

# The Language and Functions of Czech Counter Slogans: 1948 to 1989

Tom Dickins

## Introduction

One of the most conspicuous manifestations of Communist ideology in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) was the presence of official slogans, which were largely taken for granted by the local population. Much less in evidence were the opposition slogans, which appeared periodically in the public domain, usually in response to political and economic developments or in recognition of anniversaries. Anti-regime shouts and inscriptions were the most spontaneous articulation of what in Czech is broadly termed 'the third resistance' (*třetí odboj*), and accompanied virtually all forms of public protest. Counter slogans, as they will be called here, were especially important for individuals psychologically, as a short-term release valve, but they also contributed collectively to the subversion of the authoritative discourse of the Communist Party.

Several Czech-language publications have listed and, to varying degrees, discussed counter slogans relating to specific periods of unrest (see especially notes 1, 7, 8, 19, 20, 21, 30, 33, 45, 56, 68, 69, 75), but none has sought to analyse the evolution of counter slogans throughout the Communist period as a whole, or in their wider social and cultural context. Very few works in languages other than Czech have listed and evaluated more than a handful of examples,<sup>1</sup> and again none has considered the development of a critical 'narrative', or the interface between linguistic and extra-linguistic activity, over time. Nor has sufficient attention been paid to the mode of delivery of the counter slogans – oral or written – in terms of their content and style. The fact that the counter slogans tended to be unpublished, short-lived and confined to the street has also militated against their inclusion in Czech corpora (including the Czech National Corpus).<sup>2</sup> This is the first study in any language to present an in-depth analysis of the defining characteristics of Czech counter slogans – their style, tropes and referents – as well as their intertextual allusions. It is likewise the first to place these collective and public, but also intensely private, forms of dissent in Czechoslovakia in their synchronic and diachronic perspective.<sup>3</sup>

Why focus on counter slogans? They were, after all, often inchoate and transitory, and they lacked many of the contextual features of other expressions of discontent, such as legal challenges, leaflets, anonymous letters, fiction (*samizdat* and *tamizdat*), drama, verse, song, underground seminars, and so forth. Yet, it is precisely the fact that counter slogans provide such a spontaneous, reactive and distilled critique of the regime that makes them a useful barometer of changes in the attitudes and moods of the opposition. Counter slogans, arguably more than any other form of resistance, captured the essence of people's grievances. As Wheaton and Kavan have noted, in respect of 1989, not all the slogans were overtly political,<sup>4</sup> although all, in one way or another, represented a response to the undesirability of the status quo.

The functions and motivations of the counter slogans varied. Some took the form of aspirations and entreaties; some were a response to a specific event or development; some served to share and disseminate information. Based on Geoffrey Leech's (1974) model of the five principal language functions, of primary importance was the slogans' directive function (the articulation of demands for change), which was inextricably linked to their expressive function (the expression of feelings). Put in Aristotelian terms, the slogans generally sought to influence their audience through pathos (or emotion). Sometimes the directive/expressive functions also combined with the informational function (that is, the slogan communicated a 'message'). Many of the slogans similarly evinced an aesthetic

dimension, which was characterized by language play and rhyme, often including humour, irony, parody or allegory. The aesthetic dimension was not a case of *l'art pour l'art*, but a tool for emphasizing values and judgements. Finally, all the slogans had a phatic function – they brought people together, and thereby initiated the possibility of further dialogue.<sup>5</sup> Collectively, the slogans likewise had, what some linguists call, a ‘conative function’ (they sought to modulate behaviour through persuasion). According to Roman Jakobson, the conative function ‘finds its purest grammatical expression in the vocative and imperative’, hence Karl Bühler’s term ‘appealing function’ (Appellfunktion) in his organon model.<sup>6</sup>

There is no precise single definition of ‘counter slogan’. The concept is always open to interpretation, and its stylistic and semantic parameters are inevitably fuzzy. However, as a broad working definition, ‘counter slogan’ can be taken to denote a specific type of gnomic anti-regime utterance which articulates a coherent thought, request or lament, in response to externally imposed developments, actions or policies. Occasionally a counter slogan may consist of just one word, where the significance of that word is derived from the wider socio-political context; as in, say, cries of *Dubček!* in late 1968, after the reformist leader of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Alexander Dubček, was forced by the military occupation to reverse his policy of liberalization known as the Prague Spring. But, more typically, the counter slogan comprises a string of words (not usually exceeding a couple of phrases/sentences or a rhyming couplet), which encapsulate its ostensible meaning. This article focuses on those examples where the message was sufficiently relevant and topical to convey clearly a shared idea; and pithy, catchy and perspicuous enough to resonate more widely with members of the public (assuming the requisite knowledge of the prevailing socio-political circumstances). By implication, therefore, longer verbal and non-verbal anti-regime proclamations, and numerous other shorter expressions of disapproval (such as profanities, insults, jeers, drawings and scribbles), are excluded here.

Counter slogans were frequently anonymous and spread by word of mouth. Their exact provenance was rarely recorded, and they were more generally associated with groups than individuals. Stylistically, their oral and written modes had much in common, with both modes erring towards the informal. However, while the former accentuated accessibility through its use of the vernacular, the latter placed greater emphasis on creativity, and largely adhered to the conventions of literary Czech (especially in terms of morphology). In many cases, the chanted slogans may have had a more dramatic impact because they were a direct response to a specific stimulus, and were perceived by a larger number and wider range of people, but the written inscriptions may have sometimes stuck longer in the public’s imagination.

The counter slogan in its non-verbal guise was especially prevalent in the months prior to and after the Prague Spring, from 1968 to 1969, and at the end of the Communist era, as detailed in works by Jindřich Pecka, and Bohuslav Beneš and Václav Hrníčko, and Lydia Petráňová.<sup>7</sup> At other times, the counter slogan was largely manifest orally; as in the late 1940s, in protest against the Communist takeover on 25 February 1948, and in the early 1950s and mid 1960s – often in response to changing economic circumstances. Examples referred to hereafter are taken from a variety of sources, including the Security Services Archive (Archiv bezpečnostních složek) and the Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Archiv Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa), as well as from citations by other scholars, popular and academic studies, websites, video recordings, hand-written and printed posters, leaflets, type-produced flyers, and photographic collections.<sup>8</sup>

Although it is not known to what extent the dissent expressed the feelings of society as a whole, the size and scale of the street protests in 1968/69 and 1989, in particular, suggest a massive rejection of Marxism-Leninism (if not necessarily of socialism per se). Unlike the

official slogans imposed from above, which were formulaic and ritualistic, the counter slogans had their origins in popular, collective folk traditions, and often bore the hallmark of those traditions stylistically and semantically.<sup>9</sup> For the most part, better educated youth were at the forefront of the opposition, but even in the early years of Communism support was not confined to this demographic. The slogans were frequently accompanied by other gestures of defiance, varying from the singing of the national anthem and folk songs to the placing of flowers at statues and gravestones; to the tearing down of Communist symbols; to the destruction of state property; to the removal or repositioning of road signs (in 1968); to the jingling of keys, and the ringing of bells (in 1989).

Whilst the goal of the officially sanctioned slogan was to reinforce and normalize the Party's grip on power, the counter slogan sought to challenge those imposed values. In terms of speech act theory, as proposed by J. L. Austin, and developed by John R. Searle, the intended or pragmatic meaning of the Party slogan (that is, the utterance as an 'illocutionary act', including 'performatives' such as ordering and promising), frequently exceeded in importance its literal or ostensible meaning (the utterance as a 'locutionary act').<sup>10</sup> The 'perlocutionary force' of the officially sanctioned word (the actual or probable effect of the 'illocutionary act') derived its authority largely from its addressees' understanding of its connotative meaning. By contrast, the counter slogan tended to foreground literal (or denotative) meaning over implicit meaning. Many of the counter slogans could be broadly defined as 'constative' (that is, they served to distinguish between true and false, to identify right from wrong, or to assert some other kind of proposition). They sometimes also included covert messages (which were open to interpretation), but their primary function was to make their point as unambiguously as possible. Where the counter slogans had a 'performative' role (for example, inviting, promoting or pledging a particular course of action), the 'felicity conditions' (or prerequisite contextual factors for the implementation of the action that they proposed) rarely pertained, at least until late 1989.

The spontaneous folkloric dimension of counter slogans has been discussed by Beneš and Hrníčko, amongst others.<sup>11</sup> They emphasize the fact that counter slogans, even in their written mode, formed part of the oral tradition, since their content and means of expression was nearer to the spoken idiom than to literature.<sup>12</sup> Many slogans were characterized by colloquial usage and word play; others by irreverent language; still others by interdiscursive allusions, cultural referents, quotations and paraphrases, which testifies to the more cerebral nature of some of the discourse. As a consequence of the above, they often contained anomalies and contradictions, and did not represent a consistent ideological platform. Yet, for all their inherent variation, they shared a broad antagonism to aspects of Communism.

## **Methodology**

The analysis of counter slogans poses at least four major problems. First, the known examples are only representative of what scholars, photographers, archivists and other interested parties have chosen or been able to preserve. They may therefore disproportionately favour the striking, amusing, polemical or even the untypical. Second, the data might give a good indication of the range of slogans used, but they cannot provide information about how many people shared the sentiments expressed, or about their relative or absolute frequency of usage.<sup>13</sup> Third, the ephemeral and shifting nature of the counter slogan renders it more open to interpretation than the official slogan, which is semantically largely fixed. Fourth, the motivations of those who joined in the chants, held up placards, stuck posters on walls, or scribbled on public property are not always transparent from the message that they conveyed. Any deductions about the functions and intended impact of the counter slogans must therefore be qualified.

In order to mitigate the aforementioned difficulties, this study adopts a mixed methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches with historical evidence. Inventories of counter slogans are employed to identify the recurrence of the different ‘types’ of slogan at different times, with particular reference to thematic repetition across those types. However, since the datasets consist of isolated decontextualized units, they do not lend themselves to conventional corpus-based analysis (where the focus is on language phenomena in their natural setting). Inductive content analysis compensates to some extent for the lack of context through in-depth deconstruction of the rhetoric, including consideration of register and style; reflection on intertextuality and interdiscursivity; and exemplification of the ways in which the counter slogans debunked or challenged the official word. Historical sources likewise serve to establish the broader social, political and economic setting. Archive materials are particularly illuminating in respect of the authorities’ response to the opposition.

In his analysis of situational context, M.A.K. Halliday identifies the three salient features of register as ‘field’, ‘mode’ and ‘tenor’.<sup>14</sup> Here, quantitative data foreground the concept of ‘field’ (in particular, the repeated leitmotifs of the counter slogans); qualitative evidence is concerned both with ‘field’ (especially individual examples and variation within the data) and ‘mode’ (the channel and the genre of communication); while primary and secondary historical sources relate more to ‘tenor’ (the interactional aspect of the protest, which includes the phatic function). Halliday’s focus is firmly on the contextual dimension of language usage, and he does not engage with questions of perception or motivation. Thus, while his framework helps draw attention, for instance, to the strong support for state socialism in 1968, it does not elucidate how people interpreted the notion of reform Communism or the concept of neutrality.<sup>15</sup>

No methodology can adequately establish the long-term psychological impact (or perlocutionary force) of the counter slogans on those directly involved or on the population as a whole. The ‘tenor’ or collective nature of the activity may sometimes have had an even greater influence on people’s attitudes and behaviour than either the message or the medium. Archival evidence suggests that the authorities were seriously concerned by the potentially contaminating effect of the protests, while oral history confirms that participants felt emboldened and united by the counter slogans.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Early Communist Period**

Police surveillance, intimidation, detentions, arrests and imprisonment accompanied a series of events in which overt opposition to the authorities manifested itself. However, the aim here is not to identify and discuss the repercussions, which are well documented elsewhere, but to analyse the counter slogans themselves. The protesters’ common theme at the start of state socialism, generally articulated orally rather than in writing, was a rejection of Communist hegemony. Unlike the counter slogans of the post-Stalinist period, the early counter slogans expressed a commitment to the values of Western parliamentary democracy, on which the First Republic (1918–1938) was founded.

