

Jan Matys

# **In the Riffles of Life**

Reflections of Velvet Revolution and the Tide of Events  
in the Years 1990 – 2020



## Contents:

1 The Velvet Revolution at Slušovice.....	2
2 Flats have been a good business.....	4
3 <i>Receive Travellers</i> .....	5
4 Radar in Brdy.....	7
5 The Peace Movement 2007 and Miloslav Jandík.....	8
6 Thirty Years Later.....	9
A pilgrimage to Říp.....	9
The Break-up of Civic Forum.....	10
The Political Spectrum.....	11
7 Where are we going to?.....	12

*Author (on the right) in Café Marina, Davle*



# 1 The Velvet Revolution at Slušovice

On November 17, 1989 an approved demonstration of students in Prague ended in a clash with the police. The cruelty of police and a report of killing one of the students (which turned out to be a fake later on) was the spark which initiated massive demonstrations in the streets and finally led to fall of the communist government and the rule was taken over by Civic Forum<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, as the news of Praguean events spread to whole country, people began to constitute local Civic Forums, which took over the rule from the communist party organs.

On these days I worked at the *Cooperative Farm (complex) Slušovice*.. The Slušovice Agrocomplex was something exquisite within the Eastern Bloc. It's "chairman" František Čuba had introduced a system of management inspired by the prewar *Bat'a Shoe Company*, seated in neighboring town Gottwaldov (Zlín). Mr Čuba had to overcome many obstacles made by conservative party bureaucrats, but he found supporters among open-minded party leaders. Slušovice attracted many talented people including the officers dismissed from army after the year 1968. The farm extended its activities to many fields; in addition to progressive farming methods, there were also divisions of milk products, machinery, computer research and production, etc. There was even a biochemical laboratory, which organized international congresses on molecular genetics <sup>2</sup>,

I was concerned with development and production of computers, later on I was redeployed to the foreign-trade division. That time I stayed at Piešťany (Slovakia) where I had worked before<sup>3</sup>. So I could see the march of *Velvet Revolution* from both the sides of the Moravian-Slovak border.

If one followed international events in the year 1989, he must had noticed that there was something happening in the Middle Europe – in Poland and Hungary the communist regime was overthrown, and the Berliner Wall fell down. In June there was an *Open Communist Party Meeting* at Motorest Zádveřice (there is a spacious hall there). In his address Mr. Čuba, who was member of the Central Comity of Communist Party<sup>4</sup> that time, stated that *socialism and capitalism* are two equivalent systems and that Agrocomplex Slušovice would survive the expected transition to the capitalist system<sup>5</sup>.

---

1 Občanské fórum (OF)

2 Look at "Handful of Memories" on my web: [www.technologie-kvalita.cz/honza](http://www.technologie-kvalita.cz/honza)

3 I worked at Tesla Piešťany Works there.

4 In abbreviation – ÚV KSČ

5 At this point, Mr. Čuba was wrong. On the revolutionary days an open meeting took place at Zádveřice called by actors from Zlín and the organizers were rather impolite to Mr.Čuba, who then resigned and decided to establish a new company that would employ his "true people". It was probably the first "tunnel" in Czechoslovak economy.

Once I went to Zlín in the evening to see about something and I met two of my colleagues there. They told me that there would be something important happening in the square. When I reached the town hall, I could see a dais in front of it. It was already getting dark and the street lights were switched off. There was a man on the dais speaking into megaphone. There were about 200 people in the square and one spoke about the current demonstrations in Prague and the striking students. Among speakers, there was also the popular explorer Miroslav Zikmund, who stayed at Zlín.

Next day, there was a meeting again; the square was already illuminated and the speakers spoke into microphone. A local Civic Forum was established, which governed the following run of events...

At Slušovice, the situation was more complex. Mr. Čuba sent a message to his serfs to keep out of politics and that he, being a professional politician, would solve all the problems. Nevertheless, some kind of “dissident” Civic Forum appeared – it was loyal to the chairman at first, but gradually it fell into disfavor. I joined this group and wrote a few critical articles for their Newsletter<sup>6</sup>. Leader of the Civic Forum, a pretentious young man, failed in elections for the executive board of the Agrocomplex later on; he had allegedly been a *secret agent* of Mr. Čuba. Later on this “dissident group” organized strikes and they also sent out a delegation to Václav Havel. There probably was the origin of the critical words appearing in Havel's speeches concerning Slušovice.

