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Czechoslovakia

Introduction

Two different periods are usually identified in relation to Czechoslovak oppositional activities and movements in the socialist era.¹ The first one, connected with the years of establishing communist rule in the country after 1948, is usually called the anti-communist resistance. Oppositional activities, however, were not too visible and numerous after February 1948. Students' protests or several isolated armed actions were exceptions. Oppositional movements were then affected by the communist repressions focusing on potential "enemies," such as non-communist politicians, representatives of the Church, army, state and economic administration, non-communist World War II resistance figures, and many others. The second period was the so-called normalization, which followed the socialist attempts at reform of the 1960s and the Prague Spring in 1968, when opposition was enriched by many active ex-communists. Since the 1970s manifest opposition inside the communist party was almost completely absent. On the other hand, civil opposition began to grow from various milieus ranging from political-oriented intellectual opposition to alternative youth scenes. Such chronologies are, however, only a starting point for a deeper understanding of the conceptual changes and various individual stories inside the composite groups of cultural opposition. Despite the decisive efforts of the state and party representatives towards cultural homogenization, not even official culture represented an immobile and unified system. The boundaries between official and forbidden or tolerated cultural production were variable and sometimes not very easy to grasp.²

It is important to stress also that the Czech and Slovak parts of the country were not always developed in the same manner. Divergences can be seen also in the quality and extent of historical scholarship on cultural opposition, dissent, and exile issues for the period 1948–89. In the Czech Republic these topics enjoyed much more attention than in Slovakia. This informational gap is visible also in processing oppositional collections, general knowledge about topics, and public demands to deal with these issues. In post-1989 Slovakia the period of the Second World War and the history of the Slovak state are

1 Blažek, "Typologie opozice a odporu proti komunistickému režimu," 10–24; Tůma, "Czechoslovakia," 29–49; Veber, *Třetí odboj ČSR v letech 1948–1953*.

2 Alan, "Alternativní kultura jako sociologické téma," 13.

predominant themes. Contrarily, in the Czech Republic, normalization and “coming to term with the communist past” became essential for academic and public debate. This difference is visible in the production and activities of institutes of national memory, institutions that aim at keeping awareness on the activities of totalitarian regimes and democratic opposition.³

Types, Persons and Turning Points of Cultural Opposition in Czechoslovakia

The era after the communist takeover of power in February 1948 was accompanied by intensive censorship and the elimination of non-communist press, centralization of cultural policy, nationalization of enterprises, and the intensified repression of individuals and groups of the population; this was often done in a preventive and disciplinary manner. The Communist Party propaganda promised to implement “a new social order,” and to fight “against bourgeois elements.” Such “elements” referred not only representatives of the First Czechoslovak Republic upper class; this term was used by communist propaganda to portray non-communists and potential enemies in general. This period was characterized by the strong persecution and intimidation of people not in line with the regime.⁴ After the communist party came to power, spontaneous, unorganized protests appeared, but they did not grow into an organized, united opposition movement due to the systematic repression and, last but not least, to a non-negligible support of the communist measures by the Czechoslovak society.⁵ However, no more significant opposition attempts were successful, and the state authorities participated in systematic repressions against selected individuals and groups of the population. The result was a further wave of emigration, changes in the society’s structure, as well as significant changes in the nature of official cultural production based on a Stalinist version of the Marxist-Leninist philosophy and so-called socialist realism in art. They did not allow any possibility of autonomous coexistence.

Restrictions upon artistic and intellectual creation also provoked a response. A group of authors that emerged from surrealist decay, began to produce a samizdat edition of *Půlnoc* (Midnight), the name of which is probably an allusion to the illegal French edition *Les Editions de Minuit* from the period of World War II. The formation of this group was also conditioned by the critical attitudes towards the contemporary society and represented by the aesthetic theory of so-called embarrassing poetry and overall realism. For the

3 Kovanic, “Institutes of Memory in Slovakia and the Czech Republic,” 81–104; Sniegón, “Implementing Post-Communist National Memory,” 97–124.

4 Kaplan and Paleček, *Komunistický režim a politické procesy v Československu*.

5 Veber, Bureš and Rokoský, *Třetí odboj*.

subversion *ad absurdum* artists used a lot of elements of Stalinist mythology, and by purposefully naive imitations of Stalinist aesthetics they were actually straining it. They did not try to erase it and moralize it. Because of their anti-authoritarian and anti-elitist attitude, and their underground lifestyle, they were equated to the beat generation.⁶ The edition was founded by Egon Bondy (Zbyněk Fišer) and Ivo Vodsedálek at the turn of 1950/51 and about 49 works were published.⁷ Egon Bondy, in particular, had a great influence on Czechoslovak underground culture until the 1990s. His anti-utopian novel *Invalidní sourozenci* (Invalid Siblings), from 1974, became an important manifest of the underground lifestyle.⁸

