

The emergence of a nonviolent society in Czechoslovakia 1989

Nonviolent struggle and methods of the Velvet revolution

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Introduction

Some events can change rapidly the world. In 1989 nobody knew that the Cold War was about to end and the whole Eastern and Central Europe will transform within the end of the year. In 1989 Berlin wall is falling down and Soviet Union ceases its existing – whole Eastern bloc crashes into independent states. This is the beginning of new politics, new civil movements, new ideas and examples of nonviolent revolutions to be followed.

After 1989 many nonviolent revolutions burst in Europe, Africa and Asia, some of them leading to international crises. With the example set by the *Velvet revolutions* in 1989, in many other nonviolent protests are trying to overthrow the governments in so peaceful way. In this transitional year, the countries behind the *Iron curtain* are becoming a territory for a conflict between the people and the state. In Romania the regime change is violent and severe, causing victims, but in others the revolution is smooth, gentle and it is called “*velvet*”. The most of an interest are the cases of Poland and Czechoslovakia. There the people on the streets were the leading actors in the nonviolent play of the transitional change.

There are states under dictatorial conditions with rules, which are suppressing the people in today's world. This way of ruling is an ongoing problem for the international world firstly from the people's perspective and secondly from the international system and regime spectrum. There are working organizations which are showing to people how to use nonviolent methods to

overthrow dictatorial regimes. There are handbooks of revolutions and movements to inspire and guide the oppressive regimes. Even against *ISIS* there are suggestions to resist in a non-violent way (Popovic and Mimoun, 2016). Those problematizations are important in the world development and their marks for solving are in the spectrum of the current research.

On the other hand are existing successful wave of nonviolent revolutions, well known as *Velvet revolutions*. This research is focusing on the topic of the 1989 in Czechoslovakia and particularly the nonviolence, which was used by the Czechoslovak people in 1989. Construing and interpreting the events of 1989 in the case of Czechoslovakia, the paper is aiming to find out *what were the components of the non-violent struggle in Czechoslovakia 1989? Which of the nonviolent theory principles were adhered?* Moreover, this thesis is seeking *what were the roots of non-violence in Czechoslovakia in 1989?*

Methodology

The methodological chapter will include a short outline of the project, consideration of ontological and epistemological positions, research design and specific choice of method, the way the data is collected - primary and secondary sources, discussion and clarification of terms and core limitation and feasibility of the research.

Outline of the research project

This thesis is examining the emergence of the nonviolent society in the Czech lands in 1989 during the Velvet revolution. The research questions are posing the components of the nonviolent struggle used by the society in Czechoslovakia, which of them were inherited in the struggle along with the search for the roots of the nonviolence in Czechoslovakia. The introduction is providing with a short overview of the significance of the Velvet revolution as well as information about the wave of the nonviolent revolutions in the last two decades. The introduction leads to the problem formulation, which discusses why the examination of the successful nonviolent struggle in the past would be of particular importance in the nowadays globalized world. Next is developed the methodology chapter, in which are described the main methods of analysis, data collection, discussion of why the research is carried out in this particular way and core limitations.

The next section is presenting the scientific theories chosen to be tested in the project paper. They are the nonviolent theories projected by the most indicated people in the field of the nonviolence. The theories are Gandhi's theory of nonviolence and Richard Gregg's continuation as a supporting the Gandhi's moral nonviolence theory and the pragmatic nonviolent theory by Gene Sharp. After the theoretical aspects, the research paper is providing with a clarification part, where are pointed out the terms, which are not researched, due to their complexity. Some disputable or often used phrases are cleared and explained for the reader, including the referring to the different parts of the paper. In the following historical chapter the context of the topic is developed by the description of the previous nonviolent struggles of the Czech nation, flow of

events and ideas before and during 1989. In the analytical chapter of the paper is examined the causality of the used nonviolent methods during the Velvet revolution with the pointed methods by the theories and by the qualitative analysis. By the use of primary and secondary source data analysis seeks an answer for the posed research questions. Furthermore, there is included side-comparison to the used by the Polish people nonviolent techniques with an influence to the revolution in Czechoslovakia. The last section of the paper is devoted to the findings drawn from the analysis for finding the origins and the main factors, which were composing the nonviolent struggle in Czechoslovakia. In the appendix are included the semi-structured transcribed interviews conducted for the thesis research.

Main positions adopted in the research paper

Relationship to theory

Relationship to theory in this research is primarily inductive, but with deductive parts. The involving of induction and deduction is known as an iterative relationship, which is constantly moving between data and theory. This “*waving back and forth between data and theory*” is the only suitable way to simultaneously test the theories of nonviolence and provide new developments for them out from the experience of the people during the nonviolent revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989 (Bryman, 2004, p.10). This approach is implemented in order to be fulfilled the process from the both sides of testing theory and contributing with new theoretical implications. Bryman (2012) presents that is possible with the sufficient existence of

theory, the researcher to want to collect more data and to establish “*conditions*” in which the theory will or will not stand, which is matching with this case research.

Epistemology

The epistemological position adhered in the research is interpretivism and it is in opposition with positivist stance, where there is a natural scientific approach for studying reality (Bryman, 2012, p. 28). The examination of the revolution in 1989 is inspired by the position of attempt to understand the people and their and actions to create a nonviolent revolution. Furthermore, the paper is focused on the understanding of the roots of the motivations of the society to use nonviolence. Interpretivism as intellectual tradition is containing the notion of Weber’s “*understanding*” and it is including the phenomenology and symbolic interaction in order to give “*interpretive understanding of the social actions*” (Bryman, 2012, p.30). The *understanding of social actions* in the paper is standing for the usage of which nonviolent methods and tools people were implementing to question the state apparatus. Phenomenology as intellectual stream of the interpretivism is grasping the reality of the actors and the world that they are creating to understand how they make sense of it (Bryman, 2012, p.30). In this case research this refers to finding the components of the nonviolent struggle and the roots of the nonviolence and observes how the people made sense of them.

It is vital to be noted in connection with the epistemological position that the research paper is seeing the human action as the main trigger of the events. Therefore, is preconditioned to follow the phenomenology. This position is attempting to gain access to the people’s “*common*

thinking” and to examine their actions and see the world from their point of view (Bryman, 2012, p.30). The similar goal is shared by current thesis.

Ontology

Following the logic of the social research, the ontological position adhered is not the *objectivism*, but the *constructionism*. As researched by Bryman (2012) the constructionism is linked with the culture from the both central concepts in the social research - organization and culture (p.32). In the current paper, the culture of the society in Czechoslovakia is the basis for observation of the method of the events and not the organizations. The social science is acknowledging about *constructionism* or *constructivism* that the social world is in “*constant state of change*”, it means that is renewed and being constructed by the actors (people) (Bryman, 2012, p.33). In contrast of the *objectivism* and *positivism*, the main perception of the constructivism is the knowledge of the social word and objects as constructed, which as perception is relying on two core features. The first one is that the researchers are creating a specific version of the reality and it cannot be fully definitive and second is that as postmodernists view the knowledge is uncertain and indeterminate (Bryman, 2012, p.33). By the purposes of ratifying this ontological stance, the one of constructivism is fully matching the perceptive of the research topic and the way it is decided to be carried out.

Discussion

The choices of combining the iterative approach with the interpretivism and constructivism are made, because they are relevant to the study of the reality of Czechoslovakia in 1989. Moreover those choices are guiding also the further decisions of the paper's methodology. The people in the important year 1989 are constructing the reality of the nonviolent struggle, which is in the research interest. This reality is interpretive and not stable because it is seen by many different perspectives with various outcome opinions. Those positions regarding the research view are allowing the freedom of interpretation and space for determining new findings by the deconstruction of the created reality. To explain the chosen epistemology and ontology is important also with the connection to the research design. Those stances with which the paper is operating are relevant not only for the topic, but furthermore they are supporting the projected discoveries with an intention for more sufficient and accurate results. The research paper is answering in a better and clearer way to the research questions, supported by the interpretivism and constructionism. These standpoints are giving the freedom of interpretation, which is needed for the topic, and allowing constructing classification of the nonviolent methods and testing the theories. By this means the research paper is accomplishing better results and greater verification.

Research design

The research design of the paper is a case study meaning that it will contain "*detailed and intensive analysis*" on one single case (Bryman, 2004, p.48). The research paper is focused

on the nonviolent tactics used by the people to create the Velvet revolution in 1989 in Czechoslovakia. The study is generating one correlation or side-comparison case with the nonviolent tactics used in Poland, due to very strong relevance to the case.

In the case study of Czechoslovakia's nonviolent revolution, the research paper is seeking which nonviolent methods as components were adopted during the protests. For that purpose are included the theories of the scientists of the nonviolent struggle specifically the three most indicated. Those three theoreticians are projecting the nonviolence and how it should work in various ways. Gandhi is relying on the moral view of the nonviolent struggle, Gene Sharp is dissociating from him as affirming that the nonviolent struggle should be strategized, and between them is Richard Gregg, who is staying on the ground of moral nonviolence, but with counting on the dramatization and the psychological pressure. Klotz (2009) implies that the significance of the case study for testing theories is still debated, but for finding and building theories is widely accepted (p. 58). This point is presented, because with the testing of the theories, the research paper is trying to construct and contribute to the nonviolent theory with the classification and further elaboration of methods used in Czechoslovakia. Therefore due to the complexity and too broad content the study is simply case study with side-comparison, but not a comparative study, which could also be meaningful. The attempt for side-comparison case with Poland is trying to reach for some better researching of the methods used in Czechoslovakia's nonviolent revolution.

Specific methods

For the aim of achieving accurate and satisfactory outcomes are chosen the qualitative content analysis and the historical representations as methods. This merging of methods is made by the use of triangulation for mixed- methods. Triangulation is the procedure, which allows specific situation to be seen from more than one perspective in order to enrich knowledge or test validity – in this case for both (Sarantakos, 2005, p.145). In this case is used method triangulation, which is allowing in the research paper to be used more than one method (Sarantakos, 2005, p.145). The study is employing “*mixed-methods design*” to research different aspects of the same phenomena (Sarantakos, 2005, p.145). This choice is made with the aim for full understanding of the topic and complete observations. Furthermore the topic is requiring besides the qualitative interpretation of data, to be implicated the historical presuppositions and context of the situation.

The strategy of the qualitative research is linked with the practice of data collection and is given flexibility for interpretation from the researcher. It is pointed out by Bryman (2004) that the qualitative method is seeing and interpreting the world by examination of its “*participants*”, which is matching with the interpretivism as position adopted in the paper (p.266). The qualitative way of researching is also seeking to understand the constructed reality as the outcome of “*the interactions between the individuals*”, which is associated with the ontology of constructivism (p.266). Klotz (2009) is asserting how important is for the case study of qualitative research to rely on proper ontology and epistemology (p.44).

For the method of qualitative content analysis, Weber (1990:19) describes that is a “*set of procedures to make inferences from text*” (as quoted by Hermann 2009, p.151). On the further level Moysen and Wagstaffe (1987: 20) are stating that is a method, which is displaying how people are using or manipulating symbols and investigating “*communication with meaning*” (as quoted by Hermann 2009, p.151). To be precise with the current particular case study there is not an obvious communication demand in the research question and there is not a focus on particular observations from words. However, the interest of the study is focused on the sources of communication and tools used by the people for creating a nonviolent revolution. Moreover, it is examining a written set amount of data relating to the event. This includes the qualitative sense and the content examination. The content examination is focused on the semi-structured interviews made in the paper with the people talking about the events. Hermann (2009) states that the content analysis could have quantitative and qualitative implications, but this paper focuses on the interpretation of the data in a qualitative way (pp.152-155).

This paper is not entirely ratifying the qualitative content analysis for analyzing only official speeches or focusing on *keywords* for analyzing, thus it is using the sources of interviews, archives, oral histories, videos and a wide range variety of sources. As there is the need for coding the choice is made on the indicators of the three streams of nonviolence – *moral*, *pragmatic* and *moral dramatized* standing for the theories of Gandhi, Sharp, and Gregg used in the research. The contextualizing of the information will put in order the discovered and used by the people tactics in the Velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia 1989.

The other mentioned above method is historical representations. Dunn (2009) characterizes it as focus on the “language, ideas, and culture” and how those means are contributing to the creation of structures during specific historical moments (p.78). For finding out the components of the nonviolent struggle, there is a need to be examined these moments in the past, which were responsible for forming the society in a particular way. The language, ideas and culture of the people in Czechoslovakia seen through the historical perspective are giving more precise point of view than to use only the qualitative data from interviews and oral histories. The past moments are by giving interpretation of them, which is helping to develop the topic. Therefore the historical section is including some analytical moments and in the analysis of the case of Poland are included the historical representations.

Consequently, the result should enable the research paper to keep the relation between the method, terms, analysis, and observations. Bryman (2004) is naming this as “*procedure of constant comparison*” and it authorizes the examination of the “*phenomena being coded under certain category*” as for this paper this is the category of nonviolence (p.403).

Discussion

Those decisions are made to address in the best way the research questions of the paper. The qualitative and case study approach with historical representations are suitable for discovering the traces of the roots of the nonviolence in the Czech lands and the components of the nonviolent struggle. With the establishing the frames of using the history and data and interpreting them is believed that the maximum result should be accomplished.

Data collection

The collected data is primary and secondary. The second-hand sources as mentioned above are a wide variety of data as academic books, articles, documentaries, archives, online sources and oral histories. The current research is narrowing the data to the specific sources concerning only nonviolent character of the events during 1989. Also the research paper is keeping the sources to be focused primarily on the year 1989. Some exclusion is made for the comparison with the Polish nonviolent tactics and the historical representation of the Czech society and culture before 1989. Other sources are concerning the nonviolent movements and the emerging of the underground society. All the data is collected with the goal to understand and indicate all the possible nonviolent methods used by the people in 1989.

As primary or first-hand data sources are used five semi-structured interviews to serve for the content analysis of the paper and to give implications and argumentations and experiences in English language regarding the topic. These people as sources are either academic professionals specialized in the field of the democratic transitions from 1989 and the Velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia or participants in the revolution or directly affected from the revolution. The detailed information for all them is containing the Appendix in which in the beginning of each interview there is a personal profile of the person. The interviews are five. Accordingly they are indicated with a letters, serving for better orientation in the Appendix likes this – first interview is *Appendix A*, second is *Appendix B* etc.

Discussion and limitations

Most of the sources for the events in 1989 in Czechoslovakia are still in Czech language. Despite the intensive lessons during the research, the author was not capable to operate fully and completely with those sources. Therefore, as primary limitation is still listed the understanding of the local language Czech. Czech sources were used in the research, but they were narrowed down to only several with key importance, which the author had the knowledge to read and understand with additional help. In connection with this limitation first-source data of interviews was intentionally targeted to be received more complete and authentic view on the situation of 1989 from local individuals and academics concerned in this topic. This carries out the limitation of whether the interviews are enough. It also carries the risk of the credibility and validation of the sources. Therefore the triangulation in methods is used to support the arguments with historical representations.

With this choices research paper aims to find the components of the nonviolent struggle of the people in 1989 and to classify them correctly by the listed theories. The research paper is justifying its choices by bearing in mind the core limitations of knowing the local language and culture and being fully aware of the history of the nation. Therefore with this understanding the limitations the suggestion of this paper was made after taking a semester in political science with classes in history and cultural history of the Czech nation.

Theoretical framework

This chapter explores the main theories of the nonviolent struggle. It is divided between the three builders of the nonviolence theory – Mohandas Gandhi, Richard Gregg and Gene Sharp.

Defining non-violent theory

In the 19th century, there were fabricated significant amount of peace ideas and nonviolent movements. Some of them were religious, some were secular or political - they were all questioning the existence of violence. Along with the violence of the World War I and II, the pacifism and non-violent action as ideas were flourishing to oppose colonialism, racial segregation, war and political suppression. While Gene Sharp is emphasizing on the transformation of the state from a dictatorial regime to democracy through non-violent means, Gandhi is presenting the absence of violence as a way of living. This has its reasons due to the different time that they are living. Considering this, there is not a person, who is accepted as the establisher of the theory of non-violence, but the most influential and well known is Mohandas Gandhi. Both Gene Sharp and Richard Gregg are basing their theories on his ideas.

The theoretical part are outlined the three scientists of the nonviolent thought - Mohandas Gandhi, Richard Gregg, and Gene Sharp. They are separated by the goals of their ideas for the nonviolent action, because with in that way they built different faces of this theory.

Gandhi's nonviolence – planted in the human nature

Mohandas Gandhi has been researched and considered as a phenomenon for his ideas and thoughts during his life and even more after his death in 1948. He has been important not only for India with fighting for the independence and anti-colonialism, but also on the international level, inspiring the societies to adopt the principle of nonviolence. On a global level, many authors are seeing his practice and ideas of nonviolence as a source for dealing with all sorts of conflicts (Brown and Parel, 2011, p. 259).

The nonviolence, conflict and state in Gandhi's perception

The questioning of the status quo is the starting point for all of the thinkers of the nonviolent theory. In one or other way only nonviolence cannot exist, without the idea of the confrontation or the definition of state and political system. If Gene Sharp is writing exclusively against dictatorial regimes, Gandhi is living still in the time of colonialism and his struggle is personal - adopting nonviolence as a human principle. This ground of *Gandhian* nonviolence cultivates inspiration from his ideas on many levels. Nevertheless, in every occasion for protest stays the general idea to fight against the established order. Gandhi is encouraging the people who have been suppressed to be active and gain their autonomy (Terchek, 2011, p.117). To confront the state Gandhi's principle is to introduce a crisis, which leads to conflict, and the conflict should be handled nonviolently (Terchek, 2011, p.117). As Terchek (2011) expresses, the basic pillar of Gandhi's teachings is *Satyagraha*, which is the power of the truth (p.117). He bonds the truth with the nonviolence and says that this is the civil disobedience – he declares that

nonviolence is serving to the truth and everyone is better off when knowing about truth rather than denying it (Terchek, 2011, pp.117-118).

Gandhi is tracing the origin of the power back to the ordinary men and women, therefore, the civil disobedience according to him is natural and it is the refusal to support the amoral control (Terchek, 2011, p.121). Further statement of him is expressing the ideas of the connections between human rights and the necessary struggle of the people: *“Civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy...Civil disobedience...becomes a sacred duty when the state has become lawless, or which is the same thing-corrupt”* (Terchek, 2011, p.121).

However, before the preparation for protest, Gandhi insists that efforts should be made to negotiate with the other side (Terchek, 2011, p.122). On this topic, the theorists of nonviolence have different views, but it has importance since in the case of Czechoslovakia simultaneously with the nonviolent struggle surpasses a process of negotiations with the government.

Gandhi's ideas for nonviolent struggle

When starting to fight with nonviolent means, people cannot find a book with described methods or theories provided from the Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi. However, his works are displaying a way how to adopt nonviolence and why is important to do so. He urges the individuals to make choices and live morally (Terchek, 2011, p.118). But also, this should be made with consciousness, because, people do have control only over their means, but not over

the results, or the end (Terchek, 2011, p.118). Gandhi presents the argumentation of the violent opponent like this: “*They say “means are after all means”. I would say that “means are after all everything”*” (Terchek, 2011, p. 119). He argues that with violent means the people can only get similar of that what they had before (Terchek, 2011, p.118).

As mentioned above the *Satyagraha* is the devotion to one certain ideal – *the truth*. This word and its meaning are the core of the nonviolent theory, which Gandhi develops in his life. According to Terchek (2011) for Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* is including in itself the conflict and the love (p. 123). Only the love is having the power to influence or change the attitudes of the people voluntarily, it has the potential to convert and persuade (Terchek, 2011, p.123). Explaining this concept, for Gandhi, all the human virtues and ideals are having implication for the nonviolence. His beliefs are that all human life “*exists by some himsa [harm, violence] and remains with us as long as we live. However, that is no reason to think we should not strive to diminish himsa in our lives and cultivate ahimsa, that is love, nonviolence*” (Terchek, 2011, p.124).

Gandhi is expressing the nonviolence is the love for life and to us, nonviolence is natural and it can bring only good outcomes. Following this thought, we can read that the nonviolence in his theory as not an only one-time strategy to overthrow a regime. Exactly the opposite, nonviolence is a lifestyle, which can be morally adopted and included in every part of our living.

The way it needs to be embraced is via discipline and preparations. According to Gandhi in the nonviolent struggle the people should be prepared for confrontation and they should train

self-discipline to accept the pain and suffering (Terchek, 2011, p. 122). They should not answer to the violence with violence, but implement the confrontation, which is more than just an ordinary action (Terchek, 2011, p. 122). This will provoke a crisis, which as presented by Terchek (2011), is a method to provoke dialogue for volunteer change (p.122). In any case, this strategy can be also dangerous, because of the nature of the people. The civil disobedience cannot be controlled by all the involved people and others may become violent (Terchek, 2011, p.122). Therefore is so important every individual to cultivate nonviolence by himself.

Another important pillar for fostering nonviolence is to control the leading emotions, as it was mentioned about love; Gandhi is focusing also on isolating the negative feelings. In the process of the confrontation - the passion, anger, envy and feeling for revenge may appear and they can make proceeding nonviolently impossible (Terchek, 2011, p.123). After all, the person who is *satyagraha* is cultivating hope and skepticism. Moreover criticism and hope make the person constructive and he is likely to adopt nonviolent means (Terchek, 2011, p.125). The hope is a virtue as strong as the love for the Indian leader and the hopeful person does not engage in “*wishful thinking nor in blind faith*” (Terchek, 2011, p.125). Essential for *the mahatma* is as well the virtue of courage. It needs to be pursued in order to create successful nonviolent struggle and to fight for removing of the opposite emotion – the fear (Terchek, 2011, p.127). The argument given by him of why this is important is that the people, who feel fear, are directed by this emotion and they are incapable of ruling themselves (Terchek, 2011, p.127). From his ideology is considered that fear is one of the obstacles for nonviolent action and the removal of it will be one of the methods to begin with this kind of struggle.

To answer to the question for the superiorities of the nonviolence as a method, Gandhi is pointing out that with nonviolence there is no tension between the both parties - it is enabling them to live in harmony; it is narrowing the passions and limiting the fear after the conflict is finished (Terchek, 2011, p. 128).

However on the other side, the nonviolent order cannot be created without the cooperation of the state (Parel, 2011, p.170). If the state is not reflecting on the virtue of truth, society will hardly achieve nonviolence (Parel, 2011, p.170). Therefore, the essence of Gandhi's thought is that state power and society have to work together as a tandem because only the secular state itself is not able to develop nonviolent order (Parel, 2011, p.170).

The nonviolence in the theory of Gandhi is a product of certain values and conditions. It is important to understand under which circumstances nonviolence is impossible. For achieving this, we can examine Gandhi's perception of the power. In his opinion when the power relations are "asymmetrical" the one who holds the power is "tempted to use" its resources to his own advantage (Terchek, 2011, p.120).

Accepted as a pillar of Gandhi's thought for conducting nonviolent action, is also the relationship between consent and power. He is paying attention to the "powerless" - people who think that they have no other way then to comply with the situation (Terchek, 2011, p. 124). In this thesis dealing with the case of the nonviolent revolutions in Czechoslovakia in 1989, powerless are having a special place in the symbolic system of the nation. The important source for nonviolence is the essay "*The power of the powerless*" by the dissident Vaclav Havel.

According to Gandhi the tacit consent is legitimizing the governments and when this consent is withdrawn from the people, the state loses its legitimacy and its main resource – the power, which is returned to the people (Terchek, 2011, p.128).

Additionally, Gandhi is predicting the situation in Europe according to the outcome of the socialism. He claims that the concept of socialism in the West “*was born in an environment reeking with violence*” and he continues “*I hold that the coming to power of the proletariat through violence is bound to fail. What is gained by violence must be lost before superior violence*” (Parel, 2011, pp.169-170). Gandhi is predicting correctly that the violent regimes are constrained to fail. This statement unfortunately was fully accomplished after much more violence and victims were given before the Soviet bloc fall apart in a nonviolent way.

Gandhi is considered by many as an idealist, but he is aware of the power and its use, his political thought is beyond religious views or naive idealism (Terchek, 2011, p.128). His insisting on the spiritual values and the practice of nonviolence is making his influence significant at a global level (Brown and Parel, 2011, p. 261).

