



REKLUB 1927-1949. Chapters from the History of Czechoslovak Advertising

PAVLŮ, D.: *REKLUB 1927-1949. Kapitoly z dějin československé reklamy.*
Prague: Professional Publishing, Ltd., 2017. 284 p. ISBN 978-80-88260-00-4.

Hana Pravdová

A new publication is entering the book market, dealing with an unconventional topic presented by a highly qualified and renowned author, Professor Dušan Pavlů. The author is a knowledgeable, well-educated, understanding and contemplative scientific expert with an impressive record of valuable publications and studies. His recent monograph entitled REKLUB 1927-1949. The role of the Advertising Club in Czechoslovak Advertising History proves that these praises attributed to Dušan Pavlů are not mere pleasantries or clichés. They are based on a detailed evaluation of the quality of said monograph. This statement also stems from the knowledge of the author's fruitful research and publication activities focused on marketing communication, especially advertising. Professor Pavlů's greatest assets are his professional qualifications and academic background in the area of journalism and media communication, and also his vast practical experience in marketing and communication. His most recent monograph also proves another fact: thanks to the interdisciplinary focus of the author's research activities, he has a better understanding of many processes involved in marketing and communication practice in the context of social, political, economic and cultural phenomena.

It is necessary to emphasise that the author did not build his monograph on 'a greenfield site'; the publication had been preceded by extensive and thorough preparation, as well as by a series of lectures at various international scientific conferences, several articles published in renowned international journals and various discussion forums. It is also essential to note that Professor Pavlů's monograph does not only pretend to be a monograph; it truly is a monograph, unlike many compilations published in the area of marketing communication. It represents a deep analysis of selected issues, rather than a descriptive constellation and statement of facts gathered from other publications of a similar nature, which have been produced in large numbers over the last two decades in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Professor Pavlů's monograph is a clear and excellent example of the application of analytical methods enabling him to combine the results of applied historiographical method with the current status and urgent challenges of today's marketing communication. In this context, one must praise the author's meticulous research in the field, i.e. in institutions where he found historically valuable and crucial data, as well as many clarifying details. The author himself states that he gathered key data for over three years by visiting several archives all over the Czech Republic, by studying dozens of books in the Czech National Library, journals in the National Museum's library, the Czech National Archive, the Prague Archives, and by leading a targeted research of correspondence maintained by Reklub members with their partners and family members (p. 7-8).

One must agree with the author when he says that the Czech and Slovak environment lacks a monograph that would map the establishment, development and end of the most important advertising institution of the First Republic, which the Czechoslovak Advertising Club undoubtedly was. The author states that he was inspired to choose this particular topic following meetings with outstanding personalities of Czech and Slovak advertising history, such as Bohuš Häckl, Josef Poláček, Jiří Solar, Juraj Prachár, etc. (p. 3). It is undoubtedly true that the selected topic is a specific part of the common history of Czechs and Slovaks which has never been processed before. According to the author, 2017 was a suitable year for the publication of the monograph, as it marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the most prestigious professional institution of the Czech advertising industry (founded in 1927). The author divided the monograph into eight chapters with the aim of

providing a complex record and assessment of the selected period. Chapters are based on very solid foundations of historical perspective and factual descriptions. The first chapter includes the establishment, development and end of the given club's activities. In the following seven chapters, an understanding of terminology and assessments of authors and advertising professionals of that period are reflected and analysed.

It is very valuable to see the author's retrospective view on social, economic, cultural, educational, production, business, media, and other aspects and contexts of the establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic and the conditions for the establishment and development of the Czechoslovak Advertising Club. From the sociological and cultural viewpoint, the author also identifies other determining factors for the creation of advertising – the impact of all industrial revolutions. The author believes that it is necessary to deal with the topic; he claims that (due to) "the impact of technology and information technologies, everything has changed: not just the production of material goods and the way in which services are provided, but also the forms of managing one's household, heating, cooking, food storage and shopping, free time activities, and means of communicating with the social environment" (p. 14). Analyses of the conditions, establishment and presence of the association and establishment of Reklub are presented to the reader in a very clear, logical and exhaustive manner with a variety of interesting facts and historical links. The author assesses individual stages of the club's activities with deep understanding, reflecting the general circumstances, and provides detailed information on key personalities who played an essential role in Reklub's activities.

