

*Slovensko v rokoch druhej svetovej vojny. (Materiály z vedeckého sympózia). Časť 6.-7. novembra 1990 [Slovakia during the Second World War. (Proceedings of a symposium)].*

Slovenská národná rada – Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava 1991, 170 S.

*Slovensko v rokoch druhej svetovej vojny* is a collection of papers presented at a conference on Slovakia during the Second World War, held in November 1990 in Častá, Czechoslovakia and sponsored by the Slovak National Council and the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Coming just one year after the Velvet Revolution, the conference gave Czech and Slovak historians the opportunity to examine various facets of Slovakia from 1938 to 1945 in a considerably freer atmosphere than memorable history has afforded them.

The book contains twenty-four articles, dealing with political, diplomatic, economic, military, social, and ideological issues. Among the noteworthy contributions are critical studies of the Slovak Republic by Ivan Kamenec and Yeshayahu Jelinek. A number of other articles also treat important questions. In a comparison of Slovakia during the First and Second World Wars, Lubomír Lipták points out that “several phenomena of the Second World War which enormously weakened the foundations of civil society and facilitated the rise to power of Stalinism, such as the undermining of private property by expropriating Jews and ‘enemies’, had older roots,” namely in the post-World War I land reform. Jan Gebhart, discussing relations between Czechs and Slovaks in the wartime resistance, asks a question worthy of further consideration – to what extent did the national conflict between Czechs and Slovaks facilitate the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948? Jan Rychlík, in an article examining Czech views of Slovakia from the Munich Agreement to 1945, addresses questions that have only gained in urgency in the political climate in Czechoslovakia today. Rychlík shows how Czech attitudes towards the Slovak Republic were much more complicated than is often assumed, and not unequivocally negative.

A number of authors draw attention to those areas of research that have either been ignored by Czech and Slovak historians since 1948, or dealt with tendentiously. Among others, they identify the Slovak Republic’s apparatus of repression, its army, and its policy toward its Rusyn minority; French, British, Soviet and American policies toward Slovakia; and relations between Czechs and Slovaks. In addition, biographies of a number of leading Slovaks, above all Jozef Tiso, are in order.

A number of contributors point to the relevance of the study of Slovakia’s past to Czech-Slovak relations today and the future of their common republic. Maria

Dobříková cautions, however, that historians, while dismantling one set of myths, must avoid constructing new ones. On both counts, *Slovensko v rokoch druhej svetovej vojny* is a step in the right direction.

*Seattle/Wash.*

James Felak