The nonviolent theory developed by Gandhi is relevant to any case, which is observing nonviolent struggles. To this particular research Gandhi is essential figure, because the aim of the research is to find and observe the components of the nonviolent struggle, its roots and principles which were adhered in order till nowadays in history to be remembered as *Velvet revolution*. Moreover, Gandhi’s theory is showing the moral approach to nonviolence, which is considered in this paper as the most compatible with the case of Czechoslovakia 1989. Withal Gandhi is the

core thinker and the first person ever to develop approach to protest against any suppression of the state by uniting love, hope and devotion to truth in a nonviolent resistance. Through his theory in the analysis are searched the patterns and similarities with the nonviolence type which Gandhi is writing about.

Richard B. Gregg theory of nonviolence

Richard Gregg is one of the scholars, which are, as Kosek (2005) confirms - ignored, but on the other hand, Gregg is the first scholar in America to develop a nonviolent resistance theory (p.1318). He was living between the years 1885 and 1974 while many peace movements and groups are flourishing, but he succeeds to separate from them and stays on the theoretical level. He is making a step further than the pure ideology and moves away from the sectarian faction that affects the *American Left* in 1930's, from the radical pacifism and racial war movements (Kosek, 2005, p. 1333).

It is impossible to talk about Gregg without considering the influence from Gandhi. Their direct communication starts in 1925 when Gregg travels to India and becomes friend with Gandhi, he also stays in mahatma's *Sabarmati ashram* (Kosek, 2005, pp.1320-1324). Gregg is also the first American, who studied the *Indian independence movement*, Kosek (2005) is calling the theories of Gregg "*transitional exchange*" (Kosek, 2005, pp.1320-1324). There are translations in the works of Gregg from the teachings of the Indian leader Gandhi. The most famous book of Gregg is "*The power of Non-Violence*", published in 1934, and it is giving inspiration to nonviolent activists like Martin Luther King (Kosek, 2005, p. 1321).

Gregg is learning about *Satyagraha* – the devoting to the truth and adopts the tone of Gandhi for self-examination, in other words, he thinks that he can be always mistaken or wrong and that he is also experimenting with the truth (Kosek, 2005, p.1324).

Still, besides the transfer of ideas from India, he contributes to the nonviolence theory with the combination of the moral and the spiritual “*with strategic dramatization*” (Kosek, 2005, p.1325). Gregg is giving a pragmatic view to the moral aspect of the nonviolence and tries to develop it as a method for social change (Kosek, 2005, p.1329). The American's views on nonviolence are that nonviolent action is a real weapon and more than imaginable it looks like war, but without killing (Kosek, 2005, p.1331). Gregg is publishing three books on nonviolent action and in all of them he is giving examples of cases to show how nonviolence is working (Kosek, 2005, pp.1327-1328). He plays on the psychological side of the persuasion. In the scenario that two men are defending in the same violent way, they both have same moral values and believe that physical force is solving the conflicts.

Thereafter he changes the case as on the place of the violent attacker, he situates nonviolent resister (Kosek, 2005, p.1329). In this scene is described *the moral “jiu-jitsu”*, which is the lost of the moral balance of the opponent. This is one of the most important theoretical expressions for nonviolence of Richard Gregg. He is relying on the basis that “*in failing to defend himself, the nonviolent person intentionally disrupts the attacker value system*” (Kosek, 2005, p.1329). Another tool that is an advantage of the nonviolence is that it can be a method for public performance and intends to persuade the audience (Kosek, 2005, p.1329). Nowadays this is not a new idea for the activists, but back then it was realized that the struggle is collecting

more benefits when it is watched by someone or presented in front of the society. In Gregg's ideas, the audience is a "*mirror reflecting back to the attacker*" and it harms his moral standards (Kosek, 2005, p.1330). Back then Gregg's views are very much focused on what now is used from the protesters the most— *the mass and social media*. He is paying attention to the power of the mass media and how "*wonderful news*" and "*fascinating stories*" is creating the nonviolent resistance of women and men (Kosek, 2005, p.1330). Gregg even compares it with commercial advertising (Kosek, 2005, p.1330). Those abstracts are not created because he is particularly interested in media or effects of it, on the contrary, he understood the effect of the nonviolent struggle and how to be performed in a better way. The "*bad publicity*", he thinks is going to give to the resistance group advantage and he argues that "*ruthless deeds tend to become known to the world at large*" (Kosek, 2005, p.1330). Still this is just an assumption, because when the opponent is the state, the answers could vary depending on the political system and the degree of dictatorship as we observe later in the works of Gene Sharp.

However, Gregg is creating modification of the techniques of Gandhi adding the need of secularization of the views and the importance of the symbolic action (Kosek, 2005, 1320-1331). Therefore, the elaborated aim of Gregg is to solve the crisis of the democracy by paying attention to values and symbols. He says that when those two can be changed what will go after them is going to be the real *revolution* (Kosek, 2005, 1323). One of the pointed tools from him is *the strike*; it is not a battle for material goods, but rather a performance as he sees it (Kosek, 2005, 1325). If the nonviolent resisters succeed to perform well, they could put shadow even on the melodrama of the violence with surprising and dramatized moments (Kosek, 2005, p.1325).

In his essay *Gandhism versus Socialism*¹ is expressed that the socialism, particularly in the Russian Soviet bloc, is neither humane, nor just, and the nonviolent society following those features is having different view (Kosek, 2005, p.1333). As Gandhi, Gregg as well is predicting in a right way what is happening with the societies, which are following the virtues of the nonviolence. This research paper is observing one of the inclusive examples for this.

Whenever nonviolence is adopted as method it is giving to the struggle the benefit of the political action and the power to each participant and therefore the feeling of personal responsibility (Kosek, 2005, p.1335). However, during those years in America Gandhi's politics and Gregg's theories are seen as tools for racial elimination, but Gregg is still defending the thesis that conflict is only a question of values (Kosek, 2005, pp.1336-1337). Gregg is criticized by many pacifists for not choosing between moral idealism and political realism because he still implements some pragmatic side of the nonviolence action theory (Kosek, 2005, p.1346). Still he is setting the importance of the theory along with the practical side of the strategy and the methods (Kosek, 2005, p.1339).

Gregg was willing to elaborate on the characteristics of this type of society, which Gandhi was seeing, but with adding some points to the direct actions. He didn't want to write a handbook for political technology, but to implement the ideals for humane society in the modern knowledge (Kosek, 2005, p.1346).

¹ Published for first time in 1931 as *Gandhism and Socialism*

Gregg theory of nonviolence is as well relevant to the case of Czechoslovakia, not only because it is valuable as the first theory ever written in America, but similarities are found on many levels. If in the case study are about to be tested the theories of the nonviolence starting from the most idealistic one and finishing with the most pragmatic one, then is vital to be acknowledged the central stand between them belonging to Gregg. By researching also his approach it could be made a clear differentiation and classification of the methods used by the people in 1989 in Czechoslovakia.

According to Gregg, the nonviolence could be developed by a society, which will restore the meaning to the modern existence. The developing of nonviolent direct action theory from Gandhi and Gregg is still more or less on the horizon of idealism. With some practices and some examples, they are setting the starting point for another scholar, who already writes a handbook for organizing nonviolent revolutions - Gene Sharp.

Gene Sharp's approach to the theory of nonviolence

Gene Sharp is a scholar with major significance in the field of civil resistance and disobedience. His books on nonviolent struggle and civilian defense are translated into more than 30 languages around the world (Weber, 2003, p. 251). Gene sharp is using the "*technique approach*" to nonviolence, and he is stating that nonviolence should be used in a pragmatic way rather than for religious or ethical fights (Weber, 2003, p.251-252).

Defined by Judith Stiehm there are two approaches to the nonviolence – "*conscientious*", which stands for the human harmony and moral rejection of violence and "*pragmatic*", which is seeing the conflict as normal and the rejection of violence is the effective mechanism to challenge it (as quoted by Weber, 2003, p. 250). The further research is stating that they differ with the implications and motivations behind them. The failure to distinguish between the moral and pragmatic nonviolence may harm the results of it and confuse the audience (Stiehm, 1968 quoted by Weber, 2003, p.252). For the research's topic is important to note which approach to nonviolence the people in Czechoslovakia in 1989 were adopting or if it is possible these cases to fit into any of the types of nonviolence in order to test better the components of the nonviolent struggle and the theory. The impact of this division of types of nonviolent action is even further when Gene Sharp, unlike Gandhi and partly Gregg, is developing and advising for the pragmatic type of nonviolence.

To develop the pragmatic approach, Gene Sharp was influenced by the philosophy of Gandhi in his early life. During 1950's and 1960's in his works he is stating that Gandhi's methods for opposing the state should be studied (Weber, 2003, p.253). Many of the papers of Gene Sharp in 1979 are published still on the Gandhian wave together with a book "*Gandhi as a political strategist*" (Weber, 2003, p.254).

Instrumental value of the nonviolence – “imperfect tool for imperfect people”

Gene Sharp is starting to find weak messages into Gandhi's ideology; therefore, he after some years puts his messages into a different shape. Sharp is “secularizing” Gandhi's theory

because in his opinion western people are not taking it seriously (Weber, 2003, p.257). Moral nonviolence is not allowing the western civilization to engage into rationalism and logic, so the American scholar is developing his own “brand” of nonviolence, which is going beyond “satyagraha” and “ahimsa” (Weber, 2003, p.257). Gene Sharp is devoting his life for projecting a theory of nonviolence. The nonviolence is already shaped by him as more political and addressed for the “brave people”; with those changes Sharp is showing his sense of reality and dissociation from the established idea of nonviolence (Weber, 2003, p.255-256).

The debate in Gandhi’s ideology for the end and the means, which was departing nonviolence from realism, in Sharp's views, is for uniting them. Unlike Gandhi, who thinks that people can control only the means, but not the end, Sharp is stating that the end can be and should be controlled by the means (Weber, 2003, p.256). For instance the nonviolence should be strategized in the begging with the aims of some concrete results, which to achieve with the nonviolent means. In other words the people should have clear idea of what should come next when starting to apply nonviolent approach. According to the scholar putting in practice nonviolence in the moral and ethical aspect is ignoring the reality in which we “*must operate*” (Weber, 2003, p. 258). As long as for punishment there are still violent sanctions, only on a moral ground, the violence cannot be removed from the societies as a whole (Sharp, 1980, p. 395). Unlike many scholars, Sharp is adopting solely technical approach to nonviolence. He is stating that nonviolence is “a strategy for imperfect people in an imperfect world” (Weber, 2003, p.257). In the practice he is writing about nonviolence as a weapon, but not in the meaning that Gandhi and Gregg are writing, he is actually referring already to “*political jiu- jitsu*”, not “*moral*” (Weber, 2003, p.258). Additionally, his ratification of the pragmatic approach is not

necessarily neglecting the moral one as wrong. Gene Sharp is considering nonviolence as a tool and if someone wants to accept it morally it should happen without any commitment (Weber, 2003, p257). Weber (2003) is asserting that as activist groups are growing larger, it is difficult to keep the moral nonviolent approach with the purity of means - they are easily diminished, and this leads to the pragmatic phase of the struggle (p.262).

The critics to Sharp's version of nonviolence are pointing to his approach as negative or pragmatic and that is used only because is believed to be the most effective method available in the circumstances, not because it is wanted from the society (Weber, 2003, p. 258). It is important with connection to the case of the research paper to present the both streams of nonviolence in order to test them in the analytical part. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the incentives of choosing the nonviolent struggle. According to Burrowes (1995), who is developing a nonviolent defense strategy by uniting Gandhi's ideals and Carl von Clausewitz strategy theory, the ethical idea for nonviolence is moving beyond the ordinary techniques (p. 101). He is referring to the sense of community, which is achieved at the price of suffering and sacrifices, and this idea is missing when the approach is only pragmatic and the aims are only to defeat the opponent (Burrowes, 1995, p. 114).

Regarding Czechoslovakia's reality in 1989, it is fundamental whether the dominated ideas among the society were for only defeating the opponent or seeking the unity. Whoever adopts nonviolence for the moral reasons believes in the unity of the means and ends, this society is seeing the opponent as a partner, the sacrifices are made by the practitioner of the nonviolence and the suffering may become a way of life to some extent (Burrowes, 1995, p.99). In contrast,

Gene Sharp is asking more for the particular consequences after the nonviolent struggle, he doesn't state that fighting with nonviolent means will absolutely secure the future for the state and the society.

In his first book "*The politics of nonviolent action*"², he is providing the particular list of means and tools, in which he is describing and giving examples from history and includes 198 methods for nonviolent action against the repressive state. "*The politics of nonviolent action*" is containing nonviolence theory, nonviolence training, nonviolent political activism, workshops and academic studies (Weber, 2003, p.251). Combined with other books as "*The dynamics of nonviolent action*" and over than forty years research on the dictatorial regimes, he is creating the ground for the final handbook for revolutions "*From Dictatorship to Democracy*", published first in 1993.

In their research Martin and Varney (2003) indicate three classifications of methods in Gene Sharp's *Politics of Nonviolent action: nonviolent protest and persuasion, nonviolent cooperation and intervention* (p. 213).

Observing the handbook for revolution "*From Dictatorship to Democracy*" as synthesis work of all the theory from Gene Sharp in short version, this paper will pay attention on the parts of the book, considered as nonviolent action theory. Firstly, the debate about elections, which are the tool for changing the government is rejected by Sharp (2010), simply because under dictatorships elections are unavailable (p. 5-6). He mentions the Soviet Eastern bloc as an

² Published for first time in 1973

example of regime, which was presenting elections, but they were rigged, controlled and only appeared to get attention and look democratic (Sharp, 2010, p.6). In this thought dictators are going to consider elections only if they place “*civilian puppets in the government offices*” (Sharp, 2010, p.6). As this book was mainly addressed to Burma's case, Sharp is giving example with it in the year 1990 and with Nigeria in 1993, when winners of elections were ignored (Sharp, 2010, p.6). Overall the dictators will never allow someone to remove them from power (Sharp, 2010, p.6). In connection with the topic of the thesis, those extremes will be tested, taking on consideration the different development of the events in 1989.

The four basic steps of fulfilling nonviolence as action and campaign are developed by Sharp (2010) as strengthening the oppressed population their determination, self-confidence and resistance skills; empowering the independence social groups and institutions; creating powerful resistance force; developing a grand strategic plan and fulfilling it skillfully (p.7-8). Those developments are the basis of organized response in a nonviolent way. What Sharp (2010) is certain about is that nonviolent means exist and he aims to examine them and put them together (p.8).

Furthermore, in his theory, he includes as separate tool the negotiations to which he dedicates entire chapter. Unlike Gandhi and Gregg, Sharp is seeing danger in the negotiations. For him, the consideration of unity with the opponent and the common interest of the state are not realistic in the terms of dictatorial regimes. The only one method for provoking conflict and settle negotiations, which he considers as successful, is the labor strike (Sharp, 2010, p.10). Only by it could be achieved “between the sums proposed by each of the considering sides” (Sharp,

2010, p.10). Otherwise the negotiations as an option are too idealistic in his point of view. This is important because there is a different result in the outcome of the nonviolent case of the Velvet revolutions in 1989.

Another important tool for putting nonviolence to practice is finding “*the Achilles heel*” of the dictatorship (Sharp, 2012, p. 38). Determining the weakest point of the regime and attacking it via the nonviolent methods is necessity in organizing successful revolution (Sharp, 2010, p.17). However, Sharp (2010) explains that nonviolent struggle is much more complex than violence and the discipline for using nonviolent weapons is the hardest to achieve (pp.30-38). There are two chapters in the book devoted to the strategic planning and planning strategy, which is including as well campaign for promotion of democracy (Sharp, 2010, p.47). Strategic planning of resistance groups enables the group or movement to make the best use of all available resources, as well as to “*calculate a course of action that will make it more likely to get from the present to the desired future situations*” (Sharp, 2012, p. 62). There are four important terms to consider in connection with strategic planning: grand strategy, strategy, tactics, and method.

Other condition to implement nonviolence into practice is spreading the idea of noncooperation (Sharp, 2010, p. 55). As important source for theoretical observation are the sources of power for all the dictatorships classified by Sharp (2012) as authority, human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible factors, material resources, and ability to apply sanctions (Sharp, 2012, pp. 28-29). Once removed one by one, the dictatorial regime loses all of its power and it is defeated.

Methods

The first big section in the separation of methods is the nonviolent protest and persuasion. It includes formal statements section containing the particular methods of writing letters to opposition groups, public speeches, declarations, group petitions and statements (Sharp, 2010, p. 79). Communication with wider audience is next section, which is including many communication tools for making the nonviolent approach successful – slogans, symbols, caricatures, banners, posters, leaflets, pamphlets, newspapers, journals, records, radio television and writing on sky or earth (Sharp, 2010, p.79). The section further includes the methods of group representations like mock elections, mock awards, group lobbying etc. (Sharp, 2010, p.79). The symbolic public acts is also important section in which are positioned twelve ways to create a new symbolic system like wearing symbols, displaying flags and colors and delivering symbolic objects (Sharp, 2010, pp.79-80). Moreover, painting for the protest, making new signs and names, some symbolic sounds and reclamations, including destroying own property and rude gestures are other means for putting in practice the pragmatic nonviolent approach (Sharp, 2010, pp.79-80).

There is a section for pressures on individuals as “haunting” officials and a section on "honoring the dead" performance and public assemblies (Sharp, 2010, pp.80-81). Attention deserves to be paid on the sections with the drama and music, which implements humor pranks, singing performances of plays, music and other section called processions including marches, parades etc. (Sharp, 2010, p.80). By these tactics the regime should be losing its authority and legitimization.

On the second level in the classification of the practical nonviolent theory are the methods for social noncooperation. They are in sections of ostracism of persons like social boycott, “*withdraw from social system*” like staying at home or protest emigration and noncooperation with institutions and social events as creating student strike, social disobedience and all kinds of boycott (Sharp, 2010, p.82). Another main section is devoted to all kind of economic boycotts named economic noncooperation plus place for twenty two types of economic noncooperation as strike – symbolic strikes, agricultural, industrial and multi-industry strikes named *general* and *generalized strike* (Sharp, 2010, p. 83).

The last methods are separated between political noncooperation and nonviolent intervention. The political noncooperation can include as tool rejection of all authorities and it can be achieved according to Sharp (2010) with public speeches advocating resistance or public refusal of support or withdrawal of allegiance (p.84). Political boycott as section is including citizen’s obedience or noncooperation with government, actions by the government like judicial noncooperation, domestic governmental action like quasi legal evasion and delays, internal governmental action as diplomatic changes, refusal for membership in international bodies or expulsion from them (Sharp, 2010, pp. 84-85).

The nonviolent intervention is also covering important means for creating a nonviolent resistance. They are separated by psychological intervention as fasting, which can be moral pressured, hunger strike or the *Gandhian satyagrahic fast*; physical intervention as sit-in, stand-in, pray-in etc. and nonviolent occupation (Sharp, 2010, pp. 85-86). Social intervention is also part of the intervention methods including the establishment of new social patterns, which is too

general, but in particular they are some other tools as the alternative communication system or the famous “*guerrilla theater*”, inspired by Che Guevara and used widely by feminists and resistance groups against capitalism and war (Sharp, 2010, p.86). The type of method is including art performance with symbols and no plot, made to fascinate or scandalize the masses. The section for economic intervention is including one more time types of strikes and using of alternative markets or economic institutions (Sharp, 2010, p.86). The last five methods are concerning the political intervention as overloading the administrative system, seeking imprisonment, civil disobedience of “neutral” laws and last and very strong is the parallel government or “dual sovereignty” (Sharp, 2010, p. 86).

All those tools for employing nonviolence are in sum shortly described the 198 methods of Sharp’s theory of nonviolence.

Weber (2003) states that the index of the entries for searching in the field of books for social change, civil disobedience and nonviolent theory is the biggest for some authors of the nonviolent theory (p.251). It presents that the most searched is Gandhi, as well Richard Gregg’s work “*The power of nonviolence*” and Gene Sharp’s work “*The politics of nonviolent action*” (Weber, 2003, p. 251). Weber (2003) confirms that this is a replacing pattern, which is used for most of the searches in the field (p.251). Still this is not exactly explaining why Gene Sharp as still alive theorist of the pragmatic nonviolent action is widely unknown in non western countries among activists. However, some organizations as *Canvas* which is addressing nonviolent struggles and following Sharp’s advices, are contributing for the nonviolent theory field with creating new books and new *brand* from the nonviolence to offer to people willing to do

resistance (“*What we do*”, n.d.). They are mainly organized by the same activists who toppled the regime of Milosevic in Serbia in year 2000, named *Otpor! Movement*. The exchange of nonviolent ideas is observed in the Jasmine revolution or called as well Arab Spring in 2011, when *Canvas* ahead with Srdja Popovic are giving lessons to the resistance group in Egypt *6th of April* how to implement nonviolence strategically (“*What we do*”, n.d.). In 2015 the leader of *Canvas* and journalist Srdja Popovic published a book named “*Blueprint for revolution*”, which is helping with nonviolent theory for the nowadays activists to use “*rice pudding*”, “*lego men*” and other nonviolent techniques (“*Blueprint for revolution*”, n.d.). The book should guide the people how to overthrow dictators or “*simply change the world*” (“*Blueprint for revolution*”, n.d.). Along with this facts could be observed that the adopting of nonviolence is something not ordinary, it is perhaps something for which the societies need lessons, advices and workshops.

The nonviolent activism and methods to “*organize revolutions*” are transformed into business product, which sells the product of the idea of nonviolence. As Richard Gregg is comparing it to advertisement industry, it is now for real used in the field of public relations, social media, communications and marketing as well as method for mass persuasion. The theory of nonviolent action shifted from the moral and spiritual ideal to the practical and technical approach, which in the case of the revolutions in *XXI* century is not showing any real change or successful result. Therefore the examination of the nonviolent revolutions in 1989 may give a further knowledge for the validity of the nonviolent theory in any of its forms.

Definitions and Clarifications

Explanation of terms used in the paper

Revolution

Scholars most often are referring to the chain of the events in Central and Eastern Europe as “*revolutions*”. Whether that is correct as term is not the main concern of the paper. As Krapfl (2013) points out there is not a settling about this question, because there is not certified universal agreement on its definition (p.11). According to Jaroslav Krejci, theorist of revolution, the revolution can be called only situation in which “*the change is accomplished by the means of the illegitimate violence*” (Krejci, 1994 quoted by Krapfl, 2013, p.11). The case of the transition in Czechoslovakia is not fitting into this requirement, because there lack of violence. Charles Tilly, a prominent theorist provides with definition that a revolution can be called situation when sovereignty of the state is contested, which he calls “*a revolutionary situation*” and after this situation occurs transfer of power, which he calls “*revolutionary outcome*” (Krapfl, 2013, p. 11). In his description Czechoslovakia is indeed living a revolution in 1989.

Smithey and Kurtz (1999) are explaining that it is easier to refer to those transformations of the regimes with the term “*revolution*” because they were originating rapidly, as Timothy Gordon Ash refers to them (p.100). Nonetheless, the historian James Krapfl (2013) mentions in his research that Czechoslovak citizens were experiencing what is happening to them as a *revolution* and that was having an important aspect for their reality (p.11). Since the question of

whether the democratic transitions in 1989 are correctly called *revolutions* is still disputable, it is necessary to be discussed in the paper. By the argument that people in Czechoslovakia see it as important for them as revolution, this paper is choosing to refer to those events as revolution. In paper are used the expressions *like the revolution, the velvet revolution, “sametova revoluce”*³, *the events in 1989, the protests* etc.

Regime

By taking the nonviolent theory from the scholars Richard Gregg and Gene Sharp and the Gandhi, the paper is not developing the definition of the regime in Czechoslovakia was in 1989. It is hard to avoid that in their nonviolent theories, they write for the suppressing state and the dictatorial nature of the regimes. But it is taken under consideration that they are experiencing different events and facing the problem of oppressive state in different centuries. Same thing stands for the communist regime in Central Europe, which is defined by different features depending on the country in the Soviet bloc. Abrams (2009) is presenting the focal points of the regime in Czechoslovakia as firstly going through the common wave of Stalinism till his death in 1953 when the rule is highly ideological. Back then the Czechoslovakian communist party is having the strongest local support in the whole region of Central Europe (Falk, 2003, p. 59). Reasons for this were the disappointment of Munich agreement in 1938 accepted as abandoning from the Western powers (Falk, 2003, p. 59). For this reason the President Benes established cooperation and friendship with USSR (Falk, 2003, p.59). Abrams (2009) defines the shift of the regime in 70's and 80's "*economic mode of legitimization*" explaining that the regime was

³ Meaning *Velvet revolution* in Czech language

offering to the people consumer goods in trade for the political silence. Nevertheless, the crisis occurred in late 80's and the only left thing for those regimes was the notion of the "*self-legitimacy*" or their own understanding that they should stay in power (Abrams, 2009). Vaclav Havel (1978) in his essay "*The power of the powerless*" is searching for the most correct term to refer to this "*flexible*"(part.II). He defines the regime as "*post-totalitarian*" and by the prefix post he means "*that it is totalitarian in a way fundamentally different from classical dictatorships, different from totalitarianism as we usually understand it.*"(part.II).

