

Abstract

Social policy belonged to the key areas of the construction of the Nazi rule in Germany and in the occupied territories in Central and Western Europe. This work addresses the public social policy in the context of the change of ideology in the second Czech-Slovak Republic and in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The goal of the public social policy was to aid stabilization and securing peace and order in the occupied territory. Consequently, the policy was an object of great interest not only on the part of the Protectorate (Czech) elite but also of the representatives of the occupation (German) power. The first chapter sketches the social policy development in the inter-war period and points to the fundamental problems and questions that the political representatives of the time were unable to address satisfactorily. The Great Depression and growing social inequalities were the primary causes of the crisis of liberal democracy and the onset of radical movements.

The conclusion of the Munich Pact boosted the anti-liberal atmosphere in the Bohemian lands and brought a change of the state ideology paradigm consisting in the shift from the construction of a liberal democratic state to the building of “national communality”. The second chapter depicts this process from the perspective of the dynamics coming from the domestic environment. Its essential feature were appeals to “national unity”, to “protection of nation”, and exclusive tendencies that gained ground in the thinking about nation in the first Protectorate months. The Czech political and social representatives maintained the protection of and care for the nation as their primary agenda in the occupation period. The second chapter is concluded with an excursus on the policies of nation and on collaboration in occupied Western Europe.

The Protectorate representatives carried out their agenda largely within the public social policy. The occupation power representatives supervised the administrative and legislative procedures and, in the late Protectorate, also assumed primacy in preparing reforms. The social policy in the Protectorate manifested itself in three functions: repressive, motivational, and supporting. Dealing with the social policy instruments and institutions, the third chapter characterizes the first of the aforementioned functions. The Jews, Roma and Poles were banned from participating in social redistribution, which points to the racist nature of the Protectorate's entire public social policy. The motivational and supporting functions, which this work explores in the greatest detail, are described in the following thematic chapters.

In 1938–1945, the public social policy existed in all its branches. In the next three chapters, this work follows it in the fields of labour policy, health policy and family policy. The intellectual background and the social policy practice show both the Czech and German initiative in improving the social policy in the sense of extending the number of clients of virtually all branches of social insurance, improving work safety, health prevention or increasing the efficiency of measures against epidemic illnesses. Viewed from the perspective of the Czech-German cooperation in organization of the public social policy, the family policy was the most controversial one. Within the family policy, the Protectorate representatives strove to boost the population growth of the Czech nation, which was, however, undesirable from the perspective of the Nazi nationality policy.

Keywords: social policy, Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, nationalism, Czechs, Germans, National Socialism, ideology, social insurance