The reader also discovers more knowledge about problems which have always been and always will be linked to the creation of new professional discourse. These problems are related to a non-unified terminological platform, terminological ambivalence and chaos in professional terms. The author presents these aspects in a highly qualified manner in order to enable the reader to understand them. He also allows the reader to understand the reasons for the creation of certain key terms, providing context and interpretation variants. The author accurately assesses the period full of terminological ambivalence by using glossarist language. He describes the period of terminological chaos as "a Babylon of the First Republic" (p. 148). By logically following on the analysis of the period of terminological ambivalence, he also discusses the issues of advertising, culture and cultural institutions. As one of the few authors – not only in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but on a global scale –, he identifies the crucial role of culture in advertising and the impact of advertising on the cultural environment. He stresses that culture is a multi-layered term, which is something one can definitely agree with. From this ideological standpoint, he accurately defines and analyses the relationship between advertising and human creation, social and cultural regulations, and the ideas and institutions forming human behaviour. In the context of defining the relations between culture and advertising, he aptly describes the power of symbols presented by advertising: "After all, all citizens living in economically advanced countries clearly perceive it, as well as citizens living in countries with poorer economic results: because what they admire in countries with higher living standards are symbols of consumption materialised in advertising, as it is the only available information source mediating the unattainable world of consumption to those who cannot travel freely" (p. 177-178).

From the information and analytical perspective, one must also praise the parts dealing with Reklub's activities in the pre-war Czechoslovakia, the issue of measuring advertising efficiency in the first half of the 20th century and Reklub's efforts to create an objective system for checking data for advertisers on the total print run of the periodical press, sales and number of unsold copies. It is extremely valuable that the author analyses period approaches to advertising theory and the practices used to achieve advertising efficiency. He points out the fact that efforts made to achieve efficiency at that time – by combining individual advertising channels – can be described as a forerunner of the concept of integrated marketing communication.

In conclusion, it can be noted that there are only few professional publications dealing with the analysis of advertising – promotion – marketing communication in the first half of the 20th century to a sufficient extent and with thorough knowledge of original resources. Based on a comprehensive study of the manuscript of the monograph entitled REKLUB 1927-1949. The Role of the Czechoslovak Advertising Club in the History of Czech Advertising, it can be said that this lack has been minimised following the monograph's publication last year. Although it is not the primary aim of the publication, it is certainly informative for Generations Y and Z,

as many representatives of these generations naively or unknowingly believe that marketing communication and advertising emerged only after 1989. Notwithstanding this educational aspect, it is indisputable that the monograph presents exceptionally valuable findings. It uncovers and deeply analyses the history of Reklub between 1927 and 1949 and provides remarkable discoveries as well as inspiring and interesting facts with the potential to enrich and expand the knowledge base of the professional public.

Prof. PhDr. Hana Pravdová, PhD., Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Nám. J. Herdu 2, 917 01 Trnava, Slovak Republic



Dictionary of Selected Terms of Media Studies

PRAVDOVÁ, H., RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J. (eds.): Slovník vybraných pojmov z mediálnych štúdií: Kľúčové termíny v súčasnej mediálnej komunikácii. Trnava: Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2016. 250 p. ISBN 978-80-8105-874-5.

Ľuboš Greguš

The reviewed publication provides a much needed overview of the most important terms and major concepts used in today's media studies and journalism. A team of authors consisting of 15 scholars was involved in creation of the dictionary; together they co-authored and processed 75 terms on 250 numbered pages. The terms reflect the most recent, socially and academically discussed, and at the same time, in many cases, very up-to-date body of knowledge related to the aforementioned fields of study, and that, as the editors of the publication add, "at a time when we have been witnessing radical technical, technological, economic and socio-cultural changes in social reality ..." (p. 5). The selection and the number of entries are a bit unusual, at least when we take into account routine processing of dictionaries. However, as the authors of the publication point out, the intentionally selected terms are related to the research project supported by the Scientific Research Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic and Slovak Academy of Sciences (VEGA) No. 1/0611/16 called *Multiplatform Concepts of Journalism in the Context of the Development of Digital Technologies in the Media Environment of the Slovak Republic*. The currently reviewed publication is one of the key scientific results of the given project. The team of authors managed to create an excellent review dictionary not only for media scholars and academics, but also for students of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral study programmes in several fields related to media communication, journalism and marketing communication, and for media professionals as well.

