ligion. Chicago – London 1969: University of Chicago Press, p. iii, 65), the issue of the so-called secular/implicit religions, which includes not only totalitarian ideologies but also modern science (see Mary Midgley: *Evolution as a Religion. Strange Hopes and Stranger Fears.* London – New York 2002: Routledge), and others. The latter overlooked topic would be of great importance to the post-communist societies, especially over the course of the enlargement of the European Union and the contemporary discussion on common 'European values', but it must not be addressed from only the narrow historical perspective (as it has begun to be done, for example, by René Rémond: *Religion et société en Europe.* Paris 1998: Éditions du Seuil). Here I am coming back to the issue I started my review with – the importance of changing the over-historicised and the exclusively elsewhere-centred perspective in Central European science. The book I have described in these lines would thus seem an important contribution to our theoretical and methodological struggle for a genuinely modern scientific study of religions and their social impact.

Zdeněk R. Nešpor

Tomáš Kostelecký: *Political Parties after Communism. Developments in East-Central Europe*

Washington, D.C. Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore – London 2002: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 213 p.

Kostelecký's book comes across as impressive. The Contents of the book catches the reader's attention with its interesting selection of subjects and logical ordering of the text into six chapters: 1. An Overview of Party Development (1850–1989); 2. A New Day: Parties in the Post-Communist Period (1990 to the Present); 3. The Party System: A Product of a Country's History and Culture? 4. The Party System: A Reflection of Social Cleavages? 5. The Party System: A Product of the Rules of the Game? 6. Political Party Development in Post-Communist East-Central Europe: In Search of General Patterns. The potential reader is also drawn in by the book's ambition of dealing with four countries in Central Europe – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia: "This text looks at party development in the post-Communist era in East-Central Europe from a comparative perspective, thereby avoiding the traditional concentration on domestic problems... In doing so, it examines the relationships between party development in the post-Communist era and the underlying historical, cultural, socio-economic, and juridical factors, and then assesses the importance of those relationship both in each country and in the region as a whole." (p. 6) The task perhaps could not have been formulated in a more attractive manner, or in a more exacting and extensive one. Given this fact, and given the limited amount of space to work with, the reviewer is unable to look at all four of the countries, but must limit the focus here to only the Czech Republic and the overall extent to which the author has fulfilled his aim.

The book presents the four countries, especially in the first three chapters, with the aid of parallel descriptions rather than analytically or in a comparative analysis. The descriptive parallels also dominate in the ensuing chapters in which the author considers the presented information in greater detail. For the most part the information is interesting, and thus the reader need not always notice that the text is actually dealing with something other than what was indicated in the Contents or Introduction. According to these, the text should be looking at political parties, but in fact it is discussing the individual countries in general and the various problems the countries are experiencing, which here includes the rate of abortion, even though it could not always be said that this is a subject that is usually dealt with in relation to how political parties are organised and function. In the book, the usual termi-

nology, perspectives and approaches whereby the subject of political parties is typically formulated, analysed and presented, are not employed.

This is caused by the approach the author has chosen to take and the method he uses to tackle the subject. The subject cannot be addressed without the appropriate terminology and a starting, defined, interpretative frame of reference, sustained by one of the theories or models of democratic transformation, which would systematically structure, limit, and focus the subject into comparable sub-topics and sections while preserving their generalising capacity. Owing to the absence of any principle of this kind, despite the author's attempts at a certain logic, the country facts and the material often relate to the subject of political parties only remotely. In this situation it is possible to speak of a comparison in the metaphorical rather than the methodological sense; the topics and information on the individual countries are often presented disproportionately and subjectively.

