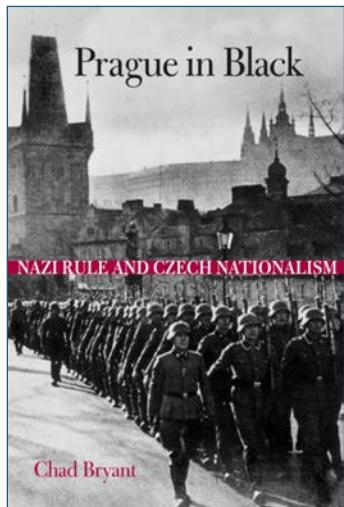


2006-2007 Hans Rosenberg Book Prize Laudatio

Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Harvard University Press, 2007)



The Hans Rosenberg Book Prize Committee is pleased to announce that Chad Bryant's *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*, published by Harvard University Press, is the winner of the Hans Rosenberg Prize for the best book published in 2006 and 2007.

Prague in Black contributes significantly to de-essentializing and localizing what is so boldly being called national identity. Bryant offers a complex and provocative picture of nationality politics. It is one in which, as he notes, there are "few heroes, few straight lines, many tragic absurdities, and many more unintended outcomes."

Prague in Black leads readers from post-World War I Czechoslovakia, dramatically undermined as an independent state by the Munich Agreement, and the country's occupation by Nazi Germany to the height of the Second World War and the immediate postwar period. Chad Bryant focuses on how Nazi authorities and Czech politicians embarked on distinct attempts to forge a coherent national identity in one of Central Europe's most prominent, ethnically mixed regions. His close reading and sophisticated interpretation of a wide array of sources allow a plethora of insights into the Nazis' monstrous program of demographic and national engineering as well as into the efforts to create an ethnically homogeneous Czech nation.

Prague in Black also takes a view from below; it captures the everyday life consequences and absurdities of the genocidal Germanization policy caught in its own contradictions and ambiguities. With great sophistication, Bryant delineates the complex texture of situational moments, subjective loyalties, and pragmatic interests that generated new forms of national self-identification on the part of the German and Czech population. The book questions the boundaries—imposed and self chosen—between these closely intertwined groups. It contrasts how Czechs under occupation and those in exile defined and practiced "acting nationally" in distinctive ways.

Weaving together various strands of historiography, from discourse analysis to social, political and international history, this impressive first book exemplifies the virtues of historical scholarship that transcends disciplinary confines. Presented in an eloquent narrative that is

accessible to non-experts, Chad Bryant's *Prague in Black* offers a model for capturing the entangled histories of Central Europe.

The Hans Rosenberg Book Prize Committee extends its warm congratulations to Chad Bryant.

The 2006-2007 Hans Rosenberg Book Prize committee

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