

Reviews

Vladimír Ondruš: Atentát na nežnú revolúciu

Ikar, Bratislava 2009, 296 pages

In relation to the 20th anniversary of November events that meant fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, discussion about the system change has occurred in Slovakia as well. The attention was taken mainly by documentary movies with testimonies of direct attendants presented in the media (for example program „Studio dialogue after 20 years” on STV) and as well various conversations and discussions with the most important actors of that period. There have been only few scientific studies and books dealing with November 1989 events, although there is a space for objective evaluation now. Mainly Slovak politicians and experts produced only little memoirs or expertise about this period that is being core period of modern Slovak history.

One of the attempts to bring the atmosphere of those days of important political decisions and their consequences closer is the publication by Vladimír Ondruš: „Assassination of the Velvet Revolution“. The author was a researcher in the area of ecology before 1989 and he belongs to the group Bratislava aloud, the initiative of protectionists and activists from Bratislava. Through this activity he became a co-founder of civic initiative VPN (Public against violence), therefore he saw himself in the middle of revolution events. In February 1990, he became a vice-president of the government of „national understanding“ of Slovak republic headed by Milan Čič and since the first free elections in the same year he was as well vice-president in the government of Vladimír Mečiar. In April 1991, he was together with prime minister and some ministers called off his position because of the rupture in VPN and untenability of the governing coalition. The book „Assassination of the Velvet Revolution“ is a direct testimony of the witness of the period. He is with sufficient analytical distance trying to zoom in the turbulent stadium of democratic transformation and its mistakes to the reader on the basis of his own memories and with help of period documents. Author uses a vast amount of direct information. The information is not given in the chronological order, but in the way addressing wide public spheres. The core issue of the text is the problem of lustration - from untrustworthy documents of ŠtB (state security) to today form of „lustration“ law and its practical application.

The author expresses deep anxiety about the senseless consequences resulting from secret police records from past regime and being applied in the democratic regime. Those are in his opinion misused in the fight for political and economical power. A number of scientific evaluations of this period support the work. The most cited is Czech historian and political science expert Jiří Suk and his publication „Through the labyrinth of revolution“(Suk, Jiří: Labyrintem revoluce: Aktéři, zápletky a křížovatky jedné politické krize. Praha: Prostor, 2003, 316 p., ISBN 80-7260-099-0).

The introductory chapter represents short review of events since the August 1989 until November 1989 from the author’s point of view and his personal experience and therefore it serves as an indication of later turbulent period.

First chapter named „Knock“ stresses the events during and shortly after 17th November 1989, the establishment of the movements VPN and OF (Civic Forum) and detailed picture of the most important political decisions. After partial settlement of the situation, exhaustive negotiations between emerging political elites and actual power holders began. Here the author expresses his first worries about future evolution of the situation, and he restlessly adds how *“politics of values was starting to change to politics of interests”* (p. 38). This process, as he says, was the beginning of the VPN destruction, which was later emphasized by conflict between its central personalities (Budaj vs. Gál) and the end was different attitude towards the evolution of Czecho – Slovak relations. The passage about the election of Václav Havel for president is interesting as well, this event is being considered by Ondruš „the most dramatic phase of the communist regime fall“ (p. 52) and the author expresses his moral objections towards its course. In the end, the author describes the destiny of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) and its members who were not discredited in any way. They even started to protect their positions within the frame of the political system.

„*The tool of power, the tool of extinction*“ is the title of the second chapter in which the author analyses the problem in more detailed way. He mainly emphasizes the impossibility of the just lustration process based on given criteria. However, this process of lustration was the key factor influencing not only the result of first free elections in 1990 but also political development in Slovakia ending by the split of Czechoslovakia (p. 109). The records of ŠtB therefore unjustifiably became absolute proof of guilt or innocence of the given person and the only truth was the viewpoint found in the materials of ŠtB.

„Destruction“ is the name of the third chapter and it is supposed to show the consequences of the process of lustration to the reader. It is in this chapter where the author in the fictional way describes the atmosphere of the days and hours of the first free elections in connection with tens of candidates for VPN, that were hit by the pre-election check-up and deleted from the candidates list. Ján Budaj is among them, it is probably the most frequent name in the book and the book sometimes feels like his defense. The author speaks about systematic conspiracy and elimination of the president of the VPN movement for purpose based on more factors (p. 165). Budaj resigned from his position finally. Ondruš is asking the question ending the chapter whether this resignation was not too early and whether Ján Budaj should not have fight longer.