The use of perspectives and terms that are not clarified, obstructing an adequate assessment of the information, at times leads to a certain kind of disinformation for the non-Czech reader. When the author, for example, relatively broadly deals with Moravian regional parties, which at the end of the 1990s were almost unknown, as a part of the party system, and presents them as an example of Rokkan's centre-periphery cleavage, "although the Czech Republic is more ethnically homogeneous than Slovakia..." (p. 95), he seems unaware that the data dating from the years 1990 and 1992, which he uses to support his arguments, are not informative of the party system or the way the political system functions, but are informative rather of the political maelstrom in which various political parties were constituting themselves from the top down, and whereby the amorphous and unstable Civic Forum, i.e. a mass movement – not a political party – was taking shape. In a number of other places the author reports on the details of the countries addressed herein during the first years of the democratic transformation in the context of a fully fledged political system, in which it is possible with relative ease to clearly identify Rokkan's cleavages, and he does not realise that at that time both systems were still just emerging.

The subject area from 1850 up to the present cannot be addressed to a satisfactory degree without German – and in the case of a Czech author also Czech – sources and literature. Despite the extensive domestic literature on the indicated period, the author also, and especially for earlier periods, draws uncritically on foreign literature in English. The result is an entirely distorted picture of the Czech and Slovak level of research and particularly of some Czech and Slovak topics and facts, on which distorted interpretations or direct evaluations, drawn from the anti-democratic criticism of the 1930s and 1940s, and even the 1950s (communist ideology), have circulated for years abroad, and which have ultimately evolved into generally accepted stereotypes. For almost sixty years Czech researchers were unable to react to these stereotypes in an international forum and owing to censors and closed archives they were unable to even professionally address these subjects.

One of the more widespread stereotypes is that of The Five, as a sort of junta of political parties restricting Czechoslovak democracy. T. Kostelecký accepts it: "Among them [Czechoslovak parties] the most powerful were the five parties *Pětka*, The Five...". "For most of the period, the strongest party within the Pětka ...". (p. 21) In reality, The Five was an unofficial institution of talks between the leaders of the five main parliamentary parties on parliamentary tactics, which on the contrary contributed to the strengthening of democracy. It emerged out of the predicament parliamentarism was in during the early post-war years of the new state. It was by no means specific to the Czechoslovak Republic, and as it lasted from 1920 until March

1926 it cannot even be considered as a systemic characteristic of the political system of inter-war Czechoslovak democracy. (For more, see Eva Broklová, *Czechoslovak Democracy, Political System ČSR 1918–1938*, Prague 1992, p. 45–46, in Czech, with an English and German summary.)

The author overlooks altogether other fundamental Czech works on the given subject, for example, one large study by Lubomír Lipták et al.: *Politické strany na Slovensku 1860–1989* (Political Parties in Slovakia) (Bratislava 1992), and the quite extensive study by Pavel Marek et al.: *Přehled politického stranictví na území českých zemí a Československa v letech 1981 až 1998* (Political Partisanship Survey in the Czech Lands and in the Czechoslovakia), (Palackého univerzita, Olomouc 1998), on political parties in the Czech lands from the mid-1990s. But, as far as the Czech subject area is concerned, even in English the author draws on only partial studies. He positively evaluates the *concept of multidimensional social status* [Kostelecký 2002: 107], and presents authors who have made use of this concept (Lenski 1954; Kolosi 1984; Machonin et al. 1996), but he neglects to cite one basic study – about twenty years older – of Czechoslovak sociology, a macrosociological, computer-processed (in 1968) survey of social stratification, published in the book titled *Czechoslovak Society. Sociological Analysis of Social Stratification*, edited by Pavel Machonin et. al. (Bratislava 1969). Other of the author's references to sources are not always reliable.

However, one basic distortion is the acceptance of the ethnic-evaluative and interpretative perspective instead of the civic perspective, which the inter-war Czechoslovak democracy accepted in the ideological connection to democracy, especially American. Unlike the neighbouring countries, this naturally enabled the country to develop its own social structure without any considerable role for Czech feudal elements, as well as a structure of values and attitudes towards Austro-Hungarian and German feudal elements corresponding to this. The author acknowledges the bourgeois-industrial Czech foundation, but he interprets its basic emancipatory paradigm as an ethnic paradigm, just as it is interpreted by the ever more influential 'undemocratic thought' [see Kurt Sontheimer: *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, dtv München, 1983], and his understanding of the nation is as an ethnic group comprised of tribes and not as a civic and democratic paradigm. This interpretation of the author is succinctly expressed in the following statements: "By proclaiming itself a nation-states of the 'Czechoslovak nation', Czechoslovakia should defend its existence on the principle of national self-determination." However, it could not escape any impartial reader of the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1920 that the Czechoslovak nation is not declared within the constitution in ethnic terms but in civic terms. The author's interpretation that follows here, regarding constitutional details, founded on the acceptance of the above-mentioned stereotypes, contradicts his overall stance and does not make any sense. Kostelecký writes: "The Czechoslovak constitution adopted by the Czech-dominated National Assembly in 1920 defined the state as uninational with a centralised administration. Although the constitution was basically liberal, stressing civil rights regardless of ethnicity, religion, and language, the centralised solution did not satisfy minorities, not even the Slovaks." (p. 20)

