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President Havel of Czechoslovakia 10/22/91 [OA 8330] [2]

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Feb. 1991

DOBROVODSKY:

Dear friends, this is Studio 28 at the Voice of America, you are listening to a special broadcast. You've just heard a live broadcast of President Vaclav Havel's speech before a joint session of the the United States Congress. As you've just heard, President Havel finished his speech in English. Simply put, Mr. Havel stated that only the human mind and human conscience are of great importance, of sole importance.

And now we will go to the VOA radio booth at the US Congress. Jan Kocvara and Jiri Sykora are standing by.

BRENT:

President Havel's speech was a great success. It was interrupted by ovations twenty, twenty three times. Two of the loudest came when he said that Czechoslovakia will never again give up its freedom, and when he said that the Declaration of Independence, US laws and the US Constitution serve as inspiration to Czechs and Slovaks. And naturally, the ovation at the end was huge, I think that people are still clapping.

KOCVARA:

Yes, they are.

DOBROVODSKY:

Jirka, if I could interrupt for a moment...Please describe the situation in the auditorium, what's happening?

KOCVARA:

President Havel is shaking hands with all members of the Congress, and other spectators, who are still applauding. Walking behind him is the Senate Republican Minority Leader, Senator Robert Dole. All those present--I think President Havel is shaking hands with his wife now--those present are still rewarding his speech with a long, long applause. The speech was a great success.

BRENT:

Naturally, we did not see Winston Churchill's speech before a Joint Session of the Congress, but we did see Lech Walesa's speech, and I would just like to make a small comparison. There was, of course, a great deal of applause for Lech Walesa, but his speech was quite different from President Havel's. Possibly even, more humorous. President Havel's speech was very serious, profound, and everyone who heard it realizes this. And that is why they don't want to let him go. Usually, when a speaker has finished, he is escorted down an isle and out, shaking hands as he walks along. But today, the Congressmen have surrounded President Havel and are basically preventing him from walking out of the room. I believe that everyone here has recognized the seriousness and profoundness of his speech.

Announcer:

In the next few minutes you will hear the reaction of several Czechoslovak citizens to the election of playwright Vaclav Havel to the office of the President of Czechoslovakia.

Voice:

My name is Jan Kacer, and I work as a director at the Na Vinohradech Theater in Prague. You ask me what the election of Vaclav Havel to the office of President of Czechoslovakia means to me. First of all, it means a great new hope, and also the logical conclusion to all the great work Vaclav Havel has done. First he worked on himself, examined the prevailing situation and conditions, then he made a profound study of all that was happening here. He studied the totalitarian system, the diminished humanity, he studied the lack of freedom. When he had learned everything, he began to use his knowledge, made it a reality. And so, as far as I am concerned, there is no question about who should be President. Because the fact that all this happened in Czechoslovakia is actually Vaclav's work, it is inspired by him. And not just inspired, it is fulfilled, finished by him.

Voice:

I am Dana Nemcova, from Prague, and I am a psychologist. This year I am a speaker for Charter 77. I, of course, feel happy, am in a holiday mood. As I approached the Castle, I kept repeating to myself that psalm, the one that says, "When they brought forth the Babylonian captives, we felt as if we were dreaming." That's about how I felt during the entire ceremony, during the presidential vote. I believe that the election of Vaclav Havel to the presidency is a guarantee that in the future, or at least during the next six months, free elections will be guaranteed by law.

Voice:

Good evening. I'm Stanislav Sarsky, and I'm an actor of the State Theater in Ostrava. Well, today we've had an absolutely wonderful day, which will be entered not only in history books, but will forever remain in our hearts. Because I believe that we will once again, finally, rule in our own cause. Vaclav Havel has become the President of our country. Though we speak about it, we can't seem to be able to find the right words. That which seemed impossible a month ago is now reality. It is a victory of morality, ethics. And the truth has won out. As it says on the Presidential Seal. We will see what happens next. But I think everything will work out fine.

Announcer:

And now, let us go to Slovakia, to Bratislava. Journalist Ota Plavkova, who has only recently, and after 20 years of forced non-accreditation, regained her membership in the Journalists' Guild, spoke of the feelings and hopes of all generations of Czechs and Slovaks.

Voice:

I am simply--and humanly--happy. For my children, for my grandchildren. After 21 years of sadness, suffering, and lack of justice and gratefulness from the people,

I feel as if suddenly I had grown wings. Unfortunately, I am ill at this time, but even that is not very important now. Vaclav Havel as President of the country--that is a blessing for the generations that come after us. It means the awareness, the guarantee that those who come after us will never have to so desperately, to the death, fight such a hydra-headed totalitarianism as was created here by that monstrous communism. True education, and a free world, will be open to our children, they will not be lied to, their spines will be straight. Children, young people who will be free to learn without that ballast, phraseology that was sometimes more difficult to bear than was the fact that we were fired from our jobs. Though I do not like to use long words, I can find none other that will convey the same message: Mr. Vaclav Havel's character is clean, crystal clear. He is modest and wise and humane. He is the personification of all the best that is and has been--and surely will be--the Czech people. I, a Slovak, am happy and proud for all the world to see that he is my President, too. Mr. President, we Slovaks too will help you. Because all of us good people still have much to do to stand this fragile, commencing democracy on its feet and to strengthen it. Mr. President Havel, we thank you and wish you good health.

DOBROVODSKY:

Dear listeners, you have been listening to a special live VOA broadcast of President Vaclav Havel's speech to the Joint Session of the Congress of the United States.

Now we say good by, and stay tuned. In two minutes we will be back with our regularly scheduled thirty minute show from 1830 hours.

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Today, thank God, Kuwait is free. But turmoil in that tormented region of the world continues. Saddam's continued savagery has placed his regime outside the international order. We will not interfere in Iraq's civil war. Iraqi people must decide their own political future.

Looking out here at you and thinking of your families, let me comment a little further. We set our objectives. These objectives, sanctioned by international law, have been achieved. I made very clear that when our objectives were obtained that our troops would be coming home. And yes, we want the suffering of those refugees to stop, and in keeping with our nation's compassion and concern, we are massively helping. But yes, I want our troops out of Iraq and back home as soon as possible.

Internal conflicts have been raging in Iraq for many years. And we're helping out, and we're going to continue to help these refugees. But I do not want one single soldier or airman shoved into a civil war in Iraq that's been going on for ages. And I'm not going to have that.

I know the coalition's historic effort destroyed Saddam's ability to undertake aggression against any neighbor. You did that job. But now the international community will further guarantee that Saddam's ability to threaten his neighbors is completely eliminated by destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

And as I just mentioned, we will continue to help the Iraqi refugees, the hundreds and thousands of victims of this man's—Saddam Hussein's—brutality. See food and shelter and safety and the opportunity to return unharmed to their homes. We will not tolerate any interference in this massive international relief effort. Iraq can return to the community of nations only when its leaders abandon the brutality and repression that is destroying their country. With Saddam in power, Iraq will remain a pariah nation, its people denied moral contacts with most of the outside world.

We must build on the successes of Desert Storm to give new shape and momentum to this new world order, to use force wisely and extend the hand of compassion wherever we can. Today we welcome Europe's willingness to shoulder a large share of this responsibility. This new sense of responsibil-

ity on the part of our European allies is most evident and most critical in Europe's eastern half.

The nations of Eastern Europe, for so long the other Europe, must take their place now alongside their neighbors to the west. Just as we've overcome Europe's political division, we must help to ease cross-over from poverty into prosperity.

The United States will do its part—we always have—as we have already in reducing Poland's official debt burden to the United States by 70 percent, increasing our assistance this year to Eastern Europe by 50 percent. But the key to helping these new democracies develop is trade and investment.

The new entrepreneurs of Czechoslovakia and Poland and Hungary aren't looking to government, their own or others, to shower them with riches. They're looking for new opportunities, a new freedom for the productive genius strangled by 40 years of state control.

Yesterday, my esteemed friend, a man we all honor and salute, President Václav Havel of Czechoslovakia called me up. He wanted to request advice and help from the West. He faces enormous problems. You see, Czechoslovakia wants to be democratic. This man is leading them towards perfecting their fledgling democracy. Its economy is moving from a failed socialist model to a market economy. We all must help. It's not easy to convert state owned and operated weapons plants into market-driven plants to produce consumer goods. But these new democracies can do just exactly that with the proper advice and help from the West. It is in our interest, it is in the interest of the United States of America, that Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary strengthen those fledgling democracies and strengthen their fledgling market economies.

We recognize that new roles and even new institutions are natural outgrowths of the new Europe. Whether it's the European Community or a broadened mandate for the CSCE, the U.S. supports all efforts to forge a European approach to common challenges on the Continent and in the world beyond, with the understanding that Europe's long-term security is intertwined

DEEP BACKGROUND:

POTUS SPEECHES

HAVEL WRITINGS

STATE DEPT. NOTES

THE POPE/HAVEL

New York Times

New
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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 1990

\$1.50 beyond 75 miles from New York City, except on



Associated Press

John Paul II Begins Visit to Czechoslovakia

John Paul II, the first Slavic Pope, reviewing the honor guard yesterday at the Prague airport with President Vaclav Havel, who hailed the Pope's two-day visit as nothing less than "a miracle." Page 10.

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Pressure Points

Pope, on Sweep Through Prague, Sees a United Europe

By CLYDE HABERMAN
Special to The New York Times

PRAGUE, April 21 — The first Slavic Pope, John Paul II, swept joyfully through the streets of the Czechoslovak capital today, proclaiming that a unified Europe was at hand and that Communism had crumbled like the tower of Babel.

The only mystery about Communism, the Pope asserted, was when and how it would collapse.

"Today," he said, "we stand before the ruins of one of the many towers of Babel in human history."

Tens of thousands of people, standing five and six deep at some corners, waved flags and cheered as John Paul entered Prague on his first trip to an Eastern European country outside his native Poland.

Mass Is Celebrated

Later, several hundred thousand others, including many Poles, defied the thunderstorms that raked the city to cheer some more when he arrived to celebrate a Mass on a sprawling plain near the Vlatava River. Some threw flowers at him as he sliced through the crowds in his enclosed see-through vehicle. Obviously delighted, he smiled back and waved.

Five years ago, the former Communist Government refused to let him come to preside at a religious service. Even five months ago, a journey like this would have been unthinkable.

And so John Paul's arrival was hailed in vaulting language by President Vaclav Havel as nothing less than "a miracle," equally wondrous to Mr. Havel's own sudden rise from political dissidence to political power.

"I do not know whether I know what a miracle is," Mr. Havel said moments after the Pope, following his custom, kissed the ground on stepping off the plane that brought him from Rome.

"Nonetheless," he continued, "I dare say I am a party to a miracle now. The messenger of love comes into the country devastated by the ideology of hatred. The living symbol of civilization comes into the country devastated by the rule of the uncivilized."

"For long decades, spirit has been chased out from our homeland," said Mr. Havel, who has described himself in interviews as a believer in God but not adherent of any particular religion. "I have the honor to be a witness to the moment when its soil is being kissed by the apostle of spirituality."

From the start, it was clear that this was a day for emotions and not substance, for praising Czechoslovakia and the rest of the Eastern bloc and not dwelling on lingering economic troubles and political agendas like the general election scheduled for early June.



Pope John Paul II embracing Frantisek Cardinal Tomasek, the 90-year-old prelate of Czechoslovakia, at Mass yesterday during the Pope's first visit to an East European country other than his native Poland. Agence France-Presse

in evidence. At several stops, from the Mass to a meeting with Roman Catholic clergymen in the spired Prague Cathedral, the Pope mentioned that he was a Slav, "the son of a kindred nation." He spoke in Czech in all his public appearances.

Hope for a United Europe

But an overriding theme was John Paul's long-stated vision of what he has called a single Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals.

"A united Europe is no longer a dream," he told writers and artists who gathered tonight at the Prague Castle, the seat of government. "It is not utopian memory from the Middle Ages. The events that we are witnessing show that this goal can be reached."

Europe's roots, he added, are Christian. And without ever using the word Communism, he said the Communists' mistake was to hold forth a failed blueprint for material well-being that took no account of this Continent's cultural and spiritual requirements.

"This was the predetermined site," the Pope said, "for constructing a new

pect of prosperity, but with an existential program strictly limited only to this earth."

'A Tragic Utopia' Seen

"That hope revealed itself to be a tragic utopia," he continued, "because certain essential dimensions of the human person were disregarded and denied — his uniqueness and unrepeatable quality. His unquenchable yearning for freedom and truth, his inability to be happy if the transcendent relationship with God is excluded."

"These dimensions of the person can be denied for a certain time, but they cannot be permanently rejected. The claim to build a world without God has been shown to be an illusion."

At the same time, the Pope warned Eastern Europe's nascent democracies that getting rid of Communism is not enough if it means simply replacing it with the "secularism, indifference, hedonistic consumerism, practical materialism and also formal atheism" that he said plague the West.

"The dangers that the regaining of contacts with the West can bring must not be underestimated," he told the

John Paul's visit, which ends on Monday in the Slovakian capital, Bratislava, is one of the shortest trips among the 46 that he has made outside since ascending to the papacy in 1978.

Hastily arranged, it has given him an opportunity not only to celebrate the end of Communism's demise here but also to honor Frantisek Cardinal Tomasek, the country's 90-year-old prelate and an outspoken critic of Communism. The resilient Cardinal was at the Pope's side throughout the day.

In addition, John Paul sought to encourage his co-religionists in a country where Catholics account for two-thirds of the 15.5 million people but where the church was repressed more thoroughly than almost anywhere else in the Eastern bloc.

Recalling decades of religious persecution, the Pope exhorted Czechoslovak priests to rebuild their church.

"You have been called the church of silence, but your silence was not the silence of sleep or death," he said. "The spiritual order, silence is the strength which the most precious values are

ire Points

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"The dangers that the regaining of contacts with the West can bring must not be underestimated," he told the Czechoslovak Bishops' Conference.

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"You have been called the church of silence, but your silence was not the silence of sleep or death," he said. "In the spiritual order, silence is the state in which the most precious values are born."

By Ivana Edwards

PROFILE

World
Monitor
11/90

Who Is Olga Havel?

— She works to rebuild her country. She helps the handicapped. She competes with her husband in cooking svičková—and makes sure he gets a little rest as he shows the world a new kind of leadership (see Media, p. 26).

Illustrations by
I. W. Stewart

Ivana Edwards, who has worked as a journalist for both Canadian and United States publications, is writing a novel about Czechoslovakia.

I'M BACK IN MY OLD COUNTRY IN THE HEART of Europe to see the future where just yesterday there was none. Hope—yesterday buried so deep in mud and scum as to be inaudible, today once again eternal and singing—rushes urgently through the beautiful, historic streets of Prague as the presidential motorcade, led by a white BMW, headlights glaring at high noon, speeds by. Hard behind it clamor grim, unanswerable questions: How will we ever catch up with the West? How to change the life expectancy odds that, owing to poor health care and environmental havoc, Czechs and Slovaks will die 11 years sooner than Western Europeans?

Never mind, Prague is as eternal as hope.

The new, independent newspapers everyone wants to read vanish by 7 a.m. (English dictionaries sold out months ago). Crowds and musicians throng the once lifeless streets well after dark. CNN is live on television. And Olga Havel, in a faded burgundy sweat shirt, is vacuuming the floor of her riverfront apartment with its splendid view of the Hrad. That's the castle where her husband, Václav, presides over the Czechoslovak government.

EVERYONE IN PRAGUE KNOWS THE ADDRESS

I have no trouble locating the address—everyone in Prague knows where it is—a now drab Art Nouveau-decorated building with the Latin greeting *Salve* in red mosaic tiles in the entrance pavement. A big black mailbox in the tiny lobby clearly outranks all the others, and the wall is covered with loving graffiti in several languages: "Havel for President of the World," says one, speaking, more or less, for the rest. Higher up, a formal frieze of gold lettering states that the edifice was built by Havel's father in 1905, damaged during World War II, and restored soon after.

In the Havels' second-floor apartment security seems oddly absent. Two young men are engaged in intense discussions in the foyer. Newspapers are

piled on the floor. A secretary ushers me into a formal front room dominated by a long dining table. White curtains are billowing at windows open to the noisy traffic below.

Looking a bit apprehensive, a serious and—despite the sweat shirt—dignified Olga Havel greets me in her soft, raspy voice. In contrast with her young-looking, reddish-haired husband, who bounces around with a perpetually amused demeanor, she seems to have the burdens of the country's scarred past and severely challenging present etched deeply into her face. Yet it is an unmistakably strong face—with prominent cheekbones, an assertive nose.

A KEEN SENSE OF THE ABSURD

Slight in stature, she is a monotone of paleness: unadorned skin, silver hair, and large aquamarine-blue eyes. As she warms to the interview, I notice also a slightly wry twist to her lips, a throaty laugh keenly attuned to the absurd—no doubt inevitable in the wife of a celebrated dissident-playwright-turned-statesman and master of the absurd.

Who is Olga Havel? Who is this woman the world saw standing on a castle balcony beside the freshly inaugurated leader last December, waving tentatively yet royally to the crowds below?

I had often wondered about her thoughts that day. Until two months earlier, the Havels had been struggling against an implacable Communist government that dogged their every move and threw Václav into prison for four years. The struggle turned in their favor almost overnight.

Now I am back in my native city for the first time since those extraordinary events to learn what role Olga Havel would play in rebuilding her country. I thought it unlikely that the wife of Václav Havel would be anything but a hands-on First Lady. After all, as a dissident herself, she had been her husband's accomplice in "putting oneself in danger for the sake of the nation," as exiled Russian dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn phrased it.

NOVEMBER 1990



J. W. Stewart illustrations with photos © Pavel Stecha/Black Star

As I place the tape recorder between us, I am afraid she may be allergic to all electronic listening gadgets, since for years the authorities made no secret of monitoring the Havel's every word with surrealistic care. But she only blinks and stares at it briefly before girding herself for my questions. Perhaps the dissident experience provided useful training for her new life. Later she tells me that the glare of worldwide publicity was easier to adjust to because she was so familiar with being watched: "We were so interesting to the police who constantly filmed us and listened to our telephone conversations.... Of course, it was a negative kind of attention, so if now there is a positive kind of attention, it's not as terrible as that was."

