

DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE EXPULSION OF THE SUDETEN GERMANS

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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.