DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE EXPULSION OF THE SUDETEN GERMANS

Peter Burian

In 1951 Dr. Hans Lukaschek, at that time Federal German Minister for Expellees, appointed a commission to collect and examine all available sources of information concerning the expulsion of the German population from eastern central Europe after the end of World War II, and to prepare a documentation for publication. The commission — consisting of an archivist, a specialist in international law and four historians — worked under the chairmanship of Prof. Th. Schieder (Cologne).

The documents referring to the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans were published in 1957 as Volume IV of the documentation. They consist of 133 individual items, most of them accounts of personal experiences, since only few official documents are available. No document was accepted without evidence of its authenticity. The commission had to be convinced that the information given was strictly relevant to a given situation or a particular region, and that it was absolutely correct. Veracity was checked by comparison with parallel reports.

An analysis of these documents reveals several significant points: 1. Profound shock at the fact that a person could suddenly be robbed of all material, social and legal security; 2. The extent to which the Czechs observed their own laws and regulations; 3. The susceptibility of all strata of the Czech population to nationalist chauvinist slogans and the inhuman consequences of these and on the other hand, the very human attitude of many Czechs; 4. The inability of most of those who supplied information to see the connection between German politics before 1945 and the Czech reaction.

CZECH COMMENTARIES ON PROBLEMS OF TRANSFER AND THE FACTS OF TRANSFER

Oswald von Kostrba-Skalitzky

An analysis of Czech commentaries on the problem of the transfer of the Sudeten German population reveals two fundamental aspects of the question: the small number of such commentaries and their defective historical interpretation.

This is inconsistent with the significance of the transfer of the German population for the Bohemian lands. The discrepancy between the transfer action and its effect upon the Czech people can be explained not only by a study of the modern Czech political consciousness but also by the formation of the transfer concept.
A study of the problem reveals that the principle of expulsion could only be conceived by Czech political groups representing social, political and historical views in direct contradiction to Bohemian political tradition. The article examines the inception and development of the transfer idea, and defines the social and political milieu in which the principle of expulsion could be implemented as a measure in a mistaken Bohemian policy.

THE SUDeten GERmans IN CEhосOSLOvAKIa AFTER 1945

Margaretha Reindl-Mommsen

In her introduction the author outlines the number, demographic structure and geographical distribution of the Germans who were retained in Czechoslovakia during the expulsion period in 1945—46, and raises the question why they remained at all. She goes on to discuss the development of this German minority in the course of the past twenty years in the light of various factors governing its life.

Deprived of power and rights, the situation of the German population in Czechoslovakia in the post-war period only began to improve in 1949—50. The milder treatment of the remaining Germans in Czechoslovakia which then began can be attributed partly to the change of government in February 1948 and partly to the proclamation of the G.D.R. A study of the concessions made to the Germans from this juncture for the development of an independent cultural existence reveals that the basis for their establishment as a minority — German schools — is lacking. In comparison with the position of other minority groups in Czechoslovakia, Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians, who have fully-developed minority school systems, the Germans are under-privileged. This fact must be viewed in the light of the articles of the Czechoslovak constitution of 1960 governing the rights of nationalities. Whereas the Poles, Ukrainians and Hungarians are granted the means whereby they can cultivate their nationality, the Germans, although far greater in number than the Poles and Ukrainians, are not even mentioned. In this way the Germans left in Czechoslovakia have become the object of a deliberate policy of assimilation.