The revolution was supported by the Catholic Church. The parish priest Pekárek organized a procession for homage of saint Agnes of Bohemia, who had just been canonized<sup>7</sup>. The church choir prepared the song “*Justice of all the World*”<sup>8</sup> - a song of Czech Protestants, who had to leave their country. Within the Civic Forum, there was a young man, who had been sent there by the parish priest; he was something like a “soul” of our group. Once in hot summer days I entered the church and went up to the gallery. There was the parish priest in the middle of the nave, kneeling on a red carpet. He prayed to God for the end of communism. There was nobody in the church except of us two.

While I worked at Slušovice, I regularly visited my home at Piešťany. In November 1989, during hot days, I got a stack of publicity materials printed by Civic Forum; apart from other things it contained portraits of *Václav Havel*. I took these materials to Piešťany and together with my Slovak friend we glued them at various places in town. However, we found later that somebody removes them. It was an older couple who were afraid of such “novelties”; after some explanations they gave up.

I spoke to my former colleagues at the division of Slovak Academy of Science<sup>9</sup> and at Tesla Works. They didn't understand what was happening in Prague and what do Czech people wanted; there was relative freedom in Slovakia and most people didn't believe in democracy. One of my friends told me: “*What is permitted to God, is not permitted to an ox*”<sup>10</sup> - i.e. people who don't understand the matters, cannot govern the country.

Later on, various conspiratorial theories emerged, e.g. that about alleged cooperation of Václav

---

6 Zpravodaj OF

7 Anežka Česká

8 Soudce všeho světa Bože

9 OFE- department of physical electronics

10 *Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi*

Havel with the secret police. There were also leaflets appearing around there which spread nationalism; they might have been coming from the KGB workshop<sup>11</sup>. Similar printed stuff was seen in Czechoslovakia after the Russian invasion in 1968. I went with my friends to Bratislava to take part at a big manifestation at the Square of SNP<sup>12</sup>.

In Spring 1990, there were elections into the executive board<sup>13</sup> of the Farm. Civic Forum organized a public meeting. It didn't much help – the CF candidates obtained not more than 30% and, consequently, CF had no representatives in the board. Due to my critical remarks in the CF Newsletter, I was called to responsibility. Later on, I was asked to leave the Farm. I did it without hesitation.

Soon after the revolution the border to Austria was opened. I used the first opportunity to travel to Vienna. I went there with my friend Marie Bobková. Marie was a very talented lady – she had two diplomas – she was a medical doctor as well as a professional pianist<sup>14</sup>. More over – her mother was of noble origin. She worked in the “Agrogen” division of Slušovice Farm<sup>15</sup>. I had already been in Vienna once – during the Prague Spring. This time it was no success – I had a bad cold, the weather was bad and my friend patronized me all the time. As if she was bewitched by the capitalist world. As soon as we crossed the border back to Moravia, she turned normal.

In Spring 1990 I traveled to Vienna again. I went there by car with one colleague of mine from the Civic Forum. We visited the Chamber of Commerce and I spoke with its president. We spoke about our political situation; he was rather skeptical as for the future development and didn't share our passion. He gave me a list of Viennese firms. We visited some of them, but it was no success – we didn't have anything to offer.

During the revolutionary days I also visited Prague and took part in some manifestations; Marie traveled with me. We listened to speeches by Alexander Dubček and Václav Havel. I had some remarks to Havel's speech, but Marie cut me down: “*Everything what Václav Havel says is Truth*”.

April 4, 2020

## 2 Flats have been a good business

In the socialist system<sup>16</sup> flats were considered as a basic need of citizens. There were 4 categories of rented flats according to their appointments. Flat area should have corresponded to the number of household members; if it was excessive, one had to pay more for each extra square meter. In private houses, the owner had to accommodate another individual or family if its area was large enough. The tenant paid there the same rent as in the state-owned houses<sup>17</sup>. Single persons might have been accommodated in hostels or dormitories. This way, every citizen could have a roof over his

---

11 Soviet secret police

12 Slovak National Uprising

13 See above

14 She graduated at *Academy of Music* in Bratislava and she worked at *Max-Planck Institute* in Germany.. In the *Ludovít Štúr Institute* in Martin she is listed among the prominent Slovak scientists.