Chapters „*Requiem*“ and „*Clean money, dirty agents*“ describe the period of the government of Vladimír Mečiar until the elections in 1992 and disintegration of VPN and Czechoslovakia with regard to applying and exploiting of the lustration law.

„Especially in connection with new prime minister of Slovak republic and dealing with files of ŠtB the author’s approach is remarkable. He in the time-lapse states: *„homo politicus Vladimír Mečiar could not act differently”* (p. 199). Further, in the text there is critical viewpoint on the person of Mečiar and his practices. His authoritarian exercise of power influenced not only rupture within VPN and its destruction, but as well the position of Slovakia in the international scene.

The last sixth chapter „*The fight with evil*“ is mostly the exhaustive evaluation of the ŠtB activity during communist regime, the way it worked and recorded, archiving etc. There is a subchapter about the nation memory law from 2002 being considered the

most strict lustration law in the post communist Europe by the author (p. 230). Ondruš is trying to show its senselessness and incompatibility with the principles of democratic and legally consistent state. As a proof, he uses records from that time and testimonies stored in the archives of ÚPN (the Institute of National Memory). Through these, he shows non-existent morale in the ŠtB structures, mainly in the leading positions of the single workplaces and related failure of the control and managing activities. His application of Slovak national memory in the Polish environment is as well interesting. On its basis would former leader of the movement „Solidarity“ and Polish president Lech Walesa be considered „man without honor and being marked by the state as informer“ (p. 250). At the end of the chapter, Ondruš decided to describe „lustration stories“ of several persons whose lives were influenced by this. In the book author stresses the problem of lustrations – causes, course and consequences for then forming political system. As a direct participant, he has great qualification to offer many testimonies and his own observations. Citation mechanism is on a very high level. Ondruš is supporting his statements by a number of documents and several expert studies – historical ones. However, we must view the publication as a work of politician, whose opinions should partly represent his ideological attitudes. That is what is different from scientific (historical) approach. Since the author is a direct actor, independent evaluation will be possible after similar works will emerge from other actors from that period such as Budaj, Kusý, Gál, Mikloško, Bútora etc. To defend the author we must say that he avoided using animosities in writing his text. The book publication is a brave civic gesture and it is a role of history and political science to work with these reflections.

Michal Greguška

Ditta Dolejšiová and Miguel Ángel Garcia López (eds): European citizenship – In the process of construction Challenges for citizenship, citizenship education and democratic practice in Europe
Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg 2009, 230 pages

One of the dominant themes of current research in the European studies is the question of citizenship and answering the question what exactly a European citizenship is and what dimensions are understood and presented in the European community. Peer-reviewed publication of the study is devoted to current trends and concepts in the research of European citizenship and identity. In principle the book is structured upon the analysis and findings of the research seminar entitled "Young People and Active European Citizenship" organized by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Prospects for euro citizenship remain a priority for this partnership.

The publication summarizes the structural formation of the European Community, later the European Union as well as the requirement of a common European citizenship and identification, so called europeanization of the national member states. Although the citizenship of the Union was incorporated only in the Maastricht Treaty of 1991, the very issues of European citizenship and identity have been discussed already in the

seventies and its central thesis was the assumption that "European citizenship is a supplement and not the replacement of a national citizenship" (Treaty establishing the European Community, Article 17).

This publication contains 16 chapters, from the theoretical one - Introduction and two evaluation agenda setting final chapters. The remaining studies are the product of young sociologists and experts on issues of the political participation of young people, the issue of migration and implementation of national policies in relation to transnational identity and citizenship. Individual contributions are differentiated perception of the European and national identity, differentiating between cultural heterogeneity and universal rights, not least the classic sociological discourses "us and them." (Balescu, O., Dobbernack, J., Ehs, T., Singh, S.)

The author Syuzanna Vasilyan highlights the complexity of Dutch social and immigration system, analyzes trends and application of social policy towards migrants and looks for a "treatment" of so called integration crisis. On the background of historical analysis of immigration to the three Benelux countries Vasilyan applies theoretical concepts to be implemented as a basis for evaluation of the integration conflict. Thus, in addition to the field of political psychology (ethnic, national, cultural identity) and institutionalized political science is a particular view of security micro-theory, where the author refers to the research problem of existing civil-minority analysis, when all the migrants were taken as a whole, regardless of socio-political recognition - illegal immigrants, short and long term migrants, people born to parents who are not ethnic Dutch, etc. (p. 76)

The next chapter follows the relationship of citizenship and political participation among young migrants in Germany, the young Turks, Greeks and Italians particularly. An interesting finding is that migrants, despite the absence of formal civil status, are incorporated within the various organizations whose activities are not clearly subjugated due to nationality, but above all values of political orientations: left, nationalist, religious fundamentalists, etc. (Gezici Meral Yalcin, p. 98)

In this case, both studies are not looking for a classic discourse to answer the questions directly related to Euro citizenship and identity. The authors examine mostly the migrants and policies and their identification with local communities, thereby partially complement the reasons why the possibility of applying the generalized euro citizenship is difficult to achieve precisely in societies that are culturally and ethnically heterogeneous.

