

ON THE MEANING OF BOHEMIAN HISTORY

Oswald Kostrba-Skalicky

The author examines in this article the traditional endeavor of the Czechs to define the „meaning and philosophy“ of their own history, and establishes that these efforts do not correspond to the classic Western attempts by Spengler, Toynbee and others to arrive at a comprehensive interpretation of historical events. The attempts made from Palacký down to present-day Marxist historiography to find an all-embracing „meaning“ for Czech history have not yielded any valid, useful results. Examining the reasons for this failure, the author comes to the conclusion that research should concentrate on specific periods of the Bohemian past — and thus gain corresponding insights into the past that would enable an interpretation of contemporary events — instead of searching for any comprehensive „meaning“. Czechoslovak events of 1938, 1939, 1945, 1948 and 1968 that exercised an important influence on European history are cited as examples.