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Histories of Collaboration and Dissent: Journalists' Associations Squeezed by Political System Changes

Editors

Epp Lauk and Kaarle Nordenstreng

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Editorial

Journalists’ Associations as Political Instruments in Central and Eastern Europe

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Abstract
This editorial provides the overall context for the five cases—three national and two international—covered in this thematic issue. While the cases are from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), they highlight fundamental questions of journalism everywhere, including contradictions between freedom and control, professionalism and politics, individual and collective. The associations of journalists serve as very useful platforms to study these questions, especially at historical turning points when the whole political system changed, as happened twice in CEE after World War II.

Keywords
Central and Eastern Europe; journalism; journalist associations; political control; professionalism

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue “Histories of Collaboration and Dissent: Journalists’ Associations Squeezed by Political System Changes”, edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) and Kaarle Nordenstreng (University of Tampere, Finland).

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Media and journalists—with their professional associations—have everywhere had a sensitive relationship with political regimes, ranging from total collaboration to vehement opposition. The leading Western ideal of journalism has included an autonomous and slightly oppositional relationship of the media to the existing powers, with journalist associations as crucial instruments in maintaining professional autonomy. On the other hand, in the authoritarian conditions pervading under Nazi and Communist rule the journalists’ associations operated as instruments expressing obedience to those in power.

A cornerstone of professionalism in any field is an association to advance professional standards, legitimate the status of the profession, develop collective ideology and support the individual and collective autonomy of the members of the profession. This evolution of professionalism around professional organizations is particularly characteristic of the history of journalism (Høyer & Lauk, 2016). A distinguishing feature of journalism has always been its relation to freedom of expression and of the press. Journalism is the only profession with this important mission as an element of its professional ideology. The primary functions of journalism—providing people with relevant and adequate information, and investigating the use of power in society—are impossible to fulfil without at least a certain degree of freedom. Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes always endeavour to suppress this freedom, which places journalists’ organizations in a difficult position between pressure from the authorities and the pursuit of professional autonomy—a choice between collaboration and repression.

The most dramatic stages in the development of journalism as a profession coincide with the political crises and upheavals of the 20th century in the Western world, especially after World War II and following the collapse of the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). During the post-war years and up to 1991, journalism in these countries was officially regarded as a part of political ideology and controlled by the Communist authorities. The same applies to journalists' associations. However, oppositional voices did exist, although often only as whispers. Various discourses of dissent developed, even in the official media, and an atmosphere of non-compliance was fairly strong in the journalists' associations of many countries. After the collapse of Communism in the 1990s, journalists and their associations were faced with many challenges, not only politically, but also financially and organizationally.

The articles in this thematic issue focus on crucial junctures in the history of journalists´ associations, when the political systems changed after World War II: from Nazism to Western democracy, from democracy to Communism and back from Communism to democracy. The examples come from national associations in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Estonia, with the additional perspectives of international associations of journalists both inside and outside CEE.

Jan Cebe's (2017) article tells the less known story of how immediately after World War II journalism and its associations was "cleansed" from its Nazi past—a process which actually led to some death sentences. In Czechoslovakia this paved the way for later political house cleaning after the Communist takeover in 1948. The Polish history reviewed by Wojciech Furman (2017) shows how closely journalists' associations reflected the situation of the political forces in the country—by no means serving as crude political instruments of those in power but rather as platforms of political struggle. Epp Lauk's (2017) article on the developments in Estonia also reminds us that while the political system at large—democracy, Nazism or Communism—naturally determined the basic order in society, journalists and their associations still found some ways to resist the pressure from the authorities. Moreover, the Estonian case shows us how history has a tendency to repeat itself—and how little we are ready to learn from it.

The national cases are followed by the perspectives of international associations. Markéta Ševčíková and Kaarle Nordenstreng (2017) focus on Czechoslovakia, which in 1947 became the host of the only worldwide International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) established one year earlier in Copenhagen to carry on the legacy of the pre-war Fédération Internationale des Journalistes (FIJ). However, in a couple of years the IOJ became a hostage of the nascent Cold War, making it a fellow traveller of the Soviet-led global East. This article demonstrates the sensitivity of the relations of an international association with the national associations of the country in which its headquarters are located: while both are governed by the same political order, the international organization may enjoy much greater autonomy. The article also shows how important it is to know the whole political history of the country—something that is too often overlooked when studying journalists and their associations. Finally Martin Nekola's (2017) commentary serves as a reminder of how emigrant journalists from CEE became part of the Western Cold War front.

One lesson to be learned from these stories is that CEE during the Cold War was not a monolith and that each national history has its particular characteristics, which should be taken into consideration instead of maintaining a stereotype view of a "free West" and a "totalitarian East". Actually history in CEE was quite many-sided as shown in the thematic issue of *Media and Communication* (Volume 3, Issue 4) (Lauk, 2015). After all, the "Iron Curtain" was not entirely opaque and impermeable, as shown by research on cultural exchanges (Mikkonen & Koivunen, 2015).

Another lesson of this thematic issue is that the history of journalists' associations has still been insufficiently studied. Although many national histories of journalists' associations exist, they are primarily "surface" histories documenting principal events and people but lacking more profound socio-political analysis as well as an international perspective (Nordenstreng, 2016). A case in point is the centenary history of the British National Union of Journalists (Gopsill & Neale, 2007)—a good story of the Union itself and its relations to press industry and the state, yet with no ambition to place the Union into a wider political and societal framework.

The third lesson takes us back to the study of the basic professional values and occupational ideology of journalism. Examined from the organization's perspective using sociological and political science approaches, they may reveal additional qualities not so far noticed.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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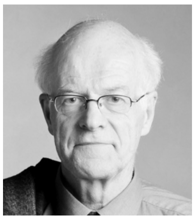

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Article

Cleansing among Czech Journalists after World War II and a Comparison with the Situation in France and the Netherlands

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Abstract
After the end of World War II Czechoslovakia was faced with the task of punishing its Nazi collaborators. Besides sentencing traitors by the special people's courts, Czech journalists themselves also started the cleansing among their own ranks. The cleansing committee of the Czech Journalists' Union investigated some 400 journalists and imposed some sort of penalties on more than 200 people. The article also presents a brief a comparison with the situation in France and the Netherlands. The cleansing among Czech journalists was very rigorous, even in comparison to other European countries. In contrast to Western countries, and due to the subsequent political developments, the journalists punished were often prohibited from resuming their profession.

Keywords
cleansing; collaboration; Czechia; France; journalists; media; Netherlands; WWII

Issue
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1. Introduction

After the end of the World War II (WWII) all European nations overrun by the Nazis were faced with the necessity of punishing collaborators.

Post-war Czechoslovakia also had to decide how to punish the "traitors to the nation". A special judiciary was established in 1945 by two so-called retribution decrees[1] by a structure of the people's courts that were supposed to ensure the cleansing of the nation from those who collaborated with the occupiers. These courts also sentenced several dozen journalists, often to harsh prison sentences. In seven cases, journalists were also sentenced to death (see more in Borák, 1998; Frommer, 2005; for the political history of Czechoslovakia, see Ševčíková & Nordenstreng, 2017, in this issue.)

The national resistance movement, as well as groups of exiles with centres in London and Moscow, acting outside the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, had already endeavoured to find a solution to the whole collaboration issue during the war. The representatives of the exiled resistance movement in London (the Czechoslovak government in exile from July 1940) talked quite regularly about the punishment of all those betraying their nation by serving the Nazi occupiers on the radio programmes broadcast by the BBC. Some of the contributions directly concerned the punishment of the treacherous journalists:

> Each sentence written by a Czech or a Slovak journalist for Hitler is tantamount to a shot from a gun of a Henlein Ordner [Sudeten German paramilitary troop] in the backs of our troopers. Each word, praising Nazism, is the same thing as the kick of an SS man into the bodies of the thousands of our people imprisoned in the concentration camps. Each word written by a Czech hand against Czechoslovakia is like a bomb against our brave pilots, risking their lives every day in the name

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[1] For Czech territories it was Presidential Decree No. 16/1945 Coll. "on the punishment of Nazi criminals, traitors and their helpers and on extraordinary people's tribunals" and the Presidential Decree No. 17/1945 Coll. "on the National Court". There were different legal norms for Slovakia.

> of their homeland…each article supporting Germany written by a Czech hand is—in a word—treason. And its culprits must be treated as culprits….Everyone who does not belong to this group should avoid belonging into it. For their guilt will be judged by a judge who knows no mercy. And this judge will be the nation itself! (Drtina, 1945, p. 131)

The resistance movement at home, also decimated by the activities of the Gestapo and its informers, demanded the strictest approach. The programme, broadcast on 23 August 1944 to London by the Council of Three (a leading non-Communist resistance group at the end of the war) representing the standpoint of the rest of the non-Communist resistance movement at home, stated radical claims regarding retribution. Among other things it demanded "as an example for the future ruthless punishments for traitors and collaborators, including traitors before Munich and economic parasites" (Kozák, 2002, p. 47). The Communist resistance demanded the same (Hudec, 1978).

The manifesto of the Czechoslovak exile government known as the *Košický vládní program* (Košice Government Programme), which was discussed at a meeting of London and Moscow representatives in exile with the Slovak National Council in Moscow on 25 March 1945, talks about the necessity to punish all traitors and collaborators with the Nazi regime (Borák, 1998, p. 28). It states: "Treacherous journalists who sold themselves to Germans will suffer retribution" (*Košický vládní program*, 1974, p. 33). And because the government committed itself in the programme to "make a thorough cleansing in journalism, radio and film" (*Košický vládní program*, 1974, p. 33), journalists themselves started the cleansing among their own ranks as well.

In the period shortly before the Prague uprising,[2] a journalistic resistance group around František Bauer, the last democratically elected president of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), had been assigned the task by the Czech National Council (CNC), as the supreme organ of the national resistance movement. This group was integrated into the press committee of the CNC as a committee of the representatives of the press, and one of its members, NUJ secretary Karel F. Zieris, was assigned the task of making a list of those journalists who were supposed to be placed under arrest and subsequently stand trial in open court. Immediately after the outbreak of the uprising in Prague, on 5 May 1945, Zieris handed over the list of 36 top journalists—collaborators—to the president of the press committee of the CNC, Lumír Čivrný.[3] Then, also on the basis of this list, some leading representatives of journalistic collaboration were taken prisoner during the uprising.

Obviously in a number of cases the arrests of collaborator journalists were quite spontaneous, without any orders from the resistance leadership. After all, these journalists represented for the Czech public the most visible representatives of the collaboration with Germans during the occupation, thanks to their regular activities on the pages of the Czech legal press or in radio, and they were treated accordingly during the uprising. One known example is the arrest of the radio journalist Alois Kříž, who was lynched in the street by the furious mob; it was documented by photos.

In the revolutionary days of May the representatives of the new leadership of the Journalists' Union (still under the old "protectorate" name National Union of Journalists) also issued a statement to the Czech public, in which they expressed themselves fully in favour of the cleansing of public life announced by the Košice government.[4] The highly emotive declaration of the group around František Bauer was made on the air in the revolutionary days, although its purpose was quite practical. The journalists who stood in the front lines of the revival process within the post-war Czech media needed to convince the Czech public that the pro-German articles that people had read during the six-year occupation on the pages of the Czech press or listened to in the broadcasting of the protectorate radio, were the work of a small group of unscrupulous renegade journalists, whereas many Czech journalists due to their patriotic opinions and revolutionary activities were prosecuted or even killed. It was the activities in the resistance movement and the uncompromising attitude towards the collaborating journalists that were supposed to ensure Bauer's group a high moral credit and the right to the leading position within the Czech post-war media system.

2. The Cleansing Process within the Journalistic Organization

The cleansing committee, the setting up of which was announced on 11 May 1945 at the conference of Prague press representatives convened by the CNC, was indeed set up in the following days. It consisted of the widow of a journalist executed by the Nazis, a journalist released from a concentration camp, a previously exiled journalist, a journalist from the domestic resistance movement, the secretary of the NUJ, chief and desk-officer from the press department of the Ministry of Information and the president of the NUJ. "This committee will examine the activities of all journalists during the war".[5]

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[2] The Prague uprising was an attempt by the Czech resistance to liberate the capital city from German occupation in the last days of WWII. The uprising began on 5 May 1945 and went on until 8 May 1945, ending in a ceasefire between the Czech resistance and the German army led by General Rudolf Toussaint. German forces decided to leave Prague on the same day. Next morning, the Red Army entered the nearly liberated city.

[3] National Archive (NA), collection Archive of the Czech Journalists' Syndicate (ASYN), unsorted documents, Zieris, K., F. *Nedatovaný projev k 30 letům obnovení svazu novinářů*, p. 5.

[4] NA, collection ASYN, unsorted documents, *Prohlášení revolučního vedení Národního svazu novinářů k českému lidu*, undated.

[5] NA, collection ASYN, box 167, *dopis předsedy NSN dr. F. Bauera Policejnímu ředitelství*, 19 May 1945.

The members of this so-called “cleansing” committee were nominated on the basis of the proposals of the journalists themselves by the Communist Minister of Information Václav Kopecký. The committee began its activities in May 1945, but numerous journalists whose names appeared under the pro-Nazis articles were not examined at all. Journalists who after the war decided to give up the profession were not investigated.[6] Nor did the obligation to go through the process apply to several tens of prominent activists already expelled from the Union in the revolutionary period; in most cases they had already been arrested and were awaiting trial. But for those who did not appear on the first published lists and who wanted to continue in the profession after the war, it was not officially possible to evade examination.[7]

For those journalists whose activities during the protectorate (author’s note: The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia) could, according to the committee, be deemed an expression of pro-German activism, sanctions were imposed, and these can be divided into four types according to how serious the offence was.

2.1. Expulsion from the Journalistic Organization and Handover to Justice

The most serious form of punishment was expulsion from the journalistic organization and the handing over of the case to the justice (national court or people’s tribunals). This punishment is documented for 73 individuals. The participation of the Czech Journalists’ Union (CJU—successor of the “protectorate” NUJ) did not end with expulsion from the Union and handing the case over to the justice authorities. The officials of the Union were frequently present in court as key witnesses. František Bauer, the key witness in almost all major trials of journalists before the National Court, had in this respect an exceptional position, as shown for example the trial of Václav Crha, where, according to the daily *Svobodné slovo* (30 March 1946, p. 2), Bauer allegedly gave “the most serious testimony”.

The witnesses’ attitude towards the question of guilt and punishment was in fact very often quite relentless. As an example we take the trial of Antonín J. Kožíšek, Rudolf Novák (editor-in-chief of *Árijský boj/Arian Combat/*, the “Czech” *Der Stürmer*), and Alois Kříž, whom the national court sentenced to death. Out of eight assistant judges in court, two were journalists—the CJU officials Josef Linek and Vojtěch Dolejší. Both voted in all three cases in favour of the death penalty.[8] Likewise at the trial of Vladimír Krychtálek (pro-Nazi leader of the NUJ), Jaroslav Křemen, Emanuel Vajtauer and Karel Werner, where Otakar Wünsch, president of the CJU, was among the assistant judges. He also voted in all four cases in favour of the death penalty. All those condemned appealed to President Eduard Beneš for pardon. Only in the case of Křemen this was also recommended by some members of the court Senate (composed of the presiding judge, assistant judges and prosecutor). Granting the pardon was also supported by two assistant judges, except for the prosecutor Tržický and Presiding Judge Šrámek. Wünsch voted in this case against the pardon.[9]

2.2. Expulsion for Life from the Journalistic Organization and Prohibition of Further Journalistic Practice

The second type of punishment was somewhat more lenient and included expulsion for life from the journalistic organization and a ban on further journalistic practice (after the war only members of the CJU could work as media professionals). This was applied to some 40 journalists. These journalists were not sent to the people’s court. However, by the beginning of November 1945 the preparatory committee of the CJU decided that they would be reported to the court at least on suspicion of crimes on the basis of the so-called “minor” retribution decree.[10]

Accordingly, after the liberation, this presidential decree n. 138/1945 Coll. “on certain offences against the national honour” influenced a wide section of Czech society, and became a norm that was often misused to settle differences between political opponents and also between ordinary people. Trials did not take place before the people’s court, but before the investigative committees of National Committees (institutions on the lowest level of new post-war Czechoslovak system of government). Many journalists had to appear before them after the war. Here they had to face accusations related to their journalistic as well as other activities.

2.3. Temporary Suspension of the Right to Engage in Journalistic Practice

In 40 cases where the committee did not find cause serious enough to bring the case forward to justice (national court or people’s tribunals) or expelling the journalist from CJU, he or she was punished by temporary suspension from journalistic practice.[11]

The time for which these people were denied the right to continue their journalistic practice varied from three months to one and a half years; a longer period was used only in those cases where the appeal committee later mitigated its original decision on expulsion to suspension.

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[6] NA, collection ASYN, box 167, part 10, *oznámení Odvolací komise pro očistu novinářského stavu při ministerstvu informací Svazu českých novinářů*, 21 February 1946.

