


Dominik Tatarka and His Journalist Dimension

<p>Marcela Antošová, Associate Professor in Philology, Department of Slavic Philology, Faculty of Arts, E-mail: mantosova@ukf.sk https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0902-1484 WOS Researcher ID: AAM-1369-2020 SCOPUS ID: 56976173300 Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Štefánikova 67, 949 01 Nitra, Slovak Republic.</p>	<p><i>Citation:</i> Antošová, M. (2024). Dominik Tatarka and His Journalist Dimension. <i>Social Communications: Theory and Practice</i>, 16(1), 53–64. DOI: 10.51423/2524-0471-2024-16-1-4</p> <p>© Antošová, M. (2024).  Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)</p>
---	---

Annotation

The study focuses on the Slovak writer Dominik Tatarka and his aspect of journalism. Although he is primarily a personality who belongs to the artistic-literary space, he was also heavily involved as a journalist at one time. However, the recognition of this journalistic line remains in the background, while it had a societal impact and was a serious testimony of the writer's turbulent opinion development, turns, and attitudes. The writer radically succumbed to the communist regime at some point in his life, but after realizing the destruction that the totalitarian regime was perpetrating, he subsequently radically moved away from these positions and became its loud critic. Naturally, these positions of opinion are also copied by his journalistic activity, the reflection of which, as we have already stated, remains somewhat in the background. The study therefore has the ambition to eliminate this deficit at least partially. Based on the research of collected journalistic texts and analytical probe into their semantic space, our goal is to make available the hitherto undisclosed semantic dimensions of his journalistic communications, put them in relationships and context and thus expand the portfolio of information about this distinctive, at that time key figure of the Slovak cultural space. With regard to the limited spatial possibilities of the contribution, we focus on Tatarka's journalistic activities in the period of the second half of the 1940s to approximately the first half of the 1950s. This is the period in which he manifested himself most strongly as a journalist and his activities in this direction took on serious social dimensions. The study aims to expand the scope of information about this prominent Slovak social and cultural figure and to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of him.

Keywords: *writer, journalist, communist regime, newspaper article, journalism, print media*

Introduction: background, objectives and research methods

Dominik Tatarka (1913 – 1989) represents a distinctive personality of the 20th century within the Slovak (resp. Czechoslovak) context. His work is primarily connected with literary activity, but he also worked on a journalistic platform. While his literary dimension is considerably reflected, as far as the mapping of journalistic activities is concerned, they remain in the background. However,

they are an important testimony about the writer's life, turns of opinion and transformations in a certain period of his life, and even have a more wide-ranging nature because they created/influenced – although not in a positive sense – the socio-political life of Slovakia (Czechoslovakia) in general. The writer became radically committed to the Communist Party in the second half of the 1940s, and his journalistic activity accompanied this period. Even in connection with this stage of his life, Tatarka became more visible in the media. Following the cessation of his uncritical enthusiasm for the communist regime, he declared his own mistakes through his journalistic communiqués (of course, all this in addition to his literary activity), named the destructions that the communist regime had caused on its way to an illusory “better tomorrow”, and urged for the transformation of the system. Bearing in mind the limited spatial possibilities, the study focuses on the reflection of the writer's journalistic stance (as a parallel line of his literary work) in the period from the second half of the 1940s to approximately the first half of the 1950s, i.e. at the time when Tatarka's journalistic activities became more visible and took on severe social dimensions. As such, they are also a testimony to the writer himself. Based on the collected contemporary journalistic texts and an analytic survey into their semantic space, the ambition of the study is to make this journalistic position of Tatarka more comprehensively accessible and to bring closer the hitherto inaccessible semantic dimensions of his journalistic communiqués, to put them in relation and context, and thus to broaden the portfolio of information about this distinctive, at the time, key personality of the Slovak cultural space. We believe the mapped information will contribute to a more comprehensive apprehension/understanding of the author.

Tatarka entered the Slovak (or Czechoslovak) public space primarily as a writer with considerable intellectual potential. His work is characterised by authenticity, originality, experimentation, semantic fullness and depth, whether we consider his philosophical-meditative debut *V úzkosti hľadania* [In the Anxiety of Searching] (1942), the experimental novel *Panna zázračnica* [The Miraculous Virgin] (1944), the impressive double novel *Rozhovory bez konca* [Conversations without End] (1959) or the work *Prútené kreslá* [Wicker Armchairs] (1963).

