

SOCIOPOLITICAL AND CULTURAL-POLITICAL VIEWS ON THE SITUATION AND TASK OF THE GERMANS IN BOHEMIA AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

(H. Herkner, M. Hainisch, F. Jesser, and the Journal *Deutsche Arbeit in Böhmen*)

Karl Richter

From the 1880s on, the distinctive situation of the German population in Bohemia, when compared with that to be found in the other Crown Lands, was regarded as ever more ominous. As is generally known, it was believed that the „Bohemian question“ could be resolved by guarantees of constitutional and linguistic rights, as well as by an administrative division of Bohemia into two parts. Based on the assumption of their own cultural and economic superiority that was characteristic of the dignitaries of the time, the representatives of the upper classes believed that they could establish a legitimate claim to leadership. This, however, at a time when genuine authorities on the mood of the people were already indulging in more or less pessimistic meditations on the future of the German Bohemians, were severely reproaching the propertied and cultural bourgeoisie, were proposing serious measures aimed at healing the body politic, and — by no means least — were endeavoring to expand and intensify the movement for education of the broad masses. The departure from traditional views was evident in the proposals advanced, above all, by the reformist economists Heinrich Herkner and Michael Hainisch, as well as the popular educator and politician Franz Jesser, and the circle around the monthly *Deutsche Arbeit in Böhmen*.