

POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA:
THEIR RELATIONSHIP IN THE FIELD OF FORCE
OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, 1932—1934

Jörg K. Hoensch

Differing perceptions of the orientation of their respective policies after World War I and border disputes conditioned the animosity and antipathy that dominated the relations between the ČSR and Poland in the interwar period. Polish fears that the Carpatho-Ukraine could, with Czech help, become a Ukrainian „Piedmont“ endangering the territorial integrity of Poland, as well as the Prague government's reservations about Polish benevolence vis-à-vis revisionist Hungarian demands and the moral support of Slovak autonomy aspirations prevented, even in the face of the disturbing rise of the National Socialists in the German *Reich*, any closer

cooperation between France's two allies. Several attempts — promoted by the guarantor power France — to settle the bilateral differences and form a united defensive front against Hitler's Germany never really got off the ground. The surprising achievement of a German — Polish non-aggression agreement on 26 January 1934 and the Warsaw government's lack of interest in an Eastern Pact exacerbated the mutual reservations, all the more so because Poland displayed an increasingly hostile attitude toward the ČSR. The inability of the Polish and Czechoslovak politicians to seek political, military and economic cooperation based on trust contributed significantly to the success of Hitler's foreign policy of revision and expansion, and permitted the Polish — Czechoslovak conflict to become one of the essential elements of European politics before 1939.