However, the end of the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s can be described as a stage of value and poetological shifts in the writer's life. For a period in which the insightful, authentic Tatarka abandons “anxious searches” and authenticity in his work and, figuratively speaking, loses himself. He lets himself be determined by the communist regime and, at that time, publishes works that align with the method of socialist realism. His pro-Communist tendencies are already foreshadowed in his novel *Farská republika* [The Clerical Republic] (1948), but they are intensely declared in his novels from the first half of the 1950s, i.e. *Prvý a druhý úder* [The First and Second Strike] (1950), *Radostník* [The Birthday Cake] (1954) and *Družné letá* [The Years of Companionship] (1954). However, this pro-Communist orientation, declared in his literary works, had much broader dimensions because Tatarka, as an important personality of social and cultural life (journalist, secretary and later chief secretary of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers), also directly participated in the implementation of Communist totalitarianism in the life of society. This is also evidenced by his journalistic activity, which increased precisely with the promotion of the communist regime and the required education of the Slovak (or Czechoslovak) citizens towards socialism.

As a journalist and publicist, Tatarka became more visible in the second half of the 1940s. He worked as editor of *Národná obroda* [National Revival] (1946-1948; more on this (see Bombíková, 2000, pp. 100-118), where he led the cultural column, collaborated with the newspapers *Pravda* [Truth] and *Práca* [Work], and later contributed to the periodical *Kultúrny život*

[Cultural life]. From this period, the journalistic writings published under the titles *Staviame Ti máj* [Building You May] (Tatarka, 1947, p. 6), *Si Ty náš človek* [You Are Our Man] (Tatarka, 1948b, p. 19) or *Budúcnosť* [Future] (Tatarka, 1948a, p. 7, 8) can be mentioned. In the spirit of his own personal convictions and political needs, their content is adoration of the heroic deeds of communists who paid for their beliefs with their lives (Tatarka, 1947, p. 6), the determination of strong individuals to join the Communist Party (Tatarka, 1948b, p. 19), or they reflect on the transformation of the old (bourgeois, middle-class) times into the new, i.e. communist, and thus, naturally, better and happier times (Tatarka, 1948a, pp. 7, 8). He further declared his commitment to the regime with his article in *Pravda*, *Môj záväzok k deviatemu sjazdu* [My Commitment to the Ninth Congress] (Tatarka, 1949, p. 4). There, he glorified “a new type of people” who “(...) have taken on new, very responsible roles. They grow by fulfilling the duties to the village, the country, the Party, which the Party (the Communist Party, M. A. note) imposes on them” (Tatarka, 1949, p. 4). As a gift/pledge for the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia, he also publicly promises to write a novel about these people (Tatarka, 1949, p. 4).

The pro-socialist tendency is also evident in the early 1950s. Newspaper articles continue to be beholden to the ruling establishment and, in their basic semantic contours, built on a binary concept, i.e. “them bad” (i.e. everything past or different in opinion) and “us good” (communists). The writer/journalist denounces, criticises and rejects everything non-communist and uncritically looks up to the new, i.e. communist.

In his articles, in line with the standards of the time, he reported on the events at the screening of Communist Party members and stressed that “communism is the coming great culture of mankind” (Tatarka, 1950a, p. 11); he described the conflict of the young generation with the old, i.e., the breaking away from the old “middle-class/bourgeois (reactionary) orders”, private property. He pointed to the ineffectiveness of the “past” (“it is a mortuary, a sad life”; Tatarka, 1950b, p. 9) and championed the “new,” i.e., the policies of the communist regime – the collective construction of the republic, the idea of organised labour, or communal farming (“The joy of organised labour, that will be the experience that the new cooperatives will receive in the dowry”; Tatarka, 1950b, p. 9) – as the only proper direction. At the same time, in *Kultúrny život*, he reaffirms the (already mentioned) commitment to the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia: “My commitment to the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia? By the end of the year, I will write a book on the workers’ cooperative and the revolutionary changes in the villages. I will do as much as possible about how comrades work in the factories and around the villages. In my work, I would like to be a striker like them” (Tatarka et al., 1950c, p. 13).

As a side note to the above, in correspondence with his journalistic speeches and publicly presented commitment, he published the pro-Communist work *Prvý a druhý úder* as the gift as mentioned earlier to the Communist Party in 1950 as part of his literary activity, for which, paradoxically, he was strongly criticised. His philosophising nature, his focus on the subtle, intimate problems of the human subject and the psychologising introspection of the characters were hardly compatible with the Party’s propaganda (with the pushing of directives that the Communist Party of Slovakia placed on art). Although in the intentions of socialist realism, he tried to implant in his texts the condemnation of the exploiters/capitalists, the heroic communist leader (i.e. Captain Žilka), the building optimism and the idea of a better future brought by the Communist Party, he did not (consciously or unconsciously) avoid his writerly essence (for more see Antošová, 2012, pp. 52–77). Moreover, this exposed him (following on from his earlier work) to radical denunciation and

labelling as a bourgeois nationalist¹: In Comrade Tatarka's entire work to date, we can clearly observe the strong influence of his French education, serious traces of naturalism, which he also brought into his last novel, *Prvý a druhý úder* (Plávka et al., 1951, p. 3). "All four comrades (together with Tatarka, Michal Chorváth, Alexander Matuška and Vladimír Mináč were subjected to criticism, M. A. notes) are individualists, even anarchists with a great deal of disbelief in man, arrogant, overestimating their abilities, (...) crawling before the bourgeois Western culture" (Štítnický et al., 1951, p. 3). Despite radical criticism, however, he persists in his pro-socialist positions, which is underlined by his other articles in the print media. In line with his previous journalistic activity, he fought in them for cooperative villages in which it was necessary "to excise more than one ulcer (...), to expose more than one exploiter (...), and to establish new, more ethical bonds of a class-conscious village" (Tatarka, 1952a, pp. 2, 3).

