

Abstract

After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1939 the Slovak part of the republic under the German patronage declared an independent Slovak state. From geopolitical reasons the Slovak regime as an ally of Nazi Germany was actively involved in many military adventures including the participation in the campaign against the USSR. The fact of Slovak participation in the German campaign against the USSR has become one of the worst acts of Slovak Clerico-Fascist government for the constituting communist regime in the renewed Czechoslovakia. The unpleasant history has been covered by an appropriate historical interpretation and a search for the new socialist traditions. Captain Ján Nálepka has become one of the solid symbols of this effort. Left-wing intellectual, teacher and reserve officer of the Czechoslovak army was called to the Slovak army after the formation of the Slovak state. He received the Medal of Bravery for the fights against Hungary and Poland and he even participated in the campaign in the USSR. In 1943 he defected to the side of Soviet partisans and he fell at the end of the same year in the fight for the city Ovruch as a leader of Czechoslovak partisan section. For his work with Soviet partisans he posthumously received the title Hero of the USSR. In the thesis I investigate the concept and scope of the cult of Ján Nálepka as a socialist hero and I offer a critical comparison with my own view on the personality of this significant symbol of the fight against Nazism.

Keywords

Ján Nálepka, Slovakia, Second World War, Socialist Hero, Propaganda