Words, Music and Propaganda

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Edited by

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INTRODUCTION: WORDS, MUSIC AND PROPAGANDA

TJAŠA MOHAR AND VICTOR KENNEDY

American Country singer Jason Aldean's 2023 hit song "Try That in a Small Town" ignited a firestorm in the culture wars currently enveloping the country. Amanda Marie Martinez wrote, "'Try That in a Small Town,' which ignites controversy this week over claims that the song and its new video promote white supremacy and violence, is far from the first country song to attack cities using racist dog whistles" (NPR, 2023). Martinez notes that this song is one in a long line of country songs that "vividly echo events such as the January 2021 insurrection that have come to define modern, far-right extremism." *Rolling Stone* added it to a list of the "most ridiculously right wing" country songs of all time (Hiatt 2023). Popular music thus continues to carry ideological burdens and to be exploited as catchy propaganda.

Words, Music and Propaganda examines the ways in which music of all genres is used to protest and to promote institutions and structures of political, commercial, and religious authority. Music is used to sell almost anything, from cars, to detergent, to political candidates. How can a combination of words and melody so successfully manipulate us? This book provides answers and will be of interest to students, teachers, and practitioners of music and literature, historians, as well as policy makers. It will also be of interest to general readers and fans of music and popular culture.

The chapters in this book explore the relations among words, music and propaganda, and the place of those relations in history and in contemporary culture. The authors, from diverse disciplines including musicology, literature, history, anthropology, sociology, and translation studies, and from different critical perspectives, such as literary and linguistic analysis, Gender Studies, ethnomusicology, critical musicology, stylistics, and popular music studies, analyse examples of musical protest, patriotism, censorship, along with the use, misuse, and appropriation of music as propaganda in many genres including folk and protest music, popular and classical music, rock, and rap.

Music Used to Promote Political or Ideological Beliefs

Music is a potent tool for promoting and reinforcing political or ideological beliefs. It can shape people's perceptions, evoke emotions, and create a sense of identity and belonging. The authors in this volume explore the many ways in which music is used for this purpose. The first section explores explicit propaganda songs: governments and political groups often commission or create songs that align with their ideologies and agendas. These songs use catchy melodies and simple lyrics to spread specific messages and values, making them easily memorable and shareable. In the first chapter, titled "Building Socialism Through Folk Song," Don Sparling analyses the genre of the "new folk song," songs which were created in Czechoslovakia after the Communist coup in 1948 for the purpose of celebrating the new order and helping to "build Socialism." Kristian Kolar's chapter describes a similar situation in Croatia, where after the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the Croatian government supported musicians and songwriters in their efforts to forge a new national identity, while being careful to avoid themes too reminiscent of an earlier regime. Sparling and Kolar also address the topic of historical revisionism, where popular music is used as a tool to rewrite the past in popular awareness.

Activists and social movements use music to raise awareness about specific causes, to rally supporters, and mobilize public opinion. Protest songs can express dissent, call for change, and challenge existing power structures. Teodor Petrič performs a linguistic corpus analysis of German rock and rap songs from the 1990s to the present to demonstrate how they reflect changes in the perception of German identity and society. David Livingstone writes about Woody Guthrie, arguably the most famous and influential of all American protest singer/songwriters, whose songs from the 1930s through the 1960s are still familiar today. In a similar vein, Jason Blake's chapter provides an analysis of the work of American protest singer Phil Ochs, whose works in the 1960s influenced and inspired the generation of the time.

Music can foster a sense of nationalism and patriotism by celebrating a country's history, culture, and achievements. Nationalistic songs emphasize a collective identity and pride in one's nation. Andrej Naterer performs an analysis of songs written about the war in Ukraine, focusing on the imagery and metaphor of weapons and weapons systems. Since these songs are widely disseminated on social media, Naterer performs a statistical analysis of responses on YouTube to measure their effectiveness as instruments of persuasion. Also on the topic of eastern Europe, Aleš Maver analyses from a historical perspective key elements of the music that played a crucial role

in the Belarus democratic movement in 2020. Agata Križan's linguistic analysis of Slovenian folk-pop songs explores the use of images and themes in song lyrics to create feelings of nationalism and patriotism. Moving across the Atlantic, Sarah Melker's sociolinguistic analysis of the use of the Acadian French dialect in French-Canadian singer-songwriter Jonah Guimond's lyrics shows how songs can foster identity for a minority within a minority in Canadian culture. These chapters also show the importance of radio and media in the creation of nationalism and patriotism. Music played on radio stations or in various forms of media can subtly reinforce certain political or ideological beliefs by highlighting songs that support a specific narrative. Janko Trupej and Aleksandra Nuč Blažič survey the history of Slovenian journalists' responses to the music of David Bowie in the context of the country's political climate during the time of its membership in Yugoslavia and after independence, taking note of the country's changing relationship with Western culture and values as reflected in popular media.

Music can serve as a defining element of various ideological subcultures. For example, certain music genres like punk, hip-hop, or folk have been associated with specific political beliefs and countercultural movements. Ilias Ben Mna writes about the Riot Grrrl movement, which combined the punk ethos of rebellion and individuality with feminist ideals. Nicole Haring's historical analysis of Olivia Records chronicles the development of the women's movement in the United States during the 1970s, and its use of music and poetry to disseminate and popularize ideals and values.

