JAN PATOČKA’S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.
SOME OBSERVATIONS WITH A VIEW TOWARDS
HANNAH ARENDT AND CARL SCHMITT

Ludger Hagedorn

This contribution attempts at identifying, in the context of Jan Patočka’s multifarious writings, some fundamental characteristics of his reflections on politics, which have never been explicitly written down, but rather make up a kind of sub-text in many of his works. The first observation is that Patočka coined the notion of an existential “truth,” and the present contribution maintains that this notion can be applied to the field of politics as well. The author then offers a comparative outlook on the political theories of Hannah Arendt and Carl Schmitt, theories that compose a background against which Patočka’s plea for politics having to be open-minded acquires more distinct contours.

COMMEMORATIVE RITES FOR THE CASUALTIES
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTIONS
IN CENTRAL EUROPE 1848/49

Jan Randák

During the revolution of 1848/49, a specific form of commemorating the dead evolved which is demonstrated in the present article by means of texts from Berlin, Vienna, and Prague. The casualties of the uprisings were ritualized, and the fate of nation and home country was symbolically linked to them. This manner of commemorating was due, in Berlin as well as in Vienna and Prague, to the bourgeois wing outweighing representatives of the old order. By “pocketing” the dead in this manner, the bourgeois strata sought to increase their power. Thus the casualties became a sort of capital, however symbolic, with which to work towards one’s goals. The obsequies in March were about real victims, it is true, but the main thrust of the commemorative assemblies and marches was the importance attached to the fact that rebels had died, and closely linked to this was the hope for an eventual democratisation and social liberation as well as — in the case of the Jews — for emancipation and civil rights equal to those enjoyed by other ethnic groups. Although the commemorative rites of those days were staged in a national way, they also had aspects which transcend the purely national. In consequence, the term “European revolutionary culture” does not appear unjustified.