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Neglected Trauma: The Lives of Women Dissidents and Émigrés in Daňa Horáková's Memoirs

Research on trauma and memory in literature typically focuses on texts dealing with the Shoah or hardship of World War II and other armed conflicts. However, war is not the only situation that leads to trauma, and the feelings of unendurable danger that produce it can be found in a number of less conspicuous situations. Especially since trauma only arises as a result of the event itself. It often develops gradually, through the accumulation of experiences which the human psyche interprets as life-threatening and which are not adequately treated. In such cases, the initial onset of trauma may even go unnoticed. Moreover, while each case of trauma has its own individual character, certain situations are more challenging for the psyche than others, involving specific patterns of circumstances that represent an increased psychological burden and therefore heightened risk of trauma.

In the following article, I will outline the possible forms of trauma experienced by women in connection to their lives as dissidents and émigrés, specifically with reference to Daňa Horáková's book *O Pavlovi* (About Pavel).

1. The universe of dissent and emigration and *ASANACE* ("sanitation") campaign

If we talk about (Czechoslovak) dissent, its most striking feature is undoubtedly the diversity of individual fates experienced by dissidents. Some were born into

dissent while others were thrown into it as a result of decisions made by their parents, and still others became dissidents by virtue of their own political, social, or life decisions. Some worked in pursuit of personal and collective freedom, while others, driven by the same goal, maintained a low profile in order to create space for those around them. Jonathan Bolton thus speaks of “worlds of experience” (Bolton 13). Dissidents were united only by the hostile attitude of the regime—the “mark of the enemy,” to use Václav Havel’s expression (Havel 37). Even here, however, different dissidents were affected to different degrees. Some were socially isolated, while others found themselves targets of various forms of “character assassination.” For some, conversely, it provided the very impulse that led them down the path of dissent. In every case, the effect of this “mark of the enemy” was to delineate a certain universe encompassing all of human existence. For people in dissent, there was nothing but dissent: all decisions, relationships, and emotions involved dissent, every part of life was marked by dissent. In Bolton’s words, “Dissent was a philosophy, but it was also a common set of situations and experiences closely tied to daily life—experiences that had little to do with politics, theory, or Western reception” (Bolton 13).

The impact of emigration on the lives of those who chose it was similarly universal. For those who left the country without the intention of returning it was like stepping into another universe. As with dissidents, émigrés were motivated by a broad range of factors to leave (and in some cases return), and there was a similarly broad range of ways to emigrate, and numerous factors shaping each émigré’s ability to cope with life abroad (knowledge of the language of the destination country, family conditions, education, age, relationship to the adoptive value system, etc.). Estimates of emigration from Czechoslovakia in the years following 1968 are in the range of 200,000 people (Nespor 50). While not all were dissidents, a significant number began as such, and it was in reference to them that an official campaign was organised under the title *Akce Asanace*, or the “Sanitation Campaign.” By order of the Ministry of the Interior, the campaign aimed to “bring about the complete dispersion and isolation of the main organisers of Charter 77 from the other signatories, and for these organisers to carry out their emigration from the CSSR” (qtd. in Stehlík et al. 155). While the campaign failed to crush dissent, many opponents of the regime did leave Czechoslovakia, including 280 signatories of the Charter (according to creators of the documentary series *Abeceda komunistických zločinů*).

The Czechoslovak State Security (the stb) was known to resort to brutal coercive measures. In addition to kidnapping and other (sometimes fatal) incidents involving the children of dissidents, these measures included repeat searches of their homes, sometimes lasting for hours, as well as surveillance,

bullying, and humiliation. There were also acts of targeted violence: the well-known assaults on Ivanka Hyblerová, Zdena Tominová, and Vlastimil Třešňák, for example, as well as Zina Freundová, who was brutally attacked in her own apartment. Simply knowing that the stb was capable of this kind of violence compelled many dissidents to leave the country.

2. A woman in dissent, a woman in exile

Until recently, the mainstream narrative on dissent was shaped by its male leaders, often overlooking the critical role played by women. In *Ženy v disentu* (Women in Dissent; 2013), historian Petr Blažek re-examines the activities of Charter 77 with the aim of explaining the relative silence concerning the role of women in the Czechoslovak opposition. In addition to the communist regime's appropriation of the (already established) women's rights movement in Czechoslovakia—with devastating consequences—Blažek draws attention to the conservative views of women's rights that could be found within the opposition itself (Blažek 3). In the same spirit, sociologist Jiřina Šiklová writes on the mutual lack of concern for this issue on the part of both Czech dissidents (and émigrés) and Western feminist movements (Šiklová 42). As with Miroslav Vodrážka's text on Charter 77 (Vodrážka 66), Šiklová recalls that:

In interviews following the fall of communism, these women [former dissidents] claimed that political pressure from the regime did not allow them to separate the feminist movement from the mainstream story on political engagement on the part of men. (Šiklová 42)

In the same way that women's issues as such were not raised by dissident (and émigré) women, they have long been ignored within the professional scholarly discussion on dissent as well (Šiklová 42).

