

Martin Potůček: *Anatomie komunismu*. Skutečný příběh jedné rodiny. [Anatomy of Communism: The True Story of One Family.] Univerzita Karlova, Nakladatelství Karolinum. Praha 2022. 456 S. ISBN 978-80-246-5171-2. (Kč 490,—)

Martin Potůček (*1948) is not a historian but a prominent Czech sociologist and university lecturer. In addition to his successful tenure at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University, he has been involved primarily as the chairman of the Expert Commission on Pension Reform and a member of the Commission for Fair Pensions (2014–2021). Both expert commissions attempted to offer politicians some guidance on how they should reform the Czech pension system. Thanks to these activities at the interface between science and politics, P. has become a publicly known and respected figure in the Czech Republic.

However, it is much less known that Potůček is the son of Jarmila Taussigová (1914–2011), a communist activist who was imprisoned for her political activities by both the Nazi (1941–1945) and the Communist (1951–1960) security apparatus; she spent an additional eight years demanding her rehabilitation. P. could not be uninfluenced by these facts, which also deeply affected all the people around him. The whole book, which can be read as an autobiography, is pervaded by the story of a boy and man who was deprived of the most important person in his life at the age of three and only got her back at the age of twelve. Little Martin grew up with no news of his mother, who seemed to have ceased to exist after her imprisonment and the divorce of his parents. Understandably, he was, like any child of school age would be, all the more interested in his mother's fate, and the story he pieced together from scraps of information led to his conviction that she was innocent. After Taussigová's release from prison, the then twelve-year-old P. found himself in the difficult position of having to choose which of his parents with which to live. He chose his mother mainly because she was alone, while his father had a new family. It meant sharing a household in his most vulnerable years with a parolee, but still a convicted and publicly bullied person, who was vainly seeking justice. This everyday experience certainly formed the basis of the motivation for the book under review.

The apparent injustice on the part of the political leadership of the state and the ambiguity surrounding the activities of Jarmila Taussigová have led P. to believe that he must be as open as possible. The book contains the life stories of three people, told by the son about himself and his parents, based on documents from family and public archives, professional literature, correspondence, and personal testimonies. This is why it is a revelatory and absorbing account, which, according to the author, should "serve mainly as an account of how people's lives and relationships could be affected by an uncritical belief in Communism, not unlike a religious rapture" (p. 13).

The most interesting part of the book is the author's analysis of Taussigová's activities in the Communist movement. She had already become a member of the Communist Party before the war, but the decisive impulse for her to become an activist came when her first husband, František Taussig, died in a Nazi execution ground. Immediately after the war, she joined the central Communist apparatus. There, from December 1948 until November 1951, she worked as a member and then chairwoman of the Commission for Party Control, to which she was nominated by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Rudolf Slánský. She took part in investigations in regional, district, and departmental organizations of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, whose leading officials were then arrested by the State Security, subsequently receiving absurdly high sentences for "anti-state activities." The people affected could thus have the impression that the Party Control Commission had had them arrested, although it had no such power. Taussigová was repeatedly described as the "main figure and soul" of the Commission. P., therefore, takes issue with some of the works of one of the founders of Czech contemporary history, Karel Kaplan, who published claims about Taussigová's involvement in the production of political trials in his scholarly studies. As his key counter-argument, P. uses the personal

testimony of his mother and the results of the research of the so-called Kolder (Rehabilitation) Commission, which stated, as early as 1963, that the findings of the Commission for Party Control were intended for party management but were passed on to the State Security on the instructions of the party leadership. The latter then arrested and investigated the controlled party officials. Taussigová also stated that the repression of the party members so affected was in contradiction with the opinions of the Party Control Commission.

The most extensive part of the book is an account of the dramatic circumstances of Taussigová's arrest, detention, trial, and imprisonment, and the subsequent eight years of attempts at rehabilitation. The State Security arrested Taussigová on the same day as Slánský and expected them to be tried together. Unlike Slánský, however, Taussigová was not forced to confess, and this probably saved her life. She was not convicted until after Stalin's death in January 1954 in one of the subsequent trials; she was given 25 years for treason on trumped-up charges. During her trial, she proclaimed her innocence and rejected the charges as false. After her conviction, Taussigová attempted suicide and advised relatives in a letter to disown her. Thus, unlike most historiographical works, the book also provides an insight into the private life of the wrongfully convicted woman.

P. also notices the bizarre fateful connection between Taussigová and Antonín Novotný. While Taussigová struggled to choose between life and death for three years after her suicide attempt, Novotný became the First Secretary of the Communist Party and eventually Czechoslovakia's President. After the 20th Congress of the CPSU, Taussigová expected that she would soon be released, but she was cruelly disappointed. From June 1956 onwards, Novotný referred to her as one of the main culprits in the political trials, in order to obscure the responsibility of the party leadership. The first man in the state did not stop publicly smearing Taussigová until the 1960s and, unlike other Communists who had been affected, refused to rehabilitate her. According to Novotný, Taussigová was "rightly" in jail because, according to a peculiar "mill theory," she was involved in turning the wheel of political trials.

P.'s account of Taussigová culminates with Novotný's departure from office in January 1968. A week after Alexander Dubček's ascension, the charges were dropped and Taussigová was subsequently rehabilitated. On the other hand, Novotný had to face merciless criticism for his previous attitude toward rehabilitation at the May 1968 meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The plenum then voted to suspend his membership in the Party, a painful measure for him. The same plenum, however, refused to lift the Party's punishment for Taussigová because she had been allegedly "involved in the preparation of political trials and illegalities."¹ She never received Party rehabilitation, and even after 1989, scholars did not attempt to re-evaluate her role in the trials.

