ABSTRACTS

FROM POLNA TO PRAGUE: THE ROUTE TO THE SLÁNSKÝ TRIAL

Jan Gerber

This contribution describes, in a longterm perspective, the nationalistic and anti-Semitic tendencies, which culminated in the Slánský trial in Prague in 1952. Using the example of the biography of diplomat and author F. C. (Franz Carl) Weiskopf, who in 1952 was relieved of his post as ambassador to China and later left Czechoslovakia for the GDR, the author demonstrates that the Prague lawsuits were due to an intersection of two lines of conflict: a rather short-term ideological axis, where both the traditions of the workers’ movement and the Manichaemism of the early Cold War period had an effect, and a long sequence of ethnic affiliations. According to the author, in Czechoslovakia the Soviet switch of positions in the Near East coincided with the aftereffects of the nationality conflicts and Jewish acculturation dating back to the 19th century. Thus, the Slánský tribunal continued the tradition of the Moscow trials of 1936-1938 as well as those of both trials against Leopold Hilsner in 1899 and 1900, the last grand trials with ritual murder charges in the Bohemian Lands of the old Habsburg Monarchy.

“SORORAL GREETINGS” FROM THE WEST

Western Women in the Czechoslovak Press, 1948-1968

Judith Brehmer

This contribution examines press reports covering the topic of women in the Western bloc published by Czechoslovak print media between 1948 and 1968, against the backdrop of the Cold War. The author bases her analysis on the assumption that foreigner stereotypes always reflect one’s own values and opinions, and goes on to present reasons for Czechoslovak media publishing items on Western women. Thus, when Stalinism was in full swing, the press focused on motherhood and active peace promoting as traits common to women in both East and West. The author concludes that this happened in order to legitimize for their female and male readers the concept of what constitutes a socialist woman. Moreover, reports that women in the West suffered economic exploitation served as evidence that socialism was superior to capitalism. With Czechoslovakia opening up, in a social sense, after 1956, the population came in contact with new models of femininity which opened new horizons for individual life plans and fostered intensive debates.