

ABSTRACTS

REVOLUTION AS A BOHEMIAN DRAMA: THE QUEST FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE EUROPEAN CRISIS YEAR 1848

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The present contribution starts out from the thesis that the revolutionary years 1848 and 1849 brought about a fundamental breach in the thoughts and actions of broad strata of the population in the Bohemian lands. New and very different perspectives opened up for the people in areas such as national identity, political concepts, cultural affiliation, economical orientation, and nationality or citizenship. These changes are interpreted by the author as a drastic reaction to the crisis of the pre-revolutionary society. However, this reaction incurred a number of new crises caused by the quest for a consensus on what to expect from the revolution. The author pursues an interpretation in several steps, setting out with a description of the problem, moving on to examine historiographic approaches, and finally describing specific aspects – hopes, dilemmas and changing successes of the parties concerned. He comes to the conclusion that we may view the revolution of 1848/49 as a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted historical disruption, to which the model of an open interplay of forces is applicable. This, he argues, would make us better understand the power of the quest for revolutionary change. He also deals with the question to what extent this revolution became a constitutive or complementary element in the collective memory of Germans from the Bohemian lands. One thing is evident: its imprints on Czech historical memory have been far smaller than those on the German one.