

only 11,200 members in 1933—that is, without the Ukrainian and Belorussian members (17,800 altogether, see p. 24). Moreover, as the authors admit, it was rent by internal conflicts and, particularly in the early years, unable to understand the problems of independent Poland. It was finally dissolved by Stalin in 1938. The characterization of Piłsudski as a man who aimed at total military dictatorship is negated by his attempts to work through the parliamentary system, at least up to 1930. The authors admit also that tendencies in this direction after his death were opposed by a large number of his followers.

In their discussion of the social structure the authors note but do not adequately discuss the emergence and role of a new technical and business intelligentsia. They do not cite or make use of a most interesting source on this subject, *Czy wiesz kto to jest?* (Warsaw, 1938), a unique Polish “Who’s Who.” This compendium lists and describes outstanding members of this strata, many of whom came from the peasant and working classes. These were the people who built Gdynia and made it the largest port on the Baltic Sea, and who worked on the development of the “Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy” or COP (Central Industrial District), which in its coordinated long-range planning was unique in Eastern Europe. In their discussion of the economic achievements of interwar Poland the authors give it some praise and admit that COP laid the foundation for the development of this region after 1945. They do not, however, believe that Poland’s economic problems could have been solved by the means employed during that period. One might note that without major foreign investments, which were unavailable, or the adoption of socialism, which was at that time unacceptable to the majority of the people, these problems could not have been solved. In the situation as it existed, a great deal was accomplished against all odds.

With all these drawbacks, this book is an important and welcome addition to the sparse scholarly literature on interwar Poland. The authors fully realize the enormous importance of this period for the development of contemporary Poland.

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THE POETS OF PRAGUE: CZECH POETRY BETWEEN THE WARS.

By *Alfred French*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969. ix, 129 pp. \$5.75.

There is no question that the Czech poets Seifert, Nezval, Halas, Hora, Holan, and the Catholic Zahradniček rank among the finest lyric poets of the twentieth century. Unfortunately Czech poetry has suffered the fate of most East and Central European poetry—which is, to paraphrase Robert Frost, that the original poetry is lost in translation. Nevertheless, translations are better than nothing. Alfred French’s study of the leading Czech poets between the two world wars not only presents an excellent account of the experimentation in Czechoslovakia during that period but also manages to convey the spirit, if not the word, of some dozen or so Czech poems in English translation.

French has selected the most representative members of the Czech group and analyzes those poems that he feels influenced Czech poetry during the twenty-year period before World War II. His discussion of Seifert is perhaps the best in the volume, but his failure to include Seifert (and Halas) in his bibliography is baffling. It is this failure to provide adequate information (including biographies,

full names, and important dates) that makes this volume a lesser work than it could have been.

There are no blatant errors of fact, and the translations of prose and poetry are indeed excellent. The author's account of Nezval's role in bringing together experimentalists, traditionalists, and "neorealists" is perhaps worthy of inclusion in any volume on the history of socialist realism. Nezval and his fellow poets were determined not to bring art down to its knees but rather to elevate people to the level of art, so that it would improve the quality of their lives. It was with this idea in mind that Nezval joined the Czech delegation to the Congress of Soviet Writers in Moscow in August 1934. During this meeting he realized the futility of trying to bring alien forces together. The surrealism of the French surrealists was in direct conflict with the social realism of the Soviet socialists. Zhdanov, on the one hand, and Hitler, on the other, proved to be too much for Nezval and his colleagues to combat.

A half-century ago the Czech poet Karel Teige pleaded for art based on the beauties of modern machines and for poetry based on film techniques, so that art in the traditional sense would cease to exist. Teige's poetic credo, so controversial during his lifetime, has now become almost a cliché. What remains forever modern, however, is the political situation and the intellectual climate which spawned these ideas. French's conclusions about the generation of poets between the wars could easily be applied to the recent generation of Czech poets before 1968: "They were full of frustrated energy and weighed down by frustrated hopes, for the times were against them. They did not inherit the earth nor witness the millennium, and the extravagant banners under which they marched in cheerful disarray were to lead them not to a promised land, but to a fresh catastrophe which was itself a new beginning."

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA SINCE WORLD WAR II. By *Tad Szulc*. New York: Viking Press, 1971. 503 pp. \$14.00.

While serving as the *New York Times* foreign correspondent in Prague in 1968, Mr. Szulc was an eyewitness to Czechoslovakia's exciting experiment with "socialism with a human face" as well as its subsequent suppression by the Soviet invasion and occupation of the country. It is the firsthand information he gathered in this capacity that constitutes the main part of the present volume. In it the author gives a detailed yet vivid and highly readable account of the hectic developments that triggered, and provided the substance of, the famed "Czechoslovak spring" of 1968. He records in a similarly detailed fashion the Soviet invasion, its aftermath, and the stubborn Czechoslovak reaction thereto. And he concludes with a brief summary of further Czechoslovak developments subsequent to his expulsion from Czechoslovakia in December 1968.

To tell the absorbing story of the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968 was evidently the author's principal purpose in writing the book. However, in a commendable search for historical perspective and an endeavor to explain what happened in 1967 and 1968 in terms of the Communist sins of the past, Szulc felt it necessary to preface his account of the 1968 events with a long historical survey covering the entire period of 1945-67. As a result the book consists really of two parts, which,