

Abstract

Between the years 1931–1934, both in the region of Jizera in the area between Semily and Mladá Boleslav and in the region of Central Elbe between Kolín and Nymburk, eight subsidiary unions of the Czechoslovakian-Lusatian society “Adolf Černý” were founded. On three other places, namely in Český Brod, Kouřim and Lysá nad Labem, the attempts to establish the local unions failed. Nonetheless, the area consequently became the second most significant cultural centre as well as the meeting point of the Lusatian Sorbs in the inter-war Czechoslovakia, the first one being Prague. It was regularly visited by the Lusatian Sokol gymnasts or choirs, and Lusatian-Sorbian children as well as university students spent their holidays there. It is therefore no surprise that the Mužský Hill near the city of Mnichovo Hradiště became the location of a demonstration in support of the Lusatian Sorbs which took place there in July 1933 as a reaction to a wave of persecutions in Germany.

Due to the fragmentary nature of the sources, the topic of the following thesis is based primarily on the regional press, the Sorbian press and the journal *Českolužický věstník*, called *Lužickosrbský věstník* since 1931. There is only one complete archive which remained intact, namely the one of the Semily union of the Czech-Lusatian society (preserved in the State district archive in Semily). Among further sources count those unpublished from the Serbski kulturny archiw in Bautzen and the State district archive in Mladá Boleslav. The materials of the Wendenabteilung, deposited in the Staatsfilialarchiv in Bautzen, enable to inspect the work of the German agencies, which were monitoring the contact with the Lusatian Sorbs.

The thesis is divided into three parts. First, the modern history of the Lusatian-Sorbian ethnic group is presented, along with the process, through which it had transformed into the modern national society it is now. This development is embedded into the context of the historical exchange between the Lusatian Sorbs and Bohemia. The second part seeks to outline the factual basis of the topic. The introduction of the composition of the regions of Jizera and of Central Elbe is followed by the illustration of the history of the cooperation centres in the settlements of the regions of Jizera and Elbe, based on the fragmentary sources. The material collected in this part is also used in the third, analytical section, where the individual aspects of the Sorabophilic activities are presented. Aside from the quantitative analysis and the social stratification of the Czech Sorabophiles, the particular types of the activities are also analysed, both from the point of view of their structure and their semantics. This chapter is followed by the semiotic analysis of the Lusatian Sorb-stereotype in the Czechoslovakian milieu. The closing part of the chapter is formed by the summary of the Sorabophilic activities in the Lusatian-Sorbian, Sudeten-German and Reichs-German milieu.