

Detlef BRANDES – Alena MÍŠKOVÁ
Vom Osteuropa-Lehrstuhl ins Prager Rathaus
(Josef Pfitzner 1901–1945).

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The reviewed book written by two outstanding historians Detlef Brandes and Alena Míšková is the outcome of the project „Josef Pfitzner – od historie k ideologii.“ At the beginning of this review, it must be mentioned that both authors are familiar with this topic. Alena Míšková has published several books relating to Josef Pfitzner in previous years. For example, in 2011 „Josef Pfitzner – prameny k životu a dílu sudetoněmeckého historika a politika“ and in 2000 „Josef Pfitzner a protektorátní Praha v letech 1939 – 1945“, Vol. I: „Deník Josefa Pfitznera, úřední korespondence Josefa Pfitznera s Karlem Hermannem Frankem“. Both historians are also familiar with the theme concerning Prague's universities in the first half of the 20th century.

The book is divided in 13 chapters and the reader may read that the chapters 1-6 were written by A. Míšková and the second half by D. Brandes. The book deals with several aspects of J. Pfitzner's life. The reader must still keep in mind that J. Pfitzner was a scholar as well as a politician during the World War II. The first chapter is called private life and summarizes his childhood, elementary and secondary school, his first love stories and marriage. Pfitzner came from a poor family from Petrovice in Jeseníky to Opava where he studied at secondary school. His German attitudes were evident during his studies. He joined local national-socialistic movement (Burschenschaft) Germanitas-Sudetia and admired Richard Wagner. After school leaving exam J. Pfitzner studied history and German language in Praha (Prague) at the Faculty of Arts of the German University. Pfitzner was given several scholarships to Breslau, nowadays Wrocław in Poland, and to Leipzig. The last part of this chapter focuses on his financial situation which improved after the marriage with Elisabeth Kottek who was a daughter of an advocate in Znojmo.

The second chapter deals with his studies and first scientific works. It starts with studies in the capital city of Czechoslovakia and financial problems which he had at the beginning of his university studies. It must be stressed that he was granted a scholarship whilst studying at the secondary school in Opava. As written above, young student Pfitzner was given scholarship. His first study visit led him to Breslau. This book gives us detailed summary of his budget and expenses during this stay. His first crucial book completed as a result of his scholarship in Breslau was titled „Geschichte der Stadt in Schlesien bis 1742“. This manuscript was published in 1924. Pfitzner submitted his dissertation in the same year. Its name was „Die Breslauer Bischöfe als weltliche Herren“. Pfitzner passed his habilitation treatise in 1927. This manuscript was an extended dissertation. In 1930 Pfitzner published

another of his important books "Großfürst Witold von Litauen als Staatsmann" which was translated into Lithuanian in the same year. Even if this book was published 83 years ago it belongs among crucial books concerning Lithuanian history till present.

The third chapter focuses on his career after passing postdoctoral lecture qualification and disputes with historians who wrote in German. It is known that Pfitzner was a self-centred man, which caused several arguments with his colleagues. After considerations about the university where to hold lectures and seminars, he decided to stay in Prague where he became associate professor for Eastern European history at the German University. This happened thanks to massive intercession of his colleague Hans Hirsch from Wien. His candidacy was also supported by Gerhard Gesemann and Theodor Mayer who were acknowledged scholars in Prague and German speaking countries. Nevertheless, Pfitzner wanted to become a head of department somewhere abroad but it did not fulfill him. Pfitzner did not have a lot of close friendships. It may be said that Hans Hirsch, his elder colleague and lecturer during his studies at the university, represented his closest friend and played an important role in his life as his scientific mentor and adviser in his private life.

Czech and German scholars used to meet during various festivities, roundtables or debates. Pfitzner had contacts with Josef Šusta and Josef Pekař who belonged among excellent Czech historians of their era. These historians considered him as a "bridge" between Czech and German historiography. It must be stressed that Pfitzner found his approval having contacts with them. Yet, the relationship between Pekař, Šusta and Pfitzner was not smooth. The conflict between Šusta and Pfitzner escalated after Pekař's death when Pfitzner published a part of their personal correspondence.

Pfitzner did not deal only with Sudetenland, Silesia but he wrote books and articles about history of Poland and Russia. In case of Russia it was a study on Bakunin.

In early 1930s, when Adolf Hitler became the Reich Chancellor, Pfitzner started to represent one of the most important person among historians who propagandised the idea of the Third Reich in Czechoslovakia. His adoration of the Pan-German idea was evident in his works in 1920s, nevertheless it was his crucial factor after 1933. Pfitzner became a member of the Sudetendeutsche Partei in 1935. The role of Pfitzner as a Pan-German propagandist was steadily growing and its apex was reached during WW 2 when Pfitzner became vice-mayor in Prague. His life ended in 1945 when he was sentenced to death by cable by the Extraordinary People's Court.

This book is based on various archive sources: Pfitzner's articles, letters, books and speeches which are analysed by Míšková and Brandes and give important basis for their answers on main questions which were postulated in the preface. The fact that Pfitzner's inheritance was unexpectedly found in Linz, enriched this book in many ways. These materials include his correspondence and personal diaries which were only partly preserved. The structure of this biography as well as the methodology, which is in this case prosopography combined with biographical method, is chosen very well. Even if this book was written in German, I found one lexicological mistake. The word „der Student" is not used in the meaning a person who attends secondary school (p. 21). "Der Student" is only a person who studies at the university. I also found a mistake in writing of the name Josef Šafařík (p. 159). There is a mistake in a year – on the page 111 is written in 1948 but there must be 1848. Although I have seen some mistakes, I think that this book provides us with an entire overview in more

aspects. Firstly – the person of Josef Pfitzner, secondly – the epoch when he was an active historian and politician, thirdly – contacts among historians in Middle Europe and in Baltic countries. In my point of view, it is a bit pity that this book was published only in German, for this book could be interesting for people who are not so fluent at German.

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