He highlighted/adorned Stalin's *Ekonomické problémy socializmu v SSSR* [Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR], which he described as the fundamental work of the epoch (Tatarka, 1952b, p. 1, 3). He drew attention to the splendid creative power of man and did not forget to point out, in the spirit of the communist theses, that it is determined by objective economic processes (Tatarka, 1952b, p. 1 and 3). At the same time, he "tellingly" (referring to the theses of the communist regime) stated that "works which are not based on a deep knowledge of life, its laws, are works of little effect" (Tatarka, 1952b, p. 3), and he insistently urged writers to "truth" in art (in life in general). Moreover – as he states in the paper – this "truth in art" had the contours of the regime's directives clearly defined in advance: "The writer must believe in the power of the working class; he must believe because he knows. Furthermore, believing in the strength of this truth, he must eventually come to the right (...) conclusions not only in his thinking but also in the fate of the characters he creates" (Tatarka, 1952b, p. 3).

Tatarka's article *Prudšie nenávidieť nepriateľa – viac milovať rodnú stranu*² [*Hate the Enemy Harder – Love the Party More*], published in Pravda on 26 November 1952, can be considered particularly serious, for it refers to one of the author's darkest and most serious acts (driven by manipulation and affectation) of the period. As a journalist, Tatarka was sent to the mock trial of Vladimír Clementis and publicly expressed his support for sentencing him to death³.

In the mentioned article *Prudšie nenávidieť nepriateľa – viac milovať rodnú stranu*, the writer/journalist, who (as evidenced by his non-tendentious literary works) looked up to the man for whom love (kind interpersonal relationship as such⁴, more about it see Antošová, 2011) became the greatest cultural work of humankind⁵ and who later carried out a phenomenological reduction of love⁶ in his work, compared Rudolf Slánský, Ludvík Frejka, Vladimír Clementis and Bedřich Geminder to atomic, plague-like mass murderers. He called them monsters, traitors to the

¹ The denouncement took place at an assembly of Slovak writers - communists in March 1951 and in a subsequent discussion on the pages of the magazine *Kultúrny život*. See e.g. „Z diskusie na aktívne slovenských spisovateľov – komunistov.“ [From the discussion at the assembly of Slovak writers - communists], *Kultúrny život*, 1951, 6 (16), 3-4; „Z diskusie na aktívne slovenských spisovateľov – komunistov.“ *Kultúrny život*, 1951, 6 (17), pp. 3-4; „Z diskusie na aktívne slovenských spisovateľov – komunistov.“ *Kultúrny život*, 1951, 6 (18), pp. 3-4.

² The paper was later also published in *Smena*, i.e. Tatarka, D. „Prudšie nenávidieť nepriateľa – viac milovať rodnú stranu.“ *Smena*, 1996, (9), p. 10, and in the text we are working with this copy.

³ F. Mikloško's memories underline this fact: "I once asked him (František Mikloško recalls, M. A.) how he behaved when bishops and many politicians were tried. Whether he also raised his hands at the assemblies expressing his approval of these terrible judgments. Once yes, Dominic replied. It was in the Clementis trial. I was sent to Prague as a journalist for that trial. I sat in the courtroom and watched everything. And I believed it all." ³ Mikloško, 2001, p. 44.

⁴ For more, see: Antošová, 2011.

⁵ „[...] the greatest cultural work of humanity is love, that concentration of the mind on the beloved person, on the beloved people, that pleasure and joy and ever-deepening understanding for the other and for those others“ (Tatarka, 1968, p. 8).

⁶ Hamada stated this idea in connection with the work *Prútené kreslá* in the afterword to *Prútené kreslá*. (Tatarka, 1990, p. 112).