When opened, the publication has a distinctive visual of a dictionary. The text is wrapped in two columns per page and each entry begins in a separate column. The structure of individual texts includes several parts. In the beginning, a reader is familiarised with the terminological definition of the entry in both Slovak and English. A brief introduction of the term follows, along with its most basic definition, respectively a characteristic of its most important and frequent uses and understandings. Following parts of the text offer further specifications of the term as such. While 'older' (or rather well established) terms are mostly introduced by their historical genesis, with varying insights into the understanding of the term from its origin to the present, the 'newer' terms are clearly justified by the need for seeking innovative concepts that reflect on a given area of objective reality. Thanks to this, the reader gets a very accurate and requisite picture of the particular problematics chosen from the entries. In addition to referring to Slovak scholars and their opinions, the authors of the individual entries also offer references to studies and views of various foreign researchers and scientists.

For many entries, it was the only option, since any relevant research or definitions had been absent in the Slovak academic community so far. Therefore, we evaluate the selection of particular entries in the dictionary even more positively. In addition to the basic features and definitions of various authors, the texts also focus on the need to specify the particular terms, theoretically and practically alike; they aim to show how it is possible to implement theoretical knowledge on the terms into everyday or professional life. At the end of each entry, initials of the author are stated; references to other texts in the publication are always more or less closely related to the given term.

Each entry is followed by a list of used and supplementary literature. We must emphasise that the number of bibliographic references is 558 in total, of which 420 refer to books or academic journals and the other 138 to various digital sources of information. As this publication, as claimed by its authors, is also intended for the young generation, especially for students, we very much appreciate the amount of references to easily accessible electronic sources. As the reader can find in the book itself, young people are seen as the so-called digital natives (p. 53-55), who have almost unlimited and instant access to the Internet. Therefore, if the readers preferring digital information sources are interested in looking up the individual terms (apart from some exceptions), they can find additional information almost immediately after reading the dictionary, which may be much more attractive to them than spending long hours of their time in the library.

The majority of the texts do not exceed 2 pages (or 4 columns). The shortest processed entry is a little bit longer than two columns (see Media Literacy, Media Competences – p. 123-124), but this does not reduce the excellent quality of the text in any way. However, there are also several entries that have a slightly larger scope, and thus a thorough 'self-presentation' in the dictionary. We must, of course, point out that this is not detrimental to the entry, because the reader gets deeper into the issue. On the other hand, the question is whether it is right to go into such an in-depth overview of (mostly) historical genesis of the term, or whether it is better to stay more 'on the ground', refer to the related terms in the publication and let the individual readers get as deep as they want. After all, the supplementary literature is included at the end of each entry.

From a linguistic point of view, the publication is written at a very high level. Of course, apart from many Anglicisms; however, without using them it would not be possible to fulfil the specific objectives of the reviewed dictionary. Several terms do not have their full equivalents in Slovak yet; many of them even have not been assimilated. Therefore, we cannot regard the use of Anglicisms as a degrading element of the text. The authors use them to a minimum and only in situations where a different term would be inappropriate, inaccurate or confusing.

Given the structure of individual entries, it is possible to 'feel' a multi-member team of authors with different levels of scientific, pedagogical and publishing experience. That is why the concept of word processing differs to a great extent and 'handwriting' of a particular author is always clearly distinguishable. Of course, from the scientific point of view, there is nothing wrong with this, it is even considered desirable. The question is how the inconsistent style can affect the future reader who may not know the issue sufficiently. Most of the terms are presented in a very clear way; the reader does not have to return to the text several times and the 'essence' is captured right from the beginning (e.g. the terms Electronic Media, Internet Journalism, Cyberspace). On the other hand, some entries are processed in a less comprehensible fashion and thus they need to be read very carefully. Sometimes it is also necessary to return to the previous paragraphs in order to obtain a correct understanding of the presented statements and an appropriate context. For example, we might mention terms like Data Warehouse and Platform. On the other hand, we also need to point out that many of the processed terms of this kind do not have exact, specific definitions yet; they are new in the given field of expertise and have not been sufficiently researched yet, which also complicates their processing in a comprehensive form. Nonetheless, the team of authors managed to present individual terms in broader contexts as well as within an interdisciplinary view of a particular issue – since media studies are, in their nature, interdisciplinary, it was definitely the right thing to do.