February 1948 is rightly remembered in Czechoslovak history for the Communist takeover, accompanied by mass demonstrations, with pro-Communist chants and placards such as *Republice více práce, to je naše agitace* (More work to the Republic – that’s our rallying cry). Less is known of the few thousand Prague university students who took to the streets, from 23 to 25 February, to challenge the Communists.<sup>17</sup> According to eye-witness accounts, the protests were sombre and restrained, but were marked by shouts of *Ať žije prezident Beneš* (Long live President [Edvard] Beneš) and *Ať žije republika Beneše a Masaryka* (Long live the republic of Beneš and Masaryk).<sup>18</sup> These repeated proclamations became leitmotifs for those who sought to maintain continuity with the ‘bourgeois’ past. At least one slogan, *17. listopad* (17 November), drew inflammatory parallels with the Nazi attack on students in

1939 – a scene subsequently replayed in the so-called *masakr* (massacre) of students, which sparked the Velvet Revolution in November 1989. Other student demands, on 24 February, called for the release of their arrested peers and for police restraint: *Propust'te zavřené študáky* (Release the imprisoned students) and *Nechod'te na nás s bodáky!* (Don't come at us with bayonets!). The use of the second person imperative as a peremptory device – Bühler's Appellfunktion – was not especially common in the early counter slogans, but where it was employed, it was often directed, as here, at the security forces or senior members of the Party.

There has been a tendency in historical discourse to downplay the moral authority of Beneš, and to focus, instead, on his compromises. The counter slogans, however, serve to modulate this negative impression of the reception of the president. For all his 'socializing' reforms and his contentious decrees, he continued to be held in high esteem in the early Communist period as a figurehead of the ancien régime. His name was constantly cited in 1948 in the context of the renewal of 'national' democratic traditions, beginning with a two-day celebration of the anniversary of the American liberation of Plzeň on 5/6 May. The principal rallying cry in Plzeň – *Byli jsme a budem, za Benešem půjdem!* (We were and we will be, we'll follow Beneš!) – left no doubt that the anti-Communist protesters viewed Beneš as one of them. Worthy of note here is the familiar tone connoted by the colloquial forms *budem* and *půjdem*, which stood in contrast to the formality of the officially approved norms. Linguistically more astute protesters were aware of and deliberately exploited the distinction between the use of real-life language and the prescribed standard. Whilst written records may only have begun in the 1960s to employ more systematized orthographic representations of the colloquial idiom (including *obecná čeština* [common Czech] and other non-standard regional variants), we can assume that the versions cited here and elsewhere accurately reflect the morphology of the spoken utterance at the time, not least because of the rhyme and scansion of the slogans. The repeated use of catchy rhythm and rhyme, which was largely absent from the socialist slogans (especially the later ones), further served to highlight the tone of familiarity and added to the counter slogans' appeal.

The anniversary of 1948 was unusual in terms of its overtly pro-American character. It was one of relatively few occasions in Czechoslovak Communist history when the American model was widely promulgated (although American flags and slogans were also in evidence at other times, especially during the subsequent Sokol gymnastics festival, and further anniversaries of the liberation in Plzeň in 1949, 1969 and 1989). Pro-American sentiment ranked alongside anti-Soviet sentiment in the hierarchy of politically untenable views, hence the huge efforts to expunge the contribution of the US army from the official war-time narrative. Of the dozen counter slogans from the State Regional Archive in Plzeň, cited by Jakub Šlouf, six contain references to America, including *Chceme americkou vlajku na náměstí!* (We want the American flag on the square!) and *Mládež Plzně v jednom šice staví se po bok Americe!* (The youth of Plzeň stands as one on the side of America!).<sup>19</sup> Three of Šlouf's examples begin with the first person plural *Chceme* – a pattern of usage, less exigent than the imperative, repeated throughout Communist rule. Unlike many of the late socialist-era opposition slogans, the early counter slogans frequently adopted the same clichéd exclamatory forms as Communist rhetoric; for instance, ***Pryč s terorem!*** (**Away with terror!**) and ***Ať žije svobodná Amerika!*** (**Long live free America!**).

The Sokol festival in June/July 1948, perhaps more than any other event, turned into a celebration of the past, and a condemnation of what many of the participants saw as the Communist parvenus. The slogans, which were largely 'scripted', combined the informality of the spoken word with the greater reflectiveness of the written word. According to Mary Heimann, the secret police (StB) reported fifty-five provocative chants, while Jan Waldauf lists sixty-eight counter slogans.<sup>20</sup> The festival, which subsequently acquired the unofficial

epithet *slet Benešův* (Beneš's rally), was dominated by the persona of the absent president. Thirty-eight of Waldauf's slogans cite Beneš's name, including several containing affectionate familial allusions, such as *My jsme děti Masaryka, my jsme děti Beneše!* (We're Masaryk's children, we're Beneš's children!); *Bez Beneše, bez Hany, nejsou žádné Hradčany* (Without Beneš, without Hana [Beneš's wife], there is no Hradčany [Prague Castle – seat of the president]); and *Beneš je náš táta, vytáhne nás z bláta!* (Beneš is our dad; he'll drag us out of the mud!). The metaphorical epithet *táta* had echoes of the diminutive *tatíček*, frequently applied to Tomáš Masaryk. The reference to the foul weather, which was both literal and metaphorical, also appeared in at least one other slogan: *Ať nám prší, nebo leje, Beneš ten nás v srdcích hřeje!* (Let it rain or pour on us; [that] Beneš warms [us in] our hearts!).<sup>21</sup>

The mythologization of Beneš was in stark contrast to the opposition's dismissive attitude to Klement Gottwald (General Secretary of the Communist Party, appointed president on 14 June 1948); for instance, *Do našeho Hradu nechceme jinou hlavu!* (We don't want a different head [of state] going to our Castle!) and *My Beneše máme rádi, Gottwald nám ho nenahradí* (We like Beneš; we won't let him be replaced by Gottwald). Some of the slogans were more overtly hostile still, including *Lépe je být v žaláři, když nám vládnou truhláři* (It's better to be in jail, if we're to be ruled by cabinet-makers) and, referencing Gottwald's wife Marta, *Máme Prahu stověžatou a Martičku prdelatou* (We have a hundred-spired Prague and big-bottomed Martička).<sup>22</sup> The diminutive 'Martička' had particularly pejorative overtones in view of her corpulence, and her liking of the old-fashioned, far-from-egalitarian honorific *milostpaní* (her ladyship).

Several of the counter slogans referred to Sokol's heritage, including *Za Fügnerem, za Tyršem, Masarykem, Benešem!* (Follow Fügner, Tyrš, Masaryk and Beneš!).<sup>23</sup> Others drew on the patriotic non-political foundations of the organization, including *Sokol patří republice, nedáme ho politice* (Sokol belongs to the Republic; we won't give it up to politics). The 'grass-roots' nature of the protest was evidenced by the constant reference to regional affiliation; for instance, *Nebojte se Pražáci, ještě jsou tu Hanáci* (Fear not, people of Prague; the people of Haná are here) and *Ostrava černá, Benešovi věrná* (Black [coal mining] Ostrava is true to Beneš). One of the more audacious and original chants, which employed the conative function to humorous effect, was *Smekejte čepice, jde bílá Sušice* (Doff your caps; white Sušice is passing).<sup>24</sup>

As the Sokol historian Tereza Frýbertová has noted, many of the counter slogans had a dialogic character.<sup>25</sup> Examples include *Nekřičte už lidi hesla, vláda by to neunesla* (Stop shouting slogans, people; the government can't bear it). At least one slogan was addressed directly to Josef Truhlář (see note 22): *Když mezi nás přišel, chceme, aby nás slyšel!* (Since you've joined us, we want you to hear us!). Several of the opposition's 'appeals' were intended to strengthen the resolve of fellow Sokol members, as with *Dodejme si odvahu, Beneš musí do Hradu* (Let's pluck up courage; Beneš must go to the Castle), and, to those who stayed silent, *Proč na nás civíte, když s námi nekřičíte?* (Why are you gawping at us, when you're not shouting with us?). Others highlighted Communist surveillance and repression: *Teror je, ale dlouho nebude* (It's a time of terror, but it won't be for long) and *Zabili nám Masaryka, Beneše jim nedáme* (They killed our [Jan] Masaryk, we won't give them Beneš).<sup>26</sup> Here, as elsewhere, the utterance served primarily as a 'locutionary act'; that is, it foregrounded literal (or denotative) meaning. Especially striking stylistically was the combination of everyday language and rhyme. The contrast with the woodenness of state propaganda served simultaneously to reinforce the distinctiveness of the counter slogan and to promote a sense of anti-establishment solidarity.

The oral mode of the Sokol protests lent itself to the vernacular both in terms of the nature of the counter slogans employed and the range of people who could perceive them. Non-

standard usage is evidenced in the six slogans containing the verb ending – *em*; in regional verb forms such as *Valaši se ptajú, kde Beneše majú* (The Valachs ask where they're keeping Beneš), referring to rumours that the Communists had imprisoned Beneš; in the morphophonological variant *leje*; the determiner *ten*; and in colloquialisms such as *držka*, as in *Soudruzi a soudružky, dostanete do držky* ([Male and female] Comrades, you're going to get it in the gob). The sense of inclusion is reinforced by first person plural verbs and pronouns (found in forty-five of Waldauf's slogans), including the ethic (emotional) dative pronoun *nám* (sometimes called the solidarity dative). Syntactically, rhyming couplets comprised the majority of the opposition's slogans. The use of end rhymes added to the rhythmic quality of the verses, increased their accessibility, and made them more memorable and affective. The terseness of the slogans' form further contributed to their catchiness. Use of Communist-style constructions, such as *Ať žije*, was limited, although some slogans contained allusions to Communist propaganda, including *Nedáme rozbít republiku od bolševiků!* (We won't hand over the Republic to be smashed by the Bolsheviks!) – a reference to Gottwald's slogan *Nedáme si rozbít republiku!* (We won't allow the Republic to be smashed!).

The last two great outpourings of anti-regime sentiment in 1948 – the mass pilgrimage by the Catholic sports organization Orel ('Eagle') to Svatý Hostýn, on 28/29 August, and the reaction to Beneš's death a few days later – took very different forms. The former stuck largely (although not exclusively) to devotional themes, and is thus of limited relevance here. The latter, on the eve of Beneš's funeral, 7 September, began with plaintive appeals to see the president's body: *Chceme vidět prezidenta Beneše* (We want to see President Beneš). However, as the mourners became frustrated with waiting, their chants increasingly challenged the role and authority of the police, as in *Proč nám ho neukážete? Beneše nám nevezmete!* (Why won't you show us him? You won't take Beneš from us!); *SNB, pojďte s lidem!* (Police, join the people!); *Lumpi, chcete nás podvést!* (Rotters, you want to deceive us!); and *Drž hubu, fízle!* (Shut your gob, copper!).<sup>27</sup> The irreverent (*lumpi*; *drž hubu*; *fízl*), augmented by the mocking chorus '*Hej hou, trpaslíci jdou!*' ('Hey ho, here come the dwarves!') aimed at the police,<sup>28</sup> contrasted with more dignified renditions of folk song and the national anthem. The juxtaposition of disrespect for those in power and respect for national traditions was a defining feature of Czech resistance. The civility and interactional aspect of folk song, (Halliday's 'tenor'), helped to elevate the protest from mob rule, whilst implicitly casting doubt on the regime's patriotic credentials.

