

Review on Anna Pererva's master thesis *Perception of the Soviet Heritage in Czech Republic*, Faculty of Arts, University of Hradec Králové, 2017, 134 pp.

The reviewed master thesis is devoted to perception of the soviet heritage in the Czech Republic. It is divided into four main chapters which represent a backbone of the whole theses. The first one is concerned with different economic, political and geopolitical aspects of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1985. The second one is focused on changing character of the Soviet civilization. The third one attempts to cope with question of Czech approaches to so called communist past and the fourth one is based on sociological questionnaire.

Despite the promising title and introduction, the thesis does not properly fulfill what it promises. It is rather a mix of different perspectives than a logically structured text. Whereas the first three parts of the thesis are more or less historical, the fourth one is based on empirical survey. At the same time, it is not clear what links all parts together and the analysis of the questionnaire is limited to a few paragraphs of the conclusion. Why the historical description ends in 1985 and why certain aspects were included and some not remains unexplained. Simultaneously, it seems that the main argument is based on an intuitive and historically incorrect presumption according to which Czechoslovak modernization followed the Soviet Stalinist project. In fact, Czechoslovak modernization was deeply enrooted into 19th century development and Stalinism did not represent here a radical civilizational shift as in other parts of East-Central Europe; such question as industrialization, exploitation of nature or urbanization were part of the Czech (less of the Slovak) reality far before Stalinism. The thesis would be more convincing had the author be concentrated on less but clearly chosen aspects of the Soviet influences. The scholarly quality of the text would be also increased by standard style of quotation (regardless if Chicago style or classic footnotes). It is not clear in many cases if the author paraphrases the argument of other scholars or if she directly cites them; at the same time, most of her references are unclear and the reader can only speculate what are the sources.

Despite all the above mentioned critical assessments, I recommend the thesis to be defended and leave the most problematic parts for the discussion.

In Prague, August 21, 2017

Jan Mervart