

• EDITORIÁL – EDITORIAL •



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The second 2025 edition of SPS has a somewhat unusual format. It is divided into two sections. The first section comprises three English-language studies on various areas of political science, political theory, and the history of ideas, as well as parliamentary research and election research. The second section, which focuses on a single theme, is dedicated to Milan Šimečka, a Czech philosopher, columnist, and essayist who lived and worked in Slovakia from 1954 until he died in 1990. In March 2025, one of the most essential dissidents in the former Czechoslovakia would have celebrated his 95th birthday. This section also contains three articles. Finally, there is a traditional book review.

The studies section begins with a treatise on Machiavelli, one of the classics of political thought. He has long been studied by political scientists, sociologists, literary scholars, and philosophers. William Wood approaches Machiavelli's concept of politics from a philosophical perspective. His essay examines the relation between theory and practice in Machiavelli's works, *The Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy*, and the extent to which his presentation of theoretical questions is dependent on his practical goals and vice versa. The philosopher argues that Machiavelli assigns a certain primacy to the political, even as he intends for his best readers to transcend the political through their philosophical insight into the primacy of the political. For Wood, Machiavelli anticipates Heidegger's treatment of being-towards-death.

The following article explores the concepts of representative democracy and parliamentarism. Being an integral part of the organisation of federal states, the second chamber in unitary states is a matter of controversy. Magdalena Maksymiuk examines the legitimacy of second chambers in the parliaments of unitary states from a classical historical perspective. The political scientist views bicameralism as a theoretical construct with its roots in a democratic state system. After discussing arguments in favour and against bicameralism in unitary states, she concludes that in unitary states, the second chambers of parliament are justified both theoretically and practically. They are part of the constitutional tradition and philosophy of the separation of powers. At the same time, they would improve the quality of the legislative process, broaden social representation, and strengthen checks and balances.

The article concluding the Studies section is relatively unusual for the SPS. Unusual, not because of its subject matter, election analysis, but because of its geographical scope. The contribution, co-written by Wasiu Olaide Bello, Michael Peter Ogbemudia, Oluwasegun Samuel Ojo, and Anuoluwapo Deborah Babawale, provides an illuminating examination of the 2023 presidential elections in the West African state of Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state. To elect the president and vice president, the election was held on February 25. Issues during the election were, among others, corruption, electoral malpractice, and insecurity. The winner of the election was Bola Tinubu, nominee of the All Progressives Congress (APC). The authors attempted to examine the con-

duct and actions that shaped these elections, analysing the dynamics and controversies that influenced the landscape in which the elections were held. The article analyses voting patterns and controversies. Lastly, it also makes recommendations for upcoming elections to enhance the transparency and democracy of the election process.

The section dedicated to Milan Šimečka begins with an interview by Dirk Dalberg and Dagmar Kusá. For the daughter of Slovak philosopher Miroslav Kusý, a close friend of Šimečka, Šimečka was a long-term optimist during the dissident movement. After the Velvet Revolution of November 1989, however, he became somewhat more sceptical about the development of Czechoslovakia and Slovakia. The interview, which also includes Kusá's personal memories of Šimečka, initially focuses on Šimečka's self-image as a dissident. Kusá provides detailed insights into the functioning of dissident structures in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia. She also discusses the relationships between dissidents and explains why critical dissident texts often differ little in content. The interview also addresses Šimečka's views on Europe, Czechoslovakia, and Slovakia. In this context, current issues are discussed. For Šimečka, Slovakia was a natural part of Czechoslovakia and Europe. Šimečka's views on liberal democracy (in Slovakia) are also sketched. For him, this was not an ideal model, but one that works relatively well. As Western countries would show, it ensures freedom and prosperity ... Finally, Dalberg and Kusá briefly discuss the political views and convictions of Šimečka's son (Martin) Milan, one of the most controversial contemporary Slovak intellectuals, as well as his grandson Michal, the chairman of the (left-wing) liberal party Progressive Slovakia (Progresívne Slovensko).

The following article is classified under the heading "Personal Profiles and Biographies". The subject of historian and archivist Josef Halla's article is Šimečka's writing oeuvre. However, the focus is not so much on the content of the essays and books listed here. Halla's article also goes beyond a mere bibliography, as the author places Šimečka's texts in the historical context in which they were written. He also refers to events that influenced Šimečka's life and inspired him to write his texts. Both critical and positive reactions to his writings are also mentioned. The biographical-bibliographical presentation focuses on the period from 1950 to 1977/78, when Šimečka's most important book, *The Restoration of Order* (*Obnovení pořádku*), was published. In the last sections of his article, Halla expresses criticism of the Slovakian reissues of Šimečka's texts. He does not criticize the reissues themselves, which he welcomes, but rather their sometimes-inadequate editorial implementation. Halla's text also offers a concise overview of the current state of research on Milan Šimečka's political and other thinking.

The section on Šimečka concludes with a review that leads into a discussion. Historian Martin Mocko reviews and discusses the Šimečka biography "Súdruh disident. Milan Šimečka v komikse" [Comrade Dissident. Milan Šimečka in Comics], presented by Michal Hvorecký, Matúš Vizár, and Adrián Hnát in a relatively unusual form, namely as a comic book. This traces Šimečka's life up to his release from prison in May 1982. In his review, Mocko considers not only the portrayal of Šimečka but also that of his wife and sons, as well as the issue of state security services, among others. In other words, he discusses the book in terms of certain themes that are addressed within the book itself. The review is distinguished by its specific title, which refers to Orwell's 1984, which had a significant influence on Šimečka's political thinking in the 1970s and 1980s. Mocko devotes considerable space to this. Although he views the comic very positively, he criticises it for lacking a clearly expressed punch line: "What exactly is Šimečka's legacy, how do we deal with it, and how do we argue about it today?" The authors could have attempted to summarise and formulate the positive values for which Šimečka endured all of this. Therefore, Mocko,

in the second part of his review, attempts to remedy the shortcomings, seeking and finding answers himself. To support his thoroughly challenging theses, Mocko also draws on archival material.

The issue is rounded off by a book review written in Czech by Josef Smolík. He reviews the Czech translation of Daniel P. Bagge's 2019 book *Unmasking Maskirovka: Russia's Cyber Influence Operations*, published by Prague-based publishing house Academia