

of relative unimportance. France did not abandon them, but from Locarno on the erroneous view of divisibility of peace prevailed, though disguised by the formula that peace in the West meant stabilization in the East. In 1928 the French tried to weaken their alliance with Poland, and they made efforts to defer to Italy to the detriment of the Little Entente. Although from a strictly French point of view the premature evacuation of the Rhineland may not have been very important, its consequences for the French Eastern alliance system were profound. Finally Locarno itself, which seemingly opened to Germany the chances of a full comeback, and consequently produced annoyances when Allied concessions did not come more rapidly and unconditionally, contributed in the long run to the Anschluss, Munich, and September 1939. Briand was no dreamer, but in a sense all he did was to fight a rear-guard action and exchange concessions for limited advantages for France and France alone. But this aspect of the story, which touches closely on the current work of this reviewer, has to be told elsewhere. Jacobson's excellent book will greatly facilitate the task.

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GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS, 1918-1933. By *Harald von Riekhoff*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971. xiv, 421 pp. \$15.00.

Few episodes of the long, often tempestuous history of German-Polish relations have drawn as much attention as the fifteen-year period from the end of World War I to the formal establishment of the Third Reich. Since Polish as well as non-Polish scholars have written extensively on this topic or specific aspects of it, Mr. Riekhoff's work can hardly be considered an original contribution on a neglected subject. Rather, he has combined the substantial body of secondary studies and published primary sources with new unpublished materials from the German Foreign Ministry files and, to a lesser extent, from the Polish archives, in order to produce a definitive study of German-Polish relations in the Weimar years. If sheer quantity of factual detail is the criterion of scholarly success, the author has reason to rejoice. Indeed, the book's chief strength is its wealth of consistent, conscientious documentation and its substantial body of information. In this regard, the detailed tables in the appendix merit special mention. Furthermore, the author skillfully relates foreign affairs to domestic developments in each country, thereby revealing the intimate connection between international relations and internal political considerations. Every issue of German-Polish relations became the subject of heated political discussion within the two polities, and assumed particular importance in such questions as the fate of the so-called optants and economic agreements. Riekhoff also displays a solid sense of the general international setting for his story, and frequently points out the role played by German-Polish affairs in Soviet, British, and French diplomatic calculations.

These merits notwithstanding, the book has several flaws. Its meticulous attention to detail and mass of information often overwhelm the reader to the point where he loses sight of the major themes central to the author's thesis of how both states needed, yet could not develop, viable, harmonious working relations. The overabundance of factual data also affects the author's style, which is ponderous and occasionally difficult to follow. Moreover, despite its broad base, the book tends to be uneven in its treatment of specific problems. The most notable example is

Riekhoff's discussion of the national minorities question. Although on most issues he consulted both German and Polish sources, in this instance he relied mainly on works produced either by postwar professional anti-Poles or former German nationalist leaders now residing in West Germany. The result is a chapter that is disproportionately and inaccurately apologetic for the German minority in Poland and openly critical of their treatment by the Polish state. On the other hand, there is little mention of the Polish minority in the Weimar Republic, a topic examined in depth by recent Polish historians. Criticism might also be leveled at the author's discussion of internal Polish political developments. Rather than using the rich, varied, and quite lively press of the period, the numerous contemporary publications on the German question, or the several fine recent studies of interwar Polish politics, Riekhoff draws mainly on German diplomatic dispatches and intelligence research reports from the *Auswärtiges Amt* to gauge the reaction of the Polish government and opposition circles to key issues in Polish-German relations. Consequently the entire book appears to consider these relations from the German point of view, although Riekhoff has gone to considerable pains to retain a detached personal objectivity in his analysis.

But these shortcomings should not obscure the overall worth of this book. Riekhoff has produced a major work of serious scholarship that should remain the definitive study of Polish-German relations during the Weimar era for some time to come. The book will also serve as a veritable encyclopedia of information for any scholar dealing with the diplomacy of interwar Europe, not merely Poland or Germany. It is a worthy monument to the author and his late mentor, Hajo Holborn.

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DER DEUTSCH-POLNISCHE SEPTEMBER 1939: EINE VOLKSGRUPPE
ZWISCHEN DEN FRONTEN. By *Peter Aurich*. Munich and Vienna:
Günter Olzog Verlag, 1969. 147 pp. DM 16, paper.

Such an emotional topic as the maltreatment of the German minority in Poland during the first days of the war in September 1939 may not be particularly rewarding for a historian's inquiry. For after the main facts have been established—the realistic estimate of the number of Germans killed is about four thousand—the conclusions are rather predictable. As can be expected, the outrages committed were the result more of anger and despair on the part of individuals than of premeditated and organized action by the authorities; the Polish government, never known for efficiency, was after all in hopeless chaos in those days. And equally predictable, the persecuted minority group did not serve as the kind of fifth column many Poles suspected it to be; for that to have happened, the German military operations had been organized too professionally and executed too swiftly.

To point out the limitations of the topic is not to say that the author has coped with it as well as he could have. His is a rather old-fashioned account, descriptive rather than analytical. Quoting extensively from interviews with survivors, he dwells on detailed descriptions of the various miseries inflicted on the *Volksdeutsche* by the outraged Poles. But in explaining the causes, he seldom goes beyond the general theme of cruelty of man to man. He never really faces in a straightforward fashion the problem of the Germans' loyalty—or the lack of it—toward the Polish state and the question how they tried or did not try to seek