

Karel Durman

July 13, 1932 – April 14, 2023

On Friday 14 April 2023, one of the doyens of the Czech historian community, Karel Durman passed away in Uppsala at the blessed age of ninety. He began studying history at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in 1952, and after graduating he started working at the Department of General History. In 1961, he received a one-year scholarship to study at the London School of Economics and Political Science. His stay in Britain undoubtedly had a significant impact on his future views and attitudes. His activities in 1968 resulted in his departure from the faculty in 1970, first employed as a night watchman, then working in the State Technical Library. In 1980, the pressure from the communist regime finally forced him to emigrate to Sweden, where he worked at Uppsala University.

Durman initially focused on the history of the Middle East/Near East (*Blízký východ ve světové politice*, Praha 1959), and in 1969, together with M. Svoboda, published the Dictionary of Modern World History (*Slovník moderních světových dějin*). He published other works in exile. He explored Russian nationalism in his work *The Time of Thunderer: Mikhail Katkov. Russian nationalist*

extremism and the Failure of the Bismarckian System, 1871–1887 (New York 1988). He assessed the era of glasnost in the USSR in his extensive publication *The Reckoning: the Soviet Glasnost Debate: Systematic Crisis 1987–1990* (Uppsala 1991). After November 1989, Durman visited his old homeland several times and lectured at Charles University. Most importantly, he published his crucial works in Czech, *Útěk od praporů: Kreml a krize impéria 1964–1991* (Praha 1998) and, above all, two books analysing key events in world history from 1938 to the collapse of the USSR in 1991 (*Popely ještě žhavé I: Světová válka a nukleární mír 1938–1969*, Praha 2004; *Popely ještě žhavé II: Konec dobrodružství*, Praha 2009).

Durman's texts stand out above all for his deep knowledge of the chosen subject, reflecting an amazing knowledge of the relevant sources and literature. Last but not least, they are written in a lively language that captures the reader's attention. For Czech historiography, Durman's importance and role in the research of recent history are unquestionable. We honor his memory.

Aleš Skřivan Sr.