The first national election in 44 years is two days away, but to her enormous relief she has no campaign assignments. She feels fortunate to be able to leave it to the specialists.

"There's so terribly much to do that I feel important enough without having to campaign, too," she says. "It's extremely strenuous. I'm going to vote, of course, but I have to form my own opinions by reading the newspapers like a regular citizen. I see so little of my husband these days that I get no news from him."

GETTING HER AGREEMENT

Her husband has said, "All my life I've consulted with her in everything I do (the wags even claim that I require her agreement to the sins through which I hurt her, and that I seek her advice in the problems my occasional emotional centrifugality brings me)." Not unexpectedly in a marriage of 34 years, she says they share many opinions and she tries not to be frustrated by the time crunch that prevents talking things over: "Oh, sometimes he gives me a speech to read, but there's such a hurry

Olga Havel sees charitable work as an almost routine extension of her dissident activities.

PROFILE

for everything, it's just not possible."

Meanwhile, Olga Havel's personal concerns are few: "I never think about being happy or not. Rather I try to make sure I get a little sleep and that Václav gets a little. That's one thing I wouldn't like to lose."

In the translator's introduction to Havel's "Letters to Olga," written while in prison, Havel is quoted as saying that he and Olga are very different: He's the diffident intellectual, emotional, given to wilder flights; she's sober, unsentimental, energetic.

Olga told me she agrees except that she doesn't think she's more energetic than most other women:

"I'm hardworking, especially when I'm enjoying myself. I do like to chop wood and work in the garden, and I always knew how to relieve mental stress by losing myself in physical work, especially in the country, in nature, but he is more disciplined and has greater drive, which you wouldn't guess because he's seen as the heavy intellectual."

Unsentimental? Sober?

"Yes, it's true. I'm just not moved by phony sob stories, brimming tears. Of course, I have a natural feeling for people, but not for any romance library. I have to decide for myself"

I mention that her husband also said she "can even be somewhat mouthy and obnoxious." She is briefly startled at this, then smiles: "I think he's right, but I don't dare be so outspoken anymore."

Their differences extend, surprisingly enough, to the kitchen. She reveals that Václav Havel is an expert cook, particularly in the preparation of that extremely popular Czech dish *svíčková*, roast beef with a vegetable-based cream sauce.

"We always used to have competitions over who makes a better *svíčková*," she says. "I think mine is better, and he thinks his is." And not only does he like to cook, he really enjoys cooking for a crowd: "If a lot of visitors unexpectedly turned up for dinner, he knew how to feed 10 to 15 people with just a small piece of meat. That's something I couldn't do."

Havel also has said that "Olga and I have not professed love for each other

for at least two hundred years, but we both feel that we are probably inseparable"—and that she, his only contact with the outside world and at first an unsatisfying correspondent, is the true hero of the letters. When I ask about this, her only reaction is a slightly



blushing "He's flattering me...."

Although none of her own letters is in the collection, "she has a vividly felt presence," writes the translator, Paul Wilson. "In her silences and Havel's frustration at them, one senses a strong personality establishing its own identity in his absence."

Olga explains that, during her husband's imprisonment, she was usually sustained by being part of a close circle of fellow dissidents that generated a lot of activity, especially after Charter 77, the document establishing the Czechoslovak human rights movement, came out. Numerous publishing chores kept her busy. One was *Edice Expedice*, a *samizdat* (underground) publication her husband had started.

"His brother Ivan and I took it over and continued the operation," she says. "In fact, everything went on as before. I was never actually alone. There were a lot of friends around. My own family always took our side and helped out, as did many other people who were not necessarily signers of Charter 77. Peo-

ple just helped. I guess we knew how to choose our friends."

Olga Havel, unlike her *haut bourgeois* husband, was born in Žižkov, a working-class district of Prague named for a Czech warrior-hero of centuries past. Both her parents were laborers, as are the majority of her relatives. "Or they have some kind of trade," she adds. Except for the war terrors of screaming sirens that she has all but erased, her childhood memories are predominantly cheerful.

"We were not affected by the drunks in the neighborhood. My mother took us to the theater a lot," she remembers. "On Sundays she dressed us up and we would go to a restaurant for lunch, then perhaps to the opera or to a children's program." She also remembers the ice cream and the bread as being superior in those days: "They weren't made in factories."

She left school at the age of 15 and went to work, holding a variety of jobs: "I was a salesgirl, shoe factory assembly-line worker, clerk—that kind of work, nothing really demanding. For a while I was an usher at the Theater of the Balustrade.

Václav was working there as a stage-hand, so we were together."

Like many other Czechoslovaks who lived under the Communist regime, she became familiar with agricultural work brigades: "In the '50s we started going into the countryside to pick potatoes and beets. I learned a lot of things that way—how to mow with a scythe, for example—which later served me well when we got our farmhouse in Hrádeček."

Václav Havel entered her life via a girlfriend's introduction at the Slavia Café across the street from the National Theater, both Prague landmarks. "He was 17 and I was 20. He fell in love with me and wanted me to go out with him, but I told him he was too young and had to wait. We met again when he was 20, and from that time on, we've always been together."

The couple have no children. "It just turned out that way in the course of circumstances, it's not that we tried to prevent it," she says. "There were years when it didn't bother me, because chil-

dren would have had unsettling lives. I can't imagine how they could have been normal, gone to school..." She is proud of her family. "They were working-class people, yes, none of them were dissidents, but they were all of the right opinion—you couldn't say their outlook was the same as a dissident's, but they tried to live honorably and not make careers for themselves." (She means the kind of career you were only allowed to make if you were a member of the Communist Party—including practicing your profession or pursuing any form of advanced education, even high school.)

FEMINISM IS A NONISSUE

When asked about women's rights, Olga Havel is impatient if not dismissive. Feminism is, for now at least, a nonissue with her. The struggle is rather one for human freedoms, and she believes that men and women must solve the country's problems together. "I think women's rights are every citizen's rights. Women here have the same rights as men. We don't separate them." Then she pauses and says, "I personally don't feel unliberated, I think a person is as liberated as they feel."

She sees feminism as a byproduct of mature technological societies, with virtually no reverberations so far in Eastern Europe. "We have completely different problems. Here during those 40-odd years some women became fellow-travelers with their husbands, involved in everything they did, or they looked after their families. These women may have suddenly felt they had nothing to fill their lives when their children grew up and left home. But those who fought alongside their spouses against Bolshevism, they don't feel in the least empty because they fought the good fight."

"In ten years when the domestic situation stabilizes, when there is a higher standard of living, perhaps [feminism will become a force]. But for now, things being the way they are, I don't see any great impact."

In a few days Olga Havel was to "take advantage of my husband's popularity," by leaving for New York on a fund-raising mission for the organization she recently founded to help the estimated 1 million (out of a total population of 15 million) handicapped people in Czechoslovakia.

This is her first major project as First Lady: "From the beginning people turned to me—those who needed help and those who wanted to help, such as

emigrants living abroad—with requests for things like medicines and therapeutic appliances, so it became obvious there was a great need to start something."

"Handicapped people suffer terribly here," she says. "The former government merely kept them out of sight in abandoned buildings and castles, where they lived in the cold and damp, with no rehabilitation, no equipment, not even wheelchairs for the physically disabled. The blind and the deaf...have no special education facilities, nothing. They were hidden away, the government pretended they didn't exist, and people got used to it. Well, now we're going to have to convince them that they will have to get used to these people moving among us, and that we will have to help them."

She sees this charitable work as an almost routine extension of her dissident activities: "That's what we were doing all those years, something for others—Charter 77, publishing books, magazines, newspapers. It was also mainly an activity that carried no obvious returns, certainly no financial gains, we just did it because we had to. So this isn't anything new."

A BORROWED BLOUSE AND TIE

Something new that I sense she would prefer to forgo is any but the most casual focus on her wardrobe. She claims she had to borrow a blouse for her husband's swearing-in (and he a tie). "Of course, I need more dresses and must always be well-groomed, but sometimes I still have to clean the apartment. And so I'm in my work clothes at the moment..." She smiles.

A change of residence, however, is not on the agenda. When asked if they will be moving to more presidential quarters, perhaps at the castle, she explains that none of the earlier presidents of Czechoslovakia lived at the castle itself, except Eduard Beneš, who only occasionally stayed overnight.

"I guess we won't move from this apartment—at least I hope not, I sleep well here," she says, looking almost peaceful for a moment.

When prodded to describe her vision of an ideal society, she responds: "I don't think an ideal society exists, and the Czech one will also not be ideal. I would not like to see people here start using drugs or becoming racist, and I think we should energetically guard against such things that we don't yet have. We should take the good from the West and avoid the bad. We are learn-

ing... The Poles have been fighting a lot longer and have made mistakes—so that we should not repeat the same mistakes. Everything must be done with deliberation; we should not want a material paradise at any price. That's not everything. Here it is most important for society to recover morally first."

WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO

Perhaps Olga Havel's Czechoslovak Society for the Handicapped is an apt metaphor for such moral recovery. "Our prospects were very dismal before, and we got used to living from one day to the next," she says. "We will have to learn that we all have flaws because the policies of the former regime branded everyone. Now people will have to make sacrifices and act on their own initiative to improve the quality of life without even waiting for the state to pass laws."

"There is much that can be done immediately. People could think twice about driving their cars to work when there is an atmospheric inversion exceeding safety norms, or washing their cars with detergent in streams where their own children swim and sometimes drink. They have to know that the consequences of their actions are often long lasting. There are hundreds of examples. People will have to understand and not think only of themselves."

She attributes the current excessive self-absorption to communist destruction of individual liberties: "In our country Marxist theories, and that's all they were, went to extremes. People had nowhere to turn. If someone liked business and was ambitious, he automatically ran into the limits of the law. Such initiatives were smashed. As soon as it becomes legal, business will be practiced as an honorable profession again. If people are honest, they won't be arrested for it."

"We rank as one of the last countries of Europe, perhaps the world, to show concern for the physical and environmental welfare of our people. In Japan life expectancy has gone up by five years, whereas here it has gone down because there is insufficient health care."

Olga Havel concedes it will be a superhuman task to help her handicapped nation, whether morally or physically. "But before, during the 20 years when we were just a few dissidents, we also thought it was a superhuman task, and even so it worked out, we succeeded, so I think that from the human aspect there is hope."

Interest soars in plays that made Havel a hero

by David Patrick Stearns
USA TODAY

Now that cult writer Vaclav Havel is Czechoslovakia's president, his plays are experiencing a new found popularity, both onstage and on TV.

Even Havel himself is able to see them for the first time after years of being banned in his native country.

His 1986 *Temptation* had only a two-month run a year ago at the New York Shakespeare Festival. This month, its retelling of the Faust story in a totalitarian society is printed in full in *American Theater* magazine. A critically acclaimed production at the Dallas Theater Center concluded after two sold-out weeks.

"Some stared at it in an acute state of mystification. And some were weeping wildly at the end," says Dallas artistic director Ken Bryant.

"Interest in him has changed — he has emerged as one of the great thinkers," says Kim Berly Myers, now producing Havel's *Largo Desolato*, a play about a philosopher about to be sent to prison, for PBS telecast



By Stephen Lefkovits, USA TODAY
HAVEL: Seeing productions of his plays for the first time

in April. It stars F. Murray Abraham, Phoebe Cates and Sally Kirkland.

Havel's one-act *Audience*, set in a brewery, also will be seen on PBS, in the documentary *Havel's Audience With History*. The April 20 telecast — shot in Prague — features the cast that's performing *Audience* in New York on a double bill with Samuel Beckett's *Catastrophe*.

Part of the fascination with

Havel concerns the novelty of a playwright in his creative prime becoming an international leader. Also, his plays were written under intriguing circumstances — while in prison, or upon his release.

Most of his 11-odd plays are critical of the defunct Communist regime, so Havel wasn't able to produce them. In fact, he first saw *Audience* 13 years after he wrote it.

Because he was forced to write in a vacuum, without the usual creative process of testing his work in live performance, some directors say his plays can be problematic.

"You can see where it works as an idea on the page, but on the stage, it's a whole different world," Bryant says. "But you can see he's a guy deeply committed to the notion that ... if you stand by your principles, life can get better. He also has a very loopy sense of humor."

It's difficult to tell whether his plays will survive the test of time. Myers believes *Largo Desolato* will. "Ultimately, it's about integrity," Myers says. "These questions will always persist."

ON STAGE/DAVID PATRICK STEARNS

This 'Audience' is seated in tedium and repetition

NEW YORK — Nothing in Vaclav Havel's plays can or should be taken at face value.

On a literal level, his one-act *Audience*, at the John Houseman Studio Theater in a double bill, *By and for Havel*, is a boozy confrontation between two brewery employees. One is a writer viewed with suspicion by the government; the other a low-level manager who spends his days drinking beer and urinating.

You don't have to be a Rhodes Scholar to realize that the brewery is Communist Czechoslovakia; the writer the intelligentsia; the drunken manager the downtrodden workers.

This might be hilarious

and disturbing to Czechoslovakian audiences. But the comedic abilities of Kevin O'Connor (the brew master) and the subtlety of director Vasek Simak can't disguise the play's tedium.

Part of the point is to portray the maddening redundancy of bureaucracy and twisted thinking behind it. But the play portrays redundancy with repetition; as a result, we spend lots of time watching O'Connor stagger off to the toilet.

Samuel Beckett's *Catastrophe*, dedicated to Havel, is an odd, 20-minute work in which a dictator and nurse fashion a living sculpture. Its heartbreaking images get to the essence of what Havel dealt with.

U.S. - 9 - Today
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USA Today
Monday, Feb. 2, 1990

Havel: Rave review

Czechoslovak in leading role

Vaclav Havel is Czechoslovakia's first non-communist president, but already he's a tough act to follow.

The 43-year-old playwright who helped topple the communist regime has grown quickly and well into the job, setting a strong moral and political tone.

"He has caught the public imagination, and I'm even a little surprised about that," said Rita Klimova, Czechoslovakia's future ambassador to the USA. "The fact that he's very sincere and speaks very openly and without hypocrisy is something unheard of here."

Tuesday, Secretary of State James Baker will visit Havel in Prague. Later this month, Havel visits the USA.

"Already by now it's clear that he's doing very well in his office. ... He has a uniting effect on all of Czechoslovakia," says friend Jan Urban.

Havel was virtually unknown a few years ago, even within his own country.

"The fact of the matter is that most people hadn't heard of him," said Klimova.

"Those who listened to Radio Free Europe or the Voice of America knew the name, but the number of people who read his things and his political essays was small."



By Antonin Novy, AP

PLAYWRIGHT TO PRESIDENT: Vaclav Havel has 'caught the public imagination,' says future ambassador Rita Klimova.

Klimova, who has known Havel for five years, says he's taking the job in stride. "I'm sure, though, that he likes the novelty of it. This is a grand theater that he's managing. But that he wants to be a professional politician, I don't think so. That's not his style at all."

Urban, wearing what has become sort of the Havel uniform (blue jeans, dark sweater and light-colored shirt with open collar), agreed that Havel seems to be enjoying himself.

"By now he likes it. But he's a man with a strong moral attitude, and I think he wouldn't stay in the job one day longer if he decided that it goes against his principles."

In June, the newly elected Parliament will choose a president. The betting is that the man following this tough act will be Havel himself.

— Juan J. Walte

U.S.A. Today 2-4-90

TELEVISION

NEWS, PROGRAMMING AND PERSONALITIES

INSIDE TV / BY PETER JOHNSON

Walters to interview Czechoslovak president

New Czechoslovakian president Vaclav Havel is a 53-year-old playwright who talks more like the intellectual he is than the politico he's becoming.

"He's the first politician I've met who talked about the meaning of life or sickness in the heart of the universe, of a time in crisis in global mankind," says Barbara Walters, whose interview with him in Prague airs Friday on ABC's *20/20* (10 p.m. EST/PST).

"The time is coming when I think politics should be taken over by intellectuals," Havel says at one point.

To give some idea of what it's like to have a writer as president, Walters says, "think about what it would be like to have (writers) Arthur Miller or Norman Mailer" in the White House.

Her six-minute interview is interpreted by Rita Klimova, the Brooklyn-born (and accented) Czechoslovakian ambassador to the USA. Child star Shirley Temple Black, now U.S. ambassador to Czechoslovakia, calls Havel "charismatic."

Between the Brooklyn accents, a child star interpreting events and frenetic activity all over Czechoslovakia, Walters says, doing the piece was "like something out of a Havel play."



WALTERS: Her Czech piece to air on '20/20'

Week Ending Friday, February 23, 1990

**Remarks Following Discussions With
President Vaclav Havel of
Czechoslovakia**
February 20, 1990

President Bush. Well, welcome to everybody. And it's been my great pleasure to welcome to the White House a man of tremendous moral courage, one of the heroes of the Revolution of '89, the President of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel.

Mr. President, your life has been one of miraculous transformations from the world of drama to the world of dissent, from the life of the artist to the life of the activist, and of course in the space of just 1 short year, the most miraculous journey of all, from prison to the Presidency. And of course it's possible to measure profound change in more personal terms. For years, as a dissident subject to arrest and imprisonment at any time, you could never go out without your toothbrush in your pocket. But now, as President, you can never go out without one of these neckties. [Laughter]

And many years ago you made a choice. You chose to live your life in keeping with your conscience not for others but for yourself. But others drew strength from the life you lead, and your life was a tribute to the difference one man can make, powerful proof of the democratic idea. On the one side stood the state with its prisons and secret police; and on the other, Vaclav Havel, one man alone but with the strength of his convictions, always free with the freedom that comes from living in truth. First one man, and now millions.

President Havel never stopped believing in what he called this unbelievable thought: that any one of us can shake the Earth. Shake the Earth, Mr. President, and part the Iron Curtain. Shake the Earth and knock down the Berlin Wall. Shake the Earth and set in motion a process of change from Budapest to Bucharest, from Warsaw to Wenceslas Square.

And that was the Revolution of '89, and our task now in the 1990's is to move forward from revolution to renaissance, towards a new Europe in which each nation and every culture can flourish and breathe free, a Europe whole and free.

President Havel, Czechoslovakia has turned to you to lead the way, and is it not fitting for a nation that each day writes a new page in its history to have elected a playwright as its President?

