

“A GERMAN MINORITY?”
LITERATURE ABOUT BOHEMIA AND UPPER SILESIA
AFTER THE FORCED RESETTLEMENT OF THE
GERMANS: A SURVEY

Damien Tricoire

This description of various scientific approaches to the question of German minorities in Bohemia and Upper Silesia during the second half of the 20th century aims at emphasizing the strengths and weaknesses of the respective historiographic methods. The author subdivides studies devoted to national minorities into three groups, which he terms “objectivistic,” “subjectivistic,” and “structuralistic.” Whereas the studies belonging in the first group fail to produce “objective” criteria and, consequently, cannot explain why a minority emerges, the “subjectivistic” approach succeeds in developing a dynamic interpretation by defining minorities along the lines of the common image they share of their national self, albeit by evaluating predominantly reactions by the minority to its treatment by the majority. This is why a more structural approach, examining in a macro-historical way how a minority forms, remains indispensable. However, many studies belonging to this latter group lack a sound theoretical foundation; socio-linguistic concepts are largely being ignored. In consequence, any analysis of macro-historical conditions remains unsatisfactory, since the cases examined are not always comparable.