

Central European Discourses from Historical Perspective

Taku Shinohara

I

The concept, "Central Europe", seems to have slowly taken root not only in journalism, but also in general usage in the last five or six years without being exactly defined. There are even many cultural, economic, political and social organisations and corporations which have this word in their name so as to claim a connection with the imaginary heritage of Central Europe, each in their own arbitrary way. It is only recently, from the 1980's, that we have accepted the concept "Central Europe", after it experienced a surprising "revival" in the discussions among dissidents and intellectuals in exile from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and to a lesser degree, Poland; surprising since it had been reduced to merely "a meteorological term" since the Second World War and almost completely forgotten.*¹ It is more than symptomatic that such words as myth, legacy, visionary, and dream appeared so often in the titles of works dealing with "Central Europe": from this one may recognise the extreme vagueness of the thing itself. For some "Central Europe" has a certain character, appearance and atmosphere: they can describe its concrete outline, even state that this or that region would belong to Central Europe or not. But others identify Central Europe with the most valuable cultural product of our century. In this case, Central Europe extends itself to such a degree that it becomes an abstract notion.*² Some present Central Europe as cultural identity. For Milan Kundera, it is a "culture or fate"*³, and for György Konrád, "to be a Central European, it is an attitude, a Weltanschauung, an aesthetic sensibility for the complicated, multi-lingualism view".*⁴

Whether Central Europe may be defined concretely or abstractly, one can criticise it from every point of view. Since the discussion about Central Europe tends to be about seeking its absent community and its lost possibilities in the past, one of the themes of Central European discourse is composed of references to certain historical "traditions".*⁵ By confronting this discourse of Central Europe with the present and historical "reality" of "Central Europe" or mentioning the total destruction of Central Europe, during and after the second World War, one could simply declare that Central Europe does not exist and is only an imaginary construction.*⁶

The purpose of this small paper is not to present an adequate definition of Central Europe (if any exists!), nor to *entzaubern* and to demolish the "myth of Central Europe." Attempting the definition of Central Europe is given up here from the very beginning because once we intend to define what it is, we should be involved in a never-ending circle of struggles for *the* Central Europe. For Central Europe is actually an ideology, a whole complex of ideas of a desirable form of national existence for any given period and self-criticism for the future, as is any national history.*⁷ We will examine various discourses about Central Europe expounded since the second half of the last century, and analyse their function and structure in their given historical context so that we may understand the position and meaning of Central Europe today. The question is not, whether Central Europe is visionary or a reality. It is visionary and at the same time, or perhaps because of this, it is a reality. So the question becomes, how does it function in reality.*⁸

II

Needless to say, the term Central Europe is closely connected with an imperialistic version of the German *Mitteleuropa*. In fact, even in the German speaking milieu, the usage of the word *Mitteleuropa* became popular only after the First World War, when *Mitteleuropa* was eagerly debated in German political circles

in relation to the German aims during the war and her plans for a post-war European order. It is only after the First World War that we can find this word in encyclopaedias, and the definitions, often deliberately bedecked with a sober geographical description, explicitly or implicitly show the origin of the word: *German Drang nach Osten*.^{*9}

Besides the German *Mitteleuropa*, there exists another stream of Central European discourse which was more often referred to and cited in the 1980's, even if the term Central Europe had almost never been used in this context till then. From Palacký's famous letter to Frankfurt to Masaryk's *Nová Evropa* (New Europe), Central Europe has always been a region with a unique plurality where small nations could be guaranteed equal rights to exist and to develop their own identity.^{*10} Palacký's letter to German *Nationalversammlung* (its Fifty Committee) in Frankfurt has been often cited in Central European discussion not only because some of his sentences sound like a fatal prophecy (e.g. about the expansion of the Russian "universal monarchy", and those which stressed the necessity of the existence of the Habsburg monarchy for European stability, such as "For the salvation of Europe, Vienna may not fall to a provincial town"), but rather, because it formulated the rights of national existence historically and philosophically and presented accordingly desirable forms for the existence of small nations for the first time in modern Czech history. After stating the independence of the Bohemian crown and the individuality and uniqueness of Czechs whose existence as a nation beside Germany was, at that time, only a glimmer in the mind of most German liberals and radical democrats (cf. Engels' notorious passage about *geschichtslose Völker*)^{*11} he formulated the political role of the Habsburg monarchy as a bastion which should protect the existence of small nations against the Russian universal monarchy. He saw in this plan the historical mission of the Habsburg monarchy to ensure the various nations natural equal rights, which would be realised by its transformation into a federal constitutional monarchy. In his later article, "The Idea of the Austrian State", Palacký emphasised that every nation and nationality (*národnost*,