And I am pleased that we've had this opportunity to meet, to speak together about the changes that are taking place from Prague to Moscow, and about Czechoslovakia's place in the heartland of the new Europe now emerging. We know there is no room for illusions. Difficult work lies ahead. The damage of four decades of fear and repression cannot be repaired in a day. But we know something more: We know that the people of Czechoslovakia have waited long enough and they know it's time to move forward to freedom.

Czechoslovakia and Europe are at the threshold of a new era. And I know I can speak for all Western leaders when I say that the Atlantic alliance will continue to play a vital role in assuring stability and security in Europe at this great and historic moment. And America will continue to play its part, including a strong military presence for our security and for Europe's.

Mr. President, you've not asked for American economic aid, and you made it clear that democratic Czechoslovakia wants the opportunity to do business on an equal footing. And in that regard, I am pleased to announce that I signed today letters notifying our Congress that I am waiving the Jackson-Vanik amendment for Czechoslovakia. Today our trade representatives began negotiating a trade agreement. Pending passage by your Parliament of new liberal emigration legislation, these measures will permit us to extend the most-favored-nation status to Czechoslovakia without the requirement of an annual waiver, granting

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your country the most liberal access to the American market possible under United States law.

Mr. President, you've also explained the enormous tasks that you face in rebuilding a democracy on the ruins of the one-party state that you inherited. And you've identified several areas where help is needed, and we are ready to respond. Let me just mention two specifics. First, in response to your request, I am asking Peace Corps Director Paul Coverdell to take the initial steps to bring the Peace Corps to Czechoslovakia by this fall. And second, I am delighted that we will soon reopen our consulate in Bratislava, as well as new cultural centers there and in Prague.

Mr. President, I assure you the United States will be part of your nation's democratic rebirth. Everything I've seen this past year tells me that Czechoslovakia can meet the challenges ahead. And as you've said in your first address as President on New Year's Day, so many times we've heard politics defined as the art of the possible; and this year has taught us something new, something more: It taught us, as you put it, that politics can be the art of the impossible.

Mr. President, before you leave us today, I would like to present you with a lithograph of your illustrious predecessor, Czechoslovakia's first President and author of your nation's Declaration of Independence, Thomas Masaryk. This portrait was done in Prague Castle and kept by President Masaryk until his death, when he gave it to his successor at Charles University's department of philosophy, President Jan Kozak.

In 1939, at the time of the Nazi invasion, Professor Kozak had 2 hours to pack his belongings and to flee Czechoslovakia. Among the items he took with him, this portrait of his friend, Professor Kozak settled in Ohio at Oberlin College, and so did this portrait until today. And now, with freedom returning to Czechoslovakia, so, too, should this portrait of President Masaryk, Czechoslovakia's first President and champion of freedom.

Once again, Mr. President, it has been my privilege to welcome you to Washington and to the White House. And God bless

you, and may God bless the people of Czechoslovakia. We are pleased to have you here.

President Havel. Mr. President, I am very moved by your speech. I thank you very much for this drawing. I promise you it will be very soon back in our castle.

We had with Mr. Bush very important negotiations. We had very warm, very open, very friendly discussions. I am very glad that I had the opportunity to be here to explain what happened in Czechoslovakia, to explain our viewpoint, our policy. And thank you very much that we could be here. Thank you for the invitation. And of course I invite you to us in Prague, in Czechoslovakia. And you will see this nice drawing in my office on Prague Castle.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. God-speed.

Note: President Bush spoke at 1:35 p.m. at the South Portico of the White House. Prior to their remarks, the two Presidents met privately in the Oval Office and with U.S. and Czechoslovak officials in the Cabinet Room, and then attended a luncheon in the Old Family Dining Room.

Executive Order 12702—Waiver Under the Trade Act of 1974 With Respect to Czechoslovakia

February 20, 1990

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, including section 402(c)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2432(c)), which continues to apply to Czechoslovakia pursuant to section 402(d), and having made the report to the Congress required by section 402(c)(2), I hereby waive the application of subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of said Act with respect to Czechoslovakia.

George Bush

The White House,
February 20, 1990.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 4:47 p.m., February 20, 1990]

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GEORGE BUSH

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marks the beginning e 1990s hold many nities, both for the ankind. We are witering of freedom. sion of liberty has sion for the respon- d, we vow continu- fellow democracies urity. We make this tude to the coura- of our armed forces defend freedom's Americans are ac- o get involved in

volunteer projects to assist the needy or in other ways to make a difference for good in their communities. They are also joining millions of people throughout the world in efforts to end poverty, violence, and hunger.

A year ago, President Reagan expressed his belief that the world was safer than it had been just 12 months before. He added, "I pray it will be safer still a year from

now." Well, I believe it is. Today, we join in that same prayer and add our heartfelt hopes for a future marked by peace and prosperity for all mankind.

Barbara joins me in sending our best wishes to the people of the United States for a happy New Year. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

GEORGE BUSH

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Federal Chancellor Scholarship for Future American Leaders

December 27, 1989

The President and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany have agreed to assume joint patronage of a Federal Chancellor Scholarship for Future American Leaders, to commence in 1990.

This scholarship program is the result of a proposal made by the Chancellor while hosting American university representatives in July 1988, with a view to intensifying German-American academic cooperation. The Chancellor's purpose in launching this initiative was to make people of both countries, especially the younger generations,

more acutely aware of the fundamental importance of the strong ties and close friendship between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The President and Chancellor Kohl are agreed that this year, which marks the 40th anniversary of the Federal Republic, is a particularly important time for launching such a program. They share the view that it is in the vital interest of both countries to broaden the foundations of their common future in the academic sphere and among the new generation of political leaders.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Election of Vaclav Havel as President of Czechoslovakia

December 29, 1989

The President has sent a warm message of congratulations to Vaclav Havel upon his election as President of Czechoslovakia. The President noted the strong links between American and Czechoslovak democracy, going back to the creation of the Czechoslovak state in 1918, and pledged his commitment to the renewal and strengthening of political, economic, and cultural ties between Czechoslovakia and the United States.

President Havel's election marks a fitting end to a year of astonishing change in Eastern Europe. A distinguished playwright and

founding member of the human rights group Chapter 77, Vaclav Havel was barred from publishing his works and often imprisoned for his activities in defense of democratic freedoms. His election, as the President noted in his message, is living proof of what Mr. Havel has called the "power of the powerless" to bring about peaceful democratic change.

This event also symbolizes a new beginning for all of Eastern Europe. Last spring, Poland and Hungary led the way toward peaceful democratic change. In the fall, popular pressures in the German Demo-

Dec. 29 / Administration of George Bush, 1989

cratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria led to rapid movement toward democratic reform. And in December, protests in Romania led to the overthrow of dictatorial rule and the advent of a new leadership committed to a democratic agenda, including the holding of free elections.

These changes, unimaginable only a few months ago, offer fresh hope for the peo-

ples of Eastern Europe and for ending the artificial division of Europe, toward a Europe whole and free. As the heady changes of 1989 give way to the challenges of 1990, the United States reaffirms its strong support for the processes of economic recovery and democratic change in Eastern Europe.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Situation in Panama December 29, 1989

The President continues hunting at the Lazy F Ranch. His planned departure for Houston is 5 p.m. There are no changes in the schedule as released yesterday, December 28.

The situation in Panama today remains calm. President Endara continues to assume control of his government. Their payroll is being met. Airports are open to commercial traffic. Food distribution is continuing at 18 humanitarian assistance distribution points.

Our discussions with Vatican officials continue in a positive vein. We appreciate the

Papal Nuncio's efforts to resolve the current situation. We remain hopeful for a resolution of the problem, and there are no fixed deadlines to be met.

A high-level economic delegation will go to Panama next Wednesday, January 3, to confer with Panamanian officials on their economic needs. The delegation will be headed by Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and Deputy Secretary of the Treasury John Robson. They will be accompanied by economic experts from several Federal agencies.

Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters in Houston, Texas, on the Situation in Panama

December 30, 1989

Q. What about Ortega, Mr. President?

The President. Well, actually, the colonel down there expressed regrets, in spite of the fact that they found AK-47's and rocket launchers and automatic machineguns. That shouldn't have happened, and that has been explained to the Nicaraguans. And it's a screwup. And they have expressed their regrets that it took place. But negotiations continue, and I am satisfied that—working closely with the Vatican. Marlin made an appropriate statement yesterday, and I stand by that. General Scowcroft has been working this problem all week, and we're in very close touch with the Vatican officials. So, don't be misled by a spokesman's com-

ment here and there. The problem is being worked, and I am satisfied that our determination to see this man brought to justice will prevail.

Q. What are you going to do about those U.S. diplomats?

The President. Well, that's the problem when you have a mistake like this, but life goes on. I don't know what we're going to do about that, but when you find those kinds of weapons caches—even though, I think in retrospect, shouldn't have gone in there—it makes you wonder exactly what our young men are up against down there.

I don't know what they need rocket launchers for in a man's house. But never-

theless, I've into that Nica expressed the it is. And I v man's doing w nades and uzi to his eyebal that, we shoul lomatic prem there still. We

Q. Are you hard, Mr. Pres

The President. communication [Thomas Raur misled by a s there's a little good relations be, I'll get on t I don't think tl we're satisfied verity of the I work it out. Tl asylum to pec thugs like No troubled relati want troubled us a little tim itself. And the I not threatening down there, no rible things he little time to I way, and all tl turning right ne

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The President. the brutalizatio the death of a changed. And t ly that we're ne not back to th And we're not I We want this m is a good indic we're going to bring him to jus will happen. Ir very delicate c want to underm

that Beijing relented a little bit and permitted a VOA correspondent to return. In the Soviet Union, publications that once vilified the Voice of America now praise it. Warm words of support even come from Izvestia. A commentator in Moscow News thanks VOA and says that it uses, and here is the quote, "our own broadening sources of information better than we do and without delay return to us what they have gathered." And now Radio Free Europe has bureaus in Warsaw, in Budapest, and VOA even has one in Moscow, an unthinkable development just a few years ago. The very fact that it is no longer considered remarkable for USIA's WORLDNET to link live programs from Washington to Kiev, or from Chicago and New York to Gdansk and Warsaw, is in itself remarkable.

How did this happen? It happened in part because of the power of truth. Czechoslovakia's playwright-President Vaclav Havel paid a very personal tribute to this power in his recent visit to Washington. First he came to the White House and told me personally what this broadcasting of the truth had meant to those who were fighting for freedom. And then he visited the Voice of America and met the employees of its Czech division. It was a very poignant encounter, for though Havel didn't recognize any of them by face, he knew them all by name the instant he heard them speak.

And it's moments like that that convince me of one sure thing: I am determined that America will continue to bear witness to the truth. America must never lose its voice. Just as President Havel and others who were once under Communist domination have thanked us, I am convinced that the people of Cuba will thank us when they, too, win the liberty they yearn for.

Still, we can envision a time when the purpose of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty could be utterly fulfilled. But for now, these networks, along with USIA's WORLDNET and VOA, must continue in Eastern Europe until change is complete. We're still seeing the struggle for freedom, and this must continue until all that struggle is won by the forces of freedom. Free stations and newspapers are still struggling to take root. Their access to their Western colleagues is still erratic. We need to be there now more than ever before to de-

scribe and explain our own two centuries of experience in building a democracy.

We can also assist the Eastern Europeans in sharing among themselves their own experience in democracy. After all, Eastern Europeans need more than Robert's Rules of Order: they need to know how the process of reform is working with their neighbors. So, if one nation adopts a novel path to reform, pollution control, or currency law, the others need to be able to benefit from that experiment.

And we must also look ahead to the challenges of a new century. To prepare for our future role, I have directed that an inter-agency review be conducted of U.S. Government international broadcasting.

And of course, we will be looking for advice from many outside the Government. After all, when it comes to setting an example of a free press, the best example must come from you. The Peace Corps is teaching English in Eastern Europe as the lingua franca of business and journalism, but it is not tasked to offer a model of journalistic excellence. Only the American press corps can pick up where the Peace Corps leaves off and provide a model of accuracy, fairness, and objectivity.

As broadcasters, you can—and you are—transferring American know-how to the East. You're working with VOA to train and orient foreign broadcasters visiting the United States. In February the director of Polish radio and television visited your headquarters, in part to seek the counsel and assistance of American broadcasters. And you've sent your representatives to meet with their counterparts inside the Soviet Union. And on top of this, you are helping Americans to invest in joint ventures to establish new radio and television networks in the East. So, most of all, I am here to recognize your energetic, international leadership. And I might make a peripheral plea: Do not neglect this hemisphere and this hemisphere's quest for democracy.

The times have changed. We need no longer act in the fine tradition of the Underground Railroad. But before the Revolution of '89, America regularly received the speeches of Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, and other brave men and women of conscience

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I can tell you m ence that there has a more exciting or President of the Un is mind-boggling— world. The bid of It's bound to happe dom today. But t work, the importan to open, fair journ any time in our his say thank you—that are doing, thank yo been able to give t may God bless you God bless the Un. Thank you all very,

Note: The President the Thomas P. M. Georgia World Co marks, he referred Eddie Fritts, joint president of the Afterwards, the Pr model of the prop lage in Atlanta.

Remarks at a Fur Gubernatorial Ca Voinovich in Cin April 2, 1990

Thank you, Ge Thank you for the seated out there. up your feet. [Lau for this very warm

I'm delighted to bers—well, three but with Bill Gra these two disting Ohio congressiona

nt progress toward regimes; and a satisfactory financial commercial banks, and debt service reduction.

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g bodies will be re- ng projects and man- Environmental Funds will prepare annual their priorities and bmitted to the Envi-

ronment for the Americas Board for review. Grants in excess of \$100,000 will be subject to the veto of the United States Government or the debtor government involved.

The proposal also authorizes the sale, reduction, or cancellation of loans made to eligible countries under the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, and assets acquired under export credit guarantee programs authorized pursuant to the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act or section 4(b) of the Food for Peace Act of 1966. These sales, reductions, or cancellations will be undertaken only when purchasers confirm that they will be used to carry out debt-for-equity, debt-for-development, or debt-for-nature swaps in eligible countries.

We believe that these investment, debt, and environmental measures will provide significant support to the efforts of Latin America and the Caribbean to build strong economies.

The leaders of these countries have welcomed the Initiative and widely recognize it as the most significant opportunity—and challenge—in inter-American relations in recent years. These are the leaders who are facing difficult choices in reforming their economies and, in the process, turning the tide away from economic decline and environmental degradation.

Their efforts are not merely of theoretical importance to us in the United States. We have not gone untouched by the economic crisis faced by Latin America and the Caribbean over the last decade. As countries in the region cut imports, postponed investment, and struggled to service their foreign debt, we too were affected. We lost trade, markets, and opportunities.

Enactment of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Act of 1991 will permit the United States to support the efforts of Latin American and Caribbean leaders, increasing the prospects for economic growth and prosperity throughout the hemisphere.

George Bush

The White House,
February 26, 1991.

Remarks to the Conference on Marketing Economics and Management Training for Eastern Europe February 27, 1991

Thank you very much. Nice to see all of you. Please be seated, and welcome, all. I'm very pleased to be here in my role as what's billed as a cameo appearance, in and out—[laughter]—and let you get on with the important work before you. But I want to welcome all of you to the White House, thank you for your participation.

A number have come from very far away: Vice President Pregl of Yugoslavia; the Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Mr. Pirinski; and Ministers from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

Among so many others here today, George Varga from Hungary, and Haile Aguilar from Poland, Drew Lewis—where's Drew? I don't see him. Among others who are not here is Drew Lewis—[laughter]. But let me just say this: His leadership at the Citizens Democracy Corps has been just fantastic. And I was hoping he'd be here so I could single him out. He's for lunch—okay. And of course, Dave Gergen, who I understand is ably moderating all of this. I salute Secretaries Robson and Eagleburger, too.

Yesterday I was on the phone for a long time with Václav Havel, the President of Czechoslovakia. And I made clear to him that, though the Gulf obviously is dominating the news coverage and claiming a lot of our time, I have not lost interest, nor has anyone in our government—as Secretaries Eagleburger and Robson can attest to—we have not lost interest in what's going on in Eastern Europe. All our people here are experts—Bruce Gelb knows that, Mike Roskens knows. And we are delighted that this is going forward, this conference and these discussions.

Historic events in Central and Eastern Europe—I called it the Revolution of '89—and its aftermath have indeed inspired us all. These countries are committed to free societies and free market economies. And we have been strong supporters of economic reform in Central and Eastern Europe through major bilateral commitments and supportive stabilization programs, enter-

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Feb. 27 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

prise funds for the private sectors of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and improved trade and investment relations. And I'd say from talking to our experts that the results are encouraging. Economic reforms are largely on track despite some very difficult challenges, despite some outside effects on these economies.

I think back to a conversation that I had again with President Havel about the effect that that early oil increase—the spike in oil prices as a result of the war—had on his economy. And then I heard from other Eastern European leaders about the adverse effect that it had on their economies. So, there have been some abnormal challenges as these market economies begin to function.

I think that our efforts and those of many in this room have helped bring positive change. And I know that the Western European countries are very much together in the determination that the positive change continue. But Central and Eastern Europeans cry out for one thing that our Federal Government alone certainly cannot offer, and that is private investment and practical free market expertise and involvement from Americans.

I've stressed throughout my administration that excellence in education is a key element of sound growth. And educated, well-trained labor forces are important for mature economies, and they're absolutely crucial for economies in transition. And a well-informed populace lends support for reform. Many of you, as I indicated earlier, are already engaged in Central and Eastern Europe. With the great human potential and commitment to market economic reform, these economies of Central and Eastern Europe are seeking to attract trade and investment. And I just hope that that trend will continue.

You have the ability to provide the world's best training in management and market economies. And America know-how really does run the gamut from higher education to the small-scale entrepreneurship. Universities, businesses, foundations, government—all have something to contribute. I think that there is an important link between economic and political freedom. Education, free markets, and the prosperity

they bring will reinforce political pluralism in these countries.

The challenges that these countries face as they fundamentally restructure their economies are enormous. Our administration will continue its strong support and assistance for their vital and historic efforts.

I just really wanted to come over to thank all of you. I might say, knowing of the interest that everyone has in the business at hand in the Gulf, that when I got to the office this morning the news continues to be very, very good, very, very heartening. I know that all Americans took great joy in the beginning of the liberation of Kuwait City. But the liberation of Kuwait, the country, is almost complete. I hope that those from overseas will explain this note of personal pride when I say I have never been more proud in my life of anybody than I am of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. They have served with great distinction, enormous motivation from the very beginning. And I think what they have done to contribute to this wave of patriotism and demonstration to others that our country is united is absolutely superb and will go down in history.

