

Marie Ryjáčková, *Everyday Life and Rationed War Economy in Slaný during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939-1945): Administration and Everyday Life of the Local Population*, Praha 2023, FHS UK, Liberal Arts and Humanities, 63 p.

Evaluation of the bachelor thesis

With the occupation of Prague by German troops and the proclamation of the "Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren" on March 15/16, 1939, the predominantly Czech-populated areas of Bohemia, Moravia and Moravian Silesia effectively became a satellite state of the "Greater German Reich". The Czech political administration was formally subordinated to the office of a German "Reichsprotector," but underwent hardly any structural or personnel changes. In particular, the district offices responsible for regional and local administration continued to be subordinate to the „Landesbehörden“, and they remained staffed exclusively with Czech civil servants until the end of the war, not with German specialists, as most researchers have wrongly assumed. After the introduction of the National Socialist "Marktordnung" - i.e. the obligation to deliver all agricultural products - and the establishment of the National Socialist "rationing system" - i.e. the obligation to issue ration coupons for all basic foodstuffs and consumer goods - these same district offices were responsible for the entire control and sanctioning of offenses in connection with this non-compliance. The district offices thus exercised a key function with regard to the everyday management of the protectorate population.

In her bachelor thesis, Marie Ryjáčková investigates how the local population of the political district of Slaný dealt with the changes in everyday life, which were primarily characterized by the rationed wartime economy, and how the management of the local economy, especially the black market, was carried out.

She focuses on five cases from 1942 that violated the wartime economy, in detail violations of food, price and supply regulations.

Apart from the introduction (pp. 6-15) and the conclusion (pp. 52-55), the author divides the work into three parts. The first part deals with the social changes caused by the destruction of Czechoslovakia and the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, i.e. the historical context (pp. 15-23), the second part deals with the system of local political administration (pp. 25-31). The third part, which is, in a way, the main part, analyzes the offenses against the war economy (pp. 31-41). This part is divided into three chapters dealing with violations of food regulations (pp. 28-40), supply regulations (pp. 40-44) and price regulations (pp. 44-52).

Already when reading the exemplary structured introduction it becomes clear that the author knows how to prove her skills acquired in her bachelor studies: methodically, the work approaches the analysis of administrative documents and police protocols by means of an approach based on everyday history, which puts the actor's scope of action in the center of interest. In this context, she discusses in the introduction the methodological approach of the German historian Als Lüdtker and the concept of History of Everyday Life. After addressing the concept of everyday life, she also discusses the definition of rule (Herrschaft), which she develops and uses in the sense of Max Weber (p. 12).

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to find out, "how the local population of the political district of Slaný dealt with the changes implemented by the rationed war economy, and how the administration of the local economy, black market in particular, functioned (p. 9)".

The study confirms in many areas the current research on the local administration and the everyday life of the local population, but it also shows some differences:

The bureaucratic system of the Slaný district authority for registering crimes was different in concrete terms from that of the Kladno district. It included files, card index boxes and a whole system of registration numbers. Explicitly register books were not used by the officials. This is an interesting result for historical research. (p. 47)

That the administrative practice differed from that of the officials in Kladno, Marie Ryjáčková also cleverly shows by another fact:

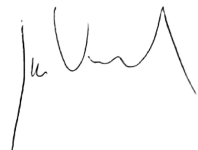
When material was transferred from the municipal office in Nové Strašecí to Slaný, completely different registration numbers were used. This supports the argument that there was no universal system created by the administration, but that the officials were themselves the ones who had to react to new regulations and create a variety of systems. (p. 26)

The work would have benefited from providing a brief summary of the findings or the general significance of the cases discussed at the end of each chapter.

Overall, it can be stated that Marie Ryjáčková has written an exceptionally well-structured and consistently arguing thesis in an exemplary clean form, which fulfills all the characteristics of a bachelor thesis. Above all, it must be emphasized once again that Marie Ryjáčková has worked intensively with previously unknown sources from the archives in Slaný far beyond the usual standard of a Bachelor's Thesis.

I recommend the submitted bachelor thesis for defense and propose to grade it excellent (1).

Prague, 15.9.2023



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