

INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL PREREQUISITES OF THE NATIONAL REVIVAL IN BOHEMIA BEFORE 1848

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Deals with the decline of the Czech language going back to the decisive turning point of the Battle of White Mountain (1620). At the same time, however, the author shows how the Czech language survived among the peasant population and the petty bourgeoisie, sustained by a religious and pietistic literature largely emanating from Germany (Halle, Freiberg and Berlin), where centers of the confessional and political emigration had been formed. Still, the disappearance of the Czech language could be foreseen toward the end of the 18th century — this despite the reorganization of the elementary school system under Empress Maria Theresa and the opposition of the Bohemian nobility to the centralistic inclinations of Joseph II. Only the efforts in the linguistic and historical fields (Palacký) which began with Herder and in the spirit of German Romanticism, and the assumption of a leading role by the bourgeois middle class brought a decisive change — which already before the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1849 had determined the revival of the Czech nation.