

Mihálik, J. (2019). *Storočie českej a slovenskej krajnej pravice 1918 – 2018*. (in English: *Century of the Czech and Slovak extreme right 1918 – 2018*). Bratislava: IRIS – Vydavateľstvo a tlač, 2019. 280 pp. ISBN 978-80-8200-052-1.

The reviewed monography affords an original view of the issue resonating relatively intensively throughout an old continent since the 1920s. As this book shows, the extreme right has fundamentally influenced the development of modern Czech and Slovak history, policy-making in both countries including. The uniqueness of the publication lies in the in-depth of scientific mapping of this process. Furthermore, while the ideological currents of the extreme right are inserted suitably. The extensive use of authentic sources from the extreme right environment and research methodology makes this monography ranked among the most relevant Slovak studies in the field.

The first chapter offers well-defined context and extreme right concepts, whilst pointing out the defining problems of grasping the issue. From a given point of view, the author offers a view of definitional diversity, etymological differentiation, the genesis of concepts, and the problem of researching and dealing with them. In addition to a relatively exhaustive introduction to the definition framework of terms such as the extreme right, radicalism, and populism, the chapter introduces the concept of defending democracy and also anchoring the issue of extremism in the Czech and Slovak legislative environment. Introduction of tools for the early detection of threats arising from the activities of extremist actors makes the theoretical framework of the study unique.

In the introduction to the extensive author's entry in the second chapter, the topic of integrally national currents within national democratic parties is thoroughly and especially objectively mapped. Among other things, the uniqueness of the monographic part lies in a high-quality erudite theoretical approach applied not only to the period of the first half of the twentieth century but also to the present times. The chapter focuses on the issue of the rise of the extreme right through the prism of Catholicism and the concept of the nation, as well as emphasizes the fascination of HSL'S, captures the issue of clerical fascism by giving characteristics of the ideological elements concerning its genesis while taking into account obstacles to its

establishment. The author in this chapter also clearly and very exactly lists the reasons for the growth of extreme-right movements. In this context, a reader cannot ignore certain paradigms with the present. As an example, the models of the current far-right compared to early 20th century can be demonstrated on the feeding of the Catholic conservative myth of the Jewish Masonic conspiracy as an absolute anti-Christian and international enemy. The author also pays relatively wide attention to political science research of the regime of the Second Republic. The author is aware of the fact that the awareness of wide Czech and Slovak public concerning existence and actions of the only extreme-right anti-democratic regime in the Czechoslovak history is rather weak. This period is essential for making research of the today's far-right in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, especially considering the fact that anti-systemic traditionalist conservatives and neo-fascists today are consciously returning to the legacy of the Second Republic, adoring its anti-democratic principles. In this respect, the chapter offers a detailed analysis of ideology and domestic politics during the regime of the Second Republic. The second chapter concludes then analysing the extreme right forces during the Protectorate and the clerical-fascist regime of the Slovak Republic, from which the extreme right derives ideologically today.

In the third chapter, the author explains revitalization of the extreme right after 1989 on the background of differences between the viability of the extreme right in Western liberal Europe and the totalitarian East. The chapter reflects the role of skinhead movements in the rebirth-times of the extreme right. Fascist methods of political activism are a considerable subject of interest analysed mainly through skinhead musical performances. In this context, dominant attributes and motifs of political songs are uniquely defined. In addition, emphasis is placed on the role of the mythical past, which the extreme right is abusing wishing to assume the role of the nation's only political representative. In this context, chapter introduces the basic myths and half-truths presented by the Czech far-right spectrum, with a significant portion of the text devoted to mapping the activities of extreme right-wing movement.

The fourth chapter describes the activities of political parties, associations, and illegal groups of the Czech extreme right of the 21st century. In this context, the Czech extreme right currents of this period undergo a nation concepts-based diversification with central mobilization themes and activist approaches absorbing unique theoretical concepts. Also integral Catholic and fascist movements are central in this chapter with their nourishment of a Catholic-binding rigid moral code, criticizing

the decline of liberal society and as well as discriminating various groups of people. The author also identifies the reasons for the political rise of such movements, as hyperbolised migration crisis, resistance to the EU policy centralist -directed, and apparent failure to admit that the constructs of a multicultural society has fallen to the ground. Czech neo-Nazi formations are also introduced here. This author's analysis of their ideological direction is based on primary sources rising thus the uniqueness of this study.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the most apparent representative of the Czech far right of the 21st century, i.e. Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti (DSSS), as well as its predecessor, the DS party. The author maps the Party's development in the time, analysing the ideological grounding, as well as political alliances and foreign policy patterns. One of the author's important findings is the fact that the Party's slogan "More than a nation!" made the Party rejecting Czech nationalism (however this slogan is deviated from it) as a manifestation of provincial closure and chauvinism. In contrast, the Party perceives the Czech nation as a submissive part of the wider white racial European community.

