THE LITTLE CZECH AND THE GREAT CZECH NATION

National identity and the post-communist
transformation of society

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Nation against state

The recent demise of socialism in Eastern and Central Europe has produced an avalanche of writing on various aspects of the socialist system. Unlike economists, political scientists, and sociologists, who have analysed the socio-economic organisation and political systems of the former socialist countries, the anthropologists who have done fieldwork in the region have concentrated on the description of the life experiences of people living in these countries, the ways in which they have accommodated to the reality of the socialist system, and the effects of such accommodation on their interpersonal relations. They have paid particular attention to the fact that in most socialist countries, 'most of the time, most "ordinary people" simply took the system for granted, accommodated to it. and got on with their lives without joining either the Communist Party or a dissident group. In other words, they "muddled through", just as people do in other kinds of society (Hann 1993: 11-12: see also Sampson 1984).

The anthropologists' effort to understand what it means to live in a socialist state has paralleled the interest of numerous Central European writers, playwrights, and other intellectuals, who have paid more attention to the effects of socialist reality on interpersonal relations than to the analysis of socialism as an economic and political system. Local intellectuals have viewed socialism first of all as a system which debased not only specifically Christian but also generally Western cultural values of moral rectitude by fostering 'living a lie', as the Czech playwright and now president of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel expressed it (Havel el a/, 1985). The Civic Forum's policy document, published on the eve of the general strike in November 1989 that eventually brought down the communist regime, spoke of the deep moral, spiritual, ecological, social, economic.

and political crisis in which the country found itself. By mentioning the moral issue first, the document was emphasising a crisis which manifested itself in the generally felt destruction of the basic norms of honesty and politeness and the collapse of what the dissident intellectuals who produced the document often referred to as 'standards of civilised behaviour'.

The public and the private in socialist Czechoslovakia

Public opinion concurred with the Civic Forum's conclusions. According to a poll conducted in June 1993. over 80 per cent of Czechs considered the possibility of free travel, the freedom to engage in private entrepreneurial activity, and the increased supply of goods in the shops among the most important results of the socio-economic transformation on which the country had embarked after the fall of the communist system. Over 90 per cent mentioned as important problems poor interpersonal relations, the widespread fraud accompanying privatisation, and the general decline of morality *(Sociologické aktuality,* 1993, no. 6: 8-9). The survey suggests that Czechs see the destruction of basic moral principles not only as the major failing of the socialist system but as the legacy which will probably take longest to change. It is therefore appropriate to begin the discussion of the post-communist transformation by considering it. Another reason for taking this approach stems from the fact that there is a distinct irony in the Czech summary condemnation of socialism on moral grounds. In Czechoslovakia, socialism was not imposed by the bayonets of the Soviet army at the end of World War II, but grew out of the wishes of the majority of the population, to whom the justice and equality it promised seemed morally superior to the injustices and inequalities of capitalism.

The Czechoslovak government established in 1945 was composed of representatives of the four Czech and the four Slovak political parlies, which together formed the National Front. Its composition was agreed upon toward the end of the war among the Czech and Slovak politicians in exile in London, the most prominent of them being the pre-war president of the Czechoslovak Republic. Edvard Beneš. and the politicians in exile in Moscow led by the chairman of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Klement Gottwald. This 'Government of the National Front of the Czechs and Slovaks' was led by the left-wing Social Democrat Zdeněk Fierlinger, and it pursued a vigorous socialist programme, the main elements of which were land reform, taxation on wealth, and wide-ranging nationalisation of banks, large insurance companies, mines, and key industries.[1]

This programme, though it met with the opposition of the right-wing parties in the National Front and of many ordinary people, was backed by

the majority of the population. In the first post-war elections in May 1946, in which all the parties of the National Front participated and which were the last free elections before the communist coup d'etat of February 1948, the Communist Party polled 40.17 per cent and the Social Democratic Party 15.58 per cent of the popular vote in the Czech lands. The strongest party in Slovakia was the right-wing Democratic Party which polled 62 per cent of the vote; the Communist Party of Slovakia polled 30.37 per cent. The Czech and Slovak Communists won 114 seats in the 300-strong parliament (National Assembly), and together with the Social Democrats, who held 37 seats, and the Slovak Labour Party, which held 2 seats, they had an overall, if tiny, majority in it. The elections of 1946 changed the composition of local government councils. In the Czech lands, the Communist Party gained an overall majority in 37.5 per cent of local councils, and 128 of the 163 chairmen of district councils were Communists. Gottwald became prime minister.