This book is an obvious and unconcealed attempt to rehabilitate the image of Jarmila Taussigová in historiography. It could be inspiring for the reader in several ways. First of all, it shows the consequences of the demise of the rule of law and its effects on specific individuals. Using the example of a close family member, the author demonstrates how the combination of party, security, and judicial agendas created an important instrument of despotism and arbitrary acts. The transformation of commonly practiced party criticism into the criminal prosecution of individual people is presented here as a systemic phenomenon. This is why it is so difficult to distinguish between competence and responsibility. In

1 Zasedání ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa 29. května – 1. června 1968: Stenografický zápis [Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 29 May – 1 June 1968: Stenographic Record], in: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, Sběrka Komise vlády ČSFR pro analýzu událostí let 1967–1970 [Institute for Contemporary History of the CAS, Collection of the Commission of the Government of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic for the Analysis of the Events of 1967–1970], sign. D IV/26, p. 16.

the book, P. urgently raises the Jaspersian question of guilt, which he poses to both himself and the reader, as well as to the historical community.

Another contribution of the book can be seen in the above-mentioned polemic with Kaplan (but also with Jiří Pernes). Based on well-chosen arguments, P. calls for a reinterpretation and a different view on the political trials. He has been conducting a polemic against Kaplan since 1968, although he otherwise acknowledges his work and relies on the results of Kaplan's research in the reviewed book. He also points out that some of his conclusions were drawn in the context of the 1963 investigations of the Kolder Commission and that it is time for a more detailed analysis. P.'s extraordinary book could thus contribute to the beginning of new research.

Praha

Jiří Hoppe

Dějiny Československé akademie věd I (1952–1962). [Geschichte der Tschechoslowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften I (1952–1962.) Hrsg. von Martin Franc, Věra Dvořáčková u. a. Academia – Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR. Praha 2019. 831 S., 449 Ill. ISBN 978-80-200-3053-5.

Mit dem Langzeitprojekt „Geschichte der Tschechoslowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1953–1992“, das am Masaryk-Institut und -Archiv der Tschechischen Akademie der Wissenschaften angesiedelt ist, setzt sich das Autorinnen- und Autorenkollektiv um Martin Franc und Věra Dvořáčková ambitionierte Ziele. Die Geschichte der Tschechoslowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Československá akademie věd, ČSAV) soll für den gesamten Zeitraum ihrer Existenz (1952/53–1992) untersucht, aus vielfältigen thematischen und methodischen Perspektiven beleuchtet und für eine breite Leserschaft verständlich aufbereitet werden. 2019 wurde der erste der vier geplanten Bände vorgelegt, der die Jahre 1952–1962 umfasst. Damit nimmt er die wichtige Phase der Gründung, Formierung und Stabilisierung der ČSAV in den Blick.

Vorweg sei gesagt, dass es den Autorinnen und Autoren in diesem ersten Band weitgehend gelingt, ihren Anspruch einzulösen und der Komplexität der Akademie gerecht zu werden: Als wichtigste Repräsentantin der tschechoslowakischen Wissenschaft sollte sie zentrale Funktionen in der Wissenschaftsplanung und -koordination wahrnehmen, und deren Institute betrieben Forschung in verschiedenen Wissenschaftsdisziplinen. Die Darstellung vermag es, vereinfachende Vorstellungen über die ČSAV, die des Öfteren als fremder, sowjetischer Import oder auch als Instrument kommunistischer Wissenschaftspolitik galt, zu korrigieren. So wird sowohl für die Akademie als Ganzes als auch für ihre Institute die Frage der (Dis-)Kontinuität mit der Wissenschaft vor der kommunistischen Machtübernahme 1948 ausführlich diskutiert. Es wird gezeigt, dass gerade in den Anfangsjahren wissenschaftliche Leistungen wichtiger als Parteizugehörigkeit waren, wodurch Kontinuität gewährleistet war. Erst zu Beginn der 1960er Jahre habe sich der Anteil der Kommunisten unter den Akademiemitgliedern – im untersuchten Zeitraum ausschließlich Männer – erhöht. Zudem ermöglicht die Analyse auf der Ebene der Institute einen differenzierten Blick. Der Befund, dass die Gesellschaftswissenschaften tendenziell von Diskontinuität mehr betroffen waren als die Natur- und Technikwissenschaften, ist vielleicht nicht überraschend, wird aber durch das Beispiel der Biologie, auf die sich ideologische Deformationen erheblich auswirkten, präzisiert.

Eine zweite Frage, die sich wie ein roter Faden durch das Buch zieht, betrifft das Verhältnis zwischen der ČSAV und der kommunistischen Politik. Entgegen einigen Klischees war das Verhältnis schon seit der Gründung der ČSAV 1952 und der Aufnahme ihrer Tätigkeit 1953 keineswegs frei von Konflikten. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit lagen oft weit auseinander, was zu häufigen Umstrukturierungen und Kompetenzverschiebungen führte. Folgerichtig wurde als Endpunkt des ersten Bandes das Jahr 1962 gewählt, das zwar in politischer und gesellschaftlicher Hinsicht wenig hervorstach, aber den Hrsg. zufolge für die ČSAV eine enorme Bedeutung hatte. Der Tod des ersten Akademiepräsidenten Zdeněk