Great Britain and Czechoslovakia:
A Study in National Myth-Making and Policy Formation

by

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**INTRODUCTION:**

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Apart from Germany and Russia, the real danger to the security of the new States is not external, but internal. They have much to learn in the arts of government, *but we must not be too impatient*…Europe owes a great debt to the men who [created] new centres of order and authority in Warsaw and in Prague. It will take many years, perhaps many generations, for them to achieve success. *But do not let us forget the past history of other European States*. For generations the history of Sweden was a record of disorder, aggression and revolution… read the history… of Scotland in the sixteenth century… out of present extravagances and misrule there may easily arise in the future a prosperous and well-governed State.[1]

> Sir James Headlam-Morley
> February 1925

In the aftermath of World War One, the nineteenth century's language of national

identity and state formation materialized in the creation of small, independent nation-

states, which were comprised of regions previously under imperial rule. Due to the

ethnically mixed composition of central and eastern Europe, these new states were

comprised of several nationalities, but were purported to be and structured to become

nation-states unified in their national identity and loyalty to the state. Contrary to the

evolutionary process of state and identity formation, the successor states were

constructed in the aftermath of war. They did not emerge as products of independent

consolidation but out of the concerted and deliberate dissolution of imperial states. As

British historian, Sir James Headlam-Morley proffered five years after their creation,

the viability of these states could only be assured over time and would depend upon

the patience of the other European states. Unfortunately, such time and patience was

in short supply in the first half of the twentieth century.

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[1] Sir Headlam-Morley, "British Policy and the Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes" February 1925 *Studies in Diplomatic History* (New York: Alfred H. King, INC, 1930), 191.

The Czechoslovak Republic was one such successor state that was formed in 1919. This new state was composed of five regions, formerly under Austro-Hungarian rule. The regions of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia comprised the historic Bohemian Crown lands, which was a kingdom within the Holy Roman Empire. In 1526, the Habsburg dynasty succeeded to the Bohemian throne and administered the Bohemian Kingdom within the Austrian Empire. The Habsburgs continued to administer the Crown lands until the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in 1918. The new state of Czechoslovakia was also comprised of Slovakia and Ruthenia, regions east of the Bohemian lands, which had formerly been under Hungarian administration. From 1867 to 1918, Austria-Hungary was a Dual Monarchy maintaining administrative rights over their respective regions.

As it was declared, Czechoslovakia was constituted as a national state of the Czechoslovak people. In reality, Czechoslovakia was as a composite state of Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Poles, and Ruthenians. In the campaign for national independence during World War I, the émigré politicians presented themselves as "Czechoslovaks" for politically calculated reasons. The Slovak nationalists, for one, had little basis to claim sovereignty; Hungary's administration of Slovakia had been characterized by acute centralization, which retarded Slovakia's industrial growth, and, concurrently, the growth of a national movement. On the other hand, the composition of the Bohemian lands posed an acute problem for Czech statehood; Bohemia was the ancestral home for three and a half million German-speakers. In their quest for statehood during World War One, Czech nationalists purported a Czechoslovak identity to claim a majority over the ethnic Germans in Bohemia and to become the

country's state-making nation. But the Czechs were not Slovaks and the Slovaks not Czechs: distinct histories, traditions, cultures, and languages separated the two nationalities.

The initial question that this thesis asks is how the region, which was once home to Czechs and Germans, became an ethnically homogenous state of "Czechoslovaks" after 1948. The answer, which lies in the forcible but sanctioned removal of the Germans in a "population transfer," begs another question: how did this removal come to be sanctioned by the Allied powers? To adequately address this question, one must look backward in time to analyze how the physical removal of the Germans from Czechoslovakia in 1945 found precedent in their rhetorical ostracism from the state before and during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. While the delegates at the Conference decided to include the Germans within the Czechoslovak state, the German population was relegated to a minority position as second-class citizens. Their presence as a component nation was then formally excluded in the new internationally recognized and ethnically defined nation-state of Czechoslovakia.

It would be mistaken, however, to frame the period between 1919 and 1948 as an exclusively Czech and German problem. Both before and after 1919 the Allied powers played a decisive role in the decision to form Czechoslovakia and how this new state would come to terms with its large German minority. The Anglo-Czech relationship during the first and second world wars was central to these developments. During the First World War Czech émigré politicians established their headquarters in London and exercised considerable influence on British policymaking. The Munich Agreement of 1938 marked a departure from the

generally pro-Czechoslovak tenor of British wartime and interwar policy, and in 1938 Britain acted alone to arbitrate the crisis between the Czechoslovak state and its German minority. It is nevertheless clear that a special relationship developed between Britain and the Czechoslovak state. It is therefore necessary to ask what exactly defined this relationship? Who and what informed the process through which Britain became involved in Czechoslovakia's "identity politics." This leads to the further question of how Czech and German identity politics evolved in the Bohemian lands. Why did the Czechs become the state-making nation in 1919 and exclude 3.5 million Bohemian Germans from the state's Czechoslovak identity? And why were these Germans physically removed from their ancestral homes in 1945? To fully answer these questions, one must look beyond their immediate connections to wartime policies, and assess the construction of identity in the Bohemian lands in the nineteenth century. Here it is necessary to ask how a specifically Czech and a specifically German identity developed. What informed this process? Significantly, was this process and were these identities necessary and absolute? What was Britain's perception of identity in the Bohemian lands, and did Britain's perception of Czech and German identity politics inform her decision-making during the first and second world wars and throughout the interwar period?

The foremost research on Czech and German relations in Bohemia is found within a Czech and German-language literature. Within the past two decades, Czech and German historians have sought to create a constructive dialogue in order to analyze the removal of the Germans from the state in 1945. This dialogue has developed out of two recent movements within the two states. In Czechoslovakia, the

collapse of the Soviet Union opened up archives and induced the Czech nation to recover a "usable past" which was not associated with Soviet communism.[2] With its rise to power in 1948, the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) had promoted a collective memory of the "transfer" which vilified the Germans and condemned the Allied "betrayal" at Munich. The Velvet Revolution necessitated that the Czech nation distance itself from its communist past and create a new, untainted national history. Meanwhile, in Germany, the transfer dialogue fits into the recent re-assessment of German collective guilt for the Nazi regime's human and material destruction. German authors have begun to examine and challenge the nation's internalization of collective guilt since 1945 and the formerly suppressed dialogue of German victimhood within the wartime experience.[3] In 1990, a Czechoslovak-German Commission of Historians (later divided into Czech-German and Slovak-German sections) was established to strive towards critically reassessing the transfer without the polemics of national grievance.[4] But of the recent historiography published by Czech and German historians, only a few texts have been translated into English.[5]

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[2] Nancy M. Wingfield, "The Politics of Memory: Constructing National Identity in the Czech Lands, 1945 to 1948." *East European Politics & Societies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 247.

[3] Examples of which include: Gunter Grass's novel, *Crabwalk,* Jörg Friedrich's, The *Fire: The Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945,* and W.G. Sebald's *On the Natural History of Destruction.*

[4] The prominent Czech historians, who have worked in collaboration with the Historical Commission over the past two decades are: Karel Kaplan, Jan Křen, Jaroslav Kučera, Václav Kural and Tomáš Staněk. Detlef Brades, Ferdinand Seibt, Hans-Franzen Karl Lemberg, Volker Zimmermann and Ralf Gabel are among the German historians who have entered this recent German-Czech dialogue.

[5] See Francis Dostál Raška, *The Czechoslovak Exile Government in London and the Sudeten German Issue* (Prague: Karolinum Press Printers, 2002); Zdeněk Beneš and Václav Kura eds., *Facing History: The Evolution of Czech-German Relations in the Czech Provinces, 1848* (Prague: Gallery, 2002).

Contemporary English-language research on Czech and German relations in Bohemia has posited it within the discourse of nationalism. On the one hand, recent micro-historical research has investigated the development of nationality and identity politics within localized regions of the Bohemian lands. This research seeks to relay the fluidity of Bohemian identity and the convoluted process through which national constructs were created. It questions the traditional and polarized perception of the people of Bohemia as Czech or German. On the other hand, studies of the German removal from Czechoslovakia have found a niche within the recent trans-national thematic study of nationalism and ethnic cleansing.[6] The dialogue over ethnic cleansing was invoked in response to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and since then the term has entered the modern lexicon to describe the extremes of nationalist impulses. These studies place the expulsion of the Czechoslovak Germans within the broader context of modern European developments.

There is a further contemporary trend in English-language literature investigating the complex Anglo-Czech relationship, of which this thesis seeks to be a part. This literature discusses the Anglo-Czech relationship through biographical studies of individual figures, through Czech and British diplomatic relations during the wars, and more broadly, through the relationship between Austria-Hungary and Britain leading up to its dissolution. By contrast, this thesis seek to forge new ground by placing the development and propagation of Bohemian "Czech" and "German"

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[6] See Benjamin Lieberman, *Terrible Fate; Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe* (New York: Ivan R. Dee, 2006); Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Steven Béla Várdy and T. Hunt Tooley, *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001).

identity politics within the context of Britain's foreign policy decisions toward the Czechoslovak state in the first half of the twentieth century. It investigates how Czech national myths, which were created in the nineteenth century, entered British academic literature and came to shape the lens through which Britain's academic and policy communities viewed the people of the Bohemian lands.

The first chapter investigates the development of Czech national identity during the nineteenth century. This chapter intends to reveal how, as the century progressed, a Czech identity was constructed by the national myth-making of self-professed Czech historians. The chapter also emphasizes the "constructed" nature of Czech and German identities in Bohemia and critically assesses the myths that were written into Czech national history. Since these national myths subsequently entered British literature and framed Britain's vision of Bohemian nationality, they are presented here in detail.

The second chapter conveys how the Czech national myths described in chapter one resonated within nineteenth and early twentieth century British literature, and how, with the advent of the war, Slavophile British professionals propagated these myths to help the Czech national movement achieve its state-making project. The chapter subsequently intends to convey that the formation of the Czechoslovak state did not simply occur as a *fait accompli* due to external events, but was informed, in part, by the propagation of the Czech's national myths.

The third chapter investigates the Anglo-Czech relations during the interwar period. It suggests that the Czech and German identities, which had been constructed in Czech and British histories began to materialize in tangible form from the

administrative structure of the state and external socio-economic processes. This chapter concurrently depicts a reversal in the Anglo-Czech relationship, and the process through which Britain became involved in the Munich Agreement of 1938.

The fourth chapter provides an account of how and why the decision for the population transfer developed during the Second World War. This chapter conveys how these plans developed alongside a process through which the Czech nation and identity was brought into the Anglo-American war effort, and the identity of the Bohemian Germans became subsumed under the identity of the collectively guilty German nation under Nazi leadership.

As this thesis will show, British policy-making towards Czechoslovakia was informed by a conviction in the Czech national myth of long-standing antagonism between the two purportedly distinct nations of Bohemia: the Czechs and the Germans. In the twentieth century, the nuances of Bohemian identity were lost within the dichotomous ethnico-linguistic portrayal of these two groups. The study of Britain's role in Czechoslovak identity politics reveals the process through which Britain's academic and policy-making elite helped define the German-speakers of Bohemia as an anomalous incongruity within their own ancestral home.

**Chapter One:**

**Historicizing the Nation in the Nineteenth Century**

**The Linguistic and Philosophical Foundations of Czech Identity**

In 1921, the Czechoslovak government conducted its first census to record the national composition of its citizenship. The census commissioners directed their pollees to identify with a specific national group based on their "'racial belonging, whose principal external marker is the mother tongue.'"[1] Individuals who professed dual national sentiment, the absence of sentiment, or bilingualism were nonetheless forced to identify with a national group. Unlike Habsburg polling criteria, which polled the Empire's national composition through "daily language use," the new polling criteria provided its Czechoslovak citizens with a degree of personal choice. The census did not, however, differentiate between Czechs and Slovaks, but accorded them with one identity: Czechoslovak. Combined as such, the "Czechs" had tangible majority over the Germans in Bohemia. Czechoslovakia's Jewish population, while predominantly German-speaking, was designated as "a national group that has lost its language."[2] The 1930 census brought no new categorical changes, but it did explicitly define nationality as one's mother tongue.

The process through which language and identity became entwined in the Bohemian lands began during a Czech philological movement in the late eighteenth

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[1] Czechoslovak Republic, státní úřad statistický, *Die Volkszählung in der Čechoslovakischen Republik vom 15. Februar 1921,* vol. 1 (Prague: Bursik und Kohout, 1924), 9-14, 64-66, quoted in Jeremy King, *Budwiesers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princetown University Press, 2002), 164.

[2] Czechoslovak Republic, státní úřad statistický, *Die Volkszählung,* 116, quoted in King, *Budwiesers,* 165.

century, but was fueled concurrently by demographic and industrial changes in what came to be Czechoslovakia. Prior to the twentieth century, language in the Bohemian lands was a mark of class. When the Bohemian crown came under the control of the Habsburg dynasty in the sixteenth century, state centralization elevated German culture and language within society, relegating the use of Czech to the countryside. Entrance into the upper echelons of Bohemian society was predicated on having a command of German. But as Czech peasants began to enter Bohemia's urban centers beginning in the late eighteenth century, a nascent Czech-speaking working and middle class developed. These developments were inspired and promoted under the "enlightened absolutism" of Austrian Empress Maria Theresa and her hereditary successor, Joseph II. While both rulers pursued centralization, their educational, social and spiritual reforms generated greater social mobility, which allowed the Czech peasantry to enter society. In 1781, Joseph II went beyond Maria Theresa's modifications of serfdom and abolished it. And, while he institutionalized German as the official public language, he did in fact mandate bilingual requirements within the civil service.[3]

As this transformation was taking place, a circle of Bohemian intellectuals developed an increased intellectual curiosity in Czech philology, from which they established a Czech literary tradition. The beginnings of this movement, now canonized as the Czech National Revival, originate in the figure of Josef Dobrovský, who drew from the medieval Slavic literary language, Old Church Slavonic, to codify the grammatical basis of the modern Czech language. His work popularized Czech in

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[3] George J. Svoboda, "The Odd Alliance: The Underprivileged Population of Bohemia and the Habsburg Court, 1765-1790," in *The Czech and Slovak Experience,* ed. John Morison (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 8-16.

everyday conversation and education.[4] Josef Jungmann, (1877-1847) a student of

Dobrovský, advanced his mentor's linguistic program with translations of Milton,

Gray, Goethe, Schiller and Chateaubriand. But he, unlike Dobrovksy, also wrote his

own works in Czech, and published in the 1830s a five-volume German-Czech

dictionary, which laid the basis for the modern Czech lexicon.[5]

The roots of the Czech nation are thus found in this philological experiment.

Born into this nascent Czech literary tradition, the next generation of Czech

philologists drew heavily from the ideas of Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann

Fichte to construct a linguistic Czech identity.[6] As the leaders of the German romantic

nationalist movement, Herder and Fichte emphasized the linguistic basis of national

identity. In *Sprachphilosophie*, Herder identified language as an aesthetic human

force, which produces the *Volk*, a community of people spiritually united by their

spoken language. The nation, as he posited, would materialize from the cultural and

literary forms that the *Volk* produces.[7] These theories consequently informed the

development of the Czech nation out of a linguistic, and subsequently, ethnic origin.

In Josef Jungmann's "Conservations on the Czech Language," he writes, "'…if it is

impossible to conceive of a homeland without a nation, and a nation without its own

language, then I assert once more that no one, except he who loves the language of

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[4] R.W. Seton-Watson, *History of the Czechs and Slovaks* (1965; repr., Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1943), 171-172.

[5] Derek Sayer, "The Language of Nationality and the Nationality of Language: Prague 1780-1920," *Past and Present* 153, no. 1 (Nov 1996): 188

[6] Robert B. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality* (New York: Central European Press, 1994), 73.

[7] Russell Arben Fox, "J. G. Herder on Language and the Metaphysics of National Community," *The Review of Politics* 65, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 244.

his nation, can pride himself on genuine love for his homeland.'"[8] As opposed to the western traditions of civic identification, national identity in central Europe was derived from a common language community. In its origins, the sentiment of Czech identity became inextricably linked to its linguistic and literary community.

The political and nationalist program of Czech identity did not develop until the latter half of the nineteenth century. For the development of Czech nationalism was predicated on the development of a broader pan-Slavic movement, which began to gain momentum at the turn of the nineteenth century and sought to unite the Slavic peoples within a common Slavic identity.[9] The Czech national movement drew from the philosophical foundations of pan-Slavism, and specifically the work of two Czech-speaking Slovaks, Jan Kollar and Paul Josef Šafárik. The characteristics, which Kollar and Šafárik attributed to the Slavs informed the forthcoming myths of the Czech nation. Kollar and Šafárik drew significantly from Herder's characterization of the Slavs in *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity*, (Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, 1784-91). The German philosopher described the Slavs as peaceful, freedom-loving, pastoral, industrious, hospitable, and artistic. First and foremost, however, he described the Slavs as victims, a theme that continued to resonate throughout tracts on Czech identity during the twentieth century.[10] Adding to Herder's characterizations, Kollar and Šafárik described Slav Protestant piety as the basis for their "proto-European" and "northern-

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[8] Josef Jungmann, "O jazyku českém. Rozmlouvání druhé," *Hlasatel Cesky* 1, no. 3 (1806): 326, quoted in Hugh LeCaine Agnew, "Czechs, Germans, Bohemians? Images of Self and Other in Bohemia to 1848," in *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe,* ed. Nancy M. Wingfield (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003)*, 62.

[9] Seton-Watson, *The History of the Czechs*, 173.

[10] Pynsent, *Questions of Identity,* 73-86.

European" identity.[11] It is thus within the wider European context that Kollar and Šafárik sought to establish and elevate Slavdom.