Music has long been used as a tool of education and indoctrination: music and songs are used as part of school curriculums to help instil socially and culturally approved values, and outside of school as protests against such usage. Today, all around the world, debate rages around education vs. indoctrination in schools. Victor Kennedy discusses the use of rock and pop songs that both commend and criticize schools, school systems, and educational philosophies, and the effect of official attempts to ban songs that criticize school and authority. Maiken Kores performs a similar analysis of "purity propaganda," focusing on the American country and western styled songs used by evangelical movements to indoctrinate children and teenagers to sign virginity pledges and promise to abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage.

It is essential to recognize the influence music can have on shaping political and ideological beliefs. Music's emotional appeal and widespread accessibility make it an effective vehicle for disseminating messages and influencing public opinion. The chapters in this volume reveal and analyse

the potential biases and intentions behind the songs we listen to, and engage critically with the messages conveyed.

Previous volumes in this series have focussed on the relationship between words and music, and have been authored primarily by scholars of language, literature, and music. This volume adds chapters written by a sociologist/anthropologist and a historian to examine the way music has been used as a political tool and, sometimes, a weapon. The propaganda functions of music, particularly from a Central European perspective, comprise the new contribution of this volume. This book focuses on the use of songs and music as propaganda, so in addition to the cultural and social analysis of previous volumes, it adds a political and historical dimension.

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BUILDING SOCIALISM THROUGH FOLK SONG

DON SPARLING

The Communist coup in Czechoslovakia[1] in February 1948 was carried out in the name of "the people." As folklore was one of the traditional expressions of the culture of "the people," the new regime set about vigorously promoting it. At the same time, however, the new ideological priority was "building socialism," which sat uneasily with many aspects of folk culture. This chapter explores some of the ways in which this somewhat contradictory situation played out when it came to folk songs, particularly in southern Moravia, which boasted the country's richest, genuinely living folk traditions. This region witnessed the emergence of the "new folk song," a form that drew on many of the conventions of traditional folk songs but whose content was highly political. This chapter analyses some of these songs, deals with the complex nature of their creation, and explores the question of "authenticity" that the songs inevitably raise.

A popular Czech saying has it that *Co Čech, to muzikant*—"Every Czech is a musician."[2] This is quite a boast, though not as much as it might be in other countries. The extremely rich musical traditions in the Czech lands can be traced back more than a thousand years, while the current network of *Lidové školy umění* ("Folk Art Schools"), leisure-time centres in which qualified teachers offer training at a very low cost in all the arts, but music in particular, is the most dense of its kind in Europe. And within this musical tradition, song has always played an important role. Indeed, at the time of the Hussite revolution in the first half of the fifteenth century, the army of invading Crusaders sent to Bohemia by the Pope to crush this heretical movement was said to have fled before the Battle of Domažlice in 1431 merely upon hearing the massed Hussite warriors burst into their battlefield chorale "Ktož jsú boží bojovníci" ("Who are God's Warriors?").

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[1] Czechoslovakia was formed from Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. In 1993 it peacefully separated into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

[2] All translations from Czech are by the author.

Not unexpectedly, the implied answer to this rhetorical question is "we Czechs."

It was hardly surprising, then, that following Czechoslovakia's liberation by the Red Army in 1945, Soviet/Russian songs became immensely popular in the country. In the wake of the Communist coup in February 1948, songs of all kinds were put to work in the service of "building socialism." So, for example, *Se zpěvem a smíchem* ("With Song and Laughter"), a songbook published in 1950 by the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (the country's single, monopolistic trade union), offers an all-encompassing selection of works. First come pre-1917 "revolutionary proletarian songs," a category conceived broadly enough to include "Ktož jsú boží bojovníci" (14),[3] "John Brown's Body" (22), "The Internationale" (10), anarchist songs and a motley collection of historical songs from a dozen countries condemning oppression, celebrating the downtrodden, and crying out for class and national liberation. These are followed by "Songs of the struggle for the freedom of nations between the two World Wars," presented as being inspired directly or ultimately by the "Great October Socialist Revolution" of 1917. The majority of songs dealing with "The Great Patriotic War of the USSR and its struggle for the liberation of Europe from the yoke of Nazism in the years 1938-1945" are Soviet, with a few works by Bulgarian, Romanian, Greek, Czech and Slovak artists. "New songs for the building of socialism here and elsewhere" reflect the present: most are celebratory and can be characterized as "agitprop." Their nature is reflected in many of the titles: "Song of the United Trade Unions" (100), "Forward, Not a Single Step Back" (104), "Song about May Day" (107), "Song of the Agricultural Brigades" (109), "March of the Apprentice Miners" (112), "Song about the Party" (124; the refrain begins "My Party, my Party [the Communist Party] is always in the right"). In the case of the vast majority of these songs, both the words and the melodies are "artificial"—that is, the lyrics and music are the work of well-educated authors and professional composers.