15 On the other hand – Maria had had some contacts with Secret Police and lived in a safe house in Brno.

16 In the years 1948 - 1989

17 There were also company flats and cooperative houses

had. As everybody had to work (if he was able to), there were virtually *no homeless people* in the streets. In the year 1990, when I first saw a man raking in a garbage can, I was somehow puzzled. We used to live in a society, where all people were equal. I never saw such a situation before<sup>18</sup>.

When the market system was introduced, apartments and apartment houses became a commodity; rich people invested their money there, expecting rise of price. Centers of greater towns became depopulated, they changed into commercial zones. People moved to the outskirts, or to newly built *satellite villages* around towns and many people finished in the streets. Capitalism is merciless – who loses the competition, he comes to a sticky end...

Until recently, owners of apartments in the city centers had a good business – they used to let their apartments for a short time period, mostly to foreign tourists. However, the new coronavirus has changed the situation: crowds of tourists ceased to come and the owners will have look for another business.

### **3 Receive Travellers<sup>19</sup>**

When my father died in July 2008, we had to clear out his apartment, in which we grew up. We shared father's books and furniture and I brought the excessive textiles to the shop of Salvation Army. It was already not clear, who of us would have to hand over the flat to the owner. My older sister Ludmila lived at Písek<sup>20</sup>, I stayed here only provisionally and Olga had been registered here as a resident for a long time. At last, it was Ludmila who took the task.

I had no tenants that time at my home at Sloup. It was a former forestry house, which was returned to my father via restitution, and he dedicated it in turn to me and Ludmila. We succeeded to push out the Ukrainian mafioso with help of the police unit *for struggle against organized crime*; it cost however one human life – it was our neighbor Marek, an older, half-blind man, who was sadistically killed. The murderer was not traced.

I intended to do some farming on my land. So far, I used to mow grass with a scythe and I sold the hay to a horse stable. It was not profitable, only to keep the meadow. I bought an electrical fence and a pair of sheep. Mr. Petrák, the shop-keeper, visited me once with a young man saying that this boy has nowhere to stay. Lukáš came to these corners with his father, who however turned him out for his messiness. I spoke with Lukáš a little and we got on well. He was a skilled man and had an ear for music. I put him up in an attic room, where his untidiness wouldn't do much matter. I didn't need his help – I managed the work myself.

I also started to take part at divine service at Hvozdnice, 2 kilometers away from my home. The local Protestant corps was founded in the year 1920 by my grandfather's forester Benda<sup>21</sup>. In addition, I joined the local chorus. I also got acquainted with my friend Jana Coufalová; our acquaintance had to surmount a lot of differences, but goes on.

---

18 There were however “Top 10 thousand people” for whom the laws were not in force

19 One of the *Seven Acts of Charity*

20 A South Bohemian town

21 See my father's Memories at [www.technologie-kvalita.cz/honza](http://www.technologie-kvalita.cz/honza)

At one service, there was a well-built young man present there with head shaven in “punk” style, and body covered with tattoo. I was curious what he is like and I spoke to him a little. The parish priest noticed that and she introduced me to him after the service. His name was Martin. She asked me to provide accommodation for him for one month. I hesitated a little; on the way home I got the message that he might have been a released prisoner. I called the priest by phone and she confirmed that. Then I asked her whether he was a killer. She said he was not.

As it turned out later, while we were speaking by phone, Martin was sitting beside her and he heard everything. As Lukáš had no objections against staying with an offender, I accommodated Martin in a well-warmed<sup>22</sup> room next to that of Lukáš.

Martin settled in the room and started to look around the house. He was especially interested in antique. In the corridor, there was a wardrobe and there was a decorative wall clock on the top of it. Martin tried to repair the clockwork without asking me and then sold it. On my direct question about the clock, he denied everything. In a word – he knew how to do it. When I informed the churchwarden what happened, she snapped back: “*It must have been proved*”.