In 2006, Pavla Frýdlová published *Ženská vydrží víc než člověk* (A Woman Lasts Longer Than a Man), a collection of autobiographical accounts by women émigrés from the period in question, with another collection appearing in 2008 under the title *Ženy mezi dvěma světy* (Women Between Two Worlds). These were followed in 2017 by Marcela Linková and Naďa Straková (eds.) *Bytová revolta: Jak ženy dělaly dissent* (Household Revolt: How Women Did Dissent), presenting the biographical testimonies of twenty-one dissidents of different generations. In the final study, Marcela Linková draws on interviews to describe the extreme hardship experienced by women dissidents. In addition to their usual duties and households, further extended by dissident social life, these women worked for the Charter, and also had to cope with the stb (Linková 379).

Moreover, she reminds us that it was the transposition of Charter activities to private homes, flats, and cottages that gave women a chance to become more directly involved in public life (Linková 381). Like Blažek, Linková points to the ambivalent equality of coercive means applied by the stb on male and female opposition figures, and the fact that women like men faced persecution and continuous bullying. While fewer women (with notable exceptions) found themselves imprisoned, coercive practices applied on them by the stb often involved intimate and sexualised violence (Linková 385–387).

However, attempts to better understand the role of women dissidents and how it differed from that of their male counterparts are limited by insufficient sources. Were women dissidents protected or were they simply protective? Did they choose their way of life—the milieu that shaped them, the support they gave to their male partners, the political activities in which they participated, etc.—as an act of conscious self-realisation? Or were they forced into this life by circumstance, and compelled (with more or less aptitude) to cope with it? Were their dissident activities comparable to that of their male counterparts, or were they different in some way: more restricted—or, on the contrary, more extensive?

The available information on dissidents gathered from memoirs and biographical interviews suggests that certain people are more prone to trauma than others, depending on such factors as individual personality, background, and psychological make-up. Several factors, however, seem to be of particular relevance: faith in God, professional ambition and need for self-realisation, and the simple fact of being an émigré all appear to be important variables in the experience of (and reflection on) the long years deprived of freedom, especially in the sense that these aspects naturally brought with them certain value complexes which helped shape the careers of particular women. While the church community in Czechoslovakia offered a support base for practicing Christians (who were also persecuted by the communist regime), émigrés, on the other hand, were often stripped of primary contacts and thus thrown into isolation, mitigated to a greater or lesser extent by contact with the expatriate community in the destination country. The desire for professional self-realisation then increased the degree of frustration for the persecuted, thus counterbalancing the value of one's personal background.

Motherhood played a major role in the lives of women dissidents and émigrés, with regard to both the sense of vulnerability and social life it carried with it. In the case of the latter, motherhood also served as a kind of life anchor, a materialised necessity. Having a child meant building a circle of adults who helped in their upbringing and education; in the case of the émigré, this tended to disrupt the isolation of daily life, and to encourage integration. It is relevant

here to consider the correlation between quality of life and an émigré's attitude towards integration and role in the family. Many (male) Czech intellectuals who refused to integrate in their host countries had a more difficult time coping with exile, and were more prone to alcoholism. Conversely, many families fell apart when the external pressure of living in dissent disappeared (cf. Tominová 351), and they were confronted with a choice between integration and confrontation. Couples who stayed together were also faced with this dilemma, caught between the new future and superseded past. It became necessary, from an ideological/political point of view, to "take a position" rather than assimilating, the émigré felt compelled to confront the values of the suppressed Prague Spring with the local culture of the host country. This is how Ivan Pfaff formulates the task of the intellectual who chose emigration, and for whom the notion of integrating represented a form of "self-mortification" that merely echoed the fate that awaited them in their own country (Pfaff 147). Invariably, the first few years in exile posed a tremendous burden for émigrés, often with devastating consequences:

Living in a new country requires a lot of energy and time. You have to learn everything all over again—not only to speak and write in a foreign language, but also to orient yourself in a foreign environment, to learn new patterns of behaviour. You have to study again, find a job, integrate into a community that is rather distrustful at first. The first seven years are said to be the hardest for an émigré. I can confirm that. (Hyblerová 204)

Moreover, it was often the women who—for various reasons—took on the role of breadwinner and caretaker in the new country. They were the first to let go, to stop clinging to the past and move on. This is the case, for example, with the émigré Daňa Horáková.

