

ACHIEVEMENTS, STRESSES AND HAZARDS  
OF DEMOCRACY IN THE FIRST  
CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

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The First Czechoslovak Republic was the only state of Central Europe during the interwar period that remained a democracy until it was destroyed by external forces. To be sure, it was a democracy with little luster; the assessment of its achievements in scholarly literature — depending on the observer's origin or point of view — is to a surprising degree negative. This article attempts to point out the achievements of the democratic institutions of Czechoslovakia, but at the same time to enumerate the weak points of the democracy, which resided especially in the tension between a constitution on the French model and an entirely different, complex society, as well as in the sphere of political culture and the political behavior of those held state functions. Democracy in Czechoslovakia appears here as a viable political order with specific stresses and some serious hazards, which, taken as a whole, were not responsible for the downfall of the state, but did offer National Socialist Germany an opening to assail the democracy.