Given what has been presented up to this point, the final section in the songbook may seem rather surprising—traditional Czech and Slovak folk songs or, as they are termed here, "national songs." The terminology is significant. Folk songs are a product of the countryside and as such reflect rural society. The steadily increasing pace of industrialization in the nineteenth century was fed by migration from the countryside to cities, and the growth of cities in turn led to increasing urban influence in the

[3] References for songs refer to the pages where they are found in their respective songbooks.

countryside. One consequence of this throughout the long nineteenth century was the weakening and slow decline of traditional folk culture. This development was to a certain extent offset by intellectual elites' increased interest in this heritage, a concern that had its roots in Rousseauian ideas about the healthy environment of the countryside and the "common sense" of its inhabitants and the Herderian concept of the *Volk* but was now driven more by the rising force of nationalism, which was certainly the most powerful ideological development in this period in Europe as a whole and in Central Europe in particular.[4] Urban intellectuals' interest in folk culture, however, ran up against the fact that for all intents and purposes the urban population lay outside its sphere (this posed a particular challenge for Marxists, for whom the urban proletariat had been torn from its roots, both literally and symbolically). One solution to this dilemma was to claim that folk culture was, or should be, a key factor shaping "the nation"—an inclusive but abstract term that could be interpreted at will. Communists proved to be very adept at manipulating this ambiguity. "The nation" and "the people" could at times be interchangeable, while at other times "the people" could be used to in effect mean "working people" as distinct from "the bourgeoisie," their alleged exploiters: these productive forces could include both the urban proletariat and a considerable part of the working population in the countryside.[5] This bridging of the romantic and the Marxist views of "the people" (Černý 1992, 577-78) created the basis for the logical presence of "national songs" in *Se zpěvem a smíchem*: from the Communist point of view, these were genuine products of countless generations of ordinary working people in the countryside and could regenerate the culture of their deracinated descendants and brothers in the cities. Together, the two groups formed "the nation." Hence it followed that in Czechoslovakia after 1948, folk culture, from the point of view of the newly ascendant Marxist-Leninist ideology, became a 'natural' symbol of the culture of "the working people" (Pavlicová and Uhlíková 2018, 179).

But one major problem remained. It was fine to celebrate folk song as a genre that was created by "the people," but the lyrics of individual songs depicted a very traditional society and its customs, one with clear social stratification and one in which the Catholic Church played a central role. As such they did not and could not reflect the radical changes introduced in rural society in Czechoslovakia in the wake of the Communist takeover in

[4] Its main rival was Marxism, whose core tenet of international class solidarity went up in smoke in the summer of 1914.

[5] Though this avoided the question of the degree to which this distinction between exploiter and exploited was valid in the countryside, and who actually embodied and carried on folk traditions there.

1948, in particular the virtually total elimination of private farms and their replacement by cooperative farms as well as the intensive anti-religious wave that followed. In response to this problem, newly created songs began to appear that did respond to these changes. The first signs of the change came around 1948, with slight modifications to traditional songs, the addition of new verses to old songs, and so on. Later there began to emerge more independent texts, though still employing melodies of traditional songs (Stiborová 1960, 183).[6] By the early 1950s, however, the rapid development of this kind of song had led to the emergence of a specific sub-category of folk song, one that came to be termed "the new folk song":

> [The new folk song] is a musical and textual form that follows from the old traditional folk song. It retains its character and corresponds to the way of expression of the rural people. But times have changed, and just as we can follow the reflection of economic, social and cultural relationships in the historical development of the old folk song, so the new folk song reflects changes in these relationships in the form of new themes and expressions that reflect a differing way of thinking... The new folk song does not differ greatly in form or melody from the traditional song. In the new folk song, as in the traditional song, the expression of internal feelings is foregrounded. Most frequently personal feelings, even though they express the joys and sorrows of life in the collective. In this social function, even though in new social conditions, it links up with the traditional folk song. (Havránková 2012, 10)

Though these new songs followed on from traditional folk songs in many aspects, and in that sense reflected a certain continuity, their content represented a radical break with earlier forms and was in fact their basic *raison d'être*. This was summed up succinctly by the musicologist and ethnographer Vladimír Karbusický: "The functionality of the new song, which came into existence *in order* to serve the flourishing of the new way of life, is its fundamental feature" (1954, 82).

These new folk songs found fertile soil in a newly emerging phenomenon, the folklore movement. In Czechoslovakia this movement

[6] Two examples of these are to be found in *Se zpěvem a smíchem* in the "building of socialism" section (110). Both employ parts of the texts of specific Moravian folk songs along with their melodies, but slip in passages praising the improvements to the quality of life brought by cooperative farms and the use of tractors instead of horses.

took shape most prominently in the mass creation of folklore ensembles, also referred to frequently at the time as folk song and dance ensembles.[7]

> Their purpose was not only to cultivate this form of cultural enjoyment, but also to take on the mission of explicitly fulfilling the idea of an ideologically conceived culture that should be of and for the people, just as it should be for the masses and politically engaged. This did not have to do with fostering folk songs and dances in the sense of sustaining tradition, as was the case especially at the end of the nineteenth century and often in the twentieth century. The point was for this type of artistic enjoyment to replace the culture of the modern period, which was regarded as completely unacceptable politically.[8] (Stavělová 2017, 412)