## The Early 1950s

Amongst the most significant anti-Communist protests in the early 1950s were the day-long Prostějov demonstration on 10 April 1953, and the uprising by factory workers in Plzeň (and other cities), from 2 June to 5 June 1953, opposed to currency reform. Again, the oral nature of the expressions of opposition had a profound bearing on the style, composition and perception of the counter slogans.

The catalyst for the former protest was the removal of Masaryk's statue, and the proposed renaming of Prostějov's main town square from Masarykovo to Gottwaldovo náměstí (as part of a nationwide campaign, from 1952 to 1953, to eliminate evidence of Masaryk's legacy).<sup>29</sup> However, the dissent reflected much deeper concerns about the overall direction of society. According to Milan Bárta, Prostějov was a bastion of social democracy, steeped in the values of the First Republic.<sup>30</sup> The importance of the event resides in the fact that it was the last large-scale *politically* motivated act of revolt until the late 1960s. The character of the protest had much in common with that of the Sokol festival – both looked to the past as a way of challenging the imposed ideological norms.

Amongst the counter slogans chanted at the Prostějov gathering were *Vraťte nám Masaryka!* (Give us back Masaryk!); *Hrouťí se nám republika, chceme zpátky Masaryka* (Our Republic is falling apart; we want Masaryk back); *Tonda nám ho nenahradí* (Tonda won't replace him in our eyes); and *Dejte nám Pobudu, dostane na hubu* (Give us Pobuda, he'll get it in the gob).<sup>31</sup> Some of the slogans were recycled from previous demonstrations; for example, *Nedáme si diktovat(i), koho máme milovat(i)!*.<sup>32</sup> From the point of view of language, three aspects are especially noteworthy: first, the pithiness and accessibility of the slogans; second, the disparaging use of the colloquial idiom (*Tonda; dostane na hubu*); third, the repeated use of the first person plural, including the ethic dative *nám*, to reinforce solidarity and a distinction between the protesters and the authorities.

The best-known challenge to Communist rule in the early 1950s came less than two months later, in response to the devaluation of the Czechoslovak crown. The main resistance was from employees of the Škoda plant in Plzeň, supported by other workers and students.<sup>33</sup> Suffice it to say, the disturbances began ostensibly as an economic protest, but perhaps inevitably (given Plzeň's pro-Western leanings) acquired a more ideological dimension. The situation was inflamed by the Communists' attempt to remove the statue of Masaryk, accompanied by their own slogans, such as *Ať žije soudruh Zápotocký* (Long live comrade Zápotocký) and *Masaryka do šrotu, i tu jeho holotu!* (To the scrap heap with Masaryk, and this riff-raff of his!) – a slogan more reminiscent in its creativity to those of the opposition.<sup>34</sup>

The oral expressions of dissent followed a familiar pattern, with a range of repeated constative slogans (highlighting grievances and demands). Amongst the direct responses to the government's economic policy were chants of *Máme hlad* (We're hungry) and *Chceme naše peníze* (We want our money). Several of the counter slogans had a folkloric character, as evidenced by the inclusion of local referents; for instance, *My jsme Plzeň černá, Benešovi věrná* (We're black [industrial] Plzeň; true to Beneš) (cf. the chant of the Ostrava representatives at the Sokol festival) and *Bude zase hej, přijdou hoši z USA* (We shall have good times again; the boys from the USA will return). Other more political slogans included *Chceme novou vládu* (We want a new government) and *Chceme nové volby* (We want new elections). Appeals for free and fair elections, alongside other basic freedoms, were perhaps the most consistent opposition themes throughout Communist rule. Of a more confrontational nature were refrains such as *Smrt komunistům!* (Death to Communists!) and *Ať komunismus shoří v pekle!* (May Communism burn in hell!), which had more in common with the radical anti-Communist resistance of the earlier Gottwald period, as cited in the Security Services Archive.<sup>35</sup>

## The 1956 Majáles

The final large-scale 'street-level' challenge to the Communist-imposed norms of the 1950s – the (officially sanctioned) satirical and carnivalesque May festival parade or majáles (a kind of student Rag, but without charitable goals) – took place in the aftermath of Khrushchev's Secret Speech (25 February 1956). The bizarre and raucous Bratislava parade, on 12 May, passed off without major incident, despite the students' identification of problems hitherto outside the scope of public discussion, such as academic freedom.

The equally exuberant Prague majáles, on 20 May, involving up to 100,000 participants and spectators, led to even more serious, planned criticism of the status quo. Particular focus was again on the students' own grievances, as evidenced by the sarcastic chants *Ať žije menzovní žrádlo!* (Long live student canteen food!) and, more idiomatically, *To se nám to učí, když nám v břiše kručí* (How for pity's sake can we learn, when our stomachs are rumbling), as well as placards reading *Vpřed za školské reformy* (Forward with educational



reforms) and *Na přednáškách méně sedět, zato chceme více vědět!* (We want to sit less in lectures, but know more!). František Kahuda, Minister of Education, was subjected to especially harsh censure, as in *Co Komenský vytvořil, to Kahuda potlačil!* (What Comenius created, Kahuda suppressed!) and *My jsme mládež nová, mládež Kahudova* (We are the new youth; we are Kahuda's youth) – a parody of the earlier official slogan *Jsme mládež nová, mládež gottwaldova* (We are the new youth, Gottwald's youth). Other targets of the students' scorn included the contrast between the theory and practice of Marxism, censorship, the personality cult, military service, and *Mladá fronta* (the newspaper of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth), for its lack of coverage of student demands: *Kup si Mladou frontu! Zítra v ni nic nebude!* (Buy *Mladá fronta*! There'll be nothing in it tomorrow!) (cf. the Sokol slogan about newspapers).

Central Committee documents in the National Archive speak of deliberate acts of provocation, and of 'the generally negative, one might say hateful, character of the procession and of the whole atmosphere'.<sup>36</sup> Information Bulletin 56/1956 cites fifteen anti-regime slogans, including *Ať žije první a poslední majáles* (Long live the first and last majáles [under Communism]); *Komunisté nám zavřeli huby* (The Communists shut our gobs); and the slogan previously used by the Czech National Socialists in 1948: *Nebojte se Pražáci, ještě jsou tu štuďáci!* (Fear not, citizens of Prague, the students are still here!).<sup>37</sup> Note the colloquial tone (*nám zavřeli huby; štuďáci*). The students were almost certainly not calling for the overthrow of the regime, but rather for meaningful dialogue, as expressed in a slogan shouted at the earlier May Day parade: *My nechceme rebelovat, my chceme diskutovat!* (We don't want to rebel, we want to discuss!).<sup>38</sup>

Again, denotative meaning took precedence over connotative meaning, but humour, irony and puns featured more prominently than in the previous 'unscripted' counter slogans, as in *Ještě jeden Čepička a budem sloužit od malička* (One more Čepička, and we'll be in the army from an early age).<sup>39</sup> The 'field' (or themes) mattered more than in earlier gatherings because the students genuinely (perhaps naively) believed that their words might now make a difference, although the 'mode' (the genre of communication) and the 'tenor' (the collective aspect of the protest) were also important. As in other more 'scripted' demonstrations, many of the verbal protestations employed short rhyming couplets, which were catchy and easily replicable. There were some allusions to the past, as in *Kopecký to naplánoval, Kahuda to zglajchšaltoval* (Kopecký planned it, Kahuda made it all the same),<sup>40</sup> but gone were the explicit references to Masaryk, Beneš and the First Republic.

### **The Mid Communist Period**

Protest grew throughout the early 1960s, not least because of a sharp economic decline in 1962/63, and the increased freedoms emanating from cultural liberalization. H. Gordon Skilling cites, inter alia, public meetings held on May Day in 1962, and most years thereafter, at the statue of the poet Karel Hynek Mácha, which often led to parades in the centre of Prague with 'provocative banners and slogans'.<sup>41</sup> These gatherings are documented in the archives of the Security Services and elsewhere, but receive relatively little attention in Czechoslovak historiography. Amongst the better-known events which merit further discussion here are three which had a particular impact on young people's perceptions of the regime's authority: the majáles in Prague on 1 May 1965 – the first official majáles (in Prague) since 1956<sup>42</sup>; the nationwide campaign against men with long hair (the so-called *vlasatci* or *máničky*) from the end of August 1966; and the protest by students from the Strahov halls of residence in Prague on 31 October 1967.

The majáles in 1965, remembered principally for the 'coronation' of Allen Ginsberg as king of the parade, represented a development in the articulation of discontent. The Communist daily *Rudé právo* included a brief piece on the majáles on page 2, containing the comment

'It's just a shame that alongside the witty slogans and pictures there appeared tasteless and unsuitable things.'<sup>43</sup> This coy form of words hides the scale and the scope of the criticism of the regime contained in the counter slogans, as shown by written and documentary evidence, including a short film by FAMU students.<sup>44</sup>

Petr Blažek presents a list of thirty written and four shouted slogans (all 'scripted') which gives some indication of the extent and range of the students' rancour, but it is by no means exhaustive.<sup>45</sup> One of the slogans referred directly to *Rudé právo: Brávo, brávo, co tomu řekne zítra Rudé právo* (Bravo, bravo, what will they have to say about this in tomorrow's *Rudé právo*) (cf. the two afore-mentioned slogans about the press). Several, such as *Se vším souhlasíme* (We agree with everything) and, most tellingly, *Všechna hesla byla předem schválena* (All the slogans were approved in advance), drew attention to the lack of freedom of speech. Others focused on economic failings; for instance, a placard was raised alongside a clapped-out bus, reading *Toto je československé hospodářství* (This is the Czechoslovak economy). Yet another, borrowing the first part of Joseph de Maistre's mantra, boldly declared *Každý národ má takovou vládu, jakou si sám zaslouží – my máme klišoživ* (Every country has the government it deserves – we have *klišoživ*).<sup>46</sup> Even sacred cows, including the Party and its leadership, the Soviet Union, and the security forces, were subjected to satire. Amongst the various sardonic invectives were *Zdravíme výše postavené soudruhy* (We greet the higher-ranking comrades); *Ať žijí naši rudí bratři, ale ve své rezervaci* (Long live our Red brothers, but on their reservations); *S Antonínem na věčné časy* (With Antonín [Novotný] for evermore) – a play on the ubiquitous Party slogan *Se Sovětským svazem na věčné časy* (Together with the Soviet Union for evermore)<sup>47</sup>; *Sovětský majáles náš vzor* (The Soviet majáles – our model) – mocking the official slogan *Sovětský svaz náš vzor*; and *Zdravíme VB a neveřejnou taky* (We greet the Public Security [i.e. the police] and also the non-public security [i.e. members of the secret police and their informants]).