As one of the main figures in the revolution and dissident, Vaclav Havel's position is authentic, because the society in Czechoslovakia later chooses to be represented by him. It is perhaps undisputable question that the regimes in the Soviet bloc were totalitarian, oppressive, dictatorial and not democratic. To which term precisely of all of them the paper will refer is not of the central importance for the research questions and the subject of the paper. This thesis does not aim to define the state reactions, state nature, regime and affairs in Czechoslovakia in 1989. However on many places is possible to be touched some points of impression for the nature of the regime, simply because the protests of the people are pointed towards it.

The research paper do not consider as relevant to count and define the crimes, the single repressions and the behavior of the state regime during and until 1989.

Legitimacy of the state and external events

The problem about legitimacy is also questioned in many studies trying to read the revolutions. There is a point of view to explain the nonviolent nature of the events in 1989 in Czechoslovakia by the external events occurring in the Soviet bloc and the strong committing to the legal system in the state of Czechoslovakia.

External events are the Gorbachov's way of rule and the announcement of the withdrawing from Afghanistan in 1988 pointing to the end of the "*Brezhnev doctrine*" (Abrams, 2009). Gorbachov admits that the Soviet Union was intervening in the affairs of the states with military force in the years 1953, 1956, 1968 only to support the communism and his country will not do this again (Clark, 2007, pp.3-4). From this assumption and the understanding that the regimes were weak comes an argument that the revolutions were nonviolent (despite Romania). The research paper is not studying this side of the events, but is focused on the nonviolent techniques and methods used from the people in 1989. However, on several places the external events are mentioned in the research paper, but with no engagement into defining their concrete influence.

The legitimization or the strong relying on legal system is discussed question from some scholars, who seek the answer of the "*nonviolence*" in the Velvet revolution not in the techniques of the people, but in the state's passive and "*nonviolent*" response (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B). This question would be more relevant for the study, which asks why the events

overall occurred and maintained nonviolent. However, this query is broad and too complex to be covered in this study.

Clarifications

The style – in the analytical part, when the Polish side-comparison case is discussed often is used the expression “*the style*”. By this is meaning the overall *nonviolent nature* of methods and techniques, which were exchanged.

The repertoires – by this expression, used again most often for the Polish side-comparison case is understood the concrete *tools* and *techniques* resulting from the exchange of style between the countries.

The referring in the paper internally is made by pointing into the brackets or in free text to which part it was mentioned or described the particular thing. The main references are made from the analytical part to the theory and history like follows – *see history part, see theory part, Theory part, Historical chapter etc.*

Historical background

The Historical part is aiming to position the topic in the context of 1989. Moreover, it describes the presuppositions leading to the “*velvet*” revolution in 1989. This chapter focuses on the facts connected with the nonviolence in the Czech lands, the situation of 1989 and the

important moments before the *Velvet revolution*. Any emerging nonviolence as a type of resistance is relevant to the topic in the aspect of finding the roots of the nonviolence. However, to keep the focus clear, the paper is not returning to other nonviolent struggles far away in the past for the Czech people. Firstly, is described the nonviolent resistance in Czechoslovakia during 1968 known more as *Prague Spring*. Later are presented stream of events in 1989 in Prague. As explaining section of the culture and development of the society before 1989 are created the sections for the *Czech culture underground*, *Samizdat* phenomenon, *Charter 77* and *The power of the powerless* devoted to the essay of the dissident Vaclav Havel.

Prague Spring – the development of nonviolent system

There is one previous to 1989 moment of the historical context of nonviolent struggle, which is the *Prague Spring* in 1968. This resistance example is important due to the numerous tactics, which Czechs are using during the Soviet invasion and the several months of nonviolent protests, which are significant in the contemporary history of the state. Another moment is that from that particular event the situation in the country and the communist regime is changing its nature. The *Prague Spring* is the event, which describes the attempt of Czechs to defend themselves with nonviolent protests, due to the Soviet-led invasion. In 1968, August 21st, the Soviet Union and the other four Warsaw pact states –Hungary, East Germany, Poland and Bulgaria are putting an end to the experiments of the *reform socialism* in Czechoslovakia by invading the country (Williams, 2011, p.110). The reforms, which were demanded from the young students, intellectuals and the new party leadership, were for more constitutional and pluralistic Communist party (Pravda, 2001). It was planned the removal of the heavy censorship

and police control along with democratization reforms concerning the economic trade and the conservative power control (Pravda, 2001). The “*communism with a human face*” was not convenient for Moscow.

In result 500 tanks in a week, enter Czechoslovakia, controlling strategic locations along with half a million troops positioned in the country (Vanhinse, 1997). The answer of the people is particularly interesting from the nonviolent strategic point of view. Williams (2011) is affirming that this spontaneous and widespread nonviolent opposition has been employed as “*textbook tactics*” (p.110). Therefore, those practices are giving distant influence to the nonviolent struggle of the people in 1989. Before listing of those nonviolent specific methods, which were used in 1968, it is important to explain why in 1968 the “*allies*” of Czechoslovakia are invading it. This explanation will give clear view on the way how the people were seeing the regime already in 1989, because it is considered that the dissatisfaction with the state came after the Soviet-led invasion. Until then as Falk (2003) points out a fact, which cannot be “*overemphasized*” is that *Komunistická strana Československa (KSC)* or the *Communist Party of Czechoslovakia* is having the strongest domestic support from all of the countries in the region (p.59). This consequence is explained in the clarification part, but also there is a phenomenon of emerging of one of the most democratic faces of the socialism from all the countries.

The decade of 60's in Czechoslovakia is connected with the appearing demonstration of independence and freedom (Vanhinse, 1997). For instance, the winning of the *Czechoslovak Pavilion* on the first world's fair of the Cold War in Brussels - *Expo 1958* is a fact, showing the freedom of the art, theater and literature in Czechoslovakia during those years (Guistino, 2012,

pp.186-188). The country's artists were having relevant autonomy from the Party officials and therefore, the Czechoslovak pavilion in 1958 was presenting "*the common ground*" between the East and the West (Guistino, 2012, pp.186-190). Further more in these "*de-stalinazion*" years after the "*secret speech*" of Khrushchev in February 1956, the freedom and liberalization of Czechoslovakia were a reality, which they showed on the *Expo 1958* (Guistino, 2012, pp.186-190). This fact is with essential meaning used to show that culture was a result of "*complex negotiations between people and party*" and the reforms, demanded later were already part of the reality in Czechoslovakia (Guistino, 2012, pp.186-190).

Along with this argument, in 1966 on the thirteenth congress of the *Communist party* is adopted new economic policy (Vanhise, 1997). Alexander Dubcek was chosen for the head of the *Communist party* and Ludvik Svoboda as a president. They pushed for reforms, as described above, as removing of the heavy censorship, free traveling, free trade and democratic elections (Vanhise, 1997). The answer from USSR of this attempt for liberalization was military intervention and forceful negotiations with "*the reformers*", which were arrested and dragged to Moscow (Vanhise, 1997; Williams, 2011, p. 111).

Thousands of tanks and hundreds of thousands of soldiers were implanted with the aim to neutralize Czechoslovak army (Williams, 2011, p.111). As clarified already for other disputable questions, the lack of military power from the side of the Czechoslovak state will not be discussed as a possible reason for the appearance of the nonviolent resistance in 1968. Simply because the paper is not focusing on the reasons of why the Czechs are developing the certain tactics of nonviolent resistance, but which methods they create in particular. This part is serving

as example to show some of the developed tactics from the people in 1968 and put the topic of 1989 in the context of those previous and important events.

In Williams's (2011) work is affirmed that the talks between the Czech representatives and the Soviets started on 23rd of August from the center of the USSR- Moscow; they resulted with the returning of "*captives*" the in the country in several days (p. 111). During that time in Czechoslovakia, the protest activities of the society were highly organized and transformed into opposition acts, which later are examples of appearance of nonviolent tactics.

Nonviolent tactics in 1968

In this historical representation of the use of nonviolence, Czech society is using humor as in 1989. One example is the writing of funny graffiti exemplified by Vanhise (1997). With those writings on the walls the people were trying to make the soldiers feel unwelcome, and were mocking the invasion as an idea: "*Why bother to occupy our State Bank? You know there is nothing in it*" or "*An elephant cannot swallow a hedgehog*" are only some of the slogans emphasizing on the absurdity of the invasion (Vanhise, 1997). Williams (2011) is describing that for the first 48 hours of the occupation, the citizens started fraternizing with the soldiers and persuading them that nothing as a counter-revolution is happening, in order to limit their will to shoot on the people (p.112). Moreover, the *Prague Spring* grew into unanimous opposition committed from all members of the society. Czechs and Slovaks were using "*underground media*" as newspapers, radio and perhaps for first time – Williams (2011) assures – television (p.112).

The citizens were including further methods as making use of graffiti, posters, placards, petitions, jokes, poems and songs, which were composed by students and artists in so-called “*slogan centers*” (Williams, 2011, p.112). When it was ordered to arrest the organized opposition, the people disarmed the officials by bringing down the signs from the government buildings, the street signs and the signs of house numbers (Williams, 2011, p.112). The supplies as water and food were withheld from the opposition on the places, where the army’s resources were finishing (Williams, 2011, p.112). The people also used the general strike as they gathered to standstill on three consecutive days since 21st of August (Williams, 2011, p.112). In Vanhise (1997) writings about nonviolent methods in 1968 are used the books “*August 21*” by Chapman, C. (1968) and “*Czechoslovakia 1968*” by Philip, W. & Roberts, A. (1969), which are giving descriptive perspective of the tactics in 1968. By systemizing the information from those books Vanhise (1997) presents several more methods besides the general strike, the use of humor and withheld from supplies, described above.

The “*noise*” is one tactic that people were using – on 26th of August in 9a.m. the people were ringing on church bells, sirens, horns and train whistles to protest against the invasion and announce the one-hour general strike (Vanhise, 1997). Other tactic, which used was the “*human blockade*” – citizens were standing for eight hours forming a blockade with their bodies in Eastern Bohemia (Vanhise, 1997). Through the radio broadcasts the citizens discovered about the transportation of a train with equipment for the soldiers and due to organizing it by the radio communication channel, they succeeded to delay the train – they stopped the electricity and the train never got to Prague – it was “*lost*” (Vanhise, 1997).

The “*nude pictures*” is another tactic created on the spot from the opposition representing the use of humor. The story of creating it goes like this - in Bratislava young people, which were gathering “*secret*” magazines from the *West*, were bringing girls pictures to the soldiers, who were supposed to watch over the area during the night (Vanhise, 1997). When the soldiers took the pictures, the people from the resistance stacked pieces of paper over their periscopes (Vanhise, 1997). The “clandestine” broadcasting of radio and television was also a tool to spread the resistance activity and to inform the entire country about the resistance along with encouraging them for noncooperation (Vanhise, 1997). The radio stations were inviting on-air well-known intellectuals, athletes and newscasters to advice for nonviolent resistance (Vanhise, 1997). The radio signals were not discovered by the Soviets; they were connected by the microwave waves and for some of them the tram lines were used for broadcasting (Vanhise, 1997).

Czechs were also using some printing presses and mimeographs to publish leaflets, pamphlets and newspapers (Vanhise, 1997). Perhaps the most well-known and famous nonviolent action, performed in 1968, was the sabotage of the travelling in the country by removing and of the signs of the roads. Vanhise (1997) informs about many villages, which were re-named by “*Dubcek*” and “*Svoboda*” - the captured for negotiations Czechoslovak leaders. Williams (2011) presents this nonviolent method with a picture of the broken signs and defines it as “*inventiveness of the resistance tactics*” with the affirmation that due to this the orientation for the Warsaw Pact forces in the country was close to impossible (p.114).

There was some violence used on the people in this attempt for “nonviolent” resistance. According to Williams (2011) there was strong tension among the people and aggressive acts like pelting tanks with rocks and bottles, burning them and using busses for barricades (p.118). As a response, on several occasions was used fire, which resulted in seventeen civilian deaths in front of the main radio on 21st of August (Williams, 2011, p.118).

There is a suggestion by Williams (2011) that the nonviolent techniques in 1968 are having possible roots as the Americanization by images from media messages (p. 117). According to her, the graffiti phrases like “*Russians go home*” and “*pasivni resistance*”⁴ are close to the used by North, South America and Asia *catch phrases* (Williams, 2011, p. 117). Moreover, the protests of the students in Paris in May 1968 were possible inspiration for the calling of the general strike, because the protests have been closely reported to Czechoslovakia (Williams, 2011, p. 117). However, despite the extensive use of the nonviolent practices, the *Prague Spring* has been considered as a failure, because the *reform socialism* was not accomplished and Czechoslovakia’s regime became one of the most cruel and “*orthodox*” (Williams, 2011, p. 122).

In the following months many forms of resistance were tried as joint pledges of trade unions, demonstrations and strikes of occupation by students only to be saved the reformist path of the Dubcek’s government (Williams, 2011, p.124). In the beginning of 1969 on 25th of February the self-immolation of the student Jan Palach still remains as controversial and discussed form of resistance, which illustrates the suppression of the reality then (Williams, 2011,

⁴ In translation from Czech it means *passive resistance*

p.124). This act, very memorable and not nonviolent is one of the starting points of the protests in 1989. Williams (2011) on the other hand, clarifies that the self-organization of this nonviolence during 1968 is not the core inspiration for the community “*coalesced in late 70’s*” and for the students, which were organizing the protests of 1989 (p.126). However, the creation of those nonviolent tactics speaks about some traditions in the nonviolent resistance, which may not be the ground for the 1989 revolution, but surely are significant example of nonviolence in the early years before 1989.

The appearance of the nonviolent society

The human rights activists as the people who signed *Charter 77* are giving ground for the emerging of *Civic Forum*⁵ and the revolutions in 1989 according to Pravda (2004). Still as the symbol from 1968, the people took the memorable figure of Alexander Dubcek as reformer (Pravda, 2004). It is out of context to describe the protests in 1989 without presenting of several large resistance ideas before the Velvet revolution. Those moments are considered as follows: *The forming of the Czech underground* and the appearance of *Charter 77*, the *samizdat* practices and the ideas of Vaclav Havel in the essay “*The Power of the powerless*”.

The underground culture in Czechoslovakia

The main document which indicates for the newly emerging nonviolent society without any doubt is *Charter 77*. This document signed by the Czech intellectuals from many different

groups was calling Czechoslovakian state to recognize the basic human rights, to which it agreed when signing the Helsinki Accords in 1975 (Bolton, 2012, p. 126). According to Bolton (2012), behind the story of *Charter 77* stays the Czech underground culture and music, which attacked “*the materialism, banality, and lack of spirituality in normalized society*” in the early 70's (Bolton, 2012, pp.152-153). Ahead of this society were standing the ideologists Bondy and Jirous (Bolton, 2012, pp.152-153). In the core of this story is the trial against that underground culture group - the “*nonconformist*” psychedelic rock band - “*The Plastic People of the Universe*” in September 1976 (Bolton, 2012, p.126). This process opened the eyes of the society for the heavy censorship and lack of freedom in the Czechoslovak state and in Bolton’s (2012) opinion was the reason why intellectuals gathered to sign *Charter 77* (p.126). This trial was not for the musicians of the famous band, but it was “*Trial of Czech non-conformist artists*” as it is stated in the report of *Amnesty International* in September 1976 (Bolton, 2012, p.127).

Vaclav Havel is defining it as the trial of “*the Czech underground*” (Bolton, 2012, p.127). In the legal proceeding were involved some important figures of the Czech underground culture as were the artistic director of the band *Plastic People of the Universe* and ideologist – Ivan Martin Jirous (Bolton, 2012, p.127). Jirous and the other three artists on the trial were contributing to the development of the nonviolent society, which would evolve to creating of the nonviolent revolution in 1989. On the other hand, one should make a differentiation between the dissidents, which were actively participating in the *Charter 77*, in the *Velvet revolution* and in the transition and the underground artists, which were developing their own symbolic system,

⁵ “*Obcanske Forum*” or in English “*Civic Forum*” is the formed organization on 19th of November 1989 including Vaclav Havel

ideology and were nonpolitical. The precise description of those both groups gives better representation of the components of the nonviolent struggle and its roots in 1989.

Therefore in the historical context of the *Velvet revolution*, the creation of underground culture is crucial catalyst for the emerging of the nonviolent society in Czechoslovakia. Furthermore as Bolton (2012) declares, the underground artists were playing a far more important role in providing the dissidents with “*forms of organization and self-identification*”, around which they could form an opposition to the regime (p.128). The underground society was creating an ideology of criticizing consumerist culture, besides the nature of the political system (Bolton, 2012, p.129). Generally, the abbreviation “*Plastic People*” was the label for the entire underground culture (Bolton, 2012, p. 128). For this reason when writing about the revolution in 1989 is needed *Plastic People of the Universe* to be introduced in the historical context. The band was formed by four teenagers in Prague in September, 1968 with no reference to any political ideology or desire for protest (Bolton, 2012, p.129). The art directors are changing until the band was still recognized by the state, but with the appointing of the art historian Jirous – participator in the first “*psychedelic band*” – *The Primitives, the Plastics* are becoming “*underground*” band (Bolton, 2012, pp.129-130).

Another important ideologist for the Czech *contra-culture* is Egon Bondy. He was a philosopher, writing in style of what he calls “*total realism*” and he was one of the pioneers of the literature underground and the practices of *samizdat* (Bolton, 2012, p.131). Bondy and small other group of ideologists including the journalist Petr Uhl were skeptical to the *Prague Spring* and positioned themselves on the left of communism in proximity with Trotsky and Mao (Bolton,

2012, p.131). Bondy is writing most of *the Plastics's* lyrics. The band is starting in 70's to form a larger group of nonconformists around them as artists and musicians, but also working-class youth (Bolton, 2012, p.133). It became significantly easy to recognize the separation of those groups by their long hairs, which were problem for the regime (Bolton, 2012, p.133).

In September 1974 was created the so-called "*first festival of the second culture*" taking place on a wedding, because of the increased police attendance on the concerts of the band (Bolton, 2012, p.134). The second one is appearing on February 1976 (Bolton, 2012, p.134). The described development of the band inspired the book by Bondy "*The invalid siblings*", which was criticizing the society in 1970's Czechoslovakia (Bolton, 2012, p.135). The "*invalidni duchodci*" in Czech are the nonconformists, who were isolated, who stayed in the margins and were often beaten by the police (Bolton, 2012, p.136). They enjoyed the "*invalid*" art, the concerts or "*afternoon at the pub with friends*", often others refer to them as "*postizenci*" – handicapped or invalids (Bolton, 2012, p.136). This book became part of the underground folklore.

The subculture was mainly distributed orally as primary forms were the music and the direct contact at concerts (Bolton, 2012, pp.136-137). Bondy's book was read in common meetings and the people were associating themselves with those invalids, part of the underground culture (Bolton, 2012, p.137). It constructed the underground reality by describing the underground itself. This text gave "*the myth*" of the opposition and the tone, which the dissidents of the *Charter 77* could never fully manage to perfect (Bolton, 2012, p.137).

For the underground ideology is contributing as well Ivan Jirous defining the rock music as “*spiritual stance*” and calling it “*second culture*” (Bolton, 2012, p.139). His essay – manifesto called “*Report on the third Czech musical revival*” is giving vital definition of the *contra-culture* as the one which was “*completely independent of the official channels, societal recognition, and the hierarchy of values that are controlled by the establishment*” (Jirous, 1975 as quoted by Bolton, 2012, pp.138-139). Even more resolving is the definition “*A culture that cannot have as its goal the destruction of the establishments, because it would thereby drive itself into its embrace*” (Jirous, 1975 as quoted by Bolton, 2012, pp.138-139). In those definitions is visible the idea that the culture could become too political and when aiming directly into diminishing the oppressive system. Therefore another more *surrealistic* and *non-political* methods should be adopted. The further values that Jirous is presenting in his text are the *madness* (zbesilost) and *humility* (pokora), according to him anyone who lacks those qualities is not able to live in the underground (Bolton, 2012, p. 139).

The influence of the underground culture cannot be traced like the circulation of the papers or the amount of spread materials as *samizdat*⁶ text editions (Bolton, 2012, p.144). Therefore in many perspectives the underground culture is not indicated as existing opposition. However, in this research it is described, because it is considered as a first sign of formation of specific form of nonviolent resistance in Czechoslovakia, which is often neglected. The legends and the active circulation of myths about Bondy, Jirous and the *Plastic People* are giving description of the underground environment and reporting for the construction of a specific culture identity (Bolton, 2012, p.144). In the years after the legends of the trial of those people is the ground for the first step of real emergence of nonviolent opposition.

Samizdat phenomena

In the paper already on several places was present the word *samizdat*. As a term it is referring to the appearance of a specific form of clandestine actions in the countries of the Soviet bloc. Skilling (1989) characterizes it as the distributing of uncensored writings on one's own, without the participation of the publishing house and without the permission of the authorities (p. 3). It is defined as specific for its time and place method, which was the substance of the appearing of new revolutionary movements (Skilling, 1989, p.3). The widening of *samizdat* technique starts in 60's in the Soviet Russia and spreads to Poland, Czechoslovakia, China, and other communist countries in middle of 70's (Skilling, 1989, p.3). Literally *samizdat* comes from Russian and means *to publish by yourself* or *self-publishing*. Kenney (2004) assures for the *samizdat* practices that the Polish underground was "light-years" ahead of the Czechs with hundreds of periodicals and several large publishers in comparison with the half-dozen periodicals in Czechoslovakia "still using typewriters and carbons" (p.214).

He gives an example for *samizdat* practices with the established movement *Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity* in 1983, which exported the banned literature via couriers and through smuggling by the borders (Kenney, 2004, p.215). For instance these couriers were crossing the Czech-Polish border across *Karkonosze Mountains* through the forest with the baggage of 20 to 35 kilograms of literature (Kenney, 2004, p.215). *Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity* couriers were making at least two trips like this per month and sometimes they were putting the packages into the nearest Czech village's post office (Kenney, 2004, p.215). That is how the *samizdat* editions

⁶ The meaning is explained further in the text

were mainly spread from country to country. There were as well big packages of printers, in summer of 1989 even a laptop computer (Kenney, 2004, p.215). They were ordered in Vienna with money from the Czech “*émigré*” organizations, marked as transit through Poland and delivered to Czechoslovakia (Kenney, 2004, p.215). It was confusing for the police, how despite their efforts the Czech *samizdat* edition was having printers (Kenney, 2004, p.215).

The Poles easier access to the West secured all those innovations, because “*thousands of Poles*” were traveling to Germany, Sweden, and other countries to work illegally (Kenney, 2004, pp.214-215). The interpretation of Kenney (2004) is that those actions broke the isolation of Czechoslovakia, created “*the world around Charter 77*” and inspired the young society after 1987 (p.215). This could be considered as helping factor for consolidating of opposition, but as already described, Czechoslovakia had its underground culture and ideas way before the creation of those communication networks.

In addition, Skilling (1989) is confirming that *samizdat* was popular and widespread widely among Czech *émigré* society (pp.11-12). It was almost not performed by them as *samizdat* practice, because it was signed by the authors themselves spreading the copies between their friends (Skilling, 1989, pp.11-12). To illustrate with example there were the series of books *Peltice (Padlock)* which from 1973 to 1987 were issued in typewritten form almost 400 volumes (Skilling, 1989, pp.11-12). The *samizdat* editions of *Padlock* were issuing novels, essays, plays, poetry, philosophical and historical literature, and very rarely political (Skilling, 1989, pp.11-12). In 1977, the year when the human rights draft *Charter 77* was created, was also established diffusion of typewritten texts and much-uncensored literature (Skilling, 1989, p. 12).

