

## Summary

It has been more than twenty years since the events of November 1989 dramatically altered the political landscape of former Czechoslovakia. The post-revolutionary era not only brought about great expectations but also produced unique opportunities. New and different ideas, views and opinions have clashed in the fields of culture, economy, politics, as well as academia.

The attempt to grasp, understand and catch up with ideas and developments in the Western world was typical of the 1990s. It was especially political thought which had been to a large extent atrophied in Czechoslovakia. Political theory simply did not exist. In contrast with classical philosophy, for example, political philosophy had to be built from scratch. To this end, it was quite impossible to draw on the knowledge and experience of scholars teaching and conducting research during the Communist era. Political theory was built from the bottom up not only by people who lived, studied and taught abroad but also by those who lived in Czechoslovakia and originally hailed from different departments and different fields of research, such as philosophy, history, sociology. After these first difficult but extraordinary years, original research was being published. And although many scholars are still not satisfied with the level of the Czech political science and political philosophy, one can sense various expectations.

This is the reason for a publication of this book of interviews. The publication is driven by an effort to map Czech political theory (political philosophy, political science, political sociology, etc.) and the developments of the past twenty years in Czechoslovakia and,

from 1993, the Czech Republic. The interview was selected for two particular reasons: it can introduce the thoughts and views of Czech scholars to a wider public but it does so in a more illuminating and accessible way than research papers and books do. Some of the interviewees are well known in the Czech public sphere, the other ones are more known in the academia. It is understandable that not every scholar who centres his or her research on political theory is presented in this book. The book is necessarily a selection; a selection from the “left-right” debate and from a generational point of view.

Apart from the nationality of the interviewees what links these interviews together are four basic questions which appear with slight variations in each of the eleven interviews. The four basic questions for each scholar are: (1) what do they regard as the key political-theoretical topic in the world, (2) what do they regard as the key political-theoretical topic in the Czech Republic, (3) what developments happened in the Czech academia in the past twenty years, and (4) what has been their area of research. It goes without question that these four questions are not set in stone and that some of the question may be combined (such as 1 and 2, for example), nevertheless they are still present. Another common denominator is the length of each interview which remains more or less the same. It is the intention of the book not to become obsolete in several years. Although the interviews hope to avoid such a thing, that does not mean to say that the interviews do not touch upon subjects which are significant in the year 2012 and do not burden themselves with at times very specific historical connotations. In this respect, it is particularly the (economic) crisis and its impact on human society which is evident in each of the eleven interviews. This is closely connected to the idea that

the Western civilization has come to the crossroads and must decide which road it will take. We have the hope that the ideas present will be pertinent even in twenty years' time, at the very least as a witness to a turbulent and insecure era.