

Pavel MÜCKE, *Místa paměti druhé světové války. Svět vojáků československého zahraničního odboje*, Praha: Karolinum 2014, ISBN 978-80-246-2563-8, 284 pages.

A monograph written by Czech historian Pavel Mücke called “Místa paměti druhé světové války! and subtitled “Svět vojáků československého zahraničního odboje” was published by the Karolinum Publishing Company. This book is a first deputy of an editorial series, which is called “Orální historie a soudobé dějiny”, led by famous historian who specialized in oral history Miroslav Vaněk and the author P. Mücke himself. In the future, there will be issued also other titles (including translations of foreign publications), except from two already existing books.¹

The author, Pavel Mücke works as a researcher at the Oral History Centre (Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences) and also as an Internal Lecturer at the Department of Oral History – Contemporary History at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague. Mücke deals with problematization of memory quite a long time, the monograph itself is based on the author’s own dissertation, which methodological part has already been published separately by the Institute for Contemporary History in editorial series “Hlasy minulosti”.²

Mücke’s book is devoted to a well-known and popular part of the Czech, respectively Czechoslovak history, to the era of the Second World War. Nevertheless, the author deals with this era from a different, not fully processed point of view, namely in terms of memory of the direct participants of the second resistance. Therefore, it is logical that the author’s definition of the topic is coherent with source base, which largely consists of issued and unissued “commemorative” work (diaries, memoirs, handwritten memoirs etc.). In addition to written sources, there is another important part of the source base that is formed by four biographical interviews with witnesses, recorded meetings with witnesses that the author realized. It is possible

¹ Apart from P. Mücke’s study, another book was published: M. VANĚK, L. KRÁTKÁ (ed.), *Příběhy (ne)obyčejných profesí. Česká společnost v období tzv. normalizace a transformace*, Praha: Karolinum 2014.

² P. MÜCKE, *Rámce paměti druhé světové války v českých zemích. Vzpomínkové práce vojáků druhého čs. zahraničního odboje*, Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR 2013.

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to ask a question, why the author did not make more biographical interviews with multiple witnesses, yet, since relatively long period has elapsed from the described events, the amount of interviews is understandable. Furthermore, the source base is complemented by series of documentaries, Internet sources and several films. The source base also consists of secondary sources, a wide range of a scholarly literature, as purely historical works, as well as a publications dealing with methodological approach.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter includes an introduction to the topic where Pavel Mücke explains the chosen approach to the topic and he puts the monograph into context of historical research, which is specified by history of everyday life, history of mentalities and history of memory. The author admits taking inspiration from work of famous French theoreticians and he adopts their terminology. Among them belongs mainly Pierre Nora (his term “sites of memory”) and Maurice Halbwachs (terms “collective memory” and “social frameworks of memory”). The starting point for the Mücke’s book was also the works of British historian Richard Holmes, especially the book “Acts of War. Behaviour of Men in Battle” dealing with the mentality and the everyday life of British soldiers. Basically, through theoretical frameworks Mücke tries to uncover the contemporary situation on which the specific images of memory were created and how this has changed due to performance of individual or collective memory over the time, optionally, how historians reconstructing the past contributed to this change. For this purpose, Mücke sets his own term, “the contours of memory”, which refers to two basic characteristics of memory – temporal variability and the fact, that memory is not given, comprehensive information, but a dynamic entity.

The following chapters of the book are with their content identical to the seven “sites of memory”, that can be explained as s kind of circuit and that the author accesses as crucial and which are often repeated in memory of witnesses. Thus, the second chapter consists of the evaluation of “great” historical events that preceded the Second World War (the Munich Agreement and the occupation of Czechoslovakia). Mücke refers to the thesis of historian Jan Tesař of the role of “Munich complex” in creating national unity and identity, while an axiomatic interpretation of events linked

with Munich are the central point from which a sense of patriotism, “Czechness”, is developed. According to the author, Czechoslovak soldiers abroad become propagators of this idea.

The third chapter is determined by terms of “homeland” and “home”. The term “homeland” does not have clearly defined geographical boundaries, it is partly an abstract concept, which witnesses formed in their minds using other symbolic categories such as “nation” and “state”. The second fundamental term of “home” is then conceived more specifically, it is perceived as a place where the witnesses were born, and does not have such considerable symbolic capital.

Another part of the study, chapter four, is formed by recollection of fellows of witnesses. A characteristic feature of this “site of memory” is represented by a strong sense of belonging created through common escape abroad, combat experience, though captivity and other events of the war. The value of solidarity is presented as a crucial attribute in the formation of identity, that overcame other differences (generational, political, ideological).

Common feature of the chapters number five and six is seeking for reconstruction of the image of elites. In one of the chapters the military elite are investigated and in the second, the political elites are studied. Pavel Mücke found rather clear, up to banal conclusions when evaluating the military elites, where on the one hand there is a vision of an ideal leader, who takes care of the needs of soldiers, has a moral, human qualities and who gains respect thanks to his own military achievements, on the other side of this dichotomy there is a commander who underestimates his subordinates etc. Behaviour of military elites during the turning points (occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 or during the February events) became an often subject of criticism in memory of witnesses. Direct participants perceived very negatively an official institution, the Ministry of National Defence, that is remembered mostly as a “rotten” institution in memories of soldiers and standoff upon supreme military headquarters is also reflected in used language through rigorous, consistent application of the plural, which confirmed dualism we (soldiers) – they (the Ministry). In general, the witnesses accused politicians of inactivity and isolation from the soldiers. The only exception of this statement was evaluation of Jan Masaryk. Ambiguous attitudes

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prevailed in the perception of Edvard Benes, with whom the witnesses associated the beginning of “Münich Complex” and the cause of further development (from their perspective, tragic) after 1948, but on the other hand, he is evaluated positively as the President Masaryk’s successor.

