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Émigrés by Choice[1]

Zofia Helman

The forced emigration of artistic and intellectual elites appears to have been a cyclically recurring phenomenon in Polish history for more than 200 years. Each successive generation adds its new experience to this tradition, creating different variants of Polish refugee culture. Political emigration differed, however, in causes and effects, from economic one or from the simple fact of taking residence abroad. After World War II there appeared a very specific situation which we could label as e m i g r a t i o n b y c h o i c e[2] – not forced, but leading to unintentional breaking of contacts with one's environment. This was the situation faced by Polish composers born c. 1895–1915, who either stayed abroad after the war had ended or left the country in the late 1940s/early 1950s. The reasons for their emigration were greatly varied, as also were their relations with the authorities of communist Poland and with the Polish musical world. What they had in common was the initial motive – a more or less openly manifested unwillingness to support the new system established in Poland under the auspices of the Soviet Union.

The oldest among those émigrés: Karol Rathaus (1895–1954) and Alexander Tansman (1897–1986), composers of Jewish origin, had chosen the émigré status already before the war. Rathaus, forced to leave Berlin already in

[1] This article is a revised version of the author's text *Muzyka na obczyźnie* [Music in Exile] (1992: 209–227). Published also in French translation (1992a: 187-202).

[2] A term used by Jagoda Jędrychowska (1988: 84).

1932 before the Nazis took over, settled in New York in 1938. Tansman, resident in Paris from 1919, reacted to the growing hostility of nationalist organisations in Poland by accepting a French citizenship in 1937. A large group of Polish composers studying in Paris before the war, centered around the Association of Young Polish Musicians, decided to stay abroad after the war, encouraged by their favourable experiences of working in the French environment. Feliks Łabuński (1892–1979), one of the leaders of the Association and its president in 1930–34, took permanent residence in the United States as early as in 1934. The outbreak of the war found Antoni Szałowski (1907–73) and Michał Spisak (1914–65) in Paris, where they would return in 1945 after their stay in Vichy. Szymon Laks (1901–83), deported from France in 1941, survived the hell of Auschwitz and Dachau and returned to Paris. Jerzy Fitelberg (1905–51), forced to leave Berlin in 1933, resided in Paris for several years and emigrated to the United States in 1940. Michał Kondracki (1902–84) came back home after his Parisian studies, but shortly before the outbreak of the war he travelled abroad again and eventually settled in the United States, never to return to Poland. Roman Maciejewski (1910–98) stayed for 12 years in Sweden (1939–57), then moved to California, and from 1976 – resided in Göteborg. Tadeusz Zygfryd Kassern (1904–57), from 1945 representing the Polish state as its cultural attaché and then consul general in the United States, gave up both his diplomatic post and the Polish citizenship late in 1948, and settled in New York. Roman Palester (1907–89), who remained in Poland during and shortly after the war, left with his wife for Paris in 1947 as a delegate of the Polish Ministry of Culture and Art. At first he maintained contact with Poland and, even though he refused to take part in the World Peace Congress in Wrocław, he still came, at the Ministry's invitation, to the historic Assembly of Composers and Music Critics in Łagów Lubuski in 1949. After his return to Paris, however, he and his wife applied for refugee status, deciding to stay abroad. In 1951, when Palester was summoned to return to Poland, he failed to turn up at the Polish Embassy in Paris and prolong his passport. "Palester is the first eminent artist from behind the iron curtain who chose 'freedom'," wrote the émigré press (*Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza* 1950).

Not connected in any way with the Association of Young Polish Musicians in Paris, Constantin Régamey (1907–82) lived in Poland before and during the war and after the Warsaw Uprising found himself in Stutthof concentration camp, later – in a camp near Hamburg, from which he was released as a Swiss citizen and left for Lausanne. Roman Haubenstock-Ramati (1919–94) left Poland in 1950 for Tel-Aviv, then (1957) for Vienna, where he lived till the end of his life. Andrzej Panufnik (1914–91) was the last to make up his mind when he used an official stay in Switzerland in 1954 to travel in secret to London. Those were the composers whom I call "émigrés by choice." Each of them could return to Poland after the war, and those who left in 1945–50 did not have to take refuge for political reasons, because they were not threatened in any way in their country. They chose emigration because they could not accept the ruling political system in Poland, though most likely they believed, at least initially, that at one point they would be able to return. Their emigration was a form of passive resistance to the new authorities. All the other composers who left the country later did it quite legally and were no longer eliminated from Polish musical life by means of official bans. For this reason, they will not be included in our category of "émigrés by choice."