Having said all that, we're going to concentrate on ending that thing, ending it right, and then moving forward and staying with these enormous challenges that these countries face. We can be helpful there. Our relationship with the Soviet Union has a lot to do with how a lot of this goes forward, and I'm determined to see that that stays on a good plane. So, you caught me on an upbeat day—particularly upbeat, with the visit of these foreign—[applause]

Note: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Zivko Pregl, Vice President of the Yugoslav Federal Executive Council; Georgi Pirinski, Member of the Bulgarian Grand National Assembly; Zdenko Pirek, Czechoslovak Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head of the Hungarian Coordination Committee for Foreign Assistance; Ferenc Madl, Hungarian Minister Without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister; Polish Minister Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Coordinator of Foreign Assistance to Poland and Pleni-

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Week Ending Friday, April 13, 1990

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Czechoslovakia-United States Trade Agreement April 9, 1990

On April 5, 1990, U.S. and Czechoslovak trade negotiators reached provisional agreement on the text of a trade agreement between the two countries. The President welcomes this as the first trade agreement concluded with an Eastern European country since the revolutions of 1989.

President Bush and President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia agreed during their February 20 meeting that reestablishing a more normal trade relationship should be a top priority for both countries. The speed with which this agreement was reached is testimony to the dramatic changes occurring in Czechoslovakia's economic policies and to our shared determination to move quickly to reestablish close ties.

The agreement, along with its side letters on trade and financial matters, intellectual property, and tourism, is scheduled to be signed Thursday, April 12, by U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills and Czechoslovak Foreign Trade Minister Andrej Barčák. Ambassador Hills and Minister Barčák will be speaking earlier in the day at a symposium on Eastern Europe sponsored by the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The trade agreement, when formally approved by both sides, will provide a number of important improvements for business in each country. Most importantly, the U.S.-Czechoslovak trade relationship will be based on a most-favored-nation basis, including tariffs. This will be a significant benefit for businesses and consumers alike.

The two sides also agreed to apply the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) between themselves, which should put business and trade on a more certain footing. Certain explicit pro-

tections for American businesses were included, such as the right to nondiscrimination in renting office space, in paying for local goods, and in establishing bank accounts. Any hard currency earnings from trade may be repatriated immediately. In addition, the Government of Czechoslovakia pledged to continue its economic reform plans, including a commitment to streamline its approval procedures for foreigners and Czechoslovaks wishing to do business together. Other bilateral commitments concern intellectual property protection and tourism.

This agreement should substantially increase two-way trade between the United States and Czechoslovakia. President Bush welcomes this step as an important milestone not only in U.S.-Czechoslovak relations but also in Czechoslovakian reintegration into the global economy and the community of free nations.

Letter to the Speaker of the House and the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Reporting on the Cyprus Conflict April 9, 1990

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with 22 U.S.C. 2373(c), I am submitting to you this bimonthly report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question.

This report covers the period from January 1 through early March 1990, a period marked by intensive international activity aimed at getting and keeping the intercommunal negotiating process on track. On January 18 I spoke personally with Turkish President Ozal in Washington about the desirability of having an early Cyprus negotiating session under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General, and received President Ozal's assurances of Turk-

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where to live. Imagine, all that drive, talent, and imagination misused and wasted. Yet many still held fast to what Barbara Jordan calls conviction values. Even under the pain of death, they resisted.

This was the conviction Andrei Sakharov, who, you remember, confronted Khrushchev with the truth on above-ground nuclear testing. And that's one reason the Soviet people revere his memory today. This is the conviction of an electrician from Gdansk, who I'm proud to know, Lech Walesa, who led the Polish people to freedom. And it's the conviction of Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia, the imprisoned playwright who now leads a great nation.

Let me tell you a little incident about President Havel and a few other brave souls from the East. It was this man that I had the honor of inviting up to the White House Residence not so many days ago to see the Lincoln Bedroom. And President Havel was in awe because he knew that this room was really President Lincoln's old office, and it was there that Lincoln worked, deliberated, agonized over a terrible war. But President Havel knew that that room is hallowed for one reason above all: It was there that President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. It was there in that room that he freed a people, and it was there in that room that I saw President Havel moved to tears by the knowledge that freedom's bell was ringing at long last for his beloved Czechoslovakia.

What one man draws from history another finds in music. President Landsbergis of Lithuania, who adopted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as an anthem for his people's movement, was asked why the strains of Beethoven should resound through the streets and squares of Vilnius; and he replied that it is because the Ninth is a "symphony of freedom and victory against slavery, insidiousness, and darkest hatred."

And what one finds in music another finds in words. Consider the case of a man named Cestimir Suchy, a Czech journalist who refused to describe the 1968 Soviet invasion of his country as an act of brotherly love. Mr. Suchy was fired for his honesty, but he was allowed to make a living at a new profession: washing windows. Ask him for his business card today, and it still says Suchy, Window Washer. But this is an ex-

ample of the man's good humor, for now he has a job with a new title. He is the dean of journalism at Prague's Charles University. Throughout the universities of the East it is the mandarins of Marxist dogma who are now out of work.

Let me tell you one last story, that of Arpad Göncz of Hungary, who came to visit me just yesterday in the Oval Office. Like President Havel, President Göncz is also a playwright. I don't know what it is about playwrights becoming Presidents of great countries in Eastern Europe, but a former anti-Fascist fighter and newspaper editor, he was sentenced to life imprisonment during the 1956 revolution. But once released, he persevered as a dissident, and today he leads the Hungarian people as their acting President.

And so, the determination of men and women yearning to be free is simply proving tougher than the walls that surround them. Because of their courage, the free world is now more vast than anyone ever dared imagine. And this is our amazing new world of freedom. And with greater freedom comes greater opportunity—in the East and the West. Whether you will make your careers in the arts, business, law, or science, this can only be good news.

Just this morning, I toured the Houston office of what will be the site of our next economic summit with Canada, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and Western Germany. When we meet, it will be more than just a comparison of balance sheets: it will be an act of fellowship between free nations. These nations stood with us through that long twilight struggle; through the painstaking building of alliances and the endless preparations for a war that must never be; through the human toil and the human toll, the sacrifice of resources that could have been used for gentler ends. And this is what the Cold War has cost Western Europe and America, but that sacrifice has been rewarded by the most precious gift of all: the dawn of new freedom and new hope for millions.

Today we see progress on many important fronts. As you know, Secretary Baker has been meeting this week with Soviet leaders to prepare for my summit conference with President Gorbachev beginning

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one of the narrower group that, within the last 10 days or so, made some of the final decisions.

There may be some reservations with respect to some of our other summiteers on the platform. I think probably rightly so because we're making decisions that will reach far out, to 5 years. Everyone is entitled to know exactly what we have wrought in the printed word. As a matter of fact, I wasn't privy to the last few lines that were written early this morning.

But, on balance, when I look at what we were originally faced with—and here we are refraining from increasing marginal rates and not touching the unmentionable out there, Social Security—and then to have the incentives for growth that I see here and the expenditure caps over the next several years that are real and enforceable, it seems to me that in the alternative so much better that we've done what we've done, and hopefully that in the ensuing days we'll be able to sell a majority of the Members on both sides of the aisle in both Houses to give us the affirmative vote that I think is so imperative that we have before we adjourn.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Well, thank you all very much. And let me conclude by singling out the White House team by name: Secretary Brady and Dick Darman, John Sununu, who stayed in there day in and day out with the Members of Congress. In my view they did an outstanding job, too.

You know, Senator Bentsen said in this meeting—I hope it's not betraying a confidence—that he hoped that I would do my level-best to take this case to the American people. And I told him inside what I want to repeat here: I will do everything I can to generate support from the American people for this compromise.

I am convinced that the American people do not want to see us continue to mortgage the futures of their children and their grandchildren. And as I say, compromise is the word here. All of us have had to do that. But to Senator Bentsen I said in there, and I would say it here publicly: I want the American people to understand how important we feel this is. I want them to under-

stand this is real. It is not a phony smoke-and-mirrors deficit-cutting program. And I will do everything in my power to help the leadership, Republican and Democrat, get this passed in the United States Congress.

Thank you all very much for coming.

Note: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to George J. Mitchell, Senate majority leader; Robert Dole, Senate Republican leader; Richard A. Gephardt, House majority leader; Robert H. Michel, House Republican leader; Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas F. Brady; Richard G. Darman, Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff to the President. Later in the afternoon, the President returned to New York City.

**Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on President Bush's Meeting in New York City With President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia
September 30, 1990**

At 6:10 p.m. President Bush met with President Havel of Czechoslovakia. President Havel discussed the status of his country's economic reform measures. He indicated that considerable progress is being made.

President Bush thanked President Havel for their early support of the U.N. sanctions against Iraq, saying, "We understand your sacrifices in supporting the U.N. embargo, and we are grateful."

President Bush informed President Havel that the United States will lift travel restrictions on Czechoslovakia's diplomats in the United States. These restrictions were imposed before Czechoslovakia's moves toward democracy.

President Bush said the U.S. interest in Czechoslovakia's success is very strong: "We want to see you succeed."

I mentioned earlier the concept that some of you all have in this industry of overregulation or excessive zeal in the regulatory business, and I think we're now more attuned to that problem than heretofore. And so, what I hope is, is when we get the new Congress here we can take more of a leadership role out of the White House in not only helping to strengthen the business that you all are in but to sometimes relieve a little pressure from the overzealous nature of some of the regulations.

So, we are in a period that concerns me of a sluggish economy. I suspect that each one of you here has economists that you believe in. And some are saying recession, and some are saying slowdown, and some are saying downturn. But one positive thing is that most, if not all, people are suggesting that whatever it is, it won't be long lasting. And I think that is very important to the overall good of the American people. I am confident that it will run its course. I think it will be relatively slow, based on the expert opinions to which I have access. I am certain that the institutions that are represented here and all of you business leaders in this room will play a leading role in reviving the economy and returning to the path of expansion and opportunity and growth.

So, I might add just a comment or two about the effects of what's happening halfway around the world on our own economy and on the economies of other countries. One of the most fascinating visits that I had on this recent trip to Europe—a trip that preceded another good trip, incidentally, for those of you who are interested in matters south of our border, a trip to Mexico—but one of the things that was really fascinating to me about the trip to Europe were the talks I had with the eastern European leaders.

I started my trip by going to see [President] Václav Havel in Czechoslovakia. Here's a country whose economy is being devastated by what Saddam Hussein [President of Iraq] is doing in the Persian Gulf. I think he used a figure of \$1.5 billion for 1 year estimated strain on that fragile economy. Comes at a very bad time for him. We had a little press conference outside of what they call the Castle there, which is his headquarters, in that marvelous center of

Prague, and he was asked a question. And I think some who were inquiring thought that maybe there would be a wedge driven between the steadfast position of the United States, as we approach the dictator Saddam Hussein, and Czechoslovakia. But to the surprise of some, but not to me, since I had talked to him about it, in spite of the economic hardship to Czechoslovakia, he was about as strong as you could possibly be in standing up against the rape, the pillage, and the plunder, and the aggression against Kuwait. That was true also of the Polish and Hungarian leaders with whom I met a few days later in Paris at the CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] meeting.

And so, on this subject of the Gulf, it is clear to me that those who can afford it the least are those who are getting hurt the worst by the speculation that's resulted in these higher oil prices. Some of you may have heard Alan Greenspan [Chairman of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System] in his rather eloquent testimony talking a day or two ago about the effect that the oil increases are having on the United States economy and what that means, trying to assess the slowdown or the recession or whatever one would call exactly what we're in now.

And it's very clear that they are having a very bad effect on our economy. But one of the reasons that the world is holding together as well as it is, is that the smallest countries—and many of them, Moslem countries—feel just as strongly as we do, and others, that the aggression must be returned not simply on the moral basis, which certainly is a profound reason to see the aggression turned around, but on the economic basis as well. Their economies are being hurt. It's not just eastern Europe. Take a look at Senegal. Some of you all do business all through Africa, and take a look at some of the countries that really are in tough shape there, and then see what the result of Saddam Hussein's aggression is doing to them. And then add to it what's happened in the United States. And that whole economic side of this equation comes much more clearly into focus.

I'm hopeful that this afternoon the United Nations will pass—I believe it's its

13th resolution, and one who served as a sometimes frustrated member of the so-called the U.N., I think some of the positive things to come out of this strife and problem in the world is the rejuvenation of peacekeeping.

It is not insignificant that the United States also backed—or in cooperation with—the Security Council members of the world, strongly supporting trying to reverse it. So, my point is, trying to get things to what we're very clear, and I think it's a single bit.

But there's also the equation, and educating those who we're embarked on here, and I hope will be peaceful. Everybody aspires to who is also the Chief of the Armed Forces. But that I hope will come out of the United Nations. Perhaps the clearest is Saddam Hussein that the about reversing it, lifting this economy wrought on many will afford it.

So, we'll see optimism I feel placed. If it is, we drawing board, have to prevail. We do business abroad, understand exactly when I talk about effects that this on all the economy.

Listen, it is a great salute you and you be with you, and private sector and government, by either or by in one way business better, can the banking system



Second Wind

✓ "Second Wind" is excerpted from the untitled "Author's Afterword" to *Václav Havel: Hry 1970-1976 (Plays 1970-1976)*, published in Czech by 68 Publishers in Toronto (1977). Although it is the only piece in the book out of chronological sequence, it is the first substantial autobiographical work published by Havel, and as such provides a natural introduction to this selection of his writing. This is its first appearance in English. Translated by Paul Wilson.

WHEN A writer is twenty, something we might call his initial experience of the world usually begins to ripen within him, and becomes a source he will draw on for a long time to come. It is about this age, after a lot of initial groping, that he comes to a more serious understanding of himself, looks about the world with his own eyes, and discovers his own way of bearing witness to it, and to himself. Then it takes roughly ten years for him to investigate, think through, and exhaust this initial experience of the world from all angles. It is an important ten years: a time of getting under way, of heroic self-discovery, a time of relative bravery and relative optimism.

I do not belong to that fortunate class of authors who write constantly, quickly, easily, and always well, whose imaginations never tire and who—unhampered by doubts or inhibitions—are by nature open to the world. Whatever they touch, it is always exactly right. That I do not belong in such company, of course, bothers me, and sometimes even upsets me: I am ambitious and I'm angry with myself for having so few ideas, for finding it so difficult to write, for having so little faith in myself, and for thinking so much about everything that I often feel crippled by it.

that in my writing too, there was a "heroic" period when—self-confident, not of overblown ambition—I was simply a normal experience of the world. Of course, at that time and I'm well aware today is not true: even then, after all, I rewrote myself, I groped in the dark and succeeded only with the passing of time, it seems to have been easier then, and my first plays were—any ways more masterful than much

at the start of mine, of course, was influenced by the fact that I had not yet fully become aware of this total interplay of several quite accidental

the great disadvantage of coming from a country where I had grown up in a communist state, and the advantage of not, from the start, of seeing the world as it really is. This helped me to escape the ideological and mystifications. Of course I don't know what would have happened if I had grown up in a different state with the same conditions. I necessarily have become a capitalist, any way, or I necessarily have become a party functionary, or I necessarily have become a party functionary. I would probably still have become a party functionary because in both those cases I would have been, in one way or another, better off, internally, because I'd have been deceived of the world "from below," which is a more honest way than I was willing to admit at the time. The hey used to write about me—a certain absurd dimensions of the world, then, and my temperament, but also because I know, the absurd and comic dimensions of the world are best seen from below.

It was the time of the famous revelation, the collapse of illusions, and the first

efforts to reconstruct them again in a more or less "renewed" or "reformist" shape. Historically, it was a fascinating period; for the first time in our part of the world the merry-go-round of hope and disappointment, of half-baked remedies and their half-baked liquidation, of renewed ideals and their renewed betrayal, began to turn. For the first time, that peculiar dialectical dance of truth and lies began its whirl in society and in people's minds, of truth alienated by lies and the phony manipulation of hopes that we know so intimately today and which is brought home to us in such an original way by one of the basic themes of modern art: the theme of human identity and existential schizophrenia.

Naturally, I don't know how I'd have written if I'd turned twenty earlier, in 1950, for instance, but I feel that the chronological coincidence of my first serious attempt at self-definition with that particular historical moment was for me—as a writer—most fortunate. Equipped with my view "from below," the experience of Franz Kafka and the French theatre of the absurd, and somewhat obsessed with a tendency to elaborate on things rationally to the point of absurdity, I found in those remarkable social conditions (hitherto unprecedented and therefore undescribed) a wonderful horizon for my writing. I am not claiming that in my first plays there was nothing more going on, or that my only concern was describing the dialectical mechanisms behind those pseudo-reforms and the irresistible decay of the system that was trying to bring them about, but I can scarcely imagine having written them without the inspiration provided by that particular background.

There are several reasons, some deep and some accidental, why I began to write plays in the late fifties after several years of trying to write poetry, but none are important in this connection. What is important is that it is far harder to store a play away in your desk drawer than it is poetry or prose. Once written, a play is only half done, and it is never complete and itself until it has been performed in a theatre. Theatre is an art form so social that, more than any other art form, it de-

depends on having a public existence, and that means it is at the mercy of cultural conditions. (Whereas one can imagine a movie shot for audiences in the future, theatre either exists in the present or not at all.)

The fortunate way in which my own "bioliterary" time meshed with historical time gave me another tremendous advantage: my early beginnings as a playwright coincided with the 1960s, a remarkable and relatively favorable era in which my plays, despite being so different from what had been permitted until then, could actually reach the stage, something that would have been impossible both before and after that. I don't suppose I need emphasize how important this was for my writing. It was not just the formal fact that my plays were permitted; there was something deeper and more essential here: that society was capable of accepting them, that they resonated with the general state of mind, that the intellectual and social climate of the time, open to new self-knowledge and hungry for it, not only tolerated them, but—if I may say so—actually wanted them. And of course every such act of social self-awareness—that is, every genuine and profound acceptance of a new work, identification with it, and the integration of it into the spiritual reality of the time—immediately and inevitably opens the way for even more radical acts. With each new work, the possibilities of the repressive system were weakened; the more we were able to do, the more we did, and the more we did, the more we were able to do. It was a state of accelerated metabolism between art and its time, and it is always inspiring and productive for phenomena as social as theatre. (Of course many of my generation active in other areas were blessed with the same fortunate coincidence of the times with their first artistic efforts: the whole "new wave" of Czech film, for instance.)