Czechoslovaks were rigid in the sphere of humanities, which can be explained by their cultural development, described above and more as the paper studies in the analytical part by their *humanness* style of “*revolution*” as well.

Those type writings and *samizdat* editions are serving as examples showing that the nation was finding a hidden ways to satisfy their will for freedom of expression. Czechs were openly stating after the appearance of *Charter 77* that their identity was robbed from the authorities and substituted with “*an alien instead*” and *samizdat* was the way to prevent it (Skilling, 1989, p. 26). The activists are calling this method “*the parallel communication system*” (Skilling, 1989, p. 26). The creating of their own networks was trained and skillfully accomplished way before the *Velvet* revolution.

More for Charter 77

Samizdat publishing and the underground culture were filling the gap, which was open in the public sphere, due to the paralyzed “*to the necessity of defense*” intellectual elite before the drafting of *Charter 77* (Machovec quoted by Bolton, 2012, p. 151). In the lines of these words, the document *Charter 77* is responsible for the “*awakening of the society*”, the maintaining of the underground culture and the emerging of a new symbolic system and apparently. All those factors served for creation of type of society, which was ready to confront the regime. The first draft of the document *Charter 77* was scripted in December 1976 after the so-called “*trial of the Plastic People*”. It gathered many different groups together along with the reformists from 1968 – writers and intellectuals like Pavel Kohout, Vaclav Havel, Petr Uhl, Pavel Bergman, Jiri Nemeč

and a small group of others dissidents (Bolton, 2012, pp.150-151). It was discussed to be named a “*committee*”, but Pavel Kohout invented with the name *Charta 77*, which was aiming to target broader group of intellectuals and not to be fixed only as a human-rights committee (Bolton, 2012, p.151).

The method, which was chosen to legitimize the *Charter 77* was the gathering of signatures – it happened between Christmas and New Year’s Eve of 1976 (Bolton, 2012, p.159). The document itself was not published until 7th of January 1977 (Bolton, 2012, p.159). Abrams (2009) confirms the importance of this five pages long document, because it was a legal declaration and could not be confronted from the regime as just some resistance activity. The dissidents were space to try to form some opposition, but with the intention not to confront the regime in any other way than the legal one (Abrams, 2009). In the *Charter 77* is highlighted the personal share of responsibility of everyone in the society. This support of individual moral choice and responsibility is encouraged during the revolution as well and it is one of the basic ideals of Gandhi

The power of the powerless

One significant source of Czech nonviolent ideas is developed by Vaclav Havel in his essay “*The power of the Powerless*” in October 1978. The same indication for personal responsibility is confirmed in the text of Havel. According to it everyone is creating the power of the regime and has the responsibility of complying a part of its legitimization. The essay describes the story of a greengrocer, who is putting every day the ideological slogan “*Workers of*

the world unite!” in his fruits-vegetable shop (Havel, 1978, part.III). Havel (1978) writes about the obedience and the fear of the regime, the desire of the people to be with the norms of the society (part.III). This quiet consent could prevent any change from happening. He emphasizes on the idea of the significance of the individual action with the statement: “*individuals confirm the system, fulfill the system, make the system, are the system*” (Havel, 1978, part. IV).

In this famous and inspirational essay, Havel defines the totalitarian regime and the reality that people are constructing serving to it. He suggests a way to go through a change and establish an order, which is not like the regime, which is convenient for anyone, because the “*post-totalitarian*” regime in Czechoslovakia is obsolete and not democratic (Havel, 1978). Despite his detailed argumentation for the need of democracy and active change, the society in Czechoslovakia needs approximately eleven years to form a real reaction to the “*post-totalitarian*” system. The essay of Vaclav Havel could be considered as a source of nonviolent thought, serving only for the Czechoslovak society. Otherwise the familiarities with the Gandhi’s moral approach to nonviolence are substantial.

Train of events in 1989

All the factors described above did not helped for the creation of stable opposition. On the contrary they formed slowly a nonviolent society, which started its Velvet revolution- “*sametova revoluce*” on 17th of November 1989. It is accepted that the revolution takes place from then till 29th of December, when is elected the first democratic president of Czechoslovakia - Vaclav Havel. Some claim that the actual time of “*the revolution*” is ten days. Smithey and

Kurtz (1999) refer to the words of Timothy Garton Ash (1990), who predicts that the nonviolent resistance in Poland has been successful after ten years, in Hungary after ten months, in East Germany after ten weeks and *it will perhaps take Czechoslovakia ten days* (p.100). The Czech archive has a section named “*Ten Prague days*” and other people as Smid (2016) declare how everything happened in the first ten days after 17th so T. G. Ash was correct to predict the rapid nature of the events (Appendix C).

Everything started with the gathering of students on 17th of November to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the student Jan Opletal, shot by the Nazi police in 1939. But this was also not the first demonstration for the year 1989 (Smithey and Kurtz, 1999, p.100). The *Velvet* revolution itself was cascade of events provoked to some extent from the neighboring countries and the fall of the Berlin wall (Abrams, 2009). It was as well chain of events in domestic sense - for the people in the opposition it was the whole year 1989 which was symbolic with the demonstrations and the protests. The year started with the demonstration in January to acknowledge the death of the self-immolated in 1969 Jan Palach, as mentioned above, he sacrificed himself in protest to the Soviet-led invasion in the previous fall (Clark, 2007, p. 6). Around five thousand people were marching on 15th of January on Wenceslaus square in Prague; the police arrested 100 of them and was beating people (Clark, 2007, p. 6). Several days after thousands of people continued to march on the streets of Prague, one of the arrested was the dissident and play writer Vaclav Havel, sentenced to nine months in prison (Clark, 2007, p. 6). Later in August on the day of the Soviet invasion another protests were taking place (“A Look Back at the Velvet Revolution, 25 Years Later”, 2014). On 28th of October, the day when Czechoslovakia was found in 1918 was again used for demonstrations (“A Look Back at the

Velvet Revolution, 25 Years Later”, 2014). All of the counted revolts were silenced by violent respond from the police authorities (“A Look Back at the Velvet Revolution, 25 Years Later”, 2014). The repression went too far on the 17th of November, when the students stood in silence for a minute to respect the victims of the Tiananmen Square from 4th of June (Krapfl, 2013, p.15). Several students were hardly beaten and there was a rumor that one named Martin Smid is killed by the police (Clarks, 2007, p.6). This news spread very fast – a student beaten to death by the police (Vaughan, 2003).

The students were calling this first day of the revolution “*massacre*” (Krapfl, 2013, p.16). In the analytical part is discussed the role of this news, published by the journalist and chartist Petr Uhl. Krapfl (2013) states that there is not a report for anyone being killed in the Velvet revolution (p.16). The police were violent to the people on 17th of November and the consequent days when people continued to gather – “*Everywhere there were cries for help...blood was visible everywhere*” (Kalivoda and Radim as quoted by Krapfl, 2013, p.16). In the next days, the students were protesting from the cities Olomouc, Brno and Prague, they were leading the protests and assured that they will not stop until certain conditions are fulfilled (Krapfl, 2013, p.16).

The awakening of the civil society was already taking shape - within two days on 19th of November the two opposition organizations were formed one in Bratislava - *Public Against Violence* or *Verejnost proti nasiliu* - VPN and in the same day, but in Prague was given start to the *Civic forum* or *Obcanske Forum* - OF (Krapfl, 2013, p.16; Clark, 2007, p.6). On 20th of November 200 thousand people filled the Wenceslaus square and more people continued to

gather up to half a million in Letna Park on 25th of November (Clark, 2007, p.6, Smithey and Kurtz, 1999, p.101). On 27th of November was the first two hours general strike, including more than million people (Smithey and Kurtz, 1999, p.101). During that time the *Civic Forum* and the government were negotiating. On 9th of December, the *Communist party* transferred the power to the coalition government and later on the resignation of the president Gustav Husak was declared. Along with those changes, the elections on 29th of December were the celebration of the new start, with the newly elected president Vaclav Havel (Smithey and Kurtz, 1999, p.101).

Fundamental for the reading of 1989 are the previous examples of nonviolent resistance and the formation of the contra-culture. Bearing that in mind the paper is analyzing the *Velvet* revolution nonviolent case through the pattern of the historical representations described in this section, but with the intention to find and classify the components of the nonviolent struggle in the nonviolent theories.

Analysis

The analysis part is discussing the theory of nonviolence with the aim to test it through the events of 1989 and answer the research questions. In sum, the methods used in the revolution are separated into three main sections, which are structured and named as following. Firstly, there is given place to the section *External factors*, where is positioned the *side-comparison case of Poland* with discussion of the influence and the diffusion of the nonviolent methods and ideology from the neighbor country to Czechoslovakia. The next section is following the structure of the theory section named *Components of the nonviolent struggle* and it is logically

classifying the used methods in three inner sections incorporating Gandhi's, Gregg's and Sharp's theories of nonviolence. The established inner sections are conceptualized by the factor of the used methods like this: *Gandhi's nonviolent ideology*, *Gregg's nonviolent approach* and *Sharp's methods of pragmatic nonviolence*. In each of them are systematized the used tools by the people in 1989 in Czechoslovakia. The classification of the methods in each section is made on the basis of the primary and secondary data – the conducted interviews and the historical sources for the events, like academic books, articles, and documentaries. The third and last section is justifying the *Self-developed methods* of the revolution, containing the developed on the spot tactics or ideas from the people to oppose the regime nonviolently. It is aiming to serve as a contribution to the nonviolent theory, moreover to discuss and test the efficiency of the nonviolent theory.

Side-comparison case – Poland

In this part is included the side-comparison to the country Poland the methods, style and ideas, which were exchanged before 1989. It is a merging part between history and analysis.

External factors

Many external factors to the nonviolent revolution in 1989 in Czechoslovakia could be titled and considered as such. Along with the lines of already presented in the clarification and historical part events, are several geopolitical factors. In particular they refer to the “*perestroika*” of Gorbachov's regime, the fall of the Berlin wall, the changed governments in Poland and Hungary and the authorization to free travelling. All of those events indeed affected the state of

the affairs of the whole Soviet bloc. On the other hand, they do not directly concern any of the components or tools of the nonviolent struggle.

Those factors could explain why most of the governments did respond as well nonviolently in the revolutions in 1989. Since the research questions do not seek to find the reasons behind the transitions in 1989, the paper is considering them as facts, but it is not including them as part of the analysis focused on the nonviolent struggle. In the clarification part it was already verified that those external factors including the nature of the state regime and the “legality question” are too broad and complex to examine them in this study. In account of those reasons, the *external factors* section traces the nonviolent techniques, tools and ideologies coming mainly from Poland and neighborhood countries. This analysis is made with the objective to prove that those external factors later became some of the components and active methods used by the people in 1989. They also contribute to the verification of the nonviolent theory.

The exchange

The entire inquiry and examination of the Polish opposition movements is not the goal of this section. Neither it is to measure the efficiency nor the success achieved in Czechoslovakia due to those techniques borrowed from the Polish movements. It is vital, though, to acknowledge the transition of the methods from Poland and the region to Czechoslovakia. Kenney (2016) concludes that the style of protesting is traveling more easily than the specific repertoires (Appendix E). In one of his articles, he defends, that Poland was “*the first domino*” and the

inspiration for the young activists to bring back the revolution into their home countries (Kenney, 2004, p.221). In this article about the opposition networks and transitional diffusion he is discussing four main separate methods of exchange namely – legend, pilgrimage, courier and convocation (Kenney, 2004). The author is arguing that the focus on the transitional contact has received less attention, but this diffusion moments of communication from Poland in several forms and the exchange between the social movements has been one of the most transitional factor of the events (Kenney, 2004, pp.208-209).

The exchange of nonviolent methods to Czechoslovakia is partly influencing the components of the nonviolent struggle in 1989 and it is important to be indicated. In line of this statement, Kenney (2004) asserts that the revolutions were hardly commanded from somewhere and despite the exchange they were highly decentralized (p.220). According to his opinion, the most studies are devoted to Gorbachov's "*perestroika*", the dissident's *Charter 77* or the intelligentsia's texts as important perspective to read the revolutions in 1989 (Kenney, 2004, pp. 208-209). He states that it is hard to imagine the crowds and the people on the streets because of Gorbachov, or because of reading some of the essays from the dissent (Kenney, 2003). When talking about the book "*A carnival of revolution*" he affirms that something else was encouraging the people to gather and it was the influence of the young movements, oriented in a totally new way (Kenney, 2003).

The factor with collective role of the movements *Freedom and Peace* and *Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity* was that they limited the scope of their slogans (Kenney, 2012). If the previous generation was bringing the focus on very general messages like nationalism or

democracy, the new wave of movements are shifting on very particular and concrete issues like environmental problems and serving in the army (Kenney, 2003). In those terms from the abstract ideas is given place to the concrete issues, but there is something more, which may play the transitional role and that is the variety and the pluralism of the messages.

In the new studies of Kenney (2012), he emphasizes that *Freedom and Peace movement* in Poland were actively involving the pluralism, so they were open for everyone to join. To illustrate this feature, some people in late 80's in Poland were more nationalistic and some, which were fighting against abortion, were also welcomed to the pacifist's gatherings of *Freedom and Peace* movement (Kenney, 2012). This approach Kenney (2012) is synthesizing as "*emerging of inclusive strategy*". The students in Prague in November 1989 were also creating a gathering message that everyone is welcome and the change and fight for human rights is in the interest of everyone. In the interview for this paper Kenney (2016) states that it is less clear to him the question of how intentionally the students were strategizing the nonviolent struggle (Appendix E). The evidence of whether the students in Prague were thinking strategically is not appearing. Surely the students in Czechoslovakia were "*highly organized and self-aware*", they were reading Gandhi and Polish authors like Michnik (Kenney, 2016, Appendix E). Nothing about intentional organizing or grand strategizing in the revolution was confirmed from any of the five interviews.

To research only one country in 1989 Central Europe's revolutions, without taking on consideration the multinational situation and the exchange of influence and methods is not complete. It cannot be stated that the nonviolent struggle was carried out in a completely

different way in every country. However, there are also slightly big differences in the time and the methods used in the revolutions in each country. For Poland, it took of thirteen years of evolving of the opposition movements *Solidarity* and *Orange Alternative*. Polish opposition was massive and much more people were involved compared to Czechoslovakia (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B). On the contrary, in Czechoslovakia more of the tactics and methods forming the nonviolent struggle were created on the spot and in the flow of the events. Czechoslovak nonviolent struggle in 1989 is not composed by planning, training and the strategy of well-formed opposition. It is discussed further in the analysis the methods and ideals of the *Velvet* revolution.

The style

Despite the most popular point of view on the year 1989 of Timothy Garton Ash, that the events in Czechoslovakia escalated quite rapidly and took place over ten days, Kenney (2003) is more prone to put the start of the revolution in Czechoslovakia in the years 1986-1987. This observation is related to the diffusion of the movements, which was particularly important for transferring not only of *samizdat* books, yet of particular style for questioning the regime. The general messages were abandoned, but there was still “*a common enemy*” around whom the activists could unite and think how to overthrow it with different approaches (Kenney, 2012). If the style can be defined in any way it should be listed as the nonviolent nature of the tactics and the nonviolence as the idea. In many countries from the Soviet bloc nonviolence was used in different shape and specific methods. The style of opposition in Czechoslovakia was not the creating of political unions as *Solidarity* (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B). Actually the nonviolence

as idea is spreading more easily, than the specific methods (Kenney, 2016, Appendix E). As already expressed in the history part the practices of *samizdat* and the publishing of political and clandestine periodical were serving to the Czechoslovak society for information about nonviolent action. The transfer of books and any written materials is classified by Kenney (2004) as a *courier* method, because couriers were crossing the border, bringing press machines and other materials (p.215; History part). *Pilgrimage* is another method of bringing the nonviolence to the “closed” Czechoslovakia and reestablishing resources of information (Kenney, 2004, p.215). On *Pilgrimage* meetings there was exchange of communication between Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, evolving into the formation of new activist movements (Kenney, 2004, p.213).

The *Freedom and Peace* were sending those pilgrims to teach and learn lessons home and abroad, it was a system serving for “*valuable recourses*” of opposition power (Kenney, 2004, p.214). Kenney (2004) argues that this model was wide spread among East Germany and the two countries, which believe to share the common faith from the “*individual tyranny*” - Poland and Hungary (pp.213-214). Within this picture Czechoslovakia is taking small place, but there are some implications for exchange. Vanek and Mucke (2016) share that Monika Perova and some other students were traveling to Dresden and Leipzig to learn more about the demonstrations and marches (Appendix D). However there are not other confirmations of strong influence from other countries to the Czechoslovakian nonviolent struggle. Those exchanges of information did stress out about the nonviolence and were part of the components of the struggle in 1989, but they do not have the core role in the revolution.

Convocation is the style of transferring information, in which Czechoslovakia was involved the most and the young people gained major influence for ideas in nonviolence. *Freedom and Peace* movement were organizing those convocations. They could be everything connected with meeting and exchanging ideas – conference, seminar or a symposium (Kenney, 2004, p.217). In this way, they were creating “*transitional networks*”, which was unique and essential system for spreading the revolutionary ideas (Kenney, 2004, p.214). One convocation is described in Kenney’s (2004) work that took place in already free and democratic Poland⁷, named *Festival of Czech culture*, which took place from second to the fifth of November in 1989 (pp.218-219). On this festival were invited singers, poets, novelists and essayists, but only the former speaker of *Charter 77* was there from the prominent figures (Kenney, 2004, p.218). Besides them, who did not succeed to cross the border “*thousand or so made it to the festival*” as the majority was young students, not on the suspect list of the police (Kenney, 2004, p.218).

In Kenney’s (2004) observation is expressed the idea that the *Festival of Czech Culture* was a very important exchange of concrete methods among the young generation (p.219). In Wroclaw, where the festival was, the students didn’t get any general ideas of forming civil society, “*but concrete methods of resisting*” in line with Kenney’s (2004) argument (p.219). The author illustrates a position that the revolution was more an act of the students of the young generation than created from the people who formed the opposition in 70’s and 80’s like the dissidents from the *Charter 77* and the underground society. This interpretation assesses that the component of the strategic planning was directly inherited from the Polish example. It appears that the idea coming from the dissidents in Czechoslovakia for peace and nonviolence was not the only factor in the nonviolent struggle in 1989. Those examples of the diffusion and exchange

⁷ Which happened on 4th of June 1989

are explaining that the Czechoslovak case in 1989 was not composed only on the moral ideals, but there was some real exchange of methods coming from Poland. However, the nonviolence as the style and idea was exchanged, not copied, and not so much particular tools.

The *guerilla theater* is having an interesting place. It can be called a style of questioning the regime, but also a concrete method. It is also listed by Sharp as a method of social intervention. However, when tracing its roots it could be categorized to the external Polish factors influence.

Kenney (2004) is giving the short definition to the *Orange Alternative* “a *guerilla theater collective*” (p. 211). They implement tactics like mocking of the regime, fake celebrations, and use of colors, singing and many other tools, in their approach, defined as *socialist surrealism*. The style of *Orange Alternative* is unique and not copied entirely by any movement or in the protests in Czechoslovakia. The aim of the young artists in this moving is to make the regime look funny. This is to some extent one strategic component inherited from the Polish example, but it is not widely used in the revolution in Czechoslovakia. Further information is developed in the section devoted to the theory of Gene Sharp.

Mizstal (2001) qualifies the transitional role in the Polish revolution to the theatrical movement *Orange Alternative*, who are breaking the dichotomous picture of the social life and filling the gap between the *Solidarity* and the state (pp.55-58). These marginal artists were in the beginning *Independent Student* movement and later are developing their own *Manifesto of Socialist Surrealism* (pp. 60-61). In the manifesto they promote different ideology than the

nonviolent one – the world is as an object of art and the surrealism is giving the possibility to treat everything as a play (p.60). This ideology does not call on the moral values for nonviolence, simply implied it through absurdity and paradoxical glimpse on the everyday life. *Major Waldemar Frydrych*⁸ and the other underground artists were using “*the Avant-garde Theater of Absurd*” to build their own style of nonviolence (Romanienko, 2007, p.137). *Orange Alternative* was formed at early 80’s and their events were named “*happenings*”, “*carnivals*” and “*snow clouds*” (Misztal, 2001, pp.55-62). On those “*happenings*” the activists were dressed in red hats referring to the elves “*Krasnodulki*”, which as an act was serving as a nostalgic device to remind of childhood fairytales and symbolic pictures of the family in Poland (Romanienko, 2007, p.148).

Romanienko (2007) is expressing that this symbolic system that they try to revive has been under attack from the Soviet authorities (p.148). In line with Romanienko’s (2007) argument, *Orange Alternative* is diminishing the established from the Soviets symbolic system by overt devises (p.148). The social movement *Orange Alternative* is not central issue to the analysis of the Czechoslovak methods of revolution. However, the similarities and influence in referring to Czechoslovakia must be noted. First of all, the “*humorous*” elves are not only laying out the nostalgic feeling in the Polish society, they are attacking and challenging everything that is Soviet and not Polish. Czechs, as Larson (2016) declares, were doing the similar thing during the demonstrations in 1989 (Appendix A). They were disabling the symbolic system of the communism by returning to the dialog of what is to be Czech (Larson, 2016, Appendix A). One can say that through the humor and the jokes those nations are saving their own culture and national identity. There is no confirmation that this idea came from Poles to Czechoslovakia. Kopecek (2016) defines this implementation of theatrical devices and style of protesting as

⁸ Who is the creator of the movement

“*generational thing*” (Appendix B). Perhaps in both countries was performed out of independent incentives and desires to self-perceiving the nation. Nevertheless the similarities in the styles are evident. Another similar position in the style of nonviolence between *Orange Alternative* and the resistance “*behavior*” of Czechoslovak Republic is the “*newly created ideologies*”. Not deliberately in the history part is given place for the importance of the underground society of artists and musicians, which are emerging before the *Charter 77*.

As described already, they do have their kind of “*manifesto*” and Jirous consider the *humility* and *madness* as the two important “*qualities*” that person should have to be part of the underground (Bolton, 2012, p. 128). The *Orange Alternative* was using the humility as a key method – to accept to dress as an elves and act in “*bizarre*”, called by Kremlin, way to stand against the regime (Romanienko, 2007, pp.146-147). They were also criticizing the main opposition on the same ground as the underground society did in Czechoslovakia, in order to show the right path to the dissidents. The space was open for the surrealistic and absurd reality and the ideology was left backwards. Moreover, if everywhere the *contra culture* or *subculture* is carrying those qualities of absurdity in the case of *Orange Alternative* they evolve to specific rituals and resistance tactics, which could be observed in Czechoslovakia as well.

The repertories

Jirous and Frydrych Mayer were creating their own art independently from each other in the both countries Poland and Czechoslovakia. Traces of influence on the ideologies could be barely tracked. The *Orange Alternative* was inspired to some extent by the Dutch movement

Provo, which was organizing environmental activities as “*The white bike plan*” in 60’s (Petr Safarik, personal communication, May 3, 2016). In *Provo* manifesto is described how the white bikes are the symbols of the healthy life and they are kind of opposition to the “*filth of the authoritarian mobile*” (Witte Fietsenplan, 2010). If that influence from the Dutch movement is distantly mediating to *Orange Alternative*, the same can be stated for the *elves-revolution* influencing Czechoslovakia’s activists. The movement “*Společnost za veselejší současnost*” or in short *SVS* was created in May 1989 in café *Slavia* (Koura and Formankova, 2008)⁹. This movement’s name literally means “*Society for happier / funnier presence*”. Their events and activities are having a slightly different configuration than the *Orange Alternative*’s, but as style and nature are identical. In a conversation with Bára Štěpánová, part of the movement, she is stating that their inspiration was not coming from the *Orange Alternative* (Koura and Formankova, 2008). She clarifies that they met with Frydrych and the result was: “*So we sat, they told us what they were doing; we told them what we were doing*” (Koura and Formankova, 2008).

