

Swein BATICLE, *Franco-Czechoslovakian relationship during the first Republic through La Revue Française De Prague*, Prague 2018

Opinion of the thesis supervisor

I first met the author Swein Baticle more than two years ago when she attended my French lectures on the Czech-French relations in the early Modern Age and the Enlightenment in particular. Our meeting and the professional interest of Mrs. Baticle resulted in her later decision to pursue this issue in a different historical period. She chose the period of the First Republic and a theme, which offered a chance to work primarily with printed and linguistically relevant sources. The cultural environment of activities of l'Alliance française (AF) and the French Institute became a subject of interest where the author focused on a journal that informed about the activities of this institution and issued articles about the francophone community and the Czech-French relations in *La Revue française de Prague* (RFP). Although the issue of Czech-French relations was pursued by more researchers at that time, it is still a legitimate subject of study illustrating the image of the First Republic, especially if we view it from various aspects. The author's main goal is monitoring the spread and promotion of French in the Czechoslovak Republic in RFP and, in particular, the interesting issue of Francophilia versus Germanophobia and the attitudes of the French and Czech intellectuals to the Munich Agreement.

Mrs. Baticle started to work on her Bachelor thesis with enthusiasm, performed the heuristics and became familiar with the main source. Nonetheless, she was unable to fully pursue her work in the following life period, which resulted in postponement of most of the editorial work to the time before the submission deadline. Unfortunately, the deep time stress left its mark on the resulting work, which shows that many good intentions and ideas were not developed as they deserved, although the author was prepared to supplement and rework many texts. The work is divided into three parts. The first part is concerned with the emergence of the French Alliance, the French Institute and RFP and the second and third parts are the core of the essay. They are based on an analysis of the source and concentrate on the spread of French, Francophilia and in the last section, on the reactions of RFP to the Munich Agreement. The issue of Francophilia versus Germanophobia, representation of the French culture and liberalism in comparison with the Germanic arrogance and intolerance as well as the reactions to the events around Munich are the most interesting and also the best elaborated parts of the essay (compared with its first half, which gives a feel of superficiality). Nonetheless, I recommend that in the further work on the theme, the author should set the theme better into the time context. This applies to the community of intellectuals around RFP and its interconnection with the culture of that time and the Czech and French policies and subsequently the reflection on the gradual political development, which resulted in the Munich Agreement. It would also be useful to elaborate more deeply on the introductory passages that introduce the existing bibliography on the theme with view to its importance.

Despite the "reproaches", which are found always and everywhere, with the understanding of the difficulties, which the historian encounters when elaborating on the theme of foreign history, I appreciate the author's effort and her work. I regard her essay an

interesting and beneficial step on the road to her further research and more complex work. I recommend the work for defence and evaluate it as "Barely Acceptable" (3).

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