

## A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE SUDETEN LANDS

*Ernst Schwarz*

On the basis of a manuscript entitled „The Foundations of the History of the Sudeten German People Prior to the Hussite Wars“, which was lost in 1945 and recently recovered, presents addenda to the author's book *History of the People of the Sudeten Lands* (Handbuch der Sudetendeutschen Kulturgeschichte, Vols. 3 and 4), published in 1965/66. Recent books and monographs on the subject are also discussed. The above-mentioned manuscript provide noteworthy data from unpublished municipal registers of Bohemia and Moravia to which German scholars today do not have access. In addition to this, it was possible to utilize the findings of a survey conducted before 1943 on the incidence of field-names of Czech origin, in the collection for the former Sudeten German areas numbering about a quarter of a million items.

Some Czech scholars agree with the author that personal, particularly family, names of the pre-Hussite period can throw light on the language spoken by their bearers — and have reached largely similar conclusions. Others, however, view this method skeptically. But they overlook the fact that the situation in the individual historical epochs was different. The abandonment of the German or Czech language and the consequences of mixed marriages and political change began to have a strong impact only after the 14th century. On the other hand, the *Volkstumskampf* that led to national isolation slowly began only in the 19th century.

In the light of these changing factors, the author discusses critically the works of Chaloupka and Hosák, repudiating their method of projecting 19th and 20th century data back on to earlier periods and of considering regional onomastic sources in isolation.

Understanding the encounter of two peoples over the course of the centuries requires — as a number of Czech scholars are indeed already doing — the avoidance of national biases, as well as recognition of the fact that it is not enough to exploit only documents, but that the linguistic data also have to be considered. Above all, research must be kept free of contemporary political points of view.