Accordingly, this is a confirmation that they did not develop any direct influence in the nonviolent techniques and tools. Anyway the *Orange Alternative* besides the dressing as elves and mocking the regime, are also using some of the particular practices listed by Sharp (1973) as the mock rituals. In 1990, the leader of the *Orange Alternative* has proclaimed himself as king of Poland in a mock ceremony with coronation (Miszstal, 2001, p. 55). Kenney (2012) defines the concrete demonstrations by the *Orange Alternative* as surrealistic celebrations with a sense of bitter humor. For instance, they celebrated “*the policeman’s day*” with giving flowers to the policemen and “*the Russian revolution day*” dressed as red army soldiers (Kenney, 2012). Some

⁹ Translated for personal use

of their agitation in one “*happening*” was “*Come with us, they are not beating today!*” (Kenney, 2012). In this sense they were mocking the regime’s violence by insisting that the chance of being beaten by the police is still very strong, but this should not stop the people of joining the protests. With this frivolity of the behavior and establishment of resistance practices, they were posing the solid ideology of the socialist state regime. *Orange Alternative* was unpredictable; some other of its slogans was “*Love the People’s Police! Long life to the undercover agents!*” (Misztal, 2001, p.62). In 1987 they organized many different events including giving free candies to the people on the streets and calling demonstrations named “*The day of the army maneuver*”, “*Eve of the Revolution*”, “*Who is afraid of the toilet paper*” etc. (Misztal, 2001, p.63). They were dressed often in orange and red colors with gremlin masks and the elves hats, and they were either creating “*surrealistic arrangements*” or establishing some totally new celebrations (Misztal, 2001, pp.62-65).

It is essential to distinguish those listed practices of nonviolence with the Czechoslovak way of questioning the regime, elaborated further in the analysis. Finding the differences between those movements is also serving to distinguish the particular components of the revolution in Czechoslovakia. For instance, the practice of giving the flowers to the police is an act, which is used by the Czech students in 1989. In Prague on 17th of November they are also giving flowers to the policemen. This specific action may be considered as particular repertoire that is directly inherited by the Polish *Orange Alternative*. Even though the *SVS* movement has not associated themselves with “*the elves*”, they have a similar style. *SVS* claims that the reasons for their creation were demonstrations in Prague in 1988 (Koura and Formankova, 2008). They were also organizing sort of surrealistic events like positioning a whale in the Vltava River for

the 21st of August¹⁰, supported with leaflets and posters in Czech and in English containing a rumor that according to astrologists there is going to be a whale in Vltava (Koura and Formankova, 2008). They entered a blue truck and car in the river and sent a message via radio station saying: “*Attention! Whale in the river!*” (Koura and Formankova, 2008). Then they publicly destroyed “*the whale*”, which was a symbol of the Russian invasion, in front of a theater building (Koura and Formankova, 2008). There are several more demonstrations in a similar vein such as putting melons and sausages in front of government buildings and activities with mud pies, in which even Vaclav Havel was taking participation (Koura and Formankova, 2008).

All of those happenings are illustrating an indirect external influence from the *Orange Alternative* methods. The creators of SVS are explaining that in 1989 there were already many initiatives for nonviolent actions as *Charter 77* and the Czech underground society, the Czech version of *samizdat*, also movements like *Czech children*, the *Movement for Civil Liberties*, *Lennon’s Peace club* etc. (Koura and Formankova, 2008). All those confirmations for nonviolent resistance formed in Czechoslovakia shows the real decentralization of the revolutions, because apparently each country was developing their own internal nonviolent opposition. However, the similarities in regards to those repertoires are hard to avoid. SVS are claiming that they were trying to eliminate the fear of the people by humor and laughing (Koura and Formankova, 2008). It is disputable of whether those practices were independently invented by the Czech society. In personal communication with Ph.D. Petr Safarik (May 3, 2016) he gave the example of one case when *Orange Alternative* activists were visiting Czechoslovakia in 80’s to “*celebrate*” 20 years of the Russian invasion in August and to “*support*” the president Husak. Frydrych and his

¹⁰ The day of the Soviet invasion

friends organized the visit with the slogan – “*Let us defend the communism!*” (Safarik, personal communication, May 3, 2016). Frydrych has been dressed as a *samurai*, carrying a long *samurai knife* willing to “*defend the government*” (Safarik, personal communication, May 3, 2016).

Along with citing of this event it is definitely likable for Czech society to observe and take the influence from the style of mocking the regime in this paradox way. Kenney’s (2003) conclusions are pointing to how unattainable is to observe only one of the revolutions in the countries in Central Europe. Their tactics or the way how they are questioning the regime could be similar due to the multinational nature of this region (Kenney, 2003).

One other concrete repertoire is similar in both countries - the idea of the anti-politics. Miszstal (2001) is citing a text of *Orange Alternative* regarding one of their *carnival* happenings, in which they encouraged people with the words “*Let’s play and make foolish jokes. Long life to the clergy, undercover agents, angels, cardinals, opposition, and militia: More carnival, games, and mockery!*” (p.66). According to the activists from *Orange Alternative*, to be “*nonpolitical*” was accepted already as a political program (Miszstal, 2001, p.66). The “*anti-politics*” or the “*non-political politics*” as style of nonviolent approach is declared by Kopecek (2016) as a long rooted idea in the Czech society (Appendix B). The external influence in that case from Poland is coming into terms of how to put this idea into specific practices. There could be several interpretations of what specifically traveled as repertoires and as ideas and what was created independently by the countries. Hence, it is true that the specific style exchanges with greater success than specific repertoires (Kenney, 2016, Appendix E). Surely, the style and its nonviolent nature are difficult to originate.

Some of the methods observed in this section were not only taken over from Poland to Czechoslovakia, but as described in the history part; they were part of the previous struggles in Czechoslovakia. Those repertoires are the humor and the jokes and the nonviolent nature of the protests. Albeit, the factor of the Polish external influence cannot be neglected. It is essentially important that Poles were helping with materials and organizing meetings, conferences, as well crossing the border and establishing communication networks with the people in Czechoslovakia. It is essential that the Polish ideas from the *Orange Alternative* and other movements were encouraging the Czechoslovak students and dissidents. Yet to understand how a nonviolent struggle was composed by the Czech society, it is needed to observe the internal components deriving from the nonviolent theories.

Components of the nonviolent struggle

In this section of the analysis the nonviolent theory is implemented on the struggle of the people in Czechoslovakia 1989. One can say that strategizing and theorizing the nonviolent struggle is essential for the nonviolent revolution. This is not so clear in the case of Czechoslovakia's Velvet revolution. The aim of this section is to systemize the methods of the events in 1989 through separating them in the different theories of nonviolence as following the theory part – Gandhi, Gregg and Sharp theories of nonviolence. For this purpose the section is split to the three authors of a nonviolent theory, bearing in mind that they all have common ground and similar general idea. Albeit, to establish better classification, their theories are divided by different features of nonviolence that they emphasize: for Gandhi it is *the moral nonviolence*, for Gregg the *strategic dramatization* and for Sharp the *pragmatic nonviolence*. It is

taken under consideration that no one of them is discrediting the previous one or aiming of something else than just strengthening the success of the nonviolent theory. The research paper is proceeding with this classification with an identical mean.

The moral nonviolence - Gandhi's nonviolent ideology

As described in the theory part Gandhi did not write a handbook with specific tactics of resistance, which should be followed step by step. Still the *Mahatma* develops a general but inspiring theory serving for example for societies in many countries, showing how to cope with conflict situations and suppression from the state. For Gandhi, the nonviolence is not the specific strategy, but a personal struggle. If we have to measure the level of pragmatism and idealism in the theories of nonviolence, the Gandhi's is the most idealistic one. His theory is directly aiming to advance the human nature, virtues, beliefs and discipline with one result only – to liberate and increase human rights (see theory part).

Czechoslovak society and Gandhi

In quest to assess whether the Czech people were using Gandhi, implementing his theory and following it, there are several indicators. It is evident that Gandhi as a name was known from the people, who led the Velvet revolution. It may not be true that entire society was introduced to the mahatma's idea for *Satyagraha*, but his writings were recognized from the young generation in Czechoslovakia. Kenney (2016) is answering that the students were reading Gandhi, but how much of the strategizing they implemented from his theory is not so obvious (Appendix E).

Kopecek (2016) on the other side as one of the people involved into the revolution is stating that Gandhi was known, but more as an icon and no one really would read him so much (Appendix B). Vanek and Mucke (2016) are informing that they cannot recall any of the slogans of the students to include something about Gandhi (Appendix D). Still, some of the students and the dissidents were talking about him and explaining how everything should happen without violence (Vanek and Mucke, 2016, Appendix D).

There is another documentation suggesting the relation of the Czechoslovak society with Gandhi's moral approach to the nonviolent theory. The interviews made by Otahal and Vanek (1999) with the students participating in the revolution are containing source of connection with Gandhi. One particular with the student Pavel Lagner is containing information about how the students were seeing Gandhi. In the interview P. Lagner is explaining the most intense situations from the days of the revolution (P. Lagner by Otahal and Vanek, 1999, p. 502)¹¹. Lagner is recalling the situation of many students and teachers - around 150, gathered in a big hall and the students were explaining to them what happened and how the police crossed the "*bearable boundaries*" (P. Lagner by Otahal and Vanek, 1999, p. 502). All the people there were encouraged not to comply with the regime and fight with all their efforts, and "*as Gandhi was alone and Jesus Christ was alone, step by step only by nonviolent means only by the truth, only because they have been telling the truth to the people, they changed the world*" (P. Lagner by Otahal and Vanek, 1999, p. 502). The students gave this example to them with the advice everyone of them to do the same. They continued with "our goal is to change Czechoslovakia as we want it to be" and after those words surprisingly "*everyone got silenced, they stood up and started praying loudly*" – people, who Lagner affirms "*were one hundred percent atheists were*

standing in the hall and loudly saying the prayer Pater noster”, he was never to think that can hear those words coming from them (P. Lagner by Otahal and Vanek, 1999, p. 502). Here the assertion from Kopecek (2016) that Gandhi is more like an icon to the Czechs is becoming clear (Appendix B). They put his name next to the name of the Jesus and take him and his actions as an example, but they are not referring to some concrete specific writings or ideas of the mahatma to put into practice.

In another interview this time with Vaclav Havel is found a great affiliation with the acknowledgment of Gandhi and his ideas. On the question for Havel whether he had truly believed that a dialog with the state authorities can be established, he stated that the hope for result was very low and nobody was taking it for granted, but it was one of the means of the dissidents; they were all trying to establish a dialog and it was made more for the public and it was one *“genre of nonviolent form”*, which was feasible and the only one durable and *“at the end it was not practically impossible”* (V.Havel by Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, pp.139-140)¹² . Havel continues to develop in the interview that the politicians were forced at the end to sit on the table and negotiate because of *“the crisis in the society regarding the economical situation, the international situation, the awakening of the society and the mass gatherings of the people on the streets”* and as he says *“one thousand more factors all together and they all played a big role”*, but at the end it resulted in a dialog (V.Havel by Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, p. 140). This dialog and the methods by which it was achieved, Havel assures that it had *“its deeper roots”*.

¹¹ Translated for personal use from Czech language with the help of Pavlicek, T. (2016)

¹² Translated for personal use from Czech language with the help of Pavlicek, T. (2016)

The nonviolent form that they were using was neither new, nor occasional and “*it has its tradition from Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King*” (V. Havel by Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, p. 140). This statement from V. Havel confirms that given his writings and his essay “*The power of the powerless*”, he was acknowledging Gandhi and referring to him when talking about nonviolent means. He says that despite the large scale development of all kinds of manipulation mechanisms, army, and weapons, “*this nonviolent means proved to be meaningful, modern and effective*”, although a little bit slow and sometimes it takes years to achieve results (V. Havel by Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, p. 140). Havel is expressing some key integral features of the nonviolent theory of Gandhi. Becoming of the hopeful person and living morally are some of the virtues, which should be adopted in order create a nonviolent resistance (see Theory part). When asked about the hope, Havel replied that he always considered a hope as a state of mind and whatever is done, it is done, because he considers it as the right thing to do, but not as the hope for the concrete results (V. Havel by Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, p. 140). He means and writes that the hope is a mental dimension of self-cleaning and as all the people in the dissent were adopting this state of mind and they were happier and more cheerful than the power authorities, which were living in a constant fear (V.Havel by Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, p. 140). In this statement Havel directly corresponds to the advice of Gandhi in the nonviolent theory, that the healthy growing of the nonviolent society should contain hopeful people, who take morally the path of the change, who are adopting the positive emotion, and are cultivating nonviolence by themselves (see Theory part).

This virtue of courage and diminishing of the opposite emotion - the fear is greatly accomplished and covered as value by Havel in his writings and by all the dissent and

underground artists (see Theory part and History part). Moreover, when observing the Havel's interview it is vital that he states how important the dialogue is and how it was the only instrument accessible by dissidents. For Gandhi the power should be only taken by a nonviolent way and with a dialogue and support from the state. Cooperation with the state is implemented in the theory by Gandhi - without the will for negotiation and compromises from the both sides the results of the nonviolence will not be the same. In the case of the Velvet revolution, these features are indisputably valid.

Gandhi's writings were also known by the Polish opposition. This was asserted many times by Kopecek (2016) that the Poles were very exclusively talking about Gandhi and Martin Luther King during their very strong and big opposition, which was built in years and strengthened by *Solidarity* (Appendix B). Krapfl (2013) is also defending the involvement of Gandhi and "*American tradition of civil disobedience*" in the revolution of 1989 (p.108). Furthermore, he is admitting this form of nonviolence is new for Central Europe given the already existed in 1968 resistance and despite of it this nonviolence was consisting different ideas (Krapfl, 2013, p.108). Nevertheless, there is also a statement that the "*gentle revolution*" was going further beyond the prohibition of violence (Krapfl, 2013, p.108). It is argued that if the nonviolence in the Czech lands was occurring naturally before, in this revolution it was a defended principle.

Ideals

Except the direct prove of mentioning Gandhi as inspiration, there are the indirect signs that the revolution was led in the Gandhian moral nonviolent approach. The students were inheriting identical with Gandhi's ideals. In Gandhi's nonviolent theory the tacit consent is legitimizing the state. Accordingly in the Czechoslovak state as Larson (2016) is asserting the party didn't gain the trust of the people, it received only their consent (Appendix A). But due to the efforts of the students in one of the moments in 1989, the people took back their consent. As Krapfl (2013) asserts this case is definitely not the first revolution, in which the slogan "*The power to the people*" has been seen (p.93). As Gandhi emphasizes the powerless, who have the special role in the society, and as the essay of Vaclav Havel *The Power of the Powerless* expresses, the powerless were the core group to establish the revolution.

The followed ideals of Gandhi's nonviolent thoughts by the people in 1989 do not stop only with the listed till now ideas. Introducing a crisis is also a basic move to achieve nonviolence according to Gandhi. The people in 1989 introduced a crisis by creating the demonstration on 17th of November. They paid respect to the student Opletal and to the students, who were victims of Tiananmen Square. When they changed the direction of their demonstration, they tried to go to the castle, because of a habit that Smid (2016) explains: "*When we do revolutions, we Czechs are always going to the castle!*" (Appendix C). The people were giving flowers to the police and even when they were beaten by the police, nobody handled the situation in a different way than the nonviolent one. So the crisis occurred and it was handled by a nonviolent way by the Czechoslovak society at that moment. Furthermore, in the next days of the

revolution it was happening exactly what Gandhi suggests as the continuation of attempts to persuade and establish nonviolence to entire society (see Theory part). By developing the nonviolence as one of the major ideals of the revolution, people committed themselves to certain ideals. It is quite important to observe that the basic commitment is a devotion to the truth. Krapfl (2013) argues that the first and foremost ideals undertaken were referring to the devotion to the truth (p.42). People were declaring: “*We want to live in truth!*” (p.42). On the streets, people were saying that they want only “*Truth! Truth!*” (p.42). They were requiring the full knowledge of “*the truth*” – about 17th of November, about 1968, about where their relatives disappeared in 50’s and with which money the state officials built their villas and many other unclear things for the people (p.42).

In this sense, the Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* was fully accomplished by the people in Czechoslovakia during the revolution, although not purposely. Not only they demanded the truth, but as the described case above (Pavel Lagner), they were cultivating and encouraging to tell each other only the truth and to follow the ideal as a necessity (Krapfl, 2013, p.42). Moreover, one of the main figures of the revolution, the dissident Vaclav Havel, as declared in the book of Krapfl (2013) was also preaching for “*living in truth*” for years (p. 76). As quoted by Vanek and Urbasek (2005), Havel is also having the state of mind for which Gandhi is talking about – the independent developing of nonviolent human nature, by the cultivation of human values (p.140; see theory part). The humanness, fairness, and devotion to truth were central values in the revolution in 1989 (Krapfl, 2013, pp.7-80). To support the idea and moral devotion to nonviolence on the streets was prepared and printed the document “*Ten commandments of our revolution*”, which was spread through Czech lands and Slovakia, containing rules of

nonviolence, helping everyone to keep “*the humanness*” (Krapfl, 2013, pp. 52-53). At the same time, there was another document, widely circulating, in November and December made by a group of intellectuals called *Civic Conversation* named “*Eight rules of Dialogue*” (Krapfl, 2013, p. 91). According to Krapfl (2013) this two agreements together were “*part of the revolution moral code*” (p.91). Krapfl (2013) in his ten years of research found enough evidence, e. g. letters from Plzen, Hradek, and Prague to the *Civic Forum*, suggesting that the *Eight rules* and the *Ten Commandments* were taken very seriously by the people (p. 92). As Gandhi’s advise the individuals to live and make moral choices, to cultivate love and hope, the same was demanded by the students and the dissidents in Czechoslovakia during the revolution.

According to Gandhi people should also develop self-discipline and accept to suffer and be in pain (see Theory part). In Czechoslovakia the self-organization was also taking a central role in the revolution (Krapfl, 2013, p. 83). This ideal of the revolution may respond as well to the self-developed methods, it may also respond to the Sharp’s idea for strategizing the nonviolent struggle, but there is one key moment about so-called “self -organization”. According to Krapfl (2013) the self-organization itself was characterized by the spontaneity and informality (p.85). He states that the self-organization was actually referring to “freedom” (Krapfl, 2013, p.86). Freedom was another ideal, which as well as the self- discipline and organization was cultivated morally by all the people together and by each individual for himself. This exemplifies the idea of Gandhi for adopting the nonviolence on the moral level, living with it as a choice, disciplining it within and holding it as the only possible mean for the change. In the nonviolent theory of Gandhi the means are the only thing that people could control, they do not have control over the results of the nonviolent struggle according to him (see Theory part). In this way the

people in 1989, as Kenney (2016) argues, were not thinking about the success so much, but they were more self-aware and organized (Appendix E). Vanek and Mucke (2016) also revealed how spontaneous and organized the revolution was at the same time (Appendix D). The Bishop Maly had speeches and when the space was needed for fireman or ambulance he asked “*one step up or down*” and everyone was following”, but not because it was said so, apparently the society were self-disciplined presenting high level of organization (Vanek and Mucke, 2016, Appendix D).

Along with the argument of Vaclav Havel in the interview cited above, the *Civic Forum* didn't think about the results, “*nobody was trying to manipulate certain outcome*”, they had the nonviolence as an ideal. The nonviolent mean was not chosen, because it was the only possible way to carry out the revolution, but Havel defines it as “*the state of mind*” (Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, p.140). Larson (2016) describes how the dissidents and Havel were saying exclusively that there is no place for revenge (Appendix A).

Gandhi also writes about living in a harmony after the quarrel or the struggle. He notes that dealing with the reality after the nonviolent conflict is easier – nonviolence is limiting the fear, narrowing the passions and allowing everyone to live in harmony in the ideal case (see Theory part). This was brought in practice by the society in Czechoslovakia by their devotion to those ideals. Gandhi was considered as an idealist, but he was aware of the power and its actions. His thoughts went beyond the naïve idealism and this case of *Velvet* revolution is proves it to a certain extent. Havel is stating that nobody was hoping that this moral approach will end up with a pragmatic result, yet together with other factors it proved to be the most efficient (Vanek and Urbasek, 2005, pp.139-140). Certainly the Gandhi's theory and ideals for establishing

nonviolence were the most advocated in this revolution. Moreover, in terms of actions on the streets of Prague and the ideals figured above, it could be estimated that *Gandhian* type of nonviolence was constituted, self-developed and defended by the people in Czechoslovakia in 1989.

Gregg's approach to nonviolent theory

Gregg is the first scientist in America to develop the nonviolent theory after being in contact with Gandhi (see Theory part). Therefore, his theory is not excluding the Gandhi's theory, but he adds one specific feature to the theory of nonviolence - it is the psychological side of persuasion or "*dramatizing effect*" (see Theory part). If the aim is to find a difference between the moral and pragmatic nonviolence, Gregg should be located in between those two approaches for nonviolent action. He is still on the horizon of the idealism, but in the direction of adding the some practical tools to the struggle. He talks about the "*moral jiu-jitsu*" and the influence over the moral system of your opponent through practical examples (see Theory part).

In the Velvet revolution of 1989, there is a large-scale developed moral nonviolence, but one situation was according to some observes „*the game changer*” in the revolution and this situation fits into the theory of Gregg. The event is the rumor about a death of the student Martin Smid and the story of "*the massacre*" on 17th of November. Everything else that Gregg focuses on is more or less adopted by the people through following the ideal of Gandhi, like Gregg is calling it *the method for social change*. The society in November 1989 in Czechoslovakia emphasized the moral changes as described above and the moral aspect.

Likewise, Gregg's idea of the psychological persuasion also appeared in the first day of the revolution. He highlights how "*wonderful news*" and "*fascinating stories*" were created by the nonviolent resistance of women and men, comparing it with the commercial advertising (see Theory part). The speculations and disputes in Czech Republic about that first evening on 17th of November and "*the dead student*" are still circulating in the society. The father of Martin – Milan Smid (2016) confirms in the interview for this paper, that he still does not know who and why chose to claim that his son is dead (Appendix C). Surely, the news about the event gathered more and more people on the streets to light candles and respect the dead of someone, who didn't die. Furthermore it is important to be mentioned that according to Gregg this dramatization and surprising flow of events are giving power to the nonviolent struggle and "bad publicity" for the violent side. In the case of Czechoslovakia, this was a meaningful moment.

The journalist who made that news public was Petr Uhl. Smid (2016) comments that the rumor about his dead son was released by the journalist perhaps with the knowledge that is not true (Appendix C). Nevertheless, Petr Uhl himself states in an interview that the whole story was unclear to him as well (Mrtvý student, který se nikdy nenarodil, 2010)¹³. In the night when the students were beaten by the police, there was a one person who fainted; later on, it became clear that that was a secret agent named Ludvik Zifcak (Mrtvý student, který se nikdy nenarodil, 2010). In the same night, Drahomira Drazska made a statement about a dead student, who died on the street. Peter Uhl as a journalist for East European agency was expressing that he took it as news and in the morning and published it (Mrtvý student, který se nikdy nenarodil, 2010).

¹³ Translated for personal use from Czech language with the help of Pavlicek, T. (2016)

According to him many people are interpreting that this news gathered the people on the streets and he says, that till nowadays there are two groups of people – one which are admiring that he did spread this false news intentionally knowing how to play “*the game with the communist government*” and the others, which are still saying that he has always been a villain and his lying in this case is proving it – he is sorry about both of the groups (Mrtvý student, který se nikdy nenarodil, 2010). One can say that whatever the true story is, the happening had impact over the proceeding with the revolution. This situation of “*the rumor*” is important to the research paper because it fits into Gregg’s approach to the nonviolent struggle, but that this situation had an influence over the people with the dramatization and the bad publicity for the “*violent*” regime. As Gregg predicates the happenings like this play a gathering role for the society during the nonviolent struggle.

In the next days of the revolution, P. Uhl publically apologized in front of the crowd of half a million people in Letna Park (Mrtvý student, který se nikdy nenarodil, 2010). He assured that he didn’t want to mislead anyone but the crowd started screaming “*Nevadi!*”-“*Never mind!*” and “*The Unity is power!*” (Mrtvý student, který se nikdy nenarodil, 2010). The mass didn’t mind whether the news was intentionally spread or not, it had its dramatic effect and when the people are already united, they can require the societal change with the means of nonviolence as Gregg describes it. Additionally, the interpretations about that story could be that it was only a detail and this news didn’t start or foster the revolution at all. One thing is considered to be important for this paper and it is the influence of the dramatization of the event. As Gregg elaborates, it helps to confront the opponent value system and it increases the sense of unity and capability of maintaining nonviolence.

Smid (2016) also contributes by another thing to the classification Gregg's perspective of the nonviolent theory and it is the behavior of the media (Appendix C). In his interview, he explained how media started to act freely step by step in the days of the revolution along with giving the people in the countryside better perspective to know what was happening (Smid, 2016, Appendix C). By this way, the Czech National Television was providing the audience awareness of the revolution events and it was converting it into public performance, exactly as Gregg sees the nonviolence (see theory part).

