

NORMAN NAIMARK ON "ETHNIC CLEANSING"
IN THE 20TH CENTURY
A REVIEW AND SOME REMARKS ON THE „CASE“
OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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With his book, Norman N. Naimark has undertaken a very ambitious task. He aims at presenting a synthesis of last century's ethnic purges discussing their principal causes, their realisation phase with all its differences and inconsistencies, and the tragic consequences. In several concise introductory chapters, he sketches the current stage of the discussion among scholars concerning matters of definition, methods, and typology. Building on this foundation, Naimark demonstrates corresponding tendencies as well as specific factors relating to the causes and the course of "ethnic purges" in application to several examples. Whereas some of the cases, such as the "Armenian catastrophe", illustrate the facts very well, his presentation of the deportation and expulsion of ethnic Germans from postwar Czechoslovakia seems rather sketchy and somewhat simplistic. This may be due to a very narrow selection of sources and the fact that results of recent Czech research have been used only to a very limited extent. A case in point is the presentation of the so-called "Ústí massacre", with Naimark adopting suppositions that have already been completely dis-

proved. A certain lack of precision becomes also apparent concerning the number of victims, the manner in which the deportations were carried out, and the situation of those ethnic Germans who remained after 1946. To a certain extent this analysis of the Czech "case" gives the book less credibility and detracts from the benefit to be derived from it. Apart from those shortcomings, however, Naimark's book proves very valuable, as it considerably advances analysis and typology of a problem which continues to exist.