here in a sense of *Kulturnation* whose core is built from its common language) had his own individuality and was a moral and juridical person.*¹² It is more explicitly expressed here that nations under the Habsburg Monarchy are conceived analogically as citizens in a civil society and thus, just as citizens should be secured individual civil rights in a civil society, so should nations and nationalities under the Monarchy. For Palacký, "the principle of nationality" (*zásada národnosti*) is the leading motive of the age because the idea of nationality played as important a role as religions did in the 16th. and 17th. centuries,*¹³ and, because civil rights had been generally recognised since the end of the 18th. century, so rights of nationality should be recognised in the 19th. century. "The principle of nationality" has a more profound sense: the progress of modern civilisation caused global centralisation. But "that mysterious spirit also assumed among the eternal laws the law of polarity, so that balance might be kept in the world, and unilateral direction might not upset the world from its prescribed course". So here evolved "the principle of nationality" in reaction and resistance to global centralisation.*¹⁴

In Palacký's conception, national aspirations are not merely an expression of Czech individuality but also an expression of the development of European civilisation towards a pluralistic civil society. In his scheme, the Austrian Monarchy would have a *raison d'être* only if it assured its nationalities equal rights of development. On the other hand, the emerging modern Czech nation and its political program needed a broader platform for its existence and a more general philosophical basis, just as Baroque patriotism had universal Catholicism as its back-bone.*¹⁵ If we find a forerunner of Central European ideas in his ideal of the Austrian Monarchy, we can confirm not only that basic motives of Central European ideas of the 1980's were already conceived here in more or less mature forms, but also that discourse about Central Europe had only come into being when modern national programs began to shape its essential and integral parts. So diversity and plurality are not characteristics of Central Europe. On the contrary, the notion of national individuality needed Central European ideas: when

modern national societies began to form, their invented uniqueness was perceived as national identity, on which basis they then claimed diversity and plurality one after another. So, Central European discourse appeared to give emerging nations a framework of existence and even legitimise their existence.*¹⁶

III

Even if Palacký's idea of the Austrian Monarchy was the prototype of the Central Europe alternative to German Mitteleuropa, we can find similar statements about the federal constitution of Central Europe in a representative protagonist of German Mitteleuropa, Friedrich Naumann. During the First World War, when Mitteleuropa-discussion got "a new, actual quality" (W. Mommsen), Naumann's concept of Mitteleuropa belonged to liberal versions of the post-war plan, when compared with more imperialistic ones or traditional annexationists.*¹⁷ In fact, Naumann sympathised with the idea of a common Central European identity, generously recognised the cultural variety of nationalities and was even ready to offer them cultural autonomy. But besides his evident aims to establish a German-Austro-Hungarian alliance to keep German hegemony in south-eastern Europe, Naumann's premises are completely different from Palacký's. He begins his argument with the assumption that total war made independent existence impossible for smaller nations and made it necessary and inevitable to establish *der mitteleuropäische Bund*. Under the pressure of total war, "all of historical particularism" was destined to disappear, and from this disappearance of particularism there would appear a Central European spirit.*¹⁸ While Palacký supposed centralisation and centrifugal tendencies both as fundamental driving forces of modern civilisation and, as we have seen above, constructed his ideas wholly on the basis of "*decentralizace*", i.e., a centrifugal tendency of which the most important expression is "the principle of nationality", Naumann regarded universalisation as the main component of his Mitteleuropa. Here is a deep split between their positions. This is reflected in the fact that Naumann never

recognised the political individuality of various national societies in the Monarchy. He insisted on keeping the Austro-Hungarian constitution based on *Ausgleich*, which in fact turned out to be a stumbling-block for the Monarchy.*¹⁹ That's why, though some prominent figures of the Czech political scene, especially the Czech Social Democrat, Bohumil Šmeral, were interested in Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*, and Naumann himself supported them in publishing several articles in German *Reich*, their co-operation crashed at last.*²⁰

