

reviews

Jan KUKLÍK – Jan NĚMEČEK, *Od národního státu ke státu národností? Národnostní statut a snahy o řešení menšinové otázky v Československu v roce 1938*, Praha: Karolinum 2013. 450 pages.

Czech-German relations or, more precisely, life of the German minority in the First Czechoslovak Republic were and certainly still are a much discussed topic. Several monographs on this phenomenon have been published recently – compare for example A. TÓTH, L. NOVOTNÝ, M. STEHLÍK, *Národnostní menšiny v Československu 1918–1938. Od státu národního ke státu národnostnímu?*, Praha 2012; M. BURIAN, *Sudetoněmecké nacionalistické tělovýchovné organizace a československý stát v letech 1918 až 1938*, Praha 2012; J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939. Migrace z okupovaného pohraničí ve druhé republice*, Praha 2013 or J. BALCAROVÁ, *“Jeden za všechny, všichni za jednoho!” Bund der Deutschen a jeho předchůdci v procesu utváření “utváření sudetoněmecké identity”*, Praha 2013.

A monograph of renowned historians Jan Kuklík and Jan Němeček successfully fills the gaps in the research of coexistence of Czech and national minorities in interwar Czechoslovakia while dealing with the proposal of National Statute in 1938. This statute tried to resolve a difficult situation of Czechoslovak state in the end of 1930s. It should have been an important attempt to reform a minority policy of the Czechoslovak Government and it should have referred not only to the German minority, but to all other national minorities and their legal statute. It should have dealt with the language law and the policy of education, public service and social security policies and the issue of personal rights of the national minorities. The main aim of processed legal arrangement should have been the release of international pressure for Czechoslovakia based on Hitler's policy after the Anschluss of Austria. This policy frankly exploited the demands of the Sudeten Germans, using these claims as a part of effort to carry the territorial and political claims, which led to the Munich Agreement and subsequently to the Second World War.

The book is based on the more or less chronological interpretation of the given problem. The authors start by the overview of Czech-German relations at the time of Hitler's ascension to power until the Anschluss in order to focus on the National Statute, a document, which in the case of its approval would have transformed the Czechoslovakia to a state of nationalities. The first chapter deals with the proclamation of the Statute, at that time called a minority one. After the radio broadcast of Milan Hodža's speech it became apparent that the term "minority" is inappropriate, it had to be changed. The biggest contribution of the paper to the research lies in the two chapters (*Statut a vyjednávání s národnostními menšinami* and *Mezinárodní reflexe souvislosti národnostního statutu z pohledu britské diplomacie*), where in the first chapter Jan Kuklík and Jan Němeček evaluate the negotiation concerning the National Statute and its adoption by the given minorities. The latter mentioned chapter deals with the reflexion of the events from the Britain's point of view, because London and consequently Paris put their pressure on the President Beneš and the Czechoslovak Government to come to terms with the Sudeten German Party. German activist parties had already been on the edge of the interest and the political activism in fact ended after the Anschluss of Austria. A reader will appreciate even the documentary part of the paper, where the transcription of the radio broadcast of Milan Hodža or the unabridged version of the National Statute can be found.

As mentioned earlier, the given monograph stand for an important contribution to the research on the topic of the national minorities in interwar Czechoslovakia. There is no doubt that the authors helped to fill the gaps in the research concerning the given historical period of time. There should be mentioned the monograph by Andrej Tóth, Lukáš Novotný and Michal Stehlík: *Národnostní menšiny v Československu 1918–1938. Od státu národního ke státu národnostnímu?*, published in 2012, which covers the issue of relation between the national minorities and the development of the National Statute in a sufficient manner.

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In conclusion, I would like to make more accurate few things incorrectly stated in the monograph. On the page 189 a French Envoy to London is mentioned while the rank of Ambassador should had been used because the diplomatic relations on the highest level had been already established between the countries before the First World War. Subsequently, the phrase “sir Vansittart” had been used on the pages 212 and 246 while the title Sir usually connects with the first name (Sir Robert or Sir Robert Vansittart). On the page 258 the name of the main representative of the Hungarian minority Janos Esterhazy is misspelled as Janosz.

However, these are only marginal objections that in no way disparage the quality of the publication. It can therefore be concluded that Jan Kuklík’s and Jan Němeček’s monograph meets demanding requirements and certainly deserves attention not only of readers who are experts in the First Republic but also of the lay public.

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