

SUMMARY

Relations and analogies of historical, social and cultural nature between the Poles and Slovaks in the past were intense and reflected in various spheres of our life. Slovak-Polish relations in the 20th century were and still are in the shadow of Polish-Czech relations. Moreover, it could be said that a considerable part of Polish society perceived Czechoslovakia mostly as a Czech state and that its perception of the Slovaks and Slovakia was dominated by this view. A similar optic, although to a lesser extent, is symptomatic for a part of Polish historiography dealing with Polish-Czechoslovak relations. Last but not least, the mainstream of Czech historical production dedicated to the Czechoslovak-Polish relations reflected the Slovak aspect rather marginally. These circumstances result to a great extent from the constitutional model of the centralized Czechoslovak state (Czechoslovak Republic and, after 1960, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic – ČSSR), although the mentioned Polish perception of Czechoslovakia as a Czech state plays a certain role too. In historiography, this fact is reflected by a relative small number of research works devoted to the Slovak-Polish questions, nay – it affects the degree of knowledge about Slovak-Polish relations in the yesteryear and the way, how the Slovaks and Poles perceive each other.

The presented publication titled *Neighborhood in the Period of Crucial Changes* is dealing with selected aspects of Czechoslovak-Polish relations during 1943 – 1948. Its ambition is to mention some of the specific questions of Slovak-Polish relations in the 1940's. Although the considerations of the authors of particular articles in this book surveying the period starting with the final phase of the Second World War until 1948 are based on the Czechoslovak context, they are primarily focusing Slovak historical aspects and Slovak-Polish issues in this period. Both the macro- and micro-levels of these relations are reflected, such as the Polish-Czech-Slovak political relations in the exile in the final stage of World War 2, the international background and the attitude of the Great Powers towards Czechoslovakia and Poland, further the bilateral relations between both countries immediately after

WW2, and finally – the situation in the Czechoslovak-Polish, or more accurately, the Slovak-Polish border regions.

Dušan Segeš is focusing on the final period (1943 – 1945) of official diplomatic relations between the Czechoslovak and the Polish government in exile residing in London. These relations were interrupted in January 1945, after the decision taken by Czechoslovak authorities in exile to recognize the Polish Committee of National Liberation headed by the communists and close collaborationists of Stalin's Soviet Union. Segeš is presenting the details of the diplomatic *faux pas* caused by the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Moscow Zdeněk Fielinger in 1944, and further, among other Czechoslovak-Polish issues, a unique document written by President Edvard Beneš in April 1944, which is his personal account of the Czechoslovak-Polish political relations in the exile. Slavomír Michálek's study is dealing with the Czechoslovak foreign policy in the immediate after-war period (1945 – 1947), taking into consideration the possibilities of its orientation and the international context and reality of that time. The author is paying attention to the Czechoslovak project of "bridge building" between the East and the West (with the President Edvard Beneš and Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk as its major advocates), giving special examples such as the European Recovery Program (the so-called Marshall-Plan) where this Czechoslovak strategy was put through the mill and, in the long run, failed. František Cséfalvay is reflecting the activities of home-resistance and partisan groups operating in the Slovak-Polish border regions in 1944, mostly on the Slovak side of this border. Jan Štaigl deals with the specifics of security situation in the northern region Orava as a consequence of re-allocating of some of the parts of it to the Polish authority. The author is taking into account the development within both the regions incorporated to Poland and the Slovak parts of Orava and Spiš, from the entry of the Red Army to these territories up to the year 1947. This year meant a breakthrough in the bilateral relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland due to the signing of Czechoslovak-Polish treaty on friendship, cooperation and solidarity. Štaigl mainly reflects the activities in the Polish-Slovak border zone of the Polish military group "Błyskawica", headed by Józef Kuraś "Ogień". The members of this military formation were involved in persecutions of Slovaks living

in Poland after WW2; moreover, they were organized robberies of Slovak villages in Czechoslovakia. Štaigl is focusing on the actions taken by the Czechoslovak Army and Slovak armed forces against the troops of “Ogień” and their cooperation with Polish security forces in order to liquidate these troops. Matej Andráš is paying attention to chosen aspects of the Czechoslovak-Polish relations during 1945 – 1948, in particular focusing on territorial changes alongside the Czechoslovak-/Slovak-Polish border and the situation of Slovak inhabitants of Upper Orava and the Northern Spiš living in Poland after the Second World War. Andráš’s description of this topic is based on research of materials from historical and diplomatic archives, using also data from his own personal archive that was collected during his active diplomatic career in the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.