We should have compared Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*, not to Palacký's *Idea*, but to his contemporary Masaryk's *Nová Evropa*. Even if Masaryk regarded himself as an authentic successor to Palacký's ideal, which he thought had become deformed in the national struggles since the 1880's, was Masaryk actually a direct successor to the pioneer of Central European ideas?*²¹

What should have been strange to Palacký was Masaryk's Messianic Czech history, even though it was mainly based on Palacký's concepts. At the turn of the century, when Masaryk published two sequel titles, *Česká otázka* and *Naše nynější krize*, there broke out a serious dispute about the, so-called, sense of Czech history (*Spor o smysl českých dějin*) which has in essence continued right up to the present day.*²²

The points of dispute are crucial to the very existence of the Czech nation: Is there any real sense of Czech history? If so, what is it? For Masaryk, what gives Czech history a sense and integrity is a metaphysical, almost mystic notion of *humanita* (humanity) expressed in the zenith of Czech history, the Hussite Revolution. Czech history is signified by realising the mission it inherited from the Hussites. The Age of National Renaissance (*národní obrození*) is characterised directly through the heritage of the Czech Reformation, and Masaryk conceived this heritage as a base upon which a democratic, tolerant and fair Czech civil society was to be founded. The problem is whether Czech national history could be constructed based on such a religious mission, and whether the "National Renaissance" in the 19th. century could be deduced from the historically completely different ideas of the middle-age

Gothic spiritual world. Masaryk identified the modern Czech nation with his eternal category of the Czech nation which should be never degenerated and exist beyond history. Even if Masaryk conceived the idea of humanita in the context of European civilisation, he assigned to the Czech nation such an extreme individuality that its existence would by itself have a universal meaning.

As an eminent historian of the positivist school, Josef Pekař had to criticise Masaryk's conception of Czech history. He rejected Masaryk's metaphysical "meaning of Czech history", and emphasised that not only the social and economic but also the intellectual and spiritual life of Czechs from the middle-ages up to the modern era had been dependent on contemporary European developments, first and foremost German ones, and Czech society had been built by the interaction of various components. So, the "National Renaissance" was not a "revival" of ideas stated in the Hussite Revolution, but grew from Baroque culture, Enlightenment and German Romanticism.*²³ Thus Pekař affirmed expressively that Czech society was an organic part of the West.

Masaryk had not been an adherent of the break-up of the Habsburg monarchy before the First World War, and had a long, complicated way to go to his *Nová Evropa* which was a democratised international society of equal and free democratised nations. When he came to this idea, he maintained that these nations of *Nová Evropa* should be fully independent and every one of them should be a democratised civil society composed of equal and free individual citizens. This ideal construction corresponds to his earlier conception of the Czech nation. Here, the analogy between individual citizens in a civil society and nations in Europe reached its consistent logical conclusion.

While Masaryk elaborated *Nová Evropa*, Pekař remained a loyal monarchist-federalist. In his reaction to Wilson's 14 Articles Pekař defended the principle of federalisation of the Monarchy, remembering Palacký's idea of the Austrian state.*²⁴ Besides their positions in the given political situation, each of their conceptions of Czech national history was reflected in, and even determined

their view of new a European order.

IV

After the end of the First World War, when both German Mitteleuropa and Central European federalisation were ruined, and successor states as nation-states (in reality multi-national) were consolidated, visions of Central Europe became a marginal matter and almost disappeared from the scene.*²⁵ Only among German expansionists adhering to geopolitics, the German mission of civilisation and the rights of *Volksdeutsche* outside the Reich, did Central Europe survive to become the selfish concept of *Lebensraum*, and thus became the most profound antagonist of the Versailles system.*²⁶ After a short revival during the Second World War when Beneš' Czechoslovak and Sikorski's Polish exile governments negotiated in vain to establish a Central European (con-) federation, the idea of Central Europe vanished until the 1980's.