In the second half of the 1960s, the time of gradual release from, and critical reflection upon, the previous era became a part of public discussion, accompanied with some kind of return of suppressed topics and discussions according the economical, historical, and cultural issues. For example, the very critical and subversive Czechoslovak New Wave in film production emerged. Films as *The Firemen's Ball* (1967), *All My Countrymen* (1969), *The Cremator* (1969), *Larks on a String* (1969) and *The Ear* (1970), become iconic and subsequently banned works.⁹ The Prague Spring was a period of defiance and intellectual and artistic freedom that resurrected various non-communist and liberal intellectual traditions in public discourse. Especially alternative leftist traditions increased. The military invasion was often represented by the dissenters and exiles as a veritable national catastrophe: the moral, spiritual, social, political, economic, cultural, and ecological destruction of the country. The new era was also marked by mass expulsion from the communist party in 1969–70, when more than half a million members were not renewed for the party membership.¹⁰ Many intellectuals and artists lost their jobs and the chance to act publicly. Some of them were even forced to leave the country. By the early 1970s, a vibrant civil society was heavily pacified. The so-called period of normalization, i.e. the attempt to reverse the political reform process initiated during the Prague Spring of 1968, was followed also by different forms of control and repressions, limitations of freedom of movement, the restoration of censorship, bans on publication, blacklisting, etc. In the everyday life of Czechoslovak society this led to strict differentiation between private and public discourses.¹¹

Adaptation of the Final Act on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in Helsinki in 1975 by Czechoslovakia, provided an important legal

6 Machovec, *Pohledy zevnitř*, 61–69, 101–14.

7 Edice Půlnoc. Accessed September 11, 2018. <http://www.slovníkceskeliteratury.cz/showContent.jsp?docId=1806>

8 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Acquisition of 'Invalid Siblings' by the Museum of Czech Literature", by Michaela Kůželová, 2018. Accessed: September 27, 2018.

9 Hames, *The Czechoslovak New Wave*.

10 Maňák, *Čistky v Komunistické straně Československa 1969–1970*.

11 See e.g. Simecka, *The restoration of order*.

framework for dissident movements. Another very important impulse is connected to the trial with the members of the Czech underground bands The Plastic People of the Universe and DG 307 in 1976.¹² The musicians got strong support from dissidents and established a common platform—Charter 77. Also, the international response to the establishment of Charter 77 was extraordinary.

The declaration of Charter 77 is a document of informal and open civic initiative which first publicly appeared in January 1977, and attracted until January 1990 1,886 signatories. Chartists criticized the failing implementation of human rights and individual freedom in the country (freedom of speech and expression, privacy, education, confession) as well as the subordination of the state apparatus to the communist party. Argumentation was built from legal positions with the aim to promote the civil society with a voice in a platform of “non-political politics.”¹³ The movement included people from a wide range of opinion groups. Signatories came often from very different social and cultural backgrounds and had various life experiences. From the beginning, reform Communists excluded from the party played an important role. Conservative or liberal-democrat-oriented intellectuals, leftist students, members of the underground, as well as the representatives of different religious environments were significant supporters of the idea of Charter 77 as well. Spreading the text of the document was considered a political crime. Until the end of 1989 many of the chartists were imprisoned. For example, Václav Havel was imprisoned three times since the 1968 invasion for a total of five years, with the longest term from 1979 to 1983. Aside from the imprisonment, chartists were often more affected by other forms of persecution, e.g. by different kinds of harassment and restrictions.

Some (not only) chartists were affected by the so-called “Assanation Action,” which was organized in 1977–84 by the State Security with the aim of decomposing the opposition structures and forcing selected activists to leave the country. The treatment of Charter 77 signatories prompted the creation of a support group, the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (Výbor na obranu nespravedlivě stíhaných – VONS). Despite unrelenting harassment and arrests, VONS continued to issue reports on the government’s violations of human rights.¹⁴ In these circumstances closer cooperation with exiles also began to develop. At the end of 1978, nuclear physicist František Janouch, who for political reasons was expelled from his employment, founded in Stockholm the Foundation of Charter 77, which mainly helped families of Czechoslovak (political) prisoners and supported various dissident activities.

12 Stárek Čuñas and Kudrna, *Kapela*.

13 Císařovská and Prečan, *Charta 77*.

14 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “VONS collection of Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

Charter 77 met with less success in Slovakia: only a few Slovaks signed Charter 77 and some of them were already based in Prague, such as historian Ján Mlynárik or writer Dominik Tatarka. However, this does not mean that in Slovakia no oppositional activities emerged. Slovaks created a special model of oppositional behavior primarily built on clandestine Christian activities. Good examples of these were Christian pilgrimages. The underground church was predominantly led by a charismatic person, a priest or a lay animator who led the communities, cells of several believers. Such communities originated in the early 1970s in Bratislava and spread across the country. In these cells, people met for the purpose of spiritual development, socialization, as well as the exchange of information. The cells of the Christian families created an alternative to the regime. This involved meetings in the houses or flats of someone in the group, where various prayer meetings, activities for children (carnivals, games, music) were organized, as well as the distribution of forbidden literature, music, and films.¹⁵ The role of Christian churches was less significant in the Czech lands, but not absent. The famous pilgrimage to Velehrad in South Moravia in 1985 became an important and symbolic anti-communist manifestation, attracting more than 100,000 worshippers.

