

the subject. The greater part of the book (pp. 65–273) is devoted to military preparations for the administration of Poland, the brief period of actual military administration, and the army's subsequent relationship and rivalry with Nazi party leaders and organizations in dealing with problems of security, the treatment of the conquered population, and the economic exploitation of the country. Army leaders, although themselves not particularly scrupulous in their treatment of the Poles, were nevertheless shocked by the policies pursued by the Nazi administrators. The generals could delay or evade the implementation of certain policies, but they lacked the authority and, for the most part, the will or desire to intervene effectively. On the whole they tried to avoid conflicts with the Nazi organizations and engaged in what can only be called a dishonorable retreat. The author admits that all these problems have been discussed in other works on the German occupation of Poland, but he maintains that all such studies contain so many misconceptions and outright errors about the nature of the German military administration that a special monograph on this subject is justified.

Dr. Umbreit's principal contribution, it seems to me, is the additional evidence he provides to undercut the theory (which is not widely accepted in any case) that the army tried to uphold standards of relative decency, while far behind the fighting lines the Nazi organizations carried out their bestial policies of genocide, terror, and economic exploitation. Dr. Umbreit makes clear that Nazi generals were quick to appreciate that opposition to Nazi policies might jeopardize or put an end to their careers; that they were positively eager to escape the responsibilities of administration; and that they competed ruthlessly for their share of the economic spoils. Because they were more pragmatic than the fanatic Nazi ideologues, they saw the danger of unrestricted terror and exploitation (as did numerous Nazi officials), but they failed—or rather, never seriously attempted—to challenge the Nazi administrators and establish a more practical, consistent, or humane administration.

NORMAN RICH  
*Brown University*

CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S INTERRUPTED REVOLUTION. By *H. Gordon Skilling*.  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. xvi, 924 pp. \$45.00, cloth. \$15.00,  
paper.

Professor Skilling's valuable study of the Prague Spring will not disappoint those who have long awaited it. The author's extensive research, persuasive interpretations, and detailed biographical footnotes combine to make this the best volume available on the subject. It may well be the most comprehensive history of the Dubček era that we will have until new primary sources become available. Despite the study's formidable length, the format, which allows readers to find discussions of specific events and issues with ease, makes it useful as either a narrative or a reference work.

Although the bulk of Professor Skilling's volume deals with the January to August 1968 period, the author sets events into the broader historical context with which he is clearly very familiar. Some of his interpretations, such as the dual democratic and authoritarian traditions of Czechoslovak communism, are hardly original but are, nonetheless, well argued. His discussion of "the Czech question," that curiously persistent cultural quest of Czech intellectuals for a national identity and calling, finally gives this issue the importance it deserves in any analysis of domestic attitudes toward democratic socialism. And Professor Skilling's description of the pre-1968 years brings out well the character of Novotný as a politically inept bureaucrat who, wavering between tolerance and repression, went far to pave the way for reform but could never accept it in principle.

The study's detailed treatment of 1968 presents a vast amount of information and conveys the complexities and contradictions of the reform movement. While most of Professor Skilling's judgments appear thoroughly persuasive, a few can—and should—be questioned. On page 629, for example, he writes that, as far as can be determined, "public opinion continued to be convinced of the value of the alliance with the Soviet Union and with the other socialist countries, and rejected the alternative of neutrality." While the public may have been resigned to the fact of the alliance, most of what was written in the spring of 1968 implicitly pointed out its disadvantages rather than its value. Similarly, Professor Skilling may at times be overestimating the popularity of the Communist Party and the chances of its victory in free elections. Granted, its popularity increased in 1968 and the party led in public opinion polls, but the party leadership consistently refused to allow creation of opposition parties, at least in part out of realization that a well-organized socialist party could pose a serious threat at the ballot box.

Professor Skilling's overall assessment of 1968 seeks to answer some tough questions which are often avoided: Could Dubček have succeeded? Will the Prague Spring serve as a model for other Eastern European reforms? On both counts he is negative, viewing the movement as basically irreconcilable with Soviet interests and thus doomed by external factors, not domestic ones. Such a conclusion is bolstered by his thesis that the Prague Spring was in fact an "interrupted revolution" because "reform is too mild a term to describe accurately what was happening in 1968 and likely to happen thereafter."

Perhaps. On the other hand, most of the revolutionary aspects of 1968 consisted of ideas tossed about but still far from implementation. The government's own objectives and accomplishments were much more modest and thoroughly reformist. We should perhaps be wary here of inadvertently adopting the old Marxist dictum that "the correct understanding of the present is its future potential." We will never know the future potential of the Prague Spring, but, thanks to Professor Skilling, we at least have an excellent account of its history.

RUDOLF VILEM PERINA  
U.S. Department of State

ČEŠI A JIHOSLOVANÉ V MINULOSTI: OD NEJSTARŠÍCH DOB DO ROKU  
1918. Edited by Václav Žáček. Prague: Academia, 1975. 751 pp. Plates. Kčs. 98.

When Tito and the Soviet Union parted company in 1948, the countries of the Socialist Bloc reacted with amazing promptitude: overnight, Tito became a *persona non grata* and the very subject of Yugoslavia fell under a shadow. Czechoslovakia leaped enthusiastically on the anti-Yugoslav bandwagon and was second to none in the zeal with which it proscribed everything Yugoslav. Whether the topic was twentieth-century Yugoslavia or thirteenth-century Serbia did not seem to make much difference. Czechoslovak historians virtually abandoned serious writing on Yugoslavia; specialists in Yugoslav history became an endangered species. Only the sixties rescued Czechoslovak historiography from these doldrums and the present volume may perhaps be described as atonement for the sins of the past.

The work is something of a companion piece to the two-volume history of Czech-Polish relations, *Češi a Poláci v minulosti* (Prague, 1964–67), an opus that earned high critical acclaim at the time it appeared. Václav Žáček, who was editor in chief of the second of the two volumes on Poland, is the historian in charge of this volume on Yugoslavia, and some of the authors who contributed to the earlier work also appear as contributors in the present work. Although the level of competence that went into both projects is similar, the products are quite different. This is attributable,