

SUMMARY

On applying the concept of totalitarianism to communist systems: general problems and Czech conditions

Miroslav Novák

The author gives reasons why communist systems, at least in certain periods, are the ones closest to the ideal type of totalitarianism as described by Max Weber. With reference to authors such as Bertrand Badie, Ernest Gellner, Pierre Kende and Jean Leca, the author points out that communism (which is a political rather than economic system) appears throughout history in a wide variety of cultural, economic and other contexts, and therefore its manifest totalitarian tendencies cannot be adequately explained by the seemingly unfavorable terrain of the experiment. In the Soviet Union, the ideal type of totalitarianism applies not only to Stalin's government, but to Lenin's as well. As for communism in the Czech lands, a large majority of its characteristics matched totalitarianism, while only a small minority of its features matched authoritarianism, and not only in the period up to Stalin and Gottwald's deaths, but also during the peak of normalization.

Fascism as a radical people's revolution

Notes on the nature of ideological regimes with regard to post-war developments in Czechoslovakia, part I.

Petr Placák

The author includes events in Czechoslovakia between 1945–1948 in a pan-European context of the non-democratic mass movements at the end of and after the First World War. These movements were called fascist, with the term fascism understood primarily as political activism, which refers to the abstract concept of people and does not feel limited by any existing constitutional, legal, social, or other order. The first of the two parts of the study is focused primarily on comparing German National Socialism with Stalinist Communism and the Soviet Union. This comparison (named by subchapter – Restrictions of the Period, Propaganda As Part of Democratic Discourse, Antidemocratic Fascism, The Mother of War, The New Man, Anticapitalism As a Link, Classless Society, The Nature of the Movement, Absolute Democracy, The Leadership Principle, The Great War in Czechoslovakia) is the starting point for the author to understand the process of the Communist takeover of post-war Czechoslovakia.

The legal code after 1989 and historical memory

Kamil Nedvědický

This study deals with the issue of embedding Czech historical memory in legal norms adopted after 1989. It chronologically describes the laws and other legal acts enacted as part of the “post-November” policy to try to correct the wrongs committed in communist Czechoslovakia, and it monitors the impact of lustration, rehabilitation and restitution. The author also addresses the practical application of this legislation, including its reflection in the jurisprudence of courts, and he comments on discontinuous laws such as Act No. 198/1993 Coll., Illegality of the communist regime and Resistance to it. This law became a pillar of the process “dealing with the past”, both by evaluating the communist regime (illegitimate, criminal and reprehensible) and exonerating and celebrating its active opponents. Other specific examples include the controversy surrounding fixing the date (25 February 1948) from which the political regime after 1989 would offer redress. He also addresses archives and institutions of historical memory, where he mentions the difficult process of making full access to the written sources of the communist security forces embedded in law and the creation of specialized bodies of the institutionalized memory of the nation, the legal dimension of anti-communist resistance, and the international context of these issues.