Mgr. Ľuboš Greguš, Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Nám. J. Herdu 2, 917 01 Trnava, Slovak Republic

Jozef Matúš
(1940 – 2017)

Jana Galera Matúšová

It was an ordinary morning. Just the normal time Ing. Jozef Matúš, CSc. got up seven a.m., to attend to his work green tea. There were notes re-
 ruled early in the morning, in-
 them in the previous evening,
 on TV. However, that particu-
 be quite different, unlike any
 And the next Wednesday to
 November 2017, brought even
 one. In the evening hours, Jozef
 storm was raging outside, as
 world; after all, he had so much

Now abandoned and pose, the suitcase containing still in his apartment. There which had fallen out of his humoured joke about blondes.

had always been his trademark. He would often say that there was no better way to wake sleepy students in the morning than telling them a joke about blondes. For him, it had always worked.

However, his sense of humour and hard-working nature are just two positive aspects of his rich personality; we may mention many more. Jozef Matúš's academic work merged deep theoretical knowledge and long-term, extensive practical experience. Combining theory and practice meant a lot to him – after all, he kept saying that all academic institutions should have followed this trend instead of neglecting it.

Jozef Matúš's professional career began in the field of municipal services in the city of Trnava. After a few years, he became a manager. In the years to follow, he was the Vice-Chairman of the Local National Committee in Trnava; then he worked as an independent research fellow at the Research Institute of Regional Planning in Bratislava. A bit later, he returned back to the District National Committee to gain further professional experience in various positions and specialisations related to planning.

A few years after that, a new and exciting career opportunity emerged – he entered academic circles associated with the (then newly established) University of SS. Cyril and Methodius (UCM) in Trnava, specifically with its Faculty of Mass Media Communication. As Jozef Matúš had been affiliated with the Faculty of Mass Media Communication from its very beginnings, he contributed to building the faculty's scientific profile and specifying various study subjects related to marketing communication – e.g. General Economic Theory, Marketing and Theory and Practice of Marketing Research (Bachelor's studies), or Public Finances and Tax System (Master's studies). Besides guaranteeing these subjects in accordance with Slovak academic legislation, he also gave lectures in the given areas of interest.



Wednesday, five o'clock in the of the day when Assoc. Prof. to be in his office for exactly at duties while holding a cup of lated to his first lecture, sched-side his suitcase; he had written while watching a football match lar Wednesday happened to other Wednesday before... follow, Wednesday the 29th of worse news than the previous Matúš passed away. A snow if he did not want to leave this unfinished work to do.

deprived of its long-term pur-
 notes on his last lecture was
 was a small sheet of paper
 notebook. It contained a good-

His well-intentioned humour

Relying on his professional experience of the Head of the Department of Marketing Communication and one of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication's Vice-Deans, in 2004, the academic community put a lot of trust and high hopes in Jozef Matúš; he became the Dean of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication. In 2010, he decided that there was one more milestone for him to reach – to become the Rector of UCM. And he did. Even though his position was not only socially and academically significant, but also time-consuming and mentally demanding, he still cared about students and their needs more than about anything else. He did not sit in his office on the first floor behind a few closed doors, on the contrary – for students, his door was always open. Although it was difficult to fulfil all his responsibilities, he still gave lectures, supervised numerous graduation theses and so on.

