

**Ferdinand Seibt: Deutsche, Tschechen, Sudetendeutsche.** Analysen und Stellungnahmen zu Geschichte und Gegenwart aus fünf Jahrzehnten. Festschrift zu seinem 75. Geburtstag. Hrsg. von Robert Luft u.a. (Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, Bd. 100.) R. Oldenbourg Verlag. München 2002. XXVII, 614 S.

This book is a tribute to the late historian Prof. Ferdinand Seibt on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in May 2002. It celebrated his forty years of research, writing, and engagement with the relations between Germans, Czechs, and Sudeten Germans by reprinting selected essays from the 339 entries in his bibliography of writings from 1952 to 2002. The book was compiled and edited by S.s colleagues at the Collegium Carolinum, which he headed for over twenty years. Thirty-one educational institutions and publishing houses in Germany, the Czech Republic, and Switzerland cosponsored the tribute. The essays are grouped into four sections that illustrate the author's varied concerns. The opening section is titled "Nachbarschaften in der Mitte Europas." Its seven essays survey centuries of Bohemian and Moravian history with special attention to the position of the Jews. Habsburg Austria gets the highest marks for offering opportunities for Jewish advancement in education, reserve military service, business and the professions, a Central European trend he identifies after 1918 mostly in the Czechoslovak Republic. Five essays are grouped in a second section as "Mentalitäten und Ideologien." They examine concepts of *Heimat*, patriotism, and "*Natio Bohemica*" in light of modern theories of nationalism and recent findings about the constituencies of medieval universities.

The third section of twenty-one essays is headed "Ein 'neuer Ackermann' der deutsch-tschechischen Versöhnung." Under this guise, S. reflects on German-Czech relations from the vantage point of a lifetime of experience and scholarly research. Already in the mid-1950s, as five short pieces show, he was critiquing post-Potsdam culture and national politics. He cautioned that self-pity and revanchism blocked realistic appraisals of Germany's future in a divided Europe and its potential for reaching understandings with Czechoslovakia. His essay "Deutsch-tschechischer Diskurs 1947-1999" objectively traces changes in attitudes toward the expulsions once communist repression ended. He gives judicious attention to the views of such publicists, historians, and intellectuals as J.W. Brügel, Václav Havel, Radomír Luža, and Jan Patočka, noting their strengths and weaknesses. The fourth and final section assembles some of S.s contributions to historiography. It is titled "Deutsche und tschechische Geschichtsforschung von den 'Großvätern' bis heute" (the editors' bow to Richard Georg Plaschka's influential essay of 1955). Fifteen essays, mainly from the 1960s through the 1980s constitute a sure guide to German-Czech-Bohemian studies. They demonstrate his mastery of the ideas of historians from František Palacký and Anton Schmalfuß onward through the downfall of communism, when he launched significant dialogues between Czech and German historians that continue today. If there is a slight shortcoming in the essays of this and the other sections it is the paucity of citations to English-language writings on Bohemian historiography and nationality problems during the years when S. wrote these essays. They would include studies by M. Cornwall, W. Iggers, H. Kieval, S. Pech, A. Rossos, and R. Smelser among others, some also translated into German.

In addition to the aforementioned bibliography, the book has a foreword by Robert Luft that helpfully provides the background to S.s focus in its selected essays. It has the usual meticulous indexes of persons and places and guide to abbreviations that one expects of publications by Collegium Carolinum. A photograph of an exultant Professor Seibt on the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate from Charles University in 1994 that greets the reader upon opening the book once more brings home the great loss we have suffered with his passing.

Port Charlotte, Florida

Stanley B. Winters