

THE SUDETEN GERMANS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AFTER 1945

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In her introduction the author outlines the number, demographic structure and geographical distribution of the Germans who were retained in Czechoslovakia during the expulsion period in 1945—46, and raises the question why they remained at all. She goes on to discuss the development of this German minority in the course of the past twenty years in the light of various factors governing its life.

Deprived of power and rights, the situation of the German population in Czechoslovakia in the post-war period only began to improve in 1949—50. The milder treatment of the remaining Germans in Czechoslovakia which then began can be attributed partly to the change of government in February 1948 and partly to the proclamation of the G.D.R. A study of the concessions made to the Germans from this juncture for the development of an independent cultural existence reveals that the basis for their establishment as a minority — German schools — is lacking. In comparison with the position of other minority groups in Czechoslovakia, Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians, who have fully-developed minority school systems, the Germans are under-privileged. This fact must be viewed in the light of the articles of the Czechoslovak constitution of 1960 governing the rights of nationalities. Whereas the Poles, Ukrainians and Hungarians are granted the means whereby they can cultivate their nationality, the Germans, although far greater in number than the Poles and Ukrainians, are not even mentioned. In this way the Germans left in Czechoslovakia have become the object of a deliberate policy of assimilation.