

WENZEL JAKSCH UND DIE SUDETENDEUTSCHE SOZIALDEMOKRATIE. By *Martin K. Bachstein*. Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, vol. 29. Munich and Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1974. 306 pp. DM 44.

Wenzel Jaksch was and remains one of the most controversial figures in the history of the Czechoslovak Republic. His policies, ideas, and actions, from the time he entered the political arena as a young man to his death in 1966, have made him a hero to some and anathema to others, and even resulted in the split in the German Social Democratic Party of Czechoslovakia in exile during World War II. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bachstein's book has become the target of criticism from both sides.

Wenzel Jaksch rose from the ranks to become, in 1938, chairman of the German Social Democratic Party. Despite the fact that he grew up in the Austro-Marxist Party, he was not an orthodox Marxist and he soon came into conflict with the leadership. Jaksch, who wanted to combine national aims with a socialist program and thus create a counterforce to the Sudeten German Party, believed in Czech-German cooperation before 1938. It is true, as Bachstein claims, that the old party chairman, Czech, was an Austro-Marxist, but Bachstein errs in stating that Czech lost sight of the raging nationality struggle. On the other hand, the author is probably correct in asserting that Otto Strasser and Emil Franzel (at that time an important member of the German Social Democratic Party) influenced Jaksch's ideas about popular nationalism and German national demands. The question of Beneš's intervention in the replacement of Czech by Jaksch as chairman is also controversial, and it appears that the author relies heavily on information received from J. W. Brügel.

The second part of the book deals with Jaksch's policies in exile and his dealings with Beneš, which finally resulted in the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia. Jaksch demanded a strict separation of Czech and German regions and even proposed a transfer of national minorities into their own national territories. Thus Bachstein concludes that Jaksch became the first to propose a transfer of population.

Bachstein had to contend with many difficulties in writing this book. The archives of the German Social Democratic Party, which were shipped to Amsterdam after the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, were lost. Although the author interviewed more than fifty people and tried to evaluate their opinions, their biased viewpoints explain the controversial nature of his work. But despite the fact that Bachstein knows the events only from second hand, this is a remarkable job. The main objection is that he relied too heavily on Emil Franzel, a renegade of the party. In general, however, the book is very well done and is a great contribution to the discussion of the history of Czech-German relations and of one of its main personalities.

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