**National Myth-Making and Constructing Identities**

The Czech nationalist program emerged out of the revolutionary fervor of 1848, during which time demands for democratic and liberal reforms were put forth throughout Europe. Throughout the 1840s, the Bohemian Diet had increasingly protested the centralization of Metternich's regime, and called for liberal constitutional reforms. The revolutions in Italy and Paris inspired Bohemian reformers, Czech and German alike, to appeal for constitutional reforms during March and April 1848. By May, however, the Germans had withdrawn from the National Committee, which had increasingly become a vehicle to promote "Austroslavism" in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. This program called for the autonomous development of the Slavic nations within Austria. The liberal reform movement was brought to a halt in June, when the formation of a Pan-Slav Congress provoked Vienna to send the Habsburg military into Prague.[12] But meanwhile, an uprising in Vienna in March had brought the fall of the old regime under Metternich, and induced an Imperial Constituent Assembly to meet throughout the summer and winter of 1848 to develop constitutional reform; following its relocation to the Moravian city of Kroměříž, the Assembly produced the Kroměříž Constitution, which advocated a constitutional monarchy and the federalization of the Empire along ethnic or national lines. But the spirit of liberalism did not last for long as the next

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[11] Pynsent, *Questions of Identity*, 76.

[12] D. Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914-1920* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1962), 8-13.

decade brought about the dissolution of the liberal constitution and instituted a period of absolutism and centralization.

The failure of the liberal reform movements of 1848 and 1849 and the increased absolutism under the Bach regime inspired the Czech intellectuals to create a specifically national program. At the forefront of this national movement was the Moravian-born František Palacký (1798-1876). As a young adult, Palacký began studying at an Evangelical lyceum only to discover a passionate interest in the Czech language, and decided to devote his studies to Czech philology. Within the Czech literary tradition, he became associates with Dobrovský, Jungmann, Kollar and Šafárik, with whom he spoke of a Czech cultural revival, seeking to lead a movement that would transform the social forms of Bohemian patriotism, like the Bohemian National Museum, into emblems of the Czech national culture. Palacký had become the foremost organizer of the Czech cultural movement prior to the revolutionary period of 1848, at which time he began to pursue and lead a Czech nationalist program.[13]

In April of 1848, Palacký was invited to attend the All-German Constituent Assembly in Frankfurt, to which he replied in a long letter of refusal, "'I am not a German…I am a Czech of Slavonic blood.'"[14] Fully imbued with a sense of Czech nationhood, Palacký sought to disseminate this sentiment among his Bohemian brethren and project the Czech nation, as a linguistic, cultural and historical entity onto Bohemian lands. In 1848, Palacký became the first Bohemian to write a Czech

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[13] Joseph Frederick Zacek, *Palacký*: *The Historian as Scholar and Nationalist* (the Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1970), 17-24.

[14] František Palacký, "Letter to All-German Constituent Assembly in Frankfurt [April 11, 1848] in B. Rieger, V. J. Nováček and L. Čech, eds., *Frantiska Palackeho spisy drobn*é 1 (Prague: 1848), 16-22, quoted in Zacek, *Palacký*, 25.

national history, for which he became known as the father of the modern Czech

nation. But *The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia* was a revised

version of previous historical text that he had published in 1836.[15] The first edition

was a comprehensive history (in German) of the Bohemian lands, *The History of the*

*Bohemia, Largely after Documents and Handwriting.*[16] The revised version of 1848

had undergone significant editorial changes to construct a new version of Bohemian

history, one that was oriented towards a Czech national program. In it, Palacký

endeavored to transform the linguistic Czech *Volk* into a tangible political and

cultural nation. He did this by projecting the *Volk* into the past and ascribing it with

historic rights to the Bohemian lands.[17] Palacký predicated Czech identity on

establishing and purporting its specific uniqueness, which distinguished the Czech

nation from what it was not. The Germans of Bohemia were thus construed as the

"Other," or the "outside group," and attributed with the death of the Czech nation

from the sixteenth century on. The history thus described the national ascendancy of

the Czech nation, and largely ignored the role of Bohemia's Germans in the nation's

development. *The History of the Czech Nation* characterized the Germans as a "nation

of predators (*Raubervölker*), whose aggressive competition with the peaceful Slavs

formed the kernel of Bohemian history."[18] Palacký's account of national antagonism

between the Czechs and Germans found lasting rhetorical expression in Czech

national literature into the twentieth century.

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[15] In Czech, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a v Morave.* See Zacek, *Palacký,* 57.
[16] In German, *Die Geschichte von Bohmen, grosstentheils nach Urkunden und Handschriften.* See Zacek, *Palack*ý, 56.
[17] Agnew, "Czechs, Germans," in *Creating the Other,* 69.
[18] Zacek, *Palacký,* 62.

When it was published, Palacký's work angered the German academic and political elites of Bohemia, who criticized it for its antagonistic racial undertones.[19] While he acknowledged his divergence from the "traditional German viewpoint," he believed that the nation was "entitled to preserve and improve its existence without regard for the Germans, and even against their will."[20] As the century progressed, Palacký's themes resonated throughout a proliferation of national histories. These histories were underwritten with a specific political purpose: to attain Czech autonomy. The national histories emphasized the Czech nation's historic rights to Bohemia to legitimize the nation's right to autonomous development. The historic rights argument was derived from the Slavic character of the kingdom's first ruling dynasty, the Přemyslids. The national histories also invoked the characterizations of the Slavs, which Kollar and Šafárik had enunciated in their work. The Czech nation was thus described as peace-loving, determined, honorable, humane, hospitable, and democratic. Czech victimhood was invoked to portray the Czechs as victims to German oppression. The German immigration into Bohemia during the twelfth century was consequently portrayed as a period of uninvited German colonization. In opposition to German Catholicism, the Czechs were portrayed as anti-Clerical and the Hussite period was attributed with national importance. The figure of Master Jan Hus was portrayed as a Czech national hero for preaching clerical reform and advocating democracy in lieu of feudalism. His post-mortem following, the Bohemian Brethren, were portrayed as religious and moral guides for the nation. And, most significantly, the Czech nationalists identified the Battle of *Bila Hora* (1620) of the Thirty Years

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[19] Zaceck, *Palacký,* 68.
[20] František Palacký, *Zur bohmishen Geschichteschreibung* (Prague, 1871), 160, quoted in Zacek *Palacký,* 70.

War as the death of the Czech nation. The next two and a half centuries were portrayed as a period of Habsburg oppression, Germanization and Catholicization. Consequently, the histories attributed Dobrovský's philological work as a "National Revival" through which the Czech nation was "re-awakened" to fulfill its political mission and reclaim its cultural and historical legacy.[21]

And so it was from these national myths that the Czech nation was imbued with a historical and linguistic claim to the Bohemian lands. In drawing from this legacy, the Czech nation was to ascend as the one and only authentic nation of Bohemia. With a "usable past" to draw from, the Czech nationalists instructed the nation of its past strengths and weaknesses to provide them with a contemporary sense of purpose, uniqueness and identification.[22]

**A Critical Reassessment of "Bohemian" History:**

The Czech nationalists thus established a historical and literary foundation from which the Czech nation could not only flourish, but lay claim to autonomy and state rights with the larger Austrian Empire. And yet this historical account was not the work of careful historical reassessment; it was a national and polarized interpretation of Bohemian history, which created a deterministic historical trajectory to validate a Czech national existence. Through the uses of presentism, the nineteenth century national ideal was projected into a glorified past. Czech history was mythologized as a struggle to exist, an explicitly national struggle between the Czechs and Germans of

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[21] Jiří Štaif, "The Image of the Other in the Nineteenth Century, Historical Scholarship in the Bohemian Lands," in *Creating the Other*, 87-93.

[22] Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 4.

Bohemia. If one revisits this mythologized history with an eye to anachronism, obfuscation, and hyperbole, the problems appear extensive.

The Battle of *Bila Hora*, which was purported to be an ethnic struggle between Czechs and Germans, actually represents a political, religious, and cultural struggle between the Bohemian Estates and absolutist rule. While the Estates did speak Old Church Slavonic, from which Dobrovský drew to establish the grammatical basis of the Czech language, the supposed ethnic struggle only resonated in a nineteenth century linguistic definition of Czechness.[23] With parallel fallacious logic, the so-called National Revival, a phrase that implies the continuity of the nation's life, anachronistically posited Czech national existence into the pre-modern or pre-national era. The myth of the Revival, which described the establishment of the National Theatre (1783) and the National Museum (1818) as part of the Czech national movement, obscured the patriotic foundation upon which these institutions were founded. Established alongside the Royal Society of Bohemia (1784) and the Society of Patriotic Friends of Art (1796), these associations represented "land patriotism…[a patriotism] for the kingdom of Bohemia; not against the Habsburgs who wore the Bohemia crown, but against [the] erosion of its powers and privileges to Vienna."[24] As they were established, these associations sought to arouse territorial patriotism to off-set centralizing reforms, which emanated from the "enlightened despotism" of Vienna. This civic patriotism was nonetheless obscured during the nineteenth century Czech national movement.

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[23] Zdeněk Beneš and Václav Kural, eds., *Facing History: The Evolution of Czech-German Relations in the Czech Provinces, 1848-1948* (Prague: Gallery, 2002), 23.

[24] Sayer, "The Language of Nationality," 183.

Underlying the mythologizing of the National Revival was the omnipresent dichotomy between the Czechs and Germans of Bohemia. The projection of this anachronistic and presentist narrative was meant to imbue the nascent Czech nation with a sentiment of ascendant uniqueness and difference.[25] While the Germans of Bohemian were portrayed as "colonizers," their actual immigration into the Bohemian lands reveals a different narrative, and their role, a different role. The first German immigrants to enter the Bohemian lands came sporadically throughout time as priests and monks. Around the thirteenth century, a German social elite began to immigrate to Prague as the city rose to prominence within the Holy Roman Empire, and the Prague princes began to marry German royal and noble brides. The Bohemian nobility consequently adopted the elite culture, which was German. Meanwhile, Bohemia's kings urged the immigration of German farmers to check the power of the Bohemian nobility, and induce economic and political development. This settlement, which was mythologized into colonization, was enabled by social and environmental changes of the twelfth century. Slight global warming, urbanization, and the agrarian revolution in western Europe had rendered the previously uninhabitable environment of the border region inhabitable.[26]

Consequently, as a sense of Czechness began to consolidate, it was not only inextricably tied to this narrative, but generated a feedback loop through which the historical narrative of antagonism began to inform nineteenth century contemporary relations, which subsequently reaffirmed the narrative. As such, the account of the enduring tension between Czechs and Germans in Bohemia was derived, on the one

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[25] Jiří Štaif, "The Image of the Other," in *Creating the Other,* 92-93.
[26] Beneš and Kural, eds., *Facing History*, 12-17.

hand from hyperbole and obfuscation, and, on the other hand, from tangible and contemporary evidence of the national conflict. This feedback loop was to prove enduring into the twentieth century. While two "communities in conflict" began to emerge in the latter half the century, to speak of a national conflict prior to the nineteenth century is anachronistic.[27] One must therefore reconcile evidence of conflict between "Czechs" and "Germans" in Bohemia's early history outside of nationalist historiography. As the historical institutional structure of Charles University in Prague relays, the Bohemians were, despite linguistic difference, united in a common territorial identity. The University was structured along four administrative or territorial units: the Saxons, the Poles, the Bavarians, and natio Bohemorum. The Bohemian nation, the Bohemi, was thus derived from a collective whole.[28] While linguistic orientation could and did provide a source of pride for medieval Bohemians, this sentiment was personal, and not driven by a nationalist project to create a larger, linguistically derived sense of community.

**The Fluidity of Identity Behind the Constructs**

In the nineteenth century, Czech nationalists distributed a history of national conflict to establish a foundation from which two contemporary communities could grow. While conflict emerged between the two groups at the turn of the nineteenth century, the roots of this conflict can be found in the economic and social transformation of

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[27] The term "community in conflict" is derived from the work of Jan Křen, whose work reflects the recent cooperation and collaboration between Czech and German historians. See Jan Kren, *Community in Conflict: Czechs and Germans 1780-1918* (Prague, 1990; Munich, 1996) (in Czech and German); Jan Kren, *Community in Conflict, Catastrophe, Separation: A Preliminary Account of German-Czech History from the Nineteenth Century* (Prague, 1996; Munich, 1996) (in Czech and German).

[28] Beneš and Kural, eds., *Facing History*, 17.

society, and not from long-standing antagonism. And, while Germans and Czechs had ostensibly emerged from Bohemians by the end of the century, these identities were neither hegemonic throughout society, nor were they hegemonic within their own constructs.

While the Czech national movement began as an intellectual endeavor, the revolution of 1848 provided Palacký and other like-minded Czech nationalists with the opportunity to entertain political objectives. While Austrian federalization would fulfill an objective within the Czech national project, the plans were rooted in a broader liberal movement for democratic and liberal rights. As Czech national parties began to develop, Bohemian politics became increasingly reduced to identity politics. Meanwhile in Prague, Czech had become the "official language of all city offices," and the Czechs had obtained a majority in the Prague city council.[29] By 1883, all the Germans of the council had resigned. The Czech elites projected their presence and of a larger Czech nation within the Bohemian lands. Throughout the last two decades of the century, the Czech political parties attained concessions from Vienna, which equalized language use in the Bohemian lands, and divided Charles University into Czech and German sections. In 1893, German was removed from the street signs in Prague. A new generation, taught in Czech language schools and socialized in a Czech culture, emerged as a nation of Czechs, vying for their linguistic, educational and administrative rights in Bohemia. In 1893, national conflict materialized on the streets as riots broke out in Prague and martial law was constituted. At the turn of the

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[29] Sayer, "The Language of Nationality, 169.

century, Bohemia appeared nationally polarized as a nation of Czechs against a nation of Germans.[30]

But the riots that broke out in 1893 were initiated by student demonstrators, who were protesting for universal suffrage. While national conflict existed this conflict was rooted in a drive for equal opportunity against a centralist government. At the same time, the polarization of politics between Czechs and Germans obscured what was yet a fluid co-existence between two language groups.[31] For despite this superficial polarization, there were those within Bohemian society who, even into the twentieth century, did not conform to either national construct. Bilingualism and interethnic marriages blended the line between Czech and German that the nationalists on both sides sought to create. Bohemia's Jewish population was also at odds with both national constructs. While they were German-speaking, anti-Semitism pervaded Czech and German communities alike. Nor was the Czech nationalist campaign, which was rooted in Bohemian autonomy, appealing to all Bohemians. Allegiance to the Emperor and imperial system ran counter to the nationalist calls from the Young Czech Party.

The Bohemian nobility, for one, remained loyal to the Empire through the end of World War One. The majority of the Bohemian nobility consistently rejected national alignment, which would have meant a further concession to the century's social, political and economic changes. Rather, they sought to maintain their independent and nationally ambiguous identity as a wealthy and politically influential class—a decision that aggravated the nationalists and accorded them with the

[30] Sayer, "The Language of Nationality," 169-170.
[31] Wingfield, *Flag Wars*, 48-50.

moniker *amphibian*. As historian Eagle Glassheim notes, "As national assertiveness increased, noble dedication to the Emperor rose proportionately."[32] While the democratic aspect of the nationalist movements threatened to undermine the nobility's stature, they were nonetheless forced to work within the framework of the Czech and German national programs to maintain a political presence. While maintaining their amphibian status, the nobility superficially split along national lines as they allied with the German centrist or Czech federalist parties. Thus, despite maintaining an a-national identity into the twentieth century, the nobility became superficially national by association. From the external vantage point, the fluidity of Bohemian identity was obscured through the growing linguistic divide, from which a superficial image of the Czechs and Germans as two distinct and cohesive groups emerged.[33]

And yet the Czechs and Germans were not two distinct groups with strict and coherent identities. Underneath the superficial "German" identity, was a degree of variation, which extended from a localized regional identity, to a broader allegiance to the Bohemian crown, to an identity derived from the Austrian-Habsburg Empire, and, finally, to a pan-German identity, which looked westward towards Germany. But Mark Cornwall notes that at the turn of the century, the northern Bohemian elite increasingly chose an Austrian allegiance, their "patriotism…tested in the Austro-Prussian war" and inspired by the "constitutional upheavals which brought liberalism

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[32] Eagle Glassheim, "Between Empire and Nation: The Bohemian Nobility, 1880-1918," from *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, ed., Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 62.

[33] Glassheim, *Noble Nationalities: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 10-11; 23-25.

to power in Austria."[34] Coexisting alongside this primary allegiance to the Austrian state was, however, a fluid association with the broader transnational identity between German Prussia and German Austria. It was this latter identity that was presented with a hegemonic face in the twentieth century.

The relationship between the Czechs and Germans in the latter half of the century was described in the decades following as embittered confrontation between a German oppressor and a Czech victim due to national circumstances. But the confrontation that emerged was, while national in all appearances, largely rooted in the drive towards economic and social change in the Bohemian lands. With the final abolition of seigneurialism in 1848 and the institution of liberal economic policies, the Habsburg lands underwent extensive industrialization. Internal immigration brought peasants into the cities, generating a surge in population and industrial growth. In Prague, in particular, the population more than tripled and the city became a cosmopolitan banking and industrial center. Since the peasant population was predominantly Czech-speaking, the process through which the nation developed was inextricably linked to the broader social and economic transformations of urbanization and industrialization.

Czech nationalists urged these emergent Czech-speakers to engage in economic nationalism, the "preferential treatment in economic life to members of one national community over members of another national community."[35] An authentic

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[34] Mark Cornwall, "The Construction of National Identities in the Northern Bohemian Borderland, 1848-71," from *Different Paths to the Nation: Regional and National Identities in Central Europe and Italy, 1830-70,* ed. Laurence Cole (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 145-146.

