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'Same story, different generation?' Slovak Velvet Revolution narrative(s)

This paper builds on an ongoing research into the ways in which twentieth century (Czecho)Slovak history has been taught to the first-post communist generation of secondary school Slovak students, and the way that fits with the broader public discourse about the key events, from the 1944 anti-fascist Slovak National Uprising, the 1944-1945 Soviet liberation of the country, the communist takeover of power in 1948, the 1968 Prague Spring, the Warsaw Pact invasion and the 'normalisation' period and finally the Velvet Revolution. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the 1989 revolutions, this paper will focus specifically on the 'November' events in Slovakia and the various narratives surrounding them. Drawing on oral interviews with secondary school history teachers as well as a range of post-communist history textbooks, it will first explore whether the academic interpretation of the events of 1989 has changed at all since. Looking at political statements regarding 1989, especially the commemorative texts and acts connected to the upcoming anniversary celebrations, it will then examine the ways in which that change - or lack thereof - can be linked to the developments in public discourse. Finally, it will bring in the role of the collective as well as individual memories and interpretations of the events of 1989 and the period that followed by looking at how the home in addition to the school environment shapes the ways in which the post-communist generation perceives and interprets the Velvet Revolution.