Quite different was the situation of composers living before the war on Poland's eastern territories which were occupied in 1939 by the Red Army. When these territories were annexed to the Soviet Union, the composers became Soviet citizens – definitely not "by choice" – and against their will, they were no longer regarded as Polish composers. This was the case with Adam Sołtys (1890–1968) and Tadeusz Majerski from Lvov (1888–1963) or with Mieczysław Weinberg (1919–96; in the Soviet Union from 1939 he used the name Moisey). Similarly Roman Berger (b. 1930) from Zaolzie (Cieszyn Silesia) was forced to move to Bratislava in 1952 and henceforth represented the Czechoslovak, not the Polish state.

In the first years after the war, works by composers resident in the West were still performed in Poland and appeared in the programmes of Polish music concerts performed abroad, e.g. at the first postwar festivals of the International Society of Contemporary Music. However, already then the ministry had a definite view on the matter. Andrzej Panufnik recalled that at one

of the concerts featuring pieces by Spisak and Szałowski that he conducted he "was strongly attacked by the Ministry of Culture for supporting 'Fascist' composers who lived abroad" (Panufnik 1987: 160). Political repressions and censorship affected, however, only three composers: Kassern, Palester and Panufnik, who by leaving the country manifested their protest against the totalitarian regime. After Kassern's death his name could again be included in publications and encyclopaedias, but the censor's ban on Palester and Panufnik was only lifted in 1977 and that only in part, as even then their works appeared in concert programmes extremely rarely. It was in the case of these two composers that the regime's methods of sentencing artists to oblivion became the most evident. Both lost their membership in the Polish Composers' Union, their names disappeared from all concert and radio programmes, their already published scores were destroyed and ordered to be removed from libraries (the latter order was fortunately not carried out in full), and their publishing contracts were cancelled.

The remaining composers (except for the period 1949–55, when émigré music was not even mentioned) were not banned by censorship and their works continued to be performed in Poland, which did not mean that they could count on state patronage. After 1956 contacts with the mother country were maintained, most of all, by Constantin Régamey, Michał Spisak, Aleksander Tansman, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, and Roman Maciejewski. Émigré compositions were included in the programmes of the "Warsaw Autumn" festival, which after 1977 also presented some works by Panufnik and Palester. Some composers (e.g. Régamey, Laks, Kondracki) also published articles in Polish music press. However, when Szymon Laks submitted for publication his book *Musique d'un autre monde*,[3] (Coudy, Laks 1948) dedicated to memories from concentration camps and the history of the Auschwitz orchestra, of which he was a member and conductor, the book was rejected – twice, in the 1950s and then in the 60s. Few émigré composers ever had their works published in Poland, and the poor knowledge of their oeu-

[3] Revised and extended by Laks alone and published in Polish as *Gry Oświęcimskie* [*Auschwitz Games*] in Oficyna Poetów i Malarzy [Poets and Painters' Publishing] in London (1979); English version: *Music of Another World*, Evanston 1989; published in Poland only as late as 1998 (State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau).

vre resulted in their omission from both synthetic historical publications and from detailed contributions to the history of Polish music after World War II.[4]

The situation of Polish composers abroad was generally not very good, either. Initially only Tansman had a well established position as a composer. The others, though they had already scored some major international successes in the 1930s and 40s, became inconvenient partners once they turned into refugees. Roman Palester, recalling his first journey to London after the war (to the ISCM festival in 1946) made the following remark: "we witnessed with our own eyes, which was incredible – a deep dislike for Polish émigrés and an excessively manifested enthusiasm for guests 'from the other side' [that is, from behind the iron curtain – comm. ZH]. Later as emigrants we experienced the same ourselves in France, and especially in Germany" (Jędrychowska 1988: 79). The same topic appears in Panufnik's autobiography:

> The welcomes I had received when an official guest from Poland had convinced me that I was reasonably known and respected within the musical fraternity in Britain. [...]. The musical fraternity which had welcomed me as a visitor was much less friendly now that I had come to stay. [...] I had leapt from my Polish position of No. One to No One at All in England (Panufnik 1987: 244–245).

The composers staying in Paris after the war already in 1945 attempted to revive the former Association of Young Polish Musicians, which, thanks to the rather meagre support of the Polish American Congress and the French Committee for the Support of Intellectuals, was still able to organise concerts and offer aid to its members. In 1946–48 Polish composers who came to study in Paris (incl. Witold Lutosławski, Andrzej Panufnik, Kazimierz Serocki, Stanisław Skrowaczewski, Zbigniew Turski, and Wawrzyniec Żuławski) became members of the Association for some time, its Managing Board addressed the Polish embassy in Paris with a request for subsidies. The embassy, however, demanded a political declaration of the Association's support for the authorities of communist Poland and propaganda concerts for

[4] In the last dozen years or so, a number of books have been dedicated to the life and work of émigré composers, e.g. Anna Granat-Janki (1995), Zofia Helman (1999) Ewa Siemdaj (2003) Elżbieta Szczurko (2008).