3. Daňa Horáková's memoir *O Pavlovi*

More than a memoir, Horáková's extensive book *O Pavlovi* (About Pavel) approaches the genre of the autobiographical novel. Published by Torst in 2020, *O Pavlovi* won the *Lidové noviny* readers' Book of the Year award the same year. The author herself claims that she struck on the idea for the book while writing what should have been the postscript for an edition of Pavel Juráček's "German" diaries,¹ and finding the piece had grown beyond the appropriate scope and

1 Pavel Juráček made his name as a film director during the Czechoslovak New Wave cinema of the 1960s, with such titles as *Postava k podpírání* (A Character in Need of

form. With the aim of offering her (revisionist) view of years of coexistence (and that of overcoming the helplessness expressed by her life partner), it was apparently not possible to encapsulate her thoughts in a brief postscript. Horáková's book is a testament to the way the human psyche is compelled to tell its story, to shape the image of a lifetime and draw meaning from it: "My intent here is to name that which exists outside of words" (Horáková 13).

The storyline follows the protagonist's acquaintance with Juráček, from their first meeting to the screenwriter's death, with (brief) detours to the past and future to provide context. It is in these digressions and marginal notes, however, that the reader is introduced to the author-narrator. It is here (and in the accompanying photos) that we learn about her prestigious scholarship to the United States, her work for the samizdat series *Expedice*, her friends and lovers, and her career in Germany. From the first of these episodes, the life of the narrator seems to draw directly from that of Horáková herself: she is successful, confident, and free. This opens up a certain space between them, and a tension between the reader's freedom to identify or not to identify with the suffering heroine—and ultimately not to take responsibility for her fate. It is a kind of "compassion from a distance," as the reader remains aware that the heroine is still present somewhere in her liberated form.

The style of the narrative—its ironic distance and subversive undertone, which turns at times to sarcasm (most often aimed at the narrator herself)—plays an important role in the text, which is also characterised by the narrator's propensity for self-reflection and earnest effort to name reality in its subtlest nuances, even at the risk of inviting condemnation from the reader.

The storyline is rather simple: Horáková meets Pavel Juráček in September 1974, marries him in February 1979, and a month later leaves with him for Munich. There he takes full responsibility for the survival (and functioning) of the small family, caring for finances and striving to find the *modus vivendi* of their new life—and his place in it. Slowly, in fits and starts, their relationship falls apart, and Juráček eventually returns to Czechoslovakia while the heroine remains behind in Germany. At this point, the story splits into two distinct narratives, with greater emphasis on the one following Juráček's fateful decline. Eventually, however, the intermittent notes on the protagonist's own existence build into a unified narrative flow, and Horáková's own story once more takes centre stage as she finds success writing for the culture section of the German newspaper *Bild*, pursues a relationship with a younger man, and is appointed

Support; 1963, with co-director Jan Schmidt), *Každý mladý muž* (All Young Men; 1965) and *Případ pro začínajícího kata* (The Case of the Novice Executioner; 1969).

Minister of Culture in Hamburg. In Horáková's own words from the conclusion of the book: "I was never 'Mrs. Juráčková,' yet I did not become a truly original being until I stopped defining myself through him" (470).

4. Trauma of the woman in dissent and in exile

Trauma is by nature constructive, arising secondarily, in both the individual and collective context. According to Jeffrey C. Alexander, it is not the event itself that is traumatic, but its interpretation, that is, the establishment of a narrative (Alexander 97–122). Alexander also brings the process of trauma formation closer to speech act theory when he identifies an initial speaker whose goal is to "transfer the claim of trauma to the public," that is, to convince members of the collective that they have been traumatized by an extraordinary event (Alexander 108). Cathy Caruth also points out the constructive nature of trauma in her explanation of the way post-traumatic stress disorder and recurrent traumatic dreams work (Caruth 124), and not all painful and adverse events cause trauma. The trauma experienced by women in dissent and in exile, like all trauma, is a cultural issue. Here too, however, there are a range of possible outcomes, and a situation that is traumatising for one woman may not be for another.

