

Abstract

Dissertation: The Making of „Democratic Socialism“. Party Historiography of 50's and 60's Between Stalinism and Reform Communism

The aim of this dissertation is to analyze the development of the Party historiography in the 50's and 60's. The story of Party historiography starts in the early 50's when it was created as a brand new revolutionary historiography deep rooted in the structure of the Communist party. This new historiographical project had to deal with the history of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and labour movement.

The Party historiography had reflected the changes in the actual policy of Czechoslovak communism. It is possible to distinguish the stalinist, the post-stalinist and the reform communist period of the Party historiography development. In the first half of the 50's Party historiography was a part of Party propaganda. After 1956 Party historians developed the scientific paradigm of Party historiography which contained also obligatory post-stalinist interpretation framework for writing about the Communist party past. In the 60's this historiographical paradigm broke down under the strong criticism, which was led from the reform communist positions. So called Reform historiography of the 60's developed a new historiographical narrative. It was based upon belief in the existence of „specific Czechoslovak road to socialism“ and the continuity of „democratic socialism“ in the modern Czechoslovak history.

This dissertation analyzes the Party historiography from three closely related perspectives. It concerns with the development of the Institute for History of Communist Party (from 1968 Institute for History of Socialism), which was the central institution of Party historiography. Second theme of this dissertation are changes of Party historiography social background and the relationship between the Party historiography and the Party politics in the 50's and 60's. The important part of this dissertation analyzes the historiographical writing of Party historians.

The aim of this work is to discuss the historiography as a culture and socio-political phenomenon. It analyzes the development of the reform communist historical thinking in the context of Czechoslovak destalinization. In the 60's the Party historiography became a historiographical counterpart of political project of reform communism. So called reform historiography made the new historiographical narrative of „democratic socialism“, which

served as a device for the historical legitimization of Czechoslovak reform communism. The important historians also took part in the reform communist politics during so called Prague Spring of 1968.

The Institute for History of Socialism was terminated in the year 1970. Reform historiography was labeled as a historiographical instrument of „right-opportunist deviation“. Reform communist historians were expelled from the Party and fired from their jobs during the first wave of normalization cleansings.