motherland, the working class, the people and the party. “Villains” who work with hostile methods based on bourgeois anarchism and nationalism, cosmopolitanism and Zionism (Tatarka, 1996, p. 10). He also urged readers to learn to hate these “evil-doers”: “The Nazi murderers, the mass murderers, the sadists seemed to us too horrible, depraved, perverted. However, Slánský, Frejka, Geminder, and Clementis are people without feelings, like calculating machines, rational, mechanical, inhuman, in a multiplied degree more inhuman than all the enemies of our people up to now (...) We are still threatened because we have not yet learned to hate these miscreants implacably, immeasurably, in proportion to their malice. That is because we have not learned to hate inconsolably, even in ourselves, our thinking, and our actions, what this horde has sown. But let us learn!”⁷ (Tatarka, 1996, p. 10). Other journalistic activities in this period also underline Tatarka’s pro-Communist orientation. When Stalin died on 5 March 1953, he expressed his grief at the loss, his remaining explicit joviality towards the system, and his uncritical, insynopathic glorification of Stalin, for example, in his articles *S ľudstvom dnes hovorte, súdruh Stalin* [You Speak to Mankind Today, Comrade Stalin] (Tatarka, 1953e, p. 6) and *Niet ho medzi nami* [He is Not Among Us] (Tatarka, 1953b, p. 5): “Our beloved, immortal Comrade Stalin, now every thought, lesson, good advice on how to build socialism is all the more dear to us. (...) Millions of workers swear today, Comrade Stalin, that they will carry out your immortal legacy to humankind without regretting any sacrifice, without sparing their lives” (Tatarka, 1953e, p. 6). “One day, a poet will sing of those great days; he will write a heroic tale of Stalin, of his family, who liberated the world from the captivity of capitalism and created the real world of socialism” (Tatarka, 1953b, p. 5).

In terms of the imposed education towards communism and its upbuilding in the articles, he also celebrates “*the class-conscious process in our people and nation*” (Tatarka, 1953c, p. 1), the completed construction of the works of “socialist labour”, namely the Orava Dam (Tatarka, 1953d, p. 3). He criticises the remnants of the old (previous) systems: “*May the horned devil take all the old ones to hell (...) The lordly ideal of happiness is still deeply rooted in the rich Zemplin soil*” (Tatarka, 1953a, p. 6).

Maturation to embrace change

Regarding Tatarka’s direction and, in parallel, his journalistic activities, the year 1954 appears different, i.e., alongside the primary pro-communist line, it is already possible to read (more or less between the lines) Tatarka’s dissatisfaction with some facts of the totalitarian system.

The official line corresponds to the publication releases of the previous period. Tatarka continued to naively/pathetically glorify communist cadres (Tatarka, 1954e, p. 5), praise the development of cooperatives (Tatarka, 1954b, p. 5), the construction of villages (Tatarka, 1954a, p. 7), and the youth’s enthusiasm for collective work and the development of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Tatarka, 1954f, pp. 3, 4). In his article *Mierové zbrane ešte nevybuchli* [Peaceful Weapons Have Not Yet Exploded] (Tatarka, 1954c, p. 3), he recounts his experiences from his travels in Switzerland and France and points to the fact that the foreign perception of Czechoslovakia as a state behind the “Iron Curtain” (and thus as an unfree state, “cut off” from the Western »non-communist« world) is inadequate and full of prejudices. In the article, he declared the image of a completely free citizen of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, who can do whatever he wants, i.e. travel wherever he wants, educate himself in whatever he wants, and the system in which

⁷ For the sake of completeness, we would like to add that, although in the above-mentioned paper, Tatarka publicly denounces, in addition to V. Clementis also other victims of fabricated political trials of the 1950s, he was, according to available information, a direct participant only in the trial of V. Clementis.

he exists is his voluntary choice and he likes to live in it. As the writer confesses, it is a system of trust in man (in his infinite abilities) without unemployment or other problems (Tatarka, 1954c, p. 3).

We must note that in symbiosis with this official line within the journalistic platform, he also realised himself on the literary ground. In the same year (1954), he published two more (already mentioned) novels, i.e. *Družné letá* and *Radostník*, which, together with *Prvý a druhý úder* are perceived by literature studies as works that are beholden to the communist regime⁸.

As we have already indicated, in addition to Tatarka's pro-Communist line, as early as 1954, it is possible to begin to register the facts contradicting the totalitarian regime. On the platform of journalism, the tendency mentioned above was manifested within literary journalism. In 1954 Tatarka published an article *O pozitívnom hrdinovi, o svedomí a o pravde*⁹ [On the Positive Hero, on Conscience and on Truth] (Tatarka, 1954d, p. 8) in *Kultúrny život*. It was a reaction to the article *Niekoľko poznámok o kladnom hrdinovi* [Some Notes on the Positive Hero] (Trávníček, 1954, p. 3), in which the author Trávníček, in the spirit of the normative standards of the time, still fiercely defended socialist realism, the black-and-white "mantels" of the characters, the "leading" position of the "strong, striking, perfect" socialist hero, and the ruthless defeat of the negative anti-socialist characters: "The writer who has a perfect command of the scientific worldview and consistently works according to the method of socialist realism must take care already in the compositional plan to choose the right proportions between the positive heroes with an aggressive character and the negative characters, who in the end must capitulate and be ruthlessly defeated" (Trávníček, 1954, p. 3).

