

INTELLECTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BOHEMIA AND SAXONY AT THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION PART II: CLERGYMEN AND TEACHERS IN THE 17TH CENTURY

Siegfried Sieber

For centuries there was a strong interchange of influences, particularly in the intellectual and political spheres, between Bohemia and Saxony. While the first part of this study showed that Saxony, as the home of the Reformation, sent numerous clergymen and teachers to Bohemia in the 16th century, the present, second part deals with the movement in the opposite direction. In the 17th century, namely, hundreds of Protestant teachers and clergymen who had to leave Bohemia found a home in Saxony and Lusatia.

Through the strong influence of Saxony and the Lutheran clergymen who had been sent from there, a large part of Bohemia had become Protestant in the 16th century. Ferdinand I, as the ruler of Bohemia, expelled as early as 1555 the Evangelical clergymen, on the basis of the Peace of Augsburg; to be sure he had but little success with this measure, since many members of the nobility had already become Protestants and they continued to summon Lutheran clergymen into Bohemia without imperial mandates. In 1608, the Protestant majority of the Bohemian Estates finally forced Rudolph II to issue a charter granting religious freedom to the Lutherans. The Habsburgs who followed Rudolph also confirmed this charter, and it thus took the Battle on White Mountain finally to incite persecution of the Protestants.

Many of the expelled Protestant clergymen and teachers had to endure grave hardships. Many of them could not find a place as clergymen or teachers in Saxony and Lusatia, and thus lived in great poverty. But with these exiles, Saxony acquired a significant number of persons of intellectual distinction, and it was due to this that the cultural recovery of Saxony after the 'Thirty Years' War was more rapid than elsewhere — while Bohemia grew poorer.