Martin evidently appreciated my willingness to receive him to my house and he offered me a help. He repaired the roofing and the bridge leading to chimney. He also cut down branches of an old willow, climbing as a monkey. At once, however, his behavior had changed – he started to throw old things out of window, saying “*I am buying the house*”. Then he took a spade and started to dig a patch under a tree. I told him that nothing would grow in the shade.

Once my Chinese friend arrived to visit me and I had to move Martin to an unheated room. As Autumn was coming and nights became cold, Martin grumbled – he was accustomed to stay in a well-heated room and to have a hot shower. In my washroom, there only was a boiler containing 30 liters of water. The problem was discussed at the vicarage; I was criticized that “*I was going to get rich*”. In fact, Martin didn't pay any rent. I had to buy a new stove and we cut the smoke outlet into the wall.

Martin however couldn't fire in a stove; he tried to charge Lukáš with heating his room and bringing the firewood. But Lukáš was reluctant to do that – he paid the rent<sup>23</sup>, so he didn't feel obliged to serve anybody. He ran downstairs to the kitchen to me, but Martin caught up with him on the staircase and hit his head against the stairs. Lukáš was bleeding. He entered the kitchen, where I was cooking dinner and Martin stood behind the door listening (I could see his head through the frosted glass of the door). I invited him in. Both of them were drunken or stoned.

That evening I was going to Prague to St. James Church for rehearsal. I used this as an excuse that I must go to the bus stop to check the departure time. On the way, I called up a friend of mine and asked him what to do. He advised me to call the police.

---

22 There was a good heat insulation, enabling electric heating of the room

23 In contrast to Martin

When the police came, both protagonists were upstairs and the staircase was cleaned to hide what happened. The two men of Law whipped out their batons and ran upstairs. When they came back to me, they said that they were calling for a car – not for the junkies but for me – to take me to mental hospital...

When I came to the bus stop in the evening, Lukáš was already waiting there. As he told me, Martin ordered him to go with him to some pub in the city. As all three of us went together by bus, Lukáš was ready to drop by fatigue.

When I turned home after rehearsal, nobody was there. At two o'clock night Martin appeared, but Lukáš was still missing; allegedly he stayed in the pub. In the morning Lukáš was normally at work. As he told me, Martin kicked him about in the street. He slept rough in the forest and went to work.

Next day I rode to the police station on the bicycle, about 10 kilometers away. I wanted to refer about the case. The policemen however refused to speak with me, saying that I am making fun of them...

I gave Martin a notice to quit. He didn't protest. Later on he appeared in the chapel again to be baptized. As to Lukáš, he had been somehow scared by this event; he stopped to speak with me and took to boozing. I had to tell him goodbye. Now he stays somewhere in Prague and lives of begging. Reportedly it is a good job – he may earn some 800 Kč per day.

*Davle-Sloup, April 14, 2020*

## **4 Radar in Brdy**

In the year 1989 the communist system in East-European countries collapsed, when Soviet Union stopped to stand by their puppet governments. The Iron Curtain fell down and things were looking up. People expected that both military blocks, the *North-Atlantic Treaty* and the *Warsaw Pact* would be dissolved. The last pact had virtually vanished together with departure of the Soviet army, while the North-Atlantic Treaty had remained and it even expanded to the East. The Russian Federation, which had lost the cold war<sup>24</sup>, could feel imperilled by that – it lost the position of a *world superpower*.

After Czech Republic entered EU and joined the North-Atlantic Treaty, one started to speak about placing an American radar in the Brdy region, south of Prague. It was the same place, where in 80ties the Soviet *SS-20 missiles* were located<sup>25</sup>. Russia naturally protested against these plans, but a protest movement also appeared in Czech Republic. In the neighboring villages a publicity campaign was organized by state, with no result: people didn't want to have military facilities where they lived. That time, people were generally not interested in world affairs. I liked the fact, that some people went to streets again and they didn't accept being manipulated.