Tatarka's reaction to the above article (published in the article above *O pozitívnom hrdinovi, o svedomí a o pravde*; Tatarka, 1954d, p. 8) suggests that the writer is becoming quite seriously aware of the stalemate in literature, which, forcibly squeezed into the "black-and-white rails" of the good hero (the communist) and the bad hero (the class enemy), "imbued" with the idealised optimism of the growth and flourishing of communist society, creates an artificial, false concept of art and society in general. And it must sooner or later "collapse" under the pressure of reason, consciousness and conscience.

The reversal of established attitudes is foreshadowed in the very opening words of the writer's paper: "Oh, how tall the critic seems when he stands on his high stilts! Oh, how high he soars when he adopts, instead of wings, the general idea: the positive hero in our prose is supposed to be like this" (Tatarka, 1954d, p. 8). Criticism is heard in them against the positive hero profiled by the (communist) garrison. In the semantic fields of the text, the need for authentic maturation and critical reassessment of reality can already be registered. The writer further points out the problem of unrealistic concepts in the works, or positive heroes, which went in symbiosis with the requirement placed on literary creation: "The positive heroes of some of our books are not ahead of us by a horse's head, but they have long been in communism, they have long since organised flawlessly production, cooperatives, they have thrown aside the questions of personal life like a bagatelle. Nothing bothers them anymore. They ascended to heaven as holy, perfect, absolutely exemplary people. How is it that we still suffer here on earth?" (Tatarka, 1954d, p. 8) He condemns the artificial, lifeless, unrealistic demands made by the then (socialist realism-oriented) literary-

⁸ See Marčok, V. et al., 2004; Mařovčik, A. et al. 2001; Perstická, 1991; Šútovec, 1990, pp. 40-46.

⁹ The article was part of a discussion that took place on the pages of the periodical *Kultúrny život* in response to B. Trávníček's article: *Niekoľko poznámok o kladnom hrdinovi* [A few notes on the positive hero]; Trávníček, 1954, p. 3.

cultural policy towards authors. He openly reproaches literary critics and theoreticians for keeping “rose-coloured glasses” of lies and pretence in their eyes, not knowing real life, and not having a concept of life or literature. They force writers to create perfect, untrue characters, leading to a cramped mechanisation of the literary work.: “(...) positive heroes are too positive, negative heroes are too negative. They are quite mechanically based – that is what they look like. The reader has the impression that they are moving, ticking like clockwork” (Tatarka, 1954d, p. 8), and yet the man is not “a closet with a cadre of judgments inside” (Tatarka, 1954d, p. 8).

In the mentioned article, Tatarka even subtly criticises the absence of intimacy in the inner world of the individual, his problems, worries, joys, and questions regarding the world, life, and existence as such, which for him was the basic principle of quality creation in the pre-socialist and post-socialist periods: “I am aware of all possible objections, even the most dangerous one, that I am opening the gates of subjectivism, but I only dare to say that personality in the field of artistic creation is underestimated, not overestimated, by theory. The source of poetry, the impetus for creation, is the collision of the personality, the poet’s subject, with the world. Properly: artistic creation is knowledge of a kind, but the object of the work of art is not only an object of cognition and representation but also of personal equilibration and transformation” (Tatarka, 1954d, p. 8).

Tatarka’s attitude transformation is further cumulated in an article published in *Kultúrny život* under the title *Slovo k súčasníkom o literatúre* [A Word to Contemporaries on Literature] (Tatarka, 1955, p. 6). It is also a literary-publicist text. In it, Tatarka denounces the “objectification” of literature, the institutional resolutions and evaluations of literary production through the lens of political dictates that lead to “the most average ideas” (Tatarka, 1955, p. 6) and to the fact that low-quality works “are elevated out of cruel paradoxicality as models” (Tatarka, 1955, p. 6). He advocates the free and natural development of literary life, the need for personal narrative in creation, and new, unique, unrepeatable forms. At the same time, he very accurately and explicitly names the destructive impact of socialist realism on literature because it “presents the world in such a way that not people make history, but, on the contrary, history makes people, the general mass” (Tatarka, 1955, p. 6). He considers this way of creation to be a mistake, barbarism and primitivism: “More striking for this period of ours are the common mistakes, the common primitivism, and in the relations of men – and of writers – the barbarism, the hardness rather than the deep understanding” (Tatarka, 1955, p. 6). He does not shy away from sharp criticism of the then “masterpiece” of socialist literature, namely *Drevená dedina* [The Wooden Village] by František Hečko. He sees the work as “the expression of a naive thinker (...) a typical error of our contemporary prose, which has an incorrect, at its core mistaken, unrealistic, logistical, thesis-like conception” (Tatarka, 1955, p. 6).

