

**Thesis Supervisor's report:** Stephen John Chetwode Crawley, BA (Hons.) *The Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia – Comparison of Memories in the Czech Republic and Abroad*, 88 p.

First of all, I would like to point out that this is the first foreign thesis written at the Department of Oral History – Contemporary History and that I am pleased with it. Stephen Crawley has become, willy-nilly, our 'subject for an experiment' to test if it is even possible to organize (and if so how) the study of foreign students at this department and subsequently to find out in what directions their research should go.

Stephen Crawley is attempting to analyse the events of November and December 1989 in Czechoslovakia through the eyes of English-speaking witnesses, both at the time and in retrospect, using English language sources. The goal of the thesis is to distill from the analysis notions of freedom and whether there are perceptions of change since 1989.

Since the very beginning (after Steven Crawley had decided to analyse the events of 1989), our discussions had been concerned with the sources that would have been the most appropriate for this thesis. As the best, the foreign media's reports about the events of November 1989 in Czechoslovakia were chosen. The reflection on them would be very useful. However, it was not possible in the end. In the introduction of his thesis, Stephen Crawley describes the rather hard way of their obtaining because many of them are not accessible for free. Therefore, it was necessary to modify the original plan and to use other sources, web portals, published news, articles, video sequences, photographs, etc. as well as oral history method.

Stephen Crowley focuses mostly on news articles written by various reporters; I appreciate his critical analysis of their journalistic approach (p. 14-7). Oral history method was used as a further source, and it was used skilfully. Stephen Crowley conducted two interviews with English-speaking narrators: with Terje B. Enklund and Peter Šada. T. B. Enklund, Norwegian national, was staying twice in the Czech Republic before November 1989 (1987, 1989). Enklund's life story and his visits in Czechoslovakia on two separate occasions enabled Stephen Crowley to follow the rather hectic process of societal change in the last years of the communist regime. The second narrator – Peter Šada – was born in Prague and immigrated to Canada in 1988. His retrospective view is, too, inspiring and creates conditions for specifically directed questions.

Here, Stephen Crawley mentions how difficult it was to find narrators for this project and this statement is supported with his e-mail correspondence. In the end, he found two – from our

perspective - specific narrators: the author of a book about the Czech mentality and the father of one of his pupils at the Prague secondary school. Stephen Crawley might subject the oral history part to the same analysis as he does in the chapter dealing with the newspapers' reporting. How the relations 'student – parent – teacher' can influence the interview? How is the interview influenced by the people who publish books in the same field of research (both in this case and in general)?

Stephen Crawley, in his thesis, defines, both using the sources and his analyses, the terms and areas such as socialist cognizance in the society, the Velvet revolution, how the society perceived the West. Moreover, he deals with the areas of dissent and Cold War. I believe his observations are beneficial, but I miss the similar observations about the Communist Party and the society. However, in the different part of his thesis Stephen Crawley points out that the reflections on these groups were rare in foreign media. Nevertheless, the broader analyses of this topic would be welcomed.

I find the chapter 5 'Western templates, symbols, icons and enduring images of the revolution' rather problematic. Even though I do understand why these topics are dealt with (moreover some of them are dealt with in an innovative way), I do find the chapter as a whole too broad. It seems like, Stephen Crawley tries to take a stand on everything he finds relevant (Dubcek, Havel, Gorbachev, the statue of King Wenceslas, Liberty Bell, revolution in Prague, in Olomouc and in Brno, echoes of the 1960s or characteristics of the opposition – here his analyses is based on the book *A Carnival Revolution* by Padraic Kenney). The interpretation of this chapter is necessarily asymmetrical, see: revolution in Brno vs. very interesting analysis of Gorbachev that is based on a magisterial work *The Gorbachev Factor*.

On the contrary, I find the last chapter 6 'Contribution of western Gross and organizations to the growth of freedom' as seminal. In this chapter, there are described not only the British government's attitudes towards the 'Eastern bloc', but also - till now rarely described - projects such as The Oxford Project and the Central European University. Interesting enough is, undoubtedly, also his analyses of research in the chapter 7 where the author originally considers the discussions about the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia; media prejudices and biases and attempts for iconic picturing of past events.

**My recommendation for Stephen Crawley's mark is very good (2).** I wish him all success in his future endeavours.