Assoc. Prof. Jozef Matúš's rich academic accomplishments were also underlined by two renowned scientific awards – the honourable degree of Doctor Honoris Causa awarded by UCM in Trnava and the Medal of Trnava Self-governing Region for the development of university education in the Trnava Region. He was a long-time member of the Slovak Marketing Society, the Slovak Association of Regional Science, the Cultural Committee of the Trnava Self-governing Region, the Editorial Board of the scientific journal *Finance and Management Review* (published by Banking Institute, Inc. in Praha and Brno) and the Editorial Board of conference proceedings titled *Marketing of Educational Institutions*. He was a member of the Habilitation Committee at the Faculty of Materials Science and Technology in Trnava (MTF STU), the Chairman of the Scientific Committee of UCM in Trnava, a member of the Scientific Committee of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM and the Scientific Committee of Trnava University. He also used to work as a member of the State Exams Committee of FMK UCM at all levels and degrees of university education (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral studies). He actively contributed to organising various international scientific conferences, e.g. *New Trends in Marketing*, *Marketing Identity*, *Megatrends and Media*, *Building Positive Image of Educational Institutions*, *Regional Marketing*, *Quo Vadis Mass Media*, *Quo Vadis Marketing* and many more. He was the author or co-author of several monographs and scholarly publications on marketing; his most important publications are *Selected Problems of Today's Marketing* (published as *Vybrané problémy súčasného marketingu*, 2007), *Influence of External and Internal Communication on the Development of an Enterprise* (published as *Vplyv externej a internej komunikácie na rozvoj podniku*, 2008), *Modern Marketing* (published as *Moderný marketing*, 2012) or *Marketing – Basics and Tools* (published as *Marketing – základy a nástroje*, 2008).

As he said in one of his official speeches, he was proud of the previous years of UCM's existence. While celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of UCM, side by side with the academic community and his colleagues working at other universities, he said: *"We may say that the University manages to maintain its undeniable quality. The best way to measure this quality is to look at our successful graduates who work home and abroad alike. This is one of the ways of fortifying our authority in the scientific world and in our society as a whole. Our graduates should work hard to unveil and respect the real values, not only in their media-related professions, but also in their everyday lives. The values based on knowledge and the humanist tradition and morale. All of us feel, and we talk about it a lot, loudly, that it is necessary to improve the moral climate in the society. And although we all talk about ourselves first while summarising UCM's academic accomplishments, every faculty's success is UCM's success as well."*

The given speech once again reflected Jozef Matúš's characteristic traits, especially his sense of humanity: *"Let us remind ourselves that in the scientific and pedagogical environment, people – students and their lecturers – have to work on good results together; these good results lead to professionally capable graduates, mature and well-educated personalities who will have no trouble to succeed in all aspects of life. However, this is only achievable if students and their lecturers become real partners. As of our young colleagues, postgraduates, we have to focus on their education and training to strengthen our own research teams. On the other hand, this does not stop us from admiring senior lecturers and researchers who invest all their energy in the professional and pedagogical development of our students by participating in quality research projects, giving lectures on difficult subjects and sharing their knowledge with postgraduates who work under their supervision."*

However, even though each one of his official or celebratory speeches naturally focused on his colleagues, students and UCM he was so proud of, Jozef Matúš, our late Rector, never forgot to thank his family and friends. We would like to mention one particular statement demonstrating his humility and love for his family: *“Even though one has to encounter many problems during his life, I have always strived to move forward, both professionally and personally. I truly respect my parents and their kind upbringing and support in all phases of my life. One big ‘THANK YOU’ also belongs to my wife Jana, for being so supportive, patient and full of love. I am grateful for her, for the fact that she has always stood by my side to allow me to concentrate on my profession. I would also like to thank my children who are my huge joy and inspiration. I should thank them for my grandchildren as well, we are very proud of them. I truly respect all people I have been honoured to meet and work with...”*

As we have mentioned already, Jozef Matúš was very proud of UCM’s progressive development and numerous scientific successes. The following statement on the occasion of celebrating UCM’s twentieth anniversary certainly outlines his opinions on the matter: *“Twenty years is not a very long time, but we, people who have been affiliated with it throughout its voyage across the academic life, may conclude that UCM has been able to use this time fully and thoroughly,”* he said. Sadly, hardly a month after giving this speech, Jozef Matúš’s unexpected, and sudden death untimely ended his second four-year term in office...

