THE PROBLEM OF THE GERMAN MINORITY IN BOHEMIA IN THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF THE YEARS 1918—19

Francesco Leoncini

The article begins with an appraisal of the most significant declarations made by President Wilson in the course of the First World War. The author shows that the ideological content of his policy cannot be traced back to the sole principle of self-determination, as the Sudeten Germans believed at the time; it had broader scope, and its roots may be found in the spirit of American democracy. In Wilson’s declarations the principle of self-determination applied above all to the small nations. In fact, he seemed even willing to limit its applicability where this furthered these countries’ aspirations. For various reasons, the Sudeten Germans could never expect to gain special attention from Wilson, though it was precisely on this that they placed all their hopes, narrowing his political ideology down solely to the assertion of the right of self-determination.

The Entente powers and the USA were convinced of the need for a federalistic restructuring of the Danube monarchy. Nevertheless they long held to the idea of the inviolability of the Empire, changing their position ever more rapidly only from the spring of 1918 on.

The Sudeten Germans had entrusted their fate to the peace negotiations in the hope that their own demands would be fulfilled. They thus looked for something which the negotiations simply could not yield. The delegates of the Weimar Republic and of German Austria who were summoned to Paris had no choice but to recognize the power-political facts of the situation.

THE GERMAN BOHEMIAN QUESTION, 1918—1919, AND THE AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONSHIP

Hanns Haas

The German Bohemian question heavily burdened relations between Czechoslovakia and Austria in 1918—1919. In their bilateral relations, the political representatives of the two states had to set aside the territorial claims resulting from the national state doctrine, at least to the degree imposed by the exigencies of the smooth building of the new state structure. But Austrian political circles (the Czechoslovaks are not dealt with here) were unable to follow in the internal political sphere the same road of a rational national policy that they took in the agreement with Prague.

On the basis of newly accessible sources, the article describes the subjective self-understanding of the Austrian Social Democrats and the Vienna Govern-
ment, and by means of an analysis of the policy vis-à-vis German Bohemia, elaborates the objective function of this policy in the above-outlined sense. The author deals with the economic negotiations between the two new states, the administration of German Bohemia, the attempts at a German-Czech settlement, as well as the attitude of the German Bohemian population itself and the activity of the Bohemian, Viennese and foreign governments. A second part will deal with developments up to the Renner-Beneš agreement of January 1920.

GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE URANIUM MINES OF JÁCHYMOW, 1945—1950

Otto Böss

The utilization of about 5000 German war prisoners in the uranium mines of Jáchymov (St. Joachimsthal) in the years 1945—1950 is a largely unknown chapter of postwar history. On the basis of sources that have only recently become available, the author describes the fate of this group of German war prisoners, which though relatively small numerically, was not without significance in the larger economic-political and perhaps also strategic context. The prisoners engaged in the process of enriching uranium ore — which brought hardly any benefit to the Czechoslovak economy but was undoubtedly of strategic importance for the Soviet Union. This study describes in detail the living conditions of the thousands of German war prisoners used for this purpose on Czechoslovak territory.

ON THE PHENOMENOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF POLITICAL HUMOR IN EASTERN EUROPE

Jörg K. Hoenscher

Over the last twenty years some 2500 underground political jokes from the USSR and the East European people's democracies, dealing critically with questions of Communist ideology and the socialist social order, were collected. The evaluation of this collection has revealed that 32% contained sharp, even bitter attacks on the Communist regime. The great majority, almost 64%, were characterized not so much by an aggressive stance toward Communism as by detached, matter-of-fact criticism of the topics of the day. Jokes aimed at popularizing or making more attractive the objects dealt with account for 4% of the collection. About 40% of the jokes surveyed are probably of Jewish origin, but many (c. 25—30%) — including some of the most brilliant — were simply "inspir-