In terms of youth participation in political life, trying to eliminate the democratic deficit and increase cooperation among organized youth, civil society and European institutions, European Commission implemented the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). The author Kamila Czerwiński, through her research conducted in order for specific results of the OMC was able to point out the adequacy of this method, its possibilities and benefits and also by discussion as these projects affect the formation of opinions for young people to question of European citizenship. The dilemma of civic engagement of young people in the Belgian Flanders is the subject of a Ph.D. candidate Bram Vanhoutte, who notes that the current unconventional forms of political socialization of young people is very popular in the predominantly Dutch-speaking part of the Kingdom. According to a research report author declares that "up to half of young people over the last 12 months signed a civil petition or supported other civic

activities" (p. 125). Based on the concept of active citizenship is noteworthy that young people who generally do not participate in political life are also in a much less extent organized in civil unions, associations and others, and vice versa; young people who combine both traditional and unconventional methods of social participation are significantly more active in organizations and strongly promote the values associated with citizenship, for example the social tolerance.

For comprehensive nature of the publication the final evaluations and findings of completed studies for young graduates are the essential source for all social researchers. Primary, general statement that "the concept of European citizenship in educational practice should not be restricted only for the EU area," but should actively create Europeanization concept with regard to the diverse nationalities, identity, traditions and the feeling of a fellowship. These are currently not very constructively and critically appreciated and implemented in educational projects. Thus, these concepts still remain in the position of the European Union – the Rest of Europe view (p. 197).

The reviewed publication is a collection of research studies and analysis of youth and their attitudes towards the process of creating a common European identity and citizenship. The authors seek to answer the question whether and how to implement a common idea of Europeanization. The publication's editor himself, Miguel Ángel García López argues: "research contributions have shown that the response (if there is an answer to the question of what is European Citizenship?) is probably not, or at least not one comprehensive, clear answer." (p. 197) The editor notes that the issue of common European citizenship is actually in the building stage, but this view must not ignore the present research and results from recent practice. It is necessary to introduce the Euro citizenship as an emotional element of citizenship, since citizenship issue is sensitive nature of community and shared values. Finally, there is a long-term social order that includes an education for active citizenship, not only from a disciplinary perspective but primarily cultural as well.

Jaroslav Mihálik

Ladislav Macháček: Úvod do politickej sociológie mládeže

UCM, Trnava 2008, 184 pages

The book *Úvod do politickej sociológie mládeže*, written by Ladislav Macháček is the outcome of the widely concipated international research project – Youth as an actor of social change (UP2YOUTH) with the support of Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic between the years 2006 – 2008. The text of the publication presents the dilemmas that are almost classically set into the studies of political sociology but the author captures it with a specific manner of sociological reflection of political and civic life of the young generation after 1989.

Exploring the society as a whole in its past, present and future, as well as in the logic of its generation and development as it is demonstrated in the publication as the object of study is possible and beneficial both from a sociological or political view.

Sociology, its scope and methodology creates the necessary frame of reference for the complex characteristics of youth in terms of its social structure and social mobility, levels and forms of civic participation in the political system, changes in lifestyle trends under the influence of modernization.

Attention is focused on the period of transition from totalitarian to a multiparty political system in terms of the processes of European integration and globalization, including a comprehensive modernization process in which the young generation is not only an object but the actor of change. With respect to the ongoing modernization of society and the changes that are associated with it the status of the young generation is changing too. The question of whether understanding young people as a "threat" or as a "hope" of contemporary society to solve its problems often returns the issue of the younger generation to a public discourse.

The publication is structured into five chapters enabling the reader understand the issue of stages of the development in sociology of youth in Europe and in Slovakia, the problems of modernization and individualization of youth, youth policy and youth work and youth participation in local administration and representative democracy.

