
NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

STANLEY Z. PECH, 1924–1985

The death of Stanley Z. Pech of the University of British Columbia on 4 November 1985 in Vancouver, is a serious loss to historical scholarship on Eastern Europe. At 61, he was in the prime of his career.

Stanley Zdeněk Pech was born in Hradec Králové on 31 March 1924. After graduating from the gymnasium there, he studied at Charles University. He emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1948 and became a Canadian citizen. While struggling with economic adversity, he earned an M.A. in political science in 1950 at the University of Alberta. Then, having settled on the vocation of historian, he gained his Ph.D. in history in 1955 at the University of Colorado. His dissertation on František L. Rieger, sponsored by S. Harrison Thomson, was the first study in English on that important nineteenth century Czech liberal politician. Using this research, Pech published several solid articles on Rieger.

Pech began his academic career in 1955 as an assistant professor of social studies at Western Montana College of Education. In 1956 he joined the University of British Columbia as an assistant professor in the Department of Slavonic Studies. When the university's area studies program was revamped, he was transferred in 1967 to the Department of History. In 1971 he was promoted to professor of history. His expert bibliographical and linguistic knowledge helped raise the university's library's Slavic collection to significant status.

In the 1960s Pech's research and writing concentrated on Czech history in the nineteenth century and on East European historiography. His major work, *The Czech Revolution of 1848* (1969), was the first comprehensive account of that event in any language and was hailed especially for its attention to the largely ignored roles of peasants, women, and students. Thereafter he undertook comparative studies of the political cultures of the peoples of Eastern Europe from 1848 to World War II. His well-conceived articles used statistics and biographical data to analyze voting patterns, party policies, and parliamentary behavior on a cross-national basis. At his death he was preparing a book on political-party behavior in the Austrian Reichsrat. His work illuminated the relations among social structures, national elites, and politics and opened new avenues for the study of traditional institutions.

Pech served the profession well as book reviewer, reader of manuscripts, and adviser to colleagues. His judgments were invariably balanced, insightful, and constructive. According to his colleagues at British Columbia, as a teacher he had a devoted student following. He was active in the Canadian Association of Slavists, whose president he became in 1966–1967; in the Czechoslovak History Conference as member-at-large and as vice-president in 1980–1982; and in the Slovak Studies Association. Since 1979, as a member of the American Committee to Promote Studies of the Habsburg Monarchy, he served on the board of editors of *Austrian History Yearbook*.

During his final illness, Stanley Pech set an inspiring example of courage and resolve. He is survived by his wife Věra and a married daughter. His friends and admirers here and abroad share their grief and will not soon forget him.

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