In connection with Tatarka’s transformation and his public criticism of the totalitarian regime (he was one of the first publicly active and well-known personalities who undertook such public criticism, regardless of the consequences), he named its destruction. He also publicly admitted his own failure: “I mean, not as a writer, but as a civil servant, I was defending something I should not have been defending. I have adopted an uncritical attitude towards the diseases of the state apparatus. I principally defended state policy, even when I should have criticised it” (Tatarka, as cited in Bauer, 2011, p. 406). At the same time, Tatarka admitted that he failed when he was supposed to bring objectivity and truth and defend/represent the commoner’s rights as a journalist. “Have I lost heart, have I lost judgement, or what happened?” (Tatarka, as cited in Bauer, 2011, p. 407).

On the margins of the above, we can mention a text that was, however, already on the border between literary and journalistic work. It is a work of prose, *Démon súhlasu* [*The Demon of Consent*], whose genre classification is not yet settled and oscillates between the novel as a purely literary genre and the pamphlet as a journalistic genre (for more on this, see Antošová & Cillingová, 2017, pp. 47-48). The text was published in a book form in 1963, but (as we have already mentioned) first (in 1956) it was published in *Kultúrny život*. It is a profound statement, which, as I. Jančovič testifies, is “an exact diagnosis of the mechanism of power” (Jančovič, 1996, p. 48) and its intellectual spectrum communicates with G. Orwell’s novels *Animal Farm* or *1984*. The text is a clear-sighted “textbook” on the manipulation of power, the fabrication of the “demon of consent”, the cultivation of the masses, the voluntary loss of freedom, of personal judgement, and the manipulative, affect-driven passion that “overrides” the phenomenon of conscience, reason, and free choice.

Subsequently, Tatarka remained in his anti-totalitarian stands. His journalistic outputs in the following period are more or less of a literary-journalistic character. However, after the entry of the Warsaw Pact armed forces into the territory of Czechoslovakia and public dissent against this occupation, he became a “persona non grata”. He is erased from all literature textbooks and banned from any activity within the literary and journalistic sphere. He remained under constant surveillance by state security until the end of his life and died in 1989 in poverty and seclusion.

Conclusion

The study introduces Tatarka’s journalistic dimension, which coincidentally gained momentum in the period when the writer succumbed to the pro-Communist trend. As research has shown, his writings were radically tainted by the intense propaganda of the Communist Party. In them, Tatarka uncritically and unrealistically adored everything communist (the building of the republic, communist officials), radically rejected and denounced everything non-communist, and adamantly educated the Czechoslovak citizens to accept this communist totalitarianism. On the other hand, Tatarka’s gradual departure from these positions and his public criticism of the destruction of the totalitarian system can be very clearly declared in his journalistic publications. His realisation on the journalistic platform clearly depicts that just as he “fought” for the communist vision with determination, unwavering, total commitment and sincere faith, he began to speak out publicly against it with the same determination and steadfastness. In light of the above, it can also be concluded – relying on the research of broad-spectrum material – that he stood behind all his decisions, choices, and actions in his authentic “nakedness”, and none of this (not even the joviality towards the communist regime) was done out of a desire for benefits, fear or coercion. Tatarka believed in what he did and said in the name of what he acted for a particular time and was convinced that it would lead to good (more Štolbová, 2000). Of course, this does not mean that (as is now widely known and Tatarka understood it himself) he was not mistaken in his pro-communist orientation. However, as Pavel Vilikovský stated, “(...) in our times when nobody admits their mistakes, it must be said that he was sincerely, wholeheartedly and legibly wrong so that we are not tempted to repeat his mistakes” (Vilikovský, 2001 p. 39). It was probably this authenticity in actions and attitudes that allowed the writer, at the moment when he understood and admitted to himself that “it is impossible to go on like this, that the wave no longer carries the surf” (Tatarka, 1968, pp. 287-288), to declare his mistakes publicly and to ask himself the question above: “*Have I*

lost my heart, have I lost my judgement, or what has happened?” (Tatarka, in Bauer, 2011, p. 407), even at the cost of discomfort in life. From this background, then, it is pretty logical that he never denied this period of his life and confessed to it as an essential part of his being, as a phase of life to which, based on experienced realities, the accumulation of life emporium, self-creation “out of the grip” of conscious and subconscious minds, current emotional disposition, state of affairs in general, he naturally arrived at, to move towards a further metamorphosis of his existence in the aftermath of the communist “blindness”, which continued with the acceptance of the fact that it was impossible to continue in this way.

We believe that the re-examination of the journalistic dimension of the writer in the period from the second half of the 1940s to approximately the first half of the 1950s, a period in which his journalistic activity was substantially manifested, facilitated a more comprehensive perception of the author - a more authentic account of his actions, opinions, attitudes and transformations - and thus made it possible to add something new about the writer.

Statement

Financing

No organization funded this study. The author carried out the research at his own expense.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Ethics

The material presented in this article meets all the points and requirements put forward by the Ethics Commission of the Editorial and Publishing Department of the public organization "Scientific and Educational Center "SUCCESSFUL".

Copyright

This is an open-access article distributed under Creative Commons Attribution. The license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are properly acknowledged.