[35] Jan Hajek and Eduard Kubu, "Specific Features of Economic Nationalism in Multinational Central Europe: The Case of Bohemian Lands," from *For Economic National*

Czech nation could thus emerge as a new bourgeois middle class within the broader

context of undermining the old order. Czech nationalists encouraged Czechs to buy

and sell within the Czech community to equalize their position within society. The

Czech campaign was, therefore, a positive campaign to ensure the "'constructive' and

'equitable' coexistence of the two ethnic groups."[36] The democratic leveling of

Bohemian society thus emerged with a specifically national face, as the Czech nation-

building project capitalized on the linguistic structure of society. During the

nineteenth century, Czech economic nationalism was therefore more emancipatory

than aggressive.[37] Thus, when the new class of Czech workers settled in the border

regions, they proved stalwart in maintaining their *Czechness*. And in turn, the German

nationalists of Austria were put on the defensive to maintain the local German

identity of the Bohemian woods; in regions where identity politics were of a lesser

concern, they mobilized local politics in terms of "economic survival."[38] The

economic and social transformation of society was inherent within the nationalist

campaign.

This process of social, economic and national change was buttressed by the

presence and active engagement of voluntary associations. In general, the association

movement contributed to Europe's transition from feudalism into a democratic and

bourgeois civil society with a participatory citizenry. In Bohemia, these clubs also

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*Possessions: Reflections on Modern Czech and German Economic Nationalism in the Bohemian Lands: Tribute to XIV International Economic History Congress in Helsinki,* Ed., Jan Hajek, Drahomir Jancik, Eduard Kubo (Praha: Charles University In Prague, 2006), 13.

[36] Hajek and Kubu, "Specific Feature of Economic Nationalism," 21.

[37] Ibid., 21-23.

[38] Pieter M. Judson, "The Bohemian Oberammergau: Nationalist Tourism in the Austrian Empire," in *Constructing Nationalities from East Central Europe*, ed. Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 90.

served to establish national allegiances in lieu of the social stratification of society. The most pervasive association was the gymnastic club. Originally a Prussian nationalist association, national gymnastic clubs, the Czech *Sokol* (Falcon) and the German *Turnverein*, were established in Prague in 1862. The *Sokol* cultivated its Czechness with Slavic symbols on Russian style uniforms, and, significantly, through the "popular veneration" of Jan Hus and the Hussites.[39] Significantly, while the Czech *Sokol* flag was black and gold, the colors of the Bohemian crown, the German *Turnverein* flag featured the colors of the German national movement, black, red and gold. Group membership, ritual, and symbolic representation in material culture thus gave the Czech nation a tangible and real presence within Bohemian society.

The development of Czech national identity corroborates with the inherent subjectivity of nationalism as something that is necessarily constructed, purported, and distributed. As the process through which the Czech nation developed relays, national identity was not simply an inborn sentiment, but was created through active and manipulative processes. The Czech nation did not simply emerge from a long slumber, but was consciously constructed. Nor, however, can one attribute abrupt cleavages in society to national hatred, for the nationalist campaign was, in part, a specifically political campaign against state centralization. And so, Czech nationalists advanced the growth of national sentiment through encouraging the linguistic *Volk* to identify themselves in national, social and economic cultural forms. It was through such efforts that the Czech nationalists sought to establish an "imagined community,"

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[39] Claire Nolte, "Voluntary Associations and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-century Prague," in *Different Paths to the Nation: Regional and National Identities in Central Europe and Italy, 1830-70,* ed. Laurence Cole (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 91.

which was linguistically based in the historic Bohemian Crown lands.[40] The Germans

of Bohemia were excluded from this imagined community as an outside group. And

yet, despite the construction and projection of these national identities, identity

remained a personal choice that could not simply be imposed or forcefully embedded.

*Amphibians,* interethnic marriages, and bilingual speakers defied the constructs that

grew out of the nineteenth century nationalist movement.

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[40] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).

**CHAPTER TWO:**

**British Perceptions of Bohemia and Czechoslovak State Formation**

**Bohemia in British Literature, 19th-20th Century**

The development of Czech national identity did not occur outside the realm of British observation and thought. As this new presence in Bohemia made itself known, the country appeared in English-language accounts as the home of the Czech nation, a national group that was defined explicitly by its Czech linguistic and cultural heritage. Informed by the Czech national project as it developed throughout the century, a sympathetic British academic elite began to associate Bohemia and the Czech nation as one and the same, ignoring and debasing the German heritage of the lands and constructing the narrative of German oppression and Czech victimhood in authentically Czech lands. The process through which the Czech nation became the state-making nation of Czechoslovakia reflects how British historians interpreted Bohemian history through a Czech lens.

This narrative finds its origins in the singular figure of John Bowring, a nineteenth century British diplomat, writer, and polygot. Bowring, an editor of the *Westminster Review,* sought to popularize British interest in the Slavic nations through translations of Russian, Serbian, Polish and Czech poetry. Since most of his translations were the first in their kind, he acquired the reputation as a "High Priest of Critics whenever the poetry of the Slavs was under consideration."[1] Bowring's research led him to make contacts with the leading intellectuals of the Slavic nations,

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[1] Arthur Prudden Coleman, "John Bowring and the Poetry of the Slavs," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 84, no. 3 (1941): 440.

including that of Šafárik of Dobrovský. In 1832, he published the first English language survey of Czech literature, *Cheskian Anthology: Being A History of the Poetical Literature of Bohemia with Translated Specimens*. The text was compiled with the advice and help of Bohemian folklorist Frantisek Celakovsky and from Czech literature which was dispatched to him by Dobrovský himself.

Four years before he published the *Cheskian Anthology,* Bowring had, however, raised indignation within his circle of Bohemian contacts. In 1828, he published an article, "The History of Bohemian Literature" in *The Foreign Quarterly Review*. The piece, which expressed decidedly anti-Habsburg sentiment, evoked castigation from Dobrovský and his fellow Czech philologists, who feared that it would incite a rebuke from Vienna and that "Bowring should realize the harm he could do the Slavonic cause 'by heaping charges of injustice on Vienna.'"[2] Bowring had infused the cultural and linguistic Czech philological project with a politicized message two decades before the Czechs had politicized it themselves. At a time when a Czech nationalist campaign did not exist, Bowring drew his own parallel that the "political situation of Bohemia…[is] connected with its literary history."[3] As he concludes the article, he condemns Joseph II as a "despot:"

> [B]y that strange and silly determination to root out the language of the country, [Joseph II] seemed to make a personal attack on every Bohemian who spoke it; he wounded the national pride and prejudice in their most morbid part; he recreated feelings, Bohemian feelings, which as a stranger, and the inheritor of usurped dominion, he should, above all things, have refrained from arousing; and he proposed to himself an impracticable object, employing for its accomplishment the worst and weakest means.[4]

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[2] Coleman, "John Bowring," 452.

[3] John Bowring, "The History of Bohemian Literature," *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 2 (1828): 173.

[4] Bowring, "The History of Bohemian Literature," 174.

In an unprecedented account, and without the consent or encouragement of his Czech

contacts, Bowring framed Habsburg rule over the Bohemian lands as unnatural,

unlawful and oppressive. While he did not explicitly label the Bohemians as Czechs,

the inference is implied in the dichotomy he created between Bohemia's German-

speaking ruler and the Bohemians who spoke the "the language of the country."[5] Four

years later, however, Bowring did apply this label in the *Cheskian Anthology*. He

consequently became the first English-speaker to identify the "Cechian (Bohemian)

nation" and the "Cheskian people" as the inhabitants of Bohemia.[6] The German

presence in Bohemia was explicitly excluded from this portrayal of Bohemia's

Czechness. His disregard for the German Bohemians is underscored by his portrayal

of the Battle of *Bila Hora*. He states that the Battle had "…terrible [consequences for]

the whole Bohemian people," and that after the Battle, "The language of Bohemia

was abandoned—its literature fell into decay."[7] His account of the Battle anticipates

the historicizing, which developed two decades later in the Czech national histories.

And so, as early as the 1830s, the Czech nation was presented to an English-speaking

audience as an oppressed nation within the Bohemian lands.

  While Bowring sought to inform his British audience of a Czech national

existence, the people of Bohemia remained largely outside the realm of British

thought throughout the nineteenth century. Concerted study of international affairs in

general, and Slavic studies in particular did not arise until World War One, when

international affairs became institutionalized as a discipline within British academia.

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[5] Bowring, "The History of Bohemian Literature," 174.
[6] John Bowring, *The Cheskian Anthology*: *Being A History of the Poetical Literature of Bohemia with Translated Specimens* (London: Rowland Hunger, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1832), 9.
[7] Bowring, *The Cheskian Anthology,* 76.

Consequently, prior to 1914, only a few English-language histories of the Czech

nation had been published.[8] In 1896, C. Edmund Maurice published *The Story of*

*Bohemia: From the Earliest Times to the Fall of National Independence in 1620,* in

which, as the title relays, he represented Czech history as a "history of a lost

nationality," and as a "struggle between Teuton and Slav."[9] Maurice endowed the

Czech nation with historic rights to the Bohemian lands, and disassociated the period

of Habsburg rule from Bohemian history. He portrayed that Czech history came to an

abrupt end in 1620, the year of the Battle of *Bila Hora*.[10] Maurice polarized the Czech

and German existence in Bohemia as inherently antagonistic.

Maurice's sympathy to the Czech cause resonates throughout the other British

histories of the Czech nation, which were published at the turn of the century. General

public interest in places abroad induced G.P. Putnam and Sons to publish a text on

Austria-Hungary in the "Our European Neighbors" series. Published in 1904 by

Francis H.E. Palmer, *Austro-Hungarian Life in Town and Country* depicted the

Empire as a seat of national conflict. Palmer strove to portray that "nearly every

factor in [Austro-Hungarian] national life…represents a distinctly disruptive

element," with which, as a contemporary *New York Times* article states, it is difficult

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[8] See Sidney Whitman, *The Realm of the Habsburgs* (London: William Heineman 1893); James Baker, *Pictures of Bohemia Drawn with Pen and Pencil* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1894); Count Francis von Lutzow, *Bohemia: A Historical Sketch* (London: Richard Clay and Sons, 1896); C. Edmund Maurice, *The Story of Bohemia: From the Earliest Times to the Fall of National Independence in 1620, with a Short Summary of Later Events* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1896); Francis H.E. Palmer, *Austro-Hungarian Life in Town and Country* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1903); Archibald R. Colquhoun and Ethel Colquhoun's *The Whirlpool of Europe: Austria Hungary and the Habsburgs* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1907); W.S. Monroe, *Bohemia and the Czechs* (London: Bell, 1910); James Baker, *Austria: her People and their Homelands* (New York: John Lane Co., 1913).
[9] Maurice, *The Story of Bohemia*, 1;2.
[10] Ibid., 478-482.

for a member of the Anglo-American community to relate, "[for] secure in our own

liberties, and believing that our future happiness and greatness depend most upon

indifference as to race, we hardly appreciate what is Pan-Slavism."[11] As the *Times*

article relays, Palmer sought to convey the inherent difference between a western

civic identity and the ethnic nationalism of the Empire. In his descriptions of this

ethnic nationalism, Palmer is decidedly anti-Habsburg and anti-German. He

supported the Czech national campaign for autonomy, emphasized the "mutual

antipathy" between the Czechs and Germans of Bohemia,[12] and described the Czech

nation as a "highly important barrier to the aspirations of the Chauvinists in the

German Empire, who dream of a German Fatherland that will extend to the Black Sea

as well as to the Adriatic."[13] Contextualized within the recent conclusion of the

Second Boer War, Palmer's assessment reflects contemporary British anxiety over

Germany's imperial motives, and the threat this posed to Great Britain's own imperial

status. Palmer conflated German Austria with the German Empire, and portrayed the

Czechs as diametrically opposed to aggressive pan-Germanism.

It was through this lens that Czech history was portrayed in English-language

accounts on the eve of World War One. The contemporary rise of the German

imperial threat legitimated the portrayal of German oppression in the Bohemian lands

and provided the Czech national project with sympathy. From Bowring's

unprecedented interest and portrayal of Bohemia, to the portrayal of the Czech nation

in the early English-language histories, Bohemian history was presented via the

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[11] "Austro-Hungary: Its Many and Conflicting Nationalities as Described by F.H.E. Palmer," *The New York Times,* January 2, 1904.

[12] Francis H. E. Palmer, *Austro-Hungarian Life in Town and Country* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), 265; 66.

myths of the Czech national movement. The Czech national history complimented

contemporary Anglo-German tension, which then came to head a with the outbreak of

war. And, as the German *Drag Nach Osten* became an apparently viable threat during

of war, Bohemia was necessarily construed as a Czech homeland to deny the right of

eastward German expansion.

**The War's Slavophile Professionals: R.W. Seton-Watson and Henry Wickham Steed**

The aforementioned texts laid the groundwork from which the Czech national myths

would become cemented in British academic study as the history of Bohemia. But

this history of Bohemia was, as national histories are, written to purport the nation's

uniqueness as opposed to the "Other," in this case the Bohemian Germans. During the

war, this perspective of Bohemian history was given a seal of authenticity by the

established British experts on central and eastern Europe. These experts, the foremost

of whom was R. W. Seton-Watson and Henry Wickham Steed, were advocates of the

dismembering the Habsburg Empire to establish sovereign nation-states for the

Czechs and the other Slavic nations of central and eastern Europe. With the help of

these sympathetic British professionals, the Czech campaign for sovereignty was

legitimated within the Czech's unique national identity and history in Bohemia. It

was through these academic British accounts that the Czech national campaign found

their way into Britain's general population, and, significantly, the British Foreign

Office. For, as the war had progressed, the officials in Whitehall entreated the help of

professionals who were knowledgeable of the war's nationality problems. Seton-

Watson and Steed were themselves brought to Whitehall, which provided the leaders of the Czech campaign with a sympathetic voice and an avenue to influence the Foreign Office directly.

Born in London in 1879, Seton-Watson's studies of central and eastern Europe began when he entered Vienna University in 1905. There he befriended Henry Wickham Steed, then the foreign correspondent for the *Times* in Vienna. Over the next decade, Seton-Watson traveled throughout the Austrian-Hungarian empire, dedicated to finding a liberal solution to the Empire's nationality conflicts, which were then reconciled within the framework of the Monarchy. He believed that Austria-Hungary was the "pivot of the balance of power" between Germany and Russia.[14] He did not, however, harbor anti-German sentiments, which were present in the press's sensational accounts of pan-Germanism and Anglo-German conflict in the Boer War. Having studied in Germany for three years, Seton-Watson viewed the German people positively and believed in Anglo-German cooperation.[15]

During his travels throughout the Habsburg lands, Seton-Watson was introduced to the leading nationalists and statesmen of the Empire's non-German and non-Magyar nationalities. At this time he also published two historical texts, *Racial Problems in Hungary* (1908), and *The South Slav Question in the Habsburg Monarchy* (1911), which were received favorably in Great Britain and established his expert reputation on central and eastern Europe. Seton-Watson's favorable view of the Monarchy fell precipitously in the months after Archduke Franz Ferdinand's

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[14] R.W. Seton-Watson, "The European Outlook" *Scottish Review*," January 18, 1907, in Hugh and Christopher Seton- Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981)*,* 30.

[15] Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 18-19.

assassination in June 1914. By August, Seton-Watson was convinced that dissolution was the only viable solution to the Monarchy's nationality problems.[16] Despite his concerted research in Hungarian and Southern Slav nationalism, Seton-Watson became involved in the Czech national cause in August of 1914, following a meeting in Rotterdam with Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the self-proclaimed leader of the Czech movement abroad.[17] In 1916, Seton-Watson and Masaryk subsequently founded a journal, *the New Europe,* which was dedicated to widening British awareness of the "oppressed nations" and advocating the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. *New Europe* provided an avenue through which the Czech campaign for independence was enhanced by British voices of authenticity and authority.[18]

The meeting between Masaryk and Seton-Watson occurred at the behest of Henry Wickham Steed, who was unable to meet with Masaryk himself. While Seton-Watson and Masaryk developed a close relationship during the war, they were relative strangers when it commenced; Steed and Masaryk, on the other hand, were well acquainted from Steed's eleven-year tenure as the *Times* correspondent in Vienna.[19] Steed, like Seton-Watson, initially advocated for liberal reforms within the Monarchy, which he viewed favorably despite its deficiencies. But he too withdrew his support for Austria-Hungary following her "wickedly foolhardy, not to say deliberately suicidal" response to the Archduke's assassination, which served as a "pretext for an attack Servia."[20] Meanwhile, Steed had left Vienna and returned to

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[16] Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 43-102.
[17] Ibid.*,* 111.
[18] Ibid., 178-181.
[19] Steed was stationed in Vienna from 1902 to 1913.
[20] Henry Wickham Steed, *The Habsburg Monarchy,* 3rd ed. (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1914), vi *b*; vi *c*.

London to become the head editor of the *Times*' Foreign Department, through which he became well acquainted with the British Foreign Office. Throughout the war, Steed used the *Times* to arouse public opinion against the Habsburg Empire in favor of the Slavic cause.[21]

Steed's and Seton-Watson's contributions to the Czech campaign were not, however, confined to their work in the *Times* and the *New Europe,* respectively. Both men were to enter the Foreign Office in the latter half of the war. A relationship between Seton-Watson and the Foreign Office had commenced after he delivered a memorandum of his conversation with Masaryk to George Clerk, head of the War Department. Thereafter, the Foreign Office viewed Seton-Watson as the "main unofficial specialist on Austrian and Balkan affairs… and the main intermediary with Central European exiles."[22] Clerk became, in particular, Seton-Watson's main contact. Having served in Turkey, Clerk was well acquainted with the conflicts in the Balkans and sympathetic to the cause of "oppressed nationalities."[23] He subsequently offered a willing ear to listen, if not consider the Czech cause, which was communicated to him through Seton-Watson and Masaryk.