In the 1980's, Central Europe arose from dissidents or intellectuals in exile from Socialist Europe. Central Europe was an intellectual and cultural alternative to the division of Europe and Soviet domination. Hence it was clear to them that any isolated national political resistance to the regime would have had no chance. After the failures of 1956 in Hungary, 1968 in Czechoslovakia and 1980 / 81 in Poland, they intended to defeat the regime morally and culturally and overcome the status quo in the long-term by creating, or in their subjective vision, revitalising a common cultural Central European identity and tradition.*²⁷ The leading motif was a democratic, tolerant and free civil society within the multi-cultural, pluralistic "tradition" of Central Europe where various groups of the population co-existed while keeping their own identity. The lost possibility in the past became the alternative for the future.*²⁸

This emphasis on pluralism implied the distance of dissidents to political activities against the regime. In fact some dissidents, like V. Havel or Gy. Konrád explicitly rejected politics in a narrow

sense of the word. The principle of pluralism was reflected in the form of their civil movements, such as Charta 77. This pluralism corresponded to the highly valued concepts of multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism in Central European discourse, and, as the pluralism of the civil movements stood in radical opposition to the totalitarianism of the communist regime, so did the multi-culturalism of Central Europe to Soviet universalism, to remember Palacký's term. Their cultural discourses of Central Europe were therefore consciously highly political. The ideological structure of discourse on Central Europe reminds us that the concept of national existence as an individuality is connected to the idea of civil society in the 19th. century.

What is Central European multi-culturalism or pluralism, then? German *Mitteleuropa* sometimes generously tolerated the existence of disparate cultures and languages in various national societies, and now, several German or Austrian historians are beginning to re-evaluate Naumann or dynastic Coudenhove-Kalergi in the context of Central European discussion since the 1980's, finding certain favourable reactions among intellectuals of other lands.*²⁹ But Naumann's liberal-imperialistic concept of *Mitteleuropa* did not correspond to the contemporary development when nations were built to elaborate their own self-consciousness which was expressed, in the Czech case, first by Palacký and later by Masaryk. The "other Central Europe", represented in this paper by Palacký and Masaryk, was a vision of how a nation could exist as a historical and political individuality. Thus without recognition of national existence as an individuality, Central European pluralism had not been possible. What should make Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* more contradictory to the pluralism of Central European ideas in the 1980's is the lack of any mention of civil society as its ideological component. When Naumann is positively referred to in the discussion, there must be a basic misunderstanding of the ideal construction of pluralism or multi-culturalism. Cultural diversity is not simply national pluralism by itself.

It is problematic, whether national identity, in the sense of *Kulturnation* (cultural nation) and the principle of civil society

can find themselves in harmony. Jürgen Habermas set *Verfassungspatriotismus*, patriotism to democratic constitution to the Kulturation. The problem is that loyalty to a particularity often finds itself in contradiction to a general loyalty to the principle of civil society. The Central European discussion simply avoids this basic contradiction through referring to the multi-cultural, pluralistic "tradition" of Central Europe. According to it multi-culturalism has simply been realised in Central Europe. Without any argumentation, it has always existed. It is said, that multicultural sensitivity is an important characteristic of Central European *Menschentyps*. György Konrád stated at one conference in November 1993 that Central Europe had been, was and would be a reality, it had existed just as the Danube had existed.*³⁰ He said, that every keen tourist could perceive the common atmosphere of Central European cities. When we think of his aesthetic and ethical definition of Central Europe during the 1980's this statement seems like a tourist pamphlet advertising an "attractive Central Europe". If Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Czernowitz (Černovcy), Lvov and other cities have a common atmosphere and style, that is only because these cities underwent their process of a modernisation under a common ruler; the Habsburg monarchy. The modernisation determined the basic appearance of these cities through representative buildings, railway-stations, hotels, *cafés*, bourgeois apartment-houses and so on.