Polish workers in France as a condition for receiving a subsidy. The Managing Board refused,[5] as the Association had never engaged in political activity before the war. In 1950 the Association's activity was discontinued. Simultaneously, from 1949, Polish culture underwent the process of Stalinisation, and all contacts between émigre composers and their mother country were broken. In one of his articles, Roman Palester wrote to an unnamed friend:

> entering the path of exile, you'll find yourself – artistically speaking – nearly in the same situation in which you were twenty years before, at the start of your career. You will be left in tragic circumstances, without your works, without the music which the government in Warsaw will order to remove from libraries and bookshops, without that *situation*, which, as you know, is such an important matter, and – most importantly – without contact with that concert public which understood you the best. Your work will not be needed here by anyone (Palester 1951: 15–16).

Frequently deprived of their means of living, the composers took up various activities depending on their skills and circumstance: they became teachers (Rathaus, Łabuński, Kassern, Kondracki), reporters (Palester in Radio Free Europe), conductors (Panufnik). Régamey was a professor of linguistics in Fribourg and Lausanne; Haubenstock-Ramati took up a post in Universal Edition in Vienna. With time, they achieved some stability but had to pay for their position by temporarily, or in some periods even permanently giving up their creative work. Gradually, Polish composers would accept the citizenship of the country they resided in. Only Roman Palester never applied for a foreign citizenship and used a refugee passport (the so-called Nansen passport) till the end of his life.

Many years of silence about the achievements of Polish émigre composers – silence resulting from the state's cultural policies and sometimes also from the censor's restrictions – mean that our picture of Polish music after the war still appears to be glaringly incomplete. In the present situation, the mapping of "uncharted territories" cannot depend on a mere filing of facts concerning the life and art of émigré composers (this systematising work has already to a large extent been done). Their oeuvre also needs to be appreciated from the artistic point of view, interpreted critically and aesthetically,

[5] Based on the archive materials of: The Association of Young Polish Musicians in Paris, University Library in Warsaw – Music Collection, Archive of Polish Composers.

and assessed with respect to its significance for the past and present of Polish music. When we get to know works written several dozen years ago, unconsciously we put them in the context of our present. The expectations and value judgments of present-day listeners are used as the basis for artistic selection, which means that a part of the émigré output is rejected again. Only the greatest works can withstand the passage of time. Selection is a natural phenomenon, though, and it concerns to an equal extent also composers who stayed in the country. The only difference is that the latter got their chance to be recognised in their own time, while the émigrés were then eliminated from cultural life. Apart from critical interpretation based on contemporary axiological criteria, researchers can also apply a historical interpretation of artistic works in their original context and in relation to larger-scale phenomena such as styles, aesthetic trends, or the history of the musical genre. That other perspective is particularly important when we study the music of émigré composers. Abroad, they did not form any coherent environment, and the significance of their music becomes apparent only when we compare it with the musical productions of composers back at home. As the music of at least some émigrés had in some periods no reception at all in communist Poland, we should undertake to reunite what has been divided and what has functioned in different environments.

The fact of their separation from the country and from their musical environment, as well as their unfavourable refugee status in the West, frequently combined with financial straits, were the factors that limited their creative activity and hampered their career growth. On the other hand, these composers could make contact with European music centres, were free to choose their creative path and had the sense of personal freedom. The universal character of musical language (at least in the Euro-American world), as opposed to e.g. literature, was – on the one hand – an advantage, but on the other it did not provide composers with that natural link with their native culture which the language offered to writers of literary works. In the case of musical art, the meaning of the term "Polish music" is less obvious, and it is more difficult to define the national identity of composers who accepted a foreign citizenship. Those artists, however, never renounced their Polish-

ness[6] and always stressed their connection with the mother country. They were aware that in exile they still served their nation and contributed to Polish culture. It was only in communist Poland that the term "Polish music" was very often used exclusively with reference to works written within the political borders of Poland as defined by the Yalta Conference.

In retrospect studies of émigré music, the years 1945–56 are the most important as the greatest number of composers were active at that time, and their independence from the socialist realist doctrine allows us to observe the first authentic line of development in the history of Polish postwar music, the tensions that appeared and the emerging new directions. If we shift accents, that first decade looks very different from its traditional descriptions prepared on the occasion of national anniversaries (Cf. Chomiński and Lissa 1957, Dziębowska 1968). We do not mean, however, to suggest an opposition between, on the one hand, the mass songs, cantatas about Stalin and in praise of peace, primitive arrangements of folksongs and operas about class struggle created in Poland, and on the other – high art applying innovative composition techniques, created by the émigrés. This kind of opposition would be demagogical and would not reflect the real artistic trends. Regardless of the fact that the products of socialist realism were then put in the limelight by the critics and sumptuously awarded, it seems much more suitable to compare the (mostly unnoticed) compositions then created by émigrés with the works of those composers at home who represented the most neutral response to socialist realism. The slogans about politically involved art appeared when Polish music was dominated by Neoclassicism based the principles of the autonomy of art, which remained in radical opposition to the Leninist concept of music as a reflection of reality. For the proponents of