These ensembles were mostly founded in cities and towns and were heavily funded at the national, regional, and local levels; even individual cooperative farms established their own ensembles. Those at the top were completely or largely professional, for example, the Czechoslovak State Ensemble of Songs and Dances (founded 1947) and BROLN (the Brno Radio Folk Instrument Orchestra) (1952). More often they comprised a mixture of professionals and amateurs. Their influence spread widely through the media: radio, television, film, gramophone recordings, and through many forms of public performance: concerts, inclusion in other musical forms (operas, ballets), appearances on important official occasions (the national holiday, election days), folk festivals, and folk ensemble competitions. At all levels these groups promoted what was hailed in contemporary terminology as "progressive folk traditions" and offered stylized—often highly stylized—versions of folklore. The term "folklorism" came to be applied to this kind of artistic expression, which was removed from its original milieu and carried out in a different context. Though a kind of "second-hand" folklore, in the words of the great German cultural scholar Hermann Bausinger (1970, 218), the work of these ensembles proved highly popular, introducing many to a homogenized (and at times ideologized) version of genuine folklore, and serving as vehicles for the careers of many individuals who became popular stars in their own right. Songs were always a key element in the ensembles' programmes, and in the early years of the "building of socialism" at least, new folk songs held a prominent place in the repertoire.

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[7] In Moravia and Slovakia, the great majority of folk dances are inseparably linked to the singing of songs specific to particular dances; this is not common in Bohemia.
[8] "The culture of the modern period" is a coded reference to highly popular forms of entertainment, most of which had originated in the United States, such as jazz and swing.

These new folk songs were also spread by songbooks, with many titles being published in large print runs. The definitive collection of this new type of folk song was a slim, 95-page songbook entitled *Ej, nota, notečka*, published in 1954. It comprises 88 songs, the vast majority of which, over 80 per cent, come from Moravia, with the remaining fifth divided roughly equally between Bohemia and Slovakia. Moravia's dominance in the book is no surprise. Moravia (and particularly southern Moravia) was (and remains) the one region in the Czech lands where there could be said to still exist an extensive and still living, though attenuated, folk culture, especially evident in its unusually rich body of traditional folk song. And it was in Moravia that the first new folk songs emerged, with one particular woman, Aněžka Gorlová, being credited for this "breakthrough."

The songs in the book are grouped in five sections. First come "songs of the new life"; these are the most baldly ideological in the book. They celebrate how "good it is that there's no longer a master" (7), how a "red star trimmed with gold" that shines between the valleys is "begemmed" with "Lenin's words and the name of Stalin" (6), how "freedom was bound in chains/till it was taken by storm [and freed] by the Bolshevik Party" (6), how "we thank comrade Gottwald [Klement Gottwald, the first Communist President]/for providing us with everything that is good" (8), how "a red glow is rising behind Hostýn"[9] while "dark night departs from our countryside" (12).

The eleven "songs of peace" that follow all employ the image of a dove as metaphor and symbol for peace—the universal wish for peace, the presence of peace and the joy this brings with it. The dove, of course, is a traditional symbol of peace, and most of these songs in this section tend to be less explicitly ideological than those in the first section. Though not all. We learn, for example, that "A white dove flew to us/and brought us greetings from Stalin [...]/It brought us the lovely message/that there will be peace/[that] there's no need for war" (24). Or, in a more surrealistic mode, in another song the singer expresses the wish to send off a dove to Korea with a slice of buttered bread and a linden twig[10] in its beak, bearing greetings from "us" and the wish that "a free sun" will soon shine down on the people of Korea (22).

The central, and largest, section in the book comprises twenty-seven "songs of the cooperative farm village." It is also (unintentionally) the most amusing. The central message is "all changed, changed utterly"—but unlike

[9] A prominent hill in eastern Moravia, site of one of the country's most famous pilgrimage churches.
[10] The linden is the Czech national tree.

Yeats's Ireland, there is no downside. People now set off happily to work, the fields are full of tractors and combine harvesters (30, 44, 45, 46, 47), targets are joyously met and even exceeded (37, 38), the cooperative farm head and his agronomist keep an eagle eye on everything to make sure things go smoothly (34). Cows give more milk (32) and milking itself is a pleasure in the new cowsheds (31), while horses whinny happily (46), and cows can remain "at home" (47), since the cooperative farms' tractors mean they no longer have to drag heavy ploughs. "Comrade miners" help the members of a cooperative farm with the hop harvest (36). Some songs are more restrained—these include several that recall the hardships of the past, now gone—but in most of them humans and even animals appear to have entered a paradise on earth.

Love songs form the fourth category in the book, and they, too, reflect the new reality. Most peculiarly, in the new world of the cooperative farm village, relationships between young men and women often involve third parties—machines, the blue shirts of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth, the five-year plan and its norms. Often in combination. In one song, a young woman—a member of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth—gazes out at her love, driving his tractor in his blue shirt while simultaneously singing, smiling at her, and fulfilling the plan; she can hardly wait till he gets home and she can greet him, with smiles, and reward him with a kiss (52). In a similar vein, another song speaks of a young woman driving through the village on the way to the fields in early morning, when "the first swallow has hardly begun to twitter," seated on her wheeled tractor, a red Zetor.[11] She flirts with her beau by challenging him to catch up with her on his caterpillar tractor. He asks his mother to hand him his blue shirt (the shirt of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth) to put on, so he'll be quite visible to her out there in the fields on his tractor. She supplies him with seeds, and he sows them, and that evening, as a reward, she places a sprig of rosemary in his hat—the traditional sign of lovers (53). To take a third example, in yet another song the young woman recalls how she was afraid her beau liked his tractor more than her, and how her eyes wept tears because of this, but now this is a thing of the past, since she has come to understand "your faithful love/your faithful love for the fields and the village/and your most faithful love for me, your sweetheart" (57). The density of ideological packaging in these and many other songs of this type, and the sheer improbability of the narratives, make it very difficult to understand how they could have gained much traction even in the 1950s.

