Among historians, this publication caused not only enthusiasm; it divided them, as reviews and other responses, some of them quite polemical, clearly showed, in two camps. Those in the first one rejected the book out of hand and accused the authors of entertaining a nihilistic relationship to the nation, while those in the other praised the critical attitude of the authors as an effort aimed at holding up a mirror to the nation. Evazim Kohák, who arguably showed the best understanding of Podiven, sees in the book a kind of antithesis to Masaryk, an effort at developing a complete understanding of the historic and modern identity of the Czechs as seen from the viewpoint of the democratic right wing. Thus, the discussions about Podiven served as new evidence for the social role and importance of historiography in the Bohemian lands.

THE “TEMNO” IN A CENTRAL EUROPEAN CONTEXT: ECCLESIASTICAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLITICS IN BAROQUE BOHEMIA

Ivana Černejová

In this article, one of the most widely known Czech historians of the postwar generation draws a new picture of the baroque epoch in Bohemia, which replaces the well-known clichés of what is usually called the temno age. Most markedly a departure from previous concepts is evident in her efforts to place developments in Bohemia in the context of their European and, above all, central European connections. It is from here that she arrives at the conclusion that “recatholicization ... had nothing to do with Germanization”. The author criticizes many myths about the temno age that have hitherto been current not only among the Czech public, but also in textbooks and in the mass media. She also offers many hints at how she came to realize those things that triggered her personal “demystification” of the temno age.

THE PROBLEMS OF A NEW BEGINNING: SOME REMARKS ON CONCEPTS AND METHODS OF CZECH RESEARCH INTO CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AFTER 1989

Peter Heumos

On the basis of selected publications by the Prague Ústav pro soudobé dějiny (Institute for Contemporary History) as well as further publications devoted to the contemporary history of Czechoslovakia, the author demonstrates that the methodic and methodological problems being felt by Czech researchers into contemporary history can be detected, among other things, in the unquestioned usage, even now, of inherited patterns of thought and in the fact that the breaking away from the Marxist-Leninist code often leads to personalist views being adopted or historicist positions being used as a line of retreat. Modern research methods however, such as those represented by structural history, have not been taken up so far.