

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GERMAN POLITICAL PRESS IN THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC (1918—1925)

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The author examines the development of the German political press in the early years of the ČSR, with emphasis on the structure of the organs of the German parties. Used as sources were numerous newspaper catalogues and statistical publications, as well as official pronouncements by the German parties on their press. In addition, extensive newspaper files were read and statements by contemporaries on this subject appraised.

Departing from the differing structure of the German and Czech press, the specific situation of the German press is illuminated. Decentralization was visible in the high number of small, low-circulation newspapers, a factor which frequently resulted in weak standards.

In depicting the initial situation of the press of the individual parties, special attention is devoted to the 1918—1920 period; after the reorientation from Vienna to Prague, the German papers began in this period in which political parties were founded to develop a stronger party-political commitment. Following a description of individual party papers and their development in the Bohemian lands, the author presents an outline of the German party newspapers in Slovakia and a sketch of the largely independent papers as well as the semi-official newspapers. The study concludes with a structural comparison of the papers of the German parties. The author shows that the economic crisis that set in at the end of 1922 forced a sweeping restructuration of the party political press. The process of contraction induced by the critical financial situation of the papers and the ensuing movement toward concentration worked against the previously existing dispersion and strengthened the influence of the central organs. By the mid-1920's the press of most of the parties had achieved so stable a structure that there were hardly any changes in the years which followed.