[11] The iconic Czech tractor, manufactured in Brno and exported round the world.

The songbook ends with a selection of military songs. Military service had been a fact of life for young men in Central Europe for the best part of two hundred years, and as such was a frequent theme of folk songs. Not surprisingly, traditional folk songs almost universally viewed this duty negatively, as it took the young men away from their villages and their sweethearts for long periods of time, brought with it hardship and could end in death. So the challenge for these new folk songs was to present military service in a different, positive light. One way was to claim that, given the changes in society as a whole, soldiers in the army—like "everywhere else" in the new society—were now all "equal" (71): "Now things are different in the army/since we no longer serve/the interests of masters" (73). Another was to stress that, given this changed reality, serving in the new socialist army was character-building. The phrase *vzorný voják* ("model soldier") occurs over and over again in these songs, whether in the words of a young man claiming he is never so happy as when coming to visit his mother as a "model soldier" (73), or a young woman sewing a blue shirt for her love, a "model soldier" (74), or a young man promising his love that he will return from his military service as a "model soldier," or a young woman rejoicing that her love is really good-looking as well as a "model soldier '*kaťušák*'[12]" (76). Rather than a fate to be lamented, military service is now viewed as a source of pride. So a young woman can tell her beau to stop knocking at her window, as she has learned something very unsavoury about him: he's afraid to serve in the army. She regards this as so "deeply disgraceful" that he is told he should forget coming to her place until he rectifies his behaviour (72).

When it comes to content, then, most of these songs represent a radical departure from earlier themes or at least offer a surprising new take on them. In other respects, however, they are conservative, maintaining the functions and employing the conventions of traditional folk song. Many songs, for example, are intended for the kinds of events celebrated in traditional folk songs: weddings (15, 23), the harvest in general (36, 37, 38), the hop harvest (36), village dances (19, 40, 41, 46, 55). Several are composed for specific local folk dances (66, 71), others for dances found in particular regions—the Slovak *čardáš* (15, 62) and the *verbuňk*, a men's dance widespread in southern Moravia that was historically linked to *regruti* (recruits) setting off to do their military service (72, 73). And the diction of the songs is resolutely traditional. Whether from Bohemia, Moravia, or

[12] The Katyusha was the classic Second World War Soviet rocket launcher; the implication is that the soldier in this case is no ordinary soldier, but a member of an elite corps.

Slovakia, the texts of all the songs employ regional, and in some cases even local, dialects of Czech or Slovak. The language is poetic, with the use of many old-fashioned and even archaic words and fixed turns of phrase characteristic of folk songs. This of course enhances the "authenticity" of the songs, but the co-existence of two worlds can be jarring. Czech folk songs often use the metaphor of a falcon to characterize a strong male figure, but it comes as somewhat of a surprise when the "grey falcon" in one particular song is identified as Lenin, the "white falcon" as Stalin (7). Or, to take another example, the Czech language is rich in diminutives, and traditional folk songs abound in them; their use to create emotional warmth is part of their intimate charm. But found in a modern, technical context they often seem inappropriate. In a song mentioned earlier, the caterpillar tractor—which would be a heavier, more "masculine" tractor in comparison with the one his love is driving—is actually referred to lovingly by the man as *moje pásáček*—"my dear little caterpillar tractor."

Perhaps the most complex aspect of the new folk songs is that of authorship, both in itself and in the way it raises questions of authenticity. Of course, when it comes to folklore generally, tackling the issue of authenticity is to open Pandora's box. Suffice it to say that folk culture has always been open to innumerable influences: as a phenomenon it is in a state of permanent flux, and the attempt to pin down some "pure" form is not only misguided in principle but impossible in practice. In the case of the authorship of the new folk songs, one complicating factor is that this concerns both writers of lyrics and composers of melodies. In the 1950s the Czech ethnographer Věra Stiborová (1960) carried out an analysis based empirically on her own personal knowledge of the great majority of individuals involved in creating and reproducing these new folk songs. Her conclusion was that they could be divided roughly into three categories (180-181). The first largely comprised ordinary country people leading their lives in a rural, agricultural environment. They had a relatively limited education, were not great readers and had minimal musical education. They composed according to how they felt, and their texts reflected the spoken language of their milieu. Of course, this is not to say they were like their predecessors two hundred years earlier: they were not illiterate, they had basic schooling, read newspapers, listened to the radio, were in easy touch with the city. They were marked by a "natural intelligence" and artistic talents, and without exception came from families that included individuals with musical or other creative abilities—musicians, singers, dancers, storytellers, embroiderers, folk artists. Often, but not always, they were responsible for both the texts and the melodies of their songs.

The second group was made of up musical amateurs and members of the educated classes, not labourers, for the most part living in towns and cities even though often they came originally from villages. The majority were members of folk ensembles, and they produced what Stiborová termed "something like echoes" of traditional songs (180). Teachers formed the largest professional group in this category. One key feature of the songs that emerged from this milieu is that often the lyrics and texts were by different individuals.