I took part in a signature protest campaign in Venceslas Square „*under the horse*“ - I spent one afternoon there and a whole night. People walking along our tent signed willingly the attendance

---

<sup>24</sup> In fact, it was Soviet Union which lost the cold war

<sup>25</sup> A systém of „hidden“ roads was made for redeployment of missiles in case of war. They are on no map, even today.

list; only once somebody appeared who discussed with us. I served there with two students; I tried to speak with them, but we didn't understand each other. They had different attitude to the events that had happened. One of them said to me, that we were doing something very important, that would *go down in history*. We were taking turns at the tent and once I roamed the square looking for WC. At the end I entered a casino; it was the only establishment in the square opened at night. I shivered of cold and did some gymnastics to warm up.

There were also some demonstration marches taking place in Prague. In one of them an older man was collecting signatures for founding a new political body. He spoke to me and said that he worked towards an „*God's Kingdom*“ on the Earth. I refused him twice, but when he came for the third time, I signed the attendance list of sympathy to him. He was the „*homeless*“ man<sup>26</sup> *Miloslav Jandík*. He established the *Peace Movement 2007*. Later on, *Miloslav* visited me at my workplace and we started to cooperate...

I went on acting at these demonstrations, but gradually I got the suspicion that there are some links to Russia there. It was *Miroslav Prokeš*, an active Communist Party member, whom I knew from before; he obviously had had some links to Moscow. So I finished my protest activities and joined *Jandík's* movement.

Finally, the radar project was canceled and Brdy region was opened to public. In contrast, the Polish were offered a similar US project and they accepted it. Now they have got an American launching base on their territory. According to American declarations, the base is not aimed at Russia, but at Teheran.

*April 18, 2020*

## 5 The Peace Movement 2007 and Miloslav Jandík

The founder of the *Peace Movement 2007* *Miloslav Jandík* was born in 1942 at *České Heřmanice* in Eastern Bohemia. His father was a farmer running 5 hectare's rented land. *Miloslav* studied civil engineering at a technical college and then he worked as a building site manager. During the military service he served as a commander of company of the *Auxiliary Technical Battalion*. In 60ties he joined the police as the patch commander. After the Soviet invasion in 1968 he left the police and started to work at a *District Building Company*<sup>27</sup>, In addition to site manager's duties he also did the manual work that was better paid.

*Miloslav* was twice married and he has had together 6 children; he couldn't however bring them up due to various obstacles. In 1997 he was divorced and then he lived together with a gypsy girl. She gave him a beautiful daughter; the birth took place at home without any qualified help, which was liable to penalty. On base of a verdict the child was taken away from him and placed in a nursery home. When *Miloslav* protested and claimed to have the child back, he was sent to mental hospital. Not to have enough of that, in 1999 *Miloslav* got ill and was not able to pay his loan by. The creditor turned him out of his home. He slept under the bridge for some time, and then he

---

<sup>26</sup> In fact, he had some home, but he was hiding himself from executors

<sup>27</sup> Obvodní stavební podnik

retired to the dormitory “*Hope*”<sup>28</sup> and the shelter of the *Salvation Army*.

In this desperate situation Miloslav recalled his Christian faith, which he gained at school. He began to pry to God. In August 1996 he heard the *God's Voice* which ordered him to establish a political movement leading people to *God's Kingdom*, where the existing human laws would be replaced with *Laws of God*; the army should be disbanded and people living in cities would move to the country and turn back to traditional farming. These were the main items on his agenda. He succeeded to gather the necessary 1500 signatures; he mainly collected them at the Central Railway Station among homeless people. After his appearance on TV Nova he won many backers of the “*Peace Movement 2007*”, and some of them even offered him a financial help.

The practice however, was rather worse. There were few people coming to the meetings called up by the founder and some of them demanded changes of the agenda, and even an exchange of the Movement's leader. The greatest (and last) Jandík's undertaking was the *March to the Prague Castle*, where the president should have been asked to *hand over his powers* to Miloslav Jandík. There were altogether 7 people that met at *Malostranská Metro Station* and got off to the castle up the Old Castle Steps<sup>29</sup>. I took part on it together with an American teacher (a friend of mine); there was also a young cameraman who documented whole the undertaking. We entered the Castle and waited in the anteroom – only Mr. Jandík was let in, accompanied by a lady from the presidential office. *Václav Klaus* wasn't in his office; he had taken part at some scientific conference in the USA. We left the Castle and Mr. Jandík delivered a speech in front of the entrance. Then we parted and went down to city. I decided to leave the Movement; soon later its activity was officially finished.