The popular support the Communist Party enjoyed in the 1946 elections indicates that socialist principles were embraced by the majority of the population in the Czech lands if not in Slovakia. This stemmed from the general endorsement of the state's provision of basic social security to all citizens in the form of state pensions, free medical care, and free education and from the endorsement of the duty to work imposed in September 1945 on all men between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five and on all women between the ages of eighteen and forty-five.

Dunn has argued that as

a response to the morally and practically anarchic aspects of capitalist production, socialism is above all else an attempt to reimpose order upon modern social experience through the benign exercise of political authority: to replace the aesthetic, moral, and practical anarchy of capitalist production with a new, benign, and spiritually compelling order.   *(1984: 64)*

The popular support for socialist policies undoubtedly stemmed in no small measure from the endorsement of this 'restoration of a moral component to economic life, from which morality was effectively expunged following the rapid expansion of European industrial capitalism' (Harm 1993: 13).

Numerous studies of the collapse of the socialist system have emphasised its moral dimension (Runciman 1985; Hankiss 1990; Chirot 1991; Clark and Wildavsky 1991). Socialism proclaimed itself the first just social order in modern history, abolishing exploitation and making it possible for people to work according to their abilities and be rewarded solely according to their merits. This self-proclaimed moral superiority to the capitalist system, with all its inherent injustices, was achieved through t h e abolition

of private ownership of the means of production. Although a number of economic activities in socialist Czechoslovakia took place outside the state sector (Wolchik 1991: 232-9), in contrast with the situation in Hungary and Poland there never developed what might properly be called a 'second economy' (Galasi and Sziraczki 1985) around which crystallised a 'second society' (Hankiss 1990; see also Skilling 1989). Many Czech dissidents themselves were of the opinion that one could at best speak only of the 'germ' of such a society in Czechoslovakia and only 'tendencies, or first manifestations of independence' (Skilling 1989: 223; on the debate over the 'second society' among Czech dissidents, see Skilling 1981: 75-7, 183-4). However, what the abolition of private ownership of the means of production led to was a separation of the public and private domains of life hitherto unprecedented in modern society. In this respect, throughout the socialist period - with the exception of the brief period of liberalisation in 1968 known as the Prague Spring - Czechoslovak society was more like the 'paralysed society' (Hankiss 1990: 11-45) of Hungary before 1965 than like post-1965 Hungary or post-1956 Poland. Ironically, it was precisely this sharp separation of the two domains and the resulting alienation from the public domain which led to what critics and opponents of socialism perceived as a deep moral crisis permeating virtually all aspects of socialist society.

Although many countries of the socialist bloc retained at least vestiges of a private sector (in services, retail outlets, and particularly agriculture), all private businesses in Czechoslovakia - including services, shops, and artisans' workshops - were fully liquidated and the collectivisation of land (the last of a series of measures undertaken to abolish private ownership of the means of production) was completed by I960.[2] This systematic transformation was expressed in the new constitution of i960, in which Czechoslovakia was declared a 'socialist state", second in history only to the USSR.

With the private ownership of virtually all means of production abolished, labour power was employed exclusively in the public sphere; irrespective of the type of work performed, people had to earn their living from employment in state or cooperative enterprises. As a result, the division of life into public and private spheres was inevitably sharpened. But the boundary between the public and the private in socialist Czechoslovakia permeated many more aspects of life than production and consumption: it affected morality, the value of time and property, modes of conduct, patterns of hospitality and socialising, etc., and it was maintained and made manifest by its own appropriate symbolic devices.

Mrs Thatchers famous pronouncement that there is no society, only individuals and families, might have been bad sociology, but it was a good ideological slogan for encouraging private home ownership and small private business ventures in a situation of decreasing opportunities for wage employment. If a similar slogan had been coined for socialist Czechoslovakia it would have to have been the exact opposite: there are no individuals and families, only society. 'Society' (more than the alternatives 'people', 'citizens', or 'the toiling masses') was the term used to construct the collective identity which was the subject of the political and economic endeavour and in whose name and on whose behalf it was carried out. This term was employed by party and government spokesmen and their opponents and critics (who sometimes referred to the same collectivity as the 'nation'). For both these categories, society was the agent with goals, aspirations, and wishes, possessing its own will and morality. It was an entity which embraced or excluded particular individuals or from which particular individuals excluded themselves as a result *of* their actions, views, or opinions. It was society which achieved spectacular successes or. alternatively, failed to achieve them and which, in the process, transformed itself in the desired way or, again, failed to do so.