[7] NA, collection ASYN, box 167, part *Lidový soud, oznámení očistné komise o vyloučení redaktorů J. Skoumala, V. Rumla, J. Fryčera*, undated.

[8] NA, collection National Court (TNS) 6/47, box 114, inv. n. 281.

[9] NA, collection TNS 8/47, box 135, inv. n. 88, *poradní protokol u Národního soudu v Praze v trestní věci proti Vladimíru Krychtálkovi, PhDr. Jaroslavu Křemenovi a Karlu Wernerovi a záznam konečné porady*, 22 April 1947.

[10] NA, collection ASYN, box 166, *zápis o schůzi užšího přípravného výboru SČN*, 5 January 1945.

[11] NA, collection ASYN, box 167, *part Očistná komise po r. 1945, oznámení Svazu českých novinářů Zemskému odboru bezpečnosti*, 5 March 1946.

Journalists punished like this could not during the time specified broadcast on radio or publish in newspapers, not even under different names. In some cases they were allowed to work in newspaper offices as technicians.

*2.4. Fines for Visiting the "*Presseklub*"*

According to the CJU leadership visiting the so-called *Presseklub*, a social centre for German and pro-German journalists during the protectorate, was deemed a crime.[12] On 18 August 1945 the head of the cleansing committee, Radim Foustka, proposed that the members of the CJU should pay a fine of 100 CZK for every visit to the *Presseklub*. The money accumulating from this was supposed to be used by the Václav Kopecký (post-war Communist Minister of Information) Fund for the support of journalist victims of Nazism.[13] Fines, however, were only imposed on those journalists who had not been punished in some other way. In total, 58 journalists were fined for having visited the *Presseklub* (*Svobodné slovo*, 6 March 1946, p. 2). Dolejší (1960, p. 363) states that the fine was paid by a total of 36 journalists, and that the money so collected was 11,700 CZK. According to Dolejší, 50 persons no longer working in the field of media did not pay such fines. But not all hurried to pay and in February 1946 there were still many who had not paid their fines.[14]

The issue of visits to the *Presseklub* was also discussed in the press. For example, the national socialist (Czechoslovak left-wing political party, not to be confused with the NSDAP) weekly *Svobodný zítřek* (Free Tomorrow) suspected the CJU of not having enough interest in informing the public about who the regular visitors to this institution had been, also founded with the aim of corrupting Czech journalists, and tried to sweep the whole issue of the *Presseklub* under the carpet. (*Svobodný zítřek*, 20 February 1947, p. 3) The article is not surprising in its criticism of the Union, for a number of journalists of the national socialist press took an ambivalent approach to this organization, for example the editor-in-chief of *Svobodné slovo* (Free speech) Ivan Herben. It is that the author reproaches the insufficient extent of radicalism in the attitude towards the punishment of journalists believed to have collaborated with the Germans and other front collaborators during the war. This approach is also surprising given that the call for harsh punishments in 1947 was slowly disappearing from the Czech public debate.

3. Balance of Activities of the Cleansing Committee

In hindsight we can say that the CJU took the post-war cleansing of the journalistic community quite seriously, and that compared to similar processes in other European countries in it was one of the hardest and most thorough.

The total number of journalists investigated by the cleansing committee was quite high. If the NUJ had shortly after its founding in 1939 some 1,000 members, of whom around 120 did not survive the occupation and several tens of others were expelled right after the liberation, or if they had not applied for the new CJU membership, there would still be at least 800 people that the cleansing committee had to examine within the shortest possible time.[15] Therefore it is not surprising that the committee was not able to take the challenge and the number of members at the inaugural meeting of the CJU preparatory committee on 19 June 1945 was significantly strengthened by other journalists.[16]

The most intensive period of work of the cleansing committee was between May and September 1945. In the middle of September 1945 Radim Foustka already expressed the opinion that the cleansing process could be completed before the end of September.[17] But due to the number of unsolved cases, the cleansing committee continued its work in the following months. At the beginning of December 1945 the president of the preparatory committee of the CJU, Jaroslav Vozka, expressed his strong belief that "the work of the cleansing committee is almost at an end".[18] However, here, too, it was rather a wish, and the committee continued to work in the winter months of 1946. At the beginning of February 1946 the Country Department of Security (CDS—Department of the Ministry of Interior which was commanded by the Communist Party) demanded all available materials concerning the cleansing and offences of Czech journalists in order to be able to decide whether the individuals accused should be judged according to the so-called "minor" retribution decree.

The CJU surrendered all files concerning the cleansing to the CDS.[19] The Union had previously decided that when the cleansing was complete, it would hand over all the incriminating material collected to the relevant courts and agencies, so that the request of the CDS in reality corresponded to the intention of the Union.[20] From approximately 800 journalists who survived the war and who could be concerned by the cleansing, the committee according to K. F. Zieris (secretary of protectorate NUJ and also post-war CJU) investigated around 400 individuals.[21] However, the literature and contemporary sources show that by February 1946 a total of 86 journalists had been punished by expulsion from the Union (Dolejší, 1960, pp. 400–401). The press informed the general public about the results of the cleansing committee immediately after the materials were handed over to the CDS: "The committee authorized to pursue the cleansing of the journalist community completed its activity. It handed over 51 journalists to the national court, expelled a further 35 from the union, forbade 42 to engage in journalism and fined 58 journalists" (*Svobodné noviny*, 7 March 1946, p. 2).

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[12] NA, TNS 8/46, V. Ryba, box 23, *oznámení svazu novinářů národnímu prokurátorovi*, 5 March 1946.

[13] NA, collection ASYN, box 166, *zápis o schůzi širšího přípravného výboru SČN*, 14 August 1945.

[14] NA, collection ASYN, box 167, *part Očistná komise po r. 1945, zápis o společné schůzi očistné komise s užším přípravným výborem*, 19 February 1946. See also NA, collection ASYN, box 167, part 4, *oznámení Svazu českých novinářů šéfredaktorovi tiskového odboru K. F. Zierisovi*, 7 March 1946; NA, collection ASYN, box 166, *zápis o schůzi užšího výboru SČN*, 13 March 1946.

[15] NA, collection ASYN, unsorted documents, *Zieris, K., F. Nedatovaný projev k 30 letům obnovení svazu novinářů*, p. 11. Zieris states that 700 journalists were left to be examined.

[16] NA, collection ASYN, unsorted documents, *Zieris, K., F. Nedatovaný projev k 30 letům obnovení svazu novinářů*, p. 13.

[17] NA, collection ASYN, box 166, *zápis o schůzi širšího přípravného výboru SČN*, 14 September 1945.

[18] NA, collection ASYN, box 166, *zápis o schůzi širšího přípravného výboru SČN*, 5 December 1945.

[19] NA, collection ASYN, box 167, part *Očistná komise po r. 1945, oznámení Svazu českých novinářů Zemskému odboru bezpečnosti*, 5 March 1946.

[20] NA, collection ASYN, box 166, *zápis o schůzi širšího přípravného výboru SČN*, 17 January 1946.

Here it is necessary to add that the lists of journalists punished that I managed to find in the archives of the Czech Journalists Syndicate (today part of the National Archive in Prague) and from the archives of the Ministry of Information (also held in National Archive), do not fit with the numbers mentioned in the press, literature and documents of the CJU. Since I was unable to locate any document containing the total number of journalists punished, nor a list of their names, I put together the list on the basis of the sources available. Although V. Dolejší in his book refers to a list of journalists whose exclusion was published in the daily press, several names mentioned in the sources that I examined are, however, missing. For this reason I assume that his list is likewise incomplete.

The rigour with which the cleansing process was pursued within the journalistic union discouraged many of the members of the original organization. These people, 34 journalists in total (Hudec, 1987, p. 74), preferred to withdraw their applications and deliberately gave up their possible future careers rather than risking the scrutiny of their activities during the protectorate.

Regarding people in special groups, individual cultural organizations could officially decide themselves; their cleansing committees were only an internal issue, not a matter of justice. It is interesting to compare the approach of the cleansing committee of the journalists' union with the activities of the cleansing committee of the writers' syndicate, which was represented by one of the most important members of the domestic non-Communist resistance movement—Václav Černý. Due to the traditional interconnection of these professions, the members of the syndicate also included members of the journalistic organization. The writers expelled from the syndicate numbered eight until 23 February 1946 (among them also writers excluded from the journalistic organization: A. J. Kožíšek, J. Grmela, V. Rozner). One of the main directives that the writers' cleansing committee followed, stated: "we do not hand over the guilty writers to the public administration, we do not tell the state courts, we are not in touch with the criminal bodies of the state, we are solely an internal device of the writers' community" (Černý, 1992, p. 57).

4. Punishment for Journalistic Collaboration in Other European Countries

The problem of punishing media professionals who during the war had collaborated with the Nazis, was obviously not confined to Czech territories (Czechoslovakia), but also existed in other countries invaded by the Nazis. For purposes of comparison I cite the examples of the Netherlands and France. These countries can serve as points of comparison in the evaluation of the journalistic cleansing process on Czech territory. The examples of France and the Netherlands were selected for comparison due to very similar situation during the war and the similar methods of regulating the media in these territories. Specifically, the conditions under which the media and journalists were working during the war were taken into consideration; not the situation in which the punishment of collaborating journalists after the war took place. Here, it might have been more logical to choose one of the countries of the future Eastern Bloc, but the situation in those countries and their media during the war was quite different. In the case of Poland, the territory was completely destroyed by war and administered by the Germans (*Generalgouvernement*), while other countries (Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, etc.) were Nazi satellites. The subordination to Germany was not enforced and in most areas they maintained a high degree of autonomy, including the media. This was also reflected in a completely different (mostly very lenient) assessment of the co-operation of journalists with Nazi regimes in the post-war era. In addition, from the end of the war until 1948, Czechoslovakia retained a certain degree of independence from the USSR, which did not exist in other countries of the future Eastern Bloc.

As for the processing of the topic abroad, in addition to the published examples of France and the Netherlands, there are publications and parts of studies dealing with the situation in Poland (see Gondek, 1988; Młynarczyk, 2009), Norway (see Ottosen, 2010), Belgium (see *Presse de Collaboration*, 2008; Winkel, 2004), Austria (see Duchkowitsch, Hausjell, & Semrad, 2004), and Denmark (see Roslyng-Jensen, 2010). Often, however, they are primarily concerned with the media situation during the war, and the post-war reaction to journalists' collaboration is only marginally described.

4.1. The Netherlands

The retribution in the Netherlands was also very thorough, with over 450 thousand individuals suspected of collaboration. The death sentence, which had been abolished in 1870, was reinstated. Death sentences were handed down in 154 cases, however, in majority this was commuted to life imprisonment. 39,000 people were deprived of some of their civil rights (e.g. the right to pursue their profession or to occupy prominent public office). One of the hardest sanctions concerning more than 40 thousand people was the loss of Dutch citizenship. (Kozák, 2002, pp. 38–39)

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[21] NA, collection ASYN, unsorted documents, *Zieris, K., F. Nedatovaný projev k 30 letům obnovení svazu novinářů*, p. 18.

In the Netherlands journalists were punished by a so-called Committee for Press Cleansing, in particular by temporary exclusion from the profession. Between 31 December 1945 and mid-1950, the committee investigated 1,100 people. In all 341 journalists were temporarily suspended from the journalistic profession for up to four years. In 97 cases the suspension was between four and nine years; 75 journalists were suspended for 10 to 14 years and in 60 cases for 15 to 19 years. The harshest punishment (the ban on practicing the journalist's profession for 20 years) was used in 161 cases. (Kolínková, 2011, pp. 34–35)

In contrast to Czechoslovakia however, Dutch journalists were rarely sentenced in court. These cases usually concerned other crimes not relating to the journalistic profession. Among the small group of journalists punished for their journalistic activity by special courts of justice in The Hague and Amsterdam, there were, for example, Tobie Goedewaagen, Arie Meijer-Schwencke, Willem Goedhuys, Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen, Marius Adolf van Huut, or Hermanus Anthoni Goedhart. The longest sentence was to 14 years' imprisonment, but the majority of the condemned journalists were released in 1952 under a general amnesty. The only journalist in the Netherlands to receive a death sentence for disseminating pro-Nazi propaganda was Max Blozijl (for more detail see Kolínková, 2011).

4.2. France

A more rigorous approach towards journalists collaborating with the Nazis can be found in France, which, due to the Vichy regime, suffered a lot from collaboration in the media. French tribunals of justice began legal proceedings against suspected collaborators in June 1944. The main action against domestic collaborators was the trial of Pétain's Vichy government, which became a template for future actions against pro-Nazi puppet governments in a number of other occupied countries. The extensive French retribution, however, did not focus only on politicians and high-ranking officials, but also on a wide range of society including compromised journalists (Kozák, 2002, p. 32). It is stated that within the *L´Épuration* (author's note: French term for "cleansing"), 50,095 people in total were accused, of whom 7,037 were sentenced to death. A number of collaborators, either real or suspected, were eliminated by the resistance movement without trial even before the arrival of the Allies (Kozák, 2002, p. 40). According to Borák (1998, p. 99), 2,853 people were condemned to death and 767 people were sentenced to execution.

Collaboration on the part of journalists was perceived in France as especially heinous, and the criminals were treated accordingly. Like in Czechoslovakia, the cleansing in the French media was also done partly by the justice system and partly by the journalists themselves. Since in France there were several journalistic organizations after the war, the cleansing was pursued by a special committee of the Ministry of Information. Individual syndicates also examined the activities of their members during the war, but here punishments were usually exceptions. The orderly cleansing in France was preceded by a "wild" phase when some journalists were already executed by the resistance movement during the war for collaborating with the Germans (e.g. editor-in-chief of the *Cri du peuple* Albert Clément). After the liberation, out of 2,000 to 3,000 journalists working during the war, only a few were sentenced, but the punishments were in these cases quite harsh. Approximately ten leading collaborator journalists were executed (Henry Béraud, Robert Brasillach, Abel Lamy, Jean Breyer, Jean Luchaire, Paul Chack, Georges Suarez, Jean Hérold-Paquis, Paul Ferdonnet), in the case of several other people the death sentences were commuted to sentences to life imprisonment (Beauplan, Cousteau, Rebatet, Maurras, Boissel). Several other journalists were sentenced to life imprisonment or to many years of hard labour. However, in general it can be said that the judgements mostly concerned editors-in-chief and other high-ranking journalists, who, besides writing articles and broadcasting, also served the Nazis in other ways.

The journalistic (i.e. professional, not judicial) cleansing began in summer of 1944 and continued in several phases under different authorities. In March 1945 these were united into one committee for granting journalistic licences and professional cleansing (*Commission de la carte en organisme d´épuration professionelle*) and were subordinated to the press department of the Ministry of Information. This committee was composed of representatives of the Cassation court, journalistic organizations, resistance movement press, publishing houses and individual journalists. This committee examined those who were interested in working in the media and on the basis of the evaluation of their activities during the war licences were issued without which the journalists could not work. Over a period of several months, however, the committee received 6,000 requests for licences, and its functioning was to a certain extent paralysed. The problem was also the fact that the basic material for the evaluation of the journalists' culpability, i.e. their wartime articles, was not extant. The important criteria for assessment were thus the nature of the newspaper in which the journalist had worked and his position in the official hierarchy (11% of those convicted were editors-in-chief, 27% executive editors—*secrétaires de rédaction*), having received material benefits (i.e. whether the journalist thanks to his collaboration with the Nazis had enriched himself), having maintained private contacts with the Nazis, and last but not least also having made journalistic trips to Nazi Germany.

The vast majority of those convicted came from the occupied part of France (77%), journalists working under the Vichy regime were punished less. Similarly to

Czechoslovakia, in France, too, the journalists might forever lose their right to work in journalism, but the committee never actually gave such a sentence. The longest restriction on working in journalism was 20 years. 89% of temporarily suspended journalists, however, were not suspended for more than two years. In total, 687 journalists were punished by the committee during the professional cleansing (8.4% of all requests for journalistic licences), 73% of them later returned to their profession (particularly after the general amnesty in 1953), although in lower editorial positions (Delporte, 1999, pp. 384–400).

5. Conclusion

The process of bringing to justice those journalists who during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia committed the crime of collaborating with the Nazis, or were after the war accused of such collaboration, significantly influenced the reconstruction of the post-war media system in Czechoslovakia. As in France, also in Czechoslovakia treason perpetrated by journalists was perceived as especially reprehensible, as journalists were within the post-war concept of media presented to the public, and even to themselves, as the leaders of the construction of the new, better society. Therefore it was not acceptable for this state to be in any way compromised by people who during the war had had anything to do with the Nazis.