Then I got a bad disease, *toxocara canis*. Míla Jandík helped me a lot by running my sheep farm at Davle. Many thanks to him!

*April 20, 2020*

## **6 Thirty Years Later**

### **A pilgrimage to Říp**

In the year 2005, when I celebrated my 60th birthday, I took part on the journey to the legendary mountain Říp, organized by the Social Democratic Party, I was member of. The party was led by *Stanislav Gross*, the rising star of our politics, who held the post of minister of finances, while the post of premier was held by former Party leader *Vladimír Špidla*.

At the foot of the mountain, there were some stands and a gentle road was leading to the top. Crowds of people were walking slowly up, including some bikers. On a clearance under the top, there was a hut; an old man was sitting there on a bench and spoke to people around him. He spoke German. I joined this group for a while. The man was a German social democrat, who bought a cottage in Bohemia. He published a magazine for dialogue between Czechs a Germans. They called

---

28 Naděje

29 Staré zámecké schody

him *Honza*. I ordered the magazine from him. Soon afterward I got a message that Honza was dead...

The pilgrims assembled in a large plain under the chapel on the top. At the lower part of the plain there was a rush: it was Stanislav Gross surrounded by journalists and reporters with cameras, while the premier Špidla was running to the top in a sports dress and nobody paid attention to him.

I cannot recall whether there was any speech or cultural performance taking place there.

The weather was nice, it had been a nice outing. I descended from the hill and went home by train.

## The Break-up of Civic Forum

After the Velvet Revolution some kind of „*personal earthquake*“ took place. As the people at chief positions had been as a rule members of the Communist Party, they were exchanged by activists. Not always was this exchange positive; on the schools where I was teaching, the new directors were worse than their „communist“ predecessors and the teaching level was falling down.

After first „free“ elections Václav Havel was elected president and other leading personalities took posts in the new established government. The Civic Forum virtually ceased to exist. New political subjects arose instead – the Civic Democratic Party<sup>30</sup> founded by Václav Klaus and the Civic Movement<sup>31</sup>. There were some distinguished personalities in the Civic Movement, but none of them was able to make an impression on potential voters. There was also a group of socialists who preferred the Swedish social-market system. Finally, the concept of “*total capitalism*” promoted by Václav Klaus won out over the socialist conceptions. The main concept was the “*the invisible hand of the market*” that makes the all necessary arrangements. Klaus ignored the spiritual aspects of economy – ethics and bands of the law.

In Slovakia the political development was rather different – in their consciousness Slovak people still had the feudal model of society; they mainly stressed the national independence were not much interested in the values of democracy<sup>32</sup>. After a long bargaining about the form of federation, both the premiers – Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar agreed about dividing the common state in two – Czech Republic and Slovakia. From the professional point of view, it was not quite kosher, but the future bore them out. At the recent case of *Brexit*, one can see where such a referendum may lead if the voters don't know what they want.

All politicians, including communists agreed that the existing centrally controlled economy should be transformed into the market economy. The first government that came from elections followed expert recommendations and tried to find strategic partners traditional Czech companies. They had only managed that in the case of *Škoda Auto* only, which fused with the concern Volkswagen. After following elections a new government came, led by Václav Klaus. He preferred Czech entrepreneurs to foreigners; these however mostly didn't manage their roles. They were missing experience and necessary background to stand the hard international competition. In many cases a firm landed in hands of irresponsible individuals who “*tunelled*” it, i.e. they sold the profitable part

30 Občanská demokratické strana (ODS)

31 Občanské hnutí

32 Compare chapter 1

of the company and left the rest parts to crash<sup>33</sup>. Ironically, the new entrepreneurs were mostly the people who supported the old regime – communist leaders and collaborators of the Secret Police. This way, a new social class of “*oligarchs*” emerged that first gained the economical, and consequently also the political power. Democracy turned into oligarchy.

