

RELATIONS BETWEEN CZECH AND GERMAN CATHOLIC  
STRATA DURING THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK  
REPUBLIC (1918-1938)

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The relations between Czech and German catholic parts of society in interwar Czechoslovakia belong to those topics in the history of Cech-German relations scholars have tended to neglect so far. Within the overall period, three distinct stages may be discerned. In the years immediately following the setting up of the Czechoslovak state, the Catholic church had to struggle in order to deflect a succession of anti-Catholic attacks. However, powerful national animosities existed between Czech and German Catholics, preventing constructive cooperation. Neither the stabilisation of the ecclesiastic and political situation in the second half of the 1920s nor the celebration of the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the nation's patron, St. Wenceslas, in 1929 did succeed in reconciling them. The 1930s constituted the most dynamic stage in the evolution of both Catholic communities, marked on one hand by positive intellectual and spiritual developments, and by growing anti-democratic and nationalist tendencies on the other. An experiment with a large-scale reunion of Catholics of every conceivable national descent during the first national Catholic Congress in 1935 did not meet with much success. The 1938 Munich Pact and the occupation of the border regions by the Nazi army brought a definitive end to Czech-German coexistence, not only in the ecclesiastic sphere. Today, believers belonging to both national groups are exemplary in their quest for goodwill and mutual understanding.