If society as a whole and not its constituent groups or individuals was to become an active subject of history and create a new social order superior to all previous ones, it had. of course, to be constantly guided in the right direction. Such guidance was provided by the idea of a 'new man' who considered work for society and its future of supreme value and whose actions were 'directed towards the good of the society rather than to his individual or group interests' (Paul 1979: 175). School curricula in both the humanities and the sciences were aimed at creating this 'new man' (see Krejci 1972: 50 1). The ideal inculcated through formal socialisation was reinforced by encouragement of forms of behaviour which conformed to it. To this effect, a great deal of effort was directed at strengthening collective forms of living.[1]

The appropriate relationship between the interests of the society and those of its individual members was bluntly specified in a lead article in the Communist Party newspaper *Rudé právo* (28 August 1979):

Only through the realisation of the interests of society can the interests of individuals also be fulfilled in the spirit of the socialist way of life. If the interests of individuals are different from the interests of society, they are not only contradictory but also in deep conflict with the efforts of socialist society and harmful to its interests,   *(quoted in Fidelius 1983: 142)*

One expression of this desirable hierarchy of interests was the precedence of loyalty to society and its causes over loyalty to one's family and friends.[5] The ideal of unreserved devotion to the interests of society was constantly communicated through appropriate symbolic means, one of which was systematic omission of details of the private lives of party and government officials from their official biographies. In marked contrast to the situation in the West, where politicians' wives play important roles in their political campaigns, are objects of public interest, and often pursue their own particular political agendas, wives never accompanied party officials and government ministers at public functions. The absence of wives, assumed to be there but never mentioned and often seen for the first time at their husbands' funerals, potently symbolised the separation of politics and public life from private domestic life. This symbolism created the image of the politician as a man (rarely a woman) entirely dedicated to the public cause from which he was not distracted by his private familial ties and interests. One of the signs of the change which occurred in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring was that Dubček, unlike his predecessors and successors, made public the details of his private life. Similarly, Gorbachev's wife, Raisa. known by name and seen at his side during his public appearances, later became a powerful symbol of the change which he tried to bring about. More than any verbal proclamation, she demonstrated to the world that things in the USSR were different from what they had been in the past.

The banishment of politicians wives from the public domain was only one manifestation of the sharp separation between public and private spheres. Another was the contrast between the neglect of public space and the cleanliness and tidiness of private flats commented upon in virtually every travel report from socialist Czechoslovakia. The Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal dwelt at length on this striking difference between public and the private spheres in an intermittent interview with the Hungarian publicist Szigeti in 1984 6. interpreting it as a kind of protest triggered by the fact that most people did not enjoy their jobs and wished for different ones, although it was mostly unclear to them what such jobs should or might be (Hrabal I988: 59).

The boundary between public and private spheres was also marked by the clear distinction between the people with whom one interacted in each sphere. The co-actors in the public sphere were typically co-workers, officials, those who provided the necessary services, and the general public; in the private sphere they were relatives and friends. The overlap between these two categories of co-actors was minimal: according to a survey con-

ducted in an electronics factory in the Czech town of Pardubice, 24.33 per cent of employees had their most frequent social contacts with relatives, 15.58 per cent with friends from outside the factory, and only 8.35 per cent with their co-workers (13.64 per cent of respondents had no regular social contacts with anyone) (Ulc 1974: 1 1 1). As a rule, friends were selected from among people of the same educational and cultural background who shared particular interests. Rather than from among co-workers, they were often chosen from among the members of various 'interest organisations'[6] ranging from associations catering for specialised interests such as philately, gardening, fishing, etc., through general and specialised sports clubs, to religious congregations and many others. A notable exception to the sharp separation between co-workers and friends occurred among academics, researchers, artists, writers, musicians, actors, and other members of the intelligentsia. Even under communism, their personal friends were typically other members of their professions and fellow employees of the same institute, theatre, or orchestra. This was because intellectuals were likely, to paraphrase Hrabal, to enjoy their jobs and not to wish for different ones, the congruence between job and interest resulting in a congruence between colleagues or fellow workers and friends.