[6] Alexander Tansman said in an interview: "One cannot delete from one's biography the childhood and adolescence, the cultural traditions, the memory of the environment in which we grew up. *Volens nolens*, whether they know my music in Poland or not, I still belong to Polish culture. I am a French citizen and I owe France a lot in terms of my artistic evolution, personal life and international reputation; but it does nor change my national artistic identity, which has always been present in all my works from the beginning till the present." (cf. Cegiełła 1976: 61). In the same collection – an interview with Régamey: "I am connected with Poland by indissoluble family ties and professional links. I also spent six years of the occupation here, which created even stronger ties. Naturally, I am Swiss [...]. But at the same time musically it would be difficult for me not to consider myself a Pole" (Ibidem: 151).

the new ideology, Neoclassicism was synonymous with the so-called "formalism", which they strove to eliminate. Neoclassicist aesthetics, developed in Hanslick's *Vom musikalischen Schönen* and Igor Stravinsky's *Musical Poetics*, was summarised in Stefan Kisielewski's work *Is Music Non-Humanist?* (1948), which presented music in the categories of pure form as organised sound systems remaining in constant movement. Polish music on both sides of the iron curtain was, then, first of all a continuation of Neoclassicism, and it was on the basis of this style that artists developed their individual idioms, attempted to extend its conventions and open their art to changes. All the postwar output of composers such as Tansman, Fitelberg, Spisak, Szałowski derives from Neoclassicism, exemplified by such works as Tansman's *Musique pour orchestre*, *Concerto pour orchestre*, Spisak's *Symphonie concertante No. 1* and *Symphonie concertante No. 2*, Szałowski's *Violin concerto*, or Kassern's *Sonatina for flute and piano*. Neoclassical in style are also some of Palester's compositions from the postwar period: *Serenade for two flutes and string orchestra*, *Sinfonietta for small orchestra*, *Divertimento for 9 instruments*, *String trio No. 1*, as well as works composed in Poland by Grażyna Bacewicz (*Concerto for string orchestra*), Kisielewski (*Concerto for chamber orchestra*), Turski (*Olympic symphony*), Malawski (*Toccata for orchestra*, *Symphonic studies for piano and orchestra*), Szabelski (*Concerto grosso*), Woytowicz (*String quartet No. 2*).

In music composed in the country we can sometimes observe a kind of compromise between universal Neoclassical style, the national character and the requirement of popular accessibility. The compromise depended on introducing folk motifs or stereotypical forms of musical expression, in agreement with the socialist realist principle of creating "emotional" music; sometimes the compromise meant an excessive simplification of musical language. Some composers escaped from the dictates of political involvement without exposing themselves to accusations of "formalism" by presenting stylisations of early music such as Panufnik's *Gothic concerto* (*Concerto in modo antico*), Baird's suite *Colas Breugnon*, Malawski's *Sonata on themes by Janiewicz*, Krenz's *Classical serenade* and *Symphony in the old style*. A similar attempt to draw on early musical traditions, though much more interesting musically, was made in emigration by Palester in his *Concertino for harpsichord and 10*

instruments on themes of dances from Jan of Lublin's *Tablature* (Cf. Helman 2003: 425–434).

The demand for a national style, emphasised in the first postwar decade, was in fact not anything new in Polish music (except for its distorted interpretation as a synonym of mass culture) and it opened up some opportunities for innovative exploration as well as for a development of Bartók's idea of universal folklore, as exemplified by e.g. Lutosławski's *Concerto for orchestra* or Panufnik's *Sinfonia rustica*. All the same, the various possibilities of using folklore in combination with the new types of harmony, texture, rhythm and timbre had already been all but exhausted in the interim period between the wars, starting with Szymanowski, and so in émigré music folklorism did not enjoy much interest. One of the exceptions in this field is Laks's *Quartet No. 3 on Polish folk themes*. Conversely, Szymanowski's idea that the original ethnic features in music must be sought in layers deeper than just folk music still inspired postwar composers, even though they had now gone a long way from their master's models. One example of a piece that explores the Polish idiom without references to folklore is Palester's cantata *The Vistula* (1st version – 1948) to words by Stefan Żeromski. The choice of musical genre and the underlying national idea might suggest that this was the first in a series of cantatas composed in the coming years under the auspices of socialist realism. Still, Żeromski's text from 1918, celebrating Poland's regaining of independence and used by Palester to mark the 30th anniversary of that event, was written at a time when Poland was seen as a "bourgeois" country hostile to the Soviet Union. And so this cantata could be seen as a bit polemical: the composer wished to present a piece with a national theme, maintaining the Polish climate through its (recited) text, but at the same time universal and innovative in its musical technique. The idea of this work had originated earlier, as the composer explains – in the years of the Nazi occupation:

