

## COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST AND REINTERPRETING CZECH HISTORY

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This contribution deals, on one hand, with the social task of historiography in the Bohemian lands, which is closely connected with the overall situation of the society concerned (mentioning František Palacký, the father of the modern concept of Czech history, or T. G. Masaryk shall suffice to prove the point), and on the other hand with the emergence of a plurality of opinion and method in the independent historiography during the period of "normalization". This is illustrated by a book which was written between the mid-1970s and 1989 and published in December 1990 under the pseudonym "Podiven" and the title *The Czechs in Modern History. An Effort at Self-Reflection*.

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.