When writing about public performance, Gregg was including the method of the general strike in his theory as well. He was insisting that the general strike can serve as public performance and with combination of dramatized effects the nonviolent struggle can be more efficient (see theory part). However, the general strike is one of the main tools used by the people in Czechoslovakia, but it is listed in the Gene Sharp's section for nonviolent struggle. This decision is made to draw a clear difference between the dramatized and pragmatic methods - the first ones are belonging to Gregg and the second group to Sharp. It is disputable by which of the theories, should belong this particular method. For easier justification it is added to the economic boycotts of Sharp's methods, because it is hard to define with which incentives the people in Czechoslovakia were organizing the general strike.

Gregg does not seek the pragmatic strategizing of the nonviolent struggle, but he is contributing to the nonviolent theory with some differences than Gandhi. Withal, Gregg is not detaching from the basic writings of Gandhi. Therefore, to serve for classification of the methods of 1989 into the nonviolent theory it could be said that people were acting in terms of the

Gregg's approach as well. Still, Gregg is not the one who wants to write a handbook for nonviolent tactics, but he wants the acts to be implemented again on the society level for knowledge and change. He considers that with psychological tension it can be achieved easily. In these terms, the Czechoslovak society did implement the Gregg's extensions for the nonviolent struggle.

Sharp's methods of pragmatic nonviolence

Gene Sharp is the first scholar, who actually developed a real handbook with 198 methods for nonviolent struggle (see Theory part). Sharp is moving from the moral approach to the more pragmatic one. Not that he does not write about the consent of the people and basic steps for achieving nonviolence, but he is isolated from the message for moral nonviolence of Gandhi and he gives a preference to the strategizing and pragmatism. His approach is solely technical and in that sense it can be discussed to which extent the components of the nonviolent struggle in Czechoslovakia match with his theory. At first glance, many of his 198 are evident in the *Velvet* revolution.

Ideas

There is a pure mismatch between the intentions and the ideals of the people in 1989 with Sharp's idea for strategizing and controlling the end by the means. The "*political jiu-jitsu*" in the situation of 1989 in Czechoslovakia was not implemented, and if it appeared to happen at the end, it was not intentionally applied. In the terms of ideology as a component forming the nonviolent

struggle of Czechoslovakia the “*moral jiu-jitsu*” was achieved instead of the political one. Sharp develops the negative approach to nonviolence or pragmatic one, which means that the method of nonviolence is chosen because is the only one available under the given circumstances (see Theory part). Yet, this reason came up as well in almost all of the interviews conducted for the topic. There was an impression that the society proceeded with nonviolence because there was no other option. Nevertheless, only Kopecek (2016) stated that it was also strategically needed, but the other mentioned more often argument that Czechs were never fighting (Appendix all). This statement delivered by Larson, Kopecek, Smid, Vanek and Mucke (2016) was pointing out more to internal cultural identity of the Czechs, but surely not a strategically preferred way (Appendix). Czechoslovak society did not aim to find intentionally the “*Achilles heel of the regime*” as Sharp suggests, neither decided to do strategic planning, implementing the grand strategy, tactics and methods (see Theory part).

Along with this argument, Czechoslovak society sought the unity, the compromise, the dialog and focused excessively on the ideals and the use of nonviolent means. The nonviolent training and studies, workshops and academic literature that Sharp is advising for the step to adopt pragmatic nonviolence were developed by the *Solidarity* and the *Orange Alternative*. They did organize and spread those ideas to Czechoslovakia, but this does not mean that the society adopted them as components of their struggle. The negotiations are also the idea, which does not match with the nonviolent theory of Sharp. He sees a danger in the negotiations with the dictatorial regime and it is even idealistic as an option, unlike Gandhi and Gregg which are encouraging this step to be done. It is well known that through negotiations, which started only

days after the protests, *Civic Forum* established a dialog with the government and after 29th of December Vaclav Havel was already the president of Czechoslovakia.

Concrete methods

As described in the theory part, Sharp is including 198 methods of nonviolence, which he splits to sections for nonviolent *protest and persuasion*, *noncooperation*, and *intervention*. The most striking interpretation according to nonviolent theoretical divisions of this revolution's methods is that in the level of ideals none of them is matching with the Gene Sharp's approach to nonviolence. On the other hand, in the protests the people put in practice almost all the techniques from every section of Sharp's methods. Sharp writes how the resistance groups should be strengthened, the social groups and unities and etc., which was done in Poland. As Kopecek (2016) says, in Poland they exclusively talked about the opposition, unions and it was made an effort to strategize the struggle there (Appendix B). Nevertheless this strategizing was barely carried out in Czechoslovakia.

Protest and persuasion

The Velvet revolution is starting with one of the concrete methods listed by Sharp – “*honoring the death*”. The students are gathering on 17th of November in the memory of Jan Opletal and in the memory of the victims of Tiananmen Square. On the next day “*honoring the death*” method is again implemented this time for the student that was falsely recognized as

killed by the police. Furthermore, there is a high compliance with almost all of the described methods in the nonviolent protest and persuasion part.

The formal statements, letters, public speeches petitions and statements are the strongest part of the revolution. As Smid (2016) affirmed Czechs often write petitions instead of searching other ways of confronting the regime (Appendix C). The *Charter 77* is itself one of those documents, the creation of *Civic Forum* and *Public against violence* and the public statements and speeches from them are another used method. Furthermore, the documents spread during the revolution were in that specified section along with the “*Ten commandments*” and “*Eight rules of dialogue*”, along with the document “*Nekolik vet*”- “*Few sentences*” for which Kopecek (2016) is telling in his interview that was circulating among the schools to be signed (Appendix B). Smid (2016) also introduces a case when the media workers were gathering in a union in the so-called “*garage*” having speeches and signing declarations how they should report what is happening on the Wenceslaus square (Appendix C). Workers were also gathering to draft proclamations and declarations and manifestos to list their demands and reason for going on strike (Krapfl, 2013, p. 77).

Students also had a big gathering role in applying these methods – Kopecek (2016) retells how they were giving to him some materials and documents to spread (Appendix B). Exactly this method is pointed by Sharp as *Communication with wider audience* and it includes all the communication tools, which people were using in the revolution as slogans, leaflets, banners, posters, pamphlets, journals, newspapers etc. Krapfl (2013) describes banners, which were including the 1968 slogan “*Be realists, demand the impossible*” (p.46). Inspired by the music of

Pink Floyd, the people were writing also slogans like “*the wall between us*”, “*Boxes of the world unite*”, which were also part of the *mocking techniques* to the regime (p. 64). Also by letters of citizens, *Civic Forum* actually gained its legitimacy, Krapfl (2013) is writing about thousands and thousands of signatures sending letters and proclamations to confirm the representation by *Civic Forum* (p. 155).

Professor Josef Jarab is presenting other method listed by Gene Sharp - spreading of the pamphlet called “*the gospel of the nonviolence*” by the students, which belongs to the *Communication with a wider audience* (Krapfl, 2013, p.53). When talking about Velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia, the large number of posters and flyers circulating was also significant. At meetings with workers, Krapfl (2013) presents that in factories, farms, and shops, students were covering the windows and the walls with type-written and hand-produced flyers and posters (p. 16). The communication tools used by the people in the revolution are matching with the classification of Gene Sharp methods to proceed with nonviolence. More likely this was unintentionally done by the students and the dissidents.

Shifting to the group representations like *mock elections* and *mock awards*, there are linked somehow to the generally called “carnevalesque” nature of the revolutions in 1989 (in Poland more relevant, than in Czechoslovakia) (Kenney, 2002, p. 296). In this sense the elaborated methods of Gene Sharp are again in match with what was used by the people, but again not with the same strategic intentions.. Much more relevant for this revolution is the general definition, which Kenney (2002) is giving to the form of the events in 1989 in Central Europe in his book “*A carnival of revolution*”. He emphasizes the carnival nature of the protests

including the humor, the mock ceremonies and the “*happenings*”. Despite that the whole nature of the nonviolent protests in 1989 is to look indeed like a “*carnival*” the components of the struggle in Czechoslovakia are still matching with the listed by Sharp methods.

Krapfl (2013) is also pointing to one event in Czechoslovakia’s revolution – the demonstration called “*collective act of signification*” (p.38). It was prepared by students in Olomouc on 15th of December and it was using semiotic impressions (Krapfl, 2013, p.38). The event was including boys dressed as policemen pretending to beat demonstrators, who were screaming that they have empty hands, referring to the first day of the revolution. The others dressed as administrators were marching and calling for a renewal of the bureaucracy while students with red blindfolds were led in the streets crying and screaming: “*Long live the communist party of Czechoslovakia!*” (Krapfl, 2013, p.38). This ceremony is a method presenting the *group representations* listed by Sharp as a specific method.

All of Sharp’s other methods connected to humor, jokes public gatherings are duplicating and repeating in his entire list of methods. Therefore, in this section are incorporated and merged the methods as music and drama performances, the processions of marches and parades, public assemblies, containing protests itself. All of those methods are expressing the same thing, which are the public meetings and performances. They were all applied in the revolution in Czechoslovakia sometimes including jokes and humor, sometimes songs or ceremonies as that described above.

For instance, beside all the protests, marches and demonstrations, which students were organizing after 17th of November, there are also many “*happenings*” like the balloon event in Olomouc, when the people are putting chain of balloons over Lenin/Stalin statue on 9th of December (Krapfl, 2013, p. 109). Students were dressing as angels in Bratislava for mourning the victims in Romania (Krapfl, 2013, p.110). The use of humor in many performances was an inseparable part of this revolution. Over the statues of Lenin and Stalin, the students were also hanging posters with slogans suggesting that they should *fly away to warmer places*, or saying like: “*Stalin let go! It is no good to you now anyway!*” or handwritten posters with the words: “*Nothing lasts forever*” (Krapfl, 2013, p.62). The humor and irony was essential feature of that revolution there are the small examples like this in every city, university, on the streets, theaters or among people. Still Kopecek (2016) is affirming this point of the cultural heritage of the Czech society by historical representations that for them as a small nation there is a reflection to look at life in more ironic way (Appendix B). This may not be one hundred percent valid for the society, but as described on several moments humor is a part of the cultural representation of this nation.

The proneness to using humor may help to represent the merge with the next big group of methods of Gene Sharp that people were using in Czechoslovakia. They are the symbolic public acts including the wearing of symbols, flags, colors, making specific sounds and using names. As for all kinds of public acts, this section can be also broad and complex - the examples are numerous. There is only one very important general concept of the usage of all the symbols and Krapfl (2013) very precisely describes it as the symbolic system that was established during the revolution. He also states that due to the humor and spontaneity of the events the revolution

created and expanded its symbolic vocabulary (p. 53). In other words, Czechs alienated from their society of the communist's signs and ideology and established other symbols with which people could be associated (Appendix A). According to Krapfl (2013) the students even created an entirely new system with writing songs, poems, issuing newspapers and so on (p. 53).

Along with this, the gestures as displaying the Czech flags, wearing symbols of the revolution, protesting with pictures of Havel and so on were widely used by the people on the streets. About making symbolic gestures and sounds, there is one act, which Larson (2016) and other people like Abrams (2009) are recalling into their stories (Appendix A; Webcast). This gesture involves holding up keys and jingling with them in the air. It may be considered as a symbolic act or sound, but it may be included as self-developed method. It appears as well in the Czech Oscar-winning movie *Kolya*, which is telling the story about 1968, but Larson (2016) also explains that the sound with keys is meaning “*Open up!*” (Appendix A). It can be defined as opening up or an advice to the power to give up because it is time for a new system, for new ideals and democracy. If there is a way to narrow down the whole section for the nonviolent methods of *protest and persuasion*, Czechs definitely are skillfully using almost every single one of them in many shapes with creativity and plenty of variations.

Noncooperation

In the next main section, Sharp is counting the methods for social and economic noncooperation counting to sixty-five different forms of boycotts, strikes and noncooperation with institutions. From 55th to 120th all the listed methods are containing this general idea of the

noncooperation (see Theory part). From all those methods, which are generally again repeating the same thing, it can be pointed out to only one, which was extensively used by the people in Czechoslovakia. The method with the significant influence on the revolution was the number 117 - the general strike. Despite that it is mentioned by Gregg as well in his theory, it is considered to be present in this section. However this choice is justified only by the reason that Sharp is emphasizing much more on it. The incentives of the people then according to this event are hard to define.

On 27th of November the announcement of the general strike managed to gather millions of people in Letna Park for two hours general strike. The general strike was called from the *Civic Forum* and as Smid (2016) believes the state representatives were not scared, because they were ready to see how the dissidents are losing their legitimacy and people do not gather (Appendix C). Surprisingly, the general strike turned the situation the other way around. For this reason the general strike plays a decisive role in the revolution. Firstly, it disarms the regime and visually was clearly representing the mass of people who do not agree with the authorities. Secondly it was threatening to deepen the economic crisis in the society – nothing was working in the normal way anymore. And third thing was still very important - it legitimized the role of the social organization of *Civic Forum* as a political power. Smid (2016) specifies that the general strike was the method, which carried out the revolution and made the actual change (Appendix C). That makes it one of the main components of the nonviolent struggle in Czechoslovakia.

Political noncooperation was also used by the people in general. Thirty seven types of refusals of the political power are listed by Sharp. It became clear that general disagreement with

the power and the regime in Czechoslovakia was evident. In this sense the political noncooperation as a whole was performed by the people in the shape of the first three methods of Sharp - *rejection of authority with resistance* and the *refusal of public support by the masses*. Besides of this particular “*methods*”, others from this section were not developed in the revolution in Czechoslovakia. This type of civil disobedience with boycott of elections, expulsion of international organizations and legislative bodies was not performed, because one of the important features in the revolution was the negotiation and cooperation with the government.

Intervention

The last section of nonviolent intervention is containing only several methods, which were used in Czechoslovakia. Gene Sharp is finishing his list of nonviolent tactics with the last 30, which are including all kind of nonviolent intervention. In Czechoslovakia methods as a psychological intervention like all types of fasting and hunger strikes were not used. In January 1990, there is a threat from students in Olomouc for hunger strike if their demands for better conditions in the schools are not met along with the use of nonviolent occupation, but is after the revolution and it is only one case (Krapfl, 2013, p. 176). The *nonviolent occupation* was happening on the main square, in the parks, universities and theaters. But here the *occupation* is quite close to the notion of demonstration or protests. Larson (2016) is also using this word to explain the gathering of the people – he states that they were occupying the Wenceslas statue and having dialogs and discussions about the meaning of being Czech (Appendix A). From the types of intervention this one named *social intervention* and the so-called *physical interventions* as an occupation were the only used in the revolution. Those physical interventions are using

concretely the method of *guerrilla theater*, which was part of public performances. *Guerilla Theater* acts were mentioned as main methods by the Polish movement *Orange Alternative*.

Nevertheless, some usage of them was present in the Czechoslovak revolution. There are reports from people for the most incredible events in the revolution and they are giving at the same time evidence that they were used and very precise definition of what actually *Guerilla Theater* is: “a group of people begins something and the rest spontaneously join in” (Rorecek quoted in “*Happening*” quoted by Krapfl, 2013, p. 60). One of those events is described by Hanus in “*Happening*”:

I heard a voice distorted by a loudspeaker...Citizens disperse! This assembly has not been approved by the national committee! Only after a moment I realized that a theater full of symbols was being played out before my eyes. I watched how people stripped themselves of “the bandages of the past and of fear” and then lit candles around these bandages (Krapfl, 2013, p.60).

This description of the event is comparable to the “*happenings*” of the *Orange Alternative* and their excessive use of *avant-gard Theater of absurd* methods to mock the regime. With less popularity the *guerilla theater* activities were known and used by the nonviolent society in Czechoslovakia during 1989.

There are no other of Sharp’s listed methods, which were used during 1989, neither economic intervention with creating alternative institutions, nor political intervention with dual

sovereignty and parallel governments were used in the Velvet revolution. It is explainable by the cooperation and negotiations with the state, which shifted a direction.

To high extent people in Czechoslovakia did many of the practical methods which are suggested by Sharp. It can be stated that without all of those happenings, leaflets, pamphlets, posters, flyers, declarations, letters, use of symbols, slogans, general strike etc. the Velvet revolution would never gather such power as with only relying on the positive emotions and adopting nonviolence in a moral way. Still strategizing and aiming of the concrete results are not widely advocated in the revolution, which is why in that sense it stays on the moral ground. Furthermore, almost nobody even till nowadays knows the listed 198 methods from Sharp, or ever heard his name. Confirmation comes from Kopecek (2016), who knows who Gene Sharp is, that nobody for sure knew or ever heard about Sharp in 1989 as well (Appendix B). The same applies for the theory from Richard Gregg. Gregg and Sharp and their ideas are entirely unknown for the society in Czechoslovakia in 1989, yet this does not mean that their theories of nonviolence were not conceptualized in a way that nonviolence would work in a real case scenario. Czechoslovakia 1989 may work as an example.

Self-developed methods

It is hard in the multinational atmosphere of the nonviolent revolutions in 1989 to insist on self-developed methods. Nevertheless, some of them are listed in the section of external factors assuming that they as influenced by Poland were self-developed and used in many countries. The use of the *samizdat* method as an enlightening about nonviolent resistance is one

of them, the development of the subculture with all of their manifestos; the ideas and writing about nonviolence are one of the self-developed methods, but not specifically by the Czechs. The entirely new symbolic system, emphasized by Krapfl (2013) on many places in his book “*The revolution with a human face*” was also such a strong self-developed method, although it was similarly conducted in Poland. In the specific case in Czechoslovakia, there is an idea, which simultaneously is a ground for developing nonviolence in the society and self-developed “*tactic*”. This is the idea of the anti-politics or the non-political politics. Kopecek (2016) is elaborating how important it was this idea in the 19th century with the first president Tomas Garrigue Masaryk to develop and activate the society without political means (Appendix B). It is specific to recognize that the influence in Poland came and was assimilated from a different angle. Unlike Poles Czechs were not creating political movements, unions or specified opposition groups.

In Czech lands the idea of the fight for human rights has been planted, something like the *Charter 77*, something that Havel was also implementing in his writings, that human rights are important for everyone (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B). Thus this principle would encourage Czechs into coping with the inconvenient situations by means such as finding a factory, do some volunteer work, sign petitions and so on (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B). They are adopting the idea of non-political politics. One of the streams of this idea is also a strong development of humor. Therefore, one of the popular national figures is the *good soldier Svejek*, which is mocking the regime and using all kinds of jokes upon the authorities (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B). This characteristic is a part of the cultural equipment of the nation and it helped to form the shape of the revolution.

Concrete methods

All the developed concrete small methods are produced due to the grand idea for the non-political politics developed by the Czechs. One particular of the practices was the meeting of the students with the workers in the factories (Larson, 2016, Appendix A; Krapfl, 2013, p.). The students knew that they should have the bigger part of the society on their side so the persuasion was accomplished by the creation of networks by *personal visits*. In all of the interviews in the Appendix people are confirming that this practice was actively used by the students. Kopecek (2016) is mentioning yet another type of *personal visits* – meeting between broader audiences, but this time, it was between big cities as Prague and the smaller towns or villages in the countryside (Appendix B). Students were calling it “*graceful rides*” because the methods were referring to the previous revolutions and the attempt to spread nonviolence in 19th century (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B). This practice was constructed by the students as follows: they were taking one car and one person, who is well known among the people like artist or writer and along with someone from university to explain what is happening and how the government is not suitable, all together they were travelling to small towns and villages, knocking on the doors and meeting people to spread the revolution (Kopecek, 2016, Appendix B).

Other concrete action was stated by Vanek and Mucke (2016) as *John Lennon’s wall*. It is considered to be a unique and long tradition, which was promoting the nonviolent means. This could not be listed as method, but more as a symbolic sign, which was self-build. The *jingling of the keys* is another symbolic method which was performed by the people in Czechoslovakia. Some two specific practices were *the train of the revolution* and *the human chain* that the people

were organizing during the Velvet revolution. Yet, as the flowers giving to the police, which now is very used method, those gestures of nonviolence could be hardly traced to some specific “inventor”. Therefore, the main idea of the *non-political politics* and *the graceful rides* are considered as self-developed methods in Czechoslovakia not only for 1989 but in the long term. As a result, those methods were part of the nonviolent struggle of the society not only in one particular situation, which occurred in 1989, but even after the revolution during the building of a new state they helped for the emergence of the nonviolent society.

Conclusions

1989 is a year, which changed the world. The reasons for this are many as the changes that occurred in that year. One of the changes was the change of the regime in Czechoslovakia and one of the reasons for this was the nonviolent struggle of the people. The declaration of the fact that the velvet revolution was a nonviolent event is not complete, without the real knowledge of the understanding of this struggle. To draw lessons from an event, which was having successes is far more complex than it seems. The using of nonviolent methods and tools in protests is not an easily applicable action. The nonviolence in Czechoslovakia in 1989 is an example of the struggle, which carries the complications of the construction of real nonviolent society.

The components of the nonviolent struggle in 1989 in Czechoslovakia are not formed only in that year, neither only in Czechoslovakia. It is true that the nonviolent events in 1989 were decentralized to some extent and influencing each other at the same time. The highest compatibility of influence to Czechoslovakia is coming from Poland. Thus, the Poles and the

Czechoslovaks are using different particular tools into their revolutions; they still exchange the main style, which is the nonviolence as idea. This is one component of the nonviolent struggle of Czechoslovakia and it can be overall defined as external influence. It is very unlikely by the lack of this helping factor of diffusion of methods and style some opposition and nonviolent resistance to be formed in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand Czechoslovak nonviolent struggle is unique and it is not containing the same components as the Polish nonviolent opposition. From the side-comparison case, it can be concluded that only the nonviolence as idea between the countries was a significant component of the struggle in Czechoslovakia. Other particular common components are the *Samizdat* publishing and the guerilla theater style.

Another component of the nonviolent struggle in Czechoslovakia was the formation of the contra culture in 70's and the ideologies coming from the intelligentsia. This is an essential factor for the resistance, because the emerging of the sub culture in Czechoslovakia is the first step of the creation of the nonviolent society. Although, some studies claim that the Velvet revolution is performed from the younger generation, the appearance of the symbolic system, in the shape that it starts to exist due to the underground culture is the first creation of the symbolic system, which directly refers to living a life in opposition. *Charter 77* and the development of the dissident ideas for the nonviolence are the further important component of the nonviolent struggle. By listing those internal components of the struggle in Czechoslovakia the paper is answering the question of the roots of the nonviolence in the Czech lands, because they can be considered as roots and reasons for the emerging of the nonviolent society.

The principles from the nonviolent theory adhered by the people in Czechoslovakia are also part of the components in the nonviolent struggle. The classification of the methods made for this study and the separation of the nonviolent theories was artificially incorporated to be examined in details the principles adhered and the components used in the nonviolent struggle. It was found that the Gandhi's idea for *Satayagraha*– the devotion to the truth is the most incorporated and advocated in the society in Czechoslovakia. It is indicated that the society developed a moral approach to the nonviolent method, instead or practical. The ideals of the people on the streets were to keep the humanness and to stick to the truth. There are many examples that the society knew about Gandhi and the people, who were involved in the revolution were reading him. Those facts do not make his theory the one, which was more used, but confirm from where the people got their inspiration.

The society in Czechoslovakia was not adhering any of the nonviolent theory principles on purpose. Therefore their struggle could not be defined as pragmatic or strategically constructed. The organization of the revolution was on very high level, but it was self-organization, achieved by the developing of values and moral virtues for which Gandhi is advising. The theoretical principles signified by Gregg were also incorporated in the nonviolent struggle in Czechoslovakia. The people constructed situations very close, even identical with the dramatizing and the public performances added from Gregg to the nonviolent theory. The rumor for the dead student also served in the beginning for the fascinating news and became one of the uniting factors of the nonviolent struggle. The general strike is one of the most essential and yet hard to define to which nonviolent approach should belong, but as component it was very skillfully implemented by the society. At first glance, almost all of the concrete methods used in

1989 are adhered from the 198 methods of the nonviolence listed by Sharp. All those practical correlations with Sharp's methods are nothing without the idea of implementing them with the pragmatic incentives. It is hard to trace the lack of incentives for the people for strategizing, but there are many confirmations for it. In the first source and second source data no confirmation came for the strategizing of the nonviolence in the way that Sharp is describing it. In 1968 nonviolent resistance are evident more strategizing moves and motivations of the people than in 1989.

