ABOUT THE "RIGHT TO ONE'S OWN HISTORY"
THE 1939-1945 SLOVAK STATE IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Tatjana Tönsmeyer

This contribution examines developments since the breakdown of communist rule in Slovak historical research concerning the wartime state. While before 1989 this period had been taboo to a large extent, during the first half of the 1990s the main activity was measuring the extent of gaps having hopefully to be closed. The climate changed fundamentally when in 1995 Milan S. Šurica's "Dějiny Slovenska a Slovákov" (A History of Slovakia and the Slovaks) appeared, since a discussion by historians about a book with obvious mistakes and weaknesses was exploited as an instrument in an identity debate in which the importance of a state was being questioned. The entrenchment thus caused can, in the opinion of our author, only be overcome by new research, a methodological prerequisite being a rethinking concerning the epistemological limits of the current positivism and, going hand in hand with it, the understanding that the interpretations rejected are inseparable from the terminology used. As regards deficiencies concerning neglected subject matters, the front rank is occupied by a societal history of the wartime Slovak state, with this authoritarian state being no longer indiscriminately termed "fascist".

THE HOLOCAUST IN SLOVAK HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE NINETIES

Eduard Nižňanský

The author sketches the fundamental changes in holocaust research in Slovakia during the 1990s. Until 1989, this topic had been practically taboo, while after the turnaround the number of studies and articles devoted to it grew considerably. In Slovakia, there is no classical revisionist view on the holocaust, but there are efforts to defend the policy of the Slovak republic during World War II and to place all responsibility for the deportation of the Slovak Jews firmly on the German side. The present study, rather a commented bibliography, begins with a section on sources and memoirs concerning the holocaust, and general works. For the 1990s, there are also studies devoted to local aggressors and to the social conditions in which the holocaust took place. Also introduced are authoritative studies on Jewish communities in Slovakia, on the system of forced labour and on forced labour camps for Jews in Slovakia. Apart from historical works, mention is also made of law historians or ethnologists devoting studies to the history and culture of Jews in Slovakia.