This study is devoted also to a new tactic for political allying with neo-Nazi illegals as well as the mobilization of citizens against a liberal democratic regime. The author claims that the Party's propaganda focused mainly on abusing the failure of systemic politicians to address the Roma issues in the Czech Republic, and concerning this the author notifies that the Party has shifted its activities to the Czech population living near the Roma ghettos. The chapter elucidates also the program differences, but especially the activation and mobilization ones, when the Workers Party transited to the Workers Party of Social Justice. In this context, the analysis shows that despite some corrections in the form of an open abandonment of violent verbal and physical street revolt, which has caused increased security scrutiny, the Party's political thinking continues to uphold a national socialist rejection of humanity and prefers purgatory violence to ensure the order. This adaptive tactical line of far-right behaviour is referred by the author as the principle of serious radicalism. Such conclusions bring a unique discourse to the far-right research. The chapter also contains an analysis of intra-party issues, as well as an analysis of the Party's failure to establish itself on the political scene.

The sixth chapter covers broader framework of far-right parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Marginally, the chapter again touches the DSSS, but only to a tolerable extent not leaving a disturbing impression.

Another subject of Czech extreme right sphere approached in this book is party called “Národno-sociální fronta” (National-Social Front). Emphasis is put on the membership base, ideological or geopolitical roots, and contacts abroad. Here, the author also considers literary patterns precisely based on sources just from the Party’s environment, as well as from social networks rising thus relevance of the research introduced here. The mapping presented in this chapter does not omit marginal extreme right groupings such as Národní občanské hnutí, Generace identity, Pro-vlast, or Projekt 7. republika. Incomparable asset of this chapter lies in identification of a “grey zone” for new extreme-right research.

The chapter also deals with the extreme right from the political environment of the Slovak Republic. The genesis of political beginnings in Slovakia is mapped quite carefully, while theories of conflict lines are incorporated into its characteristics in a unique way. The mapping of the Slovak extreme right scene includes marginal political movements such as Slovenská ľudová strana, Slovenské hnutie obrody, but also the most important one, Slovenská pospolitosť – Národná strana. The analysis is based mainly from the mapping of the time perspective of their development while raising new questions for researching their ideological anchoring. The analysis also involves the only extreme right parliamentary entity in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the political party called Kotlebovci – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko” (ĽSNS). The author drew from both secondary and primary sources processed in a comparative way when comparing the programs of a political party in individual elections, as well as the activist and mobilization strategies focusing predominantly on the period of the Party’s full establishment on the Slovak political scene.

The seventh chapter is devoted to electoral behaviour of selected extreme right entities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Analysis of the results of elections is made considering the party systems and includes monitoring of the geographic distribution of the ĽSNS electorate in the elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the municipal level held between 2010 and 2018. From the perspective of far-right research in the Czech Republic, the focus put on SPD party is remarkable when considering the fact that SPD’s classification among the extreme right subjects is rather questionable. However, given that the party’s populist communication addresses a large part of the extreme right electorate, study of the Party’s electoral behaviour is relevant. The analysis also includes traditional Czech extreme right subjects evaluated upon the same criteria as the Slovak ĽSNS party. At the end of the chapter, the author summarizes the findings of his

study of electoral systems in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and how they affect the political results of the parties examined here.

The eighth chapter generally deals with the influence the media have on the extreme right political spectrum. This chapter offers a detailed theoretical framework based on the considerations of relevant experts in the field. The matter analysed in this chapter opens a very topical issue of the impact of social networks on the extreme right. Here, it should be noted that social networks play a primary role in activating and mobilizing the electorate of these parties. In this context, the chapter offers a practical view of how the selected political parties LSNS and DSSS communicate. Therefore, the author applied method of content analysis of discourse, which enabled him considering both the level of use of selected media by far-right political parties and the thematic context which the parties operate with. A very ambitious topic of this part of the monograph is the profiling of LSNS and DSSS parties in a limited period of three months. This context requires to note that such a limited period disables to deduce an exact profile of any political party, despite the number of contributions analyzed. Anyhow, it can serve as a valuable basis for further processing.

The last, ninth chapter deals with the prevention of radicalization and right-wing extremism. There is a relatively wide-ranging discussion held in the EU of this one of the most dynamically evolving areas. This chapter introduces the basic documents, concepts, institutions, and tools. The author's effort to point at the insufficiently fulfilled potential for cooperation between the authorities at various levels needs to be appreciated, *inter alia*, in this context. Importance is also put at pointing out the diversity of this issue in EU member states. The extreme right political spectrum cannot be generalized and its nature differs to some extent depending on the political, historical, and cultural identity of individual countries. For this reason, the fight against radicalization is primarily a national domain. In the given context, the author analysed those concepts that deal with the issue of extremism and radicalism in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

A significant contribution lies in the presentation of a basic and, at the same time, a complex overview of extreme right anti-liberal traditionalist currents, parties, and movements in the Slovak and Czech politics. Emphasis is put on the historical roots of extreme right thinking, its development, as well as the current state of extreme-right political realities. The book offers a suitable underlying material for state and public administration workers operating with the issue of right-wing extremism and radicalism. With its erudite approach, the monograph responds to the need to professionalise

the strategy by strengthening prevention against extreme right parties and movements that have a significant negative impact on society, choosing young people in particular as their target group. This monograph introduces its reader the knowledge that will enable them to analyse extreme right thinking, and thus distinguishing them from obvious monitoring of extreme right parties and movements. At the same time, this monograph significantly complements the Slovak scientific community in the research of the extreme right, to which only an activist view is largely devoted.

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