If it is true that this region had been full of colourful cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, it destroyed itself and became monotonous and the goal of pluralism has never been realised. So one could not naively believe in a pluralistic, multi-cultural tradition of Central Europe. Referring to the past, multi-cultural "tradition" can only be realised in the future. Some see the basis of the self-destruction of Central Europe in its deformed modernisation, economic backwardness, political radicalism and twisted nation-building process; in short, in its failure to establish a normal civil society which is legal, democratic and tolerant and supported by a stable middle-class, i.e., in its *Sonderweg*.*³¹

Central Europe was an expression of an acute desire for a

particular form of existence; the civil society. But besides the question of whether a normal civil society actually exists, it must be suspected that a civil society can be a premise for multi-cultural co-existence. Historically, modern civil societies, which has been realised in the form of nations, whether "deformed" or "normal", needed their existential project; Central Europe. This has been true in the 19th. century, during the First World War and also in the 1980's. It was only after modern civil society as nation had been invented and become conscious of its national character that the concept of a pluralistic, multi-cultural Central Europe was born. Central European discourses are just political visions seeking desirable forms of national existence. Thus, it seems paradoxical at the end of the 20th. century, after national identity turned to be more detrimental than beneficial, to appeal to the concept of Central Europe in order to overcome nationalism.*³²

The extreme desire for cultural identity can be reversed, becoming a scepticism towards one's own existence. Once one rejects political vision, vision for further existence, the "diversity" of Central Europe can cause a sense of fragility, uncertainty and a scepticism towards consistent existence. Even Kundera, an eager adherent of the Messianic Central Europe, expresses existential uncertainty towards Central Europe, when he sees the destiny of Central Europe in its Jewry: "the Jews in the twentieth century were the principal cosmopolitan, integrating element in Central Europe: they were its intellectual cement, a condensed version of its spirit, creators of its spiritual unity ... in their destiny the fate of Central Europe seems to be concentrated, reflected, and to have found its symbolic image."*³³

Central European instability results from its diversity and its ambivalence. Central Europe is defined only passively as something that is always moving between East and West.*³⁴ Josef Kroutvor writes: "History brings rhythm to time, but it is this that sleepy, dusty, seedy Central Europe, its tiny relations lack. Ordinarity is the master of the situation ... Unhistoricalness (nedějinost) is not non-historicalness (bezdějinost). Central European unhistoricalness (středoevropská nedějinost) finds itself between

the Western history and the Eastern non-historicalness (mezi západními dějinami a východní nedějiností), between a dynamic principle of history and a static principle of history".*³⁵ He means that a "history" does not have to make sense here, and that in Central Europe history is a grotesque heap of absurd incidents of everyday life, as in the novels of Kafka, Hašek and Musil. Such a cultural Central Europe by itself stands clearly in contrast to the political version of Central Europe.

After the end of the Cold War, some of the adherents of the Central European idea enthusiastically urged its revival and they believed in its political, cultural and perhaps economical possibility. But this kind of enthusiasm cooled down in a short time as nationalism and chauvinism began to threaten the area, especially as civil war broke out in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, as the integration of some of former socialist countries into the European structures arrived on the agenda, more prosaic problems became predominant over the poetic ideals that had been expressed in the Central European discussions during the 1980's. It is paradoxical, or maybe logical that Central European discussions are losing their actuality, as Central Europe is appearing in a concrete form, such as the various regional and local co-operations and so on. That is because Central European discussion since the beginning of 1980's was essentially "European discussion", i.e., it had a strong orientation towards the West in its essence. Thus today, Central Europe seems to be in a transition process to the another world, to Europe, merely a "waiting room" for entrance into the West. It contains only negative or passive meanings in this sense. So long as Central Europe was only a possibility, it was an object many people zealously talked about. As "Central Europe" is becoming a reality, that is, the region which was emancipated from the East but is not yet and for the time being will not be accepted into the West,*³⁶ it has lost its actuality.

The fact that Central Europe remains now an intellectual challenge which appeals to the civil society shows that it is not a concept of historical substance, but an idea for change, a subjective self-portrait for a desirable future. The problem is the prosaic

reality that legitimised the notion, Central Europe, and the banal reference to its "tradition".