Literature

- Antošová, M. (2011). *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu [Dominik Tatarka in the context of existentialism]*. Nitra: FF UKF (in Slovak).
- Antošová, M. (2012). *Socialistickorealistickej triáda v kontexte existencializmu [Socialist-realist triad in the context of existentialism]* [Nepublikovaná habilitačná práca]. UKF v Nitre (in Slovak).
- Antošová, M. & Cillingová, V. (2017). Timeless Message of Dominik Tatarka in his Work «The Demon of Conformism». *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 13(3), 47–58.
- Bombíková, P. (2000). Nové formulovanie spisovateľa a spisovateľskej práce v rokoch 1946-1956. Prípád Dominika Tatarku [New formulation of the writer and writer's work in the years 1946-1956. The case of Dominik Tatarka]. *Slovenská literatúra – Slovak literature*, 47(2), 100–118 (in Slovak).
- Eis, Z. (2001). *Dominik Tatarka – Mezi domovem, Prahou a Paříži. [Dominik Tatarka - Between home, Prague and Paris.]* Praha: Gutenberg. (in Czech)
- Hamada, M. (1990). Doslov. In Tatarka, D.: Prútené kreslá. [Afterword. In Tatarka, D.: Wicker Armchairs.] Bratislava: Smena, 1990 (in Slovak).

- Jančovič, I. (1996). *Dominik Tatarka a jeho dielo v premenách času. [Dominik Tatarka and his work in the changes of time]* Banská Bystrica: Metodické centrum Banská Bystrica. (in Slovak)
- Marenčin, A., Hruz P., Kantůrková, E., Hamada, M. & Kadlečík, I. (2001). Rozhovory o Tatarkovi. [Conversations about Tatarka] *Kritika a kontext - Criticism and context*, 6(1), s. 9–20. (in Slovak)
- Marčok, V. et al. (2004). *Dejiny slovenskej literatúry III. [History of Slovak Literature III.]* Bratislava: Literárne informačné centrum, 2004. (in Slovak)
- Maťovčík, A. et al. (2001). *Slovník slovenských spisovateľov 20. storočia. [Dictionary of 20th Century Slovak Writers]* Bratislava – Martin: SSS – SNK. (in Slovak)
- Mikloško, F. (2001). Za Dominikom Tatarkom. [Following Dominik Tatarka] *Kritika a kontext - Criticism and context*, 6(1), 44. (in Slovak)
- Perstická, D. et al. (1991). Dominik Tatarka a tí druzí. [Dominik Tatarka and the others] Brno: Státní vědecká knihovna. (in Czech)
- Petrík, V. (1992). Tatarka opäť legálny. [Tatarka legal again] *Slovenské pohľady - Slovak Views*, 108(3), 157–159. (in Slovak)
- Plávka, A. et al. (1951). Z diskusie na aktíve slovenských spisovateľov – komunistov. [From the discussion at the assembly of Slovak writers - communists] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 6(16), 3–4. (in Slovak)
- Rosenbaum, K. et al. (1951). Z diskusie na aktíve slovenských spisovateľov – komunistov. [From the discussion at the assembly of Slovak writers - communists] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 6(18), 3–4. (in Slovak)
- Štítnický, C. et al. (1951). Z diskusie na aktíve slovenských spisovateľov – komunistov. [From the discussion at the assembly of Slovak writers - communists] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 6(17), 3–4. (in Slovak)
- Štolbová, E. (2000). *Navrávačky s Dominikom Tatarkom. [Interviews with Dominik Tatarka]* Bratislava: Literárne informačné centrum (in Slovak)
- Šútovec, M. (1990). „Improvizácia na tému D. T.“ [„Improvisation on the theme of D. T.“] *Slovenské pohľady - Slovak Views*, 106(3), 40–46 (in Slovak).
- Tatarka, D. (1954a, April 30). Aby bol Ploštín ešte krajší. [Making Ploštín even more beautiful] *Pravda - The Truth*, 7.
- Tatarka, D. (1963). *Démon súhlasu. [The Demon of Consent]* Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ.
- Tatarka, D. (1954b). I družstvá, i ryža budú rásť. [Cooperatives and rice will grow] *Pravda - The Truth*, 7. 11, 5.
- Tatarka, D. (1953a). Ideál šťastia. [The ideal of happiness] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 8(29), 6–7.
- Tatarka, D. (1954c, November 28). Mierové zbrane ešte nevybuchli. [Peace weapons have not yet exploded] *Pravda - The Truth*, 3.
- Tatarka, D. (1949, May 13). Môj záväzok k deviatemu sjazdu. [My commitment to the Ninth Congress] *Pravda - The Truth*, 4.
- Tatarka, D. (1953b). Niet ho medzi nami. [He is Not Among Us] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 8(12), 5.
- Tatarka, Dominik. 1954d. O pozitívnom hrdinovi, o svedomí a o pravde. [On the positive hero, conscience and truth] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 9(30), 8.
- Tatarka, D. (1953c). Pred prvým májom. [Before the first of May] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 8(17), 1.
- Tatarka, D. (1968). Proti démonom. [Against demons] Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1968.

