

some phases violent, process of societal change, which encompasses shifts in both social and power structures. When considering the types of revolutions, he classifies those revolutions that were not accomplished exclusively from below as only revolutions in the broad sense of the word. The revolutions carried out both from below and above are considered as hybrid (pp. 6-15). This is certainly a definition more or less acceptable from the sociological point of view. However, one must take into account also that Krejčí uses the concept of revolution for such qualitative changes in the partial aspects of societal life that were realised without collective violence (for instance, the industrial revolution) only as a metaphor (p. 16). This all means that he does not tend to accept the possibility of non-violent political upheavals and social and economic transformations as a specific type of revolutionary changes for present or future periods – despite the fact that such processes seem to be more and more frequent in our epoch.

It is remarkable that in his definition and in the analyses of a majority of aspects of the typological classifications of revolutions, the formal and procedural characteristics of revolutions are much more emphasised than the characteristics of their contents (the ends and their realisation). His generalisation of all analysed revolutionary processes is attended by the following statement:

"It is important to point out that all the above-mentioned generalities concern only the procedural aspects of the phenomenon 'revolution'. It is the 'shell', or 'vehicle', and not the

'filling', the 'cargo', that is similar." (That is mutually similar in various types of revolution.) (p. 269).

It seems to me that in this point the relativisation of the causes of revolutions, and derived from this, the stress laid on the plurality of the 'contents' of revolutions goes too far. It may be that just this tendency led the author to the qualification of the upheavals led by Italian, German and Spanish fascists as an example of 'hybrid revolutions'. However, this might only be a momentary deviation from the main orientation of thought. The emphasis of the primary significance of the revolutions 'from below', as well as numerous reminders of the *democratic, social and modernising changes* as important characteristics of the investigated cases calls for deliberate generalisations concerning the 'contents' orientation of the great revolutions. These 'eternal themes' of great revolutions come forward in a concrete geographic and national area and in a concrete phase of the revolutionary process in many cases separately, or even in mutual conflicts, but in any of the actual historical revolutionary processes all of them have played their role and have fulfilled that what Krejčí calls 'outcome', that is, the historical result of the revolution.

Regardless of these comments, the study of Professor Krejčí on the great revolutions represents an important contribution of Czech social science to the cognition in one of the crucial fields, that is, in the theory of societal change. At the same time, it makes for instructive and interesting reading.

Pavel Machonin

Miroslav Novák: Une transition démocratique exemplaire? L'émergence d'un système de partis dans les Pays tchèques [An exemplary transition to democracy? The emergence of a party system in Czech countries]

Prague, Centre Français de Recherche en Sciences Sociales 1997, 275 p.

Miroslav Novák, Czech political scientist specialised in comparative politics, is specialised particularly in questions of party system and political parties (see his *Systémy politických*

stran, SLON 1998). This book has been written in French, which is rather uncommon, but for the French reader, it makes for welcome reading and has to be commended. Especially so, since it is presented to a readership which is not highly informed on contemporary Czech affairs, that is, life after the 'Velvet Revolution'.

The richness of political life in the emerging party system in the Czech Lands makes the creation of such a work a demanding task. Therefore, this book is composed of six chapters. The first five are a study of the devel-

opment of the party system in Czechoslovakia (although the study is accented more towards the Czech development) from the beginning of the Civic Forum (OF) to the split of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1992. These chapters are very interesting, particularly the last, since the political party (the ODS on the Czech side, and the HZDS on the Slovak side) clearly played an important role in the dislocation of the common Czechoslovak state.

Three chapters are dedicated to the "first steps of Civic Forum", its "evolution" and its "end and legacy". These show how the first moments of the constituting party system are important, and the way that these played out in the Czech case. But it also shows that the others parties, that is, parties existing at that time, have been rather neglected, even if their role might now be considered important (they can be found in final chapter). Unfortunately, in this book it is not possible to find any answers to the specific problem of the National Front and the parties in it (not before, but after November 1989: how does its existence affect these parties?). The presentation of Civic Forum and its evolution shows us just one aspect of the newly constituting party system after 1989, evidently the more important and the more specific one. It should be noted that of the six parties present in the Chamber of Deputies after the elections of 1996, just one directly originated from within the ranks of OF (the ODS – Civic Democratic Party), two others have links with the OF (the ODA i.e. the Civic Democratic Alliance and perhaps the Social Democratic ČSSD) because of the presence of certain personalities who played a role in OF, the three others, the Communist Party (KSČM), the Republican party (SPR-RSČ), and the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), were from the beginning completely distinct from the OF. The priority given by the author to Civic Forum, and its development, does not really explain this political scene, and therefore the reader has to wait until the last chapter in order to understand the situation of the contemporary Czech party system (that is, until autumn 1997). The inner transformation of OF clearly shows the reconstruction of the logic and importance of a political party in a modern political pluralist system.

However, a problem not treated in this book is the question of the difference between political party and political movement, and the logic placed in the fact that OF was a 'movement' (particularly in its relations with the political parties existing or reforming at that time), and the legal consequences of this dilemma. Another interesting problem is that at its inception OF seemed permeated by an anti-party sentiment, which is not merely due to its opposition to the former Communist Party.

The problem of systems in transition is that it is not a specific phenomenon, that is to say the 'playing field' is not stable. The system, as shown by Miroslav Novák, is continuously modified by its elements (the parties, the leaders of the various political currents etc.), and it is very difficult to understand each evolution. Nevertheless, it shows the process of party system development. Even if the speed of evolution has seemingly slowed recently, the quick pace of modification is still hard to anticipate. That is perhaps the reason why the author did not foresee the evolution of the party system of the Czech Republic after autumn 1997; the book was written at a time when the signs were not really visible (such an evolution was not expected). Moreover, the election of June 1998 provided some rather unanticipated results (the most significant being the failure of the extremist Republican Party). This is another reason to bear in mind that it is a study about a changing subject, and therefore can only be read for what it is – a study of the beginning of the late post-communist Czech party system. As the title indicates, it is 'only' the emergence of a party system. The evolution is not complete (even if the beginning may have ended) and, as such, it can not be read as a final result.

To a certain degree, the application of the 'classic' typologies of political parties and party systems seems to have been used by the author without reference to its usability in the framework of a system in transition: he seems to be too hurried to allow to the new party system a label of (western) 'normality'. For example, is the ODS really a 'voters party' in the way meant by Jean Charlot? Another French political scientist, George Lavau, specialist of the French Communist Party, is men-