Notes

- 1 "The (European) continent was simplified there, where the largest changes proceeded in the last two hundred years, that is, in Central Europe. Originality of this particular, storm, tragic and vital sub-continent was today reduced nearly to zero - the concept remains yet in meteorology, otherwise Central Europe is only a point of contact between the two social systems, their frontiers." Jan Křen, *Konfliktní společenství. Češi a Němci 1780-1918*, Praha, 1990, p. 7.
- 2 Otto Urban, "Evropanství a střední Evropa v historické retrospektivě", *Historický obzor*, X., 1994., p. 227.
- 3 Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe", *The New York Review of Books*, April 26, 1984, p. 35.
- 4 György Konrád, "Der Traum von Mitteleuropa", in: E. Busek / G. Wilflinger (Hrsg.), *Aufbruch nach Mitteleuropa. Rekonstruktion eines versunkenen Kontinents*, Wien, 1986.
- 5 As T. G. Ash correctly pointed out, Central European ideas of the 1980's contain an almost mystical historicism. And, as we will see below, it is not only a matter of 1980's. Timothy Garton Ash, "Does Central Europe Exist?", *New York Review of Books*, October 9, 1986, p. 46.
- 6 So does R. Jaworski. Rudolf Jaworski, "Die aktuelle Mitteleuropadiskussion in historischer Perspektive", *Historische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 247 / 3, pp. 540-543.
- 7 Ideological characteristic of the regional concept of Central Europe, see, Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Mitteleuropa, Politik und Kultur. Festrede zur Eröffnung des Internationalen Brucknerfestes '89 Linz an derDonau*, Linz, 1989.
- 8 Contrary to the interwar period, when Central Europe was quite out of the question among historians, in the discussion of the 1980's, where intellectuals played the main notes, historians, such as Jenő Szűcs, Péter Hanák, Iván Berend, Jan Křen, etc.,

contributed to a greatly to developing further discussion about Central Europe.

- 9 For example, *Mayers Lexikon* (7. Aufl., Leipzig, 1924-30), whose preceding edition did not contain a single headword of *Mitteleuropa*, defines three dimension of *Mitteleuropa*: Germanic *Mitteleuropa*, *Mitteleuropa* in a wider (mainly geographical) sense and political *Mitteleuropa*. If Germanic *Mitteleuropa* is assigned to the regions until recently governed by the German and Habsburg empires, then *Mitteleuropa* in a wider sense meant implicitly the regions supposed to be under German political, economical, cultural, or historical influence. It doesn't concern three different concepts of the definition, but one hierarchically arranged concept. *Masarykův slovník naučný* (Praha, 1925-33) was very aware of the origin of this word: it spends only a few lines on a geographical definition, and explains *střední Evropa* basically as various versions of German concepts of her *Machtssphäre* from Friedrich List to Friedrich Naumann.
- 10 After referring to Palacký, Kundera writes: "Central Europe longed to be a condensed version of Europe itself in all its cultural variety, a small arch-European Europe, a reduced model of Europe made up of nations conceived according to one rule: the greatest variety within the smallest space." Kundera, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- 11 The fact that Palacký proclaims himself as "a Bohemian of Slavic tribe (*Ich bin ein Böhme slawischen Stammes*)" reflects the obscurity of the notion of the Czech nation. Czech national intellectuals preferred *böhmisch* and *Böhme* to *tchechisch* and *Tschechisch* in German because the latter implied that the Czech speaking population in the Bohemian Lands was only an "ethnic group" as a part of the German nation cut off from the historical tradition of Bohemian Kingdom; and this was perceived as a discrimination. Jiří Kořalka, *Die Tschechen im Habsburger Reich und in Europa. 1815-1914. Sozialgeschichtliche Zusammenhänge der neuzeitlichen Nationsbildung und der Nationalitätenfrage in den böhmischen Ländern*, Wien / München, 1991, pp. 51-75. Such a confusing situation about the notion of the Czech nation continued up to the *Jahrhundertswende*, when Masaryk published

