



Editorial

Where Have Politics Gone?

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If you look at the campaign posters of various political parties, political groups, and individual candidates (for example, from the recent municipal elections in the Czech Republic), you will notice that something has disappeared from the choice of words that are supposed to move voters to cast their ballots for a certain candidate or platform, something that is, for politics as a certain type of behaviour, most characteristic – that is, *politics*. We can certainly ask the question how politics itself is disappearing or has already fully disappeared from the political discourse; first, however, we should answer the questions, what does politics actually mean, and what distinguishes it from other types of human behaviour and action, in order to attempt to answer the question if and why “true” and “real” politics are currently disappearing, or have already disappeared, from the political discourse.

Beforehand, it should be noted that these questions are not exclusively for political scientists – or sociologists, historians, or philosophers. They are for all of the above (and maybe even other) experts (or people who consider themselves experts); in the end they should be posed also to those who have chosen, as Max Weber called it, “politics as a vocation”. What then has vanished from the discourse as the most innate essence of politics, which is still referred to as politics and whose practitioners call themselves politicians and still insist on being considered politicians?

The most noticeable phenomenon is the complete, and very obvious, elimination of the term *power* from the current political discourse. There can be the least doubt that the desire for power, for ruling, is just as common nowadays amongst those who contribute to the political discourse as it was in the past. Nonetheless, one cannot help but get the impression that, especially in the current European discourse, the terminology of power (or political battle) has been nearly completely eradicated.

At the very least, thanks to the work of Michel Foucault, we know that discourse has no author, no subject; it is an anonymous creation into which we enter, it carries us, and through its medium we can express things. The current European Union political discourse (perhaps even certain variants of the global political discourse) seems to obscure, to deny, that politics has always been primarily a power conflict, which in extreme, or suitable, cases does not hesitate to turn to violence fully in the spirit of the Clausewitzian notion of armed conflict as the continuation of a conflict *sui generis*, which is otherwise fought with words. Today’s political discourse has fully glossed over this fundamental function of politics, and it is necessary

to ask why. More than thirty years ago already, Michel Foucault inquired about the changing nature of the political discourse, for example, in his *The Birth of Biopolitics*. Let us then ask the question, why is the discourse of power today concealed behind *biopolitical discourse*?

The question is therefore, does a transformation of the political discourse mean a change in politics, perhaps even its disappearance and replacement with something fundamentally different? The papers contained in this issue attempt to answer this question at least in part.