

ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF  
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
FROM THE END OF WORLD WAR II UP TO THE  
REFORM MOVEMENT IN THE SIXTIES

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Typical for the social environment of the industrial workers in Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1968 are strategies of downplaying and sealing oneself off. These are examined with respect to three problem areas – shift working, factory-owned social clubs and working ethics. Those strategies did not represent a fundamental rejection of the communist regime, they were an attempt at maintaining a traditional living and working environment and at dodging or at least weakening over-bureaucratization and -ideologization of the production process by trade unions and the party. The social sphere of the industrial workforce demonstrates specific limits of communist power, and those are to be found, among other things, in organizational preferences of the workers which in 1968 were the starting point of an inner-trade-union reform debate aimed at reestablishing “classical” roles and responsibilities of the unions.