This theory, however, was in practice in conflict with the vague perception of borders that were supposed to define journalistic collaboration. Excluding several leading editors and editors of significantly pro-Nazi or anti-Semitic papers who compromised themselves by an active approach towards collaboration with the Nazis, and who were punished within the extraordinary public judiciary, the majority of journalistic collaborators were people writing pro-German articles often under constraint and in fear for their very lives. The public, aroused by six years of occupation during which they could every day read articles collaborating with the Nazi invaders, and for whom it was the newspapers that represented the collaboration, however, had no mercy for these journalists, and nor did the journalists themselves who after the war accepted the task of cleansing their community from the stigma of the occupation. This related without a doubt to the moral disintegration of Czech society during the occupation, which traumatized society in the post-war period, and led to a more intensive proclamation of national unity, which was supposed to suppress this trauma and to shift the burden of guilt onto a certain group of people (traitors, collaborators, Germans). (Brenner, 2005, pp. 257–263)

This fact was strongly reflected in the media, where the evidence of collaboration was clearly visible to the public and present in everyday life. Therefore it was without a doubt for the journalists to make their community again legitimate in the eyes of the public after the war, and the professional cleansing among Czech journalists was very harsh, even compared to that in other European countries. Contrary to other western countries, the journalists convicted often lost their chances of returning to their profession due to the later political development.

An essential part of the cleansing is also its political aspect. From the very beginning the leadership of the post-war CJU was significantly left oriented, and the same can be said of the cleansing committee, consisting mostly of members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia or of its open and secret sympathizers. The Communist press was banned already in 1938, and Communists, together with Jews, were the main enemies of the Nazis, and so with some exceptions the majority of radically left-thinking editors did not work in the protectorate press, and thus could not compromise themselves by the collaboration. This also made it impossible without further risk for the Communists to demand the most radical approach, which would enable them to rid themselves of potential political adversaries.

Christiane Brenner (2009) correctly points out the problem of the absence of free and equal public discourse during the relatively democratic pre-February regime (before the Communist takeover in February 1948). This situation was caused by the exclusion of certain societal groups (ethnic Germans, members of former right-wing political parties, real or supposed traitors and collaborators) from participation in the public discourse. Some restrictions were introduced for certain issues and violating them was punishable like for example in the conflict of the Catholic weekly *Obzory* (Horizons) with the Communist Minister of Information, Václav Kopecký. These facts also concerned very decidedly the journalistic community, which significantly influenced the form of the public discourse. The exclusion of a certain part of journalists from participation in this discourse could have had a significant influence on this discourse, and could have contributed to its shaping in a certain political and ideologically desirable direction (for more on the topic, see Brenner, 2009, pp. 467–468.)

From the point of view of the development of society in the days of the Communist takeover in February 1948 and in the following years of Communist totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia, the ideological and personal interconnection of the united journalistic organization (to which the professional cleansing was entrusted) with the Ministry of Information (commanded by the Communist Party) is essential.

The notions of the future role and position of the media, (the end of private ownership in the media, the media as a tool for building a new, people's democratic regime, journalists as supporters of governmental efforts) which were adopted by the domestic and foreign resistance movement already during the war, were in the post-war period promoted by both the Ministry of Information responsible for the media and by the CJU, which brought all active journalists together. The Communist Party could therefore exert a strong influence on journalists and the media through the connections of the

Ministry of Information with the CJU. Communists could abuse the post-war cleansing within the journalistic organization to discredit or displace political opponents, which prepared the ground for an easy takeover of the media as the key means of influencing public opinion.

This was accordingly used also during the Communist coup in February 1948, and in the immediate aftermath, for quick subordination of all media in Czechoslovakia under communist control. Journalists who in the post-war period criticized the Communists' efforts were immediately expelled after the February coup from the CJU and thus (according to the law) lost the opportunity to work in the media. While some of those were to emigrate, many undesirable journalists ended up in prison or labour camps.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Journalists' Associations in Poland Before and After 1980

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Abstract

Even under the authoritarian political system, the Association of Polish Journalists was able to achieve a certain level of independence. Journalists sought to use any possibility to expand the area of their freedom; however, the more possibilities arose, the bigger were differences of opinions about the ways and means of democratization. Contemporary arguments between diverse journalists' associations in Poland reveal how difficult it is to separate a common concern for professional journalism from political divisions.

Keywords

association; democratization; journalism; Poland; politics; professionalism

Issue

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1. Introduction

This article is an attempt to explain why journalists' associations in contemporary Poland are divided, discordant, and weak. Such a state is probably due to a number of different causes. This article is based on the hypothesis that one of these causes is an old tradition formed long before 1989, which induces trade unions and associations to act as political actors. Trade unions and associations, instead of political parties, were stakeholders in conflicts between the nation and the Communist authorities. That is why divisions within society were transferred to journalists' associations.

In contemporary Poland these divisions not only remain, but they even led to an inversion of roles. One of the associations, which in the past distinguished itself in resistance against the authoritarian rulers of the country, presently supports restricting the principles of democracy. Another association created under the martial law and then backed by the military authorities now tries to defend democratic institutions which are at stake.

2. Appearance of Unity

In a democratic society the question seems to be simple. One can tell four journalistic roles: monitorial, facilitative, radical and collaborative (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009, pp. 30–32). Actual journalistic operations can be contained within the field designated by these four roles. Entman (2004, pp. 2–12) presented this question even simpler, when he wrote about attitudes of journalists toward government's foreign policy. Ideally, a free press balances official views with a more impartial perspective. In practice, three models occur: hegemony, indexing and cascade. The first and second ones were based largely on events during the Cold War. According to these two models journalists make no independent contribution to foreign policy debate. The third model assumes that ideas cascade downward from the administration's first public expressions about an event. The news goes through a network of different opinions of journalists and politicians. Each level of a cascade makes its own contribution to the mix and flow of ideas before the news will reach the audience.

None of these models can be applied to journalism in Poland in the 1970s. Government exercised power in an authoritarian manner, using such instruments as preventive censorship, monopoly on broadcasting, licensing of the press, personnel policy and rationing of newsprint paper. However, there was a graded approach to the level of controls. The largest part of daily press, with respect to the number of titles and circulation, was represented by the Communist Party (CP) dailies. These newspapers were strictly controlled. The press of two smaller parties that remained in alliance with the CP, as well as a few non-partisan dailies, had more freedom but a smaller range. The Catholic press was relatively free, but suffered from a severe lack of paper. In the economy of scarcity a publisher could not buy newsprint paper, but had to obtain an allowance. Small paper allowances meant the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, known for its independence, could not accept new subscriptions; they could be only inherited (Żakowski, 1999, p. 150).

Even authoritarian power cannot rely only on violence. It also needs an ideological justification. Marxism–Leninism, which initially seemed to have a certain amount of allure, provided the ideological base. Some outstanding Polish intellectuals were, in their youth, influenced by this ideology, such as Zygmunt Bauman and Leszek Kołakowski. The latter argues that Marxism–Leninism in its Stalinist version was only a broad façade, which pretended to be a legitimate heir of socialist dreams and values and an incarnation of humanism. Marxism–Leninism did not aim to conquest, but to put an end to oppression and harm. Such an ideology, though hypocritical, contained the germs of its later revision and self-destruction (Kołakowski, 2006, pp. 388–391).

The time to awake to reality came with subsequent protests and rebellions. The years 1956, 1968, 1970, and 1976 indicate in the Polish political calendar open rebellions, followed by a certain level of relaxation of authoritarianism. After a time control was re-asserted, but some gains remained. Ideology began to lose its meaning and during the 1970s was gradually being replaced by a more pragmatic approach. The ideology was for Edward Gierek, leader of the Polish CP throughout 1970s, open to interpretation: “I was and I still am a Communist. I never was an ideologue, ideology was for me an instrument to solve problems. If this instrument failed, I sought other solutions apart from it or beyond it” (Czubiński, 2002, p. 291).

Pragmatism could also be noticed by the intellectuals. Kołakowski (2006, p. 443) advices “Let’s think about what is possible, let’s make corrections within the imposed limits”. Kołakowski recommends to do what was then capable of doing and to keep in sight the main goal which was out of reach, but which should be gradually achieved. Such an approach was used by pragmatists on both sides—the government at that time and the democratic opposition represented by “Solidarity” trade union. This approach after many years led to the Round Table agreement, concluded in the spring of 1989. This agreement paved the way to the parliamentary election a few months later and to the emergence of the first non-Communist Polish government since 1945.

However, in the 1970s, Poland was in grip of an authoritarian system. The political system consisted of the CP and two smaller parties allied with it, official trade unions, and a few associations. Under this rigid pattern actual divisions were hidden. In other words: differences of political attitudes could not be expressed freely and they were hidden under an appearance of order and unity.

3. The Association of Polish Journalists

In the Polish People’s Republic, every journalist had a choice like any other citizen: They could join the CP or remain outside the party. The latter decision was like turning a cold shoulder towards the government at that time. Nevertheless, joining the Polish CP in the 1970s was more an act of loyalty or an expression of willingness to be active in public life rather than a confession of the Communist faith. There was a saying that the party card was treated like a driver’s license. In the beginning of 1980 there were more than 3 million members of the CP in Poland (Łuczak, 2012, p. 229), close to 10% of the population.

The case of the Association of Polish Journalists (SDP) was quite different. The SDP was founded in 1951 as the sole journalists’ organization in the Polish People’s Republic. It was considered a professional organization and to some extent had an elite character. A candidacy period of two years and journalistic achievements were required. Elections to governing bodies, especially on the lower levels, were not strictly controlled by the CP, although CP obviously influenced the SDP.

The SDP took care of the journalistic professionalism. Every year a Bolesław Prus Prize for outstanding journalists and a Julian Brun Prize for best journalists under 30 years of age were awarded. Both prizes enjoyed high recognition among journalists. In more than 20 specialist clubs of the Association, journalists could group together to get a special body of knowledge, get information and try to influence government’s policy. The clubs also awarded their yearly prizes. Journalists interested in learning foreign languages could attend courses abroad organized by the SDP. The SDP supported recreational activities and the social life of journalists and their families.

At that time a professional journalist did not have to strive for a scoop. Topics for the first page were always provided by the ruling party. Professional journalists tried their best to formulate their critical message in such a way, that it could pass through the censorship and still be understood by readers. Rather than following the party guidelines, a good journalist tended to improve the system (Curry, 1990, pp. 1, 114). In this respect, a leading role was played by the weekly *Polityka*. This and other weeklies consistently indicated systemic errors and drew attention to the emerging crisis. When the strikes broke out in the summer of 1980, journalists of *Polityka* were among the first group of correspondents who reported about the strikes and supported the striking workers. The reknowned reporter and writer Ryszard Kapuściński was amongst this group.

It is not easy to indicate the exact number of the SDP members. Bajka (1991, p. 149) estimated the number of journalists in Poland at the end of 1981 at 9,600 to 10,000. Ziemski (1982, p. 36) gave similar number. On the other hand, the SDP Governing Board agreed a resolution in December 1979, which referred to 8,000 members of the Association. A comparison of these numbers reveal that the vast majority of Polish journalists were SDP members.

Against this background, the democratic opposition in Poland was few in numbers. The biggest and most serious oppositional organization was the Committee for Support of the Workers (KOR), established in 1976. The KOR operated openly, systematically and for a long time. Its activities were based on the existing rules, which were contained in the constitution but ignored by the government. The KOR was founded to bring help to people, mainly in Radom and Ursus near Warsaw, who spontaneously protested the rise of food prices and were consequently persecuted. It should be explained that at that time of a centralized planned economy, the government set all the prices. One year later, 1977, there were about 30 members of KOR, plus about 100–200 collaborators in Warsaw and a similar number of collaborators outside Warsaw (Friszke, 2001, p. 439). The names of KOR members were publicly known. Among them there were authors (e.g. Jerzy Andrzejewski), scientists (e.g. Edward Lipiński) and artists (e.g. Halina Mikołajska). Collaborators for KOR acted unofficially to avoid retaliations. There were many journalists who supported KOR and the organization's influence was much greater than the size of its membership, because its illegal publications about judicial proceedings, repressions and legal assistance were widely read.

4. Disclosing of Divisions

Radical change started in 1980–1981. Mass labour strikes forced the CP and the government to recognize that an independent trade union would emerge and act on behalf of the labour force. The emergence and recognition of "Solidarity" was both energising and liberating. The spiral of silence theory explains the phenomenon (Noelle-Neumann, 2001, p. 299). Initially those few who behave differently from others, for instance openly resisting the power of government, are regarded as idealists and eccentrics. A general climate of opinion tends towards tolerance of any errors of the government. Even those dissatisfied with the political situation are not willing to stand up and criticize the government publicly. People who believe they are in minority, are not willing to expound their opinions. Nobody wants to feel alone, isolated, and significantly different from others. The opponents of the system do exist, but they are neither seen nor heard.

Meanwhile authoritarian power does not change. A feeling of dissatisfaction develops. Finally, a small and determined group will emerge, which will not be afraid of social isolation. If this group chooses the right moment and starts to protest, it can—in favourable circumstances—serve as an example to be followed by others. After crossing a certain critical point the protest emerges into a mass movement. Now the spiral of silence reverses. Even those who did not especially identify themselves as victims, do not want to be isolated so they join the protest. A worthwhile strategy for opposing the government power is to list damages, and demand corrections. Agreements with the striking workers in Szczecin and Gdańsk were concluded at the end of August 1980. One year later "Solidarity" had more than 9 million members (Karpiński, 1990, p. 11).

The majority of journalists immediately joined this revolt against the authoritarian power of government. An Extraordinary Congress of the SDP was held in October 1980. Of 391 delegates, 227 were CP members but their membership had no influence. Indeed the congress criticized both censorship and the media politics of the CP, and delegates spoke up for the excellency and prestige of journalism (Habielski, 2009, p. 312). In a special resolution, congress expressed full support for the process of democratic changes in Poland. Stefan Bratkowski was elected president of SDP. He was at this election a member of the CP, but a year later was stripped of his membership. Soon after the Extraordinary Congress, the SDP initiated a "Forum". The Forum was a cycle of public debates on a broad range of critical topics. Numerous other initiatives continued to emerge. There were supporters of radical changes as well as those who opted for more balanced criticism. A few voices of supporters of the old regime could also be heard.

The imposition of martial law in December 1981 attempted to reverser the liberating effect of "Solidarity". Martial law enabled the government to dissolve the SDP and almost all the other organizations. A new Association of Journalists of the Polish People's Republic (SDPRL) was founded in 1982. In March 1983, one year later there were 5,375 members of the SDPRL (Wiechno, 1983, p. 3). All journalists were subjected to verification. It took the form of an official interview during which journalists had to explain their previous attitude to "Solidarity" and to declare their loyalty to the military authorities. Refusals to do so by public radio and television journalists led to 500 persons expelled (Majchrzak, 2016, p. 58). Despite this, the desire for liberty could not be suppressed. After the initial shock, many illegal organizations and publishers appeared. The Catholic church also provided support for resistant movements. Social resistance grew and eventually led to the Round Table talks in the spring of 1989, which triggered the transformation of Poland's political and economic system.

5. Association, Trade Union or Political Party?

One of the dimensions of journalism is a variation between authorship and employment (McQuail, 2013, pp. 11–12). Journalists as members of editorial staff, employed under accepted conditions, will seek support of their trade union. By contrast, journalists as creative authors remain independent or choose an association that best suits their needs.

In 1980, the trade union "Solidarity" had emerged from a protest movement against the authoritarian power of Poland's government. Thus, trade unions were gaining the characteristics of being political parties. To be a member of "Solidarity" meant a will to defend the rights of employees, but it was also a political declaration and an act of protest against the existing powers. It was similar under the martial law. Membership of a government approved trade union or association was a declaration of loyalty. People contesting martial law, or only maintaining a distance from it, refrained from becoming members of such organizations. An apolitical trade union or an apolitical association was an illusion. Membership and non-membership became a political declaration.

The Governing Board of the SDP, elected by the Extraordinary Congress in October 1980, consisted of 15 people and was an authentic representation of Polish journalists. The Board worked constantly although not all its members were able to attend every meeting, and published many resolutions concerning current political events (Fikus, 1989, pp. 41–42). A clear majority of journalists supported democratic changes. There was, however, no official consent, as to the scope and pace of these changes.

A paradigm consists of negotiations over a collective labour agreement for journalists, which consisted of two parts: economic and self-governing. The economic part concerned the conditions of work and wages. The SDP demanded all postulates submitted during the Extraordinary Congress be included in the self-governing part. The most important items included: (1) editors-in-chief should be appointed or revoked only with the editorial staff's approval; (2) the staff can undertake a vote of confidence of its editor-in-chief; (3) employers and political appointees can make assessments but will not interfere directly in the work of journalists. So long as the government lacked authority, the negotiations continued. Three weeks before imposing martial law, the re-invigorated government decided to break off the self-governing part of the negotiations (Fikus, 1989, pp. 72, 180).

