

THE FORTRESS BOHEMIA, A PHANTOM AND ITS  
RELATION TO THE SUDETEN COUNTRIES

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In the opinion of the author the repeatedly used concepts "Fortress Bohemia" and "Bohemian Valley", although based on old traditional descriptions — they can be found already in the second chapter of the Chronicle of Cosmas of Prague (1045—1125) — do not correspond to geographical reality.

The first scholar who opposes these erroneous ideas was Count Albrecht von Roß (later to become Prussian Chief of Staff), who in 1847 stresses the varied formation of the Bohemian and Moravian hilly country and the Moravian mountains. He considered Bohemia as a country of valleys only "in so far as it contains several relatively small extended hollow depressions divided by wooded mountain ridges". Similarly, J. Kutzen (*„Das deutsche Land“*, Breslau 1880), attacks the definition "Valley" and calls Bohemia more aptly a step like, or terraced country, in its interior mostly uneven and ascending from the North-East, to the South-West.

Hugo Hassinger, more in accord with the "Valley" concept, divides Bohemia in his work *„Die Tschechoslovakei“* (1925), into three sections — the Elbe valley in the north, the Moldau Plateau in the south, and along the sides of both the wooded mountains. With the beginning of a new epoch in modern geography Carl Kořistka and Hugo Hassinger tried to determine the natural landscape. The concept "Sudeten Countries" — appearing in Literature for the first time in 1843 — is introduced into geography by Alexander Supan in 1889. He understands by it the Bohemian Elbe region with the Austrian granite plateau, and excludes the March-

Oder region. Franz J e s s e r , and after him F r i t z M a c h a t s c h e k in his geography of the Sudeten and West Carpathian Countries (Stuttgart, 1927), used the expression very generally for the Crown countries of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, while the expression "Sudeten-German", coined by Jesser in 1902, became known through Dr. Karl Renner in St. Germain as an official diplomatic conception.

Finally the author in his turn divides the Sudeten countries — Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia — into ten principle areas, and points out that this "Physical-geographical mosaic" helped to conserve the tribal characteristics of the Germans in the Sudeten countries. It was only through a common political fate that these became, as a unity, a political concept. The temperament of the Slavs in these regions was also influenced by the geographical differences of the land, so that the geographical variety of the landscape created, and at the same time conserved, the mosaic of its inhabitants' characteristics.