

Arthur Herr hat die Erinnerungen Jessers durch Anmerkungen erläutert und durch ein Register erschlossen. Sie vermitteln scharfsinnige Überlegungen eines sudetendeutschen Politikers zu den nationalen Verhältnissen im böhmischen Raum.

Fürth

Harald Bachmann

*Sophie Welisch, Die Sudetendeutsche Frage 1918—1928.*

Verlag Robert Lerche, München 1980 (Veröffentlichung des Sudetendeutschen Archivs 15).

This study tries, rather unsuccessfully, to integrate three themes: the application of the League of Nations to the Sudeten Germans, the relationship between the Weimar Republic and the Sudeten Germans and the reasons „why the Czechs could not consolidate the Republic and win the loyalty of the minorities“. This last theme is in quotes because it represents a questionable, and unquestioned, assertion on the part of the author. This assertion is, however, typical of a major flaw which runs throughout the book and call its worth into question: it is history as viewed through the eyes of the Sudeten German „bürgerlich“ politicians of the 1920s and 1930s. Far from bringing us a balanced, dispassionate historical analysis — and if any historical problem deserves such an analysis it is that of the Czech-German tragedy — Welisch simply rehashes old, discredited arguments which view the German-Czech problem in terms of black and white shibboleths, with the Czechs being the villains and the Sudeten Germans the innocent victims.

The author is aided in this travesty by the fact that she limits her study to the period 1918—1928, thus being able conveniently to condemn „activism“ as a „quantité négligeable“ while ignoring the fact that from 1926 to the outbreak of the great depression a tentative political rapprochement developed between the two peoples within the framework of the republic. Convenient also to her purpose is her use of sources. The most recent monograph cited dates from 1973; she ignores entirely important works, such as that of F. Gregory Campbell, which have appeared in the last ten years. Nor does she use neutrally generated statistics to sustain her arguments. Rather, she relies uncritically on contemporary, often tendentious, secondary sources for her factual information. As for her primary sources, here although she mentions the stenographic protocol of the Czechoslovak National Assembly in her bibliography, her footnotes cite exclusively German, English and a few French sources.

All this leads the reviewer regretfully to the conclusion that Welisch's book is not the kind of dispassionate history one would expect, particularly from an American scholar with some distance and objectivity, but rather an outdated political tract; not history but an historical curiosity.

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