> Years ago, in the darkest time of German occupation in Warsaw, in a small circle of artist-friends, we discussed which place, landscape or atmosphere best expresses the gist of that wondrous phenomenon of the Fatherland, of which we all feel a small insignificant part, and whose name is Poland. Stefan Jaracz, who was then with us, claimed that the Vistula Valley near Kazimierz could best epitomise all that was related to the mother country in his heart. [...] Some time later this image became associated in my mind with

> Żeromski's beautiful prose. Like no one else, he managed to find the right words to conjure up the same picture (Palester 1955a: 3).

Palester's cantata is coherent and logical in structure, with a deliberately dry sound resulting from the instrumentation itself (a reciting voice, mixed choir and instrumental ensemble consisting of four horns, two harps, two pianos and percussion), contrasting with Żeromski's exalted words. The main theme appears not in the beginning, but in the central part, and it consists of twelve tones successively used, followed by the inversion of the first six. This is not yet dodecaphony, but undoubtedly – a turn towards atonality and 'integral chromaticism', as the composed called it. The piece was commissioned by the Belgian committee of the Chopin Year and first performed in Brussels on 27th June 1950, in Poland – as late as 1957 and only once, so it could not have impact in its own time and did not find a lasting place in the memory of the audience as an original attempt to combine Polish tradition with the new musical language.

The music of émigré composers also includes religious genres, completely excluded in Poland in the first decade after the war. These genres are represented by: Roman Palester's *Requiem* (1945–1949) and *Missa brevis* (1951) and Roman Maciejewski's monumental *Requiem* of 1946–1959. Tansman's oratorio *The Prophet Isaiah* draws on the Old Testament tradition. Socialist realism, it appears, did not manage to break the continuity of manifestations of *sacrum* in Polish music between Szymanowski and Penderecki. Émigre works also represent the rather scarce and not very interesting Polish operatic music of the time, e.g. Tansman's *Le Serment* to a libretto by Balzac (1953, staged in Warsaw's Grand Theatre only in 2009) and Kassern's operas including *The Anointed* (1949–1951) to the composer's own English language libretto telling the story of a 17th-century Jewish mystic and self-styled messiah. This work became the composer's artistic creed, both ideologically and musically. In it, he applied his own original tonal system based on 21 sounds to the octave. The same motif of a false messiah was later taken up by Tansman in his opera *Sabbatai Zévi, le faux Messie* (1959).

We can see that in the music of the first postwar decade there were, apart from similarities and points of contact between Poland and the emigration,

also differences. The works of émigré composers supplemented and enriched the panorama of Polish music. Including their compositions, then unknown in Poland and frequently even to our day existing only on paper (in print or manuscript) in the chronology of Polish music history, we can observe a hidden trend of stylistic transformations resulting from the individual strategies of composers. In 1946–49 this trend is marked by such works as Palester's *Requiem*, *The Vistula* cantata and *Symphony No. 3*, Lutosławski's *Symphony No. 1* and *Overture*, Panufnik's *Lullaby for 29 instruments and 2 harps*, *Circle of Fifths* and *Nocturne*. The transformations which were then inaugurated were continued in émigre music: in Palester's *Symphony No. 4*, *Sonnets to Orpheus for voice and orchestra*, *Orchestral variations* and *Preludes for piano*, in Kassern's opera *The Anointed*, and in Regamey's *Musique pour cordes*. Their innovative character consisted in references to Viennese School atonality and to Alban Berg's expressionist poetics. In music written in Poland, similar changes would be clearly evident only as late as approximately 1956.

The Neoclassical style, moderate in its composition techniques, made it possible for composers in socialist countries to elude Zhdanov's communist party call for social involvement, but avoiding Charybdis meant falling into Scylla's paws: using the same formal and technical conventions without innovations in musical language inevitably had to lead to Neoclassical academism. The Polish communist regime strove to isolate composers from centres of the world avant-garde and from Western music, which could explain why the natural processes of change had come to a halt. One should remember, though, that Neoclassicism had a stable and strong position also among the majority of émigré composers, who expressed little interest in the avant-garde movement.