With this argument, is also becoming clear that the roots of the nonviolent struggle were not coming from the opposition tactics during the Soviet invasion. If in the Sharp's perspective the pragmatic nonviolence is an imperfect tool for imperfect people, then the confirmation that the society in Czechoslovakia was trying to perfect and their reality and their personal values could be valid. At first sight, those ideals were established in the revolution along with the symbolic system.

The roots of the nonviolence in the Czech lands were traced only to the idea of the non-political politics, which is listed in the section of the self-developed methods for the nonviolent resistance. In Bohemia and Moravia, there are no special traditions of following nonviolence, only cultural presuppositions, and geopolitical factors. Still the far away roots of the nonviolence were in the idea of activating the society with the no political means, but there are more relevant sources of the nonviolent struggle, which could be defined as roots for the revolution in 1989. They are the influence of the Polish nonviolent opposition and the established Czech underground society.

This is a qualitative research, which includes interpretation of the events. It is hard drastically to separate one factor from another or to classify specific component or nonviolent thought under only one meaning. It is delicate to write and assume factors for a struggle to which other were the participants. It could always be disputable whether is possible to examine only the nonviolence of the people cutting it from all the possible other factors influencing to the situation. It is hard to avoid tough the achievements of this revolution. To neglect the factor that the people were spreading the moral choice and the life in truth is impossible. Not only the dissidents were adopting the nonviolent state of mind, the society in Czechoslovakia adopted the moral nonviolent approach of Gandhi and applied it into practice. With this nonviolent mean emerged the nonviolent society in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and changed their own world. And “means are after all everything” Gandhi declares.

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Appendix

The appendix is containing five interviews – Peter Larson, Michal Kopecek, Michal Smid, Miroslav Vanek & Pavel Mucke, Padraic Kenney. The authenticity of the interviews and personal style of expression of the people is kept. All first four interviews are recorded and transcribed, therefore they are longer. The fifth interview with Padraic Kenney was via email. Nothing has been changed there, but take on consideration, that before and after there was email and personal communication, which is not included in the interview itself.

Interview with Peter Larson (A)

Personal profile

Peter Larson is born in 1946 in Lund, Sweden. Currently, he is a student at Charles University. Per has been living in Prague for many years and he is fluent in Czech. His creative way of describing his profession is “a survival expert in “laterna magika” since 1991 (a Czech type of theater combination and interactive - presented firstly from Czechoslovakia Pavilion in 1958 Expo in Brussels). Peter has been in Prague during the start and continuation of the so-called “Velvet revolution” in November and December 1989. He stays in Czech Republic for living, creating his own company. He is fluent in Czech. Therefore, his interview was used as a first source data from the position of the witness and observer of the events. Mr. Larson is consciousness citizen active for the topics of culture, politics, and human rights, fulfilling and following the academic life in the Czech Republic and Sweden.

Interview

I. Y. What happened in your eyes in 1989?

P. L. The economy was down; the credibility for the leader was extremely low - for the regime by the public. One had to remember the Czechoslovakia had the highest proportional number in the communist party, nearly 10% of the grown up were members of the Communist party, which is making it even more strange, all the other countries were having 3-4%. They were able to persuade the public, bribing the population to be obedient, they were using several methods, and they said if you do not care about politics, we will try to do your life as good as possible with consumer goods and so on, it will not be like Switzerland, because we were poor, but it will be better than in the Soviet Union or in Baltics, or in Romania, the standard of living and they were clever, because they got not the support, but the consent of the people especially from the young people. This happened after 1968, to take the grip on the power and this process finishes until 70-71 and after this started the process so called "*normalization*" what I described till now. They all knew that if you want a good living or making a career, you have to negotiate with the regime. But what happened after 80's is that the whole communistic system of producing and generating money went down, people were tired of these people. What was important is that the young people, the student movement were able to formulate the idea, which said, the communist has low credibility, the communist ideology was not there anymore, the government mixed it with Czech nationalism. And then Gorbachov movement it didn't have much effect here, and the "*Perestroika*" wasn't really happening in Czechoslovakia.

I. Y. Why was the revolution happening, then?

P. L. It was a change of the political economic vista, but it was not a revolution. They replaced the bad economy with the free market economy. It was mainly a question of people, who were tired of everything and it was a fantastic cool incident. I remember I was talking to Martin Mejstrik; he was one of the student leaders of the revolution. He is now kind of a politician, they started charity movement "People in need", quite known organization. So it was a change and it took place on the street.

I. Y. And I find some difference, from here and other changes of the regimes in Eastern Europe, what was different?

P. L. The meeting between the workers and the students - there you could see the fine line because they went to the working places, and that is one of the specifics of these changes here. They were received so friendly by the people in the working places, and the reaction could be totally the opposite. This specific could happen, what I know is what they were speaking. But it could not happen in a planned way; It was a change in forty years, it was not planned.

I. Y. So, why there is such an illusion that nonviolent revolution can be planned?

P. L. After this spontaneous happening, everything was constructed, especially the *Orange revolution* in Ukraine and *The Maiden*, there were Czechs who were traveling there having seminars how to work nonviolent, but those ideas constructed by the experience they had.

I. Y. You are certain that they were not using any of those ideas for the 1989 as well?

P. L. I don't think it was so present. You have to understand that the main course of inspiration came from Poland, from Germany, and their movements. It was a new time when people started escaping from Hungary, from Austria to cross. Firstly was the intellectual or emotional motivation. The communists they lost the grip of the situation. They were not considered to be representatives of the Czechoslovak nation. Then the students were children of ordinary people, so they knew each other, we are talking about kind of revolution on a Meta level. One could say that so-called revolution was staged by very, very small minority. And you could see that it was touching only and mainly big cities – Prague, Brno, Liberec, Plzen, Olomouc, Bratislava, but in the countryside it was not covered so much. They succeeded to raise people to go on the streets and the communist they felt that they lost. And also how it happened on 17th of November it was in a typical Czech way it was not so complicated, they were allowed to have a demonstration, the permit was issued by the communist youth league and then they were supposed to go to *Petrin*, but they came to the river bank and it went to the *Narodni* and then the red barrels were sent and it was all well prepared all crossing the inner section, there were not escape way and the police was beating the people. Everybody thought that this was staged by the conservatives. In order to discredit the government, but at the end, it showed up that the whole thing was set up by the reformist by the very same people, who had issued the demonstration. To make people angry and then all happened very fast. Then the revolution overtook the intellectuals and it was created *Obcansky Forum* and it was the meeting in *Laterna Magika* and the Communist understood that it cannot go on. The communist understood is a lost case

I. Y. Were you there that time?

P. L. Yeah, yeah.

I. Y. Were you participating?

P. L. I was just a bystander. To the demonstrations and so on.

I. Y. What were the people doing on the demonstration? What was it like?

P. L. There were demonstrations all the time. It was a very good mood within the demonstrations. First, it was something like 100 thousand on *Vaclav* and then was the famous demonstration on the *Letna Park* it was nearly one million people and it was mainly about what Obcansky forum will do. Communists were lost.

I. Y. So it was clear that they will be gone, whatever people do?

P. L. They were one million people on the street and they lost the grip of the people and they were considered to be foreign, aliens, they were representatives of an ideology, which came from Russia. And then the government wanted to have changed according to the constitution - passing of power, so it wasn't any revolution. They went by the book.

I. Y. But there was a kind of revolution?

P. L. It was certainly a big change, but in a political sense, it was not a revolution.

I. Y. So you don't think that the people were responsible for this change?

P. L. Yes, they were responsible, but it was a pressure from below. It was passing of power go by the constitutional means. Husak stepped down and the leader of the party stepped down and they had a Federal assembly. *Obcansky Forum* proposed to take this position and this person to represent several opinions. It is a saying that in Poland everybody knows who killed the "monster".

I. Y. Who killed the "monster"?

P. L. *Solidarnost*. In Bulgaria, for instance, nobody killed the monster. And in Czechoslovakia there are several who claimed to kill the "monster", but it can be said that it died out of a being old. And everywhere had happened a lot of things, but nothing here. If you have been here in October 1989, they were no signs of any changes, nothing. It happened in three weeks, and Havel said *I hope that we will bring down the old power before the Romania*.

I. Y. And how it happened so fast?

P. L. What was the most important here was taking over the symbols from the communists; they disconnected the communists from the Czechoslovak symbol. Ladislav Holy is

describing in a post-modernist way this symbol system. They took the mindset away because communist is not Czechoslovak.

I. Y. But how did they exactly do it?

P. L. They returned to this spirit of 1848 and 1918 and this discussion about what is to be Czech and what does it mean.

I. Y. How they practically did it?

P. L. It was one of the simplest things; they occupied *Vaclavak* and surrounded the statue.

I. Y. Do you know what they were using the most when they occupied the statue open discussions, flags, leaflets?

P. L. There is one thing from the movie *Kolya*. They were standing on *Vaclavak* with all other and doing this with the keys...

I. Y. What is this with the keys?

P. L. It is "*open up*"! It means, now we are opening up. There was no violence at all. From 17th of November to 28th of November students were traveling in the countryside and the

respond was overwhelming, people went to the streets and said yes, we are supporting the changes. And there were signs “*No violence*”, “*Respect the constitution*” and so on.

I. Y. Why they were nonviolent? Because of the fear or they were persuaded that it will work?

P. L. It was a dictatorship, and I don't think they were having any expectations. It was the mood of the time. It happened in Hungary, in East Germany, in Poland, *we have to do something*; it was the pressure from the present time. They were organizing everything and they were saying: *don't be tempted by provocateurs*.

I. Y. Was it an ideal, ideology of nonviolence somewhere there?

P. L. On an intellectual level they were talking, but for the workers it was different. The party organization was very strong. And the communists were having their own army. And certainly some unknown people were knocking on their door, saying: *We should get rid of them*.

I. Y. So you say that the most vital were those meetings between students and workers, so they united on one level?

P. L. Yes, otherwise it is unbearable to have this division to change the situation. We have to have a new opening. Then afterward they intellectualize all of this and they invented an idea that certainly had some energy of what students did. And that is why they call it the Velvet

revolution, not so much because of what was happening on the streets, but on how they should look on the former power today, should they put them on the trail or not? And they formulated the idea that everyone should be tried in an individual way. And Havel was saying it: *there was no place to revenge.*

I. Y. Some roots of this nonviolence, do you see in Czechs?

P. L. *We didn't fight even when it was needed to fight*, referring to 1938, they say.

I. Y. So there is no place for the word *revolution* in this story?

P. L. Everything was made in a constitutional way, the word is made Velvet revolution, the root is from Timothy Gordon Ash and mainly referred to the fact that the leaders of the *Obchanský Forum* left no room for revenge and that was the *Velvet*.

I. Y. Was it connected with the face of regime here? Was it softer?

P. L. It was 100% severe, they could release the army and put it on the streets, they were using soft power. There were references everywhere. Informers, they were in every "*panelak*" reporting on everyone. And they had such a grip on the society. They bribed the people. And we couldn't detect any changes, any indications for change and then from one day to another it happened.

I. Y. And government allowed it to happen?

P. L. I didn't use the word allowed, but the dictatorship didn't have the strength to uphold the change. They were several demonstrations who were suppressed nonviolently in the year for the occupation and then on a national day on 28th of October and some confrontations in late spring and then it all disappeared, nothing else happened. It was the transportation of the people when everything went down. And intellectuals didn't want to do any revolt or revolution. I still remember we were extremely sad about it and then suddenly it happened on 17th of November 1989.

I.Y. Thank you!

Interview with Michal Kopecek (B)

Personal profile

Ph.D. Michal Kopecek is an assistant professor in Charles University for Czech and Central European History, Faculty of Arts. He is a researcher since 2001 with main interest in

democratic transitions, comparative and modern intellectual history, state socialism and communism in Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2003, he is head of the post-1989 democratic transition history department at the institute of contemporary history, Czech academy of sciences, Prague. He is a member of the academic board of *Institute of contemporary history* and in the editorial board of academic journals – contemporary history and theory, critique, history, Prague. Kopecek is head in the project “*Physical violence and state legitimacy in the late socialism*” in Potsdam. His research project is within the area of Velvet revolutions including repertoires and interactions, aiming to understand the “*non-violent character of the 1989 democratic revolutions*”. With this sphere of interests, he is a valuable contributor to the topic of 1989 as well as a personal participant, like a student, in the processes in 1989 and as a researcher concentrated in the field.

Interview

I.Y. Do you know someone who was involved in the 1989 revolution?

M. K. Many people – politicians, students, and if you are willing to have someone to speak with they should speak English, so it is not so many of them - it is hard. I can tell you 20 names now, but I do not have contacts. Many of them are very important people and they were giving interviews for the last 20 years; they are not very much happy to give another interview. I met Peter Uhl last week, but he is very sick.

I. Y. You probably don't remember something about the revolution - How were you involved in the events? What was your personal experience?

M. K. I was fifteen, I remember. I was in high school, Gymnasium. It was like elite Prague Gymnasium, so there were people from the high communist functionary, people from Prague academic elite, but also some people from dissident families, we were fifteen sixteen years old so we were not speaking so much about politics, still politics was involved everywhere. And I remember the summer of 1989. People were coming; my friends were coming with this "*Nyakolik ved*". Do you know what is it? It means "*few sentences*". It was one of the oppositional programmes in 1989, criticizing the government and saying not only *we as opposition but what we as a citizens of this country should require from this country* and it was organized by the opposition, but somehow it was signed by many people, who were not part of the opposition. And this document was also circulating in my gymnasium, so the whole school was afraid; *don't get involved with that*, they were saying, because it is too dangerous, too political etc. But there was a political awareness that something was happening already in summer of 1989. And then in November, when the thing started to happen I was on some kind of trip in the country. I was not in *Albertov* in the day of demonstration. Coming back in the weekend I have seen those police cars, everything was closed and I understood that something happened. I came first day after the weekend to the school and then and we as a high school weren't organizing any strikes or whatever, but we as a high school students, we immediately started working as sort of helping force for the university students, so when they needed something and we were coming with materials and bringing it here and there

I. Y. What kind of materials?

M. K. I don't know very much, we went to the medical faculty and student would give us something like bringing this to somewhere, to some theater, we were working actually as helping force, some transportation agents.

I. Y. Like promoters for the revolution?

M. K. O, no! We liked it was romantic, all the students were not politically fighting and we could not politically fight, but we liked to help, not everybody, but I did and then actually I was so involved in this that I started to have some health problems. That was really very tiring I was doing this all day and night, then going to school and then in the evening helping there to the striking students. So actually in the beginning - middle of December I got in hospital I was really, really exhausted, so I was there around one month I was having some kind of problem with the heart, so I was following the whole Velvet revolution from the hospital, but then I got back before Christmas, so I was again, not part of the revolution, not entirely, I was sixteen years old gay, but when you studied in Prague, you studied in one of the elite Gymnasium, then you do a lot of the things that are happening, as I said there were people from high-rating communist family and people from dissident families and it was very discussed and done, which doesn't mean that I consider myself as being part of the revolution ...

I. Y. Well the success of the revolution here is due to everyone's involvements?

M. K. Yes, of course, but I do not consider myself as actor of the revolution

I. Y. But you were in the circles of the *intelligentsia*?

M. K. Yeah, not *intelligentsia*, but the inspiring youngsters, so to say, following closely what happened.

I. Y. In this document in the summer of 1989, that you mentioned, what was it containing how many points did it have?

M. K. It was 3 pages, containing points for human and political rights and reform in the economy and it was one of the most famous manifestos of this re-born political society.

I. Y. But this is different than *Charter 77*?

M. K. Yes, actually Havel was accused of being an author, he is not the author of this, but it was close to the opposition, but still aimed broader circles, not that only chartists.

I. Y. And you are researching Velvet revolutions?

M. K. I am not sure whether I will call it like that, I am researching late socialism and post-socialism, somehow 1989 is in the middle.

I. Y. There is still your research that you haven't published?

M. K. Yes, about nonviolence and legality.

I. Y. So can you tell me more about it?

M. K. Well, it is about the legal culture of the late socialist state. My try is to look at 1989 and the nonviolence as a result to some extent to the changing of the legal culture of the late socialist states. What I am trying to show actually since the de-Stalinization the socialist states everywhere in Europe were putting more and more stress on the functional legal system. And actually they did not want to rule only by the power of the party and this kind of revolutionary charisma, but also they employed a lot of rationality, the power of the rationally legal system, like constitution really mattered, law and law making really mattered. The early revolutionary Marxist regimes were not having a law in big regard because the law was connected with the bourgeois and they were creating a new society. After Stalin and with de-Stalinization, this society needed to consolidate themselves and in this consolidation regime law and the legal system started to play a much more important role. I am actually trying to show in my research how this threat on socialist legality, on law making and the socialism is actually de-revolutionizing the regime. They are not working anymore with revolutionary methods and with the violent methods, and they are much more relying their power on the functional legal system and on judiciary power. On a fact that the citizens should obey the law, which before that was considered by revolutionary Marxist states as bourgeois thing, but now they are actually using the same – the power of the legal system in order to discipline the society. Trying to show that

the late socialist regimes are putting a lot of emphasis on law making, on obedience to law and judiciary and law system are very robotically developed in order these systems to work. This is one side of the story, the more you put in the regime stress on the legality the less you are prone to use violent methods. So you are not using violence on the opposition because it is not legal and constitutional. Of course, in late 80's the secret police is using illegal secret methods, but it was under the surface only. On the surface, they would always try to look that they are legally functioning regimes. You have the more and more belief in the late socialist regime in Czechoslovakia, among them on the legal system and on the fact that we cannot do things violently, we should rather use what we have, the law. On the other side it was developing the human rights opposition, which also had an explicit nonviolent ideology, in the Polish case absolutely explicit, because people like Koroun and Michnik, they will really speak about nonviolent methods, they will speak about Gandhi, about Martin Luther King and they had this reflection: *we are creating opposition, that will fight against the system, but it will fight against the system with a nonviolent methods, because we don't want violence, because it is dangerous, because violence means that potentially we are bringing civil war, and we don't want civil war, we want to activate society by pressure on the government* – this is in the core of the Polish opposition in 1970's and 1980's and of course very much strengthen by *Solidarity*. *Solidarity* a great power and they still fear that if they radicalize too much it will be bloodshed, and they don't want bloodshed because they know that either by the regime or by the Soviet invasion they will crash the *Solidarity*. So they always wanted to have intellectuals around, to moderate it, not to provoke a clash between the society and the government. This is why *Solidarity* is calling itself *self-limiting* revolution. They do not want to come to open confrontation. In Polish opposition, you have explicitly developed a nonviolent strategy. In Czechoslovakia, they will not

speaking so much about nonviolence as a principle because here you never had a mass opposition. There was never a danger that the opposition could come to the confrontation with the regime. We have just a couple of hundreds of people in the opposition, which are not having any weapons and military experience, it could not be a nonsense for these people to think about any kind of violent methods of fighting the regime. Nonviolence was not explicit, but it was an integral part of the oppositional strategy. Because here the opposition was based on something that they will call *the non-political politics* or *anti-politics*. Vaclav Havel is one of the major theoreticians in it. And it could connect with much older Czech political traditions from the 19th century with Karel Havlicek and Tomas Masaryk and their reconceptualization of *non-political politics*, which means that Havlicek and Masaryk were working, trying to sort of come up with a vital strategy in the Austro-Hungarian state. They say we can actually not fight with the regime with political means and neither with military means, so we have to work on the ground of finding educational institutions, academic institutions, journals etc., to activate the society and this sort of thing that. *We are activating society, but without political means* - not finding political parties or movements, and if the society takes care of itself – self-organized society, so to say. This will be the political strategy of some of the major Czech political leaders in the 19th century – Masaryk and Havlicek are the most important part and actually in 1970's in the 20th century, Havel and Patocka and some other sort of theoreticians of the dissidents will directly come to Masaryk. Havel actually writes about it -*as Masaryk had this way of doing nonpolitical politics, we are in a way doing a similar thing, because we don't want to find a new political movement we want to activate the society and fight for human rights, which is for everybody, who is not like for who is conservative or communist, we are all interested in human rights*. In Havel's case, many will call it *anti-politics*, which is a misleading notion. But it really wants to say that the strategy is aimed at

activating the society and fighting the crime with a nonviolent methods such a stress on an education, stress on reformist and diverse recreation of flying universities, creation of flat seminars or many different social activities that in the end will end up in the fact that the society will be emancipated from the state. This is the strategy of *Charter 77*; this is the strategy of all these human rights oppositions in the Eastern bloc. Metaphorically saying. And somehow the fact is that nonviolence is ingrained in this strategy. If you want to find a new educational institution or youth movement or you want to contribute to the nature, environment, these are everyday activities and it is absolutely understandable that they are nonviolent, it should be nonviolent, and *Charter 77* and the dissidents were based on legalism. You should have used all legal space that the communist system of the post social Czechoslovakia is offering you in order to emancipate the society. So you think about possibilities that are here, not fighting with weapons against the communists: *no, our fight is different* – fight through civil society, through activation of the society. And somehow nonviolence is this– they could not speak about it explicitly, and they could not imagine fighting with weapons, it is absolute nonsense in the situation that they were living in 1970's and 1980's. So whether in Poland the nonviolent principle was explicitly worded because we had mass political movement and the danger of the clash. In Czechoslovakia or in Hungary it did not have the mass political opposition. The nonviolence was present, but it was not explicitly discussed because nobody would think about nonviolence before 1988.

I. Y. So the suppressing of violence was not such a big effort?

M. K. From which side?

I. Y. From the society's side and people point of view?

M. K. No, absolutely not. The state itself was guarding people from violence. And of course the social states, they represent themselves as an institution, they should guard you and me as a citizens from violence. The police guarding the ownership, your health etc. and states are working against harming and this was not something that dissidents would question. The legitimate role of the state was to get violence out of the ordinary citizen and this is something that dissidents would never question. This also means that the dissidents, because they were composed of the intelligentsia mainly in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary; they would never think something about violent method as something that can legitimate the state. If it is composed of the main workers sometimes in 50's you could have this opposition and they would think in different terms they could organize insurrection against socialist regime, but this is 70's and 80's – all the opposition is composed of people who were writers and academics and scientists, lawyers, pedagogy teachers etc. This is the intelligentsia and they have their own methods and they are very much non-violent.

I. Y. So you say that is natural for the society during those years to use nonviolence?

M. K. Also natural and strategically needed, because also oppositions were very small circles and they knew that against them there is the whole machinery of the state like huge police apparatus and party, military etc. They could not come to a confrontation because they could lose everything. It is strategically clear why they are promoting nonviolence and thinking about it because with violence they could not reach anything.

I. Y. In the field of the nonviolence, there are two outcomes – methods that work and methods which do not work? They could do both. The answer from the government I could not cover and of course there is an influence on maintaining nonviolence by the passive response from the government, but from the people's perspective, I try to understand which nonviolent methods were working. What were they using in order to gather the people on the streets?

M.K. Yes, it is a huge organization. James Krapfl is writing about it.

I. Y. Yes, about the specific leaflets, pamphlets, human chains, train of revolution and creating a new symbolic system, and including that is the first *televisionied* revolution, there is no social media, no internet, so what was organizing them, the radio and television?

M. K. Yes, but I think that more important was this conscious activity of the revolutionary. When the things started in November 1989, then what the students did, they would call it even "*panela izdi*" it is a specific word, because it was used in the *Hasseid* revolutions. *Graceful rides* are something that it was a joke that the student took from the *Hasseid* revolutions from the 15th century when the *Hasseid* were trying to spread the word of revolution across the borders. And this what student would usually do in November and December 1989, they would have one car in there will be one of the students, one of the experts like from economic institute, and one sort of famous actor like if they come to the country people will recognize him immediately. And the students were organizing this *Graceful rides* from the big university cities like Prague and Bratislava to the countryside, because they knew that what the media was reporting was still in the favor of the communist government, because it was state television and the decisive word

was on the side of the government, and the revolutionary knew that if they want to face the government and the media power; they had to create their own way to explain to the people what is happening in Prague and this is what *graceful rides* was-to go to smaller cities or village and sort of speaking with the people what is it all about it, sometimes they were welcomed, sometimes people were distant and still believing in the old system. And this was the crucial moment the mechanism of the revolution, how to spread it, because if you are growing in Prague you have some sort of different information, but if you are in small village and actually you don't know anybody who is part of the dissident, or the cultural intelligentsia and you have smaller circle of information and in 1989 you don't have social media, you are much more dependent on what the centralized media are telling you and this is why they were organized.