- the "Czech Question" (*Česká otázka*), and brought the Czech national question into a different dimension.
- 12 He distinguished *národ* and *národnost* in this *Idea státu rakouského*: "Historical fact that initially every nation had its own government and it was thus that inter-state rights and international rights (*právo mezistátní a mezinárodní*) have been considered for centuries as identical. But progress of global centralisation and decentralisation have long since caused the notions "state" (*stát*) and "nation" (*národ*) to cease to be identical ... Recently, the terms "nation" and "nationality" (*národ* and *národnost*, according to Palacký, *nation* and *nationalité*) have been supposed to mean another thing ... We use these words correctly in its genetic and original sense, mainly in regard to linguistic differences. Feeling, consciousness and validity of the principle of nationality (*zásada národnosti*) in a sense mentioned above develops and grows all over the civilised world in our time". Palacký, František, "Idea státu rakouského", in: *Františka Palackého Spisy drobné*, díl I., ed. by Bohuš Rieger, Praha, 1898, pp. 218-219.
- 13 "What the idea of church and religion meant in the 16th. and 17th. is the idea of nationality in our century". Palacký, "O centralisaci a národní rovnoprávnosti v Rakousku", *ibid.*, p. 113.
- 14 "Idea státu rakouského", p. 219.
- 15 Here must be noted that Palacký's program of a federal, constitutional Austrian monarchy is often misunderstood and incorrectly entitled "*Austroslavismus*". See, Otto Urban, "Der tschechische Austroslavismus nach dem österreich-ungarischen Ausgleich", in: A. Moritsch (ed.), *Der Austroslavismus. Ein verfrühtes Konzept zur politischen Neugestaltung Mitteleuropas*, Wien /Köln /Weimar, 1996.
- 16 By the way, the establishment of German Reich as a subjectively German national state in 1871 meant for Germans the renouncement both of the liberal national concept of greater Germany from the year of 1848 and of dynastic universal concept of the empire of 70 million, thus the end of German counter-part to Palacký.

- 17 See, Wolfgang Mommsen, "Die Mitteleuropaidee und Mitteleuropaplanungen im Deutschen Reich vor und während des Ersten Weltkrieges", in: *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen*, pp. 3-25.
- 18 "Hier soll aller geschichtliche Partikularismus im Drange des Weltkrieges soweit verwischt werden, daß er die Einheitsidee verträgt. Das ist die Forderung der Stunde, das ist die Aufgabe dieser Monate. Die Geschichte will im Donner der Kanonen darüber mit uns reden: an uns aber ist es, ob wir hören wollen ... Es fragt sich, ob die Gemeinsamkeit des Krieges ein Zufall oder eine Notwendigkeit ist. Wir behaupten das letztere ... Der Krieg wurde zum Schöpfer einer mitteleuropäischen Seele, die zeitiger da zu sein anfängt als die Ausgestaltung der zu ihr gehörigen greifbaren Formen. Von dieser Seele wollen wir sprechen und ihre Formen wollen wir suchen. Alle Mitkämpfer des Weltkrieges fühlen unmittelbar, daß in der gegenwärtigen und zukünftigen Zeit keine kleinen und mittleren Mächte mehr große Politik machen können. Unsere Quantitätsbegriffe haben sich gewaltig verändert ... Darum ist heute der mitteleuropäische Bund kein Zufall, sondern eine Notwendigkeit." Friedrich Naumann, Mitteleuropa, in: *Friedrich Naumann, Werke*, (ed.) Th. Schieder, Köln, 1964, Vol. 4., pp. 491-493. (Originalausgabe, Berlin, 1915)
- 19 *ibid.*, pp. 747-749.
- 20 See, Jiří Kořalka, "Anpassung oder Widerstand? Zu den tschechischen Reaktionen auf die deutsche Mitteleuropaidee vor und nach dem Jahre 1914", in: *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen*, pp. 25-38.
- 21 In his serial articles published in 1897-98, Masaryk analysed Pklacký's idea and deducted from his political and historical philosophy his own theories, while criticising Palacký's political practices. See, T.G.Masaryk, *Palackého idea národa českého*, Praha, 1926.
- 22 Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Česká otázka. Snahya tužbynárodního obrození*, Praha, 1895. *idem.*, *Noše nynější krize. Pád strany staročeske a počátkové směrů nových*, Praha, 1895. Both of them were newly published in one volume in Prague 1990.
- 23 Josef Pekař "Smysl českých dějin", in: Josef Pekař, *O smyslu českých dějin*, Praha, 1990, pp. 383-405, esp., pp. 394-398. (the