Despite the rather shallow nature of the impact of the programme of socialist realism on composers in Poland, for six years it effectively eliminated from the country's publications all axiological debate and any discussions of the world avant-garde. It would be hard to imagine, in the years 1949–54, any contestation of the Zhdanov theses. Exactly in the same period, émigré publications revealed the real mechanisms concealed under the guise of bridging the gap between the artistic elite and the masses. In 1951 in

the Parisian *Culture*, Palester published two articles: "The Marsyas Conflict" (Palester 1951a) and "Notes on Music, or 'Pasilogia' and 'the contemporary Apollo"' (Palester 1951b). Alluding to the tragic fate of Marsyas, Palester set out to represent the inner conflict of an individual challenging the officially accepted canons in the name of "his own vision of the world and the unforgivable ability to think and doubt" (1951a: 4). Marsyas was aware of the consequences of his actions, but he had no choice or otherwise "the tones of his aulos would most surely have been false and dead" (1951a: 3). In the context of music history, Marsyas' conflict is what the author calls "a history of artistic honesty." Artists' involvement in political games or social polemic, even in the name of nations' noble right to self-determination or the fight for freedom, always results in a departure from "artistic honesty" as, giving up art's autonomous aims, we manipulate it to utilitarian, extra-artistic ends, which contradicts art's essence and leads to the loss of the artist's inner independence. As Palester points out, the interest in the artist's social usefulness expressed in the Soviet Union and in Central European countries is nothing new. One could quote many examples from history for the social functioning of music, not to mention humorous ideas such as its use in a hyena hunt (De Vismes, 1806, *Pasilogie ou de la musique considerée comme langue universelle* – the work which Palester refers to in his title). The artist's relation to the society – Palester claims – was the strongest in the Middle Ages, when he felt more like a craftsman working on commission and "in spite of this we still admire the great wealth, scale, diversity and inner force of the art of those wise craftsmen of old" (1951b: 6). It was only in the Middle Ages that an individual was linked to the community by the existence of a universal platform – which did not preclude the rebellious impulse. From the Renaissance, the rift between the artist and the society began to appear. It became strongly manifest in Beethoven's time and reached its extreme in the twentieth century. All the attempts to counteract this process (as in Gebrauchsmusik, propagated by Hindemith in the late 1920s) could not prevent this tendency. In totalitarian countries, Palester claims, the political interference with musical matters only superficially aims to eliminate the conflict between the artist and the society; in reality, the aim is to subordinate music to purposes defined for it

by the machinery of the state. The idea of broadening the ranks of the audience, of popularising music, has always been close to composers' minds; however, in a Sovietised society cultural policies do not serve the aim of musical education of the masses, but rather – turn music into an instrument of the propaganda.

> The arbitrary imposition on all audiences – regardless of their level of intellectual development – of the worst things proves once again that the policy aims to bring culture to the lowest possible level and that the whole campaign has a fundamentally negative objective: namely, to bring the minds of men to the greatest possible confusion and exhaustion, in which state the "new culture" could most easily be planted there (1951a: 12)

Palester does not attempt to reduce the problem of music in socialist countries to a mere questioning of artistic freedom, as art had never really been free and the artist is limited by the qualities of his material as much as he is determined by the achievements of his predecessors and contemporaries. Neither does the author of the articles accept the extreme Neoclassical view that music does not express anything apart from itself; rather, he willingly admits that all art is a specific sign of its times. Still, Palester claims that

> art has developed from a spiritualist and humanist worldview, so that the acceptance of today's 'scientific [i.e. Marxist] interpretation of phenomena' must sooner or later lead to the questioning of the very sense of the existence of all artistic activity (1951a: 7).

The difference lies in the fact that in previous ages

> the composer's role was to express the tendencies and thoughts of his society, since he felt, thought, experienced and reacted in the same way as, sincerely and of their own free will, did everyone in his community. In the Soviet system, however, the artist only ostensibly expresses the "tendencies" of the nation and of his contemporaries, whereas in fact he is pushed by all kinds of means – by political pressure, bribery, flogging and caressing – to walk hand in hand with that very small ruling cast which imposes on him a standpoint full of lies and self-deception, one which no longer expresses either his own experience or the thoughts of the society around him (1951b: 18).

The contemporary crisis of culture, however, is not, according to Palester, caused by the economy and it develops simultaneously on both sides of the 'iron curtain'.

> The assumption that the struggle to preserve the key values of our civilisation goes on only on this side of the iron curtain, and does not take place among those millions that have been enslaved by a hostile system against their will – is a tragic and mechanical simplification, as also is the claim that on the Western side of the curtain our culture is not undergoing a crisis (1951a: 8).