In addition to the above-mentioned oppositional actions, different kind of subversive cultural practices emerged with the effort to establish a critical response to official cultural politics. These attracted mostly writers, academics, and artists who were banned from their previous positions and had no chance to present their work officially. From the middle of the 1970s they reinforced the organization of various unofficial cultural happenings, the production of samizdat literature, and they started to create their own independent forms of cultural environments and thinking.¹⁶ Representatives of the other subversive group—underground—organized in 1974, in the small village Postupice, a musical festival of so called “second culture.” In 1975 the most prominent figure of this scene, Ivan Martin Jirous, declared a struggle against the establishment with his very influential document *A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival* (*Zpráva o třetím českém hudebním obrození*). People from the underground movement refused to be part of the system and propagated an idea of authentic and independent art (mostly music and poetry). An important mediator of that lifestyle was a samizdat periodical *Vokno* (Window), established in 1979. Because of the strictness of the regime, many of these representatives of unofficial culture were persecuted. Jirous, for example, was jailed five times, totaling 8,5 years of imprisonment.¹⁷

The dissident Václav Benda appeared in 1978 with a similar idea about a parallel society. His concept of “parallel polis” was seen as a tool to escape the

15 Múčka, “Štát chcel prerobiť ich deti, tak ho oklamali.”

16 Otáhal, *Opoziční proudy v české společnosti 1969–1989*, 111–23.

17 For discussion about “second culture” see: Accessed September 11, 2018. <http://www.disent.usd.cas.cz/temata/druha-kulturaunderground/>.

official communist regime and build independent social structures. The main idea was to build another system for the protection of civic rights and freedoms, education and research abilities, and media – channels for spreading information, economic, and political structures.¹⁸

Writers, who lost their opportunity to officially publish after 1968, were probably the best organized informal oppositional group. From 1972 samizdat literature began to flourish and was seen by the authors and publishers as a way around the publishing restrictions against them.¹⁹ While samizdat publications appeared in Czechoslovakia already shortly after February 1948, the word samizdat was used only from the 1970s. Over the next few years, various editions emerged. The major editions of samizdat series, e.g. *Edice Petlice* (Padlock Editions) founded by Ludvík Vaculík in 1972, or *Edice Expedice* (Expedition Edition) co-founded by Václav Havel in 1975, produced hundreds of titles and thousands of copies of “banned literature.” Most of the banned authors published their works via those channels.²⁰ Despite many quality publications, it is clear that we do not have a precise picture about the overall scope of samizdat activities. Recent research shows that this phenomenon was far more extensive than it was thought to be. Nowadays the Libri Prohibiti collection contains more than 17,000 units of samizdat publications from the 1950s to 1989.²¹ The Encyclopedia of the Czech Literary Samizdat mentions more than 120 publishers or editions labelled as literary samizdat.²² Dozens of editions of non-literary samizdat of different focus (religious, philosophical, historical, sociological, ecological, esoteric, musical, art, etc.) should be added to this number.

Moreover, a large amount of samizdat periodical volumes was published about many kinds of issues. The Collection of the Libri Prohibiti contains more than 440 Czech samizdat periodical titles.²³ We can mention just a few influential examples: *Historické studie* (Historical studies), *Kritický sborník* (Critical proceedings), *Střední Evropa* (Central Europe), *Obsah* (Contents), and *Host* (Guest). The main periodicals from the Czechoslovak exiles were *Listy* (Letters) issued by ex-communist Jiří Pelikán in Rome and *Svědectví* (Testimony) issued by prominent representative of anti-communist exiles Pavel Tigrid in Paris.

18 Benda et al., “Parallel Polis,” 211–46.

19 Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent*; Bolton, “Palmy za polárním kruhem,” 900.

20 Few other editions e.g. *Edice Půlnoc* (Midnight Editions), *Kvart* (Quarto Editions), *Česká Expedice* (Bohemian Expedition), *Krameriova Expedice* (Kramerius’s Expedition), *Popelnice* (Garbage Can Editions) etc.