## The Political Spectrum

The traditional European left-wing parties – the “*social democrats*” played an important role in many West-European countries. The Czech Social Democratic Party<sup>34</sup> survived in emigration, but for long they couldn't catch on in the new condition. It was only Miloš Zeman, during his tenure as the Chairman of Parliament, who injected new life into this party; apart from other things, he incorporated some smaller political subjects. In the year 2007 the two largest political parties - ČSSD and ODS won the elections, and their leaders (Zeman and Klaus) reached the “Opposition agreement” enabling one of the parties to hold the office. This agreement was alleged to be the source of corruption by weakening the role of the Parliament. However Miloš Zeman defended this agreement by saying that the monitoring function of Parliament was not weakened.

There were also three minor political parties with specific agendas: the green, communists and christian democrats<sup>35</sup>.

In the year 2006, a weird story took place. Jiří Čunek, a popular mayor of Vsetín and leader of the Christian-Democratic Party, who even reached the post of minister in the cabinet, was accused of taking bribe<sup>36</sup>. A police investigation took place, which long didn't come to an end, and besides that a press campaign against Jiří Čunek broke out. Newspapers were daily bringing emotional allegations, for example “*He was on welfare and saved millions*”; in fact, he only took child benefit for his five children. In order to solve the situation, Čunek decided to resign. Finally, his charge was thoroughly investigated by a public executor who didn't find any crime. Today, Mr. Čunek holds the post of commissioner of the Zlín region.

According to Emil Svoboda<sup>37</sup>, political parties should be a “school of democracy”. Members of the parliament should lead a positive discussion or a dialogue. If a political party is bounded to some rich entrepreneur, the natural alteration of its member base is suppressed and the party is going to decline. This may be the case of both the “traditional parties” ODS and ČSSD which are now at the limit for entering the Parliament.

There are two new, unconventional political bodies now that are now leading election preferences: the *Movement ANO* and the *Pirates* that hold the second place.

---

33 Václav Klaus proposed: “A private owner is always better than the state”. This is evidently false, but many people still repeat it. The word “tunnelling” comes from physics

34 Česká strana sociálně demokraatická, ČSSD

35 Zelení, komunisté a lidovci

36 In our messy juridical system, almost any public figure can be accused of something

37 Emil Svoboda: *Demokracie a volby*, Praha 1920

ANO had been founded by multimillionaire<sup>38</sup> Andrej Babiš. This body is leading with a wide margin over the second Pirates. ANO is keeping its 30% of preferences in spite of the fact that Andrej Babiš allegedly collaborated with the communist secret police<sup>39</sup> and he is being prosecuted for misusing grants of EU. His backers obviously tolerate these drawbacks of his.

One of the main demands of the Velvet Revolution sounded: “*We want free vote!*”. We are having free vote since, but their result is dubious: the Parliament passes “toothless” and complicated acts, that lawyers cannot even make a head or tail of it, never mind ordinary people who should observe them. It results in an extreme increase of bureaucracy and unpredictability of judicial decisions. As a result, the proceedings become excessive long.

One of possible causes of the present state of affairs is the electoral system for Chamber of Deputies, which is, according to president Miloš Zeman “*deceit on electors*”. The agenda of the parties is usually made on base of marketing, and the names of candidates on the list don't say anything. Therefore, it's the first candidates on the list who are mostly elected. However, the Internet brought some “revolution”: people may agree with each other for whom to vote. At the last elections it worked quite well.

## 7 Where are we going to?

According to our constitution<sup>40</sup> Czech Republic is a democratic state that respects the rule of law. In contrast to the prerevolutionary situation, we have the freedom of traveling, freedom of enterprising and other civil liberties. The freedom of speech is partly limited by the law against “*extremism*” and the demand of “*political correctness*”. Besides that, information media are exposed to permanent pressure of magnates and the *fakenews or hoaxes* disseminated through internet.

Lately we can observe some crisis of democracy in the postcommunist countries, but also in the traditional democracies and other countries all over the world. The current climate changes are driving people from their native lands, which don't provide a living for them and where armed conflicts are going on. This exodus may not be forestalled. Such migration used to happen incidentally many times through human history.

In this situation, the human race is being confronted with a new challenge – the pandemia of a new form of the *coronavirus*. Some scientists warned before that long ago, but they weren't answered. People must pay for their pride.

*April 24, 2020*

---

38 multimiliardář

39 Státní bezpečnost, StB

40 Which partly copy the constitution of the first Czechoslovak Republic