If, then, we are looking for elements which would help oppose the art of the Sovieticised world on the one hand and commercial American art on the other, Palester points to the remnants of the culture of former undivided Europe. He illustrates the aims of those three worlds with the example of three compositions: Dmitri Shostakovich's oratorio *Song of the Woods*, Gian Carlo Menotti's opera *The Consul* and Luigi Dallapiccola's opera *Il Prigoniero*. Only that last work was written "in a thoroughly modern fashion, communicating in a difficult, quite intricate musical language (1951b: 19), whereas the compositions by Shostakovich and Menotti "are written in an easily accessible style, several decades old, and bring absolutely nothing new; they do not even try to achieve any originality or individual tone" (Ibidem: 19). In contrast, it is "with a sense of relief, gratification and satisfaction" that Palester moves on to a discussion of Dallapiccola's opera, where

> we sense that deep wisdom and maturity that comes from long centuries of serious artistic tradition, to which we are referred for the understanding of every gesture, the realisation of every stylistic value and all that vast content that lies in understatements. And perhaps art – in our sense of the word – is indeed a speciality of the Old World? (Ibidem: 21).

In his articles, Palester moves freely from historical examples to contemporary phenomena, from poetic language in the tale of Marsyas to a harsh and caustic polemic. The main target of his criticism is the sociological approach to music (in the contemporary Marxist sense). In the times when art was to be spread among the masses and the individual was held in low regard, he did not hesitate to say that "all that remains to us from the past, all that is a living form of cultural continuity in us – all this was created by a small minority, and for a minority" (Palester 1955b: 4). Palester himself, similarly to his friends in emigration, did not try to create politically involved art *à rebours*. They opposed the totalitarian tendencies in art with their individual attitudes, the choice of emigration, escape from the captivity of the mind,

and, though more rarely – with radio broadcasts, like Palester, or with publications. Their music, on the other hand, remained free from service to any cause or political accents. The composer's message contained in the works of Palester, Tansman or Maciejewski (*Requiem*) is conceived in terms general enough to represent universal ideas. Thus, also from the aesthetic point of view, the émigrés contributed new values to the Polish aesthetic thought of the period, which was otherwise polarised between the concept of politically and socially functional art and the idea of music as a pure sound construct (Kisielewski).

The programme of socialist realism in Poland collapsed after the breakthrough of October 1956. It had never had a strong artistic impact among composers and, most importantly, it could not lead to the creation of a new style, though that was precisely the aim imposed on the artists. We can therefore only associate the concept of socialist realism with music that had a propagandist text, because in terms of composition technique socialist realism was either a return to 19th-century tonal forms – not to those most refined, but to the common and banal ones (as in the so-called "mass songs") – or a major simplification of the existing Neoclassical principles, the supraindividual style which had dominated before World War II. In music, then, socialist realism was not a "style", but rather a lack of style or an adulteration of style. The imposed aesthetic programme resulting from the change of political system, brought the natural, autonomous transformations of musical style to a halt, but did not manage to cause or even influence the emergence of a new style. In this situation, émigré music, in combination with the authentic trends in music created at home, but avoiding socialist realism, are the two markers of the immanent development of Polish music.

After the 1956 crisis, Polish composers, wishing to oppose and reject the recent past, turned to new trends and techniques, causing a sudden acceleration in the search for new ways of approaching musical material. In the 1950s and 60s, Polish music went through a period of dynamic transformations and worldwide expansion. The appearance of great artistic individualities (Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki, Kazimierz Serocki, Tadeusz Baird, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki) and of many interesting talents meant that

the "Polish school of composition" joined the mainstream of change. It might seem that the isolation of émigré composers no longer made any sense. And indeed, in the late 1950s their works began to appear again in programmes of concerts held in Poland – only Panufnik still remained blacklisted. But after 1960, Palester was banned again. At the same time, there were already new reasons for émigré music to be sidelined. The music of Tansman, Szałowski, Spisak, or Laks had come to a standstill, using the same old Neoclassical stylistic conventions. Others had died (Jerzy Fitelberg, Rathaus, Kassern) or had fallen almost completely silent (Feliks Łabuński, Michał Kondracki). Naturally, among the works of those émigré composers there are still masterpieces which expand the old conventions in individual ways, but in that period of fascination with the avant-garde, there was no longer any place for them in concert programmes in Poland. Maciejewski's *Requiem*, performed at the Warsaw Autumn in 1960, met with no response at all. Michał Spisak's works were similarly regarded as relics of the past. On the other hand, pieces by Régamey and Haubenstock-Ramati – composers associated with the world musical avant-garde – found their place in the programmes of that festival.