I. Y. I hear this method for the second time; the students were using personal meetings even with workers?

M. K. Yes, they were even going outside Prague, when exactly it stopped I think around January, but many people were involved in this thing.

I. Y. And in Poland were using theatrical methods – *The Orange Alternative*, here as well?

M. K. Yes, it was a generational thing.

I. Y. And to sum up, in Poland there was the idea of Gandhi and following his theoretical approach?

M. K. I think, he was more like an icon, but they would not really read him so much.

I. Y. I can see some of his ideas in Czechoslovakia, like the dedication to truth, like principles to adopt positive emotions. People were singing and gathering. Were the people having any idea that they are actually following him?

M. K. People in Prague, no, I wouldn't say so, some people would know about him, but what it was right back then, he was an icon, but I think that people would not directly connect to. This November and December gathering is what Krapfl is describing, this euphoric atmosphere, this was coming from the ground that they can go out, and they can now speak freely and organize this thing. So I don't think that Gandhi was involved, even I don't remember any poster to involve Gandhi.

I. Y. What about any pieces of advice or methods from Gene Sharp?

M. K. No, no, I think nobody would really know who Gene Sharp is in 1989. They would know about Gandhi, but for sure the revolution itself and also it what Krapfl is showing that student would create their own decalogs or own catalog of conducts, what revolutionary should do or not do. There was sort of little booklet that was 10 points or something how to create a dialog. But it would be created on the spot. And some of the students would think of Gandhi, but

it was never an explicit reference to Gandhi or nonviolence. Well, the nonviolence in the revolution already when the masses got the movement and when it was not only hundred people from the *Charter 77* and then the exclusive idea of the nonviolence comes in, because now something is happening and Havel was writing it that we don't want to create a state of war or hang communist on the street. The program of the *OF* was nonviolent and in Bratislava the counter is named *Public against violence*, so we all agree that it was the core principles of the revolution – peace, nonviolence, democracy, humanism.

I. Y. Are they developing their own methods?

M. K. Of course, sub consciousness is there. Yet, that some nonviolent method was followed for instance Gandhi. Somehow the rule of conduct comes out from the situation of the time, of the configuration that existed on the spot.

I. Y. Lastly, I would like to know if you think that nonviolence is having any deep roots in the Czech lands?

M. K. No, as ethical principles, there is no other Gandhi in Czech lands. There was a pacifist thought in the Czech political tradition, for instance in 15th century, there was this *hasseid* preacher Peter Helicky, who was one of the reactions to the *Hasseid* and what they used as violent methods and wanted to reform the church, but he was preaching nonviolence as we are not allowed to kill anybody, because is wrong and overall preachers are not violent. And another one would be Comenius for instance, considered one of the founders of the pedagogy and he was

a Czech sort of preacher and would be another pacifist stand from the longer term political tradition in Bohemia. But I would consider this to be much weaker side, otherwise historically Czechs are having so much violence as anywhere else, but more specific in the Czech situation in the modern history, is this situation that I was describing of the 19th and 20th century, that until 19th century Czech lands and Bohemia were part of a bigger empire and they were always meeting the German element, which was the strongest. Germans are many, Czechs are only a few so, in this sense, I would never say that the Czechs are less violent than the Germans, no way, but the political ideology of the Czech national movement would rather socially fight rather than military or politically, because first we know we have to gather forces in economic and social terms, we have to first activate the society in order to face the danger of the Germanization. And there is the feeling of many politicians and general think about the small nation, and for Czech the Germany were the distinctive others, so we always wanted to be as culturally developed as Germany, but also afraid that the German is going to eat us and if you look at the Bohemia there is a lot of German speaking population and as Hungary having the fear to be eaten by Slavic neighbors, some existential feeling. To fight against this danger Germanization the Czech national movement is coming up with the certain method and it was *non-political politics* and the activization of the social base of the nation. Unlike Poles, that would create an uprising against Russians or Russian rule in the 19th century, Czechs never organized such an uprising. And there was not a specific nonviolent ideology, for sure not, but the configuration of the Czech nation was the one, which was promoting rather socially and society oriented method of political activity than military or violent. Maybe there is some sort of more stress on the social fight of the political term than in Poland or even Hungarians, who were also in the 19th century fighting against the Austrians and Russians. Also, Hungarians and Poles had their own aristocracy, which

would be leaders in the army. Czechs didn't have aristocracy, like in Bulgaria, aristocrats came mostly from German-speaking countries and in this sense Czechs are a more plebeian nation, we had some generals ok, but this tradition was never as strong as in Polish or Hungarian case. In this sense seems to me that there is something about it, not about nonviolent character of Czech nation, as I said they are as violent as any other nation, but in the political tradition culture. There was a tradition and tendency in the political struggle to be something that should not be done and resolved by arms but rather by negotiations, social pressure, economic growth, activization, education etc. *Not make war, but rather found a new factory and get more money*, I am, of course, joking, but this is what Masaryk will call *non-political politics: Don't fight, find some organization, do something for the kids or do some volunteer work*. And in these terms Masaryk was really a theoretician of it, he is writing articles about it, we should really focus on education elevation of the society against the enemy. And I can name you ten more other politicians who were talking about the same thing.

I. Y. I would also see the humor as the major method of the nonviolence used naturally in the Czech cultural tradition?

M. K. This what Milan Kundera was saying that the small nations are reacting to the paradoxes and problems more with humor and irony and this is what he is writing about the *Tragedy of the Central Europe* – the small nation is small because they know they could be erased from the earth, which means that we know that something can happen to make it disappear, which takes naturally to take some distant position to the history as something ironic, because we know that something can be here and in some years can be gone. Which means that

the small nations have the tendency to parody and comedy, because how you react to the paradoxes of life – *we laugh*. Whereas the big nation have sort of more tragic sense and drama, because big nations are unimaginable to disappear and they think of themselves as a sense of mission to the world as they have always sort of big lords, big literature, culture, and ideas, so they think of more heroic and tragic sense. I am not really fan of this theory, because there is a great tradition of Russian humor, British humor and there is no way to prove it, but this is not important, the important is that here in Czech lands it reflected in Czech cultural memory, kind of *Hashekian*¹⁴ tradition of how the Czechs react to the big historical events is with humor, because we know that things are paradoxical. And *Svejk* is known by every Czech; not by heart, but everybody know quotations etc., and it is somehow integrated into the cultural memory, so the humor is considered to be part of the national consciousness or *psyche*. Again, I don't think as for the violence that Czechs are more humorous than other nations, but the whole reflection of the Czechs is the one with humor. And Czechs take themselves with this sense. Usually, usually, not always.

Interview with Milan Smid (C)

Personal profile

Milan Smid born in 1944 is a Czech media analytic, publisher, dramaturgist and Ph.D. from Charles University in Prague. Smid is an external lecturer in New York University and Charles University in Media studies in the Faculty of social sciences until 2014. Since two years he is retired. Milan Smid has plenty of publications; he has redactor and dramaturgist work in the *Czech National Television* and in the academic field in the Czech Republic. In the two most

¹⁴ The author of the book "*The good soldier Svejk*"

discussed events in the Czech modern history, he is having an active participation - during 1968, he is a one of the students on the square, and in 1989 - he is working in the *Czech National Television*. Smid is the father of the claimed to be the dead student from the first day of the revolution – Martin Smid. He gives perspectives to the study as an observer, academician and personally affected by the events. His and his son's detailed memoirs from the protests 1989 are archived and published in Czech language on the Internet.

Interview

I. Y. Tell me your story about 1989?

M. S. First of all, I would like to tell you that I was not a dissident. I was part of the structure. I have been working in Czechoslovak television. I was a member of the party. But it is true that my wife had some contact to the dissent. Because her father was a journalist in the year 1968 and famous, he died and she still had contact with the dissidents. We were typical Czech family (*laughing*) I was in the party, she was in the dissent, but our children were raised up very freely. Actually, I was loyal only in my job, but I didn't make any big career, I was in the foreign program department, I was not making any active journalism, we were just selecting parts for translation. I didn't give up to be a journalist, but I tried to find some place in the Czechoslovak television, so I became dramaturgist of documentaries, but I was loyal to the regime. But there was also not conflict, but the difference of interests, because I didn't believe that the dissent will be so powerful - I was still thinking that they are some small group of people. My hope was the reform that might come from Gorbachov. But I was totally disappointed when development jumped in another way.

I. Y. What is your point of view about the nonviolence in the revolution?

M. S. When speaking about the nonviolence, I would like to stress that this was because the government was weak and actually they were afraid, they were scared. There was still a possibility to have the same development like Romania when Ceausescu used the police to suppress the demonstration, but there was a governmental decision not to use the power, it was a political solution, power solution. They were in our case still party leaders thought that political solution will be better.

I. Y. That is why they negotiated?

M. S. Yes, yes, but I will tell you that everything happened in ten days from 17th to 27th. The strike with students and theater...people were beaten...then the dead student Martin Smid and it went on for three days when it came the report on Monday, on 20th, that on Wenceslaus square they are 100 thousand people. On next day - Tuesday the party members mobilized *the people's militia – lidove militia*, some not from Prague...and they came in the night, and there was the decision to use them or not. But the party leadership had no courage to use them, so all these people went home. And on Thursday 23rd, the media started to behave free. I made the study, how the atmosphere in the media changed and became more and more free. On Monday, 100 thousand people were on the square, but next day they came 100 thousand maybe even more, joined, and the sound was made by a rock band. On the next day on the plenary section of the party, there was some voice to defend communism and use the power.

I. Y. How were the people organized?

M. S. Somebody visited Vysochany – it was an industrial district, and there were some people saying – *Ok, if you like I will organize the people here and they will come from the factory.* Back then people were not satisfied; there was the whole atmosphere that nothing is happening. But there is something very specific for the Czechoslovakia, unlike Poland and Hungary; here the leadership was very scared because all of them were put in power by the Russian tanks in the year 1968. The party members - they knew if they started small reforms, they will be immediately dismissed because they were so closely connected with the invasion of 1968. So here it was very strong anti-communism. No reforms were wanted, because in Poland and Hungary the former communists became part of the new system, becoming new social democrats.

I. Y. What was the strongest weapon of this revolution?

M. S. This revolution was won by the general strike. Until then communists were thinking that they still didn't lose this game because they were thinking- *aha, students, theaters, and some culture people ask for a strike, but people will not strike.* And they still hoped that the people in the countryside, which are not interested in the politics, and for them is more important to have a job, maybe they are not free, but they have some security. So they were hoping that the people will not go on the strike and therefore the legitimacy of the dissidents will disappear. Because they were saying that they are speaking on the behalf of the Czech/Czechoslovak nation. Therefore, it was very important this strike to be successful- it was two hours strike for defending the demands of the *Civic Forum*. This strike should have supported several demands

of the *Civic Forum* were freedom of the press, free elections, change the opinion about 1968- the aggression. Through this demonstration, *Civic Forum* became a political power. There is no precise data about that, but it was evident that they were the majority participating, not everybody maybe 10-20% didn't come. But immediately after the *Civic Forum* negotiated very firstly the change in the constitution, where it was signed that the communist party is the leading force of the Czech society. And it is true that the army was on alarm already. There is one story that I know. The problem is that I don't have smoking gun evidence. When these demonstrations were broadcasted from *Letna*, there was official Czech reporting on the session of Prague communist party. And in 14 o'clock, the coverage was switched from the session to the *Letna* demonstrations. And television called to the transmitters and said: *yes we are making the transmission, but does it go to the transmitter is it really in the air?; But here there is one man, who have a phone and he is sitting and waiting for a call, if he gets it we will stop the broadcasting. Will you do it*, they ask the technician and he answers *What can I do, I have the job?* He was sitting there for two days, but no phone came. This story was part of the solution from the party's side. They didn't know what to do with the media. This story was before the general strike. Then what is more important were the demonstrations on *Letna* more than one million people, which were reported by the national television

I. Y. Was this change in the media behavior influenced by the people?

M. S. Yes, by the demonstrations. But everything was not organized, it was spontaneous, but the second *demo* was organized by the dissent. On *Vaclav square*, there were official speeches by Mr. Havel, who first time addressed the crowd.

I. Y. Is this your version that because the government was not violent, it created a gap for people to flourish the nonviolence?

M. S. The mass was spontaneous. And actually, the atmosphere of the society was excited more than one year ago. Already in 1988 there was the Memorial day for the establishing of Czechoslovakia, then in January another demonstration. Maybe it is in the nature of this nation. They are not taking the gun and going on barricade, they are writing petitions.

I. Y. Were you protesting in 1968?

M. S. Of, course. It was also not violent protests. Some people are exaggerating the shooting, but the Russian soldiers didn't shoot on the people, they shouted in the air. The most tragic event happened in front of the radio building, when the people set on fire a tank and it was full of munitions and the people were burning and started to die, it was the most bloody event form 1968, but it was full on the street and we were debating with the Russians. I remember people were not throwing cocktails *Molotov*, but they were taking a big piece of metal and starting to bang on the tank. They also organized their own television and radio broadcasting, the technician put the signal in the trolley, and it was not possible to find it.

I. Y. And the flowers to the police were given in 1989?

M. S. Yes, in 1989. The police after this Friday 17th didn't take any action on the people on *Vencislav square*. The people were very happy about it. Even in the first day they were trying

to keep the revolution on the right side of the river. Why? Because usually for us the revolution in Czechoslovakia - *we try to go to the castle!* The police didn't have any order to suppress the revolution. Even the commander of the police was listening to the reports and he said – *Ok, everything is lost.* In January, the demonstrations were suppressed by water cannons. But it never came to the shooting. People were listening to the *Radio Free Europe* and this radio was not disturbed by jamming, because of Gorbachov. It was stopped the jamming in December 1988.

I. Y. And you were in the Television during the days of the revolution?

M. S. I was at home.

I. Y. Why were you at home? Were you afraid?

M. S. I was afraid, that I was a part of some conspiracy, which is aimed to my family. I was afraid for my family.

I. Y. What happened when you heard "*the rumor*" about your son, was he home with you?

M. S. Yes, yes. In the beginning, I thought it was because of my wife. But nobody knows till now who came up with my sons name and why.

During that time in the television the technician of the made a meeting for 150 people, which was called *trade union meeting* and they put some resolution or petition, which was against the government and police actions and among their demands were that we as Czechoslovak television should inform people and we should make reporting of the Wenceslas square. The general director didn't take the demands. He said that only 150 people will not dictate what is reporting the television and talk about communication. I was in my room and another editor asked me that there is a meeting of the people from the TV and we should support them and immediately until afternoon there was a meeting in the place named "*garage*" thousands of people said that we will go on the strike. They started to compromise day by day. It started with three minutes from the square. In some days, the evening news became more objective.

I. Y. So media wasn't playing the main role to revolutionize the society? It was the other way around?

M. S. The print media was. After the rumor in the evening on 17th on the next day Peter Uhl immediately published it, even knowing that it was not true. It was interesting that somebody tried to stop the redistribution of the newspapers outside Prague. They were printing after everything what *Civic Forum* wanted. The students were gathering force, but Mr. Havel proved to be a good organizer. Mr. Dubcek was also there. My sons were striking; my wife was in *Svobodnoe slovo*, a very revolutionary newspaper that time. Then some very strange people approached Martin. So we decided to take him out of the city.

I. Y. Was it true that the students was meeting workers to persuade them to involve in the revolution?

M. S. Yes, they were doing it, but it was not successful everywhere. We have only one big city. Everyone else in the small cities was afraid for their jobs. And the regime was trying to isolate the other part of the country.

I. Y. How were the protest meetings happening?

M. S. During the demonstrations, everything was disciplined and everyone was making space for the cars and the people. The circumstances were also very important. There were no extremists no radicals here. Some people say that Czechs are cowards and they never fight. Something like demoralization of the society maybe, the best people were eliminated, destroyed. Now 1989 there were no elite to lead the people, and the gap was filled with the dissidents, but they were a small group. There was one student, who fainted on the square and they say that he was acting as the dead student. The student Ruzicka, there is several pieces of evidence that he was secret police informer. The students were with the idea that maybe somebody was killed and they visited the hospitals and visited all the people to see if they were fine. There was only one name that wasn't there - Ruzicka and they found his address and went there and found Mr. Zifcak, who was paid by the police. Why he returned to the student movement, because he was in touch with the students, we do not know, but when it was clear that the regime was going down, and then he disappeared.

I. Y. And what was the aim of the government having this information from inside?

M. S. Because it was said that the dissidents were making a revolution. And then the government, they said *No, no this revolution was organized by our party to remove the old and incompetent leadership...* There are plenty of conspiracy theories. Therefore I put every single thing and I asked my son to put also every single experience of the revolution on the internet. There are all my memories.

Interview with Miroslav Vanek and Pavel Mucke (D)

Personal profile

Professor Miroslav Vanek, born in 1961, is a Czech historian and ex-president of the *Institute of the Contemporary history Center for Oral history* in Prague. His scope of research is 1989, for which he contributed with plenty of books containing interviews with students like “*100 Studentchich revoluce*” and with the co-editor Urbasek, M. in 2005, the two books with interviews of the members of the party and the dissidents called “*Vítězové? Poražení? Politické elity a disent v období tzv. normalizace. Životopisná interview*”. Translated in English, Miroslav Vanek is having a chapter in the Oxford University handbook of Oral history named “*Those who prevailed and those, who were replaced*”, (2011). This year, 2016, Oxford University Press, translated and published the research of Vanek, M., and Mucke, P. “*Velvet revolution: An oral history of the Czech society*”, which is presented at the end of May 2016. Ph.D. Pavel Mucke is also an oral historian member and a central figure in the *Institute for contemporary history*. Both authors are giving this interview, firstly to set the light on the recently published book, connected directly with the topic and secondly, to give impressions about the methods of the revolution, due

to the fact that the author has been interviewing students and dissidents for the events in his whole career.

Interview

I. Y. Is there something in the oral stories that can be pointing about the methods of the revolution in the newly published book in English that you are presenting on 24th of May from the Oxford University Press *The Velvet revolution: an oral history of the Czech society*?

M. V. The book is with the main topic of the Velvet revolution, but it is presenting what happened before and what is now. We have different social groups - intelligence, firemen, waitresses and it is vertical describing, but then we decided after four years of the study to go horizontal and to understand how the human values were changed. It was not in the beginning of the project, but they were coming in the interviews – value of freedom, value of war

P. M. value of free time, education...

M. V. We observe there why the people prefer the one time politically then and now, why it all changed from the poll from 70's. Before it was the *nomenklatura* and the party membership and now is the rich people, who have a lot of money and other, who have still the same access, but now it is just different regime.

I.Y. Would you say that the Velvet revolution didn't change anything?

M. V. It changed a lot of things, but it changed them for the younger generation, we interviewed people who were born around 70's, who were living under communism and under capitalism, so we know the limits. So for this young person it may change everything, but for example freedom of speech - you can speak what you want, you can go to demonstration without beating, I can go, but nobody listens to me, so they go to the conclusion that the opportunities are not so good as they thought.

I. Y. Well, when you were talking with all of them, what were they saying about how everything was achieved? From where they got inspiration for the way to do the transition - were they having some kind of idea, let say for instance from Gandhi?

P. M. Mmm...I don't know...if they were immediately inspired by Gandhi, I think it was very spontaneous.

M. V. Maybe if we return to older books and maybe the one who planned the students strike in 1989, who started the revolution after the beating of the national street and the preparation for the march and the first week after, and the month later - there was, maybe this idea about the nonviolence activity and there was this symbol about the flower. It is student's who talked about the Gandhi; I think Monika Perova and that it has to be without the violence. They came to the other students, this Monika came to the Leipzig to talk with the German students and how they organize it. And they say *no violence can be, if we join official organization, the socialist organization*; and it came the idea that it will be a very peaceful march. Dissent was out of this, students asked them not to come on 17th of November not to be political.

Maybe this was the answer because they started beating, and after the beating of the student, the people saw that there is no difference between family and parents of the communists and noncommunist's, but the police were beating the sons and daughters of the communists as well. Then it started to be that idea that should be very peaceful. Like on the *Wenceslas square*, when it was full of people, Bishop Maly said: *One step up or forward*, when the fireman or emergency was going and everybody was doing it. And it was peaceful. In a revolution usually, they sometimes throw stones or whatever, but here it was very calm and organized. We have interviewed the participants and Bishop Maly, recorded all of them in the archive. They are all in Czech.

I. Y. I would like to have the time to examine all of them, but I have some limits in time and data interpretation. I would use James Krapfl and he is talking a lot about the new symbolic system and the even "*new religion*" that these people created. I wasn't there, but what was it like, was it true?

M. V. The dissident were talking about it, the situation grew up and I think, generally, just the Czech young generation came with different thinking about the changes. It wasn't aiming to repeat or reconstruct the socialism, they weren't talking anymore about *the socialism with the human face* like in 1968, but about totally new system, they wanted to be free. And among those people, they were not so aggressive groups of people that will want to do so in nonviolent way, because we wanted to be free.

I. Y. From where were generated these peaceful attitudes?

M.V. & P. M. Because we didn't fight anytime (*laughing*). Or it is something about liberate and not liberate, but it doesn't matter. But the strategy of Gandhi with the devotion to the truth will very fit these people because would go only without the violence.

I. Y. But he has only writings about the moral adaptation of the nonviolence.

M.V. Mainly with Vaclav Havel you can find it as well, it was a very important idea in the social and intellectual groups. But there were not a lot of activities before. 1948 it only marched to the *Prague castle*, 1968- the peaceful upraise, maybe they wanted some responsibilities for everybody.

I. Y. It is interesting how they kept the nonviolent attitude and were their methods very powerful to succeed?

M. V. Another thing which was interesting was the John Lennon's wall; John Lennon was the symbol of nonviolence. They were gathering around it and not only in Prague, but nowadays is a commercial thing. And there is another thing - unofficial, which was *Independent Peace movement*, which was totally against the war, nuclear weapons, called MMS in Czech.

I. Y. Were they part of the revolution?

M. V. They were young dissidents; they organized a lot of demonstrations before 1989. They wanted to protect the young man, who had to go to the army for two years. And the second

thing in their ideas was to live without weapons in the Czech Republic, in Central Europe in whole Europe, this nuclear energy, and environmental issues.

Interview with Padraic Kenney (E)

Personal profile

Professor Padraic Kenney is born in 1963 in the USA. Currently, he is a professor at Indiana University in the departments of history and international studies. Kenney's research interests are in Modern Eastern European history, communism and political and social history. Kenney is specializing in the events of 1989 particularly in Poland by publishing his valuable research "The carnival of Revolutions"(2002). Due to his many works and deep academic knowledge in the transitions in 1989, his short interview is very valuable for this research. Despite the many sources that are including his opinion and writings as his books, articles, and interviews, he is giving answers and opinion regarding the particular topic of this research, for which he didn't elaborate opinion before.

Interview

I. Y. In the book *A Carnival of revolutions* you state that the Czech society is requiring different tactics and the Czechoslovakia was isolated in the processes of resistance in 1989 (p.146, p.268). Before the events on 17th of November there was the preparation of groups of the society, but in the crucial protest days of the "revolution" was it planned the use of specific methods and tools in order the nonviolence to be efficient?

P. K. My sense is that the students in Prague were highly organized and self-aware. Did they think in terms of efficiency, though? I am not sure. That is, I don't think they foresaw the outcome of November 17. I do think that the students are really the only ones who matter in the crucial week or so before November 17. The senior opposition was not mobilized. I assume you have read Jiri Suk's book, by the way?¹⁵

I. Y. Were those tactics inspired by any ideology of the nonviolence or copied from somewhere with the awareness of the influence that they will have on the situation?

P. K. See my answer above. Yes, they were reading Gandhi, and probably polish authors like Michnik. But how much strategizing they did is less clear to me.

I. Y. Is it by your opinion valid that every society needs specific tactics to fight the regimes and there is no universal working tool for creating a nonviolent revolution?

P. K. Yes, exactly! There is no one model. It is true that certain aspects can travel across a region as happened in 1989. But what is really striking is the difference. In a 2004 article, I argued that style travels more easily than do specific repertoires. I attach that article in case you don't know it.

¹⁵ He is referring to *Labyrinth of revolutions*, which is published only in Czech language