

SUMMARIES

THE EXPULSION OF THE SUDETEN GERMANS FORTY YEARS AGO AS A CZECH PROBLEM

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The Czech view of the expulsion („*Odsun*“) of the Germans was long marked by the revolutionary-nationalistic apologetic arguments of the year 1945. Class-related reasons were adduced only later and human rights played no role. A law of 1946 even exonerated all criminal acts against Germans. The „Prague Declaration“ of 1950 with the GDR termed the expulsion „irreversible, just and final“.

Change was brought about by the „Prague Spring“ and its commitment to freedom and human rights. After it was suppressed, the theme became the object of a broad, critical discussion in the emigration which incorporated questions of collective punishment.

Another phase began with Charter 77. Discussion of the events of 1945 and the injustice of the expulsion shifted to the historical and ethical level — only in the underground in the ČSSR but openly in the ever-stronger emigration. The February 1979 „Declaration of Franconia“ and numerous publications („*Danubius*“, „*Bohemus*“ and many others) led to a passionate, controversial and substantial discussion.

At the official level, the scale of the expulsion remains a taboo, and every possible effort is made to strike the German element and the millennial German-Czech neighbourhood from the history and culture of the land. But for the greater part of the emigration and the dissidents, the expulsion of the Germans and the criticism of Czech nationalism is no longer a taboo. Discussion of moral values and the conviction that human rights are indivisible dominate the inter-Czech dialogue about the national past.