As Blažek has pointed out, it is indicative of the times that neither the uniformed nor the plain-clothes police intervened.<sup>48</sup> Overall, the student criticism of the regime was broader and more trenchant than in 1956, and its humour was darker. The dialogic tone of the past had given way to more importunate demands, and the folkloric dimension of the counter slogans (still suggested by the improvisation and playfulness of the spoken word) was less discernible in the protestations. The majáles was also characterized by greater use of the utterance as an illocutionary act, but even where the slogans implied performatives, as in *Pryč s levou úchylkou, pryč s pravou úchylkou, zlatá je střední cesta!* (Away with deviation to the left, away with deviation to the right, the middle way is golden!), the necessary felicity conditions (the circumstances required for their implementation) did not yet exist.

Notwithstanding the students' increasing willingness to express their frustration, their behaviour was still appropriately measured and good-humoured. Moreover, most of their complaints did not seriously question the underlying ideals of socialism. The students were, after all, a relatively privileged section of society, who enjoyed some vested interest in the established order. As in 1956, many of their laments related to their everyday experiences, as in *Chceš jít dříve do pense, chod' na žrádlo do mense* (If you want to retire early, go and eat in the student canteen).<sup>49</sup> At least one of the more unusual written slogans, *Všichni jsou volové. Váš Servít.* (They're all idiots. Yours, [Professor] Servít.), drew on a now legendary inscription which had already appeared on walls throughout and beyond Czechoslovakia: *Servít je vůl* (Servít is an idiot).<sup>50</sup>

For all its relative tolerance in the mid-1960s, Czechoslovakia was still largely under the sway of conservative-minded Communists, as illustrated by the campaign against men with long hair. Amongst the slogans employed by the Party to promote its values were *Vlasatým nenaléváme* (We will not serve those with long hair [in pubs and restaurants]) and *Dlouhé vlasy, krátký rozum* (Long in hair, short in intellect); to which the *máničky* responded with

*Vraťte nám vlasy* (Return our hair) and *Pryč s holiči* (Away with barbers). The counter slogans may not have been especially inspiring or witty, but they encapsulated the changing attitudes to authoritarian rule.<sup>51</sup>

The old guard further antagonized the younger generation when they overreacted to a student protest against power cuts in Strahov. The ambiguity of the students' principal chants – *Chceme světlo* (We want light) and *Chceme studovat* (We want to study) – may have been lost on the violent security forces, but it did not go unnoticed by the students' parents or by some of the general public and media. The event did serious damage to the hardliners' cause, and played into the hands of the reformers. As Heimann puts it, 'By alienating a large part of the hitherto politically irreproachable student body from the police, the Novotný leadership gave those within the party who were pressing for change yet another means of discrediting the conservative wing'.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Warsaw Pact Occupation (1968–1969)**

The victory of the reform Communists, led by Alexander Dubček from 5 January 1968, obviated the need for more overtly hostile displays of opposition to the regime. The mainstream of the Party was now broadly on the same side as much of the population, and some of its leading representatives were amongst those pushing the bounds of the permissible politically, economically and culturally. Pecka lists 128 written slogans from various sources, cited between 21 March 1968 and 9 August 1968 – most of which appealed for a wider range of freedoms, and rejected the existing Communist structures and strictures.<sup>53</sup> May Day 1968 changed from a ritualistic expression of acquiescence to a celebration of the new opportunities, with most people embracing the spirit of the slogan *Socialismus s lidskou tváří* (Socialism with a human face).<sup>54</sup>

As is well known, the Soviet-led military intervention on the night of 20/21 August 1968 effectively put an end to reform Communism, although not without concerted opposition for over a year, in which slogans played a significant role. The expressions of grief and fury, chalked, daubed and pasted virtually everywhere, and chanted by countless protesters in innumerable different forums, changed and developed in response to new circumstances. Chronologically, the main periods of resistance can be summarized as follows: late August 1968 to January 1969: generalized dissent; January 1969: reaction to Jan Palach's suicide (in protest against the emergent norms); March 1969: mass celebration of ice hockey victories over the USSR; and August 1969: demonstrations to mark the first anniversary of the occupation.

The extensive range of counter slogans after 20/21 August provides an excellent basis for the identification of common features and recurrent themes, although no analysis, however detailed, can do full justice to the myriad of views expressed. Nor is it possible to ascertain the slogans' relative or absolute frequency of usage – both of which are unknowable. Suffice it to say, many of the slogans initially took the form of graffiti, and were explicit and reactive, with denotative meaning generally taking precedence over connotative meaning. The spontaneity and folkloric aspect of the early protest, nevertheless, declined, as the nature of the dissent grew more coordinated, with the establishment of local centres for the creation, regulation and dissemination of counter slogans (staffed largely by students, lecturers, actors, artists, and so forth). From 23 August, there was also a kind of code of conduct for slogan writers, in the form of 'ten commandments', advocating caution, decorum and constraint, and clarity of expression, although it was by no means systematically observed.<sup>55</sup>

The counter slogans cited here are again drawn mainly from the most definitive published list – in this case, that of Pecka – but other sources also inform the discussion.<sup>56</sup> Pecka's list contains 1,318 non-repeated written slogans taken from Bohemia and Moravia, between

21 March 1968 and 21 August 1969. Amongst his examples are 128 in foreign languages (which are beyond the scope of this study) including 108 in Russian (with numerous mistakes!); thirty-nine which contain vulgarisms; and 123 inspired by literary sources, which testifies to the disproportionate contribution of the better-educated; for instance, *Žádná válka. Důkaz, že opravdu nechceme válku: bojujeme bez vypovězení války* [Karel Čapek] (No war. Proof that we really don't want war: we are fighting without declaring war).<sup>57</sup>

The following analysis employs an abridged version of Pecka's collection, comprising 1,180 discrete examples, which exclude the 128 predating 20/21 August (as these were part of a more generalized campaign for liberalization), as well as ten longer contributions, deemed insufficiently pithy to satisfy this article's definition of 'counter slogan'. In his brief discussion of his data, Pecka points out that counter slogans were at their most evident in the early days of the occupation.<sup>58</sup> The most common slogan in late August was probably *Dubček, Svoboda*, which was inscribed on all manner of objects, and articulated verbally at countless gatherings, including the one-hour general strike on 23 August.<sup>59</sup> After the signing of the Moscow Protocol on 26 August, sloganizing largely came to a halt until the beginning of September, when the omnipresent rallying cry *Jsmě s vámi, buďte s námi!* (We're with you, be with us!), promoted by the reform Communists, appeared in leaflets, on posters, and in handwritten form.<sup>60</sup>

Amongst the protesters' principal themes identified by Pecka were calls for the withdrawal of the Soviet-led troops; anger over the soldiers' brutality, and the Kremlin's kidnapping of the Czechoslovak leadership; and the hypocrisy of the labelling of the enforced relations as 'fraternal'. Examples included *Táhněte domů, okupanti!* (Clear off, occupiers!); *Dubčeka nám vraťte a sami se ztrat'te!* (Return Dubček to us, and get lost yourselves!); and the biblical reference *Kain byl také bratr!* (Cain was also a brother!).<sup>61</sup> To Pecka's themes could be added several others, such as veneration of the reform leadership (akin to the reverence shown to Beneš); disdain for the hardline Czechoslovak Communists; support for the Czechoslovak socialist model; appeals for freedom and self-determination; advice to fellow citizens on appropriate forms of behaviour; and expressions of belief in the triumph of truth and justice. Illustrations of the latter include *Vy máte tanky – my Dubčeka a rozum* (You have tanks – we have Dubček and brains); *Biřák, Indra, Kolder ZRÁDCI!* (Biřák, Indra, Kolder TRAITORS!); *Jsmě pro Dubčekův socialismus!* (We're for Dubček's socialism!); *Suverenita – Svoboda – Neutralita* (Sovereignty – Freedom – Neutrality); *Nikdy nevysvětľujte. Přátelé to nepotřebují a nepřátelé vám bez toho neuvěří.* (Never explain. Friends do not need an explanation and enemies will not believe you anyway.); and *Pravda zvítězí!* (Truth will prevail!).<sup>62</sup>

In Leech's terms of reference, the directive/expressive functions took precedence, as evidenced by the large number of slogans couched in terms of wishes and demands. The verbs *chtít* (to want) and *žádat* (to demand), plus derivatives and cognates, occur in twenty and eleven slogans respectively, as in the reference to the wartime Nazi regime, *Nechceme protektorát, chceme neutralitu!* (We don't want a protectorate, we want neutrality!) and *Žádáme odchod okupačních vojsk!* (We demand the departure of the occupying troops!). Some slogans stuck to well-worn socialist constructions, as in *Pryč s ruštinou z českých škol!* (Away with Russian from Czech schools!). Several of the 'scripted' slogans employed rhyme, as in *Bude bída, bude hlad, Rusové k nám přišli žrát* (There'll be poverty, there'll be hunger, the Russians have come here to stuff themselves).

One of the most notable features of the anti-collaboration rhetoric of 1968 was that it re-established a binary opposition between 'us' (the pro-reform majority) and 'them' (the hardline minority), which had been less in evidence under Dubček's rule. The repeated use of the first person plural and the personal pronoun *my/náš* (we/our) and its derivatives is complemented by other lexical items indicating a sense of affiliation, such as

*Čech/Československo/ČSSR* (Czech etc.), cited sixty-seven times, and *přítel* (friend), cited fifty times. The constant repetition provides a clear indication of national unity and the feeling of betrayal, for which the Soviet Union bore ultimate responsibility. By contrast, this strong sense of national identification was largely absent in the events of 1989, as noted by Petráňová, except as expressed through the ubiquitous colours of the national flag and the singing of patriotic songs.<sup>63</sup>

Notwithstanding all the previous excesses of the Party, a great many people continued to put their faith in the established regime and its principal representatives. Whereas all the other outpourings of despair during Communism highlighted deficiencies in the socialist system, 1968 was characterized by resistance to enforced change. Interpretations of the meaning of 'socialism' inevitably varied, but several slogans implied its compatibility with self-determination and democracy, including *Socialismus ano – okupace ne!* (Socialism yes – occupation no!) and *Suverenitu – socialismus – demokracii* (Sovereignty – socialism – democracy). A survey conducted in June and July 1968 by the Institute of Public Opinion found 86% of Czechs in favour of socialism.<sup>64</sup>

There were relatively few calls for a return to the pre-Communist past, although one slogan linked the name of Svoboda to that of Masaryk (cited just twice in the dataset): *Ať žije republika Svobody a Masaryka* (Long live the [First] Republic of Svoboda and Masaryk). The strength of support for the pro-reform Communist hierarchy is evidenced by the ninety-two citations of Dubček's name, and the numerous references to other leading moderates, such as Oldřich Černík (Prime Minister), Josef Smrkovský (Chairman of the National Assembly) and Čestmír Císař (Chairman of the Czech National Council). The ambiguity of the names of Svoboda (= Freedom) and Císař (= Emperor) lent them to word play, as in as in *Ať žije s/Svoboda!* (Long live freedom/Svoboda!) and *Chtěli jsme c/Císaře a máme cara* (We wanted an emperor/Císař and we have a tsar).

