

credit operations of world trade – that is England' (p. 6.). Furthermore, we are told that later in 1917 the American conception of economic and political strategy was 'confronted by an unexpected reality' which forced American decision makers to work out the tactics for the 'blocking of the revolutionary wave and the eventual liquidation of Soviet power.' This is what the late Professor Hugh Seton-Watson used to refer to as 'globlydegook.'

The first half of this brief volume deals with American preparations for the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and the activities of the American delegation there. The author argues that American and British plans for the western frontiers of Germany were motivated by determination to strengthen its economic potential (pp. 81–3). This is only half correct, but, in any case the Americans acted thus not only to keep the Germans out of the clutches of the Bolsheviks.

The author admits that even from the point a view of 'Big Business' (in English in the text on p. 92), the United States seemed to be little concerned with the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Indeed, the case of Hungary seems to show, perhaps even to Raková, that President Wilson's anti-Bolshevik crusade had limits.

The final part of the book, (pp. 100–137), deals with American commercial and financial links to Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, and the information provided here is a useful summary based on secondary material.

Raková admits that the American ideological offensive was influential among the Central European bourgeoisie and 'even a part of the working class' who saw in Wilson a real 'liberator'. Fortunately, the 'destruction of these illusions in the great crisis at the beginning of the thirties helped to create the conditions for a new polarisation of class forces and created an opening for local right-wing and fascist forces in a number of European countries, but at the same time contributed to the cleansing of the ideology of the working-class movement from reformism and social democratism and to the restoration of its revolutionary orientation' (p. 98). I hope that the Czechoslovak readers of this book are conscious of the immense and beneficial service made to their country by fascist regimes such as that of Hitler. This book belongs to the same crude historical school as those in *Wilsonovská legenda v dějinách ČSR* by J. S. Hájek and *Pravda o Masarykovi* by J. Pacht (both published in 1953). That such ideas can still appear in the early 1980s is evidence of the intellectual poverty of Czechoslovak historiography.

London

Harry Hanak

*Mendelsohn, Ezra: The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars.*

Indiana University Press, First Midland Book Edition (first edition: 1983), Bloomington, IN. 1987, 300 S.

When *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* appeared in 1983, it was greeted as a welcome addition to the historiography of East Central Europe. The same is true of the revised edition of the volume, which has recently been published in paperback form.

In the preface and introductory remarks, the author explains both his definition of East Central Europe and his use of sources. The former appears to have primarily been designed to limit the scope of the work to the Ashkenazi Jews (those of German origin). Concerning the latter, Mendelsohn has mainly depended on English, Hebrew, Polish and Yiddish-language sources as well as some French and German materials. Sources are predominantly secondary, other than those employed in the relatively lengthy chapter on Poland, one of the author's areas of expertise, in which he has done original work using primary material. The bibliographic essay, which comprises almost exclusively English-language citations, is a goldmine for anyone working in that language.

After a brief introductory essay, separate chapters treat the Jewish communities of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Lithuania, and Estonia and Latvia. Concluding remarks and the bibliographical essay follow. While the chapters vary in length and content, Mendelsohn has standardized the topics discussed to some degree while addressing the particulars of the Jewish communities and the political situation in each country. Although the author has included cultural, demographic, and socio-economic aspects in his survey of the internal developments of the Jewish communities concerned, his focus is predominantly political. Mendelsohn's point of departure is that, with the exception of the Baltic countries and Czechoslovakia, relations between the Jews and the non-Jews in interwar East Central Europe had been bad from the outset and deteriorated markedly during the 1930's. One of author's main goals is to explain the "obsession with the Jewish question" in East Central Europe and to describe the impact of anti-Semitism both on the Jewish communities and on the politics of the region (p. 1).