The first chapter is devoted to the sociology of youth in individual development stages of youth sociology, where the author refers both to the fact that "... sociology and its revitalization should be seen in the context of the revival process in the social sciences after 1956, which led to its institutionalization in Slovakia..." (p. 11) and also points to the theoretical roots of sociological thought in Europe (L. Chisholm, C. Wallace, O. Stafseng, J. J. Lagré) affected by generational approach of Karl Mannheim, who had only recently established itself as a classic of sociology and the founder of Youth Sociology. An interesting part of this chapter is section dedicated to a transparent presentation and explanation of non-standard sociological concepts such as youth scene, or youth subculture, which gradually become established in sociological research of youth in Europe.

In the second chapter of modernization and individualization of youth the author presents the concept of individuation as a process of acceptance of individual responsibility for the consequences of decisions taken in the main living areas. In connection with the processes of globalization and European integration on the one hand, and the process of partial subversion of traditional class distinctions based on status to a traditional lifestyle on the other hand, there is still the decisive criterion of success of the integration of young people in society which are indicators of "quality of life" – the level of education, availability of housing, citizen participation in governance and so on.

According to Macháček in the field of sociology of youth, individuation is associated with the same "moratoria" impact of social determinants of life chances processes. It was under the influence of sociological reflection of a relatively long period of high material standard of living and far-reaching certainties and their impact on young people toward the opportunity to break out of traditional living conditions of their own family, especially in Germany and Austria.

The third chapter "Youth policy and working with youth" presents and analyzes the different stages in the complicated process of shaping state policy towards youth in Slovakia. In the context of working with youth as a specific system of social work, which is an essential component, the chapter deals with the specific, applicable

principles and levels of systems in working with youth. Author only raises questions about the future direction of youth, but also highlights the need to establish new networks of the third sectors that are capable to unite the political, civic and social aspect as well and thus help strengthen the citizenship of young people.

At the end of publication, readers will find the latest analysis of the EU documents in which are reiterated some of the known facts contained in the White Paper on Youth (2002). The starting point for a newly conceived European youth policy is the indisputable fact that growth and prosperity depend on an active contribution and participation of all young people, particularly because their number among the total population is diminishing and therefore the current young generation will have to bear the growing costs of an aging population.

Current living conditions for young people to develop their skills to work and to participate actively in society, particularly in view of globalization and knowledge-based economies can not be characterized as favorable. Problems that young people face, such as high rates of child poverty, poor health, early school leaving and youth unemployment, suggest a need to review investment that Europe is making in its youth.

The publication “*Úvod do politickej sociológie mládeže*” brings ideas and arguments in support of efforts to transfer attention to the political sociology of the original concept of youth and youth policy portfolio (participation, volunteering, information, better understanding of youth) the need to develop transversal youth strategy. This new concept of creating closer links between the European policy framework for youth set up since the adoption of the White Paper on Youth and other policies that affect youth (social, housing, health, cultural, employment, school) to develop a coherent approach to youth policy as key of achieving a real progress towards the objectives of youth policy.

Emília Podoláková

Getnet, Tamene: Moderné medzinárodné vzťahy a svetová politika. Stručný prehľad

Iura Edition, Bratislava 2010, 275 pages

Politicians often offer their own solutions of contemporary crisis and problems in politics thinking that everyone of them understands politics as well as football. „*Even today we all create our own mental images of world politics – exact or not that exact, conscious or subconscious. Nevertheless, our levels of consciousness, our images simplifying the reality by exaggerating some of the characteristic of the real world ignore the others. This way we live in the world defined by our expectations and images.*“ (p. 213-214) However if we want to understand contemporary world, world politics and international relations it is necessary to gain enough knowledge. Within living memory, the best tool to do that is a book or a textbook. The newest Slovak political science book in the area of theories of international relations is a publication by Getnet Tamene named „**Modern international relations and world politics (short summary).**“

In his publication, Tamene aims to present academic discipline of international relations in its basic terminological and theoretical dimension. The author himself states, that it is not a scientific – popular publication, but mainly a textbook for students of those academic fields that are oriented towards international relations, diplomacy and political science in general. He as well hopes that even though it is a textbook, „it will as well become a relevant contribution to the discussion about the most pressing questions of current international relations“ (p. 13).