The 29th of November 2017 might have shocked and saddened all Jozef Matúš’s close relatives, friends, colleagues and students, but the sad Wednesday did not take his work and legacy away from us. He left us here with warm memories and many highly skilled graduates and young lecturers he had lectured once. All of them will walk in his footsteps to make UCM a better place to work and study: *“There is only one language in the world all of us understand. It is the language of excitement, of things done with love and passion, with the timeless desire to fulfil everything we dream of or promote all ideas we believe in. Our excitement about the things we do does not fade away. On the contrary, strengthened by all achievements we have accomplished so far, we want to seek new ways, methods and solutions to improve our own existence. We want to offer our students and employees a stimulating environment suitable for their personal development and academic activities, and positive social and cultural experience as well. It is like our town and its cultural environment has been made for fulfilling these needs. I would like to finish my speech by thanking all people who have contributed to UCM’s life and functioning in any possible way, and I wish UCM and its further existence a lot of enthusiasm, success and good people, because, as the saying goes, nothing big has ever happened without initial excitement; people are behind everything.”*

Roman Berger

*1930

Ladislav Volko

*“A new type of school should educate a moral man. Therefore, it should lead to creativity. (...) Only then will the school and the pupil understand the context of culture. The area of cultural struggles. The fight against the ideology of consumption. Against barbarism and stupidity. The endless accumulation of things is the consequence of our loss of the perspective of Infinity. The struggle for culture sensu stricto is a fight for Transcendence. Without Transcendence, an egocentric man shrinks into a ‘black hole’ – he becomes blind and deaf to ‘SOS calls’ coming from the surrounding world. Love – Agapé – is the foundation of culture. And love, it is our deeds and actions ...,”*¹ Roman Berger wrote on the cover of his book *The Road with Music*. It is not a common phenomenon to see a composer that, in addition to creating music, has also devoted his life to theoretical or essayistic activities. Roman Berger manages to carry out both activities – composing and writing – at an extraordinarily inspiring level.

His reflections, meditations, essays, “scribes” as he sometimes calls them, converge in one point. *“The point is the awareness of the spiritual nature of the world, the deep, inexpressible mystery, the supreme precondition of everything. (...) As one of very few artists, he does not only point to contradictions, but also looks for a way to the future.”*² He always confronts his thoughts with a wide range of opinions and reflections of other scientists, thinkers and writers, embracing several scholarly disciplines including social sciences and exact sciences. Berger’s persistent search for truth, his self-reflections, but also his attempts to achieve holistic understanding of man (and his activities, culture and art) point to the dialectical interconnection between parts of the unforgivable system.

Much like the boy in Andersen’s fairy-tale screams “The King is naked”, Roman Berger tirelessly opens the Pandora’s Box of uselessness, slander, misrecognition. As we have written above, Berger measures reality through Transcendence; nevertheless, he clearly recognises the definitions of our “liquid modernity”.³ Aware of the general theory of systems, he knows that “barriers” are an integral part of the system (of any system, actually). When “the barriers of democracy” are threatened, democracy is at risk as well. *“When everyone can celebrate the way he wants to, then it is no longer freedom, but unrestraint, self-interest, a pseudopostmodernistic ‘anything goes’,”* he wrote in his essay *Aleluja!*⁴ And all this is happening in front of our own eyes and with our active contribution or silent consent, expressed by the fact that we do not do anything to stop it; we do not even use those means of resistance inside the system that have lovingly been left for us to use.

The later we realise this, the worse it will be for us. *“We are exposed to mad sociotechnics and we are subject to imposed values and attitudes. (...) Man is the easiest to manipulate when his basic needs are fulfilled, when he feels at least a minimum amount of comfort. (...) Today, the Power is trying to persuade man – and successfully! – that he is just a consumer. However, a consuming creature is just an animal. It is a degradation of the whole mankind. Man is a potential spiritual being. So we are dealing with an ontological fraud. And the role of media in this process is crucial. (...) The media are disseminating the deepest, most brutal materialism.*

1 ZAGAR, P.: Roman Berger. In JURÍK, M., ZAGAR, P. (eds.): *100 slovenských skladateľov*. Bratislava : Národné hudobné centrum, 1998, p. 45-46.

2 See: BERGER, R.: *Cesta s hudbou. Od Palacha po Obamu – a po Štefánika. Výber textov z rokov 1969 – 2009*. Bratislava : Hudobné centrum, 2012.