The counter slogans were explicit in their anti-Russian sentiment. A number discouraged assistance to the occupying soldiers, as in *Ani kůrku chleba, ani hlt vody okupantům!* (Neither a crust of bread, nor a drop of water to the occupiers!) and *Než bych Rusům vejce dala, radši bych si život vzala* (I'd rather take my own life than give an egg to a Russian). In others, the opprobrium was tinged with ruefulness, reflecting a recognition of the change in postwar perceptions. The contrast between the depiction of the reception of the Russian soldiers in 1945 and 1968, was stark: *1945 – osvoboditelé 1968 – okupanti* (1945 – liberators 1968 – occupiers) and *V roce 1945 bratr – dnes jsi agresor* (In 1945, our brother – today you are the aggressor). At least one slogan was reminiscent of an earlier one from the 1956 majáles: *Rudí bratři, vraťte se do svých rezervací!* (Red brothers, go back to your reservations!). The adverb *domů* (home[wards]) is cited forty-seven times (plus a further thirty-eight times in its Russian equivalent *domoj* [using the Czech transliteration]) in relation to the Warsaw Pact troops, as in *Jděte domů, naše děti se vás bojí!* (Go home, our children are afraid of you!). It almost invariably collocates with imperatives, which foreground its conative function, including *běžte* (*run, scarper*), *táhněte* (clear off) and *vrať(te)* (*se*) (return), as well as with the nouns *vojáci* (soldiers), *vrazi* (murderers) and *okupanti* (occupiers).

Elsewhere, the message was more satirical, as in the depiction of the fictional Russian couple, Ivan and Natasha, popularized by Ivan Vornáčková's protest song *Dobře míněná rada* (*Běž domu Ivane*) (Well-intentioned Advice [Go home Ivan]). In several of the slogans, Ivan, a young soldier, is betrayed by his partner Natasha, who is having an affair with another man, called Kolya, as in *Ivane, jdi domů, Nataša se ti courá s Koljou* (Go home, Ivan, your Natasha is cheating on you with Kolya). No fewer than twenty-eight of the examples cited in (the abridged version of) Pecka's list include reference to Ivan (or its diminutive Váňa). This focus on things Russian was reinforced by numerous Russian lexical exoticisms, used

dismissively, including *garmoška* (garmoshka [accordion]), *machorka* (cheap tobacco), *rubaška* (soldier's blouse), *step* (steppe), and *zemljanka* (bunker), as in *Sed'te doma na dvorku a kuřte svou machorku!* (Sit in your back yard at home, and smoke your own 'machorka!').

Particular contempt was expressed for Brezhnev and his hardline lackeys in Czechoslovakia. Of the seventy-five references to Brezhnev, the most polemical for the authorities were those which drew contrasts with Lenin and/or parallels with Hitler, such as *Lenine, probud' se, Brežněv se zbláznil!* (Lenin, wake up, Brezhnev has gone mad!) and *Šovinismus Hitlera převzal rudý bratr Brežněv* (Our Red brother Brezhnev has taken on the mantle of Hitler's chauvinism). Vituperative rhymes and puns used against pro-Moscow Czechoslovak Communists included *Ani vindru za zrádce Indru!* (Not a brass farthing for the traitor Indra!) and *Chceme Dubčeka, žádné Indrikány!* (We want Dubček, not 'Indrikány' [inrikány = conspirators!]). The noun *zrada* (treachery) and its cognates occur fifty-three times in the dataset, always with reference to hardline elements or the occupying forces. Other pejorative terms relating to the opponents of reform include *kolaborant* (collaborator) and its derivatives, cited thirty-seven times.

For the first time since 1948, there was a public clamour for a re-evaluation of Czechoslovakia's strategic geopolitical status, as in *Neutralita – konec okupace* (Neutrality – the end of the occupation) and *Neutralitu! Konec s „věčnými časy“!* (Neutrality! The end of 'for evermore!') – another reference to the Party phrase *Se Sovětským svazem na věčné časy!* (With the Soviet Union for evermore!). The Central Committee's decision to ban the use by the media of *okupace* and *okupant* (cited 125 times) and *neutralita* (cited fifteen times), on 6 September 1968, testifies to the toxicity of these notions in the eyes of the Soviet leadership.<sup>65</sup>

The written slogans identified by Pecka may have tended to be informal in style, but, with some exceptions such as *Ruskej buran chce náš uran* (the Russian yokel wants our uranium), they observed the morphological conventions of standard Czech. A number of the slogans exhibited a ludic quality which belied the gravity of the situation. Some included word play; for instance, *SSSR, nesar ČSSR!* (USSR, don't piss off the ČSSR!). Others employed puns, as in *Kupujte DDT. Lezou k nám švábi a rusi* (Buy DDT. Two species of cockroach are crawling towards us); *Kupujte hřebeny, přišla ušivá doba* (Buy combs, a lous[e]y time is upon us); and *Švestko, ty shnilý plode* (Švestka, you rotten fruit).<sup>66</sup> Still others drew on common cultural, musical and literary references, which required varying degrees of interpretation; for example, *Co Čech, to muzikant, co Rus, to okupant* (If you're Czech, you're a musician; if you're Russian, you're an occupier); *Host do domu – Bůh do domu* (Welcome a guest, and you welcome God); *Kde je ta ulice, kde je ten dům? – 1890 km na východ!* (Where is that street, where is that house? – 1890 km to the East!); *Poslušně hlásím, že jsem vás poznal* (I dutifully report that I recognized you); and *Zde domoj můj a kde tvůj?* (Here is my home and where is yours?).<sup>67</sup>

### Mass Protest in 1969

Of the various occasions in 1969 marked by widespread resistance, the most poignant was perhaps the self-immolation of Jan Palach in mid-January, followed by seven other suicides. Amongst the slogans chanted by the large crowd that gathered in Prague on 18 January were several that employed the conative function to convey urgency and stridency, including *Lidé, vzbud'te se!* (People, wake up!), and Palach's principal demands, *Zrušte cenzuru!* (Stop censorship!) and *Zakažte Zprávy!* (Ban [the pro-Moscow newsheet] *Zprávy!*). On 19 January, posters and inscriptions appeared throughout Prague and elsewhere announcing Palach's death, and condemning the regime. These included *Lidé bděte. Zemřel člověk!* (Be

on your Guard, people. A person has died!); *Říkat lidem pravdu není milodar, ale povinnost!* (To tell people the truth is not an act of charity, but an obligation!); and *Lépe zemřít vstoje, než žít na kolenou!* (It's better to die on your own two feet than to live on your knees!) – an aphorism associated with anti-Nazi resistance.<sup>68</sup> Several slogans also cautioned against further copycat suicides, as in *Ve jménu života – už žádné pochodně* (In the name of life – no more [human] torches).

The next major protest, dubbed by the authorities *hokejová krize* (the hockey crisis), was sparked by the Ice Hockey World Championships in Stockholm in 1969. The two victories against the USSR on consecutive Fridays, in late March, were greeted by rapturous celebrations throughout the country. Several demonstrators voiced support for Dubček, but most made their opposition to political developments known through reference to the hockey. Amongst the slogans shouted, scribbled and paraded on banners were *ČSSR – okupanti 4:3* (ČSSR – occupiers 4:3); *Vy nám tanky, my vám branky!* (You used tanks against us, we scored goals against you!); and *Nevadí, že není zlato, ty dva pátky stály za to* (It doesn't matter that it wasn't gold, those two Fridays were worth it).<sup>69</sup> Of all the demonstrations in defiance of Soviet power, this was arguably the most popular and spontaneous.

The resolve of the new Party leadership was even more sternly tested on the first anniversary of the Soviet-led occupation, with the authorities' response resulting in several fatalities.<sup>70</sup> According to Jan Břečka, the opposition began to disseminate 'anti-state' leaflets and slogans from the end of spring.<sup>71</sup> As before, many of the slogans appealed directly to Dubček, Svoboda and Černík, who ironically, on 22 August, signed the so-called Obuškový or Pendrekový zákon (Truncheon Law), which legalized the use of force and detention. Posters, inscriptions and chants, declared, amongst other things, *Den hanby* (Day of shame), and, not for the first time, *Smrt komunistům* (Death to Communists). Particular anger was directed at Gustáv Husák, as in *Husákovo gestapo!* (Husák's gestapo!) and *Nejsme husy, pane Husák* (We're not [silly] geese, Mr Husák), which played on his name.<sup>72</sup> The security forces also bore the brunt of the ire, as in *Kolik vám za to platí?* (How much do they pay you for this?) and *Nenecháme se mlátit!* (We won't let ourselves be beaten up!).

The harsh tone and uncompromising message of the slogans in late 1969 testifies to the growing sense of despair and resignation. This is also illustrated by the words *Sorry Tony* which briefly appeared on badges on teenagers' coats – a sarcastic jibe at the new leadership, suggesting that the situation was better under the reviled Antonín [Tony] Novotný. The suppression of the protests marked the end of concerted street-level opposition, and symbolized the victory of so-called 'normalization', known pejoratively as *Socialismus s husí kůží* (Socialism with goosebumps).

### **The Late Communist Period**

Opposition after 1969, until the mid-1980s, was relatively muted, and tended to be the domain of the young, as in the gatherings in Prague to mark the anniversaries of John Lennon's death, every year from 1981 to 1987.<sup>73</sup> Historians offer two main contrasting explanations for society's relative passivity: 1) according to the totalitarian interpretation, the public's mood was a direct response to the atmosphere of oppression and fear; 2) based on the more recent revisionist model, a broad social consensus was forged, in which most people implicitly accepted the status quo in return for a quiet life and a degree of material prosperity.<sup>74</sup> Both perspectives probably contain elements of the truth, as suggested by the increase in protest in response to the new opportunities opened up by Gorbachev's policies from 1985.

Amongst those most actively involved in resistance in the 1980s were members of the Catholic Church and Charter 77. Huge pilgrimages to Mariánska hora in Levoča, Eastern Slovakia, took place throughout the 1980s, and the national pilgrimage to Velehrad, Eastern Moravia, in July 1985, was attended by around a quarter of a million believers. The pilgrimages were appropriately peaceful, but the latter was accompanied by chants of *Chceme náboženskou svobodu* (We want religious freedom) and *My chceme papeže* (We want the Pope). More important in the context of the overthrow of Communism was a quiet candle-lit vigil in the name of religious freedom, attended by several thousand believers in Bratislava on 25 March 1988, which was forcefully dispersed.

Charter 77 may have had a low public profile, but its supporters played a key role in symbolic gatherings throughout the late 1980s. Important anniversaries marked by the Charter-led opposition included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on 10 December 1987 and 1988 (which was officially permitted); the foundation of the Republic, on 28 October 1988 and 1989; the Soviet-led occupation, on 21 August 1988 and 1989; and Palach's self-sacrifice, from 15 to 20 January 1989. The nature of the protest became increasingly assertive. Amongst the dissenters' repeated themes were calls for free elections, the end of censorship, freedom of speech, respect for the individual, and the removal of Soviet troops. Specific chants during so-called Palach Week included *Ať žije Charta!* (Long live Charter!); *Ať žije Dubček!* (Long live Dubček!); *Češi, poďte s námi!* (Czechs, come and join us!); *Chceme žít jako lidi!* (We want to live like people!); *Gorbačov to vidí!* (Gorbachev can see it!); *Lidská práva!* (Human rights!); *Pust'te Havla domů!* (Let Havel go home!); *Pust'te zavřené politické vězně!* (Release political prisoners from jail!); and *My nejsme živly!* (We are not elements!), in response to the regime's crude description of the resisters as 'anti-socialist elements'.<sup>75</sup>

The demands of Charter 77 were increasingly accompanied by those of other protest groups in the late 1980s, including *České děti* (Czech Children), *Český svaz ochránců přírody* (Czech Union of the Protectors of Nature) and *Klub „Obroda“* ('Revival' Club). The voice of the environmental lobby became especially audible. Tůma cites, for example, a protest in Teplice where demonstrators chanted *Chceme zdravé děti!* (We want healthy children!) and *Chceme čistý vzduch!* (We want fresh air!).<sup>76</sup> A similar environmental slogan, more open to political interpretation, became popular during the Velvet Revolution: *Chceme volně dýchat* (We want to breathe freely).

