RELIGION AGAINST A BACKDROP OF DICTATORSHIP, NATIONAL ANTAGONISMS AND THE MODERN ERA

New publications and projects relating to 20th-century religious and ecclesiastic history in the Bohemian Lands

Martin Zückert

In recent years, historians more often than before have worked on themes pertaining to religious and ecclesiastic history, with questions related to religion and society in the 19th and 20th centuries being frequently analysed in their relationship to historical developments of a more general nature. The present contribution aims at giving a general impression of recent research activities devoted to religious and ecclesiastical developments in the Bohemian Lands during the 20th century. In addition, topics still awaiting coverage are named, and relations to questions of a broader nature are shown. The principal topics discussed are nation, dictatorship, and the modern era. One result is that only in very basic terms have questions relating to the importance of religion and ecclesiastic institutions hitherto been analysed from a viewpoint of everyday life history. As a final touch, the author presents a brief sketch of a project on religious history being currently carried out at the Collegium Carolinum.

NORMAN NAIMARK ON "ETHNIC CLEANSING" IN THE 20TH CENTURY
A REVIEW AND SOME REMARKS ON THE "CASE" OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Tomáš Staněk

With his book, Norman N. Naimark has undertaken a very ambitious task. He aims at presenting a synthesis of last century’s ethnic purges discussing their principal causes, their realisation phase with all its differences and inconsistencies, and the tragic consequences. In several concise introductory chapters, he sketches the current stage of the discussion among scholars concerning matters of definition, methods, and typology. Building on this foundation, Naimark demonstrates corresponding tendencies as well as specific factors relating to the causes and the course of "ethnic purges" in application to several examples. Whereas some of the cases, such as the "Armenian catastrophe", illustrate the facts very well, his presentation of the deportation and expulsion of ethnic Germans from postwar Czechoslovakia seems rather sketchy and somewhat simplistic. This may be due to a very narrow selection of sources and the fact that results of recent Czech research have been used only to a very limited extent. A case in point is the presentation of the so-called "Ústí massacre", with Naimark adopting suppositions that have already been completely dis-
proved. A certain lack of precision becomes also apparent concerning the number of victims, the manner in which the deportations were carried out, and the situation of those ethnic Germans who remained after 1946. To a certain extent this analysis of the Czech “case” gives the book less credibility and detracts from the benefit to be derived from it. Apart from those shortcomings, however, Naimark’s book proves very valuable, as it considerably advances analysis and typology of a problem which continues to exist.