The final circumstance that had a positive influence on the first stage of my writing was the fact that in 1960—again as a result of many fortunate coincidences—I found myself working in the Theatre on the Balustrade in Prague. Here was a theatre with a specific artistic profile. Its ambition was not to become a part of the country's cultural industry, as one of

the institutions that helped to keep running smoothly; it was to be something: a place where that unsettling awareness could occur. In other words, the kind of theatre I believe in and which I am only an author who occasionally can be, was able to take part in the everyday in all kinds of ways: I could help it to be a part of its organism, test my work in it, and last but certainly not least—enjoy the fruits of it. (I think of Jan Grossman. At the Balustrade, he was opening—and throughout the sixties, he was providing—nearly favorable conditions for my writing, and who I was writing for.)

Sooner or later, however, a writer (of any type) finds himself at a crossroads: he has the experience of the world and the way he has learned to proceed from the experience, and the ever more brilliant ways of saying the things that are, that is, he can essentially repeat himself. He can repeat the position he achieved in his first burst of energy, and everything he learned to the interests of the world, and thus assure himself a place in it.

But he has a third option: he can choose to go on, proven, step beyond his initial experience, to a place which he is by now all too familiar, like a bird which binds him to his own tradition, to his own established position, and to his own mature self-definition, one that comes from his own and authentic experience of the world. This is his "second wind." Anyone who chooses to go on (if one wishes to go on writing) must do so with a sense—will not, as a rule, have an ease in his life, a writer is no longer a bird. Some things are hard to part with. Confidence, and spontaneous openness, and the maturity is not yet in sight; he must start again, but in essentially more difficult

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the institutions that helped to keep the world of appearances running smoothly; it was to be something essentially differ- ent: a place where that unsettling process of social self- awareness could occur. In other words, it was precisely the kind of theatre I believe in and which inspires me. I was not only an author who occasionally came up with a new play, I was able to take part in the everyday running of the theatre in all kinds of ways: I could help influence its profile, be a part of its organism, test my work in it from day to day, and— last but certainly not least—enjoy the dramaturgical assistance of Jan Grossman. At the Balustrade, there was something hap- pening—and throughout the sixties, this created extraordi- narily favorable conditions for my writing: I knew why I was writing, and who I was writing for. [...]

Sooner or later, however, a writer (or at least a writer of my type) finds himself at a crossroads: he has exhausted his initial experience of the world and the ways of expressing it and he must decide how to proceed from there. He can, of course, seek ever more brilliant ways of saying the things he has already said; that is, he can essentially repeat himself. Or he can rest in the position he achieved in his first burst of creativity, subordinate everything he learned to the interests of consolidating that po- sition, and thus assure himself a place on Parnassus.

But he has a third option: he can abandon everything proven, step beyond his initial experience of the world, with which he is by now all too familiar, liberate himself from what binds him to his own tradition, to public expectation and to his own established position, and try for a new and more mature self-definition, one that corresponds to his present and authentic experience of the world. In short, he can find his "second wind." Anyone who chooses this route—the only one (if one wishes to go on writing) that genuinely makes sense—will not, as a rule, have an easy time of it. At this stage in his life, a writer is no longer a blank sheet of paper, and some things are hard to part with. His original élan, self- confidence, and spontaneous openness have gone, but genu- ine maturity is not yet in sight; he must, in fact, start over again, but in essentially more difficult conditions.

pects: either the window ledges fall on
And in any case, who knows whether the
ance of facades in Prague was not ne-
ause someone, somewhere, was waxing
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d to everything else, of course. But still,
uld want to retract that idea if he knew
entually be put to—that is, allowing ev-
something other than what he ought to

this false contextualization in the *causal*
panied by its application in the *historical*
fact that today—as opposed to recent
ly and publicly criticize falling window
a comparison that, while based on his-
hat it inevitably leads to the quite ahis-
npression that such criticisms are not
ety takes completely for granted, but
nd original achievement of the present
t what kind of socialism is it that takes
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stic mechanism of this dematerialized
omething that, for my own purposes, I
I metaphysics.” By that I mean the type
; that—by freezing into formal phrase-
generates (dialectically) into the pure
us verbal balancing acts, expressed in
“on the one hand—but on the other
ense yes, but in another sense no,” “we
hand, overestimate, nor, on the other
reestimate,” “though some characteris-
tation, may—other characteristics, in
also . . .,” and so on and on.

with reality, we inevitably lose the ca-
ality effectively. And the weaker that
our illusion that we have effectively

influenced reality. Just think, for instance, of how confidently
we make predictions about what will be, and with what re-
markable precision we can interpret, explain, and classify
what has already happened. Yet we never seem to notice how
suspiciously often what happens—in fact—does not conform
to what—according to our prognoses—was to have happened.
We know with utter certainty what should happen and how
it should happen, and when it turns out differently, we also
know why it had to be different. The only thing that causes
us trouble is knowing what will really happen. To know that
assumes knowing how things really are now. But that is pre-
cisely where the catch lies: between a detailed prediction of
the future and a broad interpretation of the past, there is
somehow no room for what is most important of all—a down-
to-earth analysis of the present.

And so, in the end, the only thing that fails to conform to
our wishes is reality. Not surprisingly: we don't have time for
it. In any case, it's generally recognized today that it's better
to plan less, but on the basis of genuine research, than to
indulge in unbridled planning and then have to explain to
people every two weeks why some basic commodity is un-
available. It is probably less important that someone be will-
ing or able to explain, in terms of a world view, why a window
ledge fell into the street, than it is for him to know what
measures to take to ensure that the Jirásek Bridge, for exam-
ple, won't collapse in ten years. In any case, anyone who has
the latter ability will not, on the whole, require the former.

If I were to give a name to the collection of thought mech-
anisms I've been talking about, I would call it something like
“evasive thinking.” That is, a way of thinking that turns away
from the core of the matter to something else—from a fallen
window ledge to the prospects for mankind, from the word
“laziness” to the word “disproportion,” from the word “cow-
ardice” to the word “tactics,” or from the concrete fact of
personal guilt to the abstract category called “the atmosphere
of the cult of personality.” If, for instance, one quite logically
says that a power dam was built by people and not by “the

viduals the measure of society and the system. Not in such a way as to choose an abstract idea of man as the starting point for a new phraseological ritual, but in a simple and practical manner: by taking an interest in concrete human lives, not distanced from their immediate and unconditional needs by ideological filters; by struggling for particular human rights, demands, and interests; by rehabilitating values that have, until recently, been considered "metaphysical," values like conscience, love of one's neighbor, compassion, trust, understanding, and so on; by redefining human dignity; by concern for the personality and moral continuity of leaders; and so on.

It seems to me that thanks to such demands, new possibilities have opened up here, not only for people of widely different ages, social backgrounds, and views of the world who have been unjustly cast to the margins of social involvement because of their concrete and radical humanism, but, to a significant degree, for the youngest generation as well. From what I know about their process of self-awareness (for example, from various conceptual speeches in the student movement, which, by the way, I consider one of the few social forces that is attempting to create a genuine political independence for itself), I suspect that for various reasons such a spiritual climate could be close to them. Of course it's certainly not a matter of "capturing" these young people for politics (the Communist Party failed to capture young people precisely because that was all it ever tried to do), but of making it possible for them to become subjects, rather than objects, of political activity; not of forcing upon them the will and ideas of others, but also of accepting their will and their ideas.

So much for the theme of a second party.

IN CONCLUSION, I would like to touch on a matter I regard as extremely important. I'm afraid it will never be possible to create a broader and more active political force among non-communists—who form the majority of the nation—until

noncommunist points of view are a political and moral recognition, statement of certain evident truths, and practical measures aimed at redressing what the Party has tried to right. Without such a change, communists will never feel any confidence in the possible success of their venture.

This is not surprising: it is truly surprising that the Party has not acted politically in any major way without a recognition of communist error will not forever conceal the communist truth. And the fact that the Party has not seen communist error for what it was a long time ago did not have the slightest idea they were wrong, acknowledged in retrospect, however late. If this is not done, it means that the Party is a breed of superhumans who are—correct when they are wrong, while noncorrect when they are right—wrong even when they are right. It would be imprudent for noncommunists to expose themselves to anything. If communists have been wrong on occasions, then noncommunists have no guaranteed right to be right; everything is up in the air.

What does this mean in practice? It means a comprehensive rehabilitation of all noncommunists made to suffer for years because of the Party's error before the communists got around to correcting it. It still bears traces of the mark of Cain, and it is particularly urgent now that some noncommunists are inclined to be punished for doubting the virtues of the Party compared to sacrifice democracy and freedom for its own development are growing in the East. The fact that while the country's leadership has not drawn conclusions, and therefore acknowledged its error, it has not shown the same sensitivity publicly and draw certain practical conclusions.

One small example: in 1949 and 1950, many students were forced to abandon their studies merely for disagreeing (or, in the

“Dear Dr. Husák”

“Dear Dr. Husák” (April 1975), addressed to Dr. Gustav Husák, who was then the general secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, is Havel’s first major public statement after being blacklisted in 1969. He describes the circumstances surrounding the writing of this letter in the interview with Jiří Lederer on page 84. The letter was first published in English, in this translation, in *Encounter* (September 1975). It has subsequently appeared in several anthologies of Czech writing, most recently in *Václav Havel or Living in Truth*, edited by Jan Vladislav (London: Faber & Faber, 1986). The translator is not identified.

Dear Dr. Husák,

In our offices and factories work goes on, discipline prevails. The efforts of our citizens are yielding visible results in a slowly rising standard of living: people build houses, buy cars, have children, amuse themselves, live their lives.

All this, of course, amounts to very little as a criterion for the success or failure of your policies. After every social upheaval, people invariably come back in the end to their daily labors, for the simple reason that they want to stay alive; they do so for their own sake, after all, not for the sake of this or that team of political leaders.

Not that going to work, doing the shopping, and living their own lives is all that people do. They do much more than that: they commit themselves to numerous output norms which they then fulfill and over-fulfill; they vote as one man and unanimously elect the candidates proposed to them; they are

“Dear Dr. Husák”

active in various political organizations; and demonstrations; they declare their st they are supposed to. Nowhere can any s from anything that the government doe

These facts, of course, are not to be must ask seriously, at this point, wheth confirm your success in achieving the ta self—those of winning the public’s supp the situation in the country.

The answer must depend on what we tion.

Insofar as it is to be measured solely of various kinds, by official statements ar the public’s political involvement, and s hardly feel any doubt that consolidation

But what if we take consolidation to me a genuine state of mind in society? Su inquire about more durable, perhaps s ponderable, but nonetheless significant f by way of genuine personal, human exp behind all the figures? Supposing we ask has been done for the moral and spiritu for the enhancement of the truly human for the elevation of man to a higher degr truly free and authentic assertion in this find when we thus turn our attention from manifestations to their inner causes and connections and meanings, in a word, t plane of reality where those manifestati quire a general human meeting? Can we, our society “consolidated”?

I make so bold as to answer, No; to as outwardly persuasive facts, inwardly our s ing a consolidated one, is, on the contr deeper into a crisis more dangerous, in s any we can recall in our recent history.

I shall try to justify this assertion.

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“Dear Dr. Husák”

active in various political organizations; they attend meetings and demonstrations; they declare their support for everything they are supposed to. Nowhere can any sign of dissent be seen from anything that the government does.

These facts, of course, are not to be made light of. One must ask seriously, at this point, whether all this does not confirm your success in achieving the tasks your team set it- self—those of winning the public’s support and consolidating the situation in the country.

The answer must depend on what we mean by consolida- tion.

Insofar as it is to be measured solely by statistical returns of various kinds, by official statements and police accounts of the public’s political involvement, and so forth, then we can hardly feel any doubt that consolidation has been achieved.

But what if we take consolidation to mean something more, a genuine state of mind in society? Supposing we start to inquire about more durable, perhaps subtler and more im- ponderable, but nonetheless significant factors, such as what, by way of genuine personal, human experience lies hidden behind all the figures? Supposing we ask, for example, what has been done for the moral and spiritual revival of society, for the enhancement of the truly human dimensions of life, for the elevation of man to a higher degree of dignity, for his truly free and authentic assertion in this world? What do we find when we thus turn our attention from the mere outward manifestations to their inner causes and consequences, their connections and meanings, in a word, to that less obvious plane of reality where those manifestations might actually ac- quire a general human meeting? Can we, even then, consider our society “consolidated”?

I make so bold as to answer, No; to assert that, for all the outwardly persuasive facts, inwardly our society, far from be- ing a consolidated one, is, on the contrary, plunging ever deeper into a crisis more dangerous, in some respects, than any we can recall in our recent history.

I shall try to justify this assertion.

The basic question one must ask is this: Why are people in fact behaving in the way they do? Why do they do all these things that, taken together, form the impressive image of a totally united society giving total support to its government? For any unprejudiced observer, the answer is, I think, self-evident: They are driven to it by fear.

For fear of losing his job, the schoolteacher teaches things he does not believe; fearing for his future, the pupil repeats them after him; for fear of not being allowed to continue his studies, the young man joins the Youth League and participates in whatever of its activities are necessary; fear that, under the monstrous system of political credits, his son or daughter will not acquire the necessary total of points for enrollment at a school leads the father to take on all manner of responsibilities and "voluntarily" to do everything required. Fear of the consequences of refusal leads people to take part in elections, to vote for the proposed candidates, and to pretend that they regard such ceremonies as genuine elections; out of fear for their livelihood, position, or prospects, they go to meetings, vote for every resolution they have to, or at least keep silent: it is fear that carries them through humiliating acts of self-criticism and penance and the dishonest filling out of a mass of degrading questionnaires; fear that someone might inform against them prevents them from giving public, and often even private, expression to their true opinions. It is the fear of suffering financial reverses and the effort to better themselves and ingratiate themselves with the authorities that in most cases makes working men put their names to "work commitments"; indeed, the same motives often lie behind the establishment of Socialist Labor Brigades, in the clear realization that their chief function is to be mentioned in the appropriate reports to higher levels. Fear causes people to attend all those official celebrations, demonstrations, and marches. Fear of being prevented from continuing their work leads many scientists and artists to give allegiance to ideas they do not in fact accept, to write things they do not agree with or know to be false, to join official organizations

or to take part in work of whose value they are in no way in opinion, or to distort and mutilate the truth in the effort to save themselves, many even to the point of reporting to them what they themselves have been doing.

The fear I am speaking of is not, of course, the ordinary psychological sense as a reaction to a situation. Most of those we see around us are like aspen leaves: they wear the faces of ordinary citizens. We are concerned with fear in the ethical sense if you will, namely, the fear of participation in the collective awareness of a ubiquitous danger; anxiety about what is threatened; becoming gradually used to the constant part of the actual world; the fear of which, in an ever more skillful and mannered way, is in for various kinds of external adaptive method of self-defense.

Naturally, fear is not the only building block of the social structure.

Nonetheless, it is the main, the fundamental, the one out of which not even that surface unanimity on which official documents are based can be attained.

The question arises, of course: What are people afraid of? Trials? Torture? Loss of property? Executions? Certainly not. The most brutal pressure exerted by the authorities upon the people in the past history—at least in our circumstances—takes more subtle and selective forms. Trials do not take place today—everybody is afraid. Authorities manage to manipulate them—without an extreme threat, while the main thrust of the sphere of existential pressure. Which is the core of the matter largely unchanged.

Notoriously, it is not the absolute value that counts, so much as its relative value.

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1 you! Shut up, do your work, look after
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ed to raise our sights a little above our

limited daily perspective in order to realize with horror how
hastily we are all abandoning positions which only yesterday
we refused to desert. What social conscience only yesterday
regarded as improper is today casually excused; tomorrow it
will eventually be thought natural, and the day after be held
up as a model of behavior. What yesterday we declared im-
possible, or at least averred we would never get accustomed
to, today we accept, without astonishment, as a fact of life.
And, conversely, things that a little while ago we took for
granted we now treat as exceptional: and soon—who knows—
we might think of them as unattainable chimeras.

The changes in our assessment of the "natural" and the
"normal," the shifts in moral attitudes in our society over the
past few years have been greater than they might appear at
first glance. As our insensitivity has increased, so naturally
has our ability to discern that insensitivity declined.

The malady has spread, as it were, from the fruit and the
foliage to the trunk and roots. The most serious grounds for
alarm, then, are the prospects which the present state of af-
fairs opens up for the future.

The main route by which society is inwardly enlarged, en-
riched, and cultivated is that of coming to know itself in ever
greater depth, range, and subtlety.

The main instrument of society's self-knowledge is its cul-
ture: culture as a specific field of human activity, influencing
the general state of mind—albeit often very indirectly—and
at the same time continually subject to its influence.

Where total control over society completely suppresses its
differentiated inner development, the first thing to be sup-
pressed regularly is its culture: not just "automatically," as a
phenomenon intrinsically opposed to the "spirit" of manip-
ulation, but as a matter of deliberate "programming" in-
spired by justified anxiety that society be alerted to the extent
of its own subjugation through that culture which gives it its
self-awareness. It is culture that enables a society to enlarge
its liberty and to discover truth—so what appeal can it have

for the authorities who are basically concerned with suppressing such values? They recognize only one kind of truth: the kind they need at the given moment. And only one kind of liberty: to proclaim that "truth."

A world where "truth" flourishes not in a dialectic climate of genuine knowledge but in a climate of power interests is a world of mental sterility, petrified dogmas, rigid and unchangeable creeds leading inevitably to creedless despotism.

This is a world of prohibitions and limitations and of orders, a world where cultural policy means primarily the operations of the cultural police force.

Much has been said and written about the peculiar degree of devastation which our present-day culture has reached: about the hundreds of prohibited books and authors and the dozens of liquidated periodicals; about the carving up of publishers' projects and theatre repertoires and the cutting off of all contact with the intellectual community; about the plundering of exhibition halls; about the grotesque range of persecution and discrimination practiced in this field; about the breaking up of all the former artistic associations and countless scholarly institutes and their replacement by dummies run by little gangs of aggressive fanatics, notorious careerists, incorrigible cowards, and incompetent upstarts anxious to seize their opportunity in the general void. Rather than describe all these things again, I will offer some reflections on those deeper aspects of this state of affairs which are germane to the subject of my letter.