In contrast to the considerable narrowing of other status differentials (income, education, and lifestyle), 'the structure of power positions was not redistributed towards greater equality, but on the contrary within a few years after 1948 acquired a distinct and steep differentiation with all the important decision making concentrated in a comparatively small body at the top' (Krejci 1972: 106). This concentration of power shifted the basic division within society from the structure of the ownership of the means of production to the structure of management of not only the means of production but also the means of education and what Ossowski calls the 'means of compulsion' (1969: 185- 6) - in brief, to the management of the whole structure of social life.

Conceptualising the main division of Czechoslovak society as that between managers and the managed tallies with the Czech folk model. Of the respondents in a 1967 sociological survey, only 11 per cent subscribed to the then-official view of Czechoslovak society as divided into three non-antagonistic social classes (workers, cooperative farmers, and intelligentsia); 20 per cent advocated a complex hierarchical model of society and 25 per cent a non-hierarchical one. The four other models elicited from 44 per cent of respondents were basically dichotomous: mass and elite (Machonin *et al,* 1969: 371). This type of folk model was alternatively expressed as the division of society into rulers and ruled (a favourite

expression of dissidents and intellectuals) or into 'us' and 'them', with 'them' being variously called *papaláši, načálstvo* (from the Russian), or *velení* ('command', which is a pun on the official expression *vedení,* 'leader-ship').

The number of those who made active decisions in the public sphere remained too small to override the image of it as a sphere in which the indi-vidual was the object of manipulation, pressure, and coercion and of the private sphere as that in which the individual was a free agent restricted only by the conventions of custom, economic possibility, or morality. But even within these inevitable constraints, people's agency was felt to be greater in the private than in the public sphere, for through their own actions they themselves maintained and re-created the norms which restricted them. The prevailing feeling in the public sphere was helplessness.

Different kinds of morality prevailed in the public and in the private sphere. Šimečka points to one aspect of this difference:

The omnipresent lie of the state has a devastating effect on morality in general. It establishes the norm of a lie being rewarded rather than punished. The citizen accustomed to this point of view has a tolerant attitude to the lie in the non-private sphere. After all, he has been taught to lie at school, to hide his convictions; he has learnt to lie in his workplace, becoming convinced that it pays. In consequence, he lies when filling in forms, in his dealings with authorities, in the courtroom, to his superiors - in fact, he lies wherever he can. Morally, lying to the state does not worry him; it is a lie in self-defence, for he is aware that the state cheats him too. Generally, skilful swindlers and liars who succeed in tricking the state are more appreciated than honest people who grind away for the state which does not deserve it. 1 knew only one exemplary honest man among the workers. He would, for example, jump into a trench to save a tile or a brick for the stale. The others would look at him and tap their foreheads . . . The citizen, like the state, considers lying a useful tactic especially in the political sphere, where it is precisely estab lished what is to one's advantage. He lies in response to direct questions about his political profile according to what has been established as being to his advantage. He is fully committed to the socialist order and the Communist Party, he loves the Soviet Union, he has solved the problem of religion, he participates in meetings and demonstrations, he has no doubt of any kind. This type is exempt from moral evaluation. This same citizen at home views with horror and indescribable sadness his child's lying to him for the first time and turns away in disgust from a friend who has lied to him or concealed a secret from him. This is different. The lie outside the strictly delimited private domain is subject to different moral laws, and no one mixes the criteria of the outer and inner circles. Lies and pretence reign in the outer circle; inside the private sphere a man must be careful of his moral defence.   *(1984: l48 50)*

The different moral evaluations of lying in the public and the private sphere lent great intensity to friendship. Because in friendship 'each person

discloses something about himself that would be embarrassing or damaging in a less restricted audience' and hence the 'logic of friendship is a simple transformation of the rules of public propriety into their opposite' (Suttles 1970: 116), lying and deceit were of course unimaginable among friends. Knowing the truth about each other's views, opinions, and life histories, friends were in collusion against the world in which deceit and lies were strategically exploited to one's advantage. Friendship was thus built on the utmost trust, for if this trust were betrayed the consequence might be job loss or even imprisonment. Friendship literally meant putting one's security or even one's freedom into another's hands.

