

THE GERMANS IN CZECH HISTORIOGRAPHY 1945—1965

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The author throws light on the development of Czech historiography since 1945, using as an example what it has had to say about the relationship between Czechs and Germans. In the early post-war period, under the impact of the events after 1938, the Germans were treated — if at all — only as intruders and trouble-makers in Czech history. Their expulsion was therefore regarded as an act of historical justice. After 1948, however, this problem was redefined as part of the system of historical materialism. In the process, social elements of conflict were added to national ones, but on the other hand — and from the same viewpoint — bridged by testimony of a supra-national class-conscious solidarity. During this stage of development of historical theory in the 1950's, there appeared side by side with statements on the „wicked“ Germans, examples of the „good“ Germans as well. The

latter had distinguished themselves as forerunners and standard-bearers of the proletarian class struggle. Having made this selection of themes, however, Czech historiography does deserve credit for dealing with long-neglected interconnections; among these were the German contribution to the Hussite revolution (Macek), the peasant revolts of the 17th century (Koči), and the German working-class movement of the 19th century (Kořalka).

The emergence of a third phase since about 1961 can be discerned. In this phase a more differentiated approach has been taken to the concept of dialectical progress (e. g. by Kalivoda). Thus in treating individual periods of development in economic, social and intellectual history (Fiala, Kavka, Marek, Válka and others) bourgeois strata of the population have been viewed as having played a progressive role. Only in the field of recent history has a considerable immobility of judgement persisted. The author cites examples for the individual stages of Czechoslovak history to illustrate the changing views of this problem.