THE EXPULSION OF THE CARPATHIAN GERMANS FROM SLOVAK TERRITORY IN 1946

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On August 2, 1945, President Edvard Beneš signed a constitutional decree, according to which everybody belonging to the German minority in the then Czechoslovak Republic was deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship. Aliens could only remain in country, according to contemporary law, with specific permission of the proper administrative authority. When this was withheld, they were obliged to leave Czechoslovak territory. During the period 1939-1945, Carpathian Germans had been citizens of the Slovak state as opposed to Sudeten Germans, who had been citizens of the German Reich. The decree, however, assigned both groups the same definitive status. The Carpathian Germans now coming under the decree either had not been evacuated, for whatever reason, when the Red Army advanced, or they had already returned during spring and summer 1945. One may well assume that these people had not actively engaged in activities of either the Deutsche Partei (German Party), the Heimatschutz (Homeland Protection), or the Freiwillige Schutzstaffel (Voluntary Protective Squadron), and that they had neither occupied any important office nor committed any crime. They were now deprived of the right to live in their homeland—the place their ancestors had inhabited since centuries—simply because they were of German descent. This was in flagrant contradiction to elementary principles of humanity.

BOHEMIAN STATEHOOD ON “SOFT PAPER”: FACTS, MYTH AND SYMBOLIC MEANING IN CZECH POLITICAL CULTURE

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Subject of the present article is an attempt, in 1871, at reconciliation between Czechs and Austrians as far as Bohemian statehood was concerned. The author does not, however, deal with the political negotiations about what was termed “Fundamental articles,” but with rather impulsive reactions by the Czech political elite and large parts of the public to the whole action being cancelled all of a sudden. Analysing hitherto unknown sources and deciphering a familiar myth, the author examines a specific case of lèse-majesté, in which the breaking of the Emperor’s promise to accept the title and crown of a King of Bohemia was circulated, in printed form, on toilet paper, which some people did even use for its intended purpose. Frustration and annoyance at the sovereign’s decision thus gained a public expression. The article describes to what extent the administration was at a loss when it came to dealing with this form of protest, how traditional, symbolic values, such as trust in the sovereign, gradually disappeared, and how far these changes have influenced modern Czech political culture.