21 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Czech Samizdat Collection at Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

22 About recent research see: Příbáň, “Úvaha nejen pojmoslovná.”

23 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Czech Samizdat Collection at Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

Very successful in spreading information and cultural diversity in the sphere of music was a Jazzová sekce (Jazz section) community, with a large number of public events and semiofficial or later samizdat publications and unofficial events.²⁴ Important producers of independent materials were also the religious communities.²⁵ Conspiracy and secrecy were an important condition in all kinds of samizdat production. The Czechoslovak Jehovah's Witnesses reportedly published millions of samizdat copies in secret printing offices, using cyclostyle and even offset technology. This unique achievement was developed in perfect isolation and in no communication with other samizdat activities.²⁶

Thematic variability and the amount of samizdat literature produced was significantly higher in the Czech part of the state. But various samizdat issues could also be found in Slovakia. For example, a philosophical-theological samizdat called *Orientácia* (Orientation) was published there since 1973. Later František Mikloško, Ján Čarnogurský and Vladimír Jukl published *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť* (Religion and Present). Other known samizdats were, for example, *Bratislavské listy* (Bratislava papers), *Katolícky mesačník* (Catholic monthly), and *ZrNO*.²⁷ Liberal journals were *Kontakt* (Contact) (1980–85), *Altamíra* (Altamira) (1985–87) and in 1988–89, *Fragment K*.²⁸ The most famous samizdat coming from Slovakia was the *Bratislava/nahlas* (Bratislava/aloud) brochure, published in 1987 by Slovak dissident Ján Budaj, which drew attention to the catastrophic situation of the environment. The publication gave rise to a considerable response. Approximately 30,000 brochures circulated in the form of copies, and the State security police was unable to effectively prevent their spread.²⁹

Some samizdat publishers cooperated also with the exile community. Copies of all kinds of samizdat publications were sent through several couriers—for example to Vilém Prečan, who catalogued, archived and disseminated these materials. A former historian, Prečan was, in 1970, released from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, expelled from the Communist Party and prosecuted as one of the editors of the documentary publication *Seven Prague Days 21–27 August 1968*, the so-called “Black Book,” documenting the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops. In 1976 he emigrated from Czechoslovakia and settled in West Germany. There he played an important role in collecting and smuggling literature and providing technical assistance to the Czechoslovak opposition. These activities were institutionalized by establishing the Czechoslovak Documentary Center of Independent Literature

24 Bugge, “Boj magického razítka,” 346–82.

25 Holečková, *Cesty českého katolíckého samizdatu*.

26 Machovec, “The Types and Functions,” 17.

27 Šimulčík, *Svetlo z podzemia*, 15–26.

28 Čarnogurský, “Zárodky otvorenej spoločnosti,” 113–17.

29 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Bratislava/nahlas”, by Magdaléna Stýblová, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

in Scheinfeld-Schwarzenberg in 1986 under his supervision. As a result of the collaboration with Czechoslovak dissidents and exiles, many books of banned writers were released by Western publishing houses.

Education was an important part of the culture of dissent. So-called underground universities or home seminars started at the end of the 1940s in order to preserve students' contact with professors expelled from universities. These meetings were open for anyone and were attended mostly by those who found themselves outside the official system. Discussed topics were chosen according to the audience's interests. In other cases, more attention was paid to educate the dissidents' children and the general youth. Even scholars from abroad were invited to teach. As a result, the Jan Hus Educational Foundation and Association of Jan Hus were established at the end of the 1970s in the West to support underground education in Czechoslovakia. This kind of education was found in Prague, Brno and Bratislava. Participants were also incorporated into a broader network of independent activities including exhibitions, performances and music festivals.³⁰

Other areas of culture were also affected by normalization. Some performers were banned and many balanced precariously between official and non-official culture. Bohumil Hrabal, for example, was banned from publishing and some of his works were published in samizdat. In 1975 he made a self-critical statement, which enabled some of his work to appear in print, in heavily edited form, and some of his writings continued to be printed only in samizdat. The tradition of oppositional theater was maintained from the period of the World War II. Under communist rule a famous actress, Vlasta Chramostová, organized hidden performances in her own living room for small groups of guests.³¹ Jindřich Štreit organized informal exhibitions, concerts and theatre performances in Sovinec.³² An important and diverse group of alternative musicians emerged around the Jazz section and were influenced by New Wave Music. Although these musicians were not banned, they also were not 'official'. Another important phenomenon of semi-official culture was the folk scene with its so-called Porta festivals.

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union in early 1985, Czechoslovak authorities eased up on political pressure and dissidents invented new forms of action against the regime, including petitions and demonstrations. In the years of perestroika, samizdat publishing in Czechoslovakia reached its peak: more series of editions and samizdat and fanzine periodicals were founded. The next generation of underground artists originated around the samizdat *Revolver Revue* (established in 1985). A great number of magnitizdat issues (tape recordings, cassette recordings) were pro-

³⁰ Day, *The Velvet Philosophers*.

³¹ Just, "Divadlo v totalitním systému," 10–18.

³² COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Jindřich Štreit in Sovinec Collection", by Štěpánka Bielešzová and Anna Vrtálková 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

duced and distributed by dissident Petr Cibulka from Brno, who recorded diverse musical events and sometimes circulated them in spite of the authors' explicit objections. With financial assistance from exiles, a dissident video magazine—called *Originální Videojournal* (Original Videojournal)—was produced from 1987.³³

In the case of alternative music, the subversive and protest potential of punk and new wave was recognized by state authorities as a “diversion of the western life style” and as “anti-socialist attitudes.” As a response, a massive campaign of repression against these styles was carried out by the Secret police.³⁴ Some punks were involved also in cooperation with the underground movement and dissidents, but punk rock was not primarily about politics, it was based on rebellion, provocation, and nonconformism, and it often involved a self-destructive lifestyle.