There are nonetheless certain statements regarding the hardship of life in exile and dissent that indicate that trauma has taken place. Yet to determine the extent of the problem, we need to learn more, and since the essential character of trauma is silence, since trauma itself exists "beyond words," we see that the researcher's path to understanding runs parallel to the victim's process of healing. The first step on this path is the recognition of trauma and its "presentness," which is to say, the designation of trauma as such. In order to talk about trauma as it is experienced by women living under particular conditions (dissent/emigration), and how these traumas translate into the present, it is necessary to admit that such traumas exist. It must be **defined** as trauma on an individual level, incorporated into a common narrative, into a culture of remembering dissent and emigration. A media transformation of trauma must be carried out, changing it from something that exists only in the memory into an act of remembrance, which in turn will strengthen the collective identity.

Alexander Kratochvil describes this process as a post-traumatic narrative, while drawing attention to the need for a political and socio-cultural field for public debate (Kratochvil 31). Here Kratochvil cites Werner Bohleber and his assertions about the necessity of a supportive environment:

The individual cannot successfully incorporate the traumatic experience into a broader narrative as a purely individual act. In addition

to an empathic listener, this also requires a social discourse about the historical truth of the traumatic event, and about its denial and rejection. The victims are also witnesses to a special historical reality. (qtd. in Kratochvíl 20)

In a narrative formulated by men, moreover, it is problematic that (latent) distrust of gender research still permeates Czech society.

Life in dissent and in exile placed different demands on women than it did on men. In the published statements of women dissidents, trauma is associated with moments of risk involving the safety of the family (including the risk to children and their uncertain future), living under watch of the stb, the need for self-employment (obstacles in professional life), and relationship with the world (denouncement by stb collaborators in circles of close friends) and relativisation of values. Women were affected by humiliations connected with gender: they were forced to strip, for example, and experienced other violations of bodily integrity. Those who were not direct victims of such abuses knew others who were.

The experience of isolation—from friends, from family, and even from oneself—is a cause of trauma that seems to have been universal among émigrés. They lived without (immediate) prospect of returning, without hope of changing the social situation or seeing justice. The journey abroad was an absolute turning point in the lives of entire families (cf. Kabela 49; Diamant). Breaking ties with the place of origin represented a major burden on the psyche in and of itself, leading to a number of related problems, including feelings of guilt, insecurity, disorientation, fear, and anxiety (for some, existential). For some, these symptoms would manifest in recurring nightmares about being trapped back in the homeland, the so-called “émigré’s dream.” The lack of support complicated the practical operation of the household, as well as domestic partnerships, which took on the function of all other relationships. The story of the past is difficult to remember without a community that reflects it, and this in turn means that one’s identity is no longer supported by that story. This is compounded by the lack of contact with others, which further undermined the émigré’s self-confidence. Émigrés also lacked support in the process of healing old wounds from persecution and interrogation; far away from the dissident community, the full burden of life in dissent now fell solely on their shoulders.

The authors reflect on this isolation, the lack of support and the severing of ties in exile, bringing (literary) testimony to the consequences of this intervention in the lives of individuals and dissent as a whole—thus establishing a narrative of trauma:

We speak of the existence of cultural trauma at the moment when members of a collectivity realize that they have been exposed to a shocking event that has left indelible marks on their group consciousness, forever scarred their memory, and fundamentally and irreversibly altered their future identity. (Alexander 97)

5. Literary representations of trauma in the book *O Pavlovi*

The narrator defines herself in pre-emigration times as satisfied and successful: “At the end of 1974, I had a job, I had a ‘salon,’ I had friends, I had something to think about (patristics, Hypatia), and a few months later, Vašek Havel and I launched our samizdat series *Expedice*” (Horáková 33). Moreover, she has her own apartment on Pařížská Street and the unconditional support of her parents. In the process of emigrating, her life situation changes from the ground up. Indeed, because of Horáková’s dissident activities, the regime found it more desirable that she leave Czechoslovakia (cf. Horáková 37), a fact that connects Horáková’s personal story with the collective story of Czechoslovak dissent. Like many other émigrés, she was fundamentally affected by the loss of the security and context of dissent in her native country, and it took a long time before she could face the life in exile.

Horáková sets the beginning of her story (and first step into life as an émigré) at the scene of her wedding, which she also describes as her first traumatic experience. In various places throughout the book, Horáková depicts wedding ceremonies as something fundamental, as a focal point of life. It is of particular importance to her mother (Horáková 380), whose wish that the protagonist have a traditional wedding—a **storybook** wedding—is acutely disappointed by the unceremonious, matter-of-fact wedding staged for Horáková by the communist regime (Horáková 41).

