

CATHOLIC RHETORIC AMONG EXPELLED SUDETEN GERMANS AFTER THE WAR

Tobias Weger

Setting off with the extremist positions adopted by Emmanuel Reichenberger, this contribution examines patterns of argumentation and stereotypes of catholic rhetoric among Sudeten Germans (perceived as an ethnic group defined by common national interests) after 1945. Arguments centered around demands for an equal status in society and for a political reversion as well as the right to return, which was derived from natural law. While some evolved concrete strategies to achieve this, there were also cautious, differentiated statements by individual expelled clergymen. The "Cold War" lent new force to earlier stereotypes (such as Edvard Beneš, Hussitism, the "Peril from the East") and occidentalism (Emil Franzel). Apart from religious argumentation being exploited für political and publicistic goals, the fate of expulsion generated many popular ways of coming to terms with it. All of this had nothing to do with metaphysical needs, it served to furnish a familiar cultural matrix for Sudeten German political endeavours (the so-called "Heimatpolitik") after 1945.