At the end of the 1980s, many independent initiatives and civil movements started to operate. In 1987, the popular monthly samizdat *Lidové noviny* (The people's newspaper) was established. In Slovakia the criticism was highly concentrated on topics like religious freedom or ecology. In 1988, massive demonstrations for religious freedom took place in Prague and in Bratislava. The most massive anti-regime gathering for religious freedom in Slovakia, *Sviečková manifestácia* (Candle demonstration), took place on March 25, 1988. Against the peaceful gathering of 3,000 to 4,000 worshippers with candles in their hands, the state stormed violently, with water-cannons and truncheons.³⁵ In December 1988, for the first time, a public demonstration was held to mark the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Prague. In January 1989, “Palach's Week” was held in Prague on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the self-immolation of Jan Palach. In June, a successful petition called *Several sentences* was announced, with a request to open a free and democratic discussion and to end the state control of cultural production.

After November 17, 1989 many dissidents became active in the Civic Forum in the Czech part of the country and in the Public against Violence in Slovakia, and they took influential positions in the new state administration. The fall of the regime also meant new possibilities for preserving the cultural heritage of the opposition. Since 1993, Czechoslovakia has been divided into a separate Czech and Slovak Republic.

33 Lovejoy, “‘Video Knows No Borders,’” 206–20; COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Original Videojournal Collection”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

34 Vaněk, *Byl to jenom rock'n'roll?*, 446–51.

35 Šimulčík, *Čas svitania; Sviečková manifestácia I*; Korec, *Bratislavský veľký piatok*; COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Candle demonstration”, by Magdaléna Stýblová, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

Types, History, and Sociology of Collections

The collapse of state socialism was crucial to the history of the collections on cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia. Secretly kept collections and manuscripts suddenly appeared as an important part of post-socialist transformation processes. At the beginning of 1990s many unofficially distributed textual and musical works were published and became an influential part of recognized cultural production and anti-communist legacy of the new political order. Special collections documenting cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia emerged after 1989 as well. Thus, there is today a wide range of institutions in the territory of former Czechoslovakia that are collecting and preserving the materials associated with the activities of dissent and cultural opposition. Some collections are unique not just in the case of Czech and Slovak history, they also represent important artifacts of European dissent and exile.

There are state-owned or state-supported institutions, independent foundations, and private collections. Most of these do not specialize on the issue of opposition activities, but by the archival law are concerned to collect historical artifacts and documents. The Czech state also supports institutions by a grant system. There are also internationally recognized specialized foundations continually providing a lot of energy in collecting and spreading information about dissent and exile before 1989.

However, these collections would not exist today without previous preserving and collecting activities, personal courage, and the ingenuity of the real members of the dissident and non-conformist circles. Collectors were various people and institutions ranging from state institutions to individuals, often dissidents. As an example of good practices of the official institutions, we could mention the Museum of Czech Literature, where purchases of materials produced by banned authors took place before 1989 as well as after the “Velvet Revolution.”³⁶ The significant role of this institution in preserving the heritage of pre-1989 cultural opposition is illustrated by the fact that artists, mainly writers, themselves offered their documents to the Museum. Before 1989, these purchases were officially carried on through antiquarian bookshops. Thus, employees of these bookshops participated in collecting as well. Purchases were a kind of support of banned artists and writers and could be realized thanks to employees of these state institutions (best known is Marie Krulichová from the acquisition department of the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature). Similar purchases were realized also by the National Museum. Besides financial support for oppositional artists, these activities also led to the preservation of valuable historical sources for future generations. The significant role of the Museum of Czech Literature during the era of state socialism is illustrated by the fact

36 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Museum of Czech Literature”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

that in 1966 the American experimental group Fluxus, being on their East-European tour, performed here.³⁷

The Czechoslovak liberalization period of the 1960s saw a significant development of art collections, including works by non-conformist artists, and including photographs, manuscripts, illustrations, paintings, and graphics. For example, the Benedikt Rejt Gallery was founded at that time with the aim of collecting contemporary trends in the visual arts. The head of the gallery, Jan Sekera, was known for supporting purchases of works by unofficial artists. The other notable art collector was Jiří Hůla, who established the Fine Art Archive in 1980s.³⁸ This collection is now stored in the popular and frequently visited DOX gallery in Prague. Important collections of art were purchased also in exile. In 1968 Jan and Meda Mládek bought a broader collection from an exhibition of Czechoslovak art that took place in Washington and began to establish their own collection of unofficial Czechoslovak and East European art. After 1989, Meda Mládková moved back to her homeland and her collection became a basis for the Museum Kampa, now a very popular and significant institution.³⁹ Nowadays, pre-1989 works by unofficial artist could be found not only in private galleries and museums, but in public (regional) galleries all over the Czech Republic as well. Some art collections are stored in academic institutions. This is the case with the Video-Archive of the Academic Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, which contains also many pre-1989 non-conformist works.⁴⁰