This begs the question: given that the wedding was no longer an act of the heroine’s will (arranged as it was by the State Security, who persuaded Juráček to marry Horáková with the aim of sending both into exile), at what point did she lose control over her own life? Was it in relation to her husband that she gave it away—or to the regime, the moment she became involved in the dissent as the principal collaborator on *Expedice*? She herself describes the wedding as something unwanted, something that took place without her consent (Horáková 37).

One of the recurring themes in *O Pavlovi* is the poverty in which the protagonist and her new husband find themselves when they first move to Munich, especially in connection to the fact that it is she who swallows her pride and proactively (though tacitly and as a matter of course) struggles to make ends meet by collecting returnable bottles, washing the stairs, rummaging through

the neighbours' discarded clothes and furniture, etc. It is she who copes with the trauma of poverty, with the "fear for survival" (Horáková 76), rising to the occasion with an almost endless aptitude for seeking out and finding the things they so desperately need (Horáková 78).

This awareness of the material inequality of life in exile—and one's gratifying ability to cope with it (on one's own)—can also be found in Markéta Brousková's reflections and anecdotes on life as an émigré, *Nežádoucí svědek* (The Unwanted Witness; Brousková 68). If, on the one hand, Brousková's narrator is styled in a completely different manner than the heroine of *O Pavlovi*, her remarks on the well-being of her German neighbours resonate with the same sarcasm (Brousková 39).

Just as in Brousková's *Nežádoucí svědek*, the narrator of *O Pavlovi* is wounded by the lack of acknowledgment on the part of her male counterpart, a situation that exacerbates her frustration at being everywhere so undervalued. Horáková herself mentions that one of her motivations for writing *O Pavlovi* was her wish to "balance" the impact of Juráček's (highly valued) memoirs among his readership; her narrator likewise is strongly compelled by the desire to "settle accounts." to the point where it becomes the (often unacknowledged) motive for all her actions. She is driven by her hunger for recognition, which grows in equal measure to the propensity of her "tyrant" to dismiss or overlook her contributions. (Hence her frequent commentaries on Juráček's undeserved accolades, her indictment of his admirers for having wrongly condemned her to the role of his caregiver, and her disclosure of the personal injustices directly experienced at Juráček's hand.)

Juxtaposed to this aspect of her account, Horáková also highlights Juráček's alcoholism, and—paradoxically—exalts his work, not as a filmmaker (as others saw him) but as a genius counterpart, almost a twin of Franz Kafka.

Lacking any kind of support, the narrator is not only unable to leave her hurtful relationship with Juráček, but is also forced to integrate her suffering into an understandable, viable framework of meaning (this echoes the typical situation of domestic violence). This accounts for her insistence on Juráček's true genius, her unique ability to appreciate it—to see in Juráček, as no other can, another Kafka. It is for this reason that she finds meaning in his suffering ("fighting for his salvation"), that she devotes herself exclusively to him, justifying this exclusivity on the model of Milena Jesenská's love for Kafka (which he ultimately rebuffed): "Pavel too only ever wanted Dora [Diamant], even if he was ashamed to admit it" (Horáková 213). The aspect of Horáková's coexistence with Juráček that was most painful to her is thus represented by the unborn child. It is a subject that cannot be mentioned, that can only be approached obliquely, yet it is a subject that is ever present, by virtue of its very absence (Horáková 33; 167).

Horáková's narrator thus escapes into the strength of her intellect to protect herself from a hurtful relationship and lack of emotional attachment. After Juráček's departure, she begins her life anew. Yet even in the case of a loving relationship, she points out, she would find it difficult to accede to marriage, or even to the fact that her lived present happiness is love, as she is not able to let go of her suffering with Juráček (466). She is thus compelled, on the last page of the book, to legitimise his behaviour and provide an explanation for it: "Sometimes I ask myself if he hurt me in order to protect me" (469).

It never occurs to her in this context that she could have taken measures to influence her husband's actions. Instead she blames the external context (gender roles within dissent), suspecting that they shaped her relationship with Juráček for the worse, even while she only finds evidence at the level of their personal relationship (a certain "favouritism" towards Juráček).

