

FRANTIŠEK PALACKÝ AND THE GERMAN —
CZECH RELATIONSHIP AS VIEWED BY THE CZECH
HISTORIOGRAPHY OF OUR CENTURY

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Of the many themes of Czech historical research which the eminent Czech national politician František Palacký was the first to raise, it was precisely those concerning the German-Czech relationship that have remained topical down to this day.

Palacký took over the picture derived from Herder of a peaceful *Urslawentum* whose original legal equality was destroyed by the creation of class distinctions

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with the invasion of German feudalism under Ottokar II. The idea of a Slavic feudalism first emerged in Czech historiography in the 1930s.

The question of Bohemia's dependence on the medieval *Reich* acquired special significance for the German-Czech relationship in the 20th century. Historically, however, the relationship between Bohemia and the *Reich* was built on mutual aid and support, national aspects playing no role whatsoever.

A rapprochement of scientific standpoints on the so-called *Ostkolonisation* — viewed by the Germans as a pioneering achievement, and perceived by the Czechs as a process of foreign penetration and control — has begun in the most recent period.

Thus the insight has prevailed that Hussitism was not primarily a national, but above all a religious phenomenon, and that the post-„White Mountain“ era must be seen in the European-wide context of the resistance of the Estates against absolutism.

Czech historiography was placed in a dilemma by the facts that in the Revolution of 1848 the German politicians played a considerably more radical role than did the Czechs, and that the working-class movement from the 1860s on developed more tempestuously among the Germans. During the „Prague Spring“ Czech historians succeeded in breaking out of the narrow national perspective.