

**Jan Keller: Nedomyšlená společnost
(The Not Thought-Out Society)**

Brno, Doplněk 1992, First edition.

Jan Keller, a young but experienced Czech social scientist, employs a smart, ironical style to tell this rather short popularizing sociological story. He expresses his skepticism of the conviction that the basis of our modern society is rational and of social scientists' efforts to describe and comprehend it intellectually. Using examples of irrational social behavior such as traditional feasts, family life and rituals, Jan Keller shows the dangerous inadequacies of rationalist theories as well as any political practice which promises progress. He accuses the modern state and the social sciences, in their service of disseminating social and political myths, of rendering socialism as deceptive as liberalism.

**Emanuel Rádl: Válka Čechů s Němci
(The War of the Czechs with the Germans)**

Praha, Melantrich 1993, Second edition.

The new edition of this book, first published in 1928, is a splendid contribution to the contemporary discussion on the future of the new Czech Republic. Emanuel Rádl, a disciple of Masaryk and considered to be one of the greatest thinkers of the First Republic and probably the greatest Czech philosopher, was interested in evolutionary theories. In this book he describes the historical development of Czechs' relationship to Germans as well as their relationship to democracy. He discusses the question of the national state; for contrast, he identifies the need to cultivate the consciousness of state citizenship and to address the individual's personal freedom. Although nationalist ideologies are strongly criticized in his book, the idea of nationality is not completely rejected by Emanuel Rádl; the solution is to understand them politically.

**Jindřich Pecka, Vilém Prečan: Changes
of the Prague Spring**

Brno, Doplněk 1993, First edition.

A historical and sociological look at attitudes in Czech society during the Prague Spring (1967-1968) compiled by outstanding contemporary Czech historians, sociologists and writers. The volume is divided into three parts:

I. Studies (articles of several authors based mostly on unknown or unused historical sources)

II. Documents (which deal with post-August civic activity)

III. A chronological survey (of the period from June 1967 to December 1970)

The editors of the volume do not concentrate on the "leading power" in society - the Communist Party - but focus on emancipating parts of society: the intelligentsia, unions, students and the general public. It is an attempt to find a new way of understanding the Prague Spring and the subsequent "normalization."

**Vladimír Čermák: Otázka demokracie -
Demokracie a totalitarismus (The Question
of Democracy - Democracy and Totalitarianism)**

Praha, Academia 1992, First edition, volume I.

The first of five volumes, this work is the result of several years' study and is of principal significance to the Czech social sciences. It is a summary of historical and contemporary democratic conceptions, types of democracy, and their analysis and comparison. The author perceives democracy as a medium and as a goal. He considers an ideal type of democracy, criticizes totalitarianism and Marxism and brings out aspects of human psychology in the process of control over society.

Jan Keller: Až na dno blahobytu (To the Very Bottom of Wealth)

Brno, DUHA, 1993, First edition.

The book, the subtitle of which is "To the Common Roots of the Ecological Crisis," was published by the ecological movement DUHA as the first publication of the Last Generation program. Jan Keller, the famous young radical sociologist from Brno, writes from a sociological point of view, trying to explain Czech society's lack of concern in the face of a looming ecological catastrophe. He traces its cause to the excessive centralization of political authority, bureaucracy and the passive, consumer, mass democracy, where freedom of choice means the willingness to be convinced. Jan Keller is skeptical: it is beyond the grasp of common sense to reverse self-destructive prosperity. The modern state has therefore become defenceless against global problems. But according to Keller, there is a chance in the development of alternative systems.

Lenka Kalinová et al.: K proměnam sociální struktury v Československu 1918-1968 (On the Transformations of Social Structure in Czechoslovakia 1918-1968)

Praha, Ústav sociálně politických věd FSV UK, 1993

A topical scholarly study reworking and modernizing the historiographical probe into the history of social structure and social development in Czechoslovakia through the end of the 1960s. A team of outstanding Czech historians prepared this analysis for sociological research into the contemporary social structure transformation in the former Czechoslovakia, but has published it as a self-contained study.

Jiří Vymazal: Koncepce masové komunikace v sociologii (Conceptions of Mass Communication in Sociology)

Praha, Karolinum, 1991, First edition.

A description and analysis of the leading contemporary conceptions of mass communication in sociology, the main focus of this book is the author's contribution to the creation of real democracy in our society. Jiří Vymazal offers a complex sociological view of mass communication as a social institution. He is, however, also concerned with its specific elements and their interdependent relationship to the social system. Special attention is given to the content of communication as an expression of social.

Ann J. Zammit, Dharam Ghai: Czechoslovakia: Which Way to the Market?

Geneva, UNRISD Report 92.2, 1992, First edition.

This short publication from the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development provides an overview of the socioeconomic and political changes occurring in Czechoslovakia since November 1989. It is mainly intended for non-specialist readers and to be used as background for those who want to orient themselves to the recent developments in the former Czechoslovakia and to follow the major turning points in the history of Eastern and Central Europe. It provides interesting information on economic development, comparative GDP and structural changes during the years 1937-1989 as well as the economic transition, and a description of the main social and political changes following the revolution.

Simona Perušičová