There was still silence over the activity of Palester and Panufnik. Even at the Congress of Culture in December 1981, interrupted by the introduction of the martial law in Poland, the impoverishment of Polish music by the state's cultural policies, also after 1956, which deprived that culture of the major values represented by émigré music – was not a subject to be discussed. First foreign performances of went unnoticed in Polish press and were not mentioned in the special publications containing chronicles of musical events. Even when the censors ceased to cross out the names of Palester and Panufnik, many years of oblivion still meant that, based on Polish publications from the communist period, one could get the impression that émigré art was of no importance to our musical present and belongs exclusively to a past stylistic period. The truth is, however, that after 1960 Palester wrote his greatest works testifying to his profound artistic individuality: the musical action *La Mort de Don Juan*, the second version of *Symphony No. 4*, *Concerto for viola and orchestra*, *Symphony No. 5*, *Espressioni* and *Sonata No. 2 for piano*. In his music we can observe a symptomatic relation to past and contemporary

émigré literature: this trend in his oeuvre includes *Three Poems by Czesław Miłosz* for voice and instrumental ensemble, *Monograms* – concerto for voice and piano to words by Kazimierz Sowiński, and *Letters to My Mother* – cantata to words by Juliusz Słowacki. Conversely, the émigré poet Kazimierz Wierzyński paid homage to the composer in his *Poem for Roman Palester*.

In the 1980s, three great works were completed by three composers in Poland and abroad: Lutosławski's *Symphony No. 3*, Palester's *Symphony No. 5* and Panufnik's *Symphony No. 9* – each bearing the mark of its author's personality, each composed in a different musical idiom, and yet all the three, in more or less the same period, take up a similar artistic problem – coming to grips with the most famous West European genre and reviving a great symphonic form.

The situation of émigré music in the 1980s and 90s was not comparable with that of émigré literature. The latter enjoyed great success, even under the martial law in underground circulation or samizdat; but the music, which in most cases was not immersed in political contexts, did not meet with a similar response. It did not provide the Tyrtaean patriotic call to fight for independence, which was much sought for in the period when the audience preferred ethical to aesthetic values. One exception was the music of Panufnik, which found fertile ground in Poland in the 1980s. Such pieces as *Katyń Epitaph* (1967, performed at the Warsaw Autumn in 1989), *Sinfonia votiva* (1980–1981, performed at the Warsaw Autumn in 1986), *Song to the Virgin Mary* (1964, performed at the Warsaw Autumn in 1983), *Bassoon concerto* (1985, played in St Stanislaus Kostka Church in Warsaw's Żoliborz in 1987) all had political undertones and represented the composer's emotional response to past and present events in the life of the nation. This is what the composer wrote of *Sinfonia votiva*, composed in August 1981 during the workers' strikes in Gdańsk:

> With a surge of optimism I thought that, through the will of my oppressed countrymen, change might at last be achieved in Poland: I decided to write the new symphony as my own votive offering to the Black Madonna, joining my voice to the strikers' by invoking her aid on their behalf (Panufnik 1987: 339).

His *Bassoon concerto* was dedicated to the memory of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko:

> Although the concerto was basically an abstract work without any literary programme, listeners, especially those with some knowledge of Father Popiełuszko's dedicated religious life and savage death, might recognise in my music just an echo perhaps of the priest's patriotic sermon, his humble prayer, or even his last, fatal interrogation by the Secret Police before his tortured body was thrown into the reservoir by the Vistula river (Ibidem: 345).

To what extent can political contents be translated into music? Panufnik frequently states that he does not write programme music and that it was only in specific conditions of reception that the audience looked for specific contents and meanings in his works. The composer's commentaries to such works as *Arbor cosmica* or *Sinfonia di sfere* prove that he is most interested in the links between geometric construction and musical architecture, and in the structuring of intervalic cells. But, apart from these interests, he has a mental need for patriotic gesture, for the manifestation of his attitude to dramatic events in the mother country – which proves that the idea of "involvement" is not quite dead in his music. It also betrays his hidden aesthetic assumption that the link between music and reality depends on the choice of a "theme" (which might even be extra-artistic) and on the expression of the artist's emotional attitude to political matters in his work. Quite symptomatic here was Panufnik's reaction to the reception of his *Sinfonia elegiaca* in the West:

> Why were they afraid to say what the symphony was about, to mention World War Two and my lament for the lack of freedom in my own and other Communist-dominated countries? Would the West not allow music to have a theme? Did we all have to be abstract, polite, antiseptically detached from issues of importance? Was art to touch only upon the pretty sides of life and have no relevance to issues which affected huge slabs of humanity? Was I after all so conditioned by Socialist Realism that I wanted to speak through my music even if along another line of thought? (Ibidem: 258).

The works of émigré composers as discussed in the context of Polish music after the war demonstrates a number of similarities which testify to shared roots and to the common ground shared by that generation. External conditions (life circumstances, the political and economic system) did not always

determine the character of their music and stylistic differences. What proved more important was that generation's common way of thinking about composition, rooted in shared traditions and in the universal values of European culture. The émigre music, on the other hand, owed its specific qualities to outstanding artistic personalities who till the end of their lives strove "to add a few tiny bricks to the immense edifice of our culture's continuity and identity" (Palester 1955a: 3).

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