Sooner or later, under other circumstances, the narrator would have eventually sought help, either from experts or at least close friends. She might have found support in her life as a dissident in a network of contacts, of the kind frequently mentioned by dissidents in interviews. The specific conditions of emigration and isolation, together—crucially—with a set of attitudes and behaviours particular to the social framework imposed by totalitarianism (a tendency to rely only on oneself, to avoid the risk of revealing one's weaknesses), all this contributed to the deepening the gap in which she found herself as female victim of abuse. She set about coping with it in accordance with her personality and the options available to her: consecrating her pain as the art of living, and taking an ironic perspective on the fact of her victimisation, since it was the only way to go on as an intellectual.

The overwhelming personal trauma caused by a destructive relationship is inseparable here from the time and place in which it was experienced. In addition to her own tendencies, the protagonist of *O Pavlovi* is trapped in a situation she only partially masters, in which every decision has political and moral consequences, and is therefore crucial.

6. Shared trauma

Accounts of stb interrogation techniques in the book provide insight into the "veil of silence" associated with untreated trauma. Finding it excessively difficult to talk about those techniques, the narrator invokes them instead (referring specifically to the humiliation of forced nudity) by quoting a letter from Věra Jirousová: "I was very worried about you at that time, especially after your interrogation in Ruzyně, when they used nudity as a proven method to humiliate you" (Horáková 271).

Loss of dignity at a stranger's hand, together with her unfulfilled dream of a loving and respectful family—a dream she has trouble even formulating—deeply undermines the narrator's self-confidence. And while politics has an indirect (albeit significant) effect on private lives, it is used precisely with the aim of violating human dignity and undermining confidence, and one the primary goals of all totalitarian regimes; the violence and forced nudity that is used against women dissidents as a coercive function of interrogation is a universal cause of trauma in cases involving female victims.

A closer reading of Horáková's exceedingly personal story thus reveals a number of traumatic themes that characterise the universal dissident and émigré experience, including (state) intervention in key life events, exposure to the violent methods of State Security, and violation of bodily integrity, compounded by the effective isolation and marginalisation of the dissident/émigré in the face of extreme adversity. These themes may be partly subsumed by the thrall of a love story, or rather by its retelling on the part of a partner or the tabloids. This too is part of the process of coping with trauma, of naming the unnameable. The book as a whole, the very existence of a statement of this kind, is invaluable testimony to the injustice, systemic oppression, and social-structural inequalities that are faced by dissidents and émigrés, and that account for the differences between the male and female experience vis-à-vis these hardships. In order to expand and elaborate the narrative of dissent to accommodate these (sometimes subtle) differences, it is necessary to expand and elaborate a space where similar statements are heard and acknowledged.

7. In conclusion

To cope with trauma, it is first of all necessary to name what has happened, to give due weight to the event, to present it and to give a voice to its victims. Without these steps, recovery is not possible. Forty years under a totalitarian regime have marked Czech society in every way. After more than thirty years of democratic development, we still cannot say that the past has been properly dealt with, that all its latent consequences have been identified and held up to examination. Various topics and events that have played a vital role in shaping Czech Republic today remain trivialised or relativised in the public discourse. Years of legal action against those involved in stb crackdowns under *Akce Asanace* have ended in suspended sentences.

The role of women dissidents and émigrés has not yet been given its proper place in the Czech culture of remembrance. This makes it all the more difficult to work through the lasting traumas they face. Given that what is displaced and unprocessed persists outside of—and yet is integral to—the culture of

remembrance, given therefore that these traumas have a profound influence on the present, shaping Czech society through transgenerational transmission, it would be desirable finally to do so.

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| Abstract

LUCIE ANTOŠÍKOVÁ

Neglected Trauma: The Lives of Women Dissidents and Émigrés in Daňa Horáková's Memoirs

At the end of the 1970s, the Czechoslovak State Security, under the banner of the so-called *ASANACE* ('sanitation') campaign, used brutal means to deport leading dissidents abroad and break up the domestic opposition. As a result, many cultural figures emigrated, among them Daňa Horáková, a philosopher and collaborator of

Václav Havel. Drawing on her memoir and the testimonies of other Czech female dissidents (and émigrés), the text reflects on the difficulties that life in dissent brought to women, as well as the pitfalls in which women were most at risk of becoming traumatized. Among the most risky moments was emigration and the uprootedness associated with it. Against the backdrop of research on emigration and trauma in literature, the present study offers an interpretation of *O Pavlovi* as a testament to the destructive impact of power.

Keywords: dissent, émigré, trauma, exile literature, the lives of women as dissidents and émigrés

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