Łukasiewicz wrote openly about differences of opinions among journalists before the imposition of martial law. He was a journalist of the daily *Kurier Polski* and the leader of "Solidarity" trade union in the publishing house Epoka:

> I regret it, but it must be said, that almost all the colleagues from *Kurier* who had been soldiers of the conspiratorial Home Army during the war, now did not behave especially commendably. If they did not demonstrate directly their deep aversion…to "Solidarity" and the policy line of *Kurier*, they kept a safe distance from us. They were also the core of the old trade unions. (Łukasiewicz, 1994, p. 45)

Dariusz Fikus, who was elected Secretary of the SDP Governing Board at the Extraordinary Congress, wrote later about a statement, signed in August 1981 by more than a hundred journalists. They criticized what they thought to be a one-sided political engagement of the SPD leadership. Many other journalists and editorial staffs published a later statement supporting the position of the SDP (Fikus, 1989, pp. 135–138).

For October 1981, a congress of International Organization of Journalists was scheduled in Moscow. The SDP was a co-founder of International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) and the president of the SDP held, ex-officio, the function of vice-president of IOJ. The Polish Communist authorities attempted to prevent Stefan Bratkowski from being elected vice-president of IOJ. Two days before his trip to Moscow, the CP expelled him. It turned out in Moscow that Polish journalists were represented not only by the SDP, but also by a delegation from the Trade Union of Journalists of the Polish People's Republic (TUJPPR), founded few months earlier and numbering about 300 members. Consequently, the position of the IOJ's vice-president, which was reserved for Poland, remained vacant. The candidate should be selected by agreement between the SDP and the TUJPPR (Fikus, 1989, pp. 149–152).

In December 1981, martial law enabled the government to dissolve both the SDP and the TUJPPR forcing many journalists leave their profession. The political divisions remained deep. It was only after the beginning of the transformation in Poland in the early 1990s that various new journalists' associations could be established. Bajka (2000, p. 42) estimates that in 2000 about 25% of journalists belonged to one association or another. The four largest were the Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland (formerly the SDPRL) with about 7,500 members; the re-registered Association of Polish Journalist (SDP) with about 1,500 members; the Syndicate of Polish Journalists with about 1,400 members; and the Catholic Association of Journalists with about 500 members.

6. Inversion of Roles

The turbulent start of the transformation in Poland did not facilitate any regular and solid research of journalists. Only in 2009–2014 did surveys confirm that only a small proportion of journalists belonged to journalists' associations or trade unions. A survey conducted in 2009 within a group of 329 journalists working for the media of national coverage revealed that only 14.3% of respondents declared their membership in a journalistic organization (Stępińska & Ossowski, 2011, p. 6). Changes in membership were significantly linked to the age of respondents. Whereas 21% of journalists over the age of 35 years were members of a journalistic organization, only 7% of the under 35 years old group were members. Research, conducted in 2012–2014, as a part of the "Changes in Journalism" project, on a representative sample of 500 Polish journalists demonstrated that only 17% of respondents declared being a member of a journalistic association (Dobek-Ostrowska, Barczyszyn, & Michel, 2013, p. 8).

It should be added that in March 2016, when the Polish journalistic monthly *Press* celebrated its twentieth anniversary, it published results of a survey of journalists. 398 journalists answered many various questions, but there was no question concerning membership in a journalists' association. Apparently, the question was not considered to be significant.

One could argue that journalists' associations in Poland no longer make a lot of sense. The "Sturm und Drang" period is over. In 1989 Poland entered the way of democratic transformation and noticeable improvements in the living conditions have and are taking place (Czapiński & Panek, 2015, p. 16). Bitter quarrels came to an end. Successive governments, democratically elected, contributed in their own way to the well-being of the people. Politicians are observed by attentive and professional journalists. The transformation of the media system, initially turbulent, should now be assessed as successful. Although journalists' associations are still divided, the causes lie in the past. Besides, citizens in democratic societies have diverse opinions, which are reflected in the emergence of distinct political parties and many various associations.

This optimistic image changed drastically consequent to the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015. One of the first decisions of the new government passed into law on January 1st 2016. The Minister of the Treasury now has the right to appoint and dismiss the heads of the public radio and television, at any time, without giving any reasons, and without any consultations. Something like this has not happened in Poland since 1989. The minister exercises this new right. This decision resulted in numerous changes in employment in the public service media. Many experienced and popular journalists were expelled, induced to leave, or relocated to politically less sensitive positions. Subsequently, the public media in Poland became obedient to government, its audience declined significantly, and private broadcasters benefited from these changes. Later regulations did not substantially alter this situation. This fact confirms that democratization is not a smooth process occurring in one direction. Containments and revocations are also possible (Sztompka, 2005, p. 284).

The Society of Journalists did express solidarity with dismissed colleagues. This Society was established in 2012 by journalists who did not want to belong to either of the larger journalistic organizations: the Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland (SDRP) and the SDP. The website of the Society of Journalists displays a list of journalists who were recently expelled from Polish public media. In the middle of April 2017 there were 228 names on this list (Towarzystwo Dziennikarskie, 2017). The SDRP has also objected to these expulsions.

By contrast, the SDP took a different stance and sided with the government. "I cannot see any reason to protest. These changes do not extend beyond the normal practice of changing the staff, as a result of changing the managers", declared Agnieszka Romaszewska-Guzy, vice president of SDP (Skworz, 2016, p. 3).

The roles seem to have been reversed. The SDP has a long tradition of resistance to authoritarian power, especially in the years 1980–1981 and under martial law. Now it seems the SDP has returned to its position of supporting the government as it had in the Polish People's Republic. Although the present government possesses democratic legitimacy, it does not follow that all their decisions are in accord with the principles of liberal democracy.

Interestingly, the SDRP, which was created during the martial law period by journalists who tolerated military rule as the lesser of two evils, has also reversed its stance. Now the SDRP, just as the much younger and smaller Society of Journalists, protests the actions of the government, which maybe in accordance with national law, but are contrary to the principle of the division of powers and the freedom of the press.

7. Conclusions

Political divisions among journalists, like divisions throughout society, are common and normal. Under the post-World War II authoritarian political system these divisions were hidden, since both proponents and critics were subject to censorship. Only the process of democratization at the start of the 1990s allowed the expression of divergent and political opinions. Initially there were severe disagreements, then instead of a solitary association representing journalists and their rights, several new organizations were established. They remain politically divided and weak. Their former achievements and experiences proved to be insufficient to enhance cooperation and a smooth transformation to democracy.

The transformation from an authoritarian political system to democracy does not end at the outcome of the first election. The process is ongoing and needs to be nurtured. Journalists and their organizations are crucial factors in democratic processes. Under perfect conditions weak journalists' associations may safely exist. It is only when a crisis occurs and the principles of democracy are at stake, do new opportunities for journalists' associations emerge.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Rocky Road towards Professional Autonomy: The Estonian Journalists' Organization in the Political Turmoil of the 20th Century

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Abstract
This article attempts to explain the relationships between journalists, politics and the state from the perspective of collective autonomy, that of the professional organization of journalists. The case of Estonian Journalists' Union demonstrates the complexity and historical contingency of professional autonomy of journalism. The development of the Estonian journalists' organization occurred as a sequence of transformations from the Estonian Journalists' Association to the Estonian Journalists' Union to the Soviet type journalists' union, and lastly to an independent trade union. This sequence was disrupted by several fatal breakdowns that changed not only the character of the association, but also professional values, the whole occupational ideology and the conditions of the existence of journalism as a profession in Estonia.

Keywords
Estonian Journalists' Organization; history; journalists; politics; professional autonomy

Issue
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1. Introduction

By the late 19th century, journalism in industrialized countries gradually began to separate from other fields as a regular occupation with a certain common identity, norms and values that united journalists. Like other trades that strove to bolster their legitimacy and raise their social status, journalists established their first associations in Germany in the 1860s, Great Britain, the United States, Scandinavia in the 1880s, in the Baltic countries in the 1900s (Høyer & Lauk, 2016). Establishing an organization is one of the key elements of the development of a profession. As history has convincingly demonstrated, both the success and failure of journalists' organizations are closely connected to a country's political climate. It is always a struggle to gain and maintain an organization's independence.[1] Achieving recognition and legitimacy to the occupation as an independent agent is an important function of a professional association. Association consolidates the profession by defining common occupational standards, codes of ethics, educational requirements, and establishing some sort of control over the entry to the field. The launch of a professional association clearly reflects the occupation's aspirations to achieve a degree of autonomy from other institutions in society. By the 1920s, journalists' associations were actively involved in 'profession building'. They used various strategies to legitimize the occupation and began to make efforts for influencing the press-related legislation (Dooley, 1997; Juraite, Lauk, & Zelče, 2009). The aim of these efforts was to achieve a legal framework, which would allow the profession self-governance and to avoid restriction of the freedom of the press by governments (Waisbord, 2013).

Journalistic autonomy has been conceptualized at three levels: individual, organizational/collective and institutional. Individual autonomy includes journalists' abilities to freely select both information and aspects of their stories, as well as their position concerning their organizational and work culture (Balčytienė, Raeymaeckers, & Vartanova, 2015). Organizational autonomy refers to the news organization's independence form external political or other constraints (Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013). Institutional autonomy refers to media's freedom from any kinds of governmental surveillance, and a legally secured right for expression and access to information (Harro-Loit, Lauk, Kuutti, & Loit, 2012; McQuail, 2010; Scholl & Weischenberg, 1999). Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 35) point out that journalistic professional autonomy is always relative, as 'control over the work process is to a significant extent collegial' and individual journalists cannot control the media organizations outright. They extend the notion of professional autonomy to 'the corps of journalists taken as a whole' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), i.e. to the occupational community of journalists. They also emphasize that there is considerable variety of the degree of autonomy across media systems and within media systems, as well as over time. There are always various political and economic pressures that limit both individual and collective autonomy. Contemporary research has found that journalists recognize the pressures stemming from within the profession (e.g. ethical conventions) and their working environment (newsrooms, working routines etc.) the most immediately affecting their individual decision-making (Hanitzsch et al., 2010, p. 15). The factors of political origin (legal framework of their working conditions, degree of press freedom etc.) journalists confront at the institutional/systemic level collectively. Their associations endeavour to negotiate with other agents and agencies in society with the aim of providing journalists with working conditions where they are safe and relatively independent. Journalists' collective actions may also take other forms, especially under extreme violence, and where their organizations are unable to exert influence. In Mexico, for example, under the conditions of unprecedented violence in 2011–2012 linked to war between drug trafficking groups, journalists established networks of collective resistance to ameliorate the situation and increase the safety of journalists (González de Bustamante & Relly, 2016).

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[1] For the history of international movement of journalists see Nordenstreng, Beyersdorf, Høyer and Lauk, 2016.

Taking the story of the Estonian journalists' organization as an example, the article seeks the answer to the question: What are the chances and challenges of an organization for maintaining and safeguarding the profession's autonomy, and the existence of journalistic occupational community during political turmoil? The article casts light on the issues concerning the political involvement of Estonian journalists' organization in the interwar and post-WWII periods and the attempts to maintain collective autonomy and professional integrity.

Most of the studies on the history of the Estonian journalists' organization deal with its life story from inception till 1940 (Aru, 2009; Juraite et al., 2009; Lauk, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995; Lauk & Pallas, 2008). Only one study is available about the first decades of the Soviet Estonian journalists' union (Hanson, 1973), plus some popular articles and books (e.g., Tiikmaa, 2013; Tootsen, 2004). These publications are primarily focused on the details of the activities of the organization and related individuals. The social-political context and how this framed the activities and fate of the organization has received less attention. The story of the Estonian journalists' organization throughout various periods of the country's history clearly brings forth the political and historical contingency of journalistic professional autonomy.

Methodologically, the article is based on the existing research on Estonian journalism and critical analysis of relevant archive documents of journalists' association and Estonian Communist Party (ECP).

2. Background

The first attempts of Estonian journalists to organize as a trade were made in the late 19th century when the first meetings of newspapermen took place. By the 1910s–1920s, the newspaper field in the Baltic countries had separated from other creative fields, and journalism became a fulltime occupation.

The political turmoil of the first two decades of the 20th century was unfavourable for inaugurating any new associations, including journalists. The outbreak of WWI, the German occupation and consequent struggle for independence against the Red Army in all three Baltic countries clearly hindered, but did not stop the launch of journalists' organizations. Latvian journalists organized in 1917, Estonian in 1919 and finally, Lithuanian in 1922 (Juraite et al., 2009).

Legally, the Estonian Journalists' Association (EJA) was founded on June 14, 1919, when three experienced journalists (Jaan Tomp, Jakob Mändmets, and Paul Olak) from the largest dailies in Tallinn officially registered the association. They were concerned about the social guarantees of journalists and the general professional level of Estonian journalism during the political turmoil of 1917–1919. Five days later they invited colleagues to the founding meeting of the EJA, but only a small number of Tallinn journalists appeared. A temporary committee was elected to prepare the first general meeting, which occurred on November 4, 1919 and legitimately established the EJA with 30 founding members present (Aru, 2009, p. 928).

Many journalists were fighting in the War for Independence, so the Association was engaged in maintaining contacts with journalists in the battlefields and dispatching newspapers to the fronts. After the war, the Association stopped working for a short period, and was reactivated in April 1921 at the first congress of Estonian journalists in Tallinn. In 1925, the Association was reorganized into the Estonian Journalists' Union (EJU), which joined the *Fédération Internationale des Journalistes* (FIJ) in 1930. Most of the EJU's members worked in the editorial offices of national and regional newspapers and magazines (Juraite et al., 2009, pp. 185–186). By 1939, the EJU had 166 members (out of about 700 journalists working in the press and radio in the 1930s) (Lauk, 1994).

The EJU existed until 1940, when it was converted into a Soviet trade union under the Soviet occupational authorities, and ceased to function during WWII. During the German occupation (from the summer of 1941 until September 1944) no attempts were made to either revive the old or establish a new journalists' organization. After the war, under the Soviet occupation, a new organization—the Journalists' Union of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (JUESSR)—was established as late as 1957. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the organization was not dissolved, but continued to exist with a diminishing membership and an unclear identity. In the mid-1990s, the Union's activity revived, and in 1996 the Union joined the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and in 1998 the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ).

The development of the Estonian journalists' organization was disrupted by several fatal breakdowns that changed not only the character of the association, but also professional values, the entire occupational ideology and the conditions of the existence of journalism as a profession in Estonia. The freedom of the press existed in Estonia only for 14 years (from 1920 to 1934) in the interwar period, and again from 1991 onwards, which equates to less than 50 years for the 250 years of the history of Estonian journalism.

3. The Triangle of the Press, State Power and Politics Framing the Activities of the Estonian Journalists' Organization

3.1. Common Goal with the Government—Building Up a Nation State

Independent statehood and freedom of the press enshrined in the 1920's Constitution of the Estonian Republic granted the press and journalists nearly unlimited possibilities to critically examine the activities of politicians and governments. The Publishing Act of 1923 did not limit this freedom, except for some restrictions related to state security and state secrets. Both journalists and politicians understood the importance of journalism in forming public opinion and encouraging citizen activism, as well as in state building and strengthening democratic governance. A leading journalist and simultaneously a leading politician Jaan Tõnisson declared: 'The various trends and nuances of public opinion cannot be expressed and distributed without journalism. This underlines the increasing importance of journalism in all democratic countries' (Tõnisson, 1923, p. 17). Furthermore, the idea of Estonia as an independent nation state was for the first time ever, formulated in the press, in the leading daily Postimees/Postman in 1917 (Lauk, 2000, p. 26).

The congress of Estonian journalists in April 1921 approved three principles of journalistic activity as the underlying guidelines of the EJA: 1) instilling in citizens a sense of duty to their state, 2) shaping a deeper understanding of the importance of national independence and 3) being critical and consistent, but always accurate in reporting (Høyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, p. 135).

The aims of the EJA were in line with the general internal policy of the governments of the 1920s. However, common goals were not seen as a conflict between journalistic independence and any loyalty to the state. In previous critical times in Estonia's history, journalism had largely served national interests, so journalists' support for the nation state in the early 1920s seemed a logical continuation of this tradition. Both politicians and journalists saw the press as an efficient means for building up a democratic nation state (Lauk, 2000). However, the press did not serve the government, but the idea and aspirations of a democratic nation state. Until the beginning of the 1930s, none of the spheres of Estonian society restricted access to the press, and only direct propaganda against national independence was impeded. Thus, Estonian journalism in the early 1920s was able to become an efficient means of social control and 'to offer a critical scrutiny of society, politics, and the economy' (Høyer et al., 1993; Waisbord, 2013, p. 44).

The 1920s was also an active time of 'profession building': the norms and standards of journalism, as well as the role of journalist in society were actively discussed both in public and in the journal of the organization. The EJU established travel grants and educational stipends, as well as some training courses, and arranged field trips for its members. Membership fees and some donations and investments made the organization financially independent, but not wealthy (Juraite et al., 2009).

3.2. Democracy Crisis Is Also a Media Crisis

The December 1924 attempted coup by Russia-supported communists provoked demands to reform the Constitution to strengthen the power of the President. The international economic crisis of the 1930s accelerated the constitutional crisis. Declining living standards, rising unemployment and increasing dissatisfaction with government added heat to the political tensions by the early 1930s. These tensions clearly affected the relationships between the press and the government, and the EJU and the government.