## The Velvet Revolution

The details of the attack on students on 17 November 1989, which hastened the collapse of Communism, are well-known, and do not require discussion here. Suffice it to mention some of the main counter slogans, in which the directive/expressive functions were dominant: *Chceme svobodné volby!* (We want free elections!); *Nechceme vládu jedné strany* (We don't want a one-party government); and *Jakeš ven!* (Jakeš out!).<sup>77</sup> Other more reactive 'informational' slogans reflected the gravity of the situation in which the students found themselves: *Máme holé ruce!* (Our hands are empty!) and *Nechceme násilí* (We don't want violence).

The response of the public to the beatings was overwhelming, and marked a definitive shift in the general population towards an overtly political anti-Communist campaign. Gone was the faith in socialist reform of 1968, followed by impotent despair, and in its place was a steely determination to rid Czechoslovakia of the one-party system, directed by the Coordination Centres of Civic Forum (OF) and Public against Violence (VPN) (in Slovakia). Some slogans still appealed to the figureheads of the Communist past, especially Dubček, but most looked to an altogether different future, based on ill-defined freedoms and democracy, outside the existing structures. Initially, many people were wary of the market



economy, as evidenced by a poll conducted on 23 and 24 November 1989, which found just 3% in favour of capitalism, and 45% who supported socialism.<sup>78</sup> However, the appeal of reintegration into the Western world, promoted by slogans such as *Zpět do Evropy!* (Back to Europe!), quickly trumped this sense of apprehension.

The two most comprehensive published lists of (written) counter slogans relating to 1989 are that of Beneš and Hrníčko, and that of Petráňová (both cited in note 7). The former comprises around 900 examples in Czech and Slovak (including dozens of amended versions), largely recorded in December 1989, and the latter contains 214 examples in Czech, plus one in Slovak, dating from 19 November, when written inscriptions became commonplace. This study employs an amalgam of the two lists in order to ensure greater representativeness of the period as a whole. The combined dataset consists of 866 discrete examples (excluding amended versions, thirty-one slogans found in both works, eighty-five slogans in Slovak and English, and five entries deemed too long to satisfy this article's definition of 'slogan').

Beneš and Hrníčko's work does not attempt a systematic thematic overview of the slogans, although it briefly identifies some of their principal leitmotifs. In terms of political events, it notes the prevalence of inscriptions relating to the leading role of the Party; the formation of a new government; and the election of a new president. It also draws attention to slogans depicting flowers as a weapon, as in *Místo obušků květiny* (Flowers instead of truncheons); allusions to the weather, such as *Sněží nám svoboda* (Freedom is snowing on us) – reminiscent of the references to the rain at the 1948 Sokol festival; and the enduring (if rapidly declining) influence of official propaganda, as in *V jednotě je síla* (There is strength in unity).<sup>79</sup> Likewise included in Beneš and Hrníčko's analysis is an attempt to summarize some of the slogans' defining characteristics (or, as they put it, 'semantic elements'). However, while it has proven possible to map some of the slogans to their schema, a great many do not readily fit their model.<sup>80</sup>

Petráňová's study seeks, above all, to put the slogans from 1989 into their broader academic, cultural and historical context. She considers, inter alia, slogans from the perspective of written folkloristics; flawed attempts to interpret slogans as 'oral history'; the extent to which the slogans fit into Ladislav Holy's paradigm of the 'nation against state'; and the nature of the authors of the slogans and their addressees.<sup>81</sup> More important, in the context of this article, is her brief attempt to categorize the main themes of the 215 slogans that she cites. She notes that, in the early days, many of the slogans were aimed against the media, especially *Rudé právo*; for instance, *Nekupujte Rudé právo, kupte si noviny!* (Don't buy *Rudé právo*, buy a newspaper!). Others increasingly targeted the government; the security forces (excluding the army); and the KSČ, its representatives, and the privileges that they enjoyed. Petráňová also identifies the high profile of the opposition leaders, Václav Havel and Valtr Komárek, and the absence of vulgar and lascivious elements.

A useful statistically based breakdown of themes is similarly presented by James Krapfl, who draws on hundreds of flyers and bulletins (including, but not limited to, slogans [which he does not list]) between November and December 1989. Krapfl groups the 591 demands that he identifies into nine general categories, of which the most important by some margin are political representation (37%) and working conditions (21%).<sup>82</sup> The imperative of concerted political action, as identified by Krapfl, is borne out by the programmatic nature of many of the slogans. Working conditions, however, are barely addressed in the dataset, except perhaps by implication in more generalized proclamations such as *Máme toho dost* (We've had enough of it) and *Chceme žít tak, jak se má, nebo tak, jak se dá, ale takhle už ne!* (We want to live as one should live, or as well as one can do, but not like this anymore!).

Denotative meaning and the directive/expressive functions again took precedence in 1989, although some of the slogans also performed other functions. For example, *Staronová vládo, nejsme tupé stádo. V sobotu 14.00 na Letné!* (Reformed ['old-new'] government, we're not a mindless flock. Saturday at 14.00 at Letná [Plain!]), combined the conative with the informational – *Staronová vládo* is in the vocative, while *Letná* specified a meeting place for the disaffected masses. The protesters' demands evolved significantly over time, in response both to political change, and to the increasing influence of OF and VPN. Yet, they never lost sight of the strategic objective of promoting an alternative political system, as in *Bez svobodných voleb není demokracie* (There is no democracy without free elections). The slogans soon acquired a new 'performative' dimension, as the 'felicity conditions' for change emerged, and the reactive and dialogic quickly evolved into a series of categorical demands.

The most common non-function word in the combined dataset is again the verb *chtít* (to want), with ninety-two citations. The juxtaposition of *chcem(e)* (we want) and *nechcem(e)* (we don't want), cited fifty and twenty-three times, respectively, helps to foreground their denotative meaning. Typical are examples such as *Nechceme násilí, chceme dialog* (We don't want violence, we want dialogue), at the start of the revolution, and *Nechceme Císaře, chceme prezidenta* (We don't want an emperor/Císař, we want a president), towards the end, which ran counter to the expressions of support for Císař in 1968.

Some of the slogans were marked by folkloric creativity and word play which reinforced their rhetorical impact, as in *Obušek – bijící srdce KSČ* (The truncheon – the beating heart of the KSČ); *Milice, jste opravdu lidové?* (Militia, are you really the people's [militia]?); and *40 let jsme byli vedeni stranou, teď chceme jít rovně* (For 40 years we've been led astray/by the Party, now we want to go straight).<sup>83</sup> Psychologically, humour helped to distract from the potential danger of the situation, although it was less prevalent than in 1968, possibly because it risked undermining the seriousness of the protesters' demands. The portentous nature of the events similarly tended to militate against too much use of the colloquial idiom or other linguistic expressions which might detract from the message, but not against rhyme, which added to the slogans' affectiveness.

Several of the counter slogans again took the form of quotations and/or included intertextual cultural references, thereby adding a degree of authority to the 'narrative', as with the (ironic) proclamation *Žádnou podporu prozatímní vládě* [V. I. Lenin, 1917] ('No support to the interim government') and *Hlas Marty po dvaceti letech znamená „Vítězství dobra“ nad zlem* (The voice of Marta after twenty years means the 'Victory of good' over evil).<sup>84</sup> Others drew on Christian values and motifs; for example, *Ježíš ti dá vnitřní svobodu* (Jesus will give you inner freedom). A few embellished Communist slogans, as with *Ať žije KSČ, ale jen ve vzpomínkách* (Long live the KSČ, but only in our memories) and *Kdo dnes stojí na chodníku, nemiluje republiku* (A person who stands on the sidelines [literally: the pavement] today does not love the Republic), where the word *dnes* is added to the original. Amongst the constative slogans were several moralistic-sounding aphorisms, which contrasted the virtues of the opposition with the authorities' flaws; for instance, *Nejmoudřejší silou v republice jsou stále nestraníci* (Non-Party members are still the wisest force in the Republic) and *Silní mají pravdu, ale pravda je silnější* (The strong are 'right', but the truth is stronger).

For all the opposition's steadfastness, a sense of apprehension emanates from many of the slogans. The verb *bát se* (to be afraid) is cited in ten slogans, as in *Bojí se jen ti, co nemají čisté svědomí* (Only those without a clear conscience feel fear!) and *Milice z venkova přijely jen na vánoční nákup – nebojte se!* (The [people's] militia have come from the countryside just to do Christmas shopping – fear not!). Several slogans referred to the need for fortitude and resilience, including *Strach z nebezpečí je tisíckrát horší než nebezpečí samo* [Daniel Defoe] (Fear of danger is ten thousand times more terrifying than danger itself) and *Místo*

*klidu a rozvahu – vytrvat a odvalu!* (Instead of coolness and composure – persistence and courage!). Others cautioned against over-reaction, as in *Nenechte se nikým vyprovokovat* (Don't allow yourself to be provoked by anyone). Eighteen of the slogans appealed directly or indirectly to the workers for their backing, as in *Dělníci, podpořte své děti a demokracii* (Workers, support your children and democracy) and *Dělníci, potřebujeme nejen vaše ruce, ale i vaše srdce!* (Workers, we need not just your hands, but also your hearts!).

The switch in focus from the foreign oppressor in 1968/69 to faults inherent in the socialist system in 1989 is especially striking. In the dataset relating to 1989 there are only two specific calls for reform socialism, including one citation of *Socialismus s lidskou tváří*. Moreover, there is not a single mention of the term *sovětský*, and only one allusion to the presence of Soviet troops. Reference to things Russian is largely confined to Gorbachev and his reforms: *Gorbačov je s námi, očistěte stranu* (Gorbachev is with us, purge the Party) and, less earnestly, *Glasnost, vtip a perestrojka – to je víc než ruská trojka* (Glasnost, the joke and perestroika – that's more than a Russian troika). Nonetheless, the parallels with 1968 are made explicit, as in *Jaro 68 Podzim 89* (Spring 68 Autumn 89), which depends for its impact on the visual rather than the verbal, and *My, studenti roku 1968, máme statečné a krásné děti!* (We, the students of 1968, have brave and beautiful children!), which highlights the generational aspect of the resistance.

At the start of the revolution, much of the protesters' spleen was directed at Jakeš and Miroslav Štěpán (Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee in Prague), whose names are cited thirty-five and sixteen times, respectively, as in *Jakeše do koše!* (Put Jakeš in the bin!) and *Jakeš a Štěpán: včera veselí, zítra zavření* (Jakeš and Štěpán: happy yesterday, locked up tomorrow). Of the counter slogans that did not feature in the dataset, the most momentous was perhaps the chant of *My nejsme děti* (We're not children), in response to a speech by Štěpán, on 23 November, by workers of the Prague branch of the engineering complex ČKD.<sup>85</sup> Generalized complaints about the Party hierarchy included the rhyming couplet *Od koryta ke korytu, a pak chcete autoritu* (From trough to trough, and you still want to be in charge). Repeated calls of *Demisi!* (Resign!) were also made to the prime minister, Ladislav Adamec, but not to President Husák, whose status had diminished to the extent that his name does not appear in the inventory. Adamec's creation of a 'compromise' coalition government, still dominated by Communists, on 2 December, met with particular derision. Amongst the protesters' various jibes were criticism of the party's last-ditch effort to include some opposition leaders in a reformed cabinet: *15: 5 Tomu říkáte zrušení vedoucí úlohy?* (15:5 [ministerial posts]. You call that the end of the [Party's] leading role?).