Finally, the third group involved with the creation of new folk songs was formed by professional musicians and composers—conductors, choirmasters, artistic directors of folk ensembles, music teachers, members of professional orchestras. They were, in a sense, specialists: their creations were designed for the use of folk ensembles, especially professional ones, and were based on texts written by others.

These very diverse origins of the creators of the new folk songs suggest just how difficult it is to characterize them. This is especially true since in practice the three groups intermingled. Typically, an individual from the first group would come up with both the words and the melody for a particular song, or borrow or adapt a traditional melody. Equally possible, however, was for someone from the second or third group to create the melody, something that became more common as time went on, as did the creation of both lyrics and melodies by individuals in the second group. One thing is clear, however: though the state and its official bodies offered massive support for the creation of this kind of folk song, it did not begin as a top-down phenomenon. Rather, it was spontaneous and developed from the bottom up. All the sources agree that after the first hesitant and scattered beginnings in the second half of the 1940s, the first characteristic new folk songs were created around 1950, and were the work of one specific woman.

Aněžka Gorlová was born in 1910 in the small southern Moravian village of Boršice into a dirt-poor family of twelve siblings, the majority of whom died young. She lost her father when she was a child; two brothers left for America to find work. She herself was forced to work in the fields from dawn till dusk from a young age, not only in Moravia but sometimes across the border in Slovakia. But as a child she also learned many folk songs from her mother and was steeped in the songs and folk traditions of her village. In an article from 1953 she explained how she began writing these new folk songs. Sometime after the post-1948 changes began to be introduced, she came to sense that the transition to the "socialized village" was difficult, and that some kind of "connecting link" between the old and new societies was needed. And she also feared that the traditional folk songs, which she loved and which were so much a part of the culture, would

no longer have anything to say. However, the people "have always sung about their joys and their troubles, with optimism and faith in a better life. And now, when they've finally reached that goal, it's impossible to remain silent" (Gorlová 1953, 94). Convinced that folk song was the ideal link between the past, present and future, she sat down one night and wrote her first song, about her scythe—"my delight"—which she had used over so many years when they went out together at dawn with the dew still on the grass, but which is now hanging up, unused, since the work is being done by machines. However, the scythe should not weep that she will not go out scything any more, since she will now have more time to spend with it (Karbusický 1954, 48). A curious but charming piece. With great trepidation she showed her first attempt to her daughter, who encouraged her to continue. As they say, the rest is history. She became famous overnight, and many other individuals, encouraged by her example, followed in her track. Their songs were taken up by folk ensembles and the circle quickly expanded to include other social strata and, as explained above, even professionals, who came to play an increasingly important role in the creation of these new "folk" songs.

One of the consequences of the multiple ways in which these songs were created is that, as types, individual songs vary greatly, both in themselves and when considered from the point of view of "authenticity." At one end of the scale, most of the songs created or adapted for professional groups have more in common with "artificial" music than with traditional folk song. To take one example, the professional composer Josef Berg worked closely with the Brno Radio Folk Instrument Orchestra, creating no fewer than 77 compositions for them, of which 24 were original; the remaining 53 comprised 10 instrumental pieces based on adaptations of folk dances and 43 adaptations of folk songs (Havránková 2012, 38). He did much research on folk songs and melodies and made many visits to southern Moravia to meet with traditional singers and musicians. From these, he absorbed typical folk music elements, but the final form his compositions took could not be termed copies as such. He himself called them "self-sufficient artistic organisms" (Havránková 2012, 71), that is, the original melodies served as a means for creating what were in effect new chamber works with their own compositional and esthetic logic. And this approach was in fact felt to be appropriate by Slávek Volavý, one of the leading southern Moravian folk music violinists and folk ensemble leaders. At the other end of the scale were songs created by individuals in the villages who were rooted in a living folk tradition. Here quality varied greatly. A number of individuals, among them Aněžka Gorlová, created songs of lasting value. But often (and this also applies to Gorlová), melodies were in fact rather

simplified forms of their traditional models, and texts could be simple and over-didactic, hailing the "achievements of building socialism" and idealizing life in the "cooperative farm village." And to make things even more complicated, in between these two groups, similar successes and failures can be found, and some of the creators from the countryside, among them Gorlová, had melodies supplied to their texts by individuals from the second and third groups.

In fact, the new folk song movement had a brief life. This was partly due to the low quality of much that was being produced, both the ideological excesses of the texts and the nature of the melodies (whether over-stylized or over-simplified). What was more, the specific political constellation within which the new folk song movement took shape crumbled rapidly following the death of Stalin in 1953 and, more importantly, Nikita Khrushchev's demasking of him three years later and the changes that this set in motion. Finally, and rather ironically, the relentless official promotion of the new song movement and of folk ensembles and the omnipresence of folklore in the media made them in a sense victims of their own excess. This was first signaled by an article that appeared in the country's leading literary and cultural newspaper in 1958 entitled "Tíha folkloru" ("The burden of folklore"). Though its author, Vladimír Mináč, a leading Slovak writer, was referring specifically to the situation in Slovakia, the issues he raised were equally valid for the Czech part of the country:

> It seems the time has come for a great reckoning: our literature and art want to liberate themselves from the unbearably endearing burden of folklore. We proclaimed, and we all silently accepted, the axiom that folk art is progressive, progressive everywhere and always, in all its manifestations and forms, regardless of time or space, from time immemorial to time without end, amen. Clearly this is nonsense... [Now] we know that it must depart, that nothing of what once lived naturally can be resurrected by ensembles, by competitions, that whatever we do today with folk art is nothing but ornamentalism, that in the end it all must end up in the display cases of museums and in ethnographic publications. (Mináč 1958, 1)

The rejection by much of the population of not only the new folk songs but the whole celebration of folklore and folk culture they were part of was swift, and brutal. It is enough to read Milan Kundera's *Žert* (*The Joke*), written in 1965 and first published in 1967, to grasp the nadir of respect to which everything connected with folklore had sunk. This changed markedly in subsequent decades, and today once again folk culture is held in high regard by many. But it is highly unlikely that any of the new folk songs are

still sung these days in private, let alone in public. At best most are remembered as amusing oddities; a few may be felt to be in some way satisfying.