Under communism, charity did not begin at home; it ended there. It was appropriate for parents to care about their children and for children to care about their ageing parents; it was appropriate to help others in the domestic group and to expect their help; it was appropriate to be courteous to one another in the private sphere; and it was particularly expected that the young would be courteous to the old and that the able-bodied would take care of the old, the ill, and the otherwise incapacitated. The norms of care and courtesy did not, however, apply in the public sphere, not even when care was the essence of the job. Courtesy was something regularly commented upon by Czech travellers to the West, and, correspondingly, the lack of care and courtesy in any kind of public interaction struck visitors to Czechoslovakia. Smiles were reserved for communication among friends; shop assistants, waiters, postal or bank clerks, petrol station attendants, and so on served customers with solemn faces. Verbal utterances were restricted to the barest minimum and replies to questions were brisk and snappy. How exceptional was the opposite is attested to by the fact that a reader felt compelled to write to *Rudé právo* (5 August 1989) about a 'fairy-tale' guard on a provincial train line who greeted passengers with a smile, and while collecting tickets wished them a pleasant journey, reminded them to collect their personal belongings before leaving the train, and on top of that even managed to announce the name of the next stop.

Different moral norms also applied to the theft of private and of public or 'socialist' (i.e., state or cooperative) property. Whereas according to the official judicial view the theft of socialist property was more serious than the theft of personal property because it reflected disrespect for the collective ethic which should guide the 'new man', the folk morality saw the latter crime as much more abhorrent. Widespread pilfering of socialist property was greatly encouraged by the prevailing economic situation. Given the chronic shortage of building materials, tools, and other goods,

pilfering them from building sites and other places of work or buying them from those who had pilfered them was for many people the only solution. Czech public lavatories were notorious for their lack of towels, soap, and toilet paper, which as a rule disappeared as soon as they were put there. Pilfering of socialist property was also for many people a way of augmenting their incomes which most considered inadequate. (According to an opinion survey conducted in 1969, Kčs 3,153 was considered an adequate monthly income for a family with two school-age children; in 1966 only 2 per cent of the population had incomes as high as this (Ulc 1974: 57).) A widespread Czech saying clearly endorsed the morality of this course of action: 'Anyone who does not steal is robbing his family.'[8]

Because everyone worked in the public sphere for a living, the separation of the two spheres also affected time: on the one hand there was the time which one was required to spend in the public sphere, and on the other there was the time in which one lived fully in the private sphere. Private time had to be saved and used to the fullest - even if only for doing nothing. Public time was not a commodity with the same value. For many, time spent at work was seen as time lost for private life, and the amount of private time could be increased if a number of things of a private nature could be done in time officially allocated to work. Those whose work allowed them to do so did their shopping or attended to other private business during working hours.[9] This habit was also encouraged by the fact that the hours during which most shops were opened coincided with working hours, as well as by the fact that to be able to obtain goods one often had to be in the shop when they were delivered. Those who could not use working time for their private purposes (such as assembly-line workers) felt truly exploited. If they could not save time, they could at least save their energy for release in the private sphere. At on time, cards with a picture of the Good Soldier Schweik[10] and the slogan 'Take it easy' *(To chce klid)* could be seen in every workplace, from the garage to the ministry. The situation in which production became a matter of workers' goodwill was one of the aspects of the deteriorating economy which the reform of 1968 aimed to rectify. *Literární listy* commented critically in May 1968 that

to exert only as much energy and effort as have been accepted tacitly and with absolute solidarity in a given place of work [is] a kind of collective norm. As a rule, it is not the able and efficient who raise to their level the average and below-average workers, but vice versa: it is the mediocre who set the norm.   *(Ulc 1974: 54)"*