The establishment of a new more balanced government, at the beginning of December, largely obviated the need for further anti-Communist protest. As Wheaton and Kavan put it, 'The inauguration of this government in effect marked the end of the revolution as an event acted out publicly in the universities, schools, factories, and, most visibly, in the streets and squares'.<sup>86</sup> The subsequent poster campaign to elect a replacement for Husák had more in common with a Western-style presidential election. Civic Forum strongly promoted Václav Havel's candidature, as evidenced by many of the seventy-one citations of his name. Amongst the slogans were the ubiquitous *Havel na Hrad!* (Havel to the Castle!) and two rhyming couplets suggestive of the playful affection previously shown for Masaryk and Beneš: *Na Hrad chceme Vaška, ne rudého šaška!* (We want Vašek for the Castle,<sup>87</sup> not a red buffoon!) and *Havel bude hlavou státu, budem ho chtít jako tátu* (Havel will be head of state, we'll want him as our dad).

Havel's name is linked explicitly to that of Masaryk four times, as in *Havel nástupce Masaryka!* (Havel – Masaryk's successor!), as well as indirectly in the slogan *Kulturní národ chce mít v čele člověka kvalit T. G. Masaryka* (A cultured nation wants to have as its

head a person with the qualities of T. G. Masaryk). Whereas Masaryk was largely peripheral to the discourse in 1968, his name is cited in nine slogans in 1989, including *Masaryka na stovku* ([Put] Masaryk on the 100-crown note) and the rhyming couplet *My jsme národ Masaryka, ať si na to každý zvyká* (We're Masaryk's nation, everyone had better get used to that).

## Conclusion

This article has characterized a phenomenon of Communist society which has not previously been studied in its historical perspective. It has focused both on the linguistic dimension of the counter slogan and its intertextual allusions, and on its cultural and ideological role (the creation of an opposition 'narrative'). The adoption of a mixed-methods approach, combining different linguistic models and tools – Leech's language functions; Jakobson's communication functions; Austin's speech act theory; Halliday's conceptualization of register; and data-informed discourse analysis – with primary and secondary historical research, has allowed for the identification of features and trends in their broader discursive context. The methodology chosen has thus enabled a more systematic evaluation of the changing nature and emphases of the opposition's demands and laments. Unlike the repetitive and formulaic official slogans, which relied for their impact mainly on their connotative sense, the counter slogans were often reactive and creative, and generally foregrounded denotative meaning. They also had clearly defined directive/expressive functions largely absent from the officially approved slogans (especially the later ones).

It would be easy to dismiss the counter slogan (at least up to 1989) as an irrelevance. After all, it rarely achieved the goals that it sought to effect. Yet, its symbolic significance should not be disregarded. It gave critics of the regime a public voice, which was rarely heard outside the private domain. The Czechs may not have been as vocal as, say, the Poles, but nor were they a consistently complaisant and tractable people (as suggested by the relative inertia of the early 1970s to the mid 1980s). At different stages of Communist rule, the established norms were strongly challenged in written inscriptions and orally at mass gatherings, in which repeated leitmotifs (Halliday's 'field') left the authorities in no doubt about the strength of public feeling and unity of purpose. It is very unlikely that resistance in 1968 would have continued so long, or that the Velvet Revolution would have succeeded as it did, without a massive coordinated information and protest campaign, in which slogans served as an important rallying cry.

The changing character of the counter slogan draws attention to the danger of homogenizing socialist rule. Czechoslovakia was by no means the same country throughout the forty years of Communist administration. Whereas in the early socialist era opponents of the regime hankered after (what they saw as) a better past, by the late 1950s many of the critics were reconciled to the new geopolitical realities, and were seeking to challenge the imperfections of the system. By the time of the Prague Spring, there was a strong commitment to the idea of socialism, as articulated by the reformist wing of the KSČ, but implacable opposition to a return to the pre-Dubček years. During the subsequent 'normalization' period, passivity and cynicism gradually gave way to a determination to overthrow one-party rule. The desire to build a better, more democratic society was fittingly accompanied by a re-evaluation of the past, especially the role and values of Masaryk, who had been rendered *persona non-grata* by the Communist state. However, even in late 1989, the restoration of capitalist democracy was by no means universally endorsed, with a majority of the population favouring some kind of compromise between socialism and capitalism.<sup>88</sup>

Counter slogans may not have been especially obvious to the casual observer of Czechoslovak Communist society, except in the aftermath of the Prague Spring and during

the Velvet Revolution, but they continued to inform the public consciousness even when opposition to the Party was largely muted. Amongst the slogans which stuck most in the imagination (judging by the frequency with which they were repeated in private conversations) were those that employed humour and/or wordplay to subvert the official ideology, as in *Se Sovětským Svazem na věčné časy (a ani o hodinu déle)!* (Together with the Soviet Union for evermore [and not even an hour longer]!). The existence of such anti-Communist sentiments did not in itself threaten the stability of the regime, but it provided much-needed light relief, and helped to reinforce a sense of common identity outside the constraints of the imposed norms. Not everyone had access to underground literature or to the document Charter 77, but virtually everybody was able to cite at least the odd trenchant, creative or witty opposition slogan.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Notable exceptions are John P. C. Matthews, 'Majales: The Abortive Student Revolt in Czechoslovakia in 1956' (Cold War International History Project, Working Paper No. 24, Washington, DC, 1998), which provides an excellent account of the May festival parade in 1956; and Bernard Wheaton and Zdeněk Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution. Czechoslovakia, 1988–1991* (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, 1992), 187–194, which cites over a hundred examples (in English translation only) from 1989. Note that the English version of the collection of documents from 1968, *Sedm pražských dnů. 21.-27. srpna 1968* (Prague, 1968) – Robert Littell, ed., *The Czech Black Book* (New York, Washington, London, 1969) – omits altogether 'A selection of inscriptions from Prague streets' (471–480 of the Czech original).

<sup>2</sup> The most authoritative published corpus of Communist speak (derived from the Czech National Corpus), František Čermák, Václav Cvrček and Věra Schmiedtová, eds., *Slovník komunistické totality* (Prague, 2010), focuses on the official lexicon.

<sup>3</sup> Slovak counter slogans, which are outside the remit of this article, tended to be very similar in form and usage to the Czech slogans.

<sup>4</sup> Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 187.

<sup>5</sup> See Geoffrey Leech, *Semantics. The Study of Meaning* (Bungay, Suffolk, 1981), especially 40–42.

<sup>6</sup> See Roman Jakobson, 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in *Style in Language*, ed. T. A. Sebek (Cambridge, MA, 1960), 350–83 (354); and Karl Bühler, *Sprachtheorie* (Oxford, 1934).

<sup>7</sup> Jindřich Pecka, *Spontánní projevy Pražského jara 1968–1969* (Brno, 1993); Bohuslav Beneš and Václav Hrníčko, *Nápisy v ulicích* (Brno, 1993); and Lydia Petrářová, 'Kam s nimi? Hesla a nápisy v ulicích z listopadu 1989', *Český lid* 96, no. 4 (2009): 421–444 & V–VII, whose list is based on the collection held in the Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences, Prague.

<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive summary of the major public protests in Czechoslovakia and examples of defiance, see Oldřich Tůma, 'Demonstrace a protesty: projevy a podoby hromadného rezistenčního chování ve veřejném prostoru', 11–53 (especially 19–35), and Tomáš Vilímek, 'Projevy rezistenčního chování v Československu v letech 1969 až 1989', in *Projevy a podoby protirežimní rezistence v komunistickém Československu 1948–1989*, eds. Tomáš Vilímek and Oldřich Tůma (Prague, 2018), 111–265 (especially 112–144).

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of official slogans, see Tom Dickens, 'The Political Slogan in Communist Czechoslovakia (1948–89)', *Central Europe* 15 (2017): 58–87.

<sup>10</sup> J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1962); and John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, 1969).

<sup>11</sup> See Bohuslav Beneš, 'Folklór a protofolklór v politické renesanci', *Národopisné aktuality* 27 (1990): 73–80; and Beneš and Hrníčko, *Nápisy v ulicích*, especially chapter 1, 7–21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> See Kevin McDermott, 'Popular Resistance in Communist Czechoslovakia: The Plzeň Uprising (June 1953)', *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 4 (2010): 287–307 (302).

<sup>14</sup> M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Language, context, and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective* (Oxford, 1985).

<sup>15</sup> See Pecka, *Spontánní projevy*, 54 & 72.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the account of Vladimír Starý, cited in Miroslav Vaněk and Pavel Mücke, *Velvet Revolutions: An Oral History of Czech Society* (Oxford, 2016), 13.

<sup>17</sup> Nerudova ulice in Prague now bears a plaque commemorating an attack on the students on 25 February 1948.

<sup>18</sup> For accounts of the protests, see 'Pochod na Hrad a výstřel v únoru 1948', *Novinky.cz*, February 25, 2018, <https://www.novinky.cz/veda-skoly/464332-pochod-na-hrad-a-vystrel-v-unoru-1948.html>; Ivan Motýl, 'ÚNOR 1948: Studenti pochodují, Gottwald odmítá loutky', *Týden.cz*, February 23, 2008, [http://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/domaci/historie/unor-1948/unor-1948-studenti-pochoduji-gottwald-odmita-loutky\\_45554.html](http://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/domaci/historie/unor-1948/unor-1948-studenti-pochoduji-gottwald-odmita-loutky_45554.html); and ČTK, 'Pochod studentů na Hrad v roce 1948 připomene pietní akce', February 25, 2017, [https://prazsky.denik.cz/zpravy\\_region/pochod-studentu-na-hrad-v-roce-1948-pripomene-pietni-akce-20170225.html](https://prazsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/pochod-studentu-na-hrad-v-roce-1948-pripomene-pietni-akce-20170225.html).

<sup>19</sup> See Jakub Šlouf, 'Proamerické demonstrace v Plzni 5.–6. května 1948: „Nesneseme v republice štvání proti Americe!“', in *Třetí odboj: kapitoly z dějin protikomunistické rezistence v Československu v padesátých letech 20. století*, eds. Václav Veber, Jan Bureš et al. (Prague, 2010), 83–103.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia. The State that Failed* (New Haven and London, 2009), 183; Jan Waldauf, *Sokol – malé dějiny velké myšlenky*, vol. 1 (Luhačovice, 2007), especially 235–245; and Veber et al., *Třetí odboj ČSR v letech 1948–1953*, 43–44, who also cite 25 slogans.

<sup>21</sup> See Tereza Frýbertová, 'Nedáme si diktovat, koho máme milovat(?) O sletovém průvodu v roce 1948', *Theatralia* 17, no. 1 (2014): 52–89 (75).

<sup>22</sup> Gottwald was trained as a cabinet maker. Note that the reference to *truhláři* may also suggest criticism of Josef Truhlář, Sokol's acquiescent chairman from 1948 to 1952, although the plural of his surname would be *Truhlářovi*.

<sup>23</sup> Jindřich Fügner and Miroslav Tyrš were the co-founders of Sokol.