The richness of today's collections would not have been achieved without the courage of several individual dissidents who risked their own freedom. Persecution of samizdat producers and distributors was mostly based on accusations of "antistate," "antigovernment," "antisocialist," and "anti-Communist," attitudes. This is especially the case of Jiří Gruntorád, a publisher and collector of samizdat literature and signatory to Charter 77, who was twice imprisoned because of his samizdat activities. His pre-1989 samizdat collection has been significantly expanded since the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia and now constitutes only a fraction of present samizdat and exile collections of the Libri Prohibiti Library founded by Gruntorád in 1990.⁴¹ Libri Prohibiti was established as a foundation, with the aim to collect in one place exile and samizdat literature and make this accessible to the public in order to spread a "message about past times," and show how the

37 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Exhibition: Performance of the Fluxus Group, 1966", by Johana Lomová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

38 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Fine Art Archive", by Jiří Hůla, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

39 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Jan and Meda Mládek Collection", by Johana Lomová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

40 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Video Archive of the Academic Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts", by Johana Lomová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

41 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Society of Libri Prohibiti", by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

communist regime in Czechoslovakia functioned. Jiří Gruntorád was convinced that such a library should be private and independent. Libri Prohibiti's samizdat periodicals collections were listed by UNESCO in the Memory of the World Register. Besides Jiří Gruntorád, another iconic collector was Jaromír Šavřda, a Czech writer, dissident, and signatory to Charter 77, who was also imprisoned for many years for disseminating samizdat literature in the 1970s and 1980s.

The role of Czechoslovak exiles was very important in spreading information about the suppression of human rights in Czechoslovakia, as well as in preserving alternative cultural production. We can mention for example the activities of the Czechoslovak Society of Art and Sciences based in the United States with several branches around the world, or the exile politicians like Jiří Pelikán and Pavel Tigrid. A very special institution in this sense, the Czechoslovak Documentation Center for Independent Literature, was founded in 1986 in the Federal Republic of Germany by significant exile personalities. The Center has the combined functions of a literary archive, a specialized library, and research, study, information and publishing facilities. Original samizdat texts and periodicals were copied there and regularly distributed to large Western libraries. The Center has also organized books, magazines, documents, and the smuggling of technical equipment for producing samizdat literature back to Czechoslovakia. The collections of this Center are now stored in the Archives of the National Museum.⁴² Several foreign institutions played important roles in preserving Czechoslovak (or East European in general) collections. These are mainly academic institutions or libraries, as for example the Research Centre for East European Studies in Bremen, the Library of Congress, the British Library, the Royal Library of Belgium, the University of Nebraska – Lincoln,⁴³ and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.⁴⁴

Nowadays, literary materials are probably the most numerous types of collections documenting the Czechoslovak unofficial cultural activities before 1989. For example, in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature, dozens of collections of banned, unofficial, or non-conformist writers, poets, or publicists can be found.⁴⁵ Thus, for the Czech Republic, a large number of

42 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "The Czechoslovak Documentation Center Československé Dokumentační Středisko, O. P. S.", by Jitka Hanáková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

43 Especially the Charter 77 Collection.

44 E.g. Personal collections of Czech poet Karel Šiktanc, journalists Stanislav Budín and Ferdinand Peroutka, historians Vilém Prečan and Karel Kaplan, writer Josef Škvorecký and many others.

45 E.g. Personal collections of Ivan Blatný, Ferdinand Peroutka, Dominik Tatarka, Jan Zahradníček, Ludvík Vaculík, Václav Černý, Jiří Kolář, Ladislav Mňačko, Jan Lopatka, and many others. Apart from personal collections, Video and audio library of the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature is also an important source of materials documenting Czechoslovak cultural opposition before 1989.

(not only literary) collections stored in big state or public institutions (the Museum of Czech Literature, the National Archive, the National Museum, the Security Services Archive) is characteristic. As the majority of these are situated in Prague, we can thus define this system as rather centralized. For example, experts of the National Archives have collected a large number of personal and institutional papers and collections of dissent and exile members and organizations.⁴⁶ Useful materials of cultural opposition are reachable also in institutional collections, like the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia stored now in the National Archives—e.g. in documents from Political Bureau or Secretariat meetings or in materials of the Ideological Commission of the Communist Party. The Security Services had also produced and collected a rich amount of data, which became a part of many public controversies after the establishment of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in 2007. Although there are not specific collections in the Security Services Archives dealing primarily with cultural opposition, many materials connected to this topic can be found in various collections, e.g. in documents of State Security Units or in Operative Files (mainly materials related to surveilled persons). The Central Press Supervision Authority Collection documenting the control of the press and newly issued publications in Czechoslovakia from 1953 to 1968 is an example of a more-specifically oriented collection.⁴⁷