The chronic shortages of material goods and the unpredictability of supply made the theft of socialist property and the use of working time for

private purposes almost inevitable. This inevitability was, however, conditioned by the priority assigned to the satisfaction of private over public needs - the rejection of the ideal of the 'new man' morally committed to the interests, goals, and aspirations of society. The misappropriation of socialist property and the misuse of working time may well have been economically motivated, but ultimately they were manifestations of alienation from socialist ideals and from the society which should ideally have been their embodiment. Czechs characterised this alienation as 'inner emigration' (Wheaton and Kavan 1992: 9), as the lack of 'self-realisation' in the public sphere and full 'self-realisation' in the private circle of the family and friends, or as an 'escape' or 'withdrawal' into the private sphere. The journal *Tribuna* (1970, no. 10: 5) criticised 'individuals who have achieved their "private communism". They have nice jobs, a house, country cottage, etc.; all they need is time enough to enjoy their possessions' (quoted in Ulc 1974: 171, n. 17). Although pensions were low, people looked forward to retirement, when they would be able to withdraw completely from the public sphere, and it was not unusual for them to retire at the earliest possible time even if not forced to do so.[12]

Prior to the process of 'normalisation' following the 'crisis period' of the 1960s, a great deal of the party's rhetoric was concerned with the moral crisis of society. Its root was seen to lie in the 'building of one's private imaginary world and flight into this substitute for true self-realisation', as the *Reportér* expressed it in April 1969 (Ulc 1974: 92). Party ideologists saw the causes of this attitude in the party's failure to eradicate the survival of 'bourgeois morality' because of the 'formalism' of its socialising efforts (see, e.g., Ulc 1974: 144). They perceived the moral crisis as the cause of the economic crisis and saw the remedy in increased attention to 'ideological work' and to educating the new socialist man'. The journal *Novinář* stated this policy clearly in 1972: 'This is once again the beginning of a process of moulding a socialist man. a conscientious builder of socialism, a man who is pure and firm' (quoted in Paul 1979: 36).

Paradoxically, during the late 1970s and 1980s, alienation and withdrawal into the private sphere were considered moral problems more by the dissidents than by the party and the government. The reason is that these trends were to a very great extent encouraged by official party policy adopted in the course of "normalisation". Political stability was achieved by giving in completely to the demands generated in the private sphere and abandoning any serious attempt at mobilising the working masses to increased effort in the building of socialism (Wheaton and Kavan 1992: 10, 23) which, paradoxically, was the essence of the Communist Party's

action programme of 1968, supported by the overwhelming majority of Czechs. Economic priority was ascribed to the satisfaction of consumption needs, instead of to increasing the productivity of labour (the main economic aim of the 1968 reform), and to their stimulation by a limited import of Western consumer goods. In official rhetoric, the rising standard of living was construed as a sign of socialist achievement.

The situation in Czechoslovakia at the end of August 1988 was described by a Czech publicist who kept a diary throughout the year as follows:

Turning one's back on politics began to manifest itself from the beginning **of** nor malisation. Because politics ceased to pretend that it was concerned with national interests and became only a well-paid job, because it transpired that lying paid and people without conscience prospered best, because it transpired that stupidity had better prospects of advancement than vision and education, most people left all public activity to those who had the stomach for it. An unwritten social contract thus emerged according to which the state and the party would do their thing and the people would do theirs. The functioning of this contract was of course condi tional on the changed image of the regime. In its post-totalitarian" mutation, the regime no longer required that everyone be devoted to socialism, believe in the ide ology, and be full of enthusiasm and ready to make sacrifices; it was enough for each individual simply to respect the rules, even if with obvious cynicism. Two worlds thus emerged: the artificial world of politics and the real world of little human histories bounded by the fence of one's own garden . . . An 'as if" state emerged from this contract. In this state, we 'as if built communism, 'as if scien tifically guided society, 'as if increased the standard of living, 'as if elected state representatives with 99 per cent of the vote, and 'as if did not see that everyone worked only for himself. Real life was dominated by practical interests: where to pluck this and where to gather that, where to cheat, how to grasp an opportunity, how to drag oneself up the social ladder, how to provide for the children, how to manage to travel abroad, and most of all how to have anything when something is always in short supply.   *(Šimečka 1990: 104 5)*

Opposition to the communist regime

A lifestyle oriented solely toward increasing material well-being and full self-realisation in the private sphere may appear to contradict the ideal of a 'change of people's consciousness [and] their identification with the aims of socialist society' *(Rudé právo,* 28 July 1978; quoted in Fidelius 1983: 128). It nevertheless served a positive political function in that withdrawal from the public sphere meant lack of support not only for the policy of the Communist Party but also for the political aims of its opponents and critics. In terms of pragmatic politics, the latter consequence was much more important than the former, and the normalisation policy of the Communist Party appears to have borne fruit.