<sup>24</sup> Sušice was the only town where the number of blank (or 'white') ballots (*bílé lístky*) in the May 1948 election exceeded support for the list of candidates approved by the Communist-led National Front.

<sup>25</sup> Frýbertová, 'Nedáme si diktovat, koho máme milovat(?)'.

<sup>26</sup> Jan Masaryk, son of Tomáš Masaryk, was Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia from 1940 to 1948. He suspiciously fell to his death from a window in the Foreign Ministry.

<sup>27</sup> See Dušan Karpatský and Jan Šulc, eds., *Jan Zábřana, Celý život 1. Výbor z deníků 1948/1984* (Prague, 2001), 50.

<sup>28</sup> See Heimann, *Czechoslovakia. The State that Failed*, 184.

<sup>29</sup> The authorities abandoned the idea of renaming the square Gottwaldovo, and settled for Náměstí 9. května.

<sup>30</sup> Milan Bárta, 'Akce „Prostějov“. Odstranění sochy T. G. Masaryka v Prostějově v dubnu 1953', *Paměť a dějiny* 3 (2013): 47–57.

<sup>31</sup> Tonda was a familiar diminutive form for President Antonín Zápotocký, who had been appointed on 21 March 1953. Vilém Pobuda was chairman of the Local National Committee (MNV) in Prostějov.

<sup>32</sup> Examples cited by Bárta, 'Akce „Prostějov“', 50–51.

<sup>33</sup> For details of the unrest, see Otto Ulc, 'Pilsen: The Unknown Revolt', *Problems of Communism* 14, no. 3 (1965): 46–9; Pavel Marek, 'Protikomunistické demonstrace v Československu v roce 1953', *Securitas imperii* 24, no. 1 (2014): 10–34; McDermott, 'Popular Resistance in Communist Czechoslovakia'; Jiří Pernes, *Krise komunistického režimu v Československu v 50. letech 20. století* (Brno, 2008); and Jakub Šlouf, *Spříznění měnou: Genealogie plzeňské revolvy 1. června 1953* (Prague, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> See Kamil Činátl, 'Československé totalitní roky', in *Věčné časy. Československé totalitní roky*, ed. Jan Hron (Prague, 2009), 51–138 (74).

<sup>35</sup> See Jiří Urban, 'Barvou a štětcem proti režimu a jím prosazované kolektivizaci', in *Třetí odboj*, eds. Veber et al., 192–221 (220–221).

<sup>36</sup> Národní archiv, Fond 014/12 Svazek 23 Ar. j.: 820 1–15 (2).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. The Czech National Socialist Party (*Česká strana národně socialistická*) was a moderate democratic party, to which Beneš had belonged.

<sup>38</sup> See 'Author's interviews with Dr. Ladislav Němec', in Matthews, 'Majáles', 16.

<sup>39</sup> Alexej Čepička was Minister of Defence from 1950 to 1956. Note that the feminine noun *čepička* (with a small č) means a (standard-issue) 'forage cap'.

<sup>40</sup> The pejorative verb (*z*)*glajchšaltovat*, from German, has distinct echoes of Austro-Hungarian and Nazi rule. Václav Kopecký was Minister of Information/Culture from 1945 to 1954.

<sup>41</sup> H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton, NJ, 1976), 72.

<sup>42</sup> An unofficial *majáles* took place in Prague in 1962, and was suppressed by the authorities.

<sup>43</sup> - ml -, 'Studentský majáles', *Rudé právo*, May 2, 1965, 2. The rest of its extensive coverage of the day was devoted to the official May Day celebration.

<sup>44</sup> Jiří Danda, 'Majáles 65', 1966, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrB1Wb91LBM>.

<sup>45</sup> Petr Blažek, 'Vyhoštění krále majálesu. Allen Ginsberg a Státní bezpečnost', *Paměť a dějiny* 2 (2011): 28–43 (37).

<sup>46</sup> *Klikoživ* was an invented humorous acronym from *klika opozičních živlů* (clique of opposition elements).

<sup>47</sup> Antonín Novotný was First Secretary of the KSČ from March 1953 to January 1968, and President of Czechoslovakia from November 1957 to March 1968.

<sup>48</sup> Blažek, 'Vyhoštění krále majálesu', 36.

<sup>49</sup> Note the use of poetic licence here. To be grammatically correct, this should read *do mensy* (nowadays written *do menzy*).

<sup>50</sup> Radim Servít was a professor at the Czech Technical University in Prague (ČVUT). When Professor Servít was dismissed from his post after 1968, the slogan *Servít už není vůl* (Servít is no longer an idiot) began to appear on walls.

<sup>51</sup> For an authoritative account of the campaign against the *vlasatci*, see Petr Blažek and Filip Pospíšil, „*Vraťte nám vlasy*“ (Prague, 2010).

<sup>52</sup> Heimann, *Czechoslovakia. The State that Failed*, 227.

<sup>53</sup> Pecka, *Spontánní projevy*, 46–49.

<sup>54</sup> The concept *Socialismus s lidskou tváří* may have been inspired, at least in part, by the work of Radovan Richta and colleagues. See Radovan Richta et al., *Civilizace na rozcestí: společenské a lidské souvislosti vědeckotechnické revoluce* (Prague, 1966).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>56</sup> These include Jiří Sovadina, 'Hesla z nápisů, plakátů a letáků v srpnových dnech 1968 v Ostravě', *Moderní dějiny*, June 26, 2012, <http://www.moderni-dejiny.cz/clanek/hesla-z-napisu-plakatu-a-letaku-v-srpnovych-dnech-1968-v-ostrove/>; and *Sedm pražských dnů* (see note 1).

<sup>57</sup> Pecka, *Spontánní projevy*, 16 & 17.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>59</sup> Ludvík Svoboda was a Czechoslovak general who fought in both World Wars, and was President of Czechoslovakia from 30 March 1968 to 28 May 1975. He had been regarded as a national hero, although his reputation was tarnished after 1968.

<sup>60</sup> It was first used in a radio broadcast in May 1945, and was repeated on 21 August 1968 by an announcer who declared 'Jsme s vámi, vážení posluchači, důvěřujte nám, dejte na nás, buďte s námi' (We're with you, dear listeners, trust us, take notice of us, be with us). See Alžběta Švarcová, 'Jsme s vámi, buďte s námi!', *Český rozhlas*, August 21, 2013, <https://vltava.rozhlas.cz/jsme-s-vami-budte-s-nami-5048514>.

<sup>61</sup> Pecka, *Spontánní projevy*, 17.

<sup>62</sup> Vasil Biľak, Alois Indra and Drahomír Kolder were amongst the leading pro-Moscow Communists. The mantra *Pravda vítězí* (Truth prevails) has adorned the presidential standard since 1920.

<sup>63</sup> Petráňová, 'Kam s nimi?', 427.

<sup>64</sup> See Emanuel Pecka, 'Political Culture in the Czech Republic', in *Political Culture in East Central Europe*, eds. Fritz Plasser and Andreas Pribersky (Aldershot, 1996), 205–10 (206).

<sup>65</sup> See Archiv bezpečnostních složek, Svazek 22, Arch. jednotka: 3094 D. ú: F:021-D-1801-412/dálnopisy-1968, Dálnopis UV-99/68, 2.

<sup>66</sup> The nouns *šváb* and *rus* – common types of cockroach – (with capital first letters) also mean 'Swabian/German' and 'Russian'. (Oldřich) Švestka – another reviled hardliner – (with a lowercase first letter) means 'damson'.

<sup>67</sup> *Co Čech, to muzikant* is a traditional Czech self-stereotype. *Gdzie jest ta ulica, gdzie jest ten dom* is a well-known Polish song. *Host do domu – Bůh do domu* is an old Slavonic proverb. *Poslušně hlásím* alludes to Hášek's Good Soldier Švejk. The Czech part of the Czechoslovak national anthem was titled *Kde domov můj* (Where is My Home).

<sup>68</sup> Examples taken from an Exhibition Catalogue, Dana Kyndrová, ed., *Jan Palach 16. – 25.1.1969* (Prague, 2009). The reference to *Lidé bděte* – the mantra of the anti-Nazi journalist Julius Fučík – was readily understood.

<sup>69</sup> See Jan Kalous, 'ČSSR – okupanti 4:3. Analýza jedné březnové noci', *Paměť a dějiny 2* (2009): 22–43. Further celebrations with anti-Soviet chants followed another victory over the USSR in April 1972.

<sup>70</sup> For a comprehensive account of the events, see Milan Bárta, Jan Břečka and Jan Kalous, *Demonstrace v Československu v srpnu 1969 a jejich potlačení* (Prague, 2012).

<sup>71</sup> Jan Břečka, 'Divoký západ si z našeho státu už dělat nedáme ...', *Paměť a dějiny 3* (2009): 33–48.

<sup>72</sup> The noun *husák* means 'gander'. Gustáv Husák was First/General Secretary of the KSČ from April 1969 to December 1987, and President of Czechoslovakia from May 1975 to December 1989.

<sup>73</sup> See Tůma, 'Demonstrace a protesty', 28–30.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Jakub Rákosník, 'Tři cesty soudobé české historiografie komunismu', in *Český a slovenský komunismus (1921–2011)*, eds. Jan Kalous and Jiří Kocian (Prague, 2012), 13–23.

<sup>75</sup> For an account of the events of January 1989, see Jan Ladislav and Vilém Prečan, *Horký leden 1989 v Československu* (Prague, 1990).

<sup>76</sup> Tůma, 'Demonstrace a Protesty', 14.

<sup>77</sup> Miloš Jakeš was General Secretary of the KSČ from December 1987 to November 1989.

<sup>78</sup> Cited by James Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face. Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989–1992* (Ithaca and London, 2013), 100.

<sup>79</sup> Beneš and Václav Hrníčko, *Nápis v ulicích*, 53.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 111–12. Their schema, with my suggested illustrations, is as follows: (1) 'generalization' (zobecnění) of a concrete phenomenon in relation to a longer period: *KSČ má ideologii, my máme pravdu* (The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has ideology, we have the truth); (2) 'evaluative judgements' (hodnotící soudy): *Nechceme Svaz*



*mládeže, neb má rudé otěže* (We don't want the Union of Youth, for it is being steered by the Communists [literally: 'it has red reins']); (3) 'evaluative norms' (hodnotící normy), often in the form of assertion and denial: *Kdo se bojí, nesmí do lesa – A Havel do lesa šel* (If you're afraid [of the wolves], don't go into the forest – And Havel went into the forest); (4) 'investigative judgements' (zjišťující soudy), which state the existing situation, but simultaneously look to the future: *Neděláme si prázdniny, chceme lepší budoucnost* (We're not taking holidays, we want a better future); and (5) 'investigative norms' (zjišťující normy): *Včera disident, zítra prezident* (Yesterday a dissident, tomorrow the president).

<sup>81</sup> Petráňová, 'Kam s nimi?', 422–428. See also Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation* (Cambridge, 1996).

<sup>82</sup> Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face*, 78–79.

<sup>83</sup> *Stranou* is both an adverb meaning 'aside' and the instrumental of *strana* meaning 'by the party'.

<sup>84</sup> Marta Kubišová was a pop singer whose song *Modliba pro Martu* (Prayer for Mart[h]a) became a resistance anthem in 1968.

<sup>85</sup> Štěpán had told the workers that no country would allow fifteen-year-old children to determine the removal of the president or his replacement.

<sup>86</sup> Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 108.

<sup>87</sup> A diminutive form of Václav.

<sup>88</sup> See Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face*, 96–100.