

## HISTORY AND REGIONALISM

*Friedrich Prinz*

Not so long ago still a term of abuse, regionalism has been acquiring ever more political weight as an alternative to the flawed form of the large national state: „region“ may be defined as a natural, prenatal entity legitimated by history. The lively regional consciousness that the Sudeten Germans have preserved — despite the loss of their region — offers one example of the normative force of historical experiences.

When dealing with the region, modern historiography frequently has to step across present-day state boundaries, in order to encompass and compare larger regions of similar origin, even if differences in political development later drew them apart.

In this sense, regionalism is not provincialism, but an awareness of community authenticated by history. Precisely because of the present need for global integration, regionalism is of vital importance as a sociopolitical form of life.