In 1930, a law on a state of emergency was enacted that gave the Chief of Interior Defence extraordinary rights, including the introduction of pre-publication censorship and confiscation of printed matter (Riigi Teataja, 1930, p. 749). Under this law, a state of emergency and pre-publication censorship were declared in the summer of 1933, when the political crisis reached its climax. Paradoxically, the Prime Minister, who was responsible for the state of emergency, was Jaan Tõnisson, one of Estonia's most prestigious journalists. He was extremely critical towards the press, accusing it of irresponsibility, and undermining the authority of the politicians and the government (Päevaleht, 1933, p. 1). In October, in his speech in the Riigikogu (Parliament), Tõnisson said: 'No government or state institution forbids criticizing their activities in the press. The aim of censorship is not suppressing freedom of expression, but saving its honour and right for life'.[2] As a journalist and editor-in-chief, Tõnisson had never accepted censorship, but as politician, he did his utmost to restrain the power of the press (Aru, 2008).

All daily newspapers in Tallinn unanimously protested censorship by stopping publication of editorials and news of government activities. Instead, editorials about the language of squirrels, the family life of Native Americans, and the situation of publishing in China appeared. Tõnisson invited the editors-in-chief to his office, but none accepted the invitation. The EJU in its letter to the government backed up the action of the newspapers, condemning the restriction of freedom of the press by such extreme methods, and protesting censorship (EAL, 1933, p. 67).

The government tried to solve the conflict with the press by publicizing in September the draft of a new Publishing Act. Compared to the 1923 Act, the new one proposed changes considerably restricting press freedom and suggesting tougher penalties for violations of the Act. The extraordinary meeting of the EJU in October severely criticized the proposed draft law. The EJU Board sent the government a memorandum demanding a revision of the draft law with the participation of experts nominated by the EJU (EAL, 1933). The new Publishing Act, however, was not passed in 1933, because the government resigned and the state of emergency was abolished.

3.3. Authoritarian Turn of the 1930s and the EJU

The young Estonian democracy was unstable and one government crisis followed another. The Great Depression of the early 1930s destabilized the internal politics in all Baltic States causing the rise of authoritarian regimes. 'Starting with Lithuania in 1926, each Baltic republic sought relief from chaos in authoritarian order' (Clemens, 2001, p. 76). The internal political upheaval of March 12, 1934 resulted in an authoritarian regime in Estonia with a President having decisive power.

Repressions against civic freedoms started immediately after the coup. All political organizations and parties except the President's one (Isamaaliit/Pro Patria) were forbidden, which was also brought about the end of the party press. Although only a few anti-regime newspapers were closed, the parties behind the newspapers disappeared. The EJU as a non-political association was not banned, but had to reassess its relationship with the state authorities, since press freedom became severely suppressed.

In December 1934, the Government's Propaganda Service was founded, which was later converted into the State Propaganda Service (SPS). The SPS supervised the press, and engaged in post-publishing censorship. Furthermore, newspapers regularly received official government information, scripts of public speeches of leading politicians etc. from the SPS, and had to publish these materials verbatim without commenting. Everything concerning the leading figures of the state or members of the government had to be published in a positive manner (Lauk, 1991, p. 45).

In 1938, the new Constitution legally permitted restricting press freedom to protect state security, public order, morality and the integrity of every citizen. In the spirit of the new Constitution, a new Press Law was passed in 1938, which included all restrictions imposed temporarily on the press during the previous states of emergency. In contrast to the old Act, which only contained one short paragraph of restrictions, it contained 14 issues, which the press was forbidden to publish. Most of them concerned criticism of the activities of governing institutions and leading politicians. The Law also required constructive and positive coverage of the government's activities (Lauk, 1991, p. 47).

It is revealing how the newspapers informed the public about the new Press Law: they all published the same text prepared by the SPS. The newspapers that had recently fiercely protested against the restrictions of the press freedom, now all sang from the same songbook: 'The Press Law aims at curtailing everything that expresses disrespect, disdain and intentional malevolence towards the state order, state's leaders and institutions. The Law requires the placement the forefront of everything…that is the most useful for our social solidarity and social co-operation' (Päevaleht, 1938, p. 5). The cases of the application of the law and the activities of the SPS demonstrate that by the end of the 1930s, the media in Estonia had lost the possibility to fulfil their most important function in a democratic society: to keep the powerholders accountable, and to act as the mechanism of social control and public forum. The crisis of democracy had become the crisis of the media.

How did the EJU respond to the 'Era of Silence' as the authoritarian period is called in Estonian history? The EJU united journalists across a broad political spectrum. During the democratic development of the 1920s journalists saw no problem in supporting the government's efforts in developing an independent Republic of Estonia. The power politics of the governments during the political crises and their robust attempts to silence the press in the 1930s, revealed discrepancies in the visions about the role of journalism in society. In the EJU, some journalists cautiously criticized the government's decisions and practices; others kept silent or were ready to collaborate. A well-defined opposition platform was never formed regarding the government actions against the media. Indeed, pro-government members from the newspapers close to the governing circles gradually took the leading positions in the EJU. This also determined the nature of the public activities of the EJU during the 1930s. The EJU became rather cautious in its public judgments about any government's decisions concerning the press. Thus, the EJU did not publicly take a stance about the draconian Press Law of 1938. Speaking in Riigikogu on November 2, 1938, the Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction with the EJU and journalists, from whom the government had received 'much help and co-operation' (Lauk, 1994, p. 70). In an editorial of *Päevaleht/Daily Paper* devoted to the 15th anniversary of the EJU, the Union's leader Jaan Taklaja emphasized the readiness of the EJU to support the 'constructive national and state building work', and that the ongoing political transformation without doubt has improved our public life' (Taklaja, 1934, p. 1).

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[2] Estonian State Archive, file 1.7, 262, p. 77.

It is not so clear how sincere the Union's alliance was with the government. The press had been all but silenced; at least no critical stance was possible. Newspapers acquired a moderate and neutral tone without specifically applauding the government's policies. In a speech at the 20th anniversary celebration, Jaan Taklaja referred to the inability of the Estonian newspapers to fulfil their duty of 'being critical and consistent, but always accurate in reporting' as was stated in the resolution of the 1921 congress (Lauk, 1994, p. 71). There was also a certain opposition against the EJU leadership throughout the years, with the leading figure Leopold Johanson, who since 1921 had been a member of the EJU as well as an MP. He wrote in the EJU's yearbook 1939: 'Bans and commands that aim at restricting citizen's rights and freedoms, poison political atmosphere everywhere where they are produced, they also poison and paralyze the feeling of citizenship' (Johanson, 1939, p. 38). He also spoke for the freedom of the press in many Riigikogu sessions, the last time as late as in April 1940, two months before the Soviet *coup d'état*.

Authoritarian regimes determine the narrow frames within which journalists operate. 'Authoritarianism excludes the possibility that the press and journalism could achieve significant autonomy, particularly from the state' (Waisbord, 2013, p. 42). A professional association has very limited possibilities to influence political decisions that concern restrictions of the freedom of expression, as the case of the EJU demonstrates. Using legislation, the authorities deprived the press from the right for any critical surveillance and demanded loyalty from the journalists' organization. The means of the next regime, that of Soviet totalitarianism, was not legislation, but violence.

3.4. Killing the Messenger: Sovietization and Extermination of the EJU

During the initial months after the Soviet takeover (June 21, 1940), the authorities closed over 200 newspapers and magazines out of the 281 published during the first half of the year (Lauk, 1991, p. 75; Maimik, 1994, p. 99). The leading newspapers were turned, literally overnight, into the new regime's organs. Their facilities, as well as printing houses and printing materials were nationalized. The staffs of the newspapers could continue their work for a short while before they were removed, and the arrests of the editors-in-chief and other leading journalists (especially those with long careers and well-known names) started (Saueauk, 2010, pp. 14–15). It has been discovered that at least 37 journalists were executed during 1940 (Lauk & Pallas, 2008, p. 18).

Journalists, who had been politically active, were treated as enemies. For example, Eduard Laaman, a leading publicist and long-term editor-in-chief of one of the main dailies *Vaba Maa/Free Country*, and the press-attaché of the Estonia's Embassy in Moscow was arrested in February 1941 and executed half a year later in a prison in Kirov. The first managing editor of *Eesti Spordileht/Estonian Sport's Paper* Ado Anderkopp, who had been an MP for nearly 20 years, and minister in several governments was arrested in July 1940 and executed in Tallinn Prison on June 31, 1941 (Pallas, 2002).

The largest cleansing took place in June 1941 during the wave of deportations that began the night of June 14 throughout Estonia. The authorities arrested and deported (often together with their families) most of those journalists who had continued in their jobs, as well as those who had resigned or been fired. Their 'guilt' was having work in the 'bourgeois' press and broadcasting, which was deemed as 'anti-Soviet activity'. The average punishment for this activity was 25 years in Gulag with no right to return home. Thus, the Soviet regime almost completely uprooted Estonian journalism and destroyed the continuity of the profession in the first year of the Soviet occupation. A small number of journalists succeeded in escaping abroad at the end of WWII before the Soviet occupation was completed in September 1944. They established the Estonian exile press in Sweden, Canada, Germany and Australia. The distribution and possession of exile newspapers and magazines were strictly forbidden in Estonia during the Soviet regime.

Unlike other 'bourgeois' organizations, the Soviets did not immediately close the EJU. Instead, under pressure by the authorities, the Board of the EJU 'voluntarily' decided to withdraw the EJU from the FIJ and join the Central Union of Trade Unions of the ESSR; to hand over the EJU's properties and finances and to accept the representatives of the new regime as members of the Union. The Board resigned en masse at the extraordinary general meeting on August 18, 1940. The new Board, which was elected 'openly and entirely unanimously', consisted of communists and some collaborators. At this meeting, the editor-in-chief of the main official daily *Kommunist/Communist*, comrade Nikolai Karotamm imposed the ideologically correct goals for the work of the organization. He also emphasized that journalists must be loyal to the working people, and to 'disclose their enemies' hostile intrigues' or they will find themselves among the enemies of the working class and suffer from the consequences (Lauk & Pallas, 2008, p. 17).

After taking over the editorial offices, the Soviets staffed them with servants of the new regime, most of whom had no journalistic experience. For example, the ECP appointed at least 13 communists with 'underground careers'[3] and 5 Estonian communists who had 'returned'[4] to Estonia in June 1940, to the staffs of the three most important dailies (Veskimägi, 1996, p. 84).

Devotion to the idea of communism and loyalty to the Communist Party remained the main criteria for selecting journalists for the communist press and broadcasting after WWII. Journalistic education and experience, as well as a proper knowledge of Estonian were second-rate criteria. For example, the staff of the Komsomol (Young Communist League's) main organ *Noorte Hääl/The Voice of Youth* in 1946–1948 consisted of 34 'journalists', of whom 30 were members of the ECP or Komsomol and had fought in the Red Army or recently 'returned' from Russia.[5] For a decade after WWII, journalists for Estonian media were educated and trained only in the journalism schools and faculties of the Communist Party Colleges or in Moscow State University according to the Soviet journalist doctrine.

No information has been yet found of the activities of the Sovietized EJU in 1940–1941. During the German occupation, no chance was to revive the EJU. The members, who had survived the violence of the Soviet occupation, had left the jobs. With participation of some members a couple of interwar national dailies were revived, but the German authorities closed them after the first issues had been published. However, several Independence time local newspapers and magazines re-appeared under the strict censorship. The German authorities published the German language *Revaler Zeitung* as their official organ, and two propaganda newspapers in Estonian.

4. The Soviet Estonian Union of Journalists—An Ideological Organization, a Trade Union and a Club

The Soviet regime did not allow journalists to establish a national journalists' organization. The initiative came from the authorities. According to the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR in 1957, regional Journalists' Unions had to be established under the subordination of the all-Soviet Union of Journalists in Moscow, as its sub-organizations. The Central Committee of the ECP (CC ECP) set up an Organizing Committee (OC) and appointed the members with 'irreproachable' pasts and service records in the Soviet Estonian media, as well as in the CC structures.[6] These people were also the first members of the JUESSR, even before the organization was officially launched.[7]

From September 1957 to February 1959, the OC had 34 meetings, which decided important issues of the organization's activities and finances. Similarly, the entire media in the USSR and the journalists' organizations were abundantly subsidised by the state to secure their ability for efficient communist propaganda. The JUESSR was the far largest creative union in Estonian SSR from the outset. In March 1960, it already had 354 members.[8]

The JUESSR was established not as professional, but as a purely ideological organization. In its resolution, the first (founding) congress assured: 'The members of the Journalists' Union of the Estonian SSR will do everything to fulfil the momentous tasks that our beloved Communist Party has assigned to the Soviet journalists'.[9] Several speeches were held in Russian, and all shorthand records in Estonian were translated into Russian.

The JUESSR sent detailed monthly reports (in Russian) to the all-Soviet Journalists' Union about its activities.[10] All these reports, among other issues, declared loyalty to the Communist Party and the common mission of building Communism and fighting its enemies.

However, some segments emerged, which almost from the beginning of the organization went beyond the control of the authorities. Critical and opposition minded journalists started using the work of the JUESSR's sections for advancing professionalism and human values of journalism, trying (and succeeding) to develop a non-ideological discourse for talking to their audiences (Lauk, 1996; Lauk & Kreegipuu, 2010; Miil, 2013).

To organize 'creative work', various sections were formed. Among others, sections of sports, of language and translation, feature journalism in Russian, and satire and information.[11] Later, several new sections were added for journalists covering specific topics; working in radio and TV, and for those working in Russian. In 1972, the Party life section was established under the supervision of the CC ECP. Journalists of this section were supposed to cover the work of the party organizations in industrial enterprises and collective farms, as well as enrich 'the vocabulary and style of the stories dealing with the party life' (Hanson, 1973, pp. 68–82). In 1986, the JUESSR had 13 sections.

The sections arranged various public meetings, exhibitions, journalistic competitions, excursions, thematic seminars, press conferences, round table discussions etc. Indeed, many of these activities had no relation to ideology or 'building communism'. Instead, they aimed at improving journalistic skills and knowledge, and providing opportunities to socialize with colleagues from other media. In some sections, the members shared a kind of club-like spirit based on common interests and similar life experiences. Several sections did valuable work for developing the Estonian language and culture, and preserving cultural memory. For example, the satire section was skilful in ridiculing the double reality of Soviet society, where on paper the economy advanced at high speed, but in reality shortages of almost everything people needed for normal life were common. Another sphere, in which ridiculing Soviet life reality was possible, was bureaucracy.

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[3] Those who had fought against Estonia's independence during the 1920s–1930s and had been adjudged enemies of the state and declared illegals.

[4] Russian–Estonians who heeded the call from the Communist Party to overthrow the legal Estonian government.

[5] Noorte Hääle vastutava toimetaja A. Slutski aruanne EK(b)P KK sekretärile N. Karotammele 19.10.1948. [Report of the responsible editor of Noorte Hääl, A. Slutsk, to the Secretary of the CC ECP N. Karotamm on 19.10.1948]. ERAf [Branch of Estonian State Archive] , F.1, file 47, 35, p. 210.

[6] Ajakirjanike Liidu orgbüroo koosolekute protokollid. [Minutes of the meetings of the Organisational Committee of the Journalists' Union]. ERA.R-1950.1.13, p. 1.

[7] Ajakirjanike Liidu orgbüroo koosolekute protokollid. [Minutes of the meetings of the Organisational Committee of the Journalists' Union]. ERA.R-1950.1.13, p. 3.

[8] Materjalid Eesti NSV Ajakirjanike Liidu liikmete arvestuse, koosseisu ja liikumise kohta [Materials of membership of the JUESSR] ERA.R-1950.1.366.

[9] I kongressi stenogramm koos juurdekuuluvate lisadega [The transcript of the 1st Congress together with the supplements]. ERA.R-1950.1.8, p. 205.

[10] Informatsioonid liidu loomingulise tegevuse kohta. [Reports on the creative activities of the Journalists' Union]. ERA.R-1950.1.42.

[11] I kongressi stenogramm koos juurdekuuluvate lisadega [The transcript of the 1st Congress together with the supplements] ERA.R-1950.1.8, pp. 11–39.

The membership card of the JUESSR also opened some doors and access to some services and goods that were otherwise difficult to get (e.g. visits abroad, permission to buy a car or a voucher to go to a health or holiday resort or for getting a flat). Arranging these services was the main trade union function of the JUESSR, as all the issues concerning employment and working conditions were decided in the CC ECP.

After the collapse of the Soviet regime and reinstating Estonia's independence, the Soviet era journalists' union needed to redefine its identity and legitimize itself as an organization for all Estonian journalists. This was more difficult than anyone expected. The Union that came from the 'old' times was not attractive to young journalists. Simultaneously with the transformation of the whole media system, including the basic values and functions of journalism, a generation replacement among journalists took place. About 30 per cent of journalists reached retirement age by the end of the 1980s. The older generations found it difficult to adapt to the new working environment and ways of doing journalism and, within five years of Independence, had left journalism. As the result, 68 per cent of Estonian journalists in 1995 were younger than 40 years old, including most of the editors-in-chief. About half of the journalists of the 1990s had no experience of employment in the Soviet media (Lauk, 1996, pp. 66–67). Under the changed economic circumstances, the new journalists did not see a need for a trade union. They had no problem in getting well-paid jobs when the media market was enlarging rapidly and the demand for good journalists was higher than the supply.