In the chapter on Czechoslovakia, Mendelsohn discusses the three Jewish communities, which like the non-Jewish communities of the First Republic, varied considerably from west to east. In addition to the West European type Jewry of the Czech lands, there was the Jewish community of Slovakia, somewhere between the Western and the Eastern European types, and the Jewish community of Subcarpathian Rus, which was classically Eastern European. The author places the three communities in a historical context, describing traditional Jewish-gentile relations, including the effect of the Czech-German struggle for political supremacy in Bohemia and Moravia had on relations there; and the differing local levels of anti-Semitism. A demographic and socio-economic profile of the Jews in the interwar period follows. In the section on the relations of the Czechoslovak state with its Jewish citizens, Mendelsohn discusses the official attitude toward the Jews, which he describes as a "Czech-Jewish" alliance. Under the unwritten terms of the alliance, which the author argues was the result of a mixture of self-interest and the peculiar brand of Czech national liberalism on the Czech side, Jews were expected to be loyal to the state, though not necessarily to become "Czechs of the Jewish persuasion." Both Jewish nationality and religion were accepted modes of self-identification. The author also discusses internal Jewish developments as well as the rise of radical politics with its corresponding anti-Semitism, and the collapse of the First Republic.

As concerns Czechoslovakia, certain points invite additional discussion. Firstly, given the relatively friendly climate of the First Republic vis-à-vis the Jews – Mendelsohn's

Czech-Jewish alliance – more explanation of the “pogrom-like incidents” (p. 150) and the “manifestations of popular anti-Semitism” during 1918 and 1919 (p. 152) throughout Czechoslovakia is needed. Greater distinction should be made between the officially non-anti-Semitic policy of the governments of Thomas G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš on the one hand and continuing anti-Semitic attitudes, including among some Czech political circles, on the other. This helps to explain both the resurfacing of anti-Semitism among some segments of the Czech population in 1938 and the attitude of the government of the Second Republic toward the Jews. Secondly, the Jewish Party’s “energetic and effective war against all manifestations of anti-Semitism” (p. 157) should be dated and any allies in this battle mentioned. Further, because those of Jewish origin played a significant role in the relatively prominent left-wing political parties in the First Republic, the brief comment on the greater support the Jews gave the small, illegal communist party in Poland as compared to the support the Jews gave the legal, and during the 1920’s, large communist party in Czechoslovakia (p. 156) needs expansion. Finally, given the important role it played in the 1930’s, the Sudeten German Party requires more description than “Konrad Henlein’s pro-Nazi Party” (p. 163).

The above remarks are not intended to detract from this important book. Certainly, Mendelsohn has done a first-rate job of assimilating a large amount of diverse literature on a complicated topic and synthesizing it into a balanced and comprehensible volume.

Porto

Nancy Wingfield

*Deyl, Zdeněk: Sociální vývoj Československa 1918–1938 [Die soziale Entwicklung der Tschechoslowakei 1918–1938].*

Academia, Prag 1986, 221 S., 16 Abb.

Das Buch Deyls behandelt die Sozialpolitik der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik und ihre konkreten Auswirkungen auf die soziale Lage der Masse der Bevölkerung. Dabei stehen die sozialen Großgruppen der Industriearbeiterschaft, des Kleingewerbes und der landwirtschaftlichen Arbeiter im Vordergrund. Die Darstellung der materiellen Verhältnisse der abhängig Beschäftigten in der Ersten Republik geht über die unmittelbar von sozialpolitischen Entscheidungen bestimmten Strukturen (beispielsweise Alters-, Kranken- und Arbeitslosenversicherung) hinaus und erfaßt auch und teilweise sehr ausführlich Indikatoren der sozialen Lage der Bevölkerung, die nicht qua Sozialpolitik hervorgebracht wurden (beispielsweise die Lohnentwicklung). Gelegentliche Ausblicke auf sozialpolitische Konzeptionen einzelner politischer Parteien der Zwischenkriegsrepublik und auf soziale und gewerkschaftliche Bewegungen in den böhmischen Ländern und in der Slowakei runden die Darstellung ab. Der Anhang zu der Untersuchung enthält eine kommentierende Übersicht über die wichtigsten Maßnahmen der Sozialgesetzgebung zwischen 1918 und 1938 (S. 179–189) und eine kleine Dokumentation mit dem Text des Gesetzes über die achtstündige Arbeitszeit vom 19. Dezember 1918 und einer Resolution der tschecho-