One of the ironies of the general current evaluation of these songs, however, is that it almost inevitably leads back to the Pandora's box of authenticity. Were these new folk songs, or at least some of them, authentic? A reasonable argument can be made that they were, particularly in connection with those created by individuals who were still living in the rural world. Their songs were rooted in a long tradition that had shaped their authors, and they arose from their lived experience. At the time they were created they were a genuine expression of the optimism that they felt personally, as did many other Czechs and Slovaks, an optimism that, despite the oppressive regime, was confirmed by what was for many, especially in the countryside, real betterment in their lives—a reasonable standard of living, an assured job, the chance to obtain a decent education, dignity. The songs were honest expressions of how they experienced the rapidly changing rural world, emotional but not sentimental, expressions of what was also felt by many in their community. They capture the experience of a particular social group at a particular moment in time, and though today we can see how limited their horizons were, this does not detract from the genuine quality of their message. The time has perhaps come to view them dispassionately as a lens that might enable us to try to understand what they tell us about that period and about the capacities of folk song in general.

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PROPAGANDA IN CROATIAN MUSIC AND SOCIETY: EXPLORING THE LUDBREG MUSIC SCENE BETWEEN WAR AND WORDS

KRISTIAN KOLAR

During the late 1980s and 1990s, Yugoslavia was experiencing its downfall, and music played a significant role in constructing and strengthening the collective identity. However, as Yugoslavia[1] disintegrated, this collective identity began to dissipate, leading to the development of a new musical and cultural policy in Croatia. The Croatian authorities had to approach this policy with caution, as any connection of the Independent State of Croatia to the 1940s Nazi puppet state could damage their chances of receiving international recognition. As a result, Croatian artists of all genres recorded their interpretation of Croatian patriotic music, leading to the emergence of a case of Croatian musical pluralism. This approach resulted in the creation of numerous notable Croatian patriotic songs, such as "Moja domovina" (1991).

I will examine the establishment of Croatian statehood identity through a lens that has often been overlooked in previous research—the local, semi-professional music scene, which often has a "ritualistic" role as performers in events such as baptisms, weddings, and kermesses. Through interviews conducted with musicians from Ludbreg, a town in northern Croatia, I will clarify the complex interweaving of nationalism, patriotism, and music, revealing evidence that illuminates one of the most tumultuous chapters in Croatia's contemporary history.

[1] All mentions of Yugoslavia in this chapter refer to the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). In its final stage after the war(s) of the 1990s, Yugoslavia consisted of only Serbia and Montenegro. Thus, Yugoslavia as an entity ceased to exist in 2006, whereas the former Yugoslavia (SFRJ) had disintegrated by 1991/1992.

Propaganda, at its core, has been defined as the deliberate attempt to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions (Smith, n.d.). The concept of propaganda, along with its complex implementation that may seem straightforward but holds great significance, as well as its practical uses, has been extensively theorized. Notable figures like American author Edward Bernays, often referred to as the "father of public relations," argued for the positive implications of propaganda in his 1928 work *Propaganda*, portraying it as the only alternative to chaos. On the other hand, Jacques Ellul's seminal work *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (1962/1965) stands out as the first sociological analysis and categorization of propaganda. Ellul's observations on propaganda, stating that it is "necessarily false when it speaks of values, of truth, of good, of justice, of happiness" (1965, 59) and that it "constantly short-circuits all thought and decision" (30) continue to resonate.[2] I aim to shed light on a small fraction of the propaganda created and disseminated during the Yugoslav Wars.

Music is merely one medium of many through which propaganda has been disseminated. Songs and compositions like the socialist standard "L'Internationale" (1871), "The Ballad of the Green Berets" (1966), and even "Yankee Doodle" (1755) have become textbook examples of propaganda. However, propaganda in music did not always entail the creation of new propaganda; Richard Wagner's case in Nazi Germany exemplifies the appropriation of existing music. In contemporary music, most musicians tend to avoid Bernays' optimistic implications for propaganda. The negative connotations of propaganda resonate in rock (Green Day's "American Idiot" (2004), Muse's "Propaganda" (2018)), punk (Discharge's "The Warning" (1982)), metal (Rage Against the Machine's "Killing in the Name" (1992)), rap (Gorillaz's "Feel Good Inc" (2005)), and others.

