

all of which are missing from the list of English-language periodicals. *Polish Society* by Jan Szczepeński—which is certainly the most authoritative work in English on sociopolitical changes in postwar Poland—is also absent.

Yet, despite these occasional lapses, Professor Groth's book is a valuable addition to the literature in English on contemporary Poland. The author has accomplished his objective and produced a volume useful both to the beginner in any East European area program and to the general student of comparative politics.

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THE DOOMED DEMOCRACY: CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN A DISRUPTED EUROPE, 1914–38. By *Věra Olivová*. Translated by *George Theiner*. Introduction by *Sir Cecil Parrott*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972. 276 pp. £4.50. \$12.50.

Professor Olivová's book is a remarkable piece of scholarship. It deserves to be studied carefully not for new information about interwar Czechoslovakia but for fresh, analytical insights which originate from a respectable scholar living in ideologically besieged Prague. Characteristic of the spirit of the "Czechoslovak Spring," the book was first published in Czech during that exhilarating though short-lived experience of freedom of expression.

Olivová's study of Czechoslovakia is firmly and correctly embodied in the framework of interwar Europe. The country's domestic developments reflected the changing social, economic, and political fortunes of the Continent. The author recognizes and appreciates the country's valiant commitment to political democracy, economic progress, and social justice. She treats T. G. Masaryk's program and his towering influence with respect, even admiration, and she has words of esteem even for Edvard Beneš. She sees the problem of Slovakia and the Sudeten Germans—the Achilles' heel of the solid state structure—as a challenge for which a solution would have been found, with time. Unhappily, international developments stripped Czechoslovakia of that needed time. First, the Locarno Pact gave a sense of security (a false one) to Western Europe and directed Germany's attention to Eastern Europe. As a consequence, conservative elements in Czechoslovakia questioned the country's foreign policy and gained influence in the government. Second, Hitler's arrival to power and his aggressive actions against the Rhineland and Austria were met with appeasement on the part of the West, and the reaction in Czechoslovakia was one of further political cleavage between progressive and right-wing elements. Third, and with tragic results for both Czechoslovakia and the rest of Europe, Munich opened the road—with the West's participation—to destruction. In all instances, the Soviet Union stood aside (though ready, according to Olivová, to defend the cause of democracy) because of a combination of factors: she was weak internally, and she was feared and not wanted by Europe.

The author had access to sources some of which are not available in the West or are not accessible to Western scholars. It is therefore regrettable that she gives no source references when she brings out some previously unknown facts. One can also question her analysis of social struggles in the years immediately following the end of World War I and during the Depression as well as the role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. However, the book is remarkably free of boring

Marxist jargon and dogmatic schematism. Singularly well translated and introduced by an outstanding British scholar, Sir Cecil Parrott, it is a welcome contribution to the field of Slavic studies.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: THE BUREAUCRATIC ECONOMY. By *Ota Šik*.
White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1972. vii, 138 pp.
\$10.00.

For the greater part, this book is an English translation of the 1968 Czech telecasts by the author, then a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the deputy premier, and the head of the Commission for Economic Reform in Czechoslovakia.

Šik, who is now a professor at the St. Gallen Institute for Economics and Social Sciences in Switzerland, severely criticizes Czechoslovakia's economic performance under rigid central planning. He argues that the growth rate, rather high in the early postwar years but later rapidly declining, was brought about merely by the mobilization of labor and a high capital accumulation. The concomitant aspects of this "extensive," inefficient growth were a wrong economic structure, a misallocation of resources, a lagging technology, and an unduly low rate of consumption. Since the telecasts were addressed to a general audience, some of the intercountry comparisons in support of this critique are not rigorously reduced to a truly comparable basis, and provide an oversimplified picture. For instance, the argument that West German workers need a much shorter time than their Czechoslovak counterparts to earn certain gratuitously selected consumer goods is not a reliable measure of the comparative living standard. But on the whole, Šik's criticism of overcentralized planning, especially in a highly industrial country which is heavily dependent on foreign trade, is justified. One should add that other East European and Soviet economists, and even party officials, have also argued against an unduly rigid planning system, though perhaps less bluntly.

Yet the cure prescribed by Šik is much more radical than the economic reforms in other Comecon countries. He recommends a far-reaching reliance on market mechanism, with limited macro guidance and with prices "reflecting the value relations in the world market," as well as a decentralized political system. To facilitate the transition to such an open socialist market economy, he advocates a cooperation between Czechoslovak enterprises and West European nonsocialist firms, as well as taking a Western credit of 300–500 million dollars.

What is new in the book is the "Introduction to the American Edition." Most of it is a political castigation of the present leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, but two points are worth mentioning from the economic standpoint. First, the author rebuts claims by opponents of his reform that he favored a controlled inflation. Several Western students of the Czechoslovak economy feel that some of the aspects of the 1968 reform may indeed have added, though no doubt unintentionally, some fuel to inflationary pressures in Czechoslovakia: the "two-channel" (cost-plus) prices of 1968, a sizable increase in money supply, and the substitution of "gross income" (a loose analogy of value added) for profit as a basis for bonuses for management and workers. Second, the author predicts a general return to highly centralized Stalinist planning in the Comecon countries. In