In addition, the Union had discredited itself with a failed attempt at running its own print business. As the state financing had stopped the Union was in financial difficulties. In 1994, when the Union had its annual congress, it appeared inquorate, as too few of the members attended. Even the cessation of the Union was then discussed, but instead, a committee was put together to revive it (Tootsen, 2004, p. 276).

5. Resuscitating the EJU

In the early 1990s, the question of continuity in terms of legal succession arose. Together with the Soviet Union, the JUESSR ceased to exist. The original name, the EJU, was restored and the 1995 congress, initiated by veterans of the JUESSR, adopted new Statutes. The EJU did not declare itself to be a legal successor of the JUESSR, but of the interwar journalists' union, although this was legally very difficult to prove. However, the existing EJU, like the interwar EJU, functions simultaneously as a trade union and a professional organization, and carries similar values and professional ethos. Therefore, it can fairly be regarded as the successor of the first Estonian journalists' association.

In 1994, the Union had 1,941 members (Tootsen, 2004, p. 248). After the 1995 congress, journalists were invited to re-register their membership and 467 veterans did so. In the next five years, about 400 new members joined. By the end of the 1990s membership was about 900, but by 2017 had declined to about 300.[12]

Since Estonia's Independence, the EJU has not been involved in politics, although many of its members actively participated in the independence movement and were also elected as MPs. The EJU is primarily oriented towards professional activities and standing for the interests of journalists in relations with employers. The Union participated in establishing a Code of Ethics of Estonian Journalism and the Estonian Press Council ASN, which for the first time in Estonian journalism history developed the practice of solving people's complaints against the media. However, the organization has not been able to gain enough popularity and authority among journalist to represent the whole journalistic community of Estonia. Unlike many bigger countries, alternative journalists' organizations have not been established.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The case of Estonia's journalists' organization clearly indicates how much the process of professionalization of journalism depends on external powers. This article focused primarily on political and historical conditions that determine the frames within which journalists operate, and which allow or not allow them certain extent of autonomy. Estonian journalism in the 1920s had favourable conditions for journalism to develop towards an independent occupation. The democratic framework of a nation state, freedom of expression enshrined in the Constitution and non-restrictive press legislation created an environment where the ability of the press to influence and form public opinion and public agenda were clearly palpable (Lauk, 2000). Journalism as a field and occupation had the necessary preconditions for building institutional boundaries and achieving a certain degree of autonomy, both individual inside these boundaries, and collective, in relation to external factors. The EJU strove to define values and standards of the profession and to achieve its legal recognition. It also became on organization that stood for the interests of journalistic community, as a whole.

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[12] Eesti Ajakirjanike Liit. Available at https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eesti_Ajakirjanike_Liit

Political upheavals change the contexts and strengthen the pressures on the media from the external influences and powers. Both the internal and external boundaries of journalistic autonomy need to be reconsidered and renegotiated. Professional association is in the position of struggling for those conditions where at least a certain extent of independence is possible. During the authoritarian period in Estonia, a propaganda institution was established to direct and control the press in the interests of the state authorities. The EJU had no choice but to co-operate with the government. However, the EJU reached a compromise with the authorities when agreeing to follow the rules of the 'Era of Silence' (including a restriction of the press freedom) and receiving the government's approval in return. As a result, the EJU managed to maintain the statutes, membership and the continuity of the association and offer some solidarity to journalists in trouble (Juraite et al., 2009). When newspapers were silenced, cautious criticism of the authorities was possible in the EJU's yearbook.

Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 37) refer to the 'control of the media by outside actors—parties, politicians, social groups or movements, or economic actors seeking influence' as 'instrumentalization'. In a way, the authoritarian government instrumentalized Estonian journalism in the 1930s, and thus prepared the ground for the next period of shackled journalism, the Soviet totalitarian regime.

The Soviet authorities eradicated the press and exterminated Estonia's entire journalistic community from the independence era. No negotiations or compromise were possible. For the next five decades, from 1940 to the early 1990s, the media in Estonia was put into the position of an instrument of the Communist Party for securing and strengthening its power as the leader of the whole society. While recruiting journalists, the regime did not rely on the small number of local collaborators, but used its own myrmidons, mainly with Russian background. They ruled Estonian journalism throughout the post WWII Stalinist decade.

Gradually, the composition of the journalistic community changed. Journalism graduates from the University of Tartu (where journalism education in Estonian was established in 1954), and graduates of other specialties and Universities occupied most of the leading positions in the media. The obvious contradiction of the Soviet propaganda with national values and collective memory of people, and the conflict between the content of the official media and real life-world contributed to the development of an oppositional frame of mind among journalists (Miil, 2013). A critical mass of journalists existed who created a sophisticated metaphorical discourse for expressing opposition between the lines, which was well received by Estonian audiences. In 'a small language community like Estonia, there were considerably large intelligent audiences who were able to follow quite complicated cultural codes and who felt themselves participating in common anti-power language games, led by national media' (Lauk, 1996, p. 97). By developing such a double discourse, the journalistic community created certain space of inner autonomy, which enabled creativity and generated common spirit.

The journalists' association of 1957 was set up according to the orders and instructions of the authorities in Moscow and not on any initiative from the inside the occupation. However, some segments of less controlled, and apolitical activities became possible within the limited space of inner autonomy. The organization strove to advance journalists' professional skills and knowledge, their contacts with audiences, and their economic situation. In the situation, where 'political, rather than distinctively journalistic criteria…guide the practice of journalism' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 37), these activities were vital for maintaining the integrity of journalistic occupation. After Independence, the organization immediately distanced itself from politics and government, and operates today as a combination of trade union and professional organization, although not representing the majority of Estonian journalists.

This article focussed on the struggles of Estonian journalists' organization for collective autonomy throughout different political contexts from the early 1920s to the early 1990s. The Estonian case proves again that journalistic autonomy can never be absolute, but its boundaries are always pliable and submissive. Autonomy 'is the outcome of negotiations, compromises, and struggles inside the journalistic field, as well as in its relation with external fields' (Waisbord, 2013, p. 66). Also, the case demonstrates how much journalistic autonomy is historically contingent.

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Article

The Story of Journalist Organizations in Czechoslovakia

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Abstract
This article reviews the political history of Czechoslovakia as a vital part of the Soviet-dominated "Communist bloc" and its repercussions for the journalist associations based in the country. Following an eventful history since 1918, Czechoslovakia changed in 1948 from a liberal democracy into a Communist regime. This had significant consequences for journalists and their national union and also for the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), which had just established its headquarters in Prague. The second historical event to shake the political system was the "Prague Spring" of 1968 and its aftermath among journalists and their unions. The third landmark was the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989, which played a significant part in the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and led to the closing of the old Union of Journalists in 1990, followed by the founding of a new Syndicate which refused to serve as the host of the IOJ. This led to a gradual disintegration and the closing down of what in the 1980s was the world's largest non-governmental organization in the media field.

Keywords
Cold War; communism; Czechoslovakia; International Organization of Journalists; journalism; union of journalists

Issue
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1. Introduction

The starting point of this article is a story about the rise and fall of the IOJ—an international non-governmental organization of journalists based in Czechoslovakia, which had become an icon of the changing political landscape of the world since 1946. The same story has been told in an anthology of the history of the international movement of journalists (Nordernstreng, Björk, Beyersdorf, Høyer, & Lauk, 2016) and also in a monograph on the IOJ (Nordenstreng, in press), but this was done without covering the broader context of the political history of Czechoslovakia. The present review aims to fill the gap by first describing the key political turns in the history of Czechoslovakia since World War I (Emmert, 2012).

2. Political History of Czechoslovakia from 1918 to the 1990s

2.1. Four Periods between 1918 and 1948

If we wish to understand the events which took place in post-war Czechoslovakia, particularly in February 1948, when the Communist Party took over political power in the country, we need to go back another thirty years. Czechoslovak history divides the period between 1918 and 1948 into four main phases: the First Republic, the Second Republic, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the Third Republic.

The period of the *First Republic* is defined by two dates: 28 October 1918 (birth of independent Czechoslovakia) and 30 September 1938 (signing of the Munich Agreement). In 1918 Czechoslovakia ceased to be part of the Austro–Hungarian Empire and became an independent republic with a democratic polity based on the Constitution. The country consisted of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia. The Republic was characteristically multi-ethnic and there were initially large social, cultural and economic differences between its individual regions. The internal unity of the new state was challenged by the German ethnic minority living in the border regions and wishing to become part of Germany, and the leftist labour movement, which founded the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (henceforward the CPC) in May 1924. In the short term, however, Czechoslovakia became a mature democratic republic with a broad spectrum of political parties, and the republic advanced in leaps and bounds in the fields of industry, trade, education and lifestyle. An extensive print media developed, the press being primarily partisan, with a minority non-party press, tabloids and magazines, and the new media of radio and film were evolving. Partial censorship existed and was carried out by the Ministry of Interior. Publishers had to submit mandatory copies to district authorities or police headquarters, who had the right to withhold prints prior to their release, to allow the issue only after a change or deletion of the text or even confiscate the press (Končelík, Večeřa, & Orság, 2010). Nevertheless, cultural openness and tolerance prevailed.

The next period of the *Second Republic* began with the signing of the Munich Agreement and the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia on 30 September 1938, lasting only until 15 March 1939. In this short period, Czechoslovakia lost extensive border territories, Slovakia, and Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Politically, the country was subverted and the democratic principles of the First Republic, organization and freedom were destroyed. The Party of National Unity and the National Labour Party became the only two political parties.[1] Czechoslovak society perceived the Munich Agreement as a defeat which threw it into disillusion and moral crisis. These facts were also reflected in the media, with the disappearance of many periodicals and the intensification of censorship.

The third period between 16 March 1939 and 8 May 1945 is known as the *Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia*. The territory of the Protectorate included practically all of the present-day Czech Republic, so Nazi Germany effectively occupied the entire country. The Czech president formally remained Head of the Protectorate, along with the Protectorate's Czech government. Nevertheless, the real power—with a brutal and totalitarian Nazi regime—was held by a *Reichsprotektor*, who was hand-picked by Adolf Hitler. This means that the Germans had the Czech economy, industrial and agricultural production, transport, education and culture fully under their control. The media were controlled by a Nazi information monopoly and subjected to severe censorship. In addition to the official media, illegal and media in-exile were quickly established. The Czech population was subjected to a programme of Germanisation. Citizens of Jewish origin were deprived of their civil rights, persecuted in various ways, including the confiscation of property, and, starting in the autumn of 1941, were gradually physically eliminated.

Understandably, the Czech people did not accept the occupation and resistance to it soon emerged. These activities culminated in the assassination of the *Reichsprotektor*. Meanwhile, the government-in-exile, led by Edvard Beneš, was established in London. Any expressions of anti-Nazi feeling were brutally suppressed by the occupiers—punished by death, imprisonment or detention in a concentration camp. Nevertheless, a number of Czechs cooperated—collaborated—with the occupying regime during the Protectorate. However, the majority of the population continued to oppose the Germans (Emmert, 2012) and, on 5 May 1945, resistance to the occupation developed into an armed Prague uprising,[2] which ended on 8 May 1945 with the defeat of Germany.

Finally, the fourth period from the May 1945 to February 1948 is called the *Third Republic*. The basic document establishing the direction of Czechoslovakia after World War II was the Košice Government Programme,[3] which introduced the first post-war Czechoslovak Government heavily influenced by the USSR—the winner of the war. It was drawn up by the Moscow-based leadership of the CPC and proclaimed the confiscation of property belonging to Germans, Hungarians and Czech collaborators, the punishment of collaborators, an equal relationship between Czechs and Slovaks, the establishment of National Committees[4] and fundamental changes in the economic and social spheres, as well as the banning of the activities of right-wing political parties. Accordingly, it not only dealt with the punishment of war criminals, traitors and collaborators, but also led to the rejection of the First Republic's political and economic system. Some Czech historians view this part of Czechoslovak history in two ways: either as a short period of freedom squeezed in between two dictatorships (Nazi and Communist) or as the trappings of democracy leading to the Communist snare. (Drápala, 2000)

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[1] The political system of the Second Republic was simplified and there were only two main political parties: (1) an "official" right-wing Party of National Unity (*Strana národní jednoty*) gathering together the Republican Party of Farmers and Peasants, Czechoslovak Traders' Party, National Fascist Community, Czechoslovak Christian Social Party, National People's Party, and (2) in "loyal" opposition, the left-wing National Labour Party (*Národní strana práce*).

[2] The Prague uprising was an attempt by the Czech resistance to liberate the city of Prague from German occupying forces. It lasted from 5 May until 8 May 1945, ending in a ceasefire between the Czech resistance and the German army, which decided to leave Prague on the same day. Next morning, the Red Army entered the nearly liberated city.

[3] See an educational portal for teachers, students and pupils available on the internet http://www.moderni-dejiny.cz/clanek/kosicky-vladni-program-5-4-1945

[4] The National Committee (1945–1990; NC) was a part of the Czechoslovak state administration with formally elected bodies. The NC was divided according to the place of operation—from the top level of the country, within regions, districts and towns to municipalities. It performed as an "extended arm" of the CPC for the economy and whole society.

In May 1946 Czechoslovakia held its first post-war parliamentary elections. A limited number of parties participated in the election. While the CPC won in the Czech lands with more than 40% of the vote, the Democratic Party won in Slovakia with 60% of the vote. In June 1946, the pre-war leader Edvard Beneš was confirmed as President of the Republic, and he appointed a government led by CPC chairman Klement Gottwald. In October 1946, the Czechoslovak National Assembly approved an economic plan for the reconstruction of post-war Czechoslovakia.

In 1947 the USSR began to create the Eastern bloc by arrangements such as a peace treaty concluded with Hungary and a friendship and mutual assistance treaty concluded with Poland. At this time Czechoslovakia followed Moscow's "advice" to withdraw from the Marshall Plan and to sign a trade agreement with the USSR.

In the post-war atmosphere the liberalism and humanism which characterized the First Republic were perceived by the majority of society as the root of all evil, which was to blame for the hardships of war, human degradation and the total collapse of modern society. The central theme of the time was socialism, which was also complemented by nationalism and Slavonic patriotism. In May 1945 the Ministry of Information issued a Decree forbidding the publication of any printed material, with the exception of selected dailies issued by National Front parties. Further permission to publish was only granted to those organisations which could prove that this was in the public interest.

In the Third Republic immediately after the war, the Czechoslovak press was made up of three ideological-political types: (1) the Communist press and periodicals with Communist sympathies, (2) a democratic left-wing press and (3) the non-Socialist press. Censorship was not exercised, although the press laws dating back to the First Republic provided for it. But the situation changed in autumn 1947, when the Communists began to perceive censorship as an indispensable instrument of power. In December 1947 the Ministry of Information created the Surveillance Department, which aimed to monitor objectionable texts dealing with the national economic plan, incitement against the Slavonic peoples as well as deviation from the basic line in domestic and foreign policy and matters connected to the defence of the state (Kaplan & Tomášek, 1994).

2.2. The Communist Takeover of 1948

A dramatic government crisis started in Prague on 13 February 1948 when personnel changes in favour of the Communists were made in the National Security Corps. The response to the ever-increasing influence of the CPC was the resignation of the non-Communist ministers, 12 members of a 26-member government, on 20 February 1948. The CPC and groups sympathetic to it within individual parties began to establish the National Front Action Committees (NFAC), whose aim was to "cleanse" the government and public life of all non-Communist political forces. Two days later, the People's Militia also came into being, armed units consisting mostly of workers directly controlled by the CPC. Their main aim was the defence of industrial enterprises and the intimidation of their political (anti-Socialist) opponents. The conflict continued on 24 February 1948 with an hour-long general strike in support of the CPC's requirements, and escalated on 25 February, when President Edvard Beneš agreed to make changes in the government as suggested by Klement Gottwald.

This is how Communists came to power in Czechoslovakia—widely known as the "Communist coup". In early May, a new Constitution was approved, and the definitive influence of the CPC in the country was formally confirmed on 30 May 1948 by the parliamentary elections. All the parties stood on a single list of candidates led by the CPC and 89% of the electorate voted for them. 70% of members of the National Assembly were Communists, and the remaining members from other parties were pro-Communist. Finally, in June 1948, Klement Gottwald became the new President.