In 1917, Seton-Watson was offered a position in the Department of Information's Intelligence Bureau.[24] The Bureau was created to produce research and memoranda on the activities in foreign countries for the Department of Information's propaganda sections, which would use this information to create counter-propaganda.

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[21] Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe* 111, 339.

[22] Ibid.*,* 111.

[23] Gerald J. Protheroe, *Searing for Security in a New Europe: The Diplomatic Career of Sir George Clerk* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

[24] In 1917, Seton-Watson was called up for military service as a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps. When Seton-Watson protested his conscription in light of his expertise on Habsburg affairs and national conflicts, the Foreign Office offered him a job in the DIIB.

In 1918, however, the DIIB was dissolved on account of internal squabbling and inefficiency. Meanwhile, Viscount Northcliffe, Director of Propaganda and owner of the *Times,* subsequently requested Steed's services in his new Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries. Upon Steed's urgings, the EPD's program became specifically directed towards "the struggle of nationalities" under German or Magyar control.[25] Significantly, the EPD could not explicitly advocate Austro-Hungarian dismemberment because this was not a governmental war-aim. With the dissolution of the DIIB, Seton-Watson joined Steed at the EPD as co-director under Steed's directorship of the Austria-Hungary section.[26]

As professionals with expert knowledge on obscure questions, Seton-Watson and Steed were subsequently brought within the realm of political decision-making. While they were not signatories to the official formation of the Czechoslovak state, their unrelenting advocacy for independent and sovereign states in central and eastern Europe resonated within and outside of the Foreign Office. Historians Hugh and Chistropher Seton-Watson assert that, "it is no exaggeration to state that the policies of EPD and the *New Europe* were identical. In effect one of EPD's main preoccupations was to get the *New Europe's* programme adopted by the British (and Allied) governments."[27] Seton-Watson's and Steed's presence in the Foreign Office provided the liberal Slavophiles with the chance to circulate their ideological bent against the Empire and in favor of sovereign nation-states within official circles. They portrayed the ethnicities of Austria-Hungary as "oppressed nations" under the

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[25] Eric Drummond minute, February 24, 1918, Viscount Northcliffe to Lord Balfour, quoted in Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 260.

[26] Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 276.

[27] Ibid.*,* 277.

German and Magyar "yoke."[28] And it was, therefore, through Seton-Watson and

Steed that the leaders of the Czech independence movement, most notably Masaryk

and Dr. Eduard Beneš, gained access to meet with members of the Foreign Office and

to relay their ideas to the English-speaking world.

**Czech National Mythmaking in London**

Masaryk requested the meeting in Rotterdam to discover the British perspective on

the war and its future. Backed by Seton-Watson's anticipation for a protracted war,

Masaryk began to establish his self-professed leadership of the Czech nation and

consolidate wartime plans for national independence. When the war commenced, the

Czech Catholic and Social Democratic parties had remained loyal to the Monarchy,

but the Young Czechs, National Socialists, and Masaryk's small Realist Party began

to entertain thoughts of dissolution. Inspired by such anti-Habsburg sentiment, Czech

troops evaded subscription into the Habsburg army. Masaryk began a propaganda

campaign to make the Czech presence known in the west, and to convey their loyalty

to the Entente. By 1916, Masaryk had consolidated his position as the self-proclaimed

spokesman of the nation. Masaryk's congenial attitude, his intelligence and his work

ethic, led his British and American counterparts to view him favorably.[29] Following a

professorship of Philosophy at Charles University in the 1880s, Masaryk represented

the Young Czech Party in the Austrian parliament from 1891 to 1893, and again as a

representative of the Realist Party from 1907 to 1914. Throughout his political career

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[28] R.W. Seton-Watson, "The Pan-German Plan and Its Antidote," *The Living Age*, 290, no. 3759 (July 22, 1916): 208.

[29] See Karel Capek, *Talks with T.G. Masaryk*. trans. Michael Henry Heim, Dora Round (North Haven, CT: Catbird Press, 1996), 9.

in the *Reichsrat*, Masaryk refrained from extremist national politics and rejected the national myth of Czech and German antagonism. He sought to imbue the Czech nation with an identity rooted in its moral, ethical and religious past.

After deciding to pursue a campaign for Czech independence, Masaryk fled to London as a political exile in December 1914. He remained there for the rest of the war, and worked alongside Eduard Beneš, a Czech professor of Sociology, and Milan Rastislav Štefánik, a Slovak-born French citizen and diplomat to get the nation behind them and form a governing body abroad. By the end of 1916, "The National Council of Czech Countries" had formed with Masaryk serving as president, Štefánik as vice-president, and Beneš as Secretary-General. The name of the governing body reflected their exclusively nationalist platform.

The plans to create a unified Czech state were put forward in the spring of 1915 in a memorandum, "Independent Bohemia," which Masaryk prepared and Seton-Watson delivered to the Foreign Office. In the memorandum, Masaryk set down arguments for creating an independent state, which comprised the Bohemian lands and Slovakia. He emphasized that a central and eastern Europe of small sovereign states would obstruct the German *Drag Nach Osten* from Berlin-to-Bagdad, and he enunciated the "historic rights" of Czech nation in the Bohemian lands.[30] He thus posited the Czech national aims into British wartime Germanophobia. Masaryk also exaggerated the likeness between the Czechs and Slovaks, declaring that "the Slovaks are Bohemians, in spite of their using their dialect

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[30] Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *Independent Bohemia*, memorandum,1915, in *Masaryk in England,* ed., R.W. Seton-Watson (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 127.

as their literary language."[31] But the Slovaks were neither Bohemians, nor was their language a dialect. Over the next four years, these arguments, which were derived from the Czech nationalist history, continued to resonate throughout the war, and were well-received by the Czech émigrés and their sympathetic British friends.

In the year leading up to the Council's formation, Masaryk worked diligently to introduce the Czech nation and its national campaign to British society. This period of introduction and consolidation drew significant success from the close friendship that arose between Masaryk, Seton-Watson and Steed. In the summer of 1915, the Czech and Slovak émigrés and their western sympathizers organized, in London and Geneva, a celebration of the quin-centenary anniversary of Jan Hus's death. On July 4, 1915, Seton-Watson gave an address, "The Future of Bohemia" in honor of Hus. The address outlined the national history of the Czech nation, and presented the nation's manifest mission to form an independent state. Two days later on July 6, Masaryk and Seton-Watson published a commemorative letter in the *Times*, which was signed by twenty-eight Oxford dons.[32] That same day, Seton-Watson organized a commemoration at Aeolian Hall, which was chaired by liberal British historian, Lord James Bryce.[33]

These concerted acts of commemoration sought to convey the proximate relationship between the Czech nation and her western counterparts. Specifically, the commemoration accentuated the bond between the religious legacy of John Wycliffe

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[31] Seton-Watson, *Masaryk in London*, 128.

[32] Arthur J. May, "R. W. Seton-Watson and British Anti-Hapsburg Sentiment," *American Slavic and East European Review*, 20, no.1 (1961): 49

[33] In May 1915, Bryce issued a condemning report on atrocities inflicted by the German invasion of Belgium. May, "R. W. Seton-Watson," *American Slavic and East European Review*, 49.

and Jan Hus.[34] In response to the Seton's letter of July 6, the *Times* commented that, "Englishmen [are] entitled to recall with pride that it was from England and from the writings of Wyclif that Hus derived much of his inspiration."[35] The Czech cause was predicated, first and foremost, on their visual and audible presence in British society. This presence was then "translated" or relayed in forms with which the British public could identify. British and Slavic champions of the Czechoslovak cause sought to dispel the mysticism which was often accorded to the Slavs, whose kinship with Russia provoked unease. In emphasizing their contacts and commonalities with their English-speaking counterparts, the Czechs could construct a historical narrative that substantiated their modern relevance and presence within the Anglo-American world.

In October of 1915, Seton-Watson and Dr. Ronald Burrows, the president of Kings College, established a School of Slavonic Studies at the College.[36] The department instituted the study of central and eastern European history as a new discipline within British academic research. The establishment of the School provided the Czech campaign for national sovereignty with a symbolic and real platform of authority and legitimacy. Czech national existence, the study of which was now cemented in stone, was thus imbued with a sense of authenticity. Seton-Watson invited Masaryk to give the inaugural lecture and offered him a professorship as well. While Prime Minister Lord Asquith was absent due to falling ill, the Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Lord Robert Cecil attended in his place. In the speech that

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[34] May, "R.W. Seton-Watson and British Anti-Habsburg Sentiment," 49; Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 141.

[35] Harry Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War: A Study in the Formation of Public Opinion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 123.

[36] The department is now currently part of the University College London as the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES).

Masaryk gave, "The Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis," the Czech

émigré sought to legitimize the Czech nation's right to statehood within the European

community. Masaryk conveyed a parallelism between Serbia's and Belgium's

liberation and the liberation of the oppressed nations within Austria-Hungary.

Austria-Hungary's dissolution, like the liberation of Serbia and Belgium, would lend

an ignoble war with a noble and just meaning.[37] Significantly, Masaryk framed the

campaign around the "principle of nationality" for the Czechs within Bohemia's

"historic borders."[38] The principle was to apply only to the authentic inhabitants of

the state: the Slavs. This argument was informed by the geopolitical reality of

Germany's past and present history of domination in the region. He argued that

"Poland, Bohemia, SerboCroatia (the Southern Slavs) are the natural adversaries of

Germany, of her *Drang nach Osten*; to liberate and strengthen these smaller nations is

the only real check upon Russia."[39] Masaryk implied that a future Czech state would

be a democratic bulwark between the east and the west. He thereby sought to imbue

the future successor state with a contemporary and exigent geopolitical relevance, as

the source of European stability. The seemingly insignificant and "small" nations

were thus ascribed with the tremendous task of post-war peace. The future of Europe

was purported to be in the hands of these small nations.

  The opportunity for Masaryk and his fellow émigrés to advance the Czech

national cause was predicated on the help of their sympathetic British friends who

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[37] Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, "The Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis," Inaugural Lecture for School of Slavonic Studies, University of London, King's College, October 19, 1915, in Seton-Watson, *Masaryk in England,* 151.

[38] Masaryk, *Independent Bohemia*, in Seton-Watson, *Masaryk in England,* 128.

[39] Masaryk, "The Problem of Small Nations," in Seton-Watson, *Masaryk in England,* 151.

desired to see Austria-Hungary dismembered and the Slavic nations become sovereign states. While the Czechs needed to prove themselves and their worth, while they needed to win their right to rule and prove the desirability of this rule, a sympathetic circle within the British elite were equally bound up in this process. It was for this reason that Masaryk approached Seton-Watson about establishing a forum to promote the Czech cause, and why, as already mentioned, Seton-Watson established the journal, the *New Europe* in 1916. The *New Europe* discussed the political problems of the war in general and provided the national campaigns of the "oppressed nations" with an accredited British organ. The contributors of the journal, foremost of whom was Masaryk, were all close associates of Seton-Watson. As the war progressed, many of these men, like Seton-Watson and Steed, were increasingly consulted and drawn into Whitehall.[40] While the journal terminated at the end due to deficient funds, the *New Europe* circulated throughout Westminster and the British press with a subscription base of four thousand by the end of 1917.[41] The first publication, issued on October 17, 1916, declared its mission:

> An 'integral' victory such as alone can secure to Europe permanent peace and the reduction of armaments, the fulfillment of the solemn pledges assumed by statesmen towards our small allies, the vindication of national rights and public law, the emancipation of the subject races of central and south-eastern Europe from German and Magyar control—such must be our answer to the Pan-German project of 'Central Europe' and 'Berlin-Bagdad.'[42]

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[40] Rex and Allen Leeper, Bernard Pares, Harold Williams, H.M. Hyndman, Sir Arthur Evans, Ronald A. Burrows, J. Holland Rose, Ramsay Muir, George W. Prothero, W. Alison Philips, and parliamentarian Alexander F. Whyte. Whyte became the editorial chair when Seton went into service.

[41] Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 195.

[42] "The New Europe," *The New Europe* 1*,* October 19, 1916, quoted in Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 17.

As a forum for expert opinion, the publication sought to legitimize the individual and collective campaigns with an authoritative voice. In their mission statement, the contributors invoked the language of small nations, the principle of nationality for the Slavic nations, and the sentiment of Germanophobia to inspire and garner popular support.

Britain's war-time Germanophobia was the product of two distinct narratives of pre-war anti-Germanism. On the one hand, the myth of German oppression in the Czech lands was invoked in Czech propaganda. Tomas Capek's war-time assertion that "[f]rom times immemorial, Bohemia has been the battle-ground between Slav and the Teuton," was typical within Czech propaganda. [43] The Czechs subsequently integrated this narrative of German oppression into the general British concern over German militarism and expansion. The end result was a narrative which identified the Germans of Bohemia as pan-German and implicated them with the imperial ideology of the German Reich. The Austrian identity of these ethnic Germans of Bohemia was subsumed as they were linguistically and nationally united with the militaristic German Reich. Seton-Watson and Masaryk emphasized that the defeat of German militarism necessitated a post-war settlement of sovereign Slavic nation-states. He referred to the era as the "century of the Slav," and appealed to the people of the world to "emancipate" the "Slavonic democracies."[44] The Czechs, in particular, were destined to become a bridge between east and west—a means to bring Russia into

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[43] Karel Čapek, "Have the Bohemians a Place in the Sun," in *Bohemia Under Hapsburg Misrule: A Study of the Ideals and Aspirations of the Bohemian and Slovak Peoples, as they relate to and are affected by the great European War*, ed. Karel Čapek (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1915), 20.

[44] Seton-Watson, "The Pan-German Plan," *The Living Age*, 206.

Europe and create a new balance of power to offset further German domination.

Seton-Watson stated in "The Pan-German Plan and its Antidote":

> Of Bohemia it can fairly be said that no Slav race is so thoroughly modern, so keenly national in feeling, so well educated and well organized, so ready for endurance and sacrifice. Bohemia has been in the forefront of the battle against Germanism, from the days when John Hus ejected the Germans from Prague University and the Hussites held all Europe at bay, till the modern epoch when the great Czech scientists and poets laid the foundations of intellectual Pan-Slavism, and when the lower and middle classes contested inch by inch every village, every house, every child, against the Germans with their infinitely superior resources and backing.[45]

Seton-Watson, as the foremost British expert on central and eastern Europe, imbued

the Czech nation with contemporary legitimacy and relevance as the original victims

of German militarism. In the "Pan-German Plan," he imparted the proximate

relationship between Great Britain's current war and the battle that Bohemia had

waged for centuries. But he also framed this history of victimhood within concurrent

praise for the nation's ability to persevere and overcome German domination,

implying that the Czechs were capable of translating their national existence into

statehood. As a sympathetic observer of Germany prior to the war, Seton-Watson's

Germanophobia was a product of the war, derived from his Slavophilia and his

involvement in the Czech campaign for national independence.


**The Path to the Paris Peace:**

The decision to create an independent Czechoslovakia was not a consensual war aim,

nor was the dissolution of Austria-Hungary seen to be inevitable or necessary when

the war began. And the formation of the Czechoslovak nation-state did not reflect the

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[45] Seton-Watson, "The Pan-German Plan," *The Living Age*, 207.

revival and triumph of Gladstonian Liberalism. Nor did the *New Europe*'s conviction

in replacing Austria-Hungary with Slavic nation-states resonate universally

throughout British society, or beyond the realm of the EPD. The loudest voice of

opposition to Austria-Hungary's dissolution came from British radicals and socialists,

the most prominent of whom was the socialist journalist, Henry Noel Brialsford.

Brailsford denigrated the principle of nationality as destructive and unproductive

within the larger framework of social progress. He and others signified the

importance of economic unity and cooperation.[46] The Union of Democratic Control,

an anti-war organization comprised of Labour and Liberal party members, provided

an organ for Brailsford and other like-minded peers to oppose Austria-Hungary's

dissolution.

During the first three years of the war, the British government refrained from

explicitly detailing its war aims, which thereby left the question of Austria-Hungary's

future unsettled. The desire for dismemberment was, on the one hand, advocated to

secure post-war stability, and, on the other hand, denigrated for prolonging the war

and preventing peace talks.[47] Defeat was the foremost concern since dismemberment

was predicated upon it. By the end of 1916, however, the British government was

induced to provide more explicit war-aims. The human and material devastation of

the war had generated public and civic calls for an enunciation of war-aims. On

January 10, 1917, in a note of reply to Woodrow Wilson, Foreign Secretary Balfour

called for "the liberation of Italians, of Slavs, of Roumanians and

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[46] The group of British radicals and socialists who opposed Austria-Hungary's dismemberment included Charles Roden Buxton, Noel Buxton, Edith Durham, Edward V. Anrold. See Harry Hanak, *Austria Hungary and Great Britain,* 136.

[47] Hanak, *Austria Hungary and Britain,* 215.

of Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination."[48] Despite its literal call for

Czechoslovak liberation, the note did not concertedly call for Austria-Hungary's

dissolution. Harry Hanak, a Bohemian born British historian reflected A.J.P. Taylor's

and R.W. Seton-Watson's conviction that, "The 'Czecho-Slovaks' were only

mentioned in order to make the list more practical and precise but without any

realisation that this implied the destruction of the Habsburg Monarchy."[49] The degree

to which the note advocated Habsburg dissolution and Czech independence was

subsequently debated in the press. Within the government, however, Taylor notes that

the statement was simply a means to "rule out mediation without estranging Wilson,"

who desired to see such an assurance.[50] While the note did not ensure dissolution, it

nonetheless provided the Czechoslovak national campaign with moral leverage with

which to demand their aims. As Masaryk stated in an article published in

*International News Service* on October 25, 1917, "In outlining their program, the

allies made a solemn promise to us. Now all we ask is that they keep it."[51] The article

speaks of Austrian betrayal, and internationalizes the Czech campaign as part of the

general fight against the "Berlin to Baghdad" threat.