This does not mean, however, that private or smaller institutions, or institutions outside Prague, are not important in preserving pre-1989 cultural heritage in the Czech Republic. As mentioned below, private institutions like the Libri Prohibiti Library and Museum Kampa, or many others, are crucial to the process of storing, preserving, and disseminating the heritage of Czechoslovak cultural opposition. As many Czechoslovak dissidents were writers and numerous books (authors) were banned in Czechoslovakia, mainly since the 1970s, cultural opposition is usually seen from the dissident-literary perspective. This type of perspective is embodied in a very dynamic private institution—the Václav Havel Library. The establishment of the library was initiated by Václav Havel's wife Dagmar Havlová with the involvement of Sociologist Miloslav Petrušek and politician Karel Schwarzenberg. The Library is gradually gathering, digitizing, and making accessible written materials, photographs, sound recordings, and other materials linked to the person of Václav Havel, and is very active in popularizing Havel's legacy and in organizing public discussions about oppositional movements. Important personal collections dealing with cultural opposi-

46 E.g. Personal collection of Czechoslovak dissidents Petr Uhl and Milan Hübl or materials of Jazz Section.

47 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Central Press Supervision Authority Collection at the Security Services Archive", by Petr Šámal, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

tion are held also in the Moravian Museum⁴⁸ and the Moravian Land Archives in Brno,⁴⁹ or in the Brno and Ostrava City Archives.⁵⁰

Last but not least, we cannot forget to mention the role of academic and research institutions. Several Czech universities, for example the Archives of the Charles University in Prague⁵¹ or the Archive of Masaryk University in Brno,⁵² are preserving also materials dealing with cultural opposition, mainly from the students' point of view. The Jan Patočka Archive, focusing on the famous Czech philosopher's legacy, is operated together by the Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences within the Center for Theoretical Study. A unique oral history collection, partly related also to cultural opposition, is administrated by the Oral History Center of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Czechoslovak exile activities could be studied in specialized institutions like the Center for Czechoslovak Exile Studies within the Palacký Olomouc University,⁵³ or the private Museum of Czech and Slovak Exile of the 20th Century in Brno.

However, during the so-called normalization, underground music gradually also became a visible symbol of cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia. Although it is naturally easier to preserve written material than unofficial music production, some collections dealing with alternative music production can be found: for example, in the Audiovisual section of Libri Prohibiti Library,⁵⁴ in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature, in the National Archives, and last but not least in the Popmuseum, a private institution which specializes in the history of popular and rock music.⁵⁵

Recently, a new trend using the internet in collection dissemination has been emerging. First, some institutions focus on digitalizing their collections, as for example the private Václav Havel Library, the public Security Services Archive, or the website *Scriptum.cz*.⁵⁶ Second, some institutions create databases, registries, or online catalogues, usually intended for both the general public and professionals. Thus, these online activities help to popularize col-

48 E. g. Personal collections of Pavel Kohout, Milan Uhde, Milan Jelinek, Božena Komárková, Jan Trefulka, Jan Tesař, Jiří Gruša or the above mentioned (British branch of) Jan Hus Educational Foundation.

49 E.g. Personal collection of Czech dissident Jaroslav Šabata.

50 E.g. Personal collections of dissidents Jaromír Šavřda and Dolores Šavřdová or Karel Biňovec.

51 E.g. Personal collection of Czech philosopher and dissident Ladislav Hejdlánek or Student movement collection.

52 E.g. Personal collection of Czech historian and dissident Jaroslav Mezník.

53 E.g. Radio Free Europe Collection, The Council of Free Czechoslovakia Collection, Exile periodicals and publications Collection.

54 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Audiovisual Section at Libri Prohibiti", by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

55 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Popmuseum", by Jan Bárta, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

56 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Scriptum.cz", by Anna Vrtálková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

lections and pre-1989 cultural heritage. These databases deal mostly with arts collections (Artlist.cz, Artarchiv.cz).⁵⁷ Moreover, several collections of oral history are currently online, as the collection of the already mentioned Oral History Center of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences,⁵⁸ or the online collection of interviews, Memory of Nations, of the non-profit organization Post Bellum.⁵⁹ Apart from institutions, individuals also use the internet as a platform for presenting artifacts of cultural opposition. This is the case of František Stárek Čuñas, former dissident, publicist, and politician, who administrates his website Cunas.cz containing many unique digitized materials.⁶⁰

Czech archivists and librarians are very successful in collecting private and personal materials, which is visible in a high number of accessible personal collections deposited in a variety of the institutions mentioned above. The reason for this can be found in long-term conceptual work reaching up to the 1960s, personal and institutional credence, and also in the permanent interest of the public about topics such as dissent, samizdat, and different forms of cultural opposition.