At this stage the CPC brought society under totalitarian control. The economy was based on the principle of central planning, and companies with more than 50 employees were nationalised. Under pressure from Moscow, the CPC's Central Committee began to take a hard line against any criticism of the Communist system or in favour of liberal thinking. There were a number of fabricated political trials, forced labour camps were created and the strict supervision of the censor covered not only the field of culture, including the press, but also the life of the Church. A counter-reaction to the situation was a wave of emigration, during which a large community of post-February 1948 emigrants founded publications in exile. May 1951 saw the launch of Radio Free Europe with regular broadcasts from Munich.

After February 1948 the CPC began to introduce censorship which would apply not only to the periodical and non-periodical press, radio, film and the early days of TV, but also to exhibitions, libraries, local records, posters, advertising leaflets, badges, labels and the like. In this way, the media became closely intertwined with the system of political power, while the limits of journalistic freedom were defined by the National Front and self-censorship (Končelík et al., 2010). The system of censorship policed the flow of information both at home and abroad. There was a ban on importing foreign newspapers and magazines, press agencies were shut down, as were cultural centres and information offices with their headquarters in the West. The state security routinely monitored correspondence sent from and to capitalist countries and so on. In the coming years, everything that did not suit the official ideas of the socialist press gradually disappeared from the newspapers, while the censor intervened not only in matters of content, but also of form, and tried to influence production, print run and scope. In this way, the Communist regime gained a total information monopoly.

However, in the early 1950s, a more moderate cultural policy was promoted. The reason for this was not only the fact the Soviet ideas of socialist art had proved problematic, but it was also a response to the growing conflict within the CPC itself (Knapík, 2006). The concept of the "new course"[5] opened up the possibility of liberalisation in Czechoslovakia's cultural sphere between 1953 and 1956. After the death of Josef Stalin in 1953 and the criticism by Nikita Khrushchev in 1956, the regime began to look more kindly on some still-rejected personalities, less strict aesthetic criteria appeared, and even some channels for contact with the West were introduced. A new artistic generation began to take shape that did not feel itself as bound to the dogmatic doctrines of the late 1940s and early 1950s. While the Cold War continued as an overall frame, it was possible to hope for the promotion of liberalistic tendencies.

The pressure for reforms in the CPC and other aspects of everyday life increased after the mid-1960s. As the reform supporters became increasingly recognized in the CPC and public life, the liberal orientation in the country and in the CPC gradually won the support of the majority for a revised form of Communism.

2.3. The Prague Spring of 1968

In 1968 the world was in turmoil, with the war in Vietnam, the civil rights movement in the USA and student unrest throughout Europe, especially in France. It was a unique year in post-war history, as 1848 had been a hundred years earlier. And the "Prague Spring" became its focal point.

For a short period, from January to August 1968, there was a huge development among politicians, intellectuals, students and ordinary public life spheres in Czechoslovakia. The social and political criticism of the system had been gradual and fundamental and was reflected in economy, central management, culture and media. At the end of 1967 a crisis in the CPC itself deepened and the party split into two groups: (1) conservatives, represented by Antonín Novotný, Czechoslovak president and CPC first secretary, and (2) reform Communists, who wanted to democratize the old politics. In January 1968 the big break happened, when Antonín Novotný was removed as first secretary of the CPC and replaced by Alexander Dubček, a reform Communist from Slovakia.

The motto of Dubček´s new political programme[6] was "Socialism with a human face". Although the Czechoslovak economy should still be based on state or co-operative ownership, non-Communist parties, broad public community and free elections should also be involved in political power. Admission to leading positions and universities should no longer be contingent upon CPC membership. The reforms also abolished censorship and an informal alliance developed between Dubček´s leadership and journalists. Indeed, the media played a crucial role in the Prague Spring (Končelík et al., 2010). Freedom of speech flourished and different associations like the scout movement were restored. The Prague Spring changes were supported throughout society and had a considerable international response.

However, the Soviet Communist Party, together with its sister parties in other Socialist countries, were afraid of this revival process, and this fear led to the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact military forces on 21 August 1968. From September 1968 the so-called Moscow Protocol was implemented in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak population of course protested against the occupation. The most radical act against the restoration of the Communist dictatorship was that of Jan Palach, a student of the Charles University, who burned himself to death on 16 January 1969 at the Prague's Wenceslas Square. In April 1969 Gustáv Husák became the first secretary of the Communist Party. Alexander Dubček and his closest associates were soon removed from public life and replaced by Soviet puppets. Everyone who participated in the Prague Spring or disagreed with the occupation was punished. Censorship was reinstated and thousands of books and films were banned. Many Czechs and Slovaks left the country.

The Prague Spring was consequently brought to a drastic end and replaced by a sweeping political process called "Normalization" lasting for 20 years. Officially Czechoslovakia was a faithful member of the Eastern bloc, and the CPC bureaucratic apparatus was severely controlling all aspects of life. Yet under the surface there existed an underground culture, intellectual dissent, *samizdat* and an exile literature. The CPC bureaucratic apparatus could no longer effectively control all areas of society. The most significant manifestation of the anti-Communist resistance was the publication of Charter 77 with its civil movement established in January 1977, led by writer and later Czechoslovak President Václav Havel and the university professor Jan Patočka.

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[5] The "new course" (*nový kurs*) was proclaimed by the leadership of the CPC after the deaths of Stalin and Gottwald in 1953. Its result was a more benign approach to the middle classes; forced collectivisation in villages was temporarily halted, auxiliary technical battalions were disbanded, political trials were discontinued and the process of revising their outcomes began, etc. See http://www.edejiny.cz/obdobi-destalinizace-v-ceskoslovensku-1953-%E2%80%93-1960

[6] There were two main documents determining the Prague Spring: (1) Dubček´s CPC Action programme posted on 5 April 1968, related to the politics and reform steps of CPC, and (2) the "Two thousand words" document written by Ludvík Vaculík together with leading Czech scientists, published on 27 July 1968. It was about the activation of the Czechoslovak public against the ever-evident pressure of the Soviet leadership against the reforms in the country. The manifesto was signed by hundreds of public figures and more than 120,000 citizens, which led to the persecution of many people in the period of normalization in the 1970s.

2.4. The Velvet Revolution of 1989

The resistance to the Communist regime began to increase in the late 1980s, in connection with Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power in the USSR and policy of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. The CPC claimed to agree with this Soviet reform policy, but this was rather lip service. Demonstrations of disagreement with the totalitarian regime proliferated, but were also severely suppressed by the security forces.

The most important actions took place on (1) 28 October 1988, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic, (2) 16 January 1989, the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's suicide, and (3) 29 June 1989, the publication of "A Few Sentences", a call by dissident leaders for the release of political prisoners, open and free discussion, including thorny historical issues, and the end of censorship.[7] The crucial event which precipitated the Velvet Revolution, happened on 17 November 1989 in the centre of Prague, when security police blocked and violently broke up a student procession to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the International Day of Students. The fundamental response to this armed intervention was the founding of the Civic Forum, headed by Václav Havel, to begin a dialogue with the Communist leaders. Massive demonstrations took place throughout Czechoslovakia in support of the Civic Forum, and university students went on strike.

On 24 November 1989, the CPC's secretary general Ladislav Adamec and his entire central committee withdrew. The name of the state was changed to Czecho-Slovak Federative Republic and the head of the Federal assembly became Prague Spring leader Alexander Dubček. On 29 December 1989 Václav Havel was elected as the new President. During 1990 Czechoslovakia became a federal republic and the transformation of Czechoslovak society and its economic, social and political life from Communist totalitarianism to liberal democracy could begin after long 40 years.

3. The Journalists and Their Union 1946–1990

After World War II, there were naturally significant changes in journalism as a profession. Before 1946 journalists were represented by the protectorate National Union of Journalists (NUJ; see more on this in Cebe, 2017, in this issue). The Czech Journalists' Union (henceforward the CJU)[8] came into being at a general meeting in March 1946. On that occasion it was also agreed that professional matters should in future fall under the remit of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement.[9] The CJU represented a community of altogether about 800 journalists (Cebe, 2012). In 1947, following the Act on the Status of Editors and Journalists' Unions, two journalists' unions were formed, the Czech union (formerly CJU) and the Slovak union, while above them an umbrella organization was established, the Central Union of Czechoslovak Journalists (CUCSJ). In May 1947 the government passed the Act on the Status of Editors and Journalists' Unions.[10] In fact, the CJU and CUCSJ were more a tool of the regime than a provider of benefits to journalists.

On this basis, the practice of journalism was tied to compulsory membership of the CJU, which had dire consequences for many journalists in the post-February cleansing. After February 1948, there were dynamic political and social changes. Even in the CJU action committees were founded and only those journalists who were willing to work with the newly-established regime remained members of the Union. The others were excluded from their professional organization and thereby lost all chances of working in the media. The NFAC forced more than one hundred experienced journalists to leave and consequently affected the Czechoslovak media for decades. (Cebe, 2012)

The new Communist Constitution of May 1948 had two main consequences for journalists and their union. Firstly, although the new Constitution guaranteed freedom of expression and prohibited censorship, the CPC consistently monitored all media production, making independent media in practice impossible. The journalist became a mere instrument lacking any autonomy, providing information on only politically-approved interpretations of events. The economy was only to be portrayed as flourishing, accompanied by the people's efforts to build it up. In the same way, both sports and scientific achievements were to be ascribed to the merits of the new Communist regime. The most significant instrument for controlling the media was, of course, the staffing policy, meaning that journalists were in constant fear of losing their jobs. (Končelík et al., 2010)

Secondly, a new, integrated Union of Czechoslovak Journalists (UCSJ; 1948–1972), headquartered in Prague, was founded and, within it, the National Union of Slovak Journalists, headquartered in Bratislava. The state, rather than the UCSJ, made the decisions regarding its focus, organizational structure or the exercise of the journalism as a profession and membership, meaning that the organization toed the Communist party line throughout its existence.

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[7] For more, see http://old.ustrcr.cz/en/milestones-in-recent-czech-history-1938-1989

[8] The succession of changing union formations from 1946 to 1990: 1946–1947: Czech Journalists Union (CJU); 1947–1948: Czech Journalists Union (CJU), Slovak Journalists Union (SJU), Central Union of Czechoslovak Journalists (CUCSJ); 1948–1968: National Union of Czechoslovak Journalists (UCSJ), Union of Slovak Journalists (USJ); 1968–1972: Unions of Czech (UCJ) and Slovak (USJ) Journalists, Headquarters; 1972–1990: Czech Union of Journalists (CUJ), Slovak Union of Journalists (SUJ), National Czechoslovak Union of Journalists (NCSUJ), 1990: The Syndicate of Journalists of the Czech Republic. (Ševčíková, 2015).

[9] The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement Act was passed on 16 May 1946. In 1947, the decision was taken that the CJU should also fulfil the function of a trade union. Divisional membership was voluntary; however, the CJU pointed out to its members that the CJU would not represent them in professional issues if they were not members of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. From 1 January 1948, the Agreement on the Entry of Journalists into the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement came into force and after that date, the majority of journalists joined a trade union.

[10] Act No. 101/1974 Coll. It stipulated, among other things, who could become an editor, laid down the rights and responsibilities of editors, including the right of the Union to take disciplinary action against its members.

From 1948, the CJU and UCSJ also served as the gateway to international organizations, above all to the IOJ. In July 1968, following the events of the Prague Spring, the UCSJ held a landmark congress. A new statute and several resolutions were adopted in support of a new model of Socialism ("with a human face"), democracy and freedom of the press, speech and information. The former UCSJ was abolished and new Unions of Czech (UCJ, 1968–1972) and Slovak (USJ, 1968–1972) Journalists, including an umbrella organization (Headquarters, 1968–1972) were formed.

The new organizational model continued until August 1968. Both the Headquarters and UCJ were under the control of the Commission for the Preparation of the II Congress of the UCJ, which soon overturned all the decisions of the previous leadership and set up a cleansing commission on the basis of which 479 journalists were excluded from the Union and therefore also from their profession between September 1968 to March 1970, followed in 1972 by another 800 journalists.

As of 1971 the whole union had a complete overhaul in the line of normalization. In May 1972 a congress was convened at which the Czech Union of Journalists (CUJ, 1972–1990), the Slovak Union of Journalists (SUJ, 1972–1990) and the National Czechoslovak Union of Journalists (NCSUJ, 1972–1990) were established.

The big breakup of the NCSUJ took place at the turn of 1989 and 1990, due to the political events of the Velvet Revolution and the end of the Communist regime. Immediately after 17 November 1989, a new management of the CUJ, including the Bureau and its secretariat, was elected. At the same time, the new Bureau of the CUJ convened a general meeting on 16 December 1989, at which it was decided to create a new journalist organization, with the form of a syndicate. The old Union (CUJ) was dissolved at the extraordinary congress of the CUJ on 6 January 1990, and the successor organization became the Syndicate of Journalists of the Czech Republic, as a voluntary, independent, non-political, professionally united union of Czech and Moravian journalists. (Prouza, 1990) The new Syndicate refused to join the IOJ and instead became member of the IFJ.

4. The IOJ from 1946 to the 1990s

4.1. Founding and Split

The IOJ was founded at the International Congress of Journalists in June 1946 in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, which had only recently been liberated from Nazi occupation. The congress was attended by 165 delegates[11] from 21 countries. The post-war atmosphere was one of joy and optimism. In Czechoslovakia, this came just after the post-war parliamentary elections, which brought the Communists to power as the leading political force (for details of the first IOJ congresses, see Nordenstreng & Kubka, 1988).

The provisional constitution was finalised and approved at the second IOJ congress held in Prague in June 1947 and attended by 208 delegates from 21 countries, the UN and UNESCO. The CJU, led by Jiří Hronek, was responsible for organizing the congress and its patron was President Edvard Beneš, who spoke at the opening ceremony, as did Jan Masaryk (Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Klement Gottwald (Prime Minister and CPC Chairman).

The same positive atmosphere prevailed at the second congress in Prague as one year earlier in Copenhagen, although some tension about the impending division of the world could already be sensed. While the host union was in the middle of structural and political changes, the congress went smoothly in impressive settings. The constitutional statutes and principal resolutions were approved unanimously, likewise the leadership elected, with Archibald Kenyon of the UK continuing as President and Vice Presidents coming from the USA, USSR, France and Denmark. Hronek was unanimously elected to the combined office of Secretary General and Treasurer. But the site of the headquarters had to be put to a vote, the majority supporting Prague, while a minority led by British and Americans voted for London.

In less than a year after the Prague congress, by early 1948, the Cold War had broken out and a wave of political system changes in Central and Eastern Europe led to a division of Europe into East and West, separated by the "iron curtain". The IOJ was part of this battleground, becoming embroiled in Cold-War politics (Nordenstreng et al., 2016). The post-war unity of professional journalists was quickly replaced by distrust and antagonism between the capitalist West and the socialist East, exacerbated by political mobilization in both camps. Efforts by the Czech Secretary General Hronek and the British President Kenyon to hold the IOJ together were overruled by orders from Cold-War strategists in London and Washington, on the one hand, and the Soviet Communist Party hardliners in Moscow, on the other (Nordenstreng, in press).

The IOJ headquarters in Prague chose the Soviet side of the political divide as swiftly as the Czechoslovak Union was moved to the Socialist camp. These two processes were parallel and obviously reflections of a common overall shift in global relations of power.

In 1948–1949 the IOJ lost its West European and North American members, except for left-leaning groups of journalists there (mainly in France and Finland). The third IOJ congress in Helsinki in 1950 confirmed the change by changing the statutes in line with the Communist approach, the bulk of the membership in the Socialist countries of Central–Eastern Europe and newly independent countries of the Third World, including Communist China.

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[11] The Czechoslovak delegation to the Congress was represented by CJU Chairman Otakar Wünsch, Jiří Hronek, K. F. Zieris (CJU secretary) and Emil Štefan (USJ).

The IOJ had become one of the "democratic international organizations" closely associated with the USSR. The Western journalists' associations established a new International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in Brussels in 1952—as part of the "Free West" countering the "Communist East". The Cold War politics led to the loss of the IOJ's affiliation with the UN and UNESCO, but it gained new members in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In 1966, its membership amounted to 130,000 journalists in 108 countries, while the IFJ had 55,000 members in 31 countries.

4.2. The Prague Spring

The IOJ continued to grow despite turmoil in its political environment caused by the Prague Spring in 1968 and its aftermath. The IOJ had its premises in the building of the Czechoslovak Union UCSJ, and in August 1968 the whole building was occupied by Warsaw pact forces. However, the IOJ was soon allowed to return to its premises and continued more or less as before, while the reformist Czechoslovak Union was effectively replaced by a new CJU (see above).

Unlike in 1948, the IOJ did not dramatically follow the system change implemented in the national union. Actually the IOJ activities, including the monthly publication *The Democratic Journalist*, had since the 1950s remained quite true to the "Moscow line", with no symptoms of the Prague Spring. By the 1970s the IOJ was firmly consolidated on the basis established in the late 1940s, now increasingly dominated by an "anti-imperialist" orientation reflecting the concerns of the developing countries and meeting the Soviet interests. The changing climate of international relations was also instrumental to reinstating IOJ's affiliation with the UN and UNESCO.

