

by the Communist parties, they magnify the wartime role of the Communists way out of proportion; at the same time, they reduce the representatives of other political opinions to puppets marching to their doom with the precision of a well-oiled mechanism.

Apart from stiff determinism, hard to overcome even for enlightened Marxists, the persistence of taboos detracts considerably from the plausibility of the picture presented. Thus, for example, the omission of the Katyń massacre and of other unpleasant incidents makes the article about Poland (by J. Valenta) particularly thin. The author of the essay on Yugoslavia (J. Opat) mentions the "percentages" agreement between Churchill and Stalin, but refuses to divulge his opinion about it. In the account about Albania by P. Hradečný there are only two passing references to Enver Hoxha, one of them in a footnote.

Despite the relegation of Albania's deviationist leader to the status of a nonperson, Hradečný's essay is among the best in the collection. The ambivalent attitude of the Czechoslovak reformists to the Albanian model of communism undoubtedly facilitated an objective approach. On the other hand, their admiration for Yugoslavia influenced unfavorably the article about that country. It suffers from the uncritical acceptance of the official Titoist viewpoint characterized by overdeveloped ego and endless adulation of the partisan exploits.

The essay on wartime Czechoslovakia by O. Janeček is the most thoughtful but also the most controversial of all. Its dominant theme, implying vast Czech resistance guided by the Communists, does not lend itself easily to convincing proof; Slovakia fits this thesis better. In a final overview of the seven nations, Opat attempts to compare the incomparable. For not their similarities but rather their differences determined their respective fates in World War II, when—as so often in history—the lack of unity among the peoples of East Central Europe precipitated their misfortunes.

The initiative of the Czech historians in pioneering new interpretations of World War II had far-reaching political consequences. It contributed significantly to the avalanche which brought about the 1968 upheaval in their country. But as a fair reconstruction of the past, their achievement still falls short of the target. It demonstrates that an open-minded assessment of World War II by historians in East Central Europe is still not in sight. In the meantime the impressive documentation they amassed in this volume presents an opportunity to anyone able to take up that challenge.

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ESSAYS IN CZECH HISTORY. By *R. R. Betts*. London: The Athlone Press, University of London, 1969. x, 315 pp. \$8.75.

The essays brought together in this posthumous collection were useful when they first appeared (mostly in the 1940s and 1950s), and remain so today, as high-level popularizations of important subjects about which little has been written in English. Most of them are about political, religious, and philosophical ideas, which are not so much studied as appreciated, in the light of Betts's own understanding of life—apparently a blend of quasi-Marxism with semi-Methodism—and his ideas about what happened in the later Middle Ages. The latter center about such notions as the rising middle class, the new economy of the marketplace, the domination of governments by bankers and merchants, and so forth. These account for the doc-

trine of dominion founded on grace, because "new classes and groups were thrusting towards political and economic power," and it was therefore necessary to develop "a new basis for authority and wealth" (p. 161). They also account for the fourteenth-century Bohemian reform movement—"part of the general European middle-class revolution" (p. 91). At one remove they also account for the Czechs' receptivity to realist philosophy—that is, idealism; for cynical, materialistic nominalism could not inspire real reform. What rescues the essays from the insipidity into which such ideas and methods constantly threaten to lead is Betts's habit of working directly from the primary sources, and certain traits of his own character which kept him from combining inept judgments into elaborate constructions.

Space limitations make a detailed discussion of the several essays impossible, and I shall merely indicate some of my favorites. "Some Political Ideas of the Early Czech Reformers" is a stimulating introduction to the generation of John Milič and Matthew of Janov; "English and Czech Influences on the Hussite Movement" is good on the actual contacts between the two countries; "Jerome of Prague" and "Peter Payne in England" remain extremely useful—the former is perhaps the most successful essay in the book, in point of originality. But for critical judgment I would single out "Masaryk's Philosophy of History," which combines a fundamental respect for the man with a refreshing critique of his dicta on the many subjects that he did not understand. And: "I find it one of the weaknesses of Masaryk's teaching that, though he always insists on the importance of religion, he never tells us what his religion is. An admiration of Jesus and a somewhat vague belief in providence seem to be the substance of his theology."

The other essays in the collection include "The Influence of Realist Philosophy on Jan Hus and His Predecessors in Bohemia," "National and Heretical Religious Movements from the End of the Fourteenth to the Middle of the Fifteenth Century," "Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, and the Doctrine of Dominion," "Society in Central and Western Europe: Its Development Towards the End of the Middle Ages," and "Social and Constitutional Development in Bohemia in the Hussite Period." There are also a few others, less meritorious than these, on John Hus, the University of Prague, and late medieval philosophy. The whole is prefaced by a biographical memoir that suggests something of why everyone who knew Betts seemed to like him.

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ZAHRANIČNÍ ODOJ 1914–1918 BEZ LEGEND. By *Karel Pichlík*. Prague: Svoboda, 1968. 504 pp. Kčs. 35.

The struggle of the Founding Fathers of the Czechoslovak Republic—Masaryk, Beneš, Štefánik—for national independence was the subject of many Czechoslovak historical works after World War I, when President Masaryk became a living national monument. After 1939 such writings stopped, and until 1945 the mere mention of Masaryk's name became an offense that carried the death penalty. After 1948 Czech Communist historians produced a number of works portraying the former national heroes as reactionaries, servants of Western capitalism, and enemies of the Czechoslovak and Russian peoples. Pichlík's book, one of the thousand flowers that blossomed briefly during the Czechoslovak Spring, is a thoroughly researched, critical history of the work of the leaders in exile and a thoughtful revision of pre-