

The author discusses these events, as seen in their Marxist-Leninist Polish domestic setting, on 263 informative pages. The book is a valuable inside account of the penultimate stage in the disappearance of Poland's Jewish population from the annals of history.

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GLEICHGEWICHT, REVISION, RESTAURATION: DIE AUSSENPOLITIK DER ERSTEN TSCHECHOSLOWAKISCHEN REPUBLIK IM EUROPA-SYSTEM DER PARISER VORORTEVERTRÄGE. Edited by *Karl Bosl*. Munich and Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1976. 424 pp.

At its conferences in November 1975 and April 1976, the Collegium Carolinum of the University of Munich dealt with the foreign policy of the First Czechoslovak Republic. The conference papers are published in this volume, which maintains the consistently high standard of all Collegium Carolinum publications. The small countries neighboring Czechoslovakia get full—one might even say superb—treatment at the hands of Jörg Hoensch, Karl Richter, Peter Burian, and Detlef Brandes. Burian also presents a perceptive study of Beneš's policy in the League of Nations and of his political thought. It is amusing to be reminded of the cult of personality that Beneš enjoyed and encouraged as president, even among the Sudeten Germans. Hans Lemberg presents an equally important paper on the Little Entente.

The articles dealing with Czechoslovak policy toward the countries outside the immediate Central European area are not as satisfactory, except for the paper by Oswald Kostrba-Skalicky on the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Without consulting Russian sources, he deals with diplomatic relations, with the "Slavonic" contacts between the two nations, the role of the Czechoslovak Communists, and the change of policy inaugurated by Beneš in 1935. William Sheldon and Peter Hartmann on American and French policy, respectively, treat only certain specified areas, while Wolf Gruner's paper, "British Interest," is an analysis of British involvement in the Central and East European area as a whole and is not concerned specifically with Czechoslovakia. Francesco Leoncini makes a valiant attempt to explain Italian-Czechoslovak relations on the basis of inadequate documentary material.

The articles which will receive the greatest attention are the four dealing with Czechoslovakia's overmighty neighbor, Germany. Masaryk and Beneš were conscious of the precarious nature of Czechoslovak independence. All policy, both internal and external, had to be subjected to the maintenance of independence. Moreover, although Czechoslovakia could no doubt play a significant part in maintaining European peace and therefore her independence, she was but an object of international policy. It was the Great Powers that disposed: Czechoslovak freedom of action was limited to subordinating its policy to that of one of the Great Powers. There were only three possible alternatives, and even these alternatives were more apparent than real, given the nature of the Czechoslovak Republic and of international relations. Czechoslovak independence and the further development of the "Czechoslovak" nation could be achieved by dependence on the Entente powers plus a rejuvenated Russia (in the very early days it was to be a democratic Russia); or in close alliance with the smaller states of Central and Eastern Europe; or in dependence on Germany. These alternatives were mutually exclusive. Alliance with Germany was as unthinkable in the Weimar era as in the Hitler era; Beneš and Masaryk had not spent their lives fighting Pan-Germanism in order to lead their liberated peoples into subjection. A bloc of allied East and Central European states was equally excluded; the differences between Poland and Czechoslovakia were too great to be overcome. The Little Entente

had a different meaning in Prague, in Belgrade, and in Bucharest. Only dependence on the Entente and its creature, the League of Nations, was feasible.

The most original contributions to this volume, by F. Gregory Campbell and Peter Krüger, show the extent to which Germany, even Weimar Germany, was planning to use the Sudeten Germans as a means of exercising influence in Czechoslovakia. This does not mean, however, that Hitler's policy was merely a continuation of traditional German policy, a well-known thesis put forward by A. J. P. Taylor as long ago as 1961; Krüger and S. Dolezel underline unmistakably the revolutionary nature of Hitler's policy. Indeed, Dolezel's article, based on careful archival research, provides little-known facts about divergent German views on the future of truncated Czechoslovakia between the time of the Munich agreement and the German invasion on March 15, 1939.

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DECRETA REGNI HUNGARICAE / GESETZE UND VERORDNUNGEN
UNGARNS, 1301–1457. Compiled by *Franciscus Döry*. Edited and annotated by
Georgius Bónis and *Vera Bácskai*. Publicationes Archivi Nationalis Hungarici/
Publikationen des ungarischen Staatsarchivs, 2. Fontes/Quellenpublikationen 11.
Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 491 pp. \$28.00.

Ferenc Döry performed a significant service for medieval historians when, more than half a century ago, he started to collect Hungarian royal decrees. The groundwork was prepared for him by earlier Hungarian historians, especially by the father and son team of Kovachiches in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This volume was born when the coeditors, Georgius Bónis and Vera Bácskai, joined Döry in the late 1950s. The book offers a modern edition of *decreta* issued between 1301 and 1457, and will be followed by other volumes. When completed, the work will provide researchers an invaluable guide for the study of politics and law in medieval Hungary.

In defining the meaning of royal decrees, the editors started with the well-known fact that law in medieval Hungary was a program, not a set of inflexible regulations. It was a foundation upon which jurists could build when examining particular court cases. Actually, Hungary had four different sets of laws at that time. "Lex" was the "good old law," which originated from the holy kings of early Hungarian history, and carried great weight because of the prestige of their authors. "Ius," on the other hand, connoted "divine law," generally expressed through the canon law of the church. In case of a conflict "ius" had priority over "lex," since the former was regarded as the will of God. Mores provided another set of laws which were respected for their common sense and endurance. Finally, royal *decreta* constituted a fourth set of laws which had to be observed because they were issued by the ruling power of the country.

The power of a *decretum* was great since it represented the will of the sovereign in council with his barons and prelates and with the approval—with increasing frequency in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries—of the nobility assembled in a diet. But a *decretum* was generally valid only during the reign of the king who issued it. Its eventual survival depended upon its agreement with "lex," "ius," or customary law. Even during a king's lifetime the applicability of his *decreta* was circumscribed by "divine law." Hungarian judges must have had a hard time indeed in finding the "right" law in individual court cases! If a plaintiff demanded, the judge could decide a particular case by applying "lex" or customary law; but he ignored *decreta* or "ius" at the peril of either his body or his soul.