The final two chapters of the monograph are structured similarly as in the previous part, and they are devoted to representations of allies and enemies. Mücke notes that the relationship of the witnesses to both categories is characterized by great degree of ambivalence, many similarities were found as in the evaluation of the political elite.

The presented book is written with entrancing language. Pavel Mücke vividly outlined the perception of “great” historical events and also of everyday life of witnesses. A great deal of authenticity of the book was caused by applied language, the author worked with expressive terms, borrowed from witnesses in most cases. Frequent mixing his own text with snippets of interview or biographical insertion vividly complement impression of the contemporary authenticity of the text. There also should be appreciated time span of the monograph, which exceeds the period of war, the author examines some of the “sites of memory” in the wider timeframe. It is also advisable to connect locally-geographic index.

It would be possible to include even more themes to the monograph, another “sites of memory”, however, it may be an issue for future research of the author. In fact, greater weakness of the book is formulating of too vague findings, although it is necessary to appreciate the amount of sources used in the book. Another drawback of the book, as mentioned above, is partition of the coherent research into two separate publications, methodological and empirical. As a result, the book “Místa paměti druhé světové války” lacks compelling theoretical background for the author’s conclusions. On the other hand, of course this fact makes the book more readable and accessible to a wide audience. Despite those findings, the book is certainly a valuable piece to the mosaic of oral history and history of memory, and it can be only recommended.

Klára Kořenková

Jan Koura, *Zápas o východní Středomoří. Zahraniční politika Spojených států amerických vůči Řecku a Turecku v letech 1945–1953*, Praha: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy 2013, ISBN 978-80-7308-468-4, 250 pages.

Der Kalte Krieg gehört zu den wesentlichsten Forschungsthemen der Geschichte der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Vor diesem Hintergrund verwundert es nicht, dass sich mit diesem Thema viele Historiker, Politologen, Soziologen oder sogar Psychologen beschäftigen. Das vorliegende Buch von Jan Koura, eines jungen Historikers aus der Philosophischen Fakultät der Karlsuniversität, deckt einen weiteren Teilbereich in den Forschungen zu den internationalen Beziehungen und der Weltpolitik nach 1945 ab. Dabei konzentriert sich Koura auf die Problematik der auswärtigen Politik der USA gegenüber der Türkei und Griechenland in den Jahren 1945–1953, die er einen breiteren Zusammenhang der Tatsachen der Entstehung des Kalten Krieges eingliedert. Der Autor analysiert dabei auch die Rahmenbedingungen, welche die Grundlage für die Konzeption und Implementierung der amerikanischen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik in dieser Epoche – der Strategie der Eindämmung (Strategy of Containment) – bildeten.

Das Buch und seine Kapitel sind chronologisch geordnet, wobei der Autor seinen Ausführungen eine terminologische Einordnung sowie einen theoretischen Abschnitt voranstellt, in dem er auf die Entstehung und Implementierung der Strategie der Eindämmung (Strategy of Containment) eingeht. Koura legt in diesem Kapitel den Lesern auch die allgemein bekannten Ereignisse dar, die am Beginn der Entstehung des Kalten Krieges standen – so etwa die Rede Winston Churchills in Fulton oder die amerikanisch-sowjetischen Auseinandersetzungen im Iran. Die folgenden Kapitel analysieren die Nachkriegssituation in der Türkei und in Griechenland und bereiten gleichzeitig den Boden für die weiteren Kapitel, in denen die Truman-Doktrin und ihre Einwirkung auf die weitere Strategie der Eindämmung und ihre Implementierung in der Türkei und in Griechenland analysiert werden. Das Ende des Buches bilden die Kapitel über den Marshallplan und seine Implementierung in der Türkei und in Griechenland sowie den Eintritt beider Länder in die NATO.

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Die vorgelegte Monographie gründet auf der Analyse sowohl ungedruckter (The National Archives of the United States at College Park, Harry S. Truman Library oder The National Archives, London, Kew) als auch gedruckter Quellen sowie einer großen Menge an Fachliteratur. Kouras Schlussfolgerungen reflektieren seine Analyse der Archivdokumente und bringen einen guten Einblick in den Hintergrund der Entwicklung der auswärtigen Politik der USA nach dem Jahre 1945. Der Autor versucht auch die Formulierung breiterer Schlussfolgerungen hinsichtlich der Nachkriegspolitik der USA in Hinblick auf die innenpolitische Entwicklung in der Türkei und in Griechenland und weist folgerichtig auf die besondere Bedeutung dieses Gebietes für Washington nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges hin.

Grundsätzlich ist das Buch nicht frei von kleineren Fehlern – z.B. auf Seite 64 schreibt der Autor von Sévres und Laussane (die korrekte Schreibweise lautet Sèvres und Lausanne) und auf Seite 77 wird der Name des türkischen Präsidenten Mustafa İsmet İnönü (im Text İnönü) falsch geschrieben. Es handelt sich dabei jedoch eher um Unaufmerksamkeiten und kleine Tippfehler, die den positiven Gesamteindruck des Werks nicht zu trüben vermögen. Dabei sind der Sinn des Autors für Details sowie seine Fachkommentare zur Realisation der amerikanischen auswärtigen Politik in der Nachkriegszeit besonders hervorzuheben.

Zum Schluss ist zu betonen, dass die Publikation von Jan Koura einen wichtigen Beitrag zu den Forschungen zum Themenkomplex des Kalten Krieges darstellt. Die Monographie, welche in einem gut lesbaren Fachstil geschrieben ist, dürfte sowohl beim Fachpublikum als auch in der breiteren Öffentlichkeit auf großes Interesse stoßen.

Lukáš Novotný