3 See: BAUMAN, Z.: *Tekutá modernita*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 2002.

4 BERGER, R.: *Aleluja!* Released on the 31st March of 2016. [online]. [2018-02-10]. Available at: <<https://zurnal.pravda.sk/esej/clanok/388397-aleluja/>>.

(...) Today's materialism is so concealed that it is almost impossible for a layman – who has neither the time nor the desire to reflect on it – to be able to understand this destructive process. Moreover, the crisis of culture is also related to the fact that one loses the ability to reflect on anything.⁵

Based on our knowledge, total scepticism? Is art only goods? Always, at any moment and at any cost? Are we overly materialised to our very core? Is there truly no return to the search for spiritual euphoria, silence and concentration? *"I see a source of hope in the fact that many young people establish various communities which are explicitly oriented to Good,"* says Roman Berger. Our only chance is in returning simple terms their primary, simple meanings. In identifying iniquity and degradation, in unveiling and convicting fools, in simply not accepting the game that simulates an endless amusement park. In thinking and considering, in not being subject to beautiful sirens of consumption, not being manipulated even when thinking sometimes hurts. In being able to overcome ourselves...

5 ČORNÁ, T.: *Skladateľ Roman Berger: Umenie spochybňuje údajnú všemohúcnosť svetskej moci*. Released on the 3rd of November 2007. [online]. [2018-02-10]. Available at: <<https://www.sme.sk/c/3567448/skladatel-roman-berger-umenie-spochybnuje-udajnu-vsemohucnost-svetskej-moci.html>>.

Marián Bachratý

*1952

Ladislav Volko

Cartoon is a serious thing. Not only cartoonists – most of them are, in fact, serious people – but also theorists who reflect on everyday life, philosophers and sociologists have tried to grasp its fragility, typical exaggeration, abruptness, its ability to reflect the unpleasant reality very precisely. Very often, it is cartoons which serve as a barometer of the moods in society and as a prognostic indicator of societal changes. By cartoonists we primarily mean drawing cartoonists; however, the concept of cartoons is, of course, much wider.

"Man is a true-born violator of any given boundaries," writes the German sociologist Georg Simmel. He also says that *"exaggeration is a trait that derives from the very nature of our soul, but on the other hand, it can also be consciously and purposefully trained – especially by creating cartoons"*. Authors of cartoons thus 'train' their ability to exaggerate and at the same time they 'train' their recipients by offering specific messages that are sometimes hard to see. Cartoons are a part of social hygiene, and therefore they must be systematic and adamant in their urgency. If they are notably absent in the social life, all available communication means must be called upon, we have to scream, send e-mails, cry out 'SOS, SOS, SOS'... Slovak cartoon humour is created by many excellent authors, thanks God for that, although the space for their public presentation is slowly diminishing, which is quite surprising. There are many names without which we could not even imagine seeing a picture filled with totally abbreviated philosophical considerations. Marián Bachratý is one of them.

He has been working in this 'ploughed field' since 1968 when he debuted in the journal *Ježek*. Since then, he has been involved in cartoon humour; he has also created illustrations, sometimes he has worked as a portrait cartoonist or as a graphic designer just to avoid boredom. Now he is involved in production of advertising. Using the precise lines depicting the absurdity of human behaviour, the search for wisdom and the philosophy of common sense, he draws attention to smallness, selfishness, stupidity, and sometimes even helplessness. Through his work, he addresses thinking men of all generations.

Marián Bachratý is a very receptive observer. His drawing technique has gone through significant development; fascinated by work of the French artist Fernand Léger, by many seen as the progenitor of Pop Art, he has moved from gentle sketches towards a technique similar to that of Léger's precise, strong lines. His cartoon series on women in various life situations is the best possible evidence of the given creative shift. However, this particular line of his work does not prevent him from dealing with other spheres of existence, in which he finds the omnipresence and madness of our lives. Such topics are timeless and culturally universal; after all, many of his creations have crossed Slovak borders, and very successfully. Various international awards and numerous exhibitions abroad (Skopje, Gabrovo, Moscow, Asti, Trento, Berlin, Montreal, Tokyo) certainly confirm his creative mastery.