The Czechoslovak Constitution was adopted by deputies in the Revolutionary National Assembly, which had been established following the results of the elections in 1911, and which German representatives refused to enter. It included 52 representatives from the Slovak club. The Czechoslovak nation, mentioned in the preamble, is not a single nation in the sense of the ethnic group, but a political, state nation comprised of the population on the territory of the Czech lands, Slovakia, and Ruthenia in correspondence with the peace agreement. The state is not defined in the constitution as un-

inational but as a 'democratic republic'. Chapter Six is devoted to the defence of *national*, religious, and racial minorities. Public administration, which the author refers to as 'centralised administration', is not addressed in the Constitution. Chapter Three concludes with a section entitled Ministries and Lower Offices. It is appropriate to refer to the administration as unified. Following the First World War the trend towards a unified state generally asserted itself, which was also connected with the introduction of proportional elections. In 1927, with the support of the HSĽS (Slovak Catholic Party) and German activist parties, administrative reform was passed, which introduced a provincial system. The bureaucracy in the administration was not political and was thus also acceptable for example to the Germans (according to reports of the German ambassador to Prague, Waltr Koch). Autonomous elements (elected) made up two-thirds of the members in the councils; one-third was named by the minister of the interior and the government. This was to guarantee the professional level of the councils.

The author's statement about 'stressing civil rights regardless of ethnicity, religion, and language', as cited above, makes no sense in the light of paragraph 106 in the constitution: "All inhabitants of the Republic of Czechoslovakia enjoy... complete and absolute protection of their lives and freedoms, regardless of their origin, state affiliation, language, race or religion". Paragraph 128 of the constitution reads: "All state citizens of the Republic of Czechoslovakia are fully equal before the law and in enjoy the same civic and political rights *regardless of their race, language or religion*". The author interprets the statement in the above-cited text in the exact opposite way. Perhaps it would be useful to also point out that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that the author also refers to was, at the time when the constitution was drawn up, after the First World War, considered to be superfluous content – it was such a given that it was often not included in the constitution. That the inclusion of this passage in the Czechoslovak constitution was a correct move proved itself in later developments, when human rights in many states were suppressed.

We have here devoted more attention to the author's approach and outcome because he is not unique among that generation, which is currently in its productive age, but was formed and socialised during the twenty years after the Prague Spring in 1968, i.e. in the period of inaccessible archives, banned authors and books, and a general embargo on information, so that the authors of this generation often evoke the sense that no suitable sources, materials, and analyses exist at home. We have also intended to show here that this kind of stance and research approach does not lead to systematic, analytic, comparative knowledge, but rather to an unsystematic description and inadequate generalisations.

Despite what has been indicated here, this is an informative book written by a talented and promising young author, of whom we can still expect many important and interesting contributions.

Lubomír Brokl

Martin Greiffenhagen, Sylvia Greiffenhagen (eds.): *Handwörterbuch zur politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*
Wiesbaden 2002: Westdeutscher Verlag, 674 p.

Political culture has become a favorite topic of much writing in the field of political science and sociology, ever since Gabriel Almond published his seminal works on the subject in the late 1950s and 1960s. However, as the first years of political-culture research went by, some of the original hopes related to the concept's usefulness in answering central questions emerging from the scientific study of the political had to be abandoned, and an ill-founded optimism gave way