In the first place, however bad the present situation, it still does not mean that culture has ceased to exist altogether. Plays are put on, television programs go out every day, and even books get published. But this overt and legal cultural activity, taken as a whole, exhibits one basic feature: an overall externalization due to its being estranged in large measure from its proper substance through its total emasculation as an instrument of human, and, therefore of social, self-awareness. And whenever something of incontestably excellent value does appear—a superb dramatic performance, let us say, to stay in

the sphere of art—then it appears, rather to be tolerated because of its subtlety, hence, from an official point of view, less as a contribution to social self-awareness, no sooner does that contribution begin to be perceived than the authorities start to censor themselves: there are familiar instances where a work was banned, by and large, simply for being too good.

But that is not what concerns me at the moment. What interests me is how this externalization works, how possible to describe the human experience more explicitly and where the function of self-awareness is, thus, far more manifest.

For example, suppose a literary work is undeniably skillful, suggestive, ingenious, and polished (it does happen from time to time that the qualities of the work may be, of one thing, perfectly certain: whether through censorship, because of the writer's deception, as a consequence of resignation, it will never stray one inch beyond the conventional and, hence, basically inartistic consciousness that offers and accepts as genuine the mere appearance of experience—a commonplace, hackneyed, superficial trivia of experience). Reflections of such aspects of experience have long since adopted and dominated the form, rather, because of this fact, there will never be found such a work entertaining, exciting, or enlightening though it sheds no light, offers no flash, and lacks the sense that it reveals something unthought of, something unsaid, or provides new, spontaneous evidence of things hitherto only guessed at. In imitating the real world, such a work fails to be the world. As regards the actual forms that it takes, it is no accident that the vast majority of them will be the one which, thanks to its proven

structure begins suddenly to decline and his direction of entropy. This is the moment he succumbs to the general law of the universe: death.

At the bottom of every political authority which is faithful to entropy (and would like to treat the computer into which any program can be fed as if that he will carry it out), there lies hidden a death. There is an odor of death even in the life which such an authority puts into practice. Every manifestation of genuine life, every individual expression, thought, every unusual and red light signaling confusion, chaos, and

the cal practice of the present regime, as I have seen step by step, confirms that those conditions are always crucial for its program—order, calm, halting the nation out of its crisis,” “halting the nation’s hot tempers” and so on—have finally taken on a lethal meaning that they have for every individual in the country.

What prevails: a bureaucratic order of gray which eliminates all individuality; of mechanical precision; of everything of unique quality; of musty order and the transcendent. What prevails is order

and the country is calm. Calm as a morgue or a

country is calm. Calm as a morgue or a country is say? really alive, something is always happening. Current activities and events, of overt and covert, produces a constant succession of events which provoke further and fresh movements. The vital polarity of the continuous and the random, the foreseen and the unforeseen, its effect in the time dimension and its effect in the time dimension and its effect in the time dimension of events. The more highly structured

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the life of a society, the more highly structured its time dimension, and the more prominent the element of uniqueness and unrepeatability within the time flow. This, in turn, of course, makes it easier to reflect its sequential character, to represent it, that is, as an irreversible stream of noninterchangeable situations, and so, in retrospect, to understand better whatever is governed by regular laws in society. The richer the life society lives, then, the better it perceives the dimension of social time, the dimension of history.

In other words, wherever there is room for social activity, room is created for a social memory as well. Any society that is alive is a society with a history.

If the element of continuity and causality is so vitally linked in history with the element of unrepeatability and unpredictability, we may well ask how true history—that inextinguishable source of “chaos,” fountainhead of unrest, and slap in the face to law and order—can ever exist in a world ruled by an “entropic” regime.

The answer is plain: it cannot. And, indeed, it does not—on the surface, anyway. Under such a regime, the elimination of life in the proper sense brings social time to a halt, so that history disappears from its purview.

In our own country, too, one has the impression that for some time there has been no history. Slowly but surely, we are losing the sense of time. We begin to forget what happened when, what came earlier and what later, and the feeling that it really doesn’t matter overwhelms us. As uniqueness disappears from the flow of events, so does continuity; everything merges into the single gray image of one and the same cycle and we say, “There is nothing happening.” Here, too, a deadly order has been imposed: all activity is completely organized and so completely deadened. The deadening of the sense of unfolding time in society inevitably kills it in private life as well. No longer backed by social history or the history of the individual within it, private life declines to a prehistoric level where time derives its only rhythm from such events as birth, marriage, and death.

ense of social time seems, in every way, into the primeval state where, for thou-
 anity could get no further in measuring
 nic and climatic pattern of endlessly re-
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he disquieting dimension of history has,
 ed. So the disorder of real history is re-
 liness of pseudo-history, whose author is
 ety, but an official planner. Instead of
 ed nonevents; we live from anniversary to
 ebration to celebration, from parade to
 nimous congress to unanimous elections
 a Press Day to an Artillery Day, and vice
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en, is perfect order—but at the cost of
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e has one means of increasing the gen-
 its own sphere of influence, namely, by
 ntral control, rendering itself more mon-
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 ation. But with every step it takes in this
 y increases its own entropy too.
 mobilize the world, it immobilizes itself,
 ability to cope with anything new or to
 rents of life. The "entropic" regime is,

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thus, doomed to become the victim of its own lethal principle, and the most vulnerable victim at that, thanks to the absence of any impulse within its own structure that could, as it were, make it face up to itself. Life, by contrast, with its irrepressible urge to oppose entropy, is able all the more successfully and inventively to resist being violated, the faster the violating authority succumbs to its own sclerosis.

In trying to paralyze life, then, the authorities paralyze themselves and, in the long run, make themselves incapable of paralyzing life.

In other words, life may be subjected to a prolonged and thorough process of violation, enfeeblement, and anesthesia. Yet, in the end, it cannot be permanently halted. Albeit quietly, covertly, and slowly, it nevertheless goes on. Though it be estranged from itself a thousand times, it always manages in some way to recuperate; however violently ravished, it always survives, in the end, the power which ravished it. It cannot be otherwise, in view of the profoundly ambivalent nature of every "entropic" authority, which can only suppress life if there is life to suppress and so, in the last resort, depends for its own existence on life, whereas life in no way depends on it. The only force that can truly destroy life on our planet is the force which knows no compromise: the universal validity of the second law of thermodynamics.

If life cannot be destroyed for good, then neither can history be brought entirely to a halt. A secret streamlet trickles on beneath the heavy cover of inertia and pseudo-events, slowly and inconspicuously undercutting it. It may be a long process, but one day it must happen: the cover will no longer hold and will start to crack.

This is the moment when once more something visibly begins to happen, something truly new and unique, something unscheduled in the official calendar of "happenings," something that makes us no longer indifferent to what occurs and when—something truly historic, in the sense that history again demands to be heard.

We experienced one such explosion not long ago. Those who had spent years humiliating and insulting people and were then so shocked when those people tried to raise their own voices, now label the whole episode an "outbreak of passions." And what, pray, were the passions that broke out? Those who know what protracted and thoroughgoing humiliations had preceded the explosion, and who understand the psycho-social mechanics of the subsequent reaction to them should be more surprised at the relatively calm, objective and, indeed, loyal form which the explosion took. Yet, as everyone knows, we had to pay a cruel price for that moment of truth.

The authorities in power today are profoundly different from those who ruled prior to that recent explosion. Not only because the latter were, so to speak, "originals" and their successors a mere formalized imitation, incapable of reflecting the extent to which the "originals" had meanwhile lost their mystique, but primarily for another reason.

For whereas the earlier version rested on a genuine and not inconsiderable social basis derived from the trustful support accorded, though in declining measure, by one part of the population, and on the equally genuine and considerable attractiveness (which also gradually evaporated) of the social benefits it originally promised, today's regime rests solely on the ruling minority's instinct for self-preservation and on the fear of the ruled majority.

In these circumstances, it is hard to foresee all the feasible scenarios for a future "moment of truth": to foresee how such a complex and undisguised degradation of the whole of society might one day demand restitution. And it is quite impossible to estimate the scope and depth of the tragic consequences which such a moment might inflict, perhaps must inflict, on our two nations.

In this context, it is amazing that a government which advertises itself as the most scientific on record is unable to grasp the elementary rules of its own operations or to learn from its own past.

I have made it clear that I have no fear of history coming to a halt, or of history being with the accession to power of the present situation in history and every epoch have a fresh situation and a new epoch, and for new ones have always been quite remote from the organizers and rulers of the

What I am afraid of is something else. This letter is concerned, in fact, with what I really fear: the endlessly harsh and long-lasting consequences of the violent abuses which will have for our nations. We are all bound to pay for the drastic suppression of the cruel and needless banishment of the best ground of society and the depths of the compulsory deferment of every opportunity in anything like a natural way. And perhaps from what I wrote a little way back that I am afraid about our current payments in terms of the spoliation of society and human dignity, and the heavy tax we shall have to pay in the future and moral decline of society. I am also afraid of the scarcely calculable surcharge which must be paid when the moment next arrives for life and death on their due.

The degree of responsibility a political leader for the condition of his country must always vary and can never be absolute. He never rules alone, and his responsibility rests on those who surround him. No country exists in a vacuum, so its policies are influenced by those of other countries. The rulers always have much to answer for, and their policies which predetermined the present situation, too, has much to answer for, both individually and in the daily personal decisions of each responsible person which went to create the total state of a nation as a socio-historic whole, limited by circumstances which in turn limiting those circumstances.

one such explosion not long ago. Those who humiliat- ing and insulting people and who are disgraced when those people tried to raise their heads. I feel the whole episode an "outbreak of passion." I pray, were the passions that broke out? What protracted and thoroughgoing humiliations led to the explosion, and who understand the dynamics of the subsequent reaction to them? I am surprised at the relatively calm, objective and dispassionate analysis which the explosion took. Yet, as everyone knows, it was paid a cruel price for that moment of truth. The conditions in power today are profoundly different from those which existed prior to that recent explosion. Not only are the conditions, so to speak, "originals" and their successors, but the successors, incapable of reflecting the "originals" had meanwhile lost their ability to do so reliably for another reason.

The earlier version rested on a genuine and solid social basis derived from the trustful support of the people. In declining measure, by one part of the population (and the other also gradually evaporated) of the social contract (which was also promised, today's regime rests solely on the basis of an instinct for self-preservation and on the basis of the majority.

Consequently, it is hard to foresee all the feasible consequences of the "moment of truth": to foresee how such a moment might inflict, perhaps a disguised degradation of the whole of society, and to demand restitution. And it is quite impossible to foresee the scope and depth of the tragic consequences of such a moment might inflict, perhaps on two nations.

It is amazing that a government which admits that it is almost scientific on record is unable to learn from the rules of its own operations or to learn

I have made it clear that I have no fear of life in Czechoslovakia coming to a halt, or of history being suspended forever with the accession to power of the present leaders. Every situation in history and every epoch have been succeeded by a fresh situation and a new epoch, and for better or worse, the new ones have always been quite remote from the expectations of the organizers and rulers of the preceding period.

What I am afraid of is something else. The whole of this letter is concerned, in fact, with what I really fear—the pointlessly harsh and long-lasting consequences which the present violent abuses will have for our nations. I fear the price we are all bound to pay for the drastic suppression of history, the cruel and needless banishment of life into the underground of society and the depths of the human soul, the new compulsory deferment of every opportunity for society to live in anything like a natural way. And perhaps it is apparent from what I wrote a little way back that I am not only worried about our current payments in terms of everyday bitterness at the spoliation of society and human degradation, or about the heavy tax we shall have to pay in the long-lasting spiritual and moral decline of society. I am also concerned with the scarcely calculable surcharge which may be imposed on us when the moment next arrives for life and history to demand their due.

The degree of responsibility a political leader bears for the condition of his country must always vary and, obviously, can never be absolute. He never rules alone, and so some portion of responsibility rests on those who surround him. No country exists in a vacuum, so its policies are in some way always influenced by those of other countries. Clearly the previous rulers always have much to answer for, since it was their policies which predetermined the present situation. The public, too, has much to answer for, both individually, through the daily personal decisions of each responsible human being which went to create the total state of affairs, or collectively, as a socio-historic whole, limited by circumstances and in its turn limiting those circumstances.

qualifications, which naturally apply in our
 is in any other, your responsibility as a po-
 ll a great one. You help to determine the
 e all have to live and can therefore directly
 size of the bill our society will be paying
 of consolidation.

Slovaks, like any other nation, harbor
 simultaneously the most disparate poten-
 rad, still have, and will continue to have
 ually, our informers and traitors. We are
 ng our imagination and creativity, of ris-
 norally to unexpected heights, of fighting
 crificing ourselves for others.

ually to succumb to total apathy, to take
 ing but our bellies, and to spend our time
 er up. And though human souls are far
 nt pots that anything can be poured into
 implications of that dreadful phrase so
 speeches, when it is complained that
 government"—find that such-and-such
 led into people's heads), it depends, nev-
 on the leaders which of these contrary
 ber in society will be mobilized, which
 will be given the chance of fulfillment,
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orst in us which is being systematically
 ged—egotism, hypocrisy, indifference,
 gnation, and the desire to escape every
 lity, regardless of the general conse-

tional leadership has the opportunity to
 s policies in such a way as to encourage
 us, but the better.

r government have chosen the easy way
 d the most dangerous road for society:
 y for the sake of outward appearances;
 the sake of increasing uniformity; of

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deepening the spiritual and moral crisis of our society, and
 ceaselessly degrading human dignity, for the puny sake of
 protecting your own power.

Yet, even within the given limitations, you have the chance
 to do much toward at least a relative improvement of the
 situation. This might be a more strenuous and less gratifying
 way, whose benefits would not be immediately obvious and
 which would meet with resistance here and there. But in the
 light of our society's true interests and prospects, this way
 would be vastly the more meaningful one.

As a citizen of this country, I hereby request, openly and
 publicly, that you and the leading representatives of the pres-
 ent regime consider seriously the matters to which I have
 tried to draw your attention, that you assess in their light the
 degree of your historic responsibility, and act accordingly.

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ists into lackeys, and whom artists have always rebelled against, or at least ridiculed. At the same time this cramped, unimaginative, and humorless man stood cloaked in the garb that "masters" traditionally don when they try to deal with an unclassifiable creative phenomenon: the garb of histrionic disgust at moral degeneration and lack of respect for traditional values.

What did Ivan Jirous and his friends in the dock wish to be? Certainly not heroes who, like Dimitrov, would rise from the dock to become prosecutors and condemn the world that was trying to condemn them. I doubt they had any other aim in mind than persuading the court of their innocence and defending their right to compose and sing the songs they wanted. What did the author of the scenario want them to be? Repulsive, long-haired hooligans from the "underworld," as they were treated by the director of Czechoslovak Television, to be rejected in disgust by all serious people.

But what did they ultimately become? The unintentional personification of those forces in man that compel him to search for himself, to determine his own place in the world freely, and in his own way, not to make deals with his heart and not to cheat his conscience, to call things by their true names and to penetrate—as Pavel Zajíček said at the trial—to the "deeper level of being," and to do so at one's own risk, aware that at any time one may come up against the disfavor of the "masters," the incomprehension of the dull-witted, or their own limitations.

And what, finally, did the presiding judge try to be? My feeling is that at the outset, she simply wanted to be an objective arbiter, listening without prejudice to the arguments of the prosecution and the defense, the testimony of the witnesses and the defendants, and come to a just decision.

But what did the trial turn her into? The tragic symbol of a judiciary incapable of maintaining its independence and handing down the kind of verdicts that flow from the human, civil, and legal conscience of the judges; a judiciary fully aware of how it is manipulated by power, but incapable of defying

that power and so, ultimately, accepting subordinated employee of the "masters.

And what was the whole trial meant more than an ordinary element in the process that traditionally converts human lives, actions into a boring pile of documents, files, reports, and the treatment of one of hundreds of similar cases into a formal similarity to ordinary criminal cases? The facade maintained for some time. A great deal of time was spent hearing dozens of written and oral evidence. The judge dealt at great length with questions such as the certainty of "The Plastic People of the Universe." After Postupice, the doors to the hall were open.

Soon, however, this facade of judicial objectivity began to appear as a mere smokescreen. What the trial really was: an impassioned debate about the meaning of human existence, an urgent question to expect from life, whether one should submit to the world as it is presented to one and slip obediently into its arranged place in it, or whether one has the right to exercise free choice in the matter; whether one is "reasonable" and take one's place in the world, or one has the right to resist in the name of justice and convictions.

For a long time, I sought, without success, the best way to characterize this process of "trial."

Was it depressing? Of course it was. It could have been aroused when the most powerful impression was made by those who were surrounded by policemen and even taken away in handcuffs? Or by the fact that the defense, despite an excellent and exhaustive defense, the accused's innocence convincingly, and the case against them gradually fell into disarray, all in a situation that one must have known—the accused had been guilty long before? And anyway, the whole thing simply because it had slipped out of

nces, to what politics as such means now, to what can have political impact and potential, and so on. Because such people have been excluded from the spheres of power and are no longer able to influence directly (and because they remain faithful to the notions of politics established in more or less democratic societies or in classical dictatorships) they frequently lose touch with reality. Why make compromises, they say, when none of our proposals is adopted anyway? Thus they find themselves in a state of purely utopian thinking.

They have already tried to indicate, however, genuinely far-reaching events do not emerge from the same sources in the post-totalitarian system as they do in the democratic system. And if a large portion of the public is indifferent, skeptical of, or hostile to alternative political models and the private establishment of opposition politics, it is not merely because there is a general feeling of despair toward public affairs and a loss of that sense of responsibility; in other words, it is not just a consequence of general demoralization. There is also a bit of cynicism at work in this attitude. It is as if people feel that "nothing is what it seems any longer," and that from now on, therefore, things will be perceived differently as well.

The most important political impulses in Soviet Russia in recent years have come initially—that is, at the level of actual power—from mathematicians, physicians, writers, historians, and so on, more frequently than from the various dissidents. The driving force behind the various dissidents comes from so many people in nonpolitical spheres. It is not because these people are more interested in politics who see themselves primarily as politicians. People who are not politicians are also not so interested in political thinking and political habits. Paradoxically, they are more aware of genuine

political reality and more sensitive to what can and should be done under the circumstances.

