

CZECH HISTORY TEXTBOOKS:
IS TIME RIPE FOR A CHANGE?

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In Prague in 1996, the author published the most comprehensive study of Czech post-Communist history textbooks for school usage so far written. In the present contribution he offers, apart from a summary of his most important findings, an intro-

duction to the discussions taking place on this subject among Czech historians and those interested in history. Scrutinizing half a dozen of the textbooks recommended by the Prague ministry of education, he shows which concept of history and what kind of language are predominantly used, the result being in many cases – at least this is what Čaněk found out – that the historical multitude of facets belonging to Bohemian and Moravian society is overlooked and a one-dimensional, homogeneous concept of nation takes center stage. Examining the perception and reception of the textbooks by the public, Čaněk draws attention to the Czech historians (for instance Jan Křen, Jiří Rak and Petr Čornej), and criticizes complacency and a lack of problem awareness in the Czech historical community. Upon which he bases his demand: “The place of the scholar should not be somewhere beside society, separated from public occurrences, but, on the contrary, in the very centre of these events. Otherwise his intellectual potential is wasted.”