

PANSLAVISM—A REBIRTH IN MUSIC

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THE post-war development of culture in Europe will certainly be affected by the course of politics. A division of the spheres of influence between the western nations and Russia may well relegate the more conservative influences to the West, which will probably pick up again at the point where Hitler came in. But if any part of Europe falls under Russian influence we can expect new and unforeseen developments. Such predictions are easier to make for the eastern countries, and in particular for one of the most important, Czechoslovakia. Indeed, the movement to unite all of the Slavs under the leadership of Russia long antedates the Revolution. It is no coincidence that the term Pan Slavism was first employed in 1826 by the Slovak, I. Herkel. Although the Pole, Staszyc, had sketched the picture of such a union in 1794, the leading proponents of the Pan Slavic idea have always been the Czechs, among them the poet Joseph George Kolar (1812-1896), who preached a humanitarian Pan Slavism on which the philosophy of Masaryk was based. One of Kolar's verses became the motto of the Czech republic:

"When you cry Slav,
Let the word re-echo 'man.'"

Czarist Russia made capital of the Pan Slavic movement and Pan Slavic ideas were partly responsible for the destruction of Austria. The restrictive element in the movement has been the Poles, who, because of friction with Russia, aggravated by the uprising of 1863, withdrew from Pan Slavism. But the beginning of the twentieth century ushered in Neoslavism, which was to unite all the Slavic peoples, while permitting them to retain independence within an economic, political and cultural frame. This movement was originated by Miljukow, the leader of the Russian Cadet party, and was widely popular with the Czechs, whose intellectual leader, Karel Kramar, campaigned passionately for it. Their basic ideas were a force in the first world war. Under their influence the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were united in the Jugoslav state, and the

Czechs and Slovaks combined to form the Czechoslovak republic. But not before the expansion of the Soviet Republic and the Hitler catastrophe did the small states in the east and southeast of Europe come to full realization that they could not live alone. After that the Pan-Slavic ideal became their axiom.

In their orientation to culture these Slavs have for a long time vacillated between the East and the West, with German and French influence ranged on the one side, and Pan-Slavism on the other. The history of Czech music especially is a mirror of changing political and cultural views. The eighteenth century stands completely under Austrian, that is, German, influence. But even the great Viennese school of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven owed much to Czech musicians like Stamitz, Zach, Mysliwetschek, Vanhal. The lyrical piano music of Franz Schubert is based on the work of Tomaschek and Worzischek. These two composers epitomize the Czech romantics, as do Puchmajer, Celakovsky, Dobrovsky and Havlicek the Czech renaissance. The songs of Tomaschek often have a south Slav character and there seems to be kind of Pan-Slavic air about them. They signify the awakening of Slav feeling. But it was not until after 1848 when the Czechs began deliberately to work against Hapsburg centralism and even later, in 1867, when Austria suffered defeat at the hands of Prussia, that a true independent musical life developed. Smetana and Dvorak became in retrospect exponents of Czech constitutionalism. The freshness and directness of their music were not only the flower of their racial genius, but also of the successful political struggle carried forward by the small, musically gifted nation against its traditional oppressors. The Czech-German symbiosis however is expressed in the fact that these great Czech musicians follow formal German models. Smetana's models are Wagner and Liszt. Dvorak owes much to Brahms. Fibich follows in the footsteps of the German romantics, so do Blodek and Kovarovic, while Josef B. Foerster and others like K. B. Jirak, M. Zich, imitate Mahler. A unique position is taken by Bohuslav Martinu who has attached himself largely to French circles.

Opposed to all these men is a group who seek to express their talents purely in terms of their own race or under the Russian influence. The two most important composers are Leos Janacek and Vitezslav Novak. Janacek abandons the old tradition and leans toward Borodin and Moussorgsky. He dissolves the structural forms of Smetana and Dvorak in dynamic, passionate aphorisms of controlled strength, quite in the style

of the great Russians. Novak again is rooted in the Slovak world. In these men, perhaps also in the individualistic Ostrčil, as well as Jaroslav Kricka, (both strongly influenced by Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov) and in Alois Haba, whose quarter-tone ideas are connected in some way with the Near East, I find the musical parallels of a new Pan Slavism. Indeed Janacek's *Missa Glagolitchica* seems to resurrect the old Byzantine-Russian in a remarkable new form. These phenomena are the tonal expression of a coming new Slavic world.

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One of the leading figures in the political and musical life of pre-Hitler Czechoslovakia, who by his great influence on the present generation of Czechs has helped to accelerate this Pan Slav movement, is Zdenek Nejedly, formerly professor of musicology at the Czech university in Prague. He is one of Czechoslovakia's greatest historians and one of her most influential writers on music. At the same time he is the intellectual leader of the Czechoslovak communist party, and the Nazis have put a price on his head. Nejedly is the author of a definitive Smetana biography. He is an authority on the medieval music history of the Czechs and has also written a biography of Masaryk. As a politician he has vitally affected the cultural rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Russia. His popularity with the Czech workers is beyond description. I remember appearing with him in a folklore congress in Slovakia; when the modest scholar walked along the streets of Bratislava, he was the object of ecstatic ovations from working men. It was he, together with Leo Kestenberk, who founded the International Society for Musical Education under the aegis of the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kamill Krofta.

Nejedly was the first, and one of the few, who foresaw the coming influence of the Russians on the rest of the Slavic world, and at a time when many who think or speak differently today disposed of Russia as a cultural factor with a shrug of the shoulders. Nejedly is now one of the most important personalities in Moscow. He plays a vital role in Russian politics and in the Russian musical world, and has great influence in the field of Russian musical education.

What part this significant figure will take in his own country and elsewhere in eastern Europe when Russian influence will prevail cannot now be predicted. One may, however, speculate on the development of

his cultural philosophy. Nejedly believes in offering music to all the people on the largest possible scale. Every one should have the chance to enjoy, to learn, to understand music. For the people the best is only good enough. He believes in state support for all concert and opera projects, and has even considered the possibility of nationalizing musical life.

Moscow as we all know, is the only city in the world with four opera houses. The capacity of the Russians for the consumption of music is incredible. As a people, they are undoubtedly being prepared to receive musical education, as now they are being indoctrinated with musical performances.

We may expect that, within a few years after the peace, huge concert-halls, like those of Moscow and Leningrad, may be built in all the cities coming under Russian influence, such as Prague, Budapest, Bucharest. A new era of "music for the people" will be on its way.

Certainly a peaceful and rehabilitated Europe will welcome a broader tie between productive musicians and the masses. In this new epoch, an individualist music may again arise. But in the post-war world – and here I quote Nejedly – the State will support all music projects just as it will further and finance all kinds of scientific work.

Now Soviet ideology did not contribute all the novelty of this plan for cultural development. The Social-Democratic government of Austria – not so long ago – had set up a similar program. Shortly before Hitler, the working class had organized far-reaching musical projects. These plans were, at the time, something really new for central Europe. (The Austrian Social-Democrats must have been after all, much more progressive and efficient than their German colleagues.) Monster concerts, opera performances and music lectures were beginning to be organized and to be financed by official agencies. Compared with these projects the "cultural programs" of the Nazis, as for example *Strength through Joy*, or those of their Fascist friends *After Work* (*Doppo Lavoro*) were hardly above the level of low-class affairs aimed at the entertainment of party members.

It will take many years for the people of Central Europe to recover from the German occupation and from over-all German influence. They may not be able to recover at all unless they decide to take the Slavs for a model and to do what they have done – especially in the field of culture. The new era will bring about a great change.