The whole book is a combat of paradoxes. Although it is divided to only 4 chapters, these are then divided to great number of subchapters. The other paradox is that at the beginning of the book the author marks almost every single sentence or relevant term in notes (references and sources). However, at the end he uses only more or less useless notes (often without referring to a source) or there is no reference to the source of citations or paraphrase at all (p, 182, 189, 192 etc.). It is as well necessary to mention inaccuracy in the „**Abbreviations**“ part. In case of some named organizations, he gives the list of its members, but it is not clear if those are founding or current members. For example MERCOSUR – here he lists six member states, in case of ASEAN he lists only five of its founding members. Such inaccuracies should not be present in the introduction of a book (textbook). Tamene’s book is primarily a theoretical elaboration on world politics and international relations and it does not contain reference about given organizations or even student exchange programs (ERASMUS, TEMPUS) that are therefore unnecessarily listed in the abbreviations list.

First of the four chapters is named „*The introduction to the study of international relations and world politics*“ (63 pages) that concentrates on the definition of the term „International relations“ (p. 16-20) and its components that create international system, or more precisely its basic terminological equipment (state, sovereignty, centre, periphery and so on). The second part of the first chapter is the historical development of the academic discipline of international development analysis starting by Peace of Westphalia, but author goes back to the ancient Thucydides. Within this part, the author sometimes generalizes and he does not specify what he means by saying „many scientists“ (p. 23) etc. Subchapters 1.2 and 1.4 do not contain what their titles say. There are as well some inattention mistakes such as similar sentences at the beginning of subchapters 1.3 and 1.6 (p. 24 and 31). Highly positive evaluation can be given to the content and elaboration of the subchapters 1.7 and 1.9 that present only little known area of international relations research in geographically distant regions of Africa and Asia. Nevertheless, the author could have worked with and presented more up-to-date sources, since most of the used literature comes from period 1986-1991.

Second chapter „*Key terms of international relations and world politics discipline*“ (54 pages) goes back to the unfinished parts from the introduction in the first chapter (completion of the definitions of the terms such as system, state, sovereignty, international organizations). In case of the last term, he uses non-traditional procedure when it comes to general definition but as well in relation to the book itself and its focus. Part named „international organization“ first describes structure and functioning of the UN and then in case of supranational organization it describes functioning of the European Union. Further, the author elaborates on the terms hierarchy, polarity, symmetry and anarchy. The author also presents his clear-cut view on colonization in the sub-chapter 2.2. He marks this as „*unsolved trauma of*

current civilization“ (p. 129) and he blames colonization guilty for all negatives of contemporary African politics (p. 130). The last subchapter explains terms aimed at the life quality. Here the author uses the method of short problem outlining to the extent of just few sentences, he explains some terms such as democracy, freedom, and equality that is useless within the context of the book. This part as well features unmarked sources of notes or some unnecessary references.

Third chapter is focused on the *Theories of international relations* classification (55 pages) and therefore there is more comprehensive analysis of the problem issues outlined in the subchapter 1.9. The author is reflecting on the purpose of wars, one of the key factors of in understanding the evolution of the theory of international relations. He goes back to the First and Second World War and careful reader can feel that there is an useless duplication of thoughts from the first chapters. Following pages (p. 152-204) analyze nine theories of international relations. Even though there are many new insights on this topic, author in a way resigned on the level of elaboration from the first chapters. The problem mainly lies in the source marking, most of the schemes are not well arranged and the effort of the author to describe them is not very satisfactory. Interesting may be the incorporation of the feminist theory (p. 191-195) into the theory of international relations. It is a very non-traditional way of looking at the theory of international relations. On the other hand, I have no objections to green politics (p. 195-198) within world politics.

Final part focuses on the „*Problems of world politics and international relations at the beginning of the 21st century*“ (41 pages). As in the previous chapter, the author starts here by short reflection aimed towards the future of international relations mainly in relation with forming of new economic-political organizations (e. g. G20) and survival of those that are known internationally (G8 etc.). (p. 205-211). The chapter has three parts, the first focuses on the attributes of contemporary international relations; however, subchapters 4.1.2 -4.1.4 are incomprehensible even for careful reader and it is difficult to notice what the author wants to say even after multiple reading. Next part is as well divided into a large number of subchapters. The text is too fractured and it often limits the reader. The problem of power, great powers and superpowers is interestingly elaborated (p. 226-230). Finally, we can say that in this chapter, the author focuses on various problems and areas, however, determination and description of relevant world politics problems of 21st century is absent.

Dimensions of international relations are very wide and views on the world politics are different, often dependent on the personal preferences of individuals. However, particular common knowledge should not be neglected. In order to protect present from failures of the past and consequential conflicts we need to gain knowledge. We can acquire this knowledge also by reading quality literature. Getnet Tamene did not avoid some mistakes in his latest publication, however his book is a relevant tool to know and understand international relations and world politics.

Jozef Lenč