timely. However, currently in the environment of social scientists it would be read as a stimulus for close cooperation with lawyers and legal historians who offer us necessary aspects of the cohabitation of majorities and minorities.

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Oldřich Tůma a Tomáš Vilímek (Eds.): OPOZICE A SPOLEČNOST PO ROCE 1948. ČESKÁ SPOLEČNOST PO ROCE 1945. [Opposition and Society after 1948. Czech Society after 1945], vol. 6.

Prague: Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic v. v. i., 2009, 224 pp.

The sixth volume in the series *Czech Society after 1945* presents four good quality empirically founded studies dedicated to burning questions of Czech society after the February Revolution of 1948. The first study by Květa Jechová is the result of a long-term project about Czech and Slovak women at the time of so-called real socialism. The author's basic premise is that the history of the emancipation of women presents the possibility of looking into the history of the entire society. However Jechová, accepting the optic of gender, as one of the first researchers (unforunately it is still true that writing of the historiography of women is, to a great extent, the domain of women[1]) opened up in her text not only the question of the relations of society to maternity, including its reaction to decreasing childbirth in the 1960s and the problematics of maternity leave, but also the highly sensitive (and therefore discussed in every regime) question of birth control and abortion. One can only regret that her study did not allow voices to be heard of those who actually experienced wanted and unwanted maternity. Jechová depended mainly on the analysis of sources of women's institutions of the time, Communist Party committees, legislation of the time discussed in the press and samizdat publications, and of sociological research of the State Commission on Population. On the basis of these fundamental sources she was able to outline the history of women's emancipation based on the indicator of reproduction. Furthermore, she analyzed the development of state population policies and, finally, she also destroyed the popular myth about the so-called Husák children. In a sensitive analysis, the apparent success of the normalization of the regime appears as a result of the fact that strong postwar generations came into their reproductive years as well as the consequence of the resonance of the reforms of the '60s, in which the model of state support for families with children was worked on, a model that completely, in an unplanned way, served to establish normalization. However, Jechová also refuted the myth of the mechanical connection between the employment of women and the drop in the number of children. At the same time she pointed

[1] Cf. also the survey of basic work about maternity, employment and public activity of women by which Jechová was inspired..

out the discussion about the profitability of women's employment. To these problematics she organically connected the development of abortion legislation (including the insufficient use of modern birth control in the Czech society) with key changes in 1950; abortion was legalized for health reasons), in 1957 (abortion could be performed for other reasons than health reasons; criminalization for abortions was abolished and abortion committees were established),and in 1986 (the right to an abortion became a women's right; the abortion committees were abolished as ineffective and professionally and ethically questionable institutions). As one of the first, Jechová called attention to so-called unwanted children, unloved children. The repeatedly quoted statement of the Canadian sociologist Alena Heitlinger can be very surprising: that education for parenthood in Czechoslovakia at the time of normalization was more open, more specialized and more systematic than in Western states. It would be worth exploring this thesis, however, in connection with the little influence of churches in modern Czech society.

The second study of political history was done by Zdeněk Kárník. In it, the well-known historian clarified the circumstances and echoes of the "merging" conference of the left-wing of the Social Democrats four months after the February Revolution of 1948. Kárník focused on the motives for merging, the relation of the Communists to the former Social Democrats (mistrust even touched Zdeněk Fierlinger, who himself was one of the most determined initiators of the coalition) and in the varied two-hundred-thousand member group of the "unmerged," part of whom established the party in exile. Those who remained home were persecuted by the state security, which was also interested in emigrants. Some of the unmerged Social Democrats actually developed illegal activity although, however, there were no conditions for their persecution in the framework of a trumped-up mass trial.

While Kárník used archival material and correspondence of Social Democrats, Milan Otáhal attempted to interpret 33 oral-history interviews with workers who experienced normalization. Interviews, realized in the framework of Miroslav Vaněk's project concerning Czech society during normalization through the optic of intelligence and of representatives of workers' professions, turned around their experiences of political and public events of the 1960s, mainly the occupation, the Velvet Revolution, listening to Western radio during normalization and the relations of this group toward socialism, the regime, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, trade unions, formal elections, political celebrations and socialist medals and toward the opposition movement. Otáhal's interpretation confirmed that workers represented a heterogeneous group which, however, as a whole, carved out interest in public events (an exception was presented by the positive acceptance of the revival process and shock over the occupation) and it was interested mainly in its own standard of living and social securities (from here disappointment with the developments after 1989 emerged). Therefore holidays organized by the trade unions and supposedly

better relations among people during normalization earned positive appraisal. In contrast to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, however, the unions had great prestige among workers. An ambivalent position, then, was taken by people in relation to the May Day celebration, but they had a rather positive relation to celebration of International Women's Day and to decorations for workers' performance. In general it is possible to state that the absence of civic freedom bothered people less than the consequences of the clumsy socialist economy. Otáhal's text enables us to understand better the mentality of the people after 1989; although he does not work with the older mentality of the bearers of workers' professions, the picture of the worker as a conscious Social Democrat striving for his own rights is probably only an untrue myth (being in politics was always the privilege of worker leaders); he notices only insufficiently the family basics of the informants and he does not differ between men's and women's views.

The collection concludes with a study by Tomáš Vilímek of the relations between Czech society and the opposition that governing organs successfully separated from the majority of society. The author, who most persistently followed the task given by the title of the volume, stated that most people strove for a satisfactory life and for the construction of family welfare which they did not want to threaten with opposition activity. A mutual agreement with the regime was then confirmed by a series of rituals; however research of public opinion and other sources – despite its discussibility – signalized the growing dissatisfaction of the people with the regime. An analysis of the Charta (Charter) documents, then, showed its connection with social problems, but also the fear of some of the Chartists of the ghettoization of their group. The relation of society to Charta was characterized by alleged interest, hidden sympathy, fear and lack of understanding, a minimum of knowledge. It would, however, be interesting to compare this scale of Czech attitudes with the attitudes of other national societies toward their own opposition; mainly, however, it should be attitudes anchored in the family, children of a family of a pragmatic party leader and/or of a family affected by the regime.

In conclusion it is possible to state that the four studies presented here, however connected to a rather inconsistent whole, offer a desirably critical view of Czech society after 1945. Thus, undoubtedly there can be important building stones for a large future monograph about postwar Czech society and perhaps also a monograph comparing the development in various states of the Soviet blok. It is actually evident that the circumstances of the creation of opposition and its acceptance for the most part have their roots in the processes of the formation of modern nations.

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