Financial support for more and more activities around the world came not only from the nominal membership fees but from public "solidarity lotteries" in East European Socialist countries. Moreover, a peculiar source for financing was invented by new Secretary General Jiří Kubka together with the Hungarian Treasurer Norbert Siklósi: the IOJ was permitted, with the blessing of the Communist Party, to establish commercial companies in translation and conference services, publishing, etc. This privilege made the IOJ quite rich, facilitating a large secretariat with a publishing house, training schools in European Socialist counties, regional centres on all developing continents and large conferences around the world.

The heyday of the IOJ was in the late 1980s, when its membership reached 300,000. By this time its political line had become much more open and broad, particularly by its active engagement in East–West détente from 1973 on, leading gradually to contacts and even cooperation with the IFJ in the 1980s (Nordenstreng et al., 2016).

4.3. The Velvet Revolution

The Cold War world order began to crumble in late 1989, when first the Berlin Wall fell and then Prague was shaken by the Velvet Revolution, followed by the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. Global geopolitics was suddenly changed and the IOJ was challenged: its headquarters and operations in Prague came under sharp attack from the rising political forces in Czechoslovakia, and its local member Union—the legal base for its seat in Prague—was closed down and replaced by a new Syndicate which did not want to affiliate with the IOJ but joined the IFJ. Moreover, other strong member unions in former Socialist countries, notably the USSR, began to lose political and material ground. The IOJ's financial resources were rapidly dwindling and activities in training, publication, etc. were gradually discontinued.

Nevertheless, in 1991 the IOJ held its 11th congress in Harare in fairly good shape, but by its 12th congress in Amman in 1995 it was crippled by shrinking finances and quarrelling leadership. After this, member unions one after another decided to join the IFJ, while most of them also remained nominal members of the IOJ. By the end of the 1990s the IOJ had in fact disappeared from the scene, whereas the IFJ had grown into an organization also representing the bulk of the earlier IOJ membership. Finally, in 2016, the last two IOJ presidents pronounced the IOJ effectively dead (Nordenstreng, in press).

5. Conclusion

In summary: (1) the system change in 1948 from liberal democracy to Communism in Czechoslovakia immediately involved journalists with their national association, and the IOJ followed suit driven by the same developments among all the Soviet-dominated Eastern European member associations, while the Western members withdrew without an organizational fight; (2) the system instability of 1968 with an attempt to liberalize Communism hit the national association hard but did not extend to the IOJ, which continued largely unchanged; (3) the system change in 1989 caused an immediate upheaval in the national association and the gradual disintegration of the IOJ, again as a result of changes throughout the Soviet block—a reverse process of 1948.

The story of Czechoslovak journalist organizations and the IOJ adds further evidence to the overall lesson presented in Nordenstreng et al. (2016, p. 180): international journalists' associations are invariably bound by their political environments and to believe that journalists and their associations can ever be completely apolitical is a naïve illusion. However, the international movement is not deterministically driven by politics alone; it is also driven by professional interests with more or less autonomy.

This article has mostly concerned the political history of Czechoslovakia, which already suggests another general conclusion: in order to understand the relationship which the media and journalists, including their associations, have to political system changes, it is vital to have a profound knowledge of the history of the country in question. All too often are changes in media and journalists studied with a superficial understanding of the historical context.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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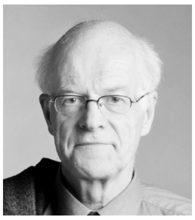

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Commentary

International Federation of Free Journalists: Opposing Communist Propaganda During the Cold War

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Abstract
The topic of supranational organizations of East-European émigrés during the Cold War still remains a lesser-known topic. There were a number of anti-Communist organizations between 1948–1989, consisting of former politicians, diplomats, soldiers, lawyers or academics from behind the Iron Curtain. The community of exiled journalists was represented by the International Federation of Free Journalists, officially founded in November 1948 in Paris by delegates from twelve nations. Its membership base soon grew to 1,400 people. The Federation warned the Western public against the injustices, false propaganda and the red terror in Eastern Europe for four decades.

Keywords
anti-Communism; Cold War; exile; international; Iron Curtain; journalism

Issue
This commentary is part of the issue “Histories of Collaboration and Dissent: Journalists’ Associations Squeezed by Political System Changes”, edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) and Kaarle Nordenstreng (University of Tampere, Finland).

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1. Introduction

The story of East European[1] anti-Communist exiles during the Cold War, for many years a neglected topic, is almost unknown but has recently become the object of historical and political research (Nekola, 2017). The best known political internationals were the International Peasant Union, associating sympathizers of peasant and smallholder parties banned by the Communists, or the Christian Democratic Union of Central Europe created to support Christian democratic policy in exile, as the name suggests. Nevertheless, cooperation was tightening also across various professions in a similar way. Non-Communist union workers established their International Center of Free Trade Unons in Exile in Paris in late 1948 and also the internationals of exiled students, writers, lawyers, and academicians were organized at around the same time. They intended to transfer their activities into the exile and then to become a counterweight to professional unions and central guild organizations back home which had fallen under total Communist control and which had then usurped the sole right to speak on behalf of an entire profession.

The exiled journalists had a much more important task: To counteract reports on developments behind the Iron Curtain from being simply mendacious red propaganda and also to criticize reports from the official mass media and to set the record straight. Nevertheless, little is known about the initiative of exiled journalists from Albania, Bulgaria, Belarussia, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Ukraine and Yugoslavia to found their international federation and to hold conscientiously the torch of the struggle against false propaganda. They were using their most powerful weapons, the pen and the truth.

2. Origins of the Federation

The determination to inform the Western public on what was happening in the East motivated the establishment of the International Federation of Free Journalists of Central and Eastern Europe and Baltic and Balkan Countries

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[1] “East European” in political, not geographical meaning. Émigré groups mentioned in this article cover Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, too.

(IFFJ). Its aims were clear, as stated in the founding Charter: "To oppose any totalitarian doctrines which misrepresent the principles of freedom of the press and tasks and obligations of the press towards nations and towards humanity, and which violate the basic freedom of man and nations" (IFFJ, 1952).

The Federation originated during wartime when cooperation between the Syndicate of Czechoslovak Journalists (*Syndikát československých novinářů*) and the Union of Journalists of the Republic of Poland (*Związek Dziennikarzy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*) developed. Both organizations were based in London and worked closely with the British journalist community to support the war efforts of the Allies. For this same purpose, the Federation of Journalists of Allied and Free Countries was created on 13 December 1941, associating journalists from twelve Allied countries, including the USSR. This federation was dissolved at the foundation congress of the International Organization of Journalists in Copenhagen in June 1946. Neither one of the exile syndicates was allowed to participate. In both Czechoslovakia and Poland a rapid communization of the free press, limiting of civil and political rights and the paths towards totalitarian regime under the hammer and sickle took place. Therefore, many journalists remained in the exile in the British Isles and refused to return. The editor of Czechoslovak desk of BBC, Rudolf Kopecký, cooperated closely with Polish colleagues, above all Antoni Dargas and Bolesław Wierzbiański. Kopecký mentioned in his unpublished memoirs how the nascent IFFJ managed to get a number of prominent figures of the British public and political life, such as leading journalist Malcolm Muggeridge from the *Daily Telegraph* or the future Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to its first meeting (Kopecký, 1981).

The formation of IFFJ was concluded at the first congress, held on 27–28 November 1948, in Paris, with more than 120 participants representing twelve nations subjugated by the Soviets.[2] The global membership base soon grew to 1,300 journalists, publishing 350 exile periodicals with a monthly circulation of more than one million copies. The most numerous and influential group were the Poles, with their exile journalist syndicate of 390 members, active in 14 countries.

The founders of IFFJ stated the reasons for its constitution in the preamble:

> In the present period of history, when the fate of nations and of individuals depends on the issues undertaken on a world-wide scale, and when an unprecedented crisis threatens our civilisation, based on Christian moral principles, we, delegates of organisations of free journalists from Central and Eastern Europea and Baltic and Balkan countries, think that the time has come to unite the forces of journalists—people of good will, who respect the proper meaning of words and ideas such as truth, freedom and democracy. (IFFJ, 1952)

As another practical by-product of its wide range of activities, IFFJ attempted to assist exile journalists to find jobs, to market their writings, and to perform tasks in the propaganda struggle for which journalists were particularly suited, or to which they could make a special contribution of talent, experience and knowledge.

The Paris congress had various outcomes including two resolutions towards the United Nations. One called on Western countries for a more serious focus on human rights that were being violated in the Soviet-occupied parts of Europe, and the other accused the International Organization of Journalists of succumbing to Communist propaganda. IFFJ tried to alert the world public about the minimal exchange of information between the free world and the countries behind the Iron Curtain, the expulsion of Western correspondents, the totalitarian control over all communication channels, and the ongoing efforts of Stalinist regimes to subjugate all aspects of free human will. IFFJ congresses usually took place every two years. After the London congress in December 1949, the Federation planned another congress in West Berlin for the end of April 1952, to include invitations to Communist journalists to attend the Congress as a sort of challenge to debate. If refused, this negative could be used as a good propaganda talking point and, if accepted, could turn into a show with great interest to mass media. The initiative, however, was later abandoned out of fear that the Communists might turn the entire congress into another of their propaganda performances. In the end, around 120 free journalists attended the Congress, held in the auditorium of Berlin Technical University, and manifested their determination to defend freedom of the press in Communist regimes. Many guests from American and West-European political, cultural and media circles ensured widespread attention to the event (Piatkowska-Stepniak, 2002).

3. Against Hammer and Sickle

The structure of IFFJ more or less mirrored the organizations of a similar nature. The congress/plenum of delegates of all national associations served as the highest authority of IFFJ. The Board of Directors, composed of two permanent delegates of each national association and of members of the Executive Commitee was in charge of the general management. The nine-headed Executive Committee (Chairman, three Deputy Chairmen, Secretary General, Treasurer and three more members) was directed to hold meetings once a month and to maintain contacts with partner organizations and institutions. In addition, an editorial board came into being to oversee all publications released under the banner of IFFJ: bulletins, booklets. memoranda and, above all, the annual reports of the state of freedom of the press in the world and the *IFFJ Bulletin* quarterly.

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[2] Each of the journalist groups had its national umbrella organization: Syndicate of Albanian Journalists (regional branches in USA, Great Britain, France and Italy), Association of Free Bulgarian Journalists (USA, Great Britain, Italy, Germany), Syndicate of Romanian Journalists (USA, Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany), Syndicate of Czech Journalists (Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany), Association of Free Czechoslovak Journalists in the USA and Germany (USA, Germany), Union of Slovak Free Journalists and Writers (USA, Great Britain, Germany, France), Estonian Union of Journalists (USA, Great Britain, France, Sweden), Association of Hungarian Journalists in Exile (USA, Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany), Union of Latvian Professional Journalists (USA, Great Britain, Sweden, Germany), Association of Lithuanian Journalists (USA, Great Britain, Germany, France), Association of Croatian Journalists (Great Britain, Belgium), Union of Journalists of the Republic of Poland (USA, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Australia, Argentina), Federation of Democratic Journalists of the Peoples of Yugoslavia (USA, France, Germany), Syndicate of Ukrainian Journalists (Great Britain, France, Germany), Syndicate of White Ruthenian Journalists (Great Britain, France, Germany).

In addition to the London headquarters, a number of regional branches of IFFJ were established. The very important IFFJ—American Regional Union (ARU) opened in New York City in December 1951, led by the Pole Zygmunt Nagórski. He was soon replaced by Mihai Fărcăşanu, head of Romanian desk of Radio Free Europe (RFE). ARU was largely financed by the Free Europe Committee (FEC)[3] through a monthly contribution of $500.00. ARU was, at the time, very important to RFE in gathering and presenting material and information. However, with the development of RFE's own information service, IFFJ's contributions were no longer required and the financial support was reduced in January 1953. Compared to previous years, FEC also minimized funding for other IFFJ branches, publications, congresses, conferences, coloquia, exhibits and other events. Only ARU continued to draw regular contributions from FEC, thanks to the personal friendship of Bolesław Wierzbiański and the FEC President C. D. Jackson (Wierzbiański & Piatkowka-Stepniak, 2001). As a downside of this connection, occasional doubts appeared, that IFFJ was a Polish monopoly and other national delegations had much smaller powers.

No less important than ARU were the IFFJ offices in Munich, publishing monthly *Freie Presse Korrespondenz* (Dumitrescu, 1997), in Rome and Stockholm. The Swedish branch administered IFFJ activities in all Scandinavian countries and was headed by Polish–Romanian pair, Norbert Zaba and Georges de Serdici. Beginning in October 1952, it published the monthly Se Upp! with a circulation of up to 10,000 copies. The situation seems to have been more complicated in Paris, where a significant group of exile intellectuals, journalists, artists and writers resided. *Union des Journalistes Libres de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale* was founded in 1948 under the presidency of Hungarian József Szilágyi and served as an umbrella organization for about 100 journalists. It refused to renounce its independence by merging completely into IFFJ and to become "subordinated" to London headquarters. Members of the Union had strong ties to *la Radiodiffusion Française*, *l'Agence France-Presse* and other leading information channels in France, and were, therefore, useful partners for IFFJ. Despite personal disputes and controversies over who had the right to nominate delegates for the upcoming international conferences and overseas trips, both organizations cooperated very closely, as a single entity. The press organ of the exile journalists in Paris was the monthly *Le Journaliste libre*, whose editor-in-chief, Mato Vučetić, had been the director of the information service of the Yugoslav exile government during World War Two.

IFFJ operated its own press agency, the Free European Press Service (FEPS) which specialized in news from behind the Iron Curtain. Originally, IFFJ suggested it would have the role of a regular press agency, serving Western broadcasting and press by supplying current information on the latest developments behind the Iron Curtain. Another proposed medium was an information and research institute, using materials and a "braintrust" from scattered groups of experts. It was hoped that „such an institute would undertake a scientific study of all problems pertaining to the new order in Eastern Europe, and thus render an invaluable service to those seeking to understand the hidden meaning and general purpose of actual events" (IFFJ, 1952). American sponsors didn't show as much enthusiasm toward the idea and IFFJ had to settle for a more modest variant. FEPS was launched with editorial offices in London and New York in June 1950. Funding was assured by putting it on a commercial basis, in other words by regular contracts for the supply of news. FEPS soon started to publish various bulletins, distributed on a subscription basis, such as the *Monthly Report on Soviet Affairs*.

In October 1949, the Executive Commitee of IFFJ submitted an application for the granting of consultative status with the United Nations and UNESCO. After a long bureaucratic decision-making process, both organizations were approved in 1951. Thus IFFJ became the only "exile group" to be admitted to the UN arena. It was the very first chance for the oppressed nations of Central and Eastern Europe to have the question of their plight openly raised before the important bodies within the UN. Not negligible was another fact: the leading personality of IFFJ, Bolesław Wierzbiański, served as Vice President of the World Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations. Furthermore, IFFJ gradually established regular cooperation with the Organization of American States, the American Newspaper Guild, the Inter-American Federation of Working Newspapermen's Organizations, the Columbia University School of Journalism, the Overseas Press Club, the International Committee on Cultural Exchanges, the International Press Institute, the Asian

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[3] Free Europe Committee, originally the National Committee for a Free Europe, was an American, anti-Communist organization founded in June 1949 by the USA Department of State. It was charged with finding suitable employment for émigré politicians, journalists and intellectuals from Communist countries in order that, while in exile, they could help prepare for the liberation of their respective countries. The Committee also stood behind a number of anti-Communist campaigns and helped establish well-known institutions such as Radio Free Europe (New York, Munich), Free Europe College (Strasbourg) and the Assembly of Captive European Nations (New York). All these activities, including support of exile national councils and committees, were funded by the CIA. See Kádár Lynn (2013).

Press Associations and Institutes, and, especially, the International Federation of Journalists, based in Brussels, which considered IFFJ a friendly, fraternal organization.

4. Conclusion

The bloody repression of the Hungarian uprising by Soviet tanks in the autumn of 1956 completely altered the atmosphere within the exile communities. The hope of return, and of the defeat of the Kremlin's satraps dissipated along with enthusiasm for engaging in exile structures such as IFFJ. The daily stress of feeding families and managing exhaustive employment depressed many capable leaders and limited their work for the organization. Unlike other exile internationals, however, IFFJ maintained its place at center stage during the next decades. It carried out projects in Europe, USA, Latin America, Asia, and Africa, asserting itself by cooperating closely, or in co-sponsoring undertakings, with some of the best known organizations in the field of international journalism. It also experienced a necessary, but difficult generational change. After the retirement of the skilled older journalists, often endowed with experiences from wartime exile, the federation lacked enough capable and committed successors. When Wierzbiański left the chairmanship in 1964 to devote himself to journalistic and editorial work only, IFFJ lost its most prominent spokesperson. From April 1971 on, he began to publish *Nowy Dziennik* in New York, soon the best-selling newspaper of Polish America.

IFFJ continued to exist in low profile until the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Then, it merged with the International Federation of Journalists.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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