When Masaryk's article was published in October of 1917 the international

significance of the Czechoslovak campaign was still metaphorical. For the first three

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[48] Lord Balfour to President Woodrow Wilson, Entente War-Aims, January 10, 1917, in *Official Statements of War Aims and Peace Proposals, December 1916 to November 1918*, James Brown Scott, ed., comp. (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1921), 37.

[49] Hanak, *Austria-Hungary and Great Britain,* 216. See A.J.P. Taylor, *English History,* 1914-1945, ed. Sir George Clerk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 79.

[50] Taylor, *English History,* 79.

[51] Masaryk, "Masaryk Demands an Independent State," *International News Service,* October 25, 1917, in *The Birth of Czechoslovakia,* Cestmir Jesina ed., (Washington, DC: Czechoslovak National Council of America, 1968), 16.

years of the war, the campaign for independence was concentrated largely in the

public sphere of rhetorical persuasion, introducing the Czech nation and its cause to

the western world. But throughout 1917, the campaign grounded its rhetorical

international significance into something that was physical, and, above all, tangibly

useful. Throughout 1917, the Czechoslovak National Council consolidated the

Czechs and Slovaks fighting within Russian and French forces into an independent

army, the Czechoslovak Corps. And so by the end of 1917 the Czech cause had been

tangibly incorporated into the Allied war effort through the independent status of the

Legions. Over the next six months the Council received decisive gains, which were

set into motion after the Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities of the Austro-

Hungarian Empire commenced on April 7; held in Rome, the leaders of the Czech,

Polish, Slovak and Yugoslav national movements pledged their dedication to the

Entente, and asked for support for their independence in return. Seton-Watson and

Steed were the only two Englishmen to attend the Congress, which Seton-Watson

issued an account in the *New Europe*.[52] While the Congress' gains were not

immediate, they were forthcoming.

In the beginning of May, Beneš traveled to London to discuss the question of

recognition within Whitehall. Seton-Watson and Steed introduced Beneš to Foreign

Secretary Balfour and his under-Secretary, Lord Robert Cecil, with whom Beneš

discussed the uses of the Czech legions in Siberia in return for recognition. Britain

was entertaining thoughts of retaining the Legion in Siberia to dismantle the

Bolshevik regime, which had risen to power after the October Revolution of 1917 and

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[52] Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 270.

led to Russia's withdrawal from the war through the Treaty of Brest-Livtosk.[53] With

this in mind, on June 3, 1918, Lord Balfour sent Beneš a letter, which recognized the

"Czechoslovak National Council as the supreme organ of the Czechoslovak

movement in the Allied countries," and the "Czechoslovak Army as an organized unit

operating in the Allied cause."[54] But Britain's desire to retain the troops in Siberia

opposed French plans for their uses on the western front. The significance of the

Legion's role was aggrandized by these debates, providing Beneš with leverage to

request the Council's full recognition as a provisional government for the

forthcoming sovereign nation-state. With the help of Steed, Beneš prepared

memoranda on sovereignty questions for Whitehall and met with Balfour and Cecil.

Meanwhile, France's appeal for the Czechoslovak Legion's help on the

western front induced the troops to begin a withdrawal along the Trans-Siberian

railroad. While the Bolshevik government initially promised their safe-passage, fierce

fighting ensued when an order came to disarm and intern the Legionnaires.

Throughout July, the Legion's fighting in Siberia drew significant press in the *Times*,

which lauded the its efforts, but entreated the Entente to intervene with assistance. In

an editorial from August 15, the Legion's efforts are framed within the narrative of

long-standing German oppression and alongside laudable characterizations of the

Czech nation as democratic, educated, religious, and moral:

> If ever a people proved its fitness for freedom, the soldiers of this Slav
> democracy have done so. They have not only maintain their discipline and
> cohesion amid the most demoralizing conditions in Russia, but they
> deliberately faced the journey across Siberia in the hope of fighting once

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[53] D. Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914-1920* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1962)*, 34.

[54] Foreign Secretary Balfour to Beneš, June 3, 1918, printed in *The Birth of Czechoslovakia,* ed., Cestmir Jesina, 38.

more in France against their hereditary foes, the German. These men are truly of the same fibre as their national hero, John Hus. The story of the struggle of the Czecho-Slovaks against oppression during the last 300 years is one of the most remarkable chapters of European history. They perceived long ago that German *Kultur* can only be beaten by superior education and by training on a high moral basis. The special school system they founded has reduced the percentage of illiteracy in Bohemia and Moravia to less than one per cent.[55]

The editorial was published two days after Britain informed the press of their decision to recognize the National Council as a Czech provisional government. The Czech national myths, which are purported in the *Times* editorial, strove to legitimize Britain's formal acceptance of Czechoslovak national sovereignty. Czechoslovak statehood was framed as the "Czechoslovak's" ultimate right, having been for centuries at the forefront of the battle with German militarism. The phrase "Slav democracy" subsequently posited the existence of a democratic state prior to its inception.

Britain's formal acceptance of a Czechoslovak provisional government was communicated to Beneš on August 10. This decision came ten days after the French but a month before American acceptance, which was conceded on September 3. Great Britain and the United States diverged, however, from the level of commitment that the Quai d'Orsay accorded to the new Czechoslovak provisional government. The French government agreed to accept the Czech's "historic rights" in the Bohemian lands. In the French letter of recognition, S. Pichon writes:

> For long centuries the Czechoslovak nation had possessed the incomparable blessing of independence; it was deprived of it by the violence of the Habsburgs allied with German princes. Historic rights are imprescriptible. It

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[55] Editorial, "Siberia and the Czecho-Slovaks," *The Times,* August 15, 1918, quoted in *The Birth of Czechoslovakia,* ed., Cestmir Jesina, 68.

is in the defense of these rights that France, attacked, is fighting today with her Allies. The cause of the Czechs is especially dear to it.[56]

France's recognition of Czechoslovak sovereignty was a clear indictment of her German populations. This concession implicitly granted a territorial commitment to new Czechoslovak state since the state's rights over the borderlands region were legitimated in this declaration. The French military and strategic aims dichotomy had informed S. Pichon to accord the principle of nationality to liberate the "oppressed peoples" from the "oppressive yoke of Austria and Hungary."[57] France's territorial commitment was derived from the desire to retain the "strategic character of the mountains German-Bohemian frontier" within a pro-French orbit in the post-war era.[58] In contrast, the British and American proclamations specifically refrained from territorial commitments. Furthermore, Beneš's attempt to receive explicit commitment to Czechoslovak sovereignty and to a provisional government was phrasing that was "too much for the Foreign Office to swallow."[59] Under Steed's recommendation, Beneš presented a new draft of terms that were accepted and communicated back to him in a letter from Foreign Secretary Balfour.[60] The declaration recognized the Czecho-Slovak National Council as the "supreme organ of the Czechoslovak national interests, and the present trustee of the future Czecho-

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[56] S. Pichon to E. Beneš, French Letter of Recognition to the Czechoslovak National Council, June 29, 1918, in *The Birth of Czechoslovakia,* ed., Cestmir Jesina (Washington, DC: Czechoslovak National Council of America, 1968), 48-49.

[57] S. Pichon to E. Beneš, French Letter of Recognition in *The Birth of Czechoslovakia,* 49.

[58] Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State*, 47.

[59] Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a State,* 295.

[60] Ibid., 295.

Slovak government.[61] But, while a territorial commitment was beyond Britain's scope

of recognition, and while official demarcation was left for the delegations at the Peace

Conference, France's verbal commitment no less set the stage for the permissibility of

the "historic rights" argument at the Conference.[62]

The individual pronouncements from the Entente were soon followed by

Austria's appeal to President Wilson in the first week of October 1918 for an

armistice based on his Fourteen Points, which had enunciated a policy of reform, not

dissolution, of the Empire. But in the fall of 1918 concerted terms for an Austro-

Hungarian armistice did not exist among the Entente. After some deliberation, Wilson

rejected Austria's appeal for reform on behalf of the Fourteen Points, acknowledging

that Czechoslovak recognition in September had trumped the Fourteen Points, which

had been delivered back in January of that year. The de facto recognition of the

successor states consequently led to the de jure dissolution of Austria-Hungary.[63]

Meanwhile, to counter Austria-Hungary's reformist arguments, Masaryk was

campaigning in the United States and issued in Washington, D.C., on October 18,

1918, the Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation. The Declaration

laid down the future outlines of the state as a democratic republic with civil liberties,

universal suffrage, separation between Church and state, and foremost, equal rights

for its minorities. On paper, the new state was to be the most democratic republic in

the world. Ten days after the declaration, on October 28, 1918, the Czechoslovak

government assumed power in Prague.

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[61] Lord Balfour to E. Beneš, British Letter of Recognition to the Czechoslovak National Council, August 9, 1918, in *The Birth of Czechoslovakia,* Cestmir Jesina ed., (Washington, DC: Czechoslovak National Council of America, 1968), 63.
[62] Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State,* 47.
[63] Ibid*.,* 48.

Meanwhile, German nationalist movements began to develop in Bohemia and Austria, which respectively called for integration into Austria and the German Reich. On October 29, Bohemian German delegates met in Vienna to declare the autonomy of "German Bohemia" within the new Austrian state. The Austrian National Provisional Assembly accepted their declaration on October 30. But on that same day, the Entente communicated the terms of the armistice to the Austrian government, inspiring Austrian German nationalists to invoke a call for *Anschluss* and, in accordance, Bohemian German nationalists attempted to raise a militia.[64] Wary of losing de facto authority over the border regions, the newly constituted Czech government sent troops in the borderlands and appealed directly to the French government to receive another commitment of Bohemia's historic rights. Beneš's appeal capitalized on the Entente's fear of a Bolshevik threat, asserting that without demarcated boundaries, Czechoslovakia would be overrun by a Bolshevik infiltration.[65] France accepted the demands on December 19. Above all, the Quai d'Orsay's conviction in the Czechoslovak state was derived from her own security needs: the successor states would obstruct eastward German expansionism. A Czechoslovak state which was deprived of its historic boundaries would be defenseless and therefore undermine French security needs.

Beneš appealed next to the British Foreign Office, which expressed concerns about the incorporation of the German minority, but no less indicated in a note on January 7, 1919 that "pending the decision of the Peace Conference the frontier of the Czechoslovak republic should coincide with the historical boundaries of the provinces

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[64] Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State,* 75.
[65] Ibid., 82

of Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia.'"[66] In this concerted declaration, the British government recognized the Czech's purported historic rights to Bohemia as the basis of the future state. Beneš, the leading Czechoslovak representative at the Conference, thereby entered the peace talks with an established government in Prague and with de facto recognition of the Czechoslovak nation as the *Staatsvolk*.[67] The subsequent deliberations at the Peace Conference, which moved slowly due to American consternation over the discriminate application of self-determination, was in a sense a mere formality. One might consider, as D. Perman argues in *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State,* that the Conference, which was supposed to determine the boundaries and composition of the future state, in essence merely recognized the *fait accompli* which had occurred over the last year.[68]

The portrayal of Czechoslovak recognition as a trajectory of external events whose momentum undermined British control over the situation and led to a *fait accompli* in January of 1919 ignores the pro-Czech sympathies that had begun to circulate within the Foreign Office in 1917 and 1918 and found their way to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The campaign to provide a Czechoslovak *Staatsvolk* with the "historic rights" of the Bohemian lands did not materialize outside the reign of the Foreign Office. The diplomatic overtures to the Czechoslovak nation in 1917 and

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[66] Note of the British Government to the Swiss Legation in London, January 7, 1919, in American Commission to Negotiate Peace, S.H. Bulletin No. 380 (Hoover Library) Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State,* 70.

[67] Karel Kramář, the new Czechoslovak Prime Minister, was the other Czech representative at the Peace Conference. During the war, Kramář was imprisoned for treason until 1916, following which he led a campaign for Czechoslovak independence from within Bohemia. Kramář's more nationalist sentiments figured him unfavorably in the eyes of Masaryk and Beneš. At the Conference, consternation arose between Beneš and Kramář as the latter petitioned for territorial concessions beyond the "historic rights" pre-1914 boundaries.

[68] Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State,* 7.

1918 were a product of the access the Czech national campaign gained to the Foreign Office.

**Peace Handbooks and Territorial Commissions**

In 1917 and 1918, two departments were established within the Historical Section (HS) and the Political Intelligence Department (PID), which were given the directive to prepare for the peace conference and study of problems related to "oppressed nations" who were vying for sovereignty. Significantly, both departments were comprised of *New Europe* contributors.

The HS and PID were established to research and relay accurate information on nationality questions, post-war reconstruction and boundary demarcation. Together the HS and PID prepared 114 Peace Handbooks, which consolidated their research of specific regions, peoples, and concerns into concise reference texts.[69] The Historical Section was placed under the directorship of historian and *New Europe* contributor, George Prothero. The PID, which was established a year later, worked in coordination with the Historical Section to compile research for the handbooks. The PID, nicknamed the "Ministry of All Talents," synthesized, analyzed, coordinated and distributed relevant information regarding the political affairs in regions of concern, and advised on the most viable course of action. The PID was created to replace the Department of Information Intelligence Bureau and subsequently absorbed its staff, which were contributors to the *New Europe.* Consequently, this new department, which was charged with researching and drawing up plans for the peace settlement,

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[69] Erik D. Goldstein, "Historians Outside the Academy: G.W. Prothero and the Experience of the Foreign Office Historical Section, 1917-20," *Historical Research,* 63, no. 151 (1990): 195.

was staffed by a group of British professionals ideologically opposed to Austria-Hungary's existence, and firmly sympathetic to the "oppressed nations" under Habsburg rule. [70] Despite a directive against writing for the press, the contributors of the *New Europe* continued to contribute to the journal by using pseudonyms.[71]

In an attempt to generate an informed post-war policy, the officials at the Foreign Office drew from outside of their exclusive club to request the help of professionals and academics whose knowledge of these obscure regions was unmatched elsewhere. But the expertise of these professionals and academics was grounded in their sympathies to see through the national projects of the "oppressed nations." Consequently, the lexicon used by the Czech émigrés and the *New Europe* to disseminate the Czechoslovak national project throughout society became the lexicon of the official memoranda that they generated in the Foreign Office. Historians Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson affirm that during Seton-Watson's tenure at the DIIB, "many of *The New Europe's* notes on internal developments in the Dual Monarchy are almost identical with passages in his DIIB reports and plainly based on the same material."[72] Thus throughout 1917 and 1918, the ideology of the *New Europe* group had found its way into the Foreign Office and secured its place at the Paris Peace Conference.

The evidence of this is most clearly revealed by the contents of the Peace Handbook for the Bohemian lands, *Bohemia and Moravia*. Just over one-hundred pages, the handbook provides an overview of the geo-political situation in the

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[70] Goldstein, "New Diplomacy and the New Europe at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the A.W.A Leeper Papers," *East European Quarterly,* 21, no. 4 (1988): 393-400.
[71] Christopher and Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe,* 209.
[72] Ibid.*,* 209.

Bohemian lands. But this overview reflects the extent to the Czech national myths

resonated within Whitehall. Researched and compiled under the auspices of the PID

and HS, whose staff comprised of liberal members of the *New Europe* group, the

handbook conveyed the question of Bohemia through the Czech's very own

nationalist narrative. The handbook's indebtedness to the work (and bias) of Seton-

Watson is evident in the bibliography, which cites the historian's polemical history,

*German, Slav and Magyar: A Study of the Origins of the Great War* (1916).

In a now familiar vein, the handbook described the Hussite Wars as a conflict

between the Czechs and Germans: "The Hussite wars were racial wars. Hatred of

German priests and nobles, even of German townsmen, was as strong as the desire for

reform."[73] In opposition to the absolutist portrayal of the Germans, the Czech

Taborites were described as a "democratic party."[74] The Battle of *Bila Hora* was

portrayed as the death of the nation, from which German absolutism and Catholicism

emerged. The Germans' "religious fanaticism was united [with] their hereditary

hatred of the Slavs."[75] The connection between German oppression and Catholicism

was clearly enunciated to make a connection between British and Czech piety.

A significant portion of the handbook was attributed to nationality questions.

In regards to the Czech and Slovak identity, the handbook asserted that "both racially

and linguistically the Czechs are intimately related to the Slovachs [sic] who lie

immediately to the east over the Hungarian border."[76] This purported kinship between

the Czechs and Slovaks was left uncontested. On the other hand, great detail was

[73] Historical Section of the Foreign Office, *Bohemia and Moravia, No.* 410 (London: HS, 1919), 15.
[74] Ibid., 16.
[75] Ibid., 17
[76] Ibid., 5.

accorded to the German question, which appeared less clear. The German presence

was described as a problem of including "large hostile minorities" within the new

state.[77] While the handbook did not identify a solution to the problem, it did assert

that the German regions could not be detached because of their economic and

strategic importance.[78] The national conflict between the Czechs and Germans was

enunciated in its own section, "General Observations, The Racial Struggle," which

attributed the Czechs with suitable characteristics for nationhood: "Combined with

the racial tenacity of the Slav, the Czechs possess intellectual ability, a strength of

character, and a power of organization such as find in no other Slav people. … The

Czechs are, in fact, the pick of the Slavs and are admirably fitted to form the

vanguard of their race."[79] Despite their Slavic and geographic ties to Russia, the

handbook imbued the Czechs with an identity that was palatable to western Europe.