There is no way around it: no matter how beautiful an alternative political model can be, it can no longer speak to the "hidden sphere," inspire people and society, call for real political ferment. The real sphere of potential politics in the post-totalitarian system is elsewhere: in the continuing and cruel tension between the complex demands of that system and the aims of life, that is, the elementary need of human beings to live, to a certain extent at least, in harmony with themselves, that is, to live in a bearable way, not to be humiliated by their superiors and officials, not to be continually watched by the police, to be able to express themselves freely, to find an outlet for their creativity, to enjoy legal security, and so on. Anything that touches this field concretely, anything that relates to this fundamental, omnipresent, and living tension, will inevitably speak to people. Abstract projects for an ideal political or economic order do not interest them to anything like the same extent—and rightly so—not only because everyone knows how little chance they have of succeeding, but also because today people feel that the less political policies are derived from a concrete and human here and now and the more they fix their sights on an abstract "someday," the more easily they can degenerate into new forms of human enslavement. People who live in the post-totalitarian system know only too well that the question of whether one or several political parties are in power, and how these parties define and label themselves, is of far less importance than the question of whether or not it is possible to live like a human being.

To shed the burden of traditional political categories and habits and open oneself up fully to the world of human existence and then to draw political conclusions only after having analyzed it: this is not only politically more realistic but at the same time, from the point of view of an "ideal state of affairs," politically more promising as well. A genuine, profound, and lasting change for the better—as I shall attempt

articulated expressions so far of living within the truth. One of the most important tasks the "dissident" movements have set themselves is to support and develop them. Once again, it confirms the fact that all attempts by society to resist the pressure of the system have their essential beginnings in the "pre-political" area. For what else are parallel structures than an area where a different life can be lived, a life that is in harmony with its own aims and which in turn structures itself in harmony with those aims? What else are those initial attempts at social self-organization than the efforts of a certain part of society to live—as a society—within the truth, to rid itself of the self-sustaining aspects of totalitarianism and, thus, to extricate itself radically from its involvement in the post-totalitarian system? What else is it but a nonviolent attempt by people to negate the system within themselves and to establish their lives on a new basis, that of their own proper identity? And does this tendency not confirm once more the principle of returning the focus to actual individuals? After all, the parallel structures do not grow *a priori* out of a theoretical vision of systemic changes (there are no political sects involved), but from the aims of life and the authentic needs of real people. In fact, all eventual changes in the system, changes we may observe here in their rudimentary forms, have come about as it were *de facto*, from "below," because life compelled them to, not because they came before life, somehow directing it or forcing some change on it.

Historical experience teaches us that any genuinely meaningful point of departure in an individual's life usually has an element of universality about it. In other words, it is not something partial, accessible only to a restricted community, and not transferable to any other. On the contrary, it must be potentially accessible to everyone; it must foreshadow a general solution and, thus, it is not just the expression of an introverted, self-contained responsibility that individuals have to and for themselves alone, but responsibility to and for the world. Thus it would be quite wrong to understand the parallel structures and the parallel *polis* as a retreat into a ghetto

and as an act of isolation, addressing itself of those who had decided on such a co-indifferent to the rest. It would be wrong to consider it an essentially group solution that with the general situation. Such a concept, alienate the notion of living within proper point of departure, which is concealing it ultimately into just another notion of living within a lie. In doing so, cease to be a genuine point of departure groups and would recall the false notion of exclusive group with exclusive interests, causing exclusive dialogue with the powers that be the most highly developed forms of life in the future, even that most mature form of them only exist—at least in post-totalitarian civilization the individual is at the same time lodged in a structure by a thousand different relations it may only be the fact that one buys what stores, uses their money, and obeys their can imagine life in its baser aspects flourish in a parallel *polis*, but would not such a life, lived in this way, as a program, be merely another veneer of phrenic life within a lie which everyone endorses in one way or another? Would it not just be further from a point of departure that is not a model solution applicable to others, cannot be meaningful either? Patočka used to say that the most important about responsibility is that we carry it with us. That means that responsibility is ours, that we must grasp it here, now, in this place in time. The Lord has set us down, and that we cannot get off it by moving somewhere else, whether to an ashram or to a parallel *polis*. If Western youth do not discover that retreat to an Indian monastery is an individual or group solution, then this is not only because, it lacks that element of

2. They leave it up to each individual to decide or will not take from their experience and work. Czechoslovak propaganda described the Chartists "intees," it was not in order to emphasize any real ambitions on their part, but rather a natural expression of how the regime thinks, its tendency to judge others to itself, since behind any expression of automatically sees the desire to cast the mighty out and rule in their places "in the name of the same pretext the regime itself has used for years.)" Elements, therefore, always affect the power structure indirectly, as a part of society as a whole, for they address the hidden spheres of society, since matter of confronting the regime on the level of

dy indicated one of the ways this can work: an the laws and the responsibility for seeing that ld is indirectly strengthened. That, of course, is instance of a far broader influence, the indi- felt from living within the truth: the pressure e thought, alternative values and alternative by independent social self-realization. The e, whether it wants to or not, must always react e to a certain extent. Its response, however, is to two dimensions: repression and adaptation. e dominates, sometimes the other. For exam- "flying university" came under increased per- e "flying teachers" were detained by the police. e, however, professors in existing official uni- e enrich their own curricula with several sub- considered taboo and this was a result of e exerted by the "flying university." The mo- ptation may vary from the ideal (the hidden ved the message and conscience and the will ned) to the purely utilitarian: the regime's ival compels it to notice the changing ideas g mental and social climate and to react flex-

ibly to them. Which of these motives happens to predominate in a given moment is not essential in terms of the final effect. Adaptation is the positive dimension of the regime's response, and it can, and usually does, have a wide spectrum of forms and phases. Some circles may try to integrate values of people from the "parallel world" into the official structures, to appropriate them, to become a little like them while trying to make them a little like themselves, and thus to adjust an obvious and untenable imbalance. In the 1960s, progressive communists began to "discover" certain unacknowledged cultural values and phenomena. This was a positive step, although not without its dangers, since the "integrated" or "appropriated" values lost something of their independence and originality, and having been given a cloak of officiality and conformity, their credibility was somewhat weakened. In a further phase, this adaptation can lead to various attempts on the part of the official structures to reform, both in terms of their ultimate goals and structurally. Such reforms are usually halfway measures; they are attempts to combine and realistically coordinate serving life and serving the post-totalitarian automatism. But they cannot be otherwise. They muddy what was originally a clear demarcation line between living within the truth and living with a lie. They cast a smoke-screen over the situation, mystify society, and make it difficult for people to keep their bearings. This, of course, does not alter the fact that it is always essentially good when it happens because it opens out new spaces. But it does make it more difficult to distinguish between "admissible" and "inadmissible" compromises.

Another—and higher—phase of adaptation is a process of internal differentiation that takes place in the official structures. These structures open themselves to more or less institutionalized forms of plurality because the real aims of life demand it. (One example: without changing the centralized and institutional basis of cultural life, new publishing houses, group periodicals, artists' groups, parallel research institutes and workplaces, and so on, may appear under pressure from

late significance for the "dissident" movements, after all, do not develop from being, and so to establish themselves on that alienating themselves from the very source

jects for the "dissident" movements as such to be very little likelihood that future development to a lasting co-existence of two isolated, interacting and mutually indifferent bodies—and the parallel *polis*. As long as it remains practice of living within the truth cannot fail the system. It is quite impossible to imagine co-exist with the practice of living within a static tension. The relationship of the post—*polis*—as long as it remains what it is—and the of society—as long as it remains the *locus* of possibility for the whole and to the whole—will either latent or open conflict.

There are only two possibilities: either the system will go on developing (that is, will be developing), thus inevitably coming closer to the totalitarian vision of a world of absolute manipulation—the more articulate expressions of living are definitely snuffed out; or the independence (the parallel *polis*), including the "dissidents," will slowly but surely become a social growing importance, taking a real part in the increasing clarity and influencing the general course this will always be only one of many in the situation and it will operate rather in concert with the other factors and in a background.

It is not to focus on reforming the official structure, on creating differentiation, or on replacing them, whether the intent is to ameliorate the system, or, to the contrary, to tear it down: these and similar problems, as they are not pseudo-problems, can be

posed by the "dissident" movement only within the context of a particular situation, when the movement is faced with a concrete task. In other words, it must pose questions, as it were, ad hoc, out of a concrete consideration of the authentic needs of life. To reply to such questions abstractly and to formulate a political program in terms of some hypothetical future would mean, I believe, a return to the spirit and methods of traditional politics, and this would limit and alienate the work of "dissent" where it is most intrinsically itself and has the most genuine prospects for the future. I have already emphasized several times that these "dissident" movements do not have their point of departure in the invention of systemic changes but in a real, everyday struggle for a better life here and now. The political and structural systems that life discovers for itself will clearly always be—for some time to come, at least—limited, halfway, unsatisfying, and polluted by debilitating tactics. It cannot be otherwise, and we must expect this and not be demoralized by it. It is of great importance that the main thing—the everyday, thankless, and never-ending struggle of human beings to live more freely, truthfully, and in quiet dignity—never impose any limits on itself, never be halfhearted, inconsistent, never trap itself in political tactics, speculating on the outcome of its actions or entertaining fantasies about the future. The purity of this struggle is the best guarantee of optimum results when it comes to actual interaction with the post-totalitarian structures.

XX

THE SPECIFIC nature of post-totalitarian conditions—with their absence of a normal political life and the fact that any far-reaching political change is utterly unforeseeable—has one positive aspect: it compels us to examine our situation in terms of its deeper coherences and to consider our future in the context of global, long-range prospects of the world of which we are a part. The fact that the most intrinsic and fundamental confrontation between human beings and the sys-

tem takes place at a level incomparably more profound than that of traditional politics would seem, at the same time, to determine as well the direction such considerations will take.

Our attention, therefore, inevitably turns to the most essential matter: the crisis of contemporary technological society as a whole, the crisis that Heidegger describes as the ineptitude of humanity face to face with the planetary power of technology. Technology—that child of modern science, which in turn is a child of modern metaphysics—is out of humanity's control, has ceased to serve us, has enslaved us and compelled us to participate in the preparation of our own destruction. And humanity can find no way out: we have no idea and no faith, and even less do we have a political conception to help us bring things back under human control. We look on helplessly as that coldly functioning machine we have created inevitably engulfs us, tearing us away from our natural affiliations (for instance, from our habitat in the widest sense of that word, including our habitat in the biosphere) just as it removes us from the experience of Being and casts us into the world of "existences." This situation has already been described from many different angles and many individuals and social groups have sought, often painfully, to find ways out of it (for instance, through oriental thought or by forming communes). The only social, or rather political, attempt to do something about it that contains the necessary element of universality (responsibility to and for the whole) is the desperate and, given the turmoil the world is in, fading voice of the ecological movement, and even there the attempt is limited to a particular notion of how to use technology to oppose the dictatorship of technology.

"Only a God can save us now," Heidegger says, and he emphasizes the necessity of "a different way of thinking," that is, of a departure from what philosophy has been for centuries, and a radical change in the way in which humanity understands itself, the world, and its position in it. He knows no way out and all he can recommend is "preparing expectations."

Various thinkers and movements feel that the only way out might be most generally a broad "existential revolution." I share this opinion and I share the opinion that a solution cannot be a technological sleight of hand, that is, in a proposal for change, or in a revolution that is merely technical, merely social, merely technological, or merely political. These are all areas where the crisis of the existential revolution can and must be found. The *locus* of the intrinsic *locus* can only be human existence in the most sense of the word. It is only from this crisis that we can become a generally ethical—and, of course, a generally political—reconstitution of society.

What we call the consumer and industrial society, and Ortega y Gasset calls "the revolt of the masses," as well as the political, and social misery in the world, is perhaps merely an aspect of the deep crisis, dragged helplessly along by the automation of technological civilization, finds itself.

The post-totalitarian system is only one particularly drastic aspect and thus all the more revealing of the origins—of this general inability of modern humanity to be the master of its own situation. The automation of the totalitarian system is merely an extreme variant of the automatism of technological civilization. The crisis that it mirrors is only one variant of the crisis of modern humanity.

This planetary challenge to the position of humanity in the world is, of course, also taking place in the world, the only difference being the social form it takes. Heidegger refers expressly to a crisis of the West. There is no real evidence that Western democracy of the traditional parliamentary type offers solutions that are any more profound. It is only in the West that the more room there is in the Western world (compared to our world) for the genuine aim

place. A new experience of being, a renewed rootedness in the universe, a newly grasped sense of higher responsibility, a newfound inner relationship to other people and to the human community—these factors clearly indicate the direction in which we must go.

And the political consequences? Most probably they could be reflected in the constitution of structures that will derive from this new spirit, from human factors rather than from a particular formalization of political relationships and guarantees. In other words, the issue is the rehabilitation of values like trust, openness, responsibility, solidarity, love. I believe in structures that are not aimed at the technical aspect of the execution of power, but at the significance of that execution in structures held together more by a commonly shared feeling of the importance of certain communities than by commonly shared expansionist ambitions directed outward. There can and must be structures that are open, dynamic, and small; beyond a certain point, human ties like personal trust and personal responsibility cannot work. There must be structures that in principle place no limits on the genesis of different structures. Any accumulation of power whatsoever (one of the characteristics of automatism) should be profoundly alien to it. They would be structures not in the sense of organizations or institutions, but like a community. Their authority certainly cannot be based on long-empty traditions, like the tradition of mass political parties, but rather on how, in concrete terms, they enter into a given situation. Rather than a strategic agglomeration of formalized organizations, it is better to have organizations springing up ad hoc, infused with enthusiasm for a particular purpose and disappearing when that purpose has been achieved. The leaders' authority ought to derive from their personalities and be personally tested in their particular surroundings, and not from their position in any *nomenklatura*. They should enjoy great personal confidence and even great lawmaking powers based on that confidence. This would appear to be the only way out of the classic impotence of traditional democratic organizations.

which frequently seem founded more on mutual confidence, and more on collective responsibility. It is only with the confidence of every member of the community that structures against creeping totalitarianism can be built. Structures should naturally arise from bottom-up, from authentic social self-organization; they draw their energy from a living dialogue with the community in which they arise, and when these needs are met, the structures should also disappear. The principle of self-organization should be very diverse, without external regulation. The decisive criterion for a structure's constitution should be the structure's ability to meet needs, not just a mere abstract norm.

Both political and economic life outside the state require the varied and versatile cooperation of individuals. As long as the appearing and disappearing organizations of economic life of society goes, I believe in a form of management, which is probably the closest to what all the theorists of socialism have in mind, is, the genuine (i.e., informal) participatory management, leading to a form of economic decision making, leading to a form of responsibility for their collective work. The traditional discipline and discipline ought to be abandoned and replaced by self-discipline.

As is perhaps clear from even so general a consideration of the systemic consequences of an existent type of management go significantly beyond the framework of parliamentary democracy. Having introduced the concept of "totalitarian" for the purposes of this discussion, I should refer to the notion I have in mind, which for the moment—as the prospects for a new system.

Undoubtedly this notion could be developed. I think it would be a foolish undertaking to try to cause slowly but surely the whole idea to be separated from itself. After all,

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which frequently seem founded more on mistrust than mutual confidence, and more on collective irresponsibility than on responsibility. It is only with the full existential backing of every member of the community that a permanent bulwark against creeping totalitarianism can be established. These structures should naturally arise from below as a consequence of authentic social self-organization; they should derive vital energy from a living dialogue with the genuine needs from which they arise, and when these needs are gone, the structures should also disappear. The principles of their internal organization should be very diverse, with a minimum of external regulation. The decisive criterion of this self-constitution should be the structure's actual significance, and not just a mere abstract norm.

Both political and economic life ought to be founded on the varied and versatile cooperation of such dynamically appearing and disappearing organizations. As far as the economic life of society goes, I believe in the principle of self-management, which is probably the only way of achieving what all the theorists of socialism have dreamed about, that is, the genuine (i.e., informal) participation of workers in economic decision making, leading to a feeling of genuine responsibility for their collective work. The principles of control and discipline ought to be abandoned in favor of self-control and self-discipline.

As is perhaps clear from even so general an outline, the systemic consequences of an existential revolution of this type go significantly beyond the framework of classical parliamentary democracy. Having introduced the term "post-totalitarian" for the purposes of this discussion, perhaps I should refer to the notion I have just outlined—purely for the moment—as the prospects for a "post-democratic" system.

Undoubtedly this notion could be developed further, but I think it would be a foolish undertaking, to say the least, because slowly but surely the whole idea would become alienated, separated from itself. After all, the essence of such a

d lavished praise on. Many people today
 rich culture they form part of—whether
 “other”—people who are still “all right”
 platforms with banned ones, everything
 nixed up. It also seems to me that even
 ly a few—official artists have changed
 us. They don't seem so afraid of us any-
 realize that they might at any time find
 nks and that there is no longer any sense
 that's unlikely to change their fate. But I
 st my first and totally personal impres-
 l not be taken as a considered judgment.
 ll this reminds me of the early sixties,
 self-realization and spiritual liberation
 where on the borders between official
 re, in that strange area in which the au-
 ie thing, only for another to crop up a
 ticed by the censors. This process, of
 in 1968, when the powers that be were
 ge, could no longer ignore, the true con-
 of its soul.

l matters, it seems to me that the author-
 g all the economic, social, political, and
 ore hesitantly than it appeared to me
 they were growing weary—and is it sur-
 alize that it is the same old guard, un-
 een in charge for fourteen years? From
 ow how desperately scared they are of
 f fresh air by nonsensically banning this
 s you would think that they themselves
 e some thought to how to ventilate this
 t the same time of course making sure
 t in any way endanger *them*. To this has
 a measure of uncertainty: is the present
 center of our bloc only provisional, or
 ge a new era—and if so, what will that

“I Take the Side of Truth”

Finally, when we are talking about the changes I have no-
 ticed since coming out of prison, I have to say that there has
 been a distinct increase in the high living of the corrupt elite.
 Not that I would compare this to the life style of the Roman
 aristocracy before the fall of Rome—for that, our Czech con-
 ditions are far too petty—but I *would* compare it to the last
 few years of Gierek's rule in Poland. Here, too, the luxury of
 the official elite is in sharp contrast to the actual economic
 situation of the country and the everyday consumer worries
 of its inhabitants.

