

GERMAN(IC) BOHEMIA, AN ARTIFICIAL NOTION  
ESTABLISHED BY GERMAN NATIONALISTS IN AUSTRIA  
AND THE GERMAN EMPIRE

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Beginning with the 1890's, equality among the constituent ethnic groups became more and more the norm in the cisleithanian part of the Habsburg monarchy. As a consequence, ethnic German bourgeois circles reduced their agenda for Bohemia, relinquishing their previous goal of overall German dominance in favour of demanding German administration for a separate territory yet to be established. German nationalists sought to establish "German(ic) Bohemia" in a multitude of ways. Both "historical merit" and an alleged cultural superiority were cited to legitimize territorial demands. Geographical theories then current were exploited to construe "German(ic) Bohemia" as part of what allegedly constituted "natural Germany." Nationalistically-coloured travel guides and travel accounts contributed to support the notion of a "German(ic) Bohemia," its history, culture, economy, and social system bearing an exclusively German imprint. Names of streets and squares or the erection of monuments signalled the "Germanness" of a town to citizens and visitors alike.