They were presented as western, democratic, and well-suited for the state-making

national project.  The handbook also identified that the German presence in Bohemia

appeared to be "losing ground more and more rapidly," and that "the German

cause…seems doomed in Bohemia."[80] The handbook legitimated the "historic rights"

claim by suggesting that the group would soon assimilate and the present dissonance

would subside.

Harold Nicolson, a member of the British delegation assigned to

Czechoslovak Territorial Commission at Conference, conveyed the usefulness of the

*Bohemia and Moravia* handbook in his memoirs. Nicholson lauded the handbooks in

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[77] HS, *Bohemia and Moravia*,  5.
[78] Ibid., 36.
[79] Ibid., 41.
[80] Ibid., 41.

general as "invaluable," and conveyed that they "provided the delegation with detailed information upon any subject that was likely to arise."[81] While Nicholson was appointed to the territorial commission, he was not, in fact, a specialist on Bohemia, and he admitted that the frontiers of Czechoslovakia were "a subject for which I was totally ill-equipped."[82] The handbook therefore became his authority on the subject.

In 1918 when Great Britain recognized to the Czechoslovak National Council as the representative body of a forthcoming Czechoslovak state, she rescinded the right of a German voice in Bohemian affairs. When the Peace Conference commenced in 1919, the borders of Czechoslovakia were largely set in place. Yet the process through which this occurred cannot simply be attributed to an apparent *fait accompli* of external events during 1918. Sympathies towards the Czech national cause resonated within the governmental bodies, which were directed to attend to the problem of Austria-Hungary. As Nicholson admitted in his memoirs, he "never moved a yard without previous consultation with experts of the authority of Dr. Seton-Watson who was in Paris at the time."[83] While Seton-Watson was not officially invited as a delegate, he attended informally to see through the Czech state-making project, which he had largely made his own.

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[81] Nicholson, *Peacemaking 1919,* 27.
[82] Ibid.*,* 113.
[83] Ibid., 126.

**Chapter Three:**

**Interwar Anglo-Czech Relations**

**The League's Minority System**

While the Allied governments at the Peace Conference decided to demarcate the

boundary between Germany and the forthcoming Czechoslovak state within the

"historic borders" of the Bohemian kingdom, this decision did end the discussions

regarding the new state's German population. During the spring, the question of

minority protection came to head as Jewish lobbying groups arrived at the Conference

to petition for autonomous rights within Poland. In April, the massacre of Polish Jews

in Pinsk imbued the minority question with necessity and urgency. Consequently, The

Committee of New States formed in May to draft a treaty, which would ensure the

protection of minority rights in Poland. Treaties were subsequently drawn up for all

the successor states; Czechoslovakia's own minority treaty was stipulated within the

Treaty of St. Germain, which was signed on September 10, 1919.[1]

And so, with the conclusion of the Peace Conference and the signing of the

League's minority treaties, the problems of central and eastern European cartography

were seemingly settled: the successor states were established with minority protection

under an international system. The League's minority system was created as a

protective measure to prevent minority group conflict from developing into an

international conflagration. The treaties stipulated equal protection before the law,

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[1] Carole Fink, "The Minorities Question at the Paris Peace Conference: The Polish Treaty, June 28, 1919," in *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment After 75 Years*, eds., Manfred F. Boemeke, Gerald D. Feldman, and Elisabeth Glaser (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 249-255.

and included provisions for educational and civil service opportunities in the language of the minority group. But, as P. de Azcarate, former director of the Minorities Section later reflected, the treaties were not "humanitarian" in nature, but "political."[2] They sought to internationalize minority disputes in a forum for discussion, but were specifically not endowed with the capacity for effective international intervention. Consequently, while hundreds of petitions reached Geneva, only thirteen passed through the three established levels of bureaucratic machinery to come before the Permanent Court of International Justice.[3]

By 1938, minority rights interest groups in Czechoslovakia had presented twenty-seven petitions to Geneva. Seventeen of these petitions were passed on for further consideration, but none made it to the Court. Since the system allowed the government in question to challenge the minority complaints, the Czechoslovak government aptly legitimated the legality of their policies against appeals of discrimination. The majority of the initial petitions regarded the Czechoslovak Land Reform Act. The act, passed in 1919 by the Revolutionary National Assembly, nationalized the estates of the Bohemian nobility. In the eyes of the new Czechoslovak leadership, the nobility embodied the old order of Habsburg German feudalism, which was antithetical to the vision of the new, democratic, middle class and specifically "Czech" state. The act redistributed the large estates, which were predominantly located in the borderlands, among the peasantry as a means for democratizing social reform. But its underlying consequence was to distribute

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[2] P. de Azcarate, *League of Nations and National Minorities: An Experiment* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1945), 14.
[3] Eagle Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 61.

"German-owned" land to Czechs. The distribution process resembled an "affirmative action program"—the State Land Office was not operating need-blind.[4] Land reform provided the Czech political parties with a unifying platform of social reform and state centralization, which provided a legitimate means to encourage Czech settlement in the borderlands to counter-balance German separatist tendencies.

Petitions regarding the act were sent to Geneva by the Association of German Large Landowners (*Verband der deutschen Grossgrundbesitzer*). The *Verband* formed alongside the Union of Czechoslovak Large Landowners (*Svaz ceskoslovenskych velkostatkaru*) in response to the act. But while the *Verband* used the League's minority system to petition the act, the *Svaz* appealed on a national level to the Land Office and President Masaryk. As opposed to the *Svaz,* which predominantly identified itself as Czech but incorporated Czech and German landowners, the *Verband* emphasized a German identity and pursued a more confrontational policy. When land confiscation accelerated in 1922, the *Verband* used the right of petition to internationalize the problem as an example of the state's discriminatory policies against the German minority.[5] But it is significant to note that by the end of the war, the Bohemian nobility still lacked a uniformed ethnic or political identity. While the nobility predominantly spoke German, language did not inform their identity. They comprised a composite group of self-identifying Czechs and Germans and amphibians, all of which ascribed to various political ideologies— monarchists and democrats alike.[6] But, due to presence of nationalist organizations like the *Verband,* who were able to capitalize on the rhetoric of ethnic discrimination

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[4] Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists,* 71.
[5] Ibid.*,* 84-105.
[6] Ibid.*,* 10-11, 48-49.

inherent in the League system, the disparate noble class became "nationalized" throughout the interwar period. As historian Eagle Glassheim notes, "the very existence of the minority guarantees nationalized the *Verband's* self-defense strategy."[7] The international recognition of the issue of land reform was achieved by couching it in the rhetoric of ethnic discrimination that the League's minority system encouraged. The system provided the nobles who identified as German to represent the entire German population, and present a polarized vision of antagonism between Czechs and Germans in the new Republic.

When the petitions of the *Verband* came before the Committee of Three, the British Foreign Office advised the British member of the Committee to disregard the complaints. While the Foreign Office perceived that these reforms were discriminatory in practice, land reform was, on paper, a legal and legitimate means to enact social reform.[8] What is more significant, however, is that the petitions affirmed the perceived notion of Czech and German antagonism within the Czechoslovak state. The particular economic nature and nuance of the Czech and German relationship in the Bohemian lands was subsequently lost within the system's bona fide yet misguided enunciation of "'racial, religious or linguistic minorities.'"[9] In Czechoslovakia, the ethnic differentiation between the Czechs and Germans largely followed economic lines. Throughout the interwar period the economic divide

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[7] Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists*, 111.

[8] Mark Cornwall, "A Fluctuating Barometer: British Diplomatic Views of the Czech-German Relationship in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1938," in Grossbritannien, die USA und die böhmischen Länder 1848-1938 [*Great Britain, the United States, and the Bohemian lands, 1848-1938*], ed. Eva Schmidt-Hartmann and Stanley B. Winters (Munchen: R. Oldenbourg, 1991), 316.

[9] League of Nations, *Guarantee Clause of the Minority Treaties* (Geneva, 1920) quoted in Azcarate, *League of Nations,* 94.

between the two language communities would prove to be a significant source of their "ethnic" conflict. Within this nominal national state, the language of the minority system accentuated the polarization of the Bohemian people into two distinct and rival ethnic groups, and subsequently created a feedback loop through which ethnic differentiation found fertile ground to embroil into a conflict.

Significantly, the majority of Britain's political elite was displeased with the minority system for elevating a historically domestic concern into the international realm of arbitration. The system was in fact enacted at a time of acute tension between Britain and one of her own national minorities, the Irish. The separatist movement erupted into a war for independence, which waged from 1919-1921, and culminated in Home Rule for the northern counties and independence for an Irish Free State. It is noteworthy that this universal problem did not receive universal application. The apparent need for the minority system was derived from a century long discourse of national rights and evidence of minority conflict, and in specific regards to Czechoslovakia, the conviction in the long-standing ethnic conflict between the Czech and Germans.[10] Since the nineteenth century, Bohemia had been consistently framed as a battle-ground between Czechs and Germans, and Austria-Hungary had been as described as a "congeries of races" embroiled in conflict.[11] Contemporary events, like the clash on March 4, 1919 between Czech troops and German demonstrators, thereby corroborated the historical trajectory that posited the inherent nature of ethnic conflict in the Bohemian lands. While the minority system

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[10] Inis L. Claude, Jr., *National Minorities: An International Problem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 6-15

[11] C.B. Roylance-Kent, "The Growth of National Sentiment," *Macmillan's Magazine* 69 (1893): 344

had been established to protect the minority, its real intention was to channel and thereby mitigate the minority's frustrations until the group accepted their situation and assimilated.[12] But paradoxically, neither situation arose in Czechoslovakia.

The treaties had a two-fold effect in Czechoslovakia. The minority treaty encouraged a civic differentiation between the Czechoslovaks as the *Staatsvolk*, the state-owning and state-defining people, and the Germans as second-class citizens. The myth of German "otherness" became written into and encouraged by the state's machinery as the German population of 3.5 million was posited as a "minority." While ostensibly seeking to protect, the treaties provided the Czechoslovak nation with positive affirmation of their majority, or in other words, their superiority within the state. Meanwhile, by the end of the 1930s, the right of petition within the minority system had projected an international image of Czechoslovakia that was defined by its perceived ethnic conflict. Throughout the interwar period, Britain's appreciation of the Czechoslovak state would not only become framed by this image of ethnic conflict, but the presence of the system, which necessitated British involvement in Czechoslovak affairs, helped erode Anglo-Czech relations. In the aftermath of the war, Britain became ambivalent towards the state, whose postwar role—to become a bulwark of democracy between Bolshevism and German militarism—appeared increasingly defunct.

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[12] Patrick B. Finney, "'An Evil for All Concerned:' Great Britain and Minority Protection after 1919" *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, no. 3 (July 1995): 541.

**Negative Perceptions of Czechoslovakia**

Whitehall's negative image of the state and the perception of ethnic conflict between the Czechs and Germans during the interwar period were fueled in part by dispatch reports, which the Foreign Office received from its Legation in Prague. The British Embassy was established in Prague in 1920. That year Sir George Clerk replaced the temporary *charge d'affaires,* Cecil Gosling, and moved to Prague to serve a six-year term. Bruce Lockhart had arrived a year earlier as the Commercial Secretary and remained until 1922. While Clerk arrived in Prague with optimism towards the new state, he grew disillusioned by the identity politics that continued to present themselves on the state level. In a dispatch to the Labour Prime Minister, Ramsey MacDonald in October of 1924, Clerk reflects that "'the extremists of both sides still retain power enough to prevent a fusion of the two nationalities into one harmonious body politic.'"[13] Clerk expressed the sense that a "'vertical racial division,'" existed throughout society.[14] The national differentiation between the Czechs and Germans, which was manifest in the political realm and represented in dispatches to the Foreign Office, subsequently reaffirmed the projection of antagonism between the state and its German minority. The presence of extremist political parties and interest groups, like the *Verbund*, which capitalized on national divisions consequently purported an image of the two language communities as distinct and antagonistic national groups. Britain's narrow vision of Bohemian identity, which posited a dichotomy between the

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[13] FO 371/9676, Clerk to Ramsey McDonald, no 233, October 31, 1924, quoted in Cornwall, "A Fluctuating Barometer," 318.

[14] FO 371/10674, Clerk to Chamberlain, no. 45, February 20, 1925: minute by Aveling, February 25, quoted in Cornwall, "A Fluctuating Barometer," 318.

Czechs and Germans was further substantiated by the Slavophobe sentiments of the British minister, Sir Joseph Addison, who was placed in Prague from 1930 to 1936.

Addison held outright disdain for the Slavs, and informed the Foreign Office that, "'order, method, punctuality, honesty in dealing with one's fellow human beings are as alien to the Slav character as water to a cat.'"[15] In his mind, the country's state-defining nation was inferior to its German minority. In a telegram to Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon in 1934, Addison asserted that the "Germans in Czechoslovakia are superior to the Czechs.'"[16] Throughout his tenure, Addison repeatedly criticized the Czechs for overt and concerted discrimination against their fellow German citizens, and he condemned the territorial decisions delineated in the Treaty of St. Germain. A seven-year tenure in Berlin had left Addison sympathetically predisposed towards the Germans, and his belief in Slav inferiority was affirmed by a two-year tenure in the Baltics.[17]

The negative portrayal of the Czechoslovak state from its British ministers was paralleled by a general cooling of relations between the state and Great Britain throughout the interwar period. The fall-off reflected Great Britain's conflicting continental aims: while wanting to establish a foothold in the region to advance British imports, Whitehall sought, unlike the French, political disengagement from central and eastern Europe.[18] The Foreign Office was specifically frustrated by Beneš's decision to promote and establish the "Little Entente," which they perceived would lead to the "Balkanization" of central and eastern Europe and create an avenue

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[15] Igor Lukes and Erik Goldstein, *The Munich Crisis of 1938: Prelude to the War* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 259.

[16] Hanak, *Britain and Austria-Hungary, 1918-1933*, 217.

[17] Lukes and Goldstein, *The Munich Crisis,* 259.

[18] Cornwall, "A Fluctuating Barometer," 319.

through which the French could establish their presence in the region. In 1922, this alliance was formally constituted between Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, and symbolically sought to place the Entente on par with Western Europe. The French, fearing a return of German aggression, accorded treaties with each member of the Little Entente to secure security guarantees in the region; the security treaty with Czechoslovakia was signed at the Locarno Conference in 1925.

Britain, unlike France, did not share in the French fear of reconstituted German aggression. In contrast, Britain underwent a sympathetic turn towards Germany in the latter half of the twenties. While France was making overtures towards the successor states at the Locarno Conference, Britain used the conference to reconcile relations with Germany by affirming the inviolability of Germany's western borders, but not her eastern ones. In August of 1929, the Young Plan relieved Germany of Allied control, restoring her national sovereignty. A year later, in 1930, Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson obtained, five years ahead of time, the withdrawal of Allied troops from the Rhineland. And in 1932, the Lausanne Conference officially canceled German reparations. Britain's revisionist policy towards Germany had consequences for the successor states of central and eastern Europe, which were constituted to prevent German domination, a fear that the British no longer held. As this fear diminished and the Treaty of Versailles was rendered obsolete, the anti-Germanism of the World War One was tempered. By the late thirties, the existence of the large German minority population in the states of central and eastern Europe appeared immoral and unjust. British public, academic and political opinion viewed the provisions of Versailles as counterproductive, cruel and

hypocritical. Consequently, Germany, a former power, was allowed to stage her

claims and *return to Europe*.

Meanwhile, Czechoslovakia's own stage presence waned in Great Britain's

orbit of affairs. The stint of wartime inclusiveness, which beckoned the

Czechoslovaks into the European imagined community had diminished. The Foreign

Office, viewed Czechoslovakia as a backwater post, outside of Britain's immediate

interests. Sir Orme Sargent, head of the Central Department in 1927, held a typical,

though not universal view: "For him Czechoslovakia was an 'unimportant country'

with 'abrupt racial cleavages' and 'somewhat artificial frontiers.'"[19] By the 1930s,

while Anglo-Czech relations were not unfriendly, they were as Sir George Clerk

stated, "'academic.'"[20] A few champions and critics aside, the British political elite

were simply uninterested in the small state of central Europe.

Anglo-Czech relations also took on another dimension in the thirties as the

Soviets emerged as the *heir apparent* to threaten European stability. In May of 1935,

inspired by fear of Hitler's decision to rearm, the Czechoslovak government signed a

security treaty with the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty inspired

concern among some officials in the Foreign Office that Soviet influence would find

fertile ground in Czechoslovakia.[21] Despite Hitler's increasingly threatening presence,

the threat of Soviet communism loomed larger.  It follows that Hitler's

remilitarization of the Rhineland in March of 1936 and *Anschluss* between Germany

and Austria in March of 1938 were met with some private apprehension yet public

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[19] Sir Orme Sargent, quoted in Hanak, *Britain and Austria-Hungary, 1918-1933,* 99.

[20] Gábor Bátonyi, *Great Britain and Central Europe, 1918-1933* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 182.

[21] Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia Between Stalin and Hitler: The Diplomacy of Edvard Beneš in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 44-47.

sanction by Westminster. Hitler's first public pronouncement in support of uniting

Austria and the Sudetenland with the Reich came in February of 1938, just a month

before *Anschluss* with Austria occurred. While Czechoslovakia was not mentioned in

name, the professed desire to bring home Germany's co-nationals was an implicit

reference to the Germans across the border in Czechoslovakia. While Britain sought

to remain removed from the domestic conflict of Czechoslovakia, *Anschluss* between

Germany and Austria propelled the Czech and German conflict to the forefront of

British concerns.