- article was first published in 1929)
- 24 Josef Pekař, "Poselství Wilsonovo a české memorandum z roku 1870" (from: *Národní politika*, February, 1918), in: Josef Pekař, *Na cestě k samostatnosti*. ed. by J. Hanzal, Praha, 1993, pp. 31-34.
- 25 Central European visions, various attempts of regional co-operation and federalisation had no real chance of being realised in the inter-war period. See, Jan Křen, "Das Integrationsproblem in Ost-Mitteleuropa zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen", in: *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen*, pp. 153-164.
- 26 Jacques Le Rider, *La Mitteleuropa*, Paris, 1994, pp. 99-103.
- 27 Jacque Rupnik, *Jiná Evropa*, Praha, 1992, p. 14. (based on revised French edition: *Une autre Europe*, Paris, 1990)
- 28 Ash, *op. cit.*, p. 52
- 29 What distinguishes the Central European discussion of the 1980's from its prototypes within the Central European conception up to the First World War is the strong orientation to the West and the organic integration of Germany into it. That is why Naumann's and other versions of German Mitteleuropa have sometimes been wrongly referred to in Central European discussion. For Kundera, Central Europe is essentially the West. (Central Europe is the West "kidnapped, displaced".) See, Martin Schulze-Wessel, "Die Mitte liegt westwärts. Mitteleuropa in tschechischer Diskussion", in: *Bohemia*, 29 (1988). But orientation towards the West has always been one of the most remarkable characteristics of Central European discourse and it can be said that the ideal construction of "Central" is in essence asymmetrical.
- 30 György Konrád, "Starý most", in: *Střední Evropa. Revue pro středoevropskou kulturu a politiku*, No. 37 (2 / 1994), pp. 46-51.
- 31 See, Iván T. Berend, *The Crisis Zone of Europe: An Interpretation of East-Central European History in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, 1986, Jan Křen, "Diskuse o střední Evropě - historicky nahlížená", in: Křen, *Historické proměny Čěšství*, Praha, 1992.
- 32 M. Rutschky writes ironically but correctly: "Gerade die dicht aus Bildungswissen gewebten Arbeiten von Claudio Magris

lehren, daß die Konzepte von Kultur und Identität sind, die den Bürgerkrieg so verlockend machen, weil es kein besseres Mittel gibt, sich der eigenen kulturellen Identität als eines vital Unverzichtbaren zu versichern ... Gleichwohl, ich behaupte, was den postsozialistischen Gesellschaften noch fehlt, ist die Einsicht in die Unvermeidlichkeit von Entfremdung und Identitätsverlust. Sie haben die lebensnotwendige Dosis an Nihilismus noch nicht intus.", Michael Rutschky, "Mitteleuropa. Rückblick auf eine kurzfristige Utopie", in: *Merkur* 519 (No. 6 / Vol. 46, 1992), p. 193.

- 33 Kundera, *op.cit.*, p. 35. More correctly, he should have written about the assimilated Jews that "were ... the integrating element in Central Europe." Hobsbawm doubted if it was worth discussing the idea of "Central Europe" after the Holocaust, the complete destruction of its Jewry. Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*
- 34 The most comprehensive historical reflection in this sense is: Jenő Szűcs, *Die drei historischen Regionen Europas*, Frankfurt, 1994² (Originalausgabe: *Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról*, Budapest, 1983.)
- 35 Josef Kroutvor, 'Potíže střední Evropy: anekdota a dějiny', in: Kroutvor., *Potíže s dějinami*, Praha, 1990, p. 66.
- 36 Miroslav Kusý, "Do které Evropy patříme?", *Lidové noviny*, March 29, 1996.