

Abstract

After 1989, Czechoslovakia, or the Czech Republic, undergoes a transformation not only political or economic, but also a broader cultural or semiotic one. Collective remembering processes are entered by multiple agents who compete with, pass, complement or contradict each other. They further differ in the extent of their institutionalization, motivation, or way of representation. Legitimizing role of the past becomes an issue of negotiation, linked to the search for different collective identities and arrival of different ideologies. The case of Bat'a can well render this process: at the beginning of the 1990s, Bat'a's historical significance is changing; he starts to be used by diverse actors in diverse representations (news articles, memoirs, non-fiction and popularizing books, documentary films, public space) for diverse purposes; at the same time, Bat'a is a synecdoche of remembering interwar Czechoslovakia and can thus become an instrument of constructed continuity. Mapping the forms of Bat'a's representations in Czech historical culture after 1989 will point to broader changes and consequences of the transformation of Czech collective remembering in its heterogeneity. The paper proceeds primarily from memory studies concepts approaches of contemporary history to the study of post-socialism.

Key words:

Bat'a, transformation, post-socialism, memory studies, cultural memory, contemporary history