**The Development of the Sudeten German Movement**

The decision to send a British mission to deal directly with the Czechoslovak problem

of 1938, which concluded in the signing of the Munich Agreement and the transfer of

the borderland region to Germany, is traditionally attributed to the policy of

appeasement, which was pursued by the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain

to forestall war. While the failure of appeasement to achieve its goal indicted

Chamberlain in the post-war era, recent historiography has contextualized his policy

as a responsible and reasonable response in its contemporary setting. Czechoslovakia

appeared not only indefensible, but Soviet encroachment legitimated German

domination in central Europe. By the summer of 1938, the general sentiment in the

Foreign Office was that war was inevitable, but should be forestalled so that Britain

could aptly rearm.

What the narrative of appeasement overlooks, however, is the relationship that

developed between the Foreign Office and Konrad Henlein, the leader of the Sudeten

German Party (SdP), and the perception that Czechoslovak relations with its German

minority were impracticable and insoluble within the framework of the state. The

SdP, founded in 1933, was ideologically based on sentiments of romantic German

nationalism, and put forth broad appeals towards Sudeten German unity. In the 1935

parliamentary elections, the SdP achieved 1.25 million votes, and 44 of 300 seats in

the Chamber of Deputies. The elections provided the SdP with a mandate of popular

support, having polled over 60 percent of the German vote. From 1935 to 1938 when

the Munich Agreement was signed, Henlein played a deck of cards between Hitler

and the British government, as he used direct international arbitration to attempt to

achieve the SdP's nationalist program of German autonomy within the

Czechoslovakia. Henlein was able to make these contacts with Whitehall, on account

of a recommendation put forth by the British Ambassador, Joseph Addison. Addison,

having hyperbolized the discriminatory practices of the Czechoslovak government

towards its Germans, set the stage upon which the SdP leader could put forth his

claims and receive direct British mediation in the matter.[22]

The formation of the SdP reflects the radicalization of identity politics in the

Bohemian lands in the 1930s. In the twenties, however, the Bohemian Germans had

largely reconciled their position in the new state. The German political parties that

emerged in the interwar period were born from their Austrian counterparts, and

became divided between two camps of *Activists* and *Negativists*. The Activists, which

included the Christian Social People's Party, the Agrarians and the Social Democrats,

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[22] Mark Cornwall, "'A Leap into Ice-Cold Water': The Maneuvers of the Henlein Movement in Czechoslovakia, 1933-1938," in *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalist and Fascist Europe, 1918-1948,* eds., Mark Cornwall and R. J. W. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007): 123-142.

supported a policy of loyal opposition. The Negativists, which encompassed the

National Socialist and the German National Parties, refused to acknowledge the

government and work within its framework. But from 1920 to 1929, the German

Activist parties maintained more than twice the popular support of the Negativists,

and led the way in German political participation within the state.[23] The initial

outburst of nationalism during the Republic's inception had proven to be an

unsustainable and undesirable policy for the majority of Czechoslovakia's German

inhabitants.[24]

In October of 1926, two German politicians, Franz Spina and Robert Mayr-

Harting entered the governmental coalition to serve as the Ministers of Public Works

and Justice; in 1929, Dr. Ludwig Czech, a German Social Democrat, became the

Minister of Social Welfare. The Weimer Government and its Foreign Ambassador in

Prague, Dr. Walter Koch, promoted this policy of cooperation.[25] Throughout the

twenties the Activist leaders continued to seek administrative autonomy while

remaining loyal to the state. As political cooperation reached its climax between 1926

and 1929, a parallel improvement emerged in the economic sector. Czech and

German big businesses began to collaborate and form large cartels like the *Central

Association of Czechoslovak Industrialists* and the *Association of Czechoslovak

Banks*. By the mid-twenties, defensive economic nationalism had fallen away.

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[23] J.W Bruegel, *Czechoslovakia Before Munich: The German Minority Problem and British Appeasement Policy* (New York: Cambridge University press, 1973), 75; Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2004), 181.

[24] Keith G. Robbins, "Konrad Henlein, the Sudeten Question and British Foreign Policy," *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 4 (December 1969): 682-683.

[25] J.W. Bruegel, "German Diplomacy and the Sudeten Question before 1938," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 37, no. 3. (July 1961): 324.

Economic conciliation was created "in multinational companies and professional business organizations," which encouraged cooperation "no matter which nationality the business belonged to."[26] The robust economic situation, compared especially to Weimar Germany, provided a source of national cooperation.

But identity politics became radicalized in the 1930s with the world-wide economic crisis. In Czechoslovakia, this crisis was concentrated in the industrialized German borderland, which was home to predominantly export-oriented glass and textile industries. With the collapse of the Weimar banks in 1931, "Sudeten banks lost millions of crowns and could no longer offer credit to industry," and the economic disparity between the Czech and German regions became more marked.[27] While Dr. Czech, Minister of Social Welfare, developed social programs to alleviate the economic crisis, between the beginning of 1929 and the end of 1930, unemployment had increased five-fold.[28] Upon its formation, the SdP under Henlein subsequently capitalized on the economic disparity, which happened to follow ethnic lines, to charge the Czechoslovak government with pursuing a policy of concerted discrimination. While their claims were not unfounded—discrimination against German employment in the public sector did exist, and governmental contracts favored Czech firms over German ones—the economic crisis provided the SdP with a means to hyperbolize the degree to which it existed.[29] The economic situation had

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[26] Jan Hajek, Drahomir Jancik, and Eduard Kubo, eds., *For Economic National Possessions: Reflections on Modern Czech and German Economic Nationalism in the Bohemian Lands: Tribute to XIV International Economic History Congress in Helsinki* (Prague: Charles University, 2006), 35.

[27] Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists,* 162.

[28] In 1929, unemployment was 45,000. At the end of 1930, unemployment had reached 230,000. Cornwall, "A Fluctuating Barometer," 321.

[29] Cornwall, "'A Leap into Ice-Cold Water,'" 129.

indirect political consequences in radicalizing nationalist politics and curtailing the measured efforts pursued by the Activist parties.

Concurrently, in 1935, Addison conveyed to Whitehall that the SdP's electoral success was representative of its absolute support among the German population.[30] During this first visit to London, Henlein not only spoke at Chatham House, but also met with Seton-Watson, who had resumed his career as a researcher and journalist. In his conversation with Seton-Watson, Henlein professed his faith in the League's minority system and the integrity of Czechoslovakia, refuting the suggestion that the SdP desired territorial secession.[31] Henlein appeared to the British elite as a moderate reformer and a democrat, though susceptible to "more radical influence if his moderate demands were not met in the near future."[32] In the summer of 1936, Henlein returned to London to meet privately with Lord Vansittart and gave a lecture at Chatham House. Vansittart provided him with positive assurances: Great Britain would exert pressure in the League to help the Sudeten Germans.[33]

In the same year that the SdP found electoral success, Dr. Edvard Beneš succeeded Tomas Masaryk as president. While Beneš rejected the SdP's demands for territorial autonomy, as the decade progressed he began to consider decentralization concessions towards regional self-rule. Meanwhile, Wenzel Jaksch, the leader of the Sudeten German Social Democrats as of 1938, sought to offset the influence of Henlein's SdP. He called upon the German middle class and intelligentsia to unite with the working class in a "national working community" or *National*

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[30] Cornwall, "A Fluctuating Barometer," 326
[31] Robbins, "Konrad Henlein,"675
[32] Cornwall, "A Fluctuating Barometer," 326.
[33] Ibid., 327.

*Werkgemeinschaft.*[34] Jaksch and the Activists appealed for greater economic aid,

proportional representation in state and public sectors for all the nationalities, and

increased support for national language and education rights. The Activists sought to

transform the fictitious "national state" into a state that recognized all of its

nationalities equally, while supporting the integrity of centralization. But Jacksh was

at a disadvantage. For Henlein, backed by electoral support and positively viewed by

Addison and leadership in Whitehall, had become the ostensible international leader

of the Sudeten Germans. Jaksch and Activist parties were subsequently ignored in the

British mediation of the conflict.[35]

Meanwhile, however, the SdP's program radicalized as its demands met

Czechoslovak intransigence and each side refused to conciliate on like terms. The

SdP's platform became increasingly pan-German, and the party began to receive

funding from Berlin. In the latter half of the decade, the SdP evinced a Nazi aesthetic,

projecting the image of a paramilitary organization, adopting uniforms and the

Roman salute.[36] Consequently, in the spring of 1938, the Czech government

embarked on new measures to mitigate the crisis and meet the demands of the SdP. In

a dispatch from April 22, Newton conveyed that Beneš was receptive to a *United*

*States of Bohemia and Slovakia* "in which the concept of national minorities would be

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[34] Francis Dostál Raška The Czechoslovak Exile Government in London and the Sudeten German Issue (Prague: Charles University, 2002), 17.

[35] Lukes, *Czechoslovakia Between Stalin*, 80-81.

[36] Cornwall, "Dr. Edvard Beneš and Czechoslovakia's German Minority, 1918-1943," in *The Czech and Slovak Experience,* ed., John Morison (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 175-180.

replaced by a partnership of all national groups."[37] As Beneš contemplated new concessions and enacted further measures to protect German political and cultural identity, Henlein put forth eight demands at a speech given at Carlsbad on April 24. The main points of the Carlsbad Decrees called for full equality between Czechs and Germans, self-government, legal guarantees and protection, and reparations. The most contentious point was, however, the eighth—the right to identify with German National Socialism and proclaim loyalty to the Hitler's Reich. By the end of 1937, whether he desired it or not, Henlein had clearly been drawn into Hitler's camp.[38]

**The Runciman Mission**

In 1938, Britain began to arbitrate directly between the Czechoslovak state and the representatives of its German minority. Czechoslovakia, formed in 1919 as a guarantee of peace, now appeared to be beckoning war. When Hitler entered the discussions and invoked the rhetoric of self-determination, the German presence in Bohemia appeared unnatural, due to the incongruity of its linguistic and ethnic presence within a "Czech" state, and contrary to the west's liberal democratic creed. Finally, as the British began and concluded their arbitration, the representation of long-standing conflict between the Czechs and Germans of Bohemia rhetorically emerged rhetorically yet again. Now, however, the myth of antagonism affirm a role reversal through which the Germans had become the victims of Czech discrimination.

The Runciman Mission arrived in Prague on August 2, 1938 to investigate the problem and carry out mediation between Henlein and the Czechoslovak government

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[37] Paul Vyšný, The Runciman Mission to Czechoslovakia, 1938: Prelude to Munich (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 52.

[38] Vyšný, *The Runciman Mission,* 56.

in an attempt to settle the SdP's claims without involving Hitler. The delegation was comprised of a hodgepodge of individuals, with varying knowledge of the problems at hand. Prior to their departure, Runciman, the leader of the delegation, was himself was almost wholly ignorant of the situation.[39] Since Whitehall wanted to authenticate the mission with a sense of impartiality, they deemed most experts unacceptable, such as Lockhart, Seton-Watson and Steed. Two members nonetheless had expert knowledge of the region: Robert Jemmet Stopford and John Monro Troutbeck. Stopford was versed in the history and problems of Central Europe in particular, and constitutional problems in general. Troutbeck, on the other hand, had first-hand experience in the Republic as the first Secretary at the British Legation in Prague. Basil Newton, the British minister, provided the lines of communication between London and Prague.[40]

A month before the delegation left, Elizabeth Wiskemann published an authoritative text on the history of the Czechoslovakia, specifically, a history of the nationality conflict. Published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the text was read in proof by J. K. Roberts and Sir L. Mallet of the Foreign Office's Central Department. Impressed, the men acquired the monograph for the Foreign Office library. While Runciman was photographed holding the text on the train to Prague, it is unknown whether or not he actually read it.[41] The text itself emphasized the long-standing conflict between the Czechs and Germans of Bohemia; the tone was set in the title, *Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia.* With emphatic authority she stated on the opening page, "In

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[39] Vyšný, The Runciman Mission, 142.
[40] Ibid., 128-134.
[41] Ibid., 141-142.

Bohemia, the Slav-German conflict has, all through history, been particularly intense."[42] She subsequently portrayed the emergence of the modern conflict as a derivative of the national antagonism within Bohemian history, stating that "many centuries of struggle lie behind the Czech-German problem."[43] Wiskemann constructed a deterministic narrative, which described the current conflict as inevitable and the two groups as irreconcilable. Her outlook towards future reconciliation was as well pessimistic.[44]

The impression of the long-standing ethnic conflict had persisted within British academic literature, and informed the way in which the British viewed the conflict in the Bohemian lands. While Runciman's personal reading of *Czechs and Germans* is unknown, one day prior to his arrival in Prague he exclaimed over the region's long history of antagonism. He wrote in a dispatch to Chamberlain, "what a cockpit Bohemia has always been! For 800 years they have quarreled and fought: Only one king kept them at peace, Charles IV, and he was a Frenchman! How then can we succeed?"[45] Runciman entered the country with little real knowledge of the present situation, and his first objective was to acquaint himself with the issues. It is clear, however, that at some point, perhaps on the train, he was informed by the narrative that had been cultivated in British literature since the turn of the century. In a letter to Chamberlain dated September 21, Runciman reiterated the narrative of antagonism, and used it to explain the modern conflict. He stated:

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[42] Wiskemann, Elizabeth, *Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), 1.
[43] Ibid.*,* 272.
[44] Ibid.*,* 283.
[45] Runciman to Chamberlain, August 1, 1938, NC 7/11/31/232 Chamberlain Papers, quoted from Vyšný, *The Runciman Mission*, 143.

> The problem of the political, social and economic relations between the Teuton and Slav races in the area which is now called Czechoslovakia is one which has existed for many centuries with periods of acute struggle and periods of comparative peace. It is not a new problem and in its present stage there are at the same time new factors and also old factors which would have to be considered in any detailed review.[46]

His note to Chamberlain resonated with Wiskemann's own statement that "circumstances have obviously changed, but the problem has remained the same one."[47] The contemporary problem in 1938 was posited within a history of antagonism and disagreement, which thereby conveyed the implicit insurmountable nature of the conflict. The German presence in Czechoslovakia appeared unnatural to Runciman as he stated: "I regard their turning for help towards their kinsmen and their eventual desire to join the Reich as a natural development in the circumstances."[48] While these observations do not convey the entire story of the Munich Agreement, and while they overlook the geo-political realities and major agents involved, they do nonetheless convey a certain way of seeing, and exhibit how one actor, Lord Runciman, was informed and approached the problem. On September 29, eight days after Runciman sent his dispatch to Chamberlain, the Prime Minister met with Daladier, Mussolini and Hitler at Munich, where in which they agreed on terms to transfer the "Sudetenland" to Germany. These terms were subsequently imposed upon the Czechs, who were made to wait outside in the foyer.

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[46] Lord Runciman to Chamberlain, September 21, 1938, "Text of British White Paper Containing Documents on the Czech-German Crisis," in *I Broadcast the Crisis,* ed. H. V. Kaltenborn (New York: Random House, 1938), 327-328.

[47] Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans,* 272.

[48] Lord Runciman, quoted in *Nemesis at Potsdam: The Anglo-Americans and the Expulsion of the Germans,* Alfred-Maurice de  (Rockport, Maine: Picton Press, 2003), 30.

In an oft-quoted radio broadcast two days before the Munich Agreement, Chamberlain referred to the crisis as a "a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing."[49] The Anglo-Czech imagined community, having deteriorated over the past two decades, was symbolically shattered. Chamberlain appealed to British ignorance to exculpate the country from its impending decision. As the interwar period had progressed, Czech and German constructs in the Bohemian lands had materialized with greater tangibility as state and international structures had relegated German-speakers into a minority position and identity. But in 1938, a role reversal had occurred, and the Bohemian Germans had now become the victims of the conflict. Runciman wrote to Chamberlain: "I have much sympathy…with the Sudeten race. Its is a hard thing to be ruled by an alien race…I have been left with the impression that…the German population was inevitably moving to the direction of revolt."[50] By the end of the thirties, the narrative of historical antagonism had materialized into a tangible, self-affirming and modern face.

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[49] Chamberlain to Parliament, quoted from David Thomson, *England in the Twentieth Century,* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), 175.

[50] Lord Runciman to Chamberlain, September 21, 1938, "Text of British White Paper," in *I Broadcast the Crisis,* 330.

## Chapter Four:

## An Identity Formed, An Identity Subsumed, An Identity Forgotten

**Impending War:**

Upon Chamberlain's return from Munich, an initial wave of euphoria passed over the British public. Public opinion hailed him for securing peace and righting a moral wrong. Twenty years after St. Germain, the Sudeten Germans were accorded with self-determination. While the Munich Agreement arose from a variety geo-political realities, the narrative of an incommensurable ethnic difference was present, whether as a strong conviction or not, in British decision-making. Accordingly, the German-speaking population of Czechoslovakia was "brought home to the Reich," to a state and people with whom they only superficially identified.

Following Munich, Beneš resigned from the presidency on October 5 due to mental exhaustion and determined pressure from Berlin. Initially, the Munich Agreement was favorably received by most of Czechoslovakia's Germans, but the sentiment was not unanimous. As the news spread, 30,000 Sudeten German Social Democrats attempted to leave the Sudeten regions. Jaksch, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, became the active figurehead of these German refugees, many of whom faced prosecution in the new state for their anti-Nazi creed. Meanwhile, the British media and influential MPs began a moral campaign to alleviate the refugee problem.[1] A non-governmental group, the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, (BCRC) formed to resettle Sudeten Germans, Austrians, and Reich

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[1] Brown, Martin D. *Dealing with Democrats. The British Foreign Office's Relations with the Czechoslovak Émigrés in Great Britain, 1939-1945.* (New York: Mitteleuropa-Osteuropa, 2006), 70-75.

