

ARNOLD SUPPAN, HITLER – BENEŠ – TITO: KONFLIKT, KRIEG UND VÖLKERMORD IN OSTMITTEL- UND SÜDOSTEUROPA, WIEN: VERLAG DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN 2014, 3 BDE., ISBN 978-3-7001-7309-0, 2047 P.



This three-volume monograph of retired professor of the *Institute für Osteuropäische Geschichte* at the University of Vienna, and a former Vice-president of Austrian Academy of Sciences, Arnold Suppan, not only represents more than ten-year long research of a renowned professional, considering history of Central, East and South-east Europe, but also begins a new monograph series called *Internationale Geschichte / International History*, which is published by the *Institut für Neuzeit- und Zeitgeschichtsforschung*, which was established in 2013 by the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

In his masterpiece, Arnold Suppan is focusing on three persons of the twentieth century, each one with different life story but all of them an unforgettable part of so far the bloodiest century of human history. First person is a Chancellor of Germany and the leader of German nation, Adolf Hitler. Second person is a long-time minister of foreign affairs and later president of the Czechoslovak Republic, Edvard Beneš. Third person is a leader of anti-Nazi resistance movement in Yugoslavia and later a leading member of Yugoslavian communists, Josip Broz Tito. These persons were chosen in order to introduce interethnic and interconfessional disputes on the area of selected crown lands of the Habsburg Monarchy from the half of the nineteenth century onwards, the history of the World War I, national conflicts during the period between the two world wars and the post-war history. It is not clearly apparent why the author did selected those three names but there cannot be any objections to this selection. As professor Suppan stated during an interview concerning his piece: “*This is the history of conflicts in the Central Europe and between individual nations. Germans, Czechs, Austrians, Croats, Poles, Slovaks, Serbs connected in the conflict of nations.*”¹

The opening, quite extensive, part is dedicated to the overview of the research and asking questions and then briefly introducing the life stories of the three main characters mentioned in the name of the book. According to the author, those characters are not connected in any way with the exceptions that can be deduced by readers easily. That all of them were born in the area of Austria-Hungary, were more or less of the same generation and they were all baptised and later left the church. The main milestones of the piece are quite logically set in years 1848, 1918, 1939, 1945. The main word appearing in headlines of majority of important chapters and subchapters is the word conflict — *Konfliktgemeinschaft, Konfliktgeschichte* — this way the author characterized the structure of the first volume where he thoroughly analyzed political and national conflicts in Bohemia, Croatia-Slavonia and in other “South-Slovenian” areas of the Habsburg Monarchy. Those conflicts are correctly attributed to the upswing of modern nationalism and to economic reasons. The chapters dedicated to the interwar period describe complicated and multi-layered national situation in Czechoslovakia, the state that more or less inherited national diversity of Austria-Hungary, and in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was the name of Yugoslavia till 1929. However, in comparison to the previous chapters, the author decided to elabo-

1 <http://issuu.com/palackyuniversity/docs/zurnal2311>, [cit. 2015–09–04].

rate more thoroughly on the international politics and adumbrated the connection between the newly formed system of the succeeding countries and the established League of Nations that got the opportunity to supervise minority policy of some countries, respectively should the minorities had felt dissatisfied, they could have complained about the actions of their governments. During this period the attempts to form economical alliances (eg. German-Austrian Customs Union) played an important part by imitating, in a sense, the former multinational Habsburg Monarchy.

The second volume of Suppan's work is dealing with Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia from 1939 to 1945, Yugoslavia from 1941 to 1945, in order to follow it up with analysis of logical post-war events that he connects with vengeance, revenge and punishment for those who committed the previous abominations. Arnold Suppan proved to be a great expert on war and post-war events in Central and Southeast Europe. The conclusion of this part of the monograph deals with, to a certain degree controversial, topic of expulsion, forced displacement and ethnic changes, firstly in Czechoslovakia and then also in Yugoslavia. Those passages were commented on with a thoroughness so specific for the author. The conclusion of the second volume is devoted to chapters about the application of the principle of collective guilt (the decrees of Czechoslovak President and the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia resolve) and remembering and historicisation. The third volume is independently focused on the works cited and also contains an extensive index.

Suppan's monograph offers an erudite, and for the reader also a tough, perspective on the history of conflicts in the Habsburg and post-Habsburg area while skilfully alternating dense factual texts with polemic passages and micro studies with broader historical units. The monograph is not a biography of three persons, as the title suggests, but a description of conflicts and atrocities in Central and Southeast Europe. From the conflict history and modern history perspective it is a highly coherent and extensive monograph that is unique not only for its length (more than 2,000 pages) but also for its geographical scope both from the point of view of Arnold Suppan and the *Institut für Neuzeit- und Zeitgeschichtsforschung* of Austrian Academy of Sciences. Taking the length into consideration it is obvious that there are some things in the monograph that could have been handled differently and better but it must be stated that professor Arnold Suppan topped his scientific endeavour in a completely magnificent manner.

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