Habsburg Monarchy, the shocking realization that they now belonged to a minority within a Czech-dominated state; on the other hand, the events strengthened their inner sense of solidarity. Around the mythology of March 4, 1919, the identity of the Bohemian Germans was crystallized for the first time as Sudeten German and even today it has continued to exercise — albeit on a unconscious level — an important influence on the Sudetengermans' understanding of themselves.

TOWARD A "POSTMODERN" MIDDLE AGES: ON NEW WAYS OF READING OLD TEXTS

Jelko Peters

The present article explores the applicability of innovative, postmodern methods for the study of the Middle Ages with reference to the examples provided by the so-called “New Philology” and the first two volumes of Peter Czerwinski’s Habilitations­schrift “Examples from the History of Perception.” After a short introduction concerning the necessity, problems and issues of transdisciplinary approaches, the author reports on the two main theses of the “New Philology.” These consist of the assumption that, firstly, the question of the medieval author is not justified and that, secondly, every manuscript has equal value in the science of editing. Furthermore, editing according to the principle that some manuscripts are more important than others must be seen as a scientific anachronism; instead, new ways ahead will be forged with studies of the history of textual transmission and new medial techniques. Finally, a transdisciplinary approach is demonstrated with the example of Czerwinski’s study. This new approach points to the historicity of our modern concept of signs and the aggregative perception of time and space in the Middle Ages. Further, the author highlights the contradictions which Czerwinski’s work has uncovered in established research.

GERMAN SCHOOLS FOR BACKWARD CHILDREN IN THE BOHEMIAN LANDS: AN EXEMPLARY ASPECT OF SCHOOL POLICY

Herwig Baier

The system of schooling backward German children in the Bohemian lands has at best received only cursory treatment. In each of the three stages of development, with their differing state authorities (Austria-Hungary, the Czechoslovak First Republic and the Reichsgau Sudetenland as part of Nazi Germany), there is a typical pattern of inception and development, especially as far as the system of schooling backward children is concerned. Although the first such schools were set up for exclusively pedagogic and didactic reasons, very soon this special kind of school became an object of political and even ideological influence and argument. Conservative circles rejected special schools for backward children out of hand, socialist groups supported them.
Under Nazi rule, the schools for backward children were retained for the single reason that the Bürgerschule (citizen school) was elevated to the status of a six-form elementary school performing a selective function, and the schools for backward children, on the other hand, in this situation served as a kind of dump for children with hereditary defects. What is noteworthy is the cooperation between German and Czech teachers at special schools not only in matters of professional politics. The build-up of the German network of special schools for backward pupils in the Bohemian lands was until 1938 closely related to the personality of the chairman of the Association of German schools for backward children in the Czecho-Slovak Republic, Rolf Marschas.

TOMÁŠ STANĚK ON THE GERMANS IN THE BOHEMIAN LANDS AFTER 1948
Otfrid Pustejovsky

In 1993 Tomáš Staněk, the author of a fundamental examination of the Germans' living conditions in Czechoslovakia and their expulsion from the country after the end of World War II (see BohZ 34/1993, 399), published an extensive study of those Germans remaining in Czechoslovakia. In his exhaustive report on this study Otfrid Pustejovsky offers an informative overview of the history of these Germans under communist dictatorship and in the present-day Czech Republic.

DISCUSSION

The book about Prague by Christoph Bartmann, published in 1994 under the German title Insider-Lexikon, has caused heated debate. This is why the editorial board of Bohemia asked two “insiders” to acquaint our readership with their opinion. In her appraisal entitled “If only the author …” Růžena Fořtlová explains why she thinks Bartmann’s book is superficial, and Václav Maindl presents his thoughts on “Our images of the others”.

In the second contribution to “Discussion”, Jaroslav Kučera looks critically at the newest study of Fritz Peter Habel on the numbers of victims among the Germans in postwar Czechoslovakia.