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## Book Review:

### Gerald Stone, *Slav Outposts in Central European History*

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It is rare that books about the Wends/Sorbs are published in English, but late last year two appeared in quick succession. In November Bloomsbury Press reprinted Gerald Stone's *The Smallest Slavonic Nation*, which was first published in 1972. Then in December they also published a new book by Gerald Stone, titled *Slav Outposts in Central European History*.

Gerald Stone is Emeritus Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, UK. He is the foremost authority on the history and culture of the Wends/Sorbs and has dedicated a lifetime of research into them.

*Slav Outposts* is the result of this research. It is a comprehensive account of the history of this smallest and least known of Slavonic peoples. It tells the story of their settlement in central Europe in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and their gradual conquest by the Germans. Over the next 12 centuries they struggled to survive, and only the Wends/Sorbs of Lusatia have succeeded to now.

He discusses the adoption of Christianity, the conversion to Lutheranism during the Reformation, the development of the written language, the revival of interest in Sorb culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the establishment of the *Domowina*, and the problems of survival in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the Nazi and Communist periods. The Wends of Pomerania and Mecklenburg are examined, and even the interest of the Hanoverian King George I of England.

The Old Lutherans and the migration of Wends to Australia and Texas are referred to. However, I am disappointed that George Nielsen's *In Search of a Home* and Rupert Burger's *The Coming of the Wends* do not appear in the extensive bibliography. However, Trudla Malinkowa's *Shores of Hope* is listed there in the German version (*Ufer der Hoffnung*).

On the other hand I am pleased to find a detailed account of the attempts to gain self-determination after the First World War. Other Slavonic nations, like Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, had succeeded. Why not the Wends/Sorbs of Lusatia?

This book is now the authority on the history of the Wends/Sorbs in Europe and must be read by those who are interested in this history. It is most readily purchased over the internet, but you need to compare prices with different booksellers. They can vary enormously. Check this site to compare prices: (<https://booko.com.au>) I found prices varied from \$39 to \$110 for the paperback. The hardcover version is much more expensive of course.

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