

HANS STEINACHER: BUNDESLEITER DES VDA, 1933–1937: ERINNERUNGEN UND DOKUMENTE. Edited by *Hans-Adolf Jacobsen*. Schriften des Bundesarchivs, 19. Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1970. lxxviii, 623 pp. DM 48.

The editor of this volume has obviously overestimated the knowledge of foreign and probably also many German readers when he assumed that they would understand the title of his work. The abbreviations in the title were used about a half-century ago to describe German organizations and institutions. Thus the letters "VDA" stand for "Volksbund [before 1933 it was called Verein] für das Deutschtum im Ausland" ("People's League for Germans Living Abroad").

In his previous work on the instruments of German foreign policy, *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik, 1933–1938* (1968), Jacobsen made it clear that after 1933 the VDA became one of the auxiliaries of German foreign policy. Originally a private organization depending mainly on membership dues, the league concentrated on promoting cultural ties with Germans living abroad and especially with German minorities in the states of Germany's eastern neighbors. After 1933 the VDA could not avoid colliding with the totalitarian efforts of the National Socialist Party machine and the German government, which were unwilling to tolerate such work outside the framework of the party organization. The purpose of Jacobsen's book is to demonstrate how the VDA, under Steinacher's leadership, tried to resist the growing pressure to change the Germans living abroad into sounding boards and allies of the Hitlerite cult in the fatherland.

Based on Steinacher's autobiographical notes, on his widespread correspondence with VDA members and with party and government offices, and on personal interviews with Steinacher, the book depicts Steinacher's struggle, in which he was predestined to be the loser. Steinacher (born in 1892) has devoted all his life to work for the German element outside the Reich. As an Austrian German his wartime experience strengthened his conviction in the superiority of the German element over non-Germans in the multinational Habsburg army. He was active in the postwar struggle to defend the German position in Carinthia and Upper Silesia, and he fought against separatism in Western Germany. His early personal experiences are mirrored in his University of Frankfurt thesis in political science (1925) on the influence of economic factors on the postwar plebiscites in Upper Silesia and Carinthia. There is no question that Steinacher was a fervent patriot dedicated to the task of strengthening German consciousness among Germans living abroad and rallying them. Yet his deputy, Dr. Robert Ernst, a party member, resigned when he became convinced and concerned that Steinacher did not go far enough in assimilating the league to the National Socialist movement, whereby German foreign policy became endangered (p. 309). Stressing the right of self-determination or demanding protection of the German minorities, Steinacher nevertheless originally had been in favor of Hitler's policy of protesting against the injustices inflicted on Germany by the peace treaties, when Hitler, in the revisionist period of his foreign policy, proclaimed the *Volkstumsgedanke* as the leading principle of his "new order." Consequently Steinacher's *Weltanschauung* had much in common with National Socialism, and the editor finds it necessary to magnify subtle differences in order to give Steinacher a distinguishing profile. On the other hand, Steinacher's devotion to his task and his insight, which was deeper than that of his opponents, into the conditions of Germans living abroad did not allow him to identify and reconcile himself entirely with the aims and aspirations of the party.

But this is a biographical problem which must be regarded as subordinate to the insights offered by Jacobsen's edition for judging in the first place the differing VDA and governmental conceptions about and attitudes toward the Germans living outside the German borders, as well as the influence of German minority problems on the internal policies of the governments concerned and on their relations to the Reich.

To Jacobsen's documentation, which is filled to the brim with fascinating details about the early years of Hitler's rule and his style of government, one can apply Klaus Urner's judgment of Peter Stahlberger's book about Emil Oprecht, *Der Zürcher Verleger Emil Oprecht und die deutsche politische Emigration, 1933-1945* (Zurich, 1970): "Although the growing distance in time diminishes the richness of the nuances determining the life of the time and leaving its stamp thereon, the retrospective view sharpens recognition of the essential by making it easier to assign to single events their proper place in the chain of historical development" (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 17, 1972).

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ECONOMIC REFORMS IN EASTERN EUROPE: POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE. By *Radoslav Selucky*. Translated by *Zdenek Elias*. Praeger Special Studies in International Economics and Development. New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1972. x, 179 pp. \$15.00.

Professor Selucky's book is certainly a welcome and valuable addition to the steadily growing number of analytical studies on economic reforms in Eastern Europe. Written by one of the leading Czechoslovak reformers, it gives the reader a comprehensive picture of all the complex problems involved in a switch-over from an arbitrary command economy to a more rational system geared to the market mechanism. The very fact that the author was an active participant in the seemingly unequal struggle between the would-be reformers and the entrenched party bureaucracy gives additional weight to his arguments.

Basing his analysis on the fundamental assumptions of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, Selucky—quite rightly—puts the main stress on the utter incompatibility of any genuinely market-oriented reform blueprint with the existing power structure of a Communist state. In this respect the first two chapters, "The Pre-Reform System" and "The Alternatives of Reform," should be of special interest not only to a general reader but also to more advanced students of the subject. One could only wish that Selucky had devoted more space to the highly significant changes in the political and economic thinking of the younger generation of the party oligarchy and their growing affinity with the technocrats. In the remaining six chapters of his book Selucky discusses one by one the economic reform programs worked out in the individual countries of the Soviet bloc (excluding Yugoslavia). Needless to say, the chapter dealing with Czechoslovak reforms is by far the best. It contains quite a lot of little-known factual material pertaining to the evolution of the Czechoslovak new economic model during the Prague Spring of 1968. Here one gets a good insight not only into the contemplated functional and institutional changes in the economic system but also into the intricate problems faced by the