Public and private collections on the territory of Slovakia are predominantly in Bratislava and its surroundings, in the archives of major institutions. The Nation's Memory Institute (ÚPN)⁶¹ was established in 2003. The central figure responsible for the establishment of the ÚPN and its direction was the dissident and post-revolutionary politician Ján Langoš.⁶² ÚPN is dedicated to educating young people, regularly organizing the Freedom Festival, producing documentary films, and organizing exhibitions. The most prominent collections of cultural opposition in the ÚPN are The collection of samizdat and exile literature,⁶³ The Independent Culture Collection, Printer Krumpholc,⁶⁴ and Bratislavské listy Editorial Office Archive,⁶⁵ a Christian-political samizdat that was created between 1988 and 1989.

The most abundant representation of opposition material is in the Slovak National Archive, which takes over, protects, scientifically processes, and makes available archival documents originating from the activities of the cen-

57 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Artlist", by Anna Vrtálková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

58 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Interviews Collection of the Oral History Center", by Anna Vrtálková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

59 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Memory of Nations", by Anna Vrtálková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

60 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Cunas.cz", by Jonáš Chmátal, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

61 Nation's Memory Institute. Accessed 28 September, 2018. <http://www.upn.gov.sk>

62 Balogh, *Ján Langoš*.

63 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Collection of exile literature and samizdat", by Martina Benčuriková, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

64 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Printer Krumpholc", by Martina Benčuriková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

65 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Bratislavské listy Editorial Office Archive", by Martina Benčuriková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

tral authorities of the Slovak Republic and their legal predecessors as well as those of national importance or acquired by purchase, or on the basis of closed deposit contracts. The collections that provide a picture of the period of communism from the government point of view, and have a great importance for researchers, are the Fond of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Fond of the Slovak Press and Information Office.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the Slovak National Archive offers samizdat collections of significant importance, such as the Collection of Vladimír Jukl samizdats. The Public Against Violence Collection contains correspondence that can be used to find personal testimonies and life stories of people who declare their belonging to opposition or cultural opposition before 1989.⁶⁷ Documents related to cultural opposition can be also found in the archives of other state institutions, such as the archive of the Slovak Radio, Slovak Television, The National Film Institute, The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic, The Theater Institute, The Slovak National Museum, The Bratislava City Museum, The Museum of the Slovak National Uprising, or in the libraries.

Unlike the Czech Republic, Slovakia still has a significant amount of private collections. Diverse material is in the Michal Šufliarsky Collection, representing someone who smuggled samizdat and made copies of forbidden films and music.⁶⁸ In contrast with the situation in the Czech Republic, in Slovakia the private collections of prominent personalities of opposition are usually not accessible, or some materials are deposited in Prague.

After the change of regime, many collectors of materials documenting pre-1989 cultural opposition in Slovakia got rid of their collections for various reasons, such as the weaker cultural awareness, or lack of resources or space. Some, on the other hand, handed over their collections to public institutions or non-governmental organizations. An example of such a well-functioning non-profit public and non-governmental organization in Slovakia is the Forum Minority Research Institute,⁶⁹ founded in 1996. Its mission is to research national minorities living in Slovakia, and document their history, culture, and related monuments. In this archive we can study collections of individuals⁷⁰ and documents of the Czechoslovak Hungarian Workers' Cultural Asso-

66 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Slovak Office for Press and Information", by Barbora Buzassiová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

67 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Public Against Violence", by Magdaléna Stýblová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018; Abaffyová, Lenka. *Dopisovanie s revolúciou*.

68 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Michal Šufliarsky Collection", by Magdaléna Stýblová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

69 Accessed 28 September, 2018. <http://foruminst.sk>

70 See collections of politicians and historians as: Rezső Szabó Personal Collection, László A. Arany Papers, József Gyönyör Legacy, Sándor Varga.

ciation (CSEMADOK) Archive,⁷¹ which contains various documents from the provenance of the largest cultural organization of Hungarians in Slovakia.

And finally, the strong religious activism in Slovakia, which went hand-in-hand with the production of samizdat, is well visible in the online collection samizdat.sk.⁷² The website was launched in 2016 and contains the reproductions of dozens of Slovak Catholic samizdat from 1982 to 1989, which are freely accessible. Religious activities are also related to the creation of songs that have been created over time, and their authors are mostly anonymous. This so-called gospel music has its origins in Slovakia in the 1970s.⁷³ It began with the preparation of tapes with prayers and music, later with spiritual songs. The tradition of these songs continues to this day. See for example a collection of the University Library of the Catholic University in Ružomberok⁷⁴ or the Collection of Gospel Music⁷⁵ at the Music Museum of the Slovak National Museum. In addition to institutional collections, we also find private collections of people active in this gospel-music sphere, such as in the Anton Fabian Collection.⁷⁶

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71 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Czechoslovak Hungarian Workers' Cultural Association (Csemadok) Archive", by Barbara Bothová, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

72 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Slovak Samizdat Online Collection", by Martina Benčuriková, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

73 Kajanová, *Gospel music na Slovensku*.

74 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Collection the University Library of the Catholic University in Ružomberok", by Yvetta Kajanová, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

75 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "University Pastoral Center Bratislava", by Yvetta Kajanová, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

76 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Anton Fabian Collection", by Yvetta Kajanová, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

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