

SKŘIVAN ml., Aleš, *Československý vývoz do Číny v letech 1918-1992* [Czechoslovak Export to China in 1918-1992], Praha 2009, 488p.

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Reviewed book on the Czechoslovak export to China since 1918 up to 1992 is a unique attempt covering some less known facts and details about not only economic contacts between Central Europe and People's Republic of China. Although the Czech lands have never been a major economic partner to China, the author examines and explores shores of mutual relations as discovered by his long-lasting archival research conducted mainly in the Czech, British and Chinese archives.

China has traditionally been a target of certain mysteries and misunderstandings originating in the lack of knowledge about the country which soon on the second half of the 20th century became the biggest exponent of the leftist ideology. Contribution of Aleš Skřivan's book lies not only in detailed delineation of mutual Czechoslovak-Chinese economic relations but specifically in its orientation in economic processes which led China from the Imperial to Maoist era.

The book is logically divided into two parts. The first is dedicated to the period from 1918 to 1939, which basically covers the democratic era from the foundation of an independent Czechoslovakia until the World War II. The second part examines deeper and ideologically influenced relations from the end of the World War II until the separation of former Czechoslovakia in 1992. For the most of the time, both countries belonged to the same ideological Bloc although Chinese international ambitions were largely incompatible with those of the former USSR and its allies, including Czechoslovakia. This ideological shift had its origin in the 1950s and there are many different interpretations of these events but generally it can be said that Maoist China was dissatisfied with its marginalized role in a bipolar world. Mao's strategy was to differentiate between Soviet and Chinese way of Socialism. Ideological as well as political and economic disputes between China and Soviet Union

led Beijing in the 1960s to broader cooperation with non-Communist countries and had an impact on international trade with the Soviet allies.

The crucial period for mutual economic, political and cultural relations of Czechoslovakia and China came after the proclamation of People's Republic of China in 1949. Soon after, both countries were tied by close ideology and so far almost unknown Czechoslovakia became more frequented term among Chinese Communists. This cooperation was reflected also in scientific sphere although in most cases these relations were rather one-sided as influenced by rather rural and technically less developed character of China and relatively sufficient industrial nature of Czechoslovakia. Soviet-Chinese disputes led after 1960 to a continual decrease of Czechoslovak export to China.

Gradual increase of Chinese international trade relations came after 1978 when reformists gained control over the state which found itself in an economic catastrophe caused by false economic decisions and Cultural Revolution proclaimed by Mao and his followers. Nevertheless, as the author shows in his work, relations between Czechoslovakia and China were still filled by mutual disbelief which was best manifested in energy industry. Nuclear power was in the era of Cold War a very sensitive issue for both sides of the frontier and China as a vanguard regime in the Socialist world was seen by Eastern Bloc as a potential threat to their interests. It was only in 1982 when both sides established new relationship based on stability and longevity of mutual interests. Although it did not bring radical change to an image of China in former Czechoslovakia, economic relations began to increase. At the end of the 1980s Czechoslovak Communists realized a potential of China to become a global power, which, seen from current perspective, was a correct idea.

After the fall of the Communist regime in former Czechoslovakia, relations with China changed at least in its ideological perspective as former President Vaclav Havel became one of the most important critics of Chinese human rights policy. Moreover, Czechoslovakia was confronted with post-Socialist reality where the quality of goods substituted formerly preferred ideology.

Aleš Skřivan's research on mutual Czechoslovak-Chinese relations in 1918–1992 can be recommended to a broader public including academics, students, those interested in history, but also specialists in economic relations, economic development and economic strategies of both Czechoslovakia and People's Republic of China. The book contains more than forty tables, graphs and other appendices which make it a publication of high quality.

FRÉMAUX, Jacques, *De quoi fut fait l'empire: Les guerres coloniales au XIXe siècle*, Paris: CNRS Éditions 2010, 576 pp.

JAROSLAV VALKOUN

Jacques Frémaux, professeur à l'Université Sorbonne - Paris IV, se range sans aucun doute parmi les importants historiens français qui se spécialisent en histoire contemporaine et en histoire coloniale. Son ouvrage *De quoi fut fait l'empire: Les guerres coloniales au XIXe siècle* en est une preuve marquante. Parmi ses autres publications, il faut aussi rappeler ses monographies très bien reçues «*La France et l'Algérie en guerre, 1830-1870, 1954-1962*» (Paris 2002) et «*Intervention et Humanisme: le style des armées françaises en Afrique au XIXe siècle*» (Paris 2005). Malgré son air un peu militairement stricte, l'ouvrage de Frémaux ne se range pas du tout parmi les publications adorant sans limites les campagnes des grandes puissances au sein de l'Afrique, Asie et Amérique au cours du XIXe siècle. En effet, l'auteur ne faillit pas à mettre en valeur les aspects culturels, sociaux, internes, scientifiques et aussi partiellement économiques de l'expansion territoriale européennes et américaines dans les coins oubliés des continents.

Le livre est organisé en cinq parties principales bien délimitées, dont chacune comporte de plusieurs chapitres. La première partie est vouée aux origines des conflits coloniaux. Tout naturellement, l'auteur en voit la cause principale dans les spécificités économiques, politiques et culturelles, qui ont tout d'abord suscité des querelles et puis des guerres. L'auteur considère la colonisation européenne en outre-mer comme une raison importante de la collision entre les «blanc» et les «peuples de couleur». Même si la position de l'histoire coloniale est devenue privilégiée, voire parfois subjectivée, dans le cadre de l'histoire de France ainsi que dans la conscience nationale française, Frémaux prend des efforts pour refléter la colonisation européenne d'une manière objective. Il essaie de percevoir les conquérants (symbolisés d'un côté par leur supériorité économique, politique et culturelle, et de l'autre côté par la diffusion du savoir et du progrès