

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE**  
**Fakulta sociálních věd**  
**Institut mezinárodních studií**

**PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE**  
**(Posudek oponenta)**

Práci předložila studentka: Elisabeth Anna Hobl

Název práce: **Changing the interpretation of monuments for the purpose of influencing the Czechoslovak collective identity through *Rudé Právo* and presidential speeches (1948-1957)**

Oponoval (u externích oponentů uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):  
PhDr. Ondřej Matějka Ph.D.

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):

The main goal of this MA thesis is to follow the process of creation and/or transformation of meanings of monuments, events, historical figures by the representatives of the Czechoslovak communist dictatorship having for the objective to assure the legitimacy and credibility of the regime and *in fine* to generate loyalty of the population vis-à-vis the regime. The author, who chose to analyse two main primary sources – the daily *Rudé právo* and presidential speeches, decided to trace this process in three particular cases: Bethlehem Chapel, Monument of National Liberation and Monument of Soviet Tank Drivers.

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):

In her theoretical introduction Ms. Lobl demonstrates a relatively clear grasp of concepts relevant to the field of the study of collective memory. She also chooses appropriate methodology (discourse analysis) and tries to systematically apply the identical analytical framework in three case studies. It is also important to underline that she courageously worked through a relatively wide corpus of texts in Czech.

As for the reconstruction of historical contexts, she does not include certain important aspects (such as the formation of several key *topoi* of Czech nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century without which it is not really possible to understand the discursive efforts of Communist propagandists in the 1950s) and she, unfortunately, does not completely avoid certain excessive generalisation and gross oversimplifications (see for instance the rather controversial interpretation of Czechoslovak anti-Nazi resistance during the WW2, p.88).

3. FORMÁLNÍ A JAZYKOVÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (jazykový projev, správnost citace a odkazů na literaturu, grafická úprava, formální náležitosti práce apod.):

We can certainly excuse numerous errors in spelling in Czech expressions (even though the systematic use of „husitcké“ – p. 5, 36, 41 etc. - becomes rather irritating). The relatively high frequency of spelling and grammar mistakes in English seems to show, however, that Ms Lobl did not proof-read her text with necessary attentiveness. From the formal perspective, there is a serious shortcoming in the presentation of bibliography – in fact, the author does not differentiate between sources and literature.

4. STRUČNÝ KOMENTÁŘ HODNOTITELE (celkový dojem z bakalářské práce, silné a slabé stránky, originalita myšlenek, naplnění cíle apod.):

The main weakness of the thesis consists in its superficiality and certain banality: the author does not really problematize the (unsurprising) process of re-interpretation of certain historical national(ist) “goods” (Hus, October 28<sup>th</sup> etc.) in the first decade of Czechoslovak Communist dictatorship. It is as if Ms Lobl transferred in her work the aspect that she criticizes when writing about “Marxist Leninist historiography” – namely the tendency to supply “the scientific evidence for the already given answer“ (p.14). Hence, she accumulates quotations from *Rudé právo* and presidential speeches on dark capitalist past and bright socialist future using well-known historical imagery but does not really enter in more detail into the how, who and when which could lead her into interesting insights i.e. on the evolution of the instrumentalization of Czech medieval past in the 1950s: just one example from her text – the fact that the two representatives of the Czechoslovak state present at the event that Ms. Lobl pointed out as the principal celebration of Hus anniversary in 1951 (in her

words “a united nation commemorating a national communist hero” p. 38) were NOT communists (Emanuel Šlechta, Alois Neuman) invites for deeper reflection and adequate interpretation!

It is also rather striking to observe what type of expressions the author repeatedly uses when characterizing the practices of certain representatives of the Czechoslovak Communist regime trying to create a new commemorative offer: they “hijack” symbols in order to “bury” their “initial meanings” (p. 54) and leave “stains” on these symbols and monuments which means that the “nation” (!) has to “struggle for some years [...] to diminish the stain the communist era had left on it [the monument]” (p. 55). According to Ms. Lobl, these Communist memory-makers “falsified” history (p. 76) and succeeded in creating only “artificial” sites of memory. It is absolutely fundamental that Ms. Lobl explain how she understands this “falsification” and “artificiality” (implying the existence of a “true” history and “genuine” sites of memory?) which seems, at least from my perspective, contradictory in relation to the essentially constructivist perspective to which she adheres in her main-stream analysis of collective memory practices.

#### 5. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):

Two more precise questions:

1/ Is there any substantial difference, according to the author, between commemorative practices and the (political) instrumentalization of historical symbols in Czechoslovak (communist) state in the period 1948-1957 in comparison with, for instance, the same state in interwar period? In other words, is there a fundamental relationship between the type of political regime (democracy vs dictatorship) and collective identity producing strategies?

2/ What is the Slovak component in the production of what Ms Lobl calls „Czechoslovak collective identity“ (in her three cases)?

#### 6. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA

(výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhově!):

The thesis proves the author’s ability to engage in sustained research work and demonstrates her methodological awareness. Despite the above-mentioned shortcoming the thesis can be defended and I recommend the mark “*dobře*” (good).

Datum: 23 January 2015

Podpis:

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Pozn.: Hodnocení píše k jednotlivým bodům, pokud nepíšete v textovém editoru, použijte při nedostatku místa zadní stranu nebo příložený list. V hodnocení práce se pokuste oddělit ty její nedostatky, které jsou, podle vašeho mínění, obhajobou neodstranitelné (např. chybí kritické zhodnocení pramenů a literatury), od těch věcí, které student může dobrou obhajobou napravit; poměr těchto dvou položek berte prosím v úvahu při stanovení konečné známky.