- Tatarka, D. (1996). Prudšie nenávidieť nepriateľa – viac milovať rodnú stranu. [Hate the Enemy Harder – Love the Party More] *Smena - Shift*, 2(9), 10.
- Tatarka, D. (1953d). Rozžali sa svetla na Orave. [The lights came on in Orava] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 8(19), 3.
- Tatarka, D. (1953e). S ľudstvom dnes hovoríte, súdruh Stalin. [You Speak to Mankind Today, Comrade Stalin] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 8(11), 6.
- Tatarka, D. (1948b, May 1). Si ty náš človek? [Are you our man?] *Práca - Work*, 19.
- Tatarka, D. (1955). Slovo k súčasníkom o literatúre. [A word to contemporaries about literature] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 10(47), 6.
- Tatarka, D. (1950a). Spoved' dieťaťa svojej doby. [Confessions of a child of his time] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 5(24), 11.
- Tatarka, D. (2011). Dominik Tatarka: Soudružky a soudruzi... [Dominik Tatarka: Comrades...] In Bauer, M. (Ed.) *II. sjezd Svazů československých spisovatelů 22. – 29. 4. 1956, svazek 1 – protokol*. (pp. 404-409). [II Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers 22 - 29 April 1956, volume 1 - protocol] Praha: Akropolis.
- Tatarka, D. (1947, May 1). Stavíme ti máj. [We're building you a maypole] *Pravda - The Truth*, 6.
- Tatarka, D. (1954e, November 20). Stranícky pracovník. [Party worker] *Pravda - The Truth*, 5.
- Tatarka, D. (1954, August 14). Svázácka zástava v ružindolskom chotári. [The flag of the union in the Ružindol Countryside] *Pravda - The Truth*, 3-4.
- Tatarka, D. (1950b, September 23). Dominik. Toto chcú mladí. [Dominic. This is what the young people want] *Pravda - The Truth*, 9.
- Tatarka, D. (1952b). XIX. sjezd VKS nám ukazuje ďalšiu cestu. [The XIXth Congress of the VKS shows us the way forward] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 7(44), p. 1 a 3.
- Tatarka, D. et al. (1950c). Zaväzujem sa k IX. sjazdu KSS. [I commit myself to the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia] *Kultúrny život - Cultural life*, 5(8), 13.
- Tatarka, D. (1952a, September 3). Závod do boja za družstevnú dedinu. [Race to the fight for the cooperative village] *Pravda - The Truth*, 2-3.

Домінік Татарка та його журналістський вимір

Марцела Антошова,
доцент кафедри філології,
кафедри слов'янської філології,
факультет мистецтв,
Університет Костянтина Філософа в м. Нітра
(Словацька Республіка)

Анотація

Дослідження присвячене словацькому письменникові Домініку Татарці та його журналістській творчості. Хоча він насамперед особистість, яка належить до художньо-літературного простору, він також активно займався журналістською діяльністю. Визнання цієї публіцистичної лінії залишається на другому плані, хоча вона мала суспільний вплив і була свідченням бурхливого розвитку думок, поворотів і поглядів письменника. Письменник у якийсь момент свого життя піддався впливові комуністичного режиму, але, усвідомивши руйнування, що чинив тоталітарний режим, згодом радикально відійшов від цих позицій і став його критиком. Звичайно, ці позиції віддзеркалює і його публіцистична

діяльність, відображення якої, як ми вже говорили, залишається дещо на другому плані. Таким чином, дослідження має на меті частково усунути цей дефіцит. На основі дослідження зібраних журналістських текстів й аналітичного дослідження їхнього смислового простору наша мета – зробити доступними досі не розкриті смислові виміри журналістських комунікацій письменника, помістити їх у взаємини та контекст, тим самим розширити інформацію про ключову на той час фігуру словацького культурного простору. З огляду на обмеженість просторових можливостей публікації ми зупинимося на публіцистичній діяльності Домініка Татарки в період із другої половини 40-х років ХХ століття до першої половини 50-х років ХХ століття. Це період, коли він найбільше виявив себе як журналіст і його діяльність у цьому напрямі набула серйозного суспільного виміру. Дослідження покликане розширити обсяг інформації про цього відомого словацького суспільного й культурного діяча та сприяти більш повному його розумінню.

Ключові слова: письменник, журналіст, комуністичний режим, газетна стаття, журналістика, друковані ЗМІ.

Submitted to the editor – 01.04.2024

Review 1 – 07.05.2024

Review 2 – 17.05.2024

Accepted for printing – 05.06.2024

Подано до редакції – 01.04.2024

Рецензія 1 – 07.05.2024

Рецензія 2 – 17.05.2024

Прийнято до друку – 05.06.2024