Much can be said about the propaganda propagated during Yugoslavia's demise; adhering to Ellul, the warring factions indeed spread falsehoods about truth, good, and justice. During the Yugoslav Wars, Croatophobia, Islamophobia, Turkophobia, and Serbophobia melted into a fatal cocktail, which was particularly evident in music. Artists like Marko Perković Thompson, Miro Semberac, Rodoljub (Roki) Vulović, Mirko Pajčin (alias Baja Mali Knindža), and Bekrije, among others, created songs that heavily relied on the mythology of justice and legitimate, at times historically grounded punishments, that would be inflicted upon their opponents should they do harm to what the singers considered the "holy land." Some songs, like Željko Grmuša's Serbian nationalist song "Karadžiću,

[2] Adapted from 1965 rendition of the book, published by Vintage Books.

vodi Srbe svoje" ("Karadžić, Lead Your Serbs")[3] from 1993, even spilled over into international events. The song's music video became a popular meme under the moniker of "Remove kebab," subsequently becoming a symbol of the American alt-right. Tragically, the song was referenced on one of the weapons of Brenton Tarrant during the 2019 shooting in Christchurch Mosque. Grmuša distanced himself from the incident, stating that the Islamophobic connotation of the song has no connection with Tarrant's actions, and he would do this "while listening to any song" (Nestorović 2019).

In the late 1980s, apprehensions appeared that the concept of unison, socialist, self-managed Yugoslavia was nearing its end. Subsequently, a series of violent conflicts (the Yugoslav Wars) ensued, the root causes of which remain ingrained in the collective memory and sporadically catalyse diplomatic and ethnic conflicts. Based on Benčić's research, conducted with 50 survivors of the Croatian War of Independence, the perceived reasons for the war were many—whether the policy of Greater Serbian expansionism of Slobodan Milošević or the rigid, inflexible Croatian nationalism stemming as a reaction, or the revisionist tendencies, the respondents unanimously answered only one question—no one anticipated the war (Benčić 2017, 351).

The narratives found in the Croatian public sphere during the time of Yugoslavia's disintegration were powerful, particularly those that emphasized the "thousand-year-old dream" of Croatian statehood (*tisućljetni san o hrvatskoj državi*) and, at times, engaged in distasteful flirtations with the ideology of the Ustasha regime.[4] As an example, soccer games increasingly became imbued with Orwellian war metaphors. Even without considering the socio-political situation in late 1990s Yugoslavia, soccer reporting and punditry generally tended to employ war-driven language. Phrases such as "shoot," "win/lose," and "strike/fire" frequently appeared in soccer reports (Nsungo 2019, 169). In ex-Yugoslav media, these words were often translated literally, resulting in the conflation of sports and military interventions.

The resurgence of nationalist ideologies during this time led to violent eruptions in Yugoslavian stadiums. A significant example of such

[3] A reference to Radovan Karadžić (1945-), a Serbian politician and psychiatrist, most notable as the first president of Republika Srpska between 1992 and 1996. Karadžić was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for war crimes against Bosniak and Croat population, and apprehended in 2008, after 12 years of hiding under the alias of an alternative medicine practitioner.

[4] For the explanation of the narrative of the thousand-year dream, see Breglec 2019.

violence occurred on May 13th, 1990, when supporters of football club Dinamo, Zagreb and football club Crvena Zvezda from Belgrade clashed with the police, leading to the match abandonment. The image of Dinamo footballer Zvonimir Boban kicking a police officer became an iconic representation of Yugoslavia's inevitable demise. Brentin asserts that Boban's "mythical kick against an officer strikingly captured the antagonisms of Yugoslavia's political situation and made him instantly 'immortal' not only for Dinamo fans but many Croats" (2013, 996). A few months later, in Split, the supporters of football club Hajduk burned the Yugoslav flag during a match against Crvena Zvezda, further illustrating the severity of the nationalist notions pervading Yugoslav society.

War became a pervasive topic in Croatian media following the independence from Yugoslav media. An analysis conducted by Labaš and Barčot focused on Croatia's most famous media outlets (*Vjesnik*, *Glas Slavonije*, and *Večernji list*) during wartime reporting, and revealed several commonalities regarding the state of Croatian newspapers, including the tendency for Croatian media to be biased and one-sided, reporting stories from a Croatian perspective. The authors noted that the war presented a significant challenge to journalistic ethics. Despite this, Croatian journalism managed to avoid showcasing gruesome imagery of the war, thus successfully preventing larger ethical issues.

A similar ethical policy was successfully implemented in music as well, with the most aggressive wartime music often connected with the Independent State of Croatia being censored by mainstream Croatian media. Nevertheless, aggressive songs found their way to Croatian listeners, as noted by Baker (2013, 416). Pettan (1998, 20) contended that incorporating Ustasha songs into the "official repertoire" would establish Croatia as a descendant of the 1940s state, thereby reinforcing the claims of the counterpropaganda. Openly embracing Ustasha propaganda in newly composed Croatian propaganda would severely undermine the chances of international recognition.

Although the active fighting in the Croatian War of Independence ceased in 1995, a new form of war emerged in the form of a dominant narrative. This narrative, as Banjeglav (2012) argues, centered around the concept of dying for the country in order to build a new state, and faced challenges from alternative narratives that questioned the legitimacy of the political elites. Nevertheless, events such as the commemoration of the Vukovar Massacre and Operation Storm (*Operacija Oluja*) continued to produce diplomatic tensions between Croatia and Serbia (Banjeglav 2012, 24). The dominance of the narrative in music did not end, or at least, it was not willing to end, after 1995. Music continued to play a crucial role in