*You are today considered to be a leading Czech dissident or opposi-
 tion spokesman; how do you view this?*

I am not, have never been, nor have I the slightest intention
 of becoming a politician, a professional revolutionary or pro-
 fessional “dissident.” I am a writer, writing what I want to
 write and not what others might like me to, and if I get in-
 volved in any other way except by my writing, then only be-
 cause I feel this to be my natural human and civic duty, as
 well as my duty as a writer. That is, my duty as a public figure
 on whom it is incumbent, just because he is known to the
 public, to express his views more loudly than those who are
 not so well known. Not because he is more clever or more
 important than anyone else but simply because he is, whether
 he likes it or not, in a different position and possessed of a
 different responsibility. Even though I naturally do have my
 own opinions on a variety of issues, I don't hold with any
 particular ideology, doctrine or, even less, any political party
 or faction. I serve no one—much less any superpower. If I
 serve anything, then only my own conscience. I am neither a
 communist nor an anticommunist, and if I criticize my gov-
 ernment, then not because it happens to be a communist gov-
 ernment but because it is bad. Were this government a Social
 Democratic or Christian Socialist one, or any other, if it ruled
 badly I would criticize it in the same way as I criticize the

which ignores the natural world and disdains its
 too, the totalitarian systems warn of some-
 serious than Western rationalism is willing to
 , most of all, a convex mirror of the inevitable
 f rationalism, a grotesquely magnified image
 tendencies, an extreme offshoot of its own
 d an ominous product of its own expansion.
 ply informative reflection of its own crisis.
 mes are not merely dangerous neighbors and
 ind of an avant-garde of world progress. Alas,
 e: they are the avant-garde of a global crisis
 n, first European, then Euro-American, and
 . They are one of the possible futurological
 estern world, not in the sense that one day
 nd conquer it, but in a far deeper sense—
 ate graphically the consequences of what
 the "eschatology of the impersonal."
 le of a bloated, anonymously bureaucratic
 esponsible but already operating outside all
 er grounded in an omnipresent ideological
 rationalize anything without ever having to
 with the truth. Power as the omnipresent
 trol, repression, and fear; power which
 orality, and privacy a state monopoly and
 em; power which long since has ceased to
 group of arbitrary rulers but which, rather,
 ows up everyone so that all should become
 it, at least through their silence. No one
 uch power, since it is the power itself which
 ; it is a monstrosity which is not guided by
 , on the contrary, drags all persons along
 self-momentum—objective in the sense of
 all human standards, including human
 ntirely irrational—toward a terrifying, un-

totalitarian power is a great reminder to
 zation. Perhaps somewhere there may be

some generals who think it would be best to dispatch such
 systems from the face of the earth and then all would be well.
 But that is no different from an ugly woman trying to get rid
 of her ugliness by smashing the mirror that reminds her of
 it. Such a "final solution" is one of the typical dreams of
 impersonal reason—capable, as the term "final solution"
 graphically reminds us, of transforming its dreams into real-
 ity and thereby reality into a nightmare. It would not only
 fail to resolve the crisis of the present world but, assuming
 anyone survived at all, would only aggravate it. By burdening
 the already heavy account of this civilization with further mil-
 lions of dead, it would not block its essential trend to totali-
 tarianism but would rather accelerate it. It would be a Pyrrhic
 victory, because the victors would emerge from a conflict in-
 evitably resembling their defeated opponents far more than
 anyone today is willing to admit or able to imagine. Just a
 minor example: imagine what a huge Gulag Archipelago
 would have to be built in the West, in the name of country,
 democracy, progress, and war discipline, to contain all who
 refuse to take part in the effort, whether from naivete, prin-
 ciple, fear, or ill will!

No evil has ever been eliminated by suppressing its symp-
 toms. We need to address the cause itself.

III

FROM time to time I have a chance to speak with Western
 intellectuals who visit our country and decide to include a
 visit to a dissident in their itinerary—some out of genuine
 interest, or a willingness to understand and to express soli-
 darity, others simply out of curiosity. Beside the Gothic and
 Baroque monuments, dissidents are apparently the only thing
 of interest to a tourist in this uniformly dreary environment.
 Those conversations are usually instructive: I learn much and
 come to understand much. The questions most frequently
 asked are these: Do you think you can really change anything
 when you are so few and have no influence at all? Are you

opposed to socialism or do you merely wish to improve it? Do you condemn or condone the deployment of the Pershing II and the Cruise missiles in western Europe? What can we do for you? What drives you to do what you are doing when all it brings you is persecution, prison—and no visible results? Would you want to see capitalism restored in your country?

Those questions are well intentioned, growing out of a desire to understand and showing that those who ask do care about the world, what it is and what it will be.

Still, precisely these and similar questions reveal to me again and again how deeply many Western intellectuals do not understand—and in some respects, cannot understand—just what is taking place here, what it is that we, the so-called dissidents, are striving for and, most of all, what the overall meaning of it is. Take, for instance, the question: “What can we do for you?” A great deal, to be sure. The more support, interest, and solidarity of free-thinking people in the world we enjoy, the less the danger of being arrested, and the greater the hope that ours will not be a voice crying in the wilderness. And yet, somewhere deep within the question there is built-in misunderstanding. After all, in the last instance the point is not to help us, a handful of “dissidents,” to keep out of jail a bit more of the time. It is not even a question of helping these nations, Czechs and Slovaks, to live a bit better, a bit more freely. They need first and foremost to help themselves. They have waited for the help of others far too often, depended on it far too much, and far too many times came to grief: either the promised help was withdrawn at the last moment or it turned into the very opposite of their expectations. In the deepest sense, something else is at stake—the salvation of us all, of myself and my interlocutor equally. Or is it not something that concerns us all equally? Are not my dim prospects or, conversely, my hopes *his* dim prospects and hopes as well? Was not my arrest an attack on him and the deceptions to which he is subjected an attack on me as well? Is not the suppression of human beings in Prague a suppression of all human beings? Is not indifference to what is happening here

or even illusions about it a preparation elsewhere? Does not their misery presuppose that some Czech dissident, as a person in need of help. I could best help myself out of distress by trying to be a “dissident.” The point is what their efforts and his fate tell us and mean, what they say about the condition, the destiny, the opportunities of the world, the respects in which we differ, the food for thought for others as well, for ourselves, and so our, shared destiny, in what way it presents a challenge, a danger, or a lesson for them.

Or the question about socialism and capitalism. I must admit that it gives me a sense of emergency, a sense of the last century. It seems to me that the question is logical and often semantically confused, but it has since been beside the point. The question is deeper and equally relevant to all: whether we can ever mean, succeed in reconstituting the true terrain of politics, rehabilitating the concept of human beings as the initial measure of morality above politics and responsibility, making human community meaningful, restoring to human speech, in reconstituting, as it were, the action, the autonomous, integral, and complete, responsible for ourselves because we are human, higher, and capable of sacrificing something, even everything, of his banal, prosperous, and comfortable “rule of everydayness,” as Jan Patočka would say, in the sake of that which gives life meaning. It is not so important whether, by accident of birth, we are a Western manager or an Eastern bureaucrat, or whether we are in the midst of the most important and yet globally crucial struggle against impersonal power. If we can defend ourself, if there is a hope of sorts—though it is not a means automatic—that we shall also find meaningful ways of balancing our natural economic decision-making and to dignified

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 true terrain of politics, rehabilitating the personal experience
 of human beings as the initial measure of things, placing mo-
 rality above politics and responsibility above our desires, in
 making human community meaningful, in returning content
 to human speech, in reconstituting, as the focus of all social
 action, the autonomous, integral, and dignified human "I,"
 responsible for ourselves because we are bound to something
 higher, and capable of sacrificing something, in extreme cases
 even everything, of his banal, prosperous private life—that
 "rule of everydayness," as Jan Patočka used to say—for the
 sake of that which gives life meaning. It really is not all that
 important whether, by accident of domicile, we confront a
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 ingful ways of balancing our natural claims to shared eco-
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the wasteland of life in a totalitarian state, with its all-powerful center and all-powerless inhabitants. The word "peace"—much like the words "socialism," "homeland," and "the people"—has been reduced to serving both as one rung on the ladder up which clever individuals clamber, and as a stick for beating those who stand aloof. The word has become one of the official incantations which our government keeps muttering while doing whatever it wants (or perhaps whatever it has been ordered) to do, and which its subjects must mutter along with it to purchase at least a modicum of tranquillity.

Can you wonder, under these circumstances, that this word awakens distrust, skepticism, ridicule, and revulsion among our people? This is not distaste for peace as such: it is distaste for the pyramid of lies into which the word has been traditionally integrated.

The extent of that distaste—and so its seriousness as a social phenomenon—can be illustrated by the fact that when our dissidents occasionally attempt to express their views on peace issues publicly, no matter how much they differ from the views of the government, they become mildly suspect to the public simply because they express serious interest in the issues of peace at all. While people listen with interest to other Charter 77 documents in foreign broadcasts, seek them out, and copy them, Charter 77's documents dealing with peace are guaranteed universal lack of interest in advance. The citizens of our country simply start to yawn whenever they hear the word "peace."

The complete devaluation and trivialization of this word by official propaganda is, to be sure, only one reason—and a rather superficial one at that—for the reserve which people here display (including to some extent the dissidents themselves, since they live in a climate not unlike that of others) when they regard the "struggle for peace" and the peace movement.

III

AGAINST whom exactly is this official "struggle for peace" in our country directed? Is it against Western imperialists and their armaments. Or is it against the Soviet Union. Or is it against the American government in our country means nothing more than a verbal difference with the policies of the Soviet Union. Or is it against the negative attitude toward the West. In our country, the word "Western imperialists" does not refer to those who are possessed by a vision of world domination or less democratically elected Western imperialists, but to more or less democratic Western politicians.

Add to this one more circumstance: the way in which the reporting of world news, have for decades systematically created the impression that virtually the only thing that happens in the West is the "peace struggle." The word has here. That is to say, the word "peace" is used as evidence of the eagerness with which the West await Soviet-style communism.

In such circumstances, what do you think the American citizen thinks? Simply that those Western imperialists get their wish—let them be punished for their inability to learn!

Try to imagine what would happen if a prominent and sincere Western peace fighter were to ask a prominent dissident but an ordinary Czech citizen and were to ask him to sign, say, a petition for the completion of NATO's armament plans. It would have two possible outcomes. One is that the dissident would politely show his visitor the document and say (more likely) is that he would take his signature to the secret police and would promptly sign it. The other (just as he signs scores of similar petitions) is that he would sign his signature at work—without studying it and without staying out of trouble. (A more alert citizen would have a different attitude toward armament plans, might have a different invitation to the West out of the whole

sober neighbors' ridicule, and of the feeling that, for the first time, he is actually drifting away from real life and up into the stratospheric realm of fairy tales.

A trace of the heroic dreamer, mad and unrealistic, is hidden in the very genesis of the dissident perspective. The dissident is essentially something of a Don Quixote. He writes his critical analyses and demands freedoms and rights all alone, merely with a pen in his hand, face to face with the gargantuan might of the state and its police. He writes, cries out, screams, requests, appeals to the law—and all the time he knows that, sooner or later, they will lock him up for it. Why, then, such scruples? Amid clouds of folly should he not feel like a fish in water? I will attempt to explain the difference between the “natural folly” of the dissident's world and the type of folly that terrifies him when he is asked to sign a program for the peaceful reordering of Europe.

As I have written more than once, I believe the phenomenon of dissent grows out of an essentially different conception of the meaning of politics than that prevailing in the world today. That is, the dissident does not operate in the realm of genuine power at all. He does not seek power. He has no desire for office and does not woo voters. He does not attempt to charm the public, he offers nothing and promises nothing. He can offer, if anything, only his own skin—and he offers it solely because he has no other way of affirming the truth he stands for. His actions simply articulate his dignity as a citizen, regardless of the cost. The innermost foundation of his “political” undertaking is moral and existential. Everything he does, he does initially for himself: something within has simply revolted and left him incapable of continuing to “live a lie.” Only then does there follow (and can there possibly follow) a “political” motive: the hope—vague, indefinite, and difficult to justify—that this course of action is also good for something in general. It is the hope that “politics beyond politics,” that “politics outside the sphere of power,” does make some sense, that by whatever hidden and complex ways it leads to something, evokes something, produces some ef-

fect. That even something as apparent as truth spoken aloud, as an openly expressed humanity of man, carries a power with a word is capable of a certain radiation. The “hidden consciousness” of a concept of this perspective is that the dissident describes and analyzes the present rather than is far more a critic of what is wrong and a planner of something better to come. He is more in defending man against the present than in imagining better systems. As for the dissident concerned with the moral and political nature of the world, he should rest rather than with premature speculation by whom these values will be secured. He knows, after all, that the nature of things depends on his present wishes but on the course of things to come.)

This, then, is the “natural folly” of the dissident. It is meaningful because, within its limited tactical because it does not let itself be governed by considerations. It is political because it is concrete, real, effective—not in spite of its cause of it. To be sure, it is also this thing honest about its folly, it is faith and undivided. This may be a world of ideal, but it is not the world of Utopia.

Why deny it, this world of truth, however we live in, offers at the same time definite boundaries: itself outside the universe of real power and politics, that is, outside the matrix of utility, promise, and the inevitable manipulations and deceptions, the dissident can be himself without danger of becoming a victim.

A dissident runs the risk of becoming a victim when he transgresses the limits of his nature and enters into the hypothetical realm of real power into the realm of sheer speculation.

in a free, society-wide debate leading to re-
is possible at this particular moment. Never
y years has the situation been as wide open

ng this as a juicy tidbit about some small,
ntry, but as someone who is aware that—
t or not—for many different reasons (includ-
onsiderations) what happens in this country
es more than just ourselves. Many Euro-
recently global—conflagrations have origi-
ided!) right here in this country. From time
ave been a crossroads for every imaginable
ical current; European history is both “rav-
led” here. We are a country where on more
the fate of many other countries was sealed
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till true. Perhaps Czechoslovakia—without
o so—will once more hold the key to and
e of the enormous movement we are wit-
iet bloc, and with it the whole of Europe’s
future. Maybe this small—and, to some
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the first convincing clue as to how this

Summer 1989

A Word About Words

“A Word About Words” (July 25, 1989): In 1989, Ha-
vel was awarded the Peace Prize of the German
Booksellers Association. It was presented to him, in
absentia, at the Frankfurt Book Fair on October 15,
1989. This is his acceptance speech, which was read
in Havel’s absence by Maximilian Schell. It was
translated by A. G. Brain and reprinted in full in
The New York Review of Books, January 18, 1990.

THE PRIZE which it is my honor to receive today is called
a peace prize and has been awarded to me by booksell-
ers, in other words, people whose business is the dissemina-
tion of words. It is therefore appropriate, perhaps, that I
should reflect here today on the mysterious link between
words and peace, and in general on the mysterious power of
words in human history.

In the beginning was the Word; so it states on the first page
of one of the most important books known to us. What is
meant in that book is that the Word of God is the source of
all creation. But surely the same could be said, figuratively
speaking, of every human action? And indeed, words can be
said to be the very source of our being, and in fact the very
substance of the cosmic life form we call man. Spirit, the hu-
man soul, our self-awareness, our ability to generalize and
think in concepts, to perceive the world as the world (and not
just as our locality), and lastly, our capacity for knowing that
we will die—and living in spite of that knowledge: surely all
these are mediated or actually created by words?

use every human suffering concerns every; but more than this: they must also not see it is those great sacrifices which form the bedrock of today's freedom, and of the gradual liberation of the nations of the Soviet bloc. They also form the basis of our own newfound freedom: without the help of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the United Nations, the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic, what has happened in our country would not have happened. In any event, it would not have followed the same successful course.

enjoyed optimal international conditions if anyone else has directly helped us during the war. In fact, after hundreds of years, both our heads are held high of their own initiative and the help of stronger nations or powers. It is this that constitutes the great moral asset of the present moment: it holds within itself the hope that we will no longer suffer from the complex of inferiority. We are now expressing their gratitude to someone only on us whether this hope will be realized in our civic, national, and political self-confidence awakened in an historically new way.

Not pride. Just the contrary: only a person who is not self-confident in the best sense of the word is listening to others, accepting them as enemies, and regretting its own guilt. Let us have this kind of self-confidence into the life of our people, as nations, into our behavior on the world stage. Only thus can we restore our self-respect and respect for another as well as the respect of other

never again be an appendage or a poor relation. It is true we must accept and learn from the victors, but we must do this again as their equals, so that we have something to offer.

As the Pope wrote: "Jesus, not Caesar." In this he was right. Let us remember Chelčický and Comenius. I dare

to say that we may even have an opportunity to spread this idea further and introduce a new element into European and global politics. Our country, if that is what we want, can now permanently radiate love, understanding, the power of spirit and ideas. It is precisely this glow that we can offer as our specific contribution to international politics.

Masaryk based his politics on morality. Let us try in a new time and in a new way to restore this concept of politics. Let us teach ourselves and others that politics should be an expression of a desire to contribute to the happiness of the community rather than of a need to cheat or rape the community. Let us teach ourselves and others that politics can be not only the art of the possible, especially if this means the art of speculation, calculation, intrigue, secret deals, and pragmatic maneuvering, but that it can even be the art of the impossible, namely, the art of improving ourselves and the world.

We are a small country, yet at one time we were the spiritual crossroads of Europe. Is there any reason why we could not again become one? Would not it be another asset with which to repay the help of others that we are going to need?

Our home-grown mafia of those who do not look out of plane windows and who eat specially fed pigs may still be around and at times may muddy the waters, but they are no longer our main enemy. Even less so is our main enemy the international Mafia. Our main enemy today is our own bad traits: indifference to the common good; vanity; personal ambition; selfishness; and rivalry. The main struggle will have to be fought on this field.

There are free elections and an election campaign ahead of us. Let us not allow this struggle to dirty the so far clean face of our gentle revolution. Let us not allow the sympathies of the world which we have won so fast to be equally rapidly lost through our becoming entangled in the jungle of skirmishes for power. Let us not allow the desire to serve oneself to bloom once again under the fair mask of the desire to serve the common good. It is not really important now which party,