Germans "as transmigrants…elsewhere in the British Empire."[2]  The refugee problem

marks the beginning of a Czech political campaign, which invoked the Munich

Agreement throughout the course of the war to portray the Czechoslovak nation as

Hitler's first victim, and to reassert the significance of the small, central European

state. Czechoslovakia was portrayed as a victim who sacrificed itself to stave off war

in western Europe. When Hitler subsequently occupied Czechoslovakia on March 15,

1939, the political elite in Great Britain grappled to define a foreign policy strategy.

On the previous day, Hitler pressured the new Czechoslovak President, Emil Hacha to

disintegrate the state, accord Bohemia and Moravia to the Reich and provide Slovakia

and Carpatho-Ukraine autonomy under the leadership of Josef Tiso.[3]  While the events

of March were decisive, they did not propel Britain into war or generate an official

repudiation of Munich. Rather, the Foreign Office accorded de facto recognition to

both the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and Slovakia.


**The Czechs Return to London**

Following his resignation, Beneš traveled to the United States to conduct a

propaganda campaign before finally settling in London in July 1940. He remained

there for the rest of the war to fight "a desperate struggle for [Czech] national

survival."[4] Much like his role in World War One, Beneš campaigned for a favorable

post-war settlement: to uphold Czechoslovakia's sovereign independence, to reinstate

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[2] Brown, *Dealing with Democrats*, 75.
[3] Following Beneš's resignation, Slovak separatists declared Slovakia's autonomy, and the region came the premiership of Josef Tiso, the leader of the Slovak People's Party and former member of the Czechoslovak Parliament. Ousted on March 9, 1939 when Czech troops sought to regain control of the region, Tiso was pressured by Hitler to return to Slovakia and declare its autonomy and alliance with the Reich.
[4] Brown, *Dealing with Democrats*, 31

its pre-Munich frontiers, and, from 1941, to transfer the Czechoslovakia's German population from the country.[5] But Beneš faced an issue of legality. Not only was Munich a legal act of peacetime diplomacy, but he had resigned from the presidency, and, furthermore, Czechoslovakia had officially ceased to exist since the British had accorded de facto recognition to the Protectorate and Slovakia. When he arrived in London, Beneš was merely the *former* president of a *former* country. He had no legal authority.[6]

Beneš's first aim was to achieve international legal recognition of a Czechoslovak administrative body, the "Action Abroad," to represent the former state during the war. The situation was, however, less than favorable. The Czechoslovak exile politicians found their place among a multitude of other émigré governments. Whitehall viewed these émigrés as a necessary, but unfortunate nuisance; while the émigrés provided useful reconnaissance information, propaganda and military assistance, each government vied for a specific national program, which went beyond the concerted effort to win the war. Accordingly, the Czechoslovaks were not a high-priority concern, and until 1942, the Foreign Office remained hesitant to provide Beneš with any assurances. The affairs of Czechoslovakia were dealt with specifically in the Foreign Office's Central Department, but the real role of the regional departments was to "act as a *cordon sanitaire* between these foreign representatives and the British government."[7] The foremost policy was to win the war; defeat would make post-war peace plans negligible. But, at the same time, British policy towards Czechoslovakia became largely dictated by wartime events, which were beyond the

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[5] Brown, *Dealing with Democrats*, 270.
[6] Ibid., 109-120.
[7] Ibid., 26.

control of any individual agent. And, consequently, decision-making did not necessarily follow a concerted or defined plan. Therefore, when the Axis attack on the Soviet Union brought the Soviets into the Allied Alliance, and the Soviet government thereafter recognized the Czechoslovak provisional government, Whitehall was induced to do the same. Soviet recognition thus precipitated recognition from the British Foreign Office, who had been in protracted discussions over the issue for several months. Thus, on July 16, 1941, Britain officially recognized Beneš's leadership of a Czechoslovak government abroad.[8]

Meanwhile, throughout the previous year other wartime developments had necessitated a closer Anglo-Czech relationship. In October of 1940, Great Britain and Czechoslovakia signed two treaties, which served to "integrate the émigrés into the Allied war effort," financially and militarily.[9] The success of the Nazi Blitzkrieg had isolated Great Britain and shaken her war-effort, forcing her to rely on the exile-governments for increasing military and reconnaissance support. Intelligence from within the Protectorate provided the Czech émigrés in London with "political capital."[10] Furthermore, in 1940, a turnover of British political leadership brought in a more receptive audience. In May, Churchill replaced Chamberlain as Prime Minister, and in December, Eden replaced Lord Halifax as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The new leadership, embodying the voice of pre-war anti-appeasement, was in relative terms, a more sympathetic proponent of the Czechoslovak cause.[11]

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[8] Brown, *Dealing with Democrats*, 137-149.
[9] Ibid., 92.
[10] Ibid., 160.
[11] Ibid., 128.

**Lidice: the Second Sacrifice**

Once Beneš had achieved British recognition, he began a concerted campaign to receive British assurances that the post-war settlement would rectify the state with its pre-Munich borders. Beneš's demands for a favorable post-war settlement became intensified following the radicalization of Nazi measures in the Protectorate in late-1941. On September 27, 1941, Hitler appointed Reinhard Heydrich as the new Reich Protector. Upon his installment, Heydrich declared a state of emergency, which brought forth a wave of arrests and executions. Under Heydrich's rule, the Nazis began to more vigorously pursue their policy of Germanization in the Protectorate, which sought the "national mutation of racially suitable Czechs," the expulsion of racial undesirables, and the resettlement of the racially pure.[12] Assimilatory measures were encouraged through gradual cultural domination: German schools replaced Czech ones, German became the official language, and censors curbed the free Czech press and artistic community. No sector of society was free from Germanization: property, business, industry, or finance for Heydrich had been directed to boost Bohemia's industrial output for the Reich's war-effort.[13] News of these measures reached London from the Czech underground resistance at home, who had been pressuring Beneš since the summer to receive greater assurances from London. The home resistance conveyed that ethnic antagonism was at its height in the Protectorate, and that the population as a whole desired the rectification of the state's pre-Munich frontiers and the transfer of its German population.[14]

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[12] Luža, *Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, 189
[13] Luža, *Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, 187-204; Brown, *Dealing with Democrats,* 285; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 15-19.
[14] Raška, *The Czechoslovak Exile Government*, 50.

In early winter of 1941, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE)

formed plans with Beneš to assassinate Heydrich. The assassination plans were

derived, in part, to force the Reich Protector's policies of Germanization to a halt. On

December 29, 1941, two Czech pilots parachuted into the Protectorate to carry out the

mission. Five months later, on May 27, 1942, Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík mortally

wounded Heydrich as he passed in an open car. The Reich Protector died a week later

on June 4.[15] While Heydrich was in the hospital, however, the Nazi authorities

instigated a spate of retaliatory violence against the Czech population, which was

reported daily in the London *Times*. Each report headlined a new death toll: on June

4, "Total now 136; on June 10, "Total Now 275.[16] On May 29, the *Times* article, a

"Technician of Terror," mused over the identity of Heydrich's assassins. While

posing the possibility of "vendetta within the Nazi camp," the article lauded the

bravery of the Czech people and their unrelenting vigilance: "…at the end of it all, the

spirit of the country is not only uncowed, but challenging. If indeed the attempt to kill

the agent and author of mass murder and sorrow was the work of Czechs it shows

patriotism seeking a desperate outlet…."[17] The assassination propelled the Czech

nation to the forefront of the news. The nation's role in the war became both real and

symbolic as the small nation who had sacrificed herself as a victim in the war, now

emerged as an integral agent in the war effort.  The assassination was depicted to

represent the nation's European significance. Two days after Heydrich's death, the

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[15] Luža, *Transfer of the Sudeten Germans,* 209-210; Brown, *Dealing with Democrats,* 307.

[16] "25 More Murdered in Czechoslovakia: Total Now 136," *The Times (London)*, June 4, 1942; "Another 41 Killed in Czechoslovakia: Total Now 275," *The Times (London),* June 10, 1942.

[17] "Technician of Terror," *The Times (London)*, May 29, 1942.

*Times* quoted Dr. P.S. Gerbrandy, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands: "The people

of Czechoslovakia who were among the earliest victims of German aggression, may

pride themselves that theirs is the first country in which one of the foremost

oppressors has met his just fate."[18] The assassination transformed a nation of victims

into a nation of non-complacent resisters. Within a few days, a further retaliatory

strike would go even further to propel the Czechoslovak people into world spotlight.

On the night of June 10, Nazi soldiers set fire to the small village of Lidice,

which lay twelve miles outside of Prague. The SS leader and newly appointed

Sudeten German Reich Protector, Karl H. Frank, gave the order to destroy the village,

which was purportedly hiding Heydrich's assassins. That night, the entire village was

burned to the ground, and all 173 men were shot. The women and children were

assembled at a nearby school in Kladno, where Nazi doctors assessed the young for

racial purity, out of which a few were sent to live with German families in the Reich.

The women were deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp, and the rest of the

children were eventually gassed at Chelmno.[19]

The destruction of the small village, 503 inhabitants in all, was broadcast to

the world by the Nazi press. Allied propaganda subsequently cultivated Lidice's

memory as a means to bolster resistance, support, and invoke a reason to persevere

and win the war. Newborns were named Lidice in the village's honor, and western

film, art, music and literature provided mnemonic cultural tools for the Anglo-

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[18] "Heydrich Not the Last," *The Times (London),* June 6, 1942.
[19] Lidice Memorial Website, History of the Memorial, History of Lidice Village http://www.lidice-memorial.cz/history_en.aspx, (accessed April 12, 2008).

American world to remember and internalize the tragedy.[20] Cities and localities were

renamed across the world: Stern Park Gardens, Chicago; San Jeronimo, Mexico; a

district in Lima, Peru; a district in Caracas, Venezuela; a village in Palestine, a Park

and Square in Havana; a street in Tabor, South Dakota. At the re-naming ceremony of

the Chicago suburb, Stern Park Gardens, the U.S. Senator Wendell L. Wilkie

declared, "Lidice lives. She lives again, thirty-five hundred miles from Wilson Street

and St. Margaret's Church, in this little village in Illinois."[21] Wilkie imbued the

Czech town with an American heritage. He appealed to the American citizens, to

whom Lidice was a faraway place, to make the tragedy their own. On June 14, U.S.

Secretary of State, William Franklin Knox expressed this sentiment at a United

Nations rally: "If future generations ask us what we are fighting for we shall tell them

the story of Lidice."[22] Significantly, the story of Lidice became a universal story of

freedom, Christianity, and western solidarity. As a formerly democratic, free, and

Christian country, the Czechoslovak nation embodied an uncontroversial group to

rally behind. News of other atrocities lacked the emotive, political and Christian

appeal with which Lidice was charged. The Czech nation's second sacrifice after

Munich propelled an Anglicized version of the Slavic people onto the world stage.

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[20] In 1942, The Writers War Board commission American poet Edna St. Vincent
Millay to write a ballad, *The Murder of Lidice*; in 1943, the American League of Composers
commissioned the Czech composer Martinu Bohuslov to compose an orchestral movement,
*Memorial to Lidice,* which premiered at Carnegie Hall in New York City on October 28,
1943. That same year the British Ministry of Information produced a 35-minute re-enactment
documentary of the tragedy called *The Silent Village*. Ivan, Ciganek, *Lidice* (Prague: Orbis
Press Agency, 1982), 44-53.
[21] Wendell L.Wilkie, "Lidice," July 12, 1042, in A. Craig Baird, ed. *Representative
American Speeches: 1942-1943*, The Reference Shelf 16, no. 6 (New York: The H. W.
Wilson Company, 1943), 166.
[22] "Knox Pledges Nazi Doom: Says 'Butchers' Will Be Erased as Was Town of
Lidice," *The New York Times*, June 15, 1942.

The tragedy inspired committees to form in Britain and the United States: the British Lidice Shall Live Committee, led by the Labour MP, Dr. Barnett Stross, raised 32,375 pounds to rebuild the town; the American Lidice Memorial Committee, created plans for an on-site memorial. The Lidice Memorial Committee's plans for the memorial are detailed in a pamphlet, "A Memorial from the People of the United States to the People of Czechoslovakia," which conveyed the committee's stated aims and designs for the memorial. The proposed structure is heavily laden with Christian imagery—designed as a Christian cross, outlined by a series of colonnades, and decorated with altars and angels. The document described the future memorial as a testament to democracy, liberty, and freedom from slavery. The mission statement asserted that "this Memorial will be a new kind of Statue of Liberty, given by America to the new old world.[23] Lidice's national character as a Czechoslovak tragedy was displaced by its rendering in Anglo-American culture. The far-away town of the far-away country subsequently entered the European press as an Allied partner and sacrificial victim.

Lidice precipitated the reversal of Munich and the acceptance, "in principle," of removing Czechoslovakia's ethnic Germans.[24] In a London *Times* article two weeks after the tragedy, "Czech's Faith in Freedom: Bonds of Union with Britain," the two nations were drawn together, who "alike in their scrupulous attention to the meaning of God's will on earth," feel a "tremendous bond of union" in which

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[23] Lidice Memorial Committee, Inc, Pamphlet, "Lidice: A Memorial form the People of the United States to the People of Czechoslovakia," (New York, 1942).

[24] Luža, *Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, 58-60; Brown, *Dealing with Democrats,* 99, 308.

together they hope for "freedom and justice in peace and good will."[25] While the

attack on Heydrich occurred during a period of protracted Anglo-Czech negotiations

over Munich, the world response, which was both spontaneous and directed, brought

the Czechoslovak nation into the war effort. On July 6, less than a month after

Lidice's destruction, the British government publicly annulled Munich. A month

later, on the 5th of August, the War Cabinet announced to the House of Commons

their acceptance, in principle, of post-war population transfers.[26]

**The Influence of Wartime Germanophobia**

Throughout the war, the Czech exile-community capitalized on anti-German

sentiment and the popularly mediated pro-Czech sentiment to achieve official

sanction of population transfer. In the English-language speeches and tracts the jargon

is repetitive. It identified the long-standing national antagonism between the Czechs

and Germans of Bohemia, and presented a polarized image of national difference: the

Czechs as democratic, Christian, and freedom-loving; Sudeten Germans as a pan-

German, fascist, fifth-column. While much of this rhetoric was taken for its

propagandistic face-value, it resonated within the growing awareness of acts of Nazi

brutality. This sentiment found influence in the Foreign Office and British parliament,

whose officials were no less receptive to emotional irrationalities. But beyond

individual sentiments, which were by no means shared by all, the influential role of

public opinion in the political decision-making is well documented. And so, just as

the moral campaign for Lidice provided the Czechs with greater moral capital, British

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[25] "Czech's Faith in Freedom: Bonds of Union with Britain," *The London (Times),* June 23, 1942.

[26] Brown, *Dealing with Democrats,* 99.

anti-Germanism precipitated the collapse of the Foreign Office's relationship with exile Sudeten German Social Democrats, and provided a channel through which the public and political circles could support the transfers, despite the undeniable suffering involved.

The exile Sudeten German Social Democrat's established lobbying groups in London and Sweden during Munich's refugee crisis. Whitehall recognized Wenzel Jaksch as the de facto leader in London, and refused Beneš's demands for authority over him and his political peers. This concession would have implicitly renounced Munich's frontiers because the "Sudeten Germans [were no longer] Czechoslovak citizens, [and] any admission of Czechoslovak jurisdiction over these people might be regarded as a territorial commitment."[27] Jaksch and the Social Democrats were therefore dealt within the Central Department as a separate entity from the Czechoslovak exile-government. While the Department encouraged the two men to cooperate, Beneš and Jaksch were unwilling to forfeit their programs—population transfer versus autonomy. While a less influential splinter group of Sudeten Germans eventually cooperated with Beneš, the fates of the Czechs and Germans of Bohemia were in symbolic and physical discord in Whitehall. Their obstinacy presented an explicit and tangible image and affirmation of the incommensurable differences between the Czechs and Germans, albeit the democratic ones, of Czechoslovakia.

Jaksch avoided Beneš's limited overtures to cooperate in lieu of retaining his independent status and political clout within the Central Department. But by 1942, the war's unforeseen developments produced an unfavorable situation for Jaksch; the Czechs had not only become indispensable to the British war effort, but two years

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[27] Brown, *Dealing with Democrats,* 295.

earlier, in May of 1940, the British government had initiated a widespread campaign

to intern Germans and Austrians who were living on British soil. Subsequently, the

Germanness of Jaksch and his co-national émigré's became increasingly suspect "no

matter how genuine their democratic pedigree."[28] In regards to the formation of a

Sudeten German Committee, Sir Orme Sargent minuted:

> The fact that Dr. Jaksch is a good democrat does not prevent him at the same time from being a good German imperialist. One of our greatest mistakes after the last war was to think that the one excluded the other, and that if a German was a democrat he could not possibly be an imperialist. Alas! Experience has shown that this is not the case, and I sympathize with the Czechoslovak Government in not wishing to be saddled in their country with any good German democrats: they are much more difficult to deal with than the open reactionaries.[29]

While Sir Orme Sargent's personal sentiments were not held by all of his colleagues,

Foreign Office support for Jaksch had already begun to wane in 1941. Regardless of

personal sentiments, the exile Sudeten Germans had become increasingly isolated

from Czechoslovakia's future due to their perceived national ties with Hitler's

German Reich. News of the Nazi's Germanization practices in the Protectorate,

which victimized the Czechs but treated their German-speaking neighbors well,

created real national divisions in the former Czechoslovak state. Hitler's specifically

racial campaign generated, perhaps for the first time, a real community of conflict

between the Czechoslovaks and the Sudeten Germans. Consequently, it was no large

leap for on-looking circles to view the Nazis through the ethnic lens as Germans, and

to subsequently portray the Bohemian Germans as pan-German and associate them

with National Socialism.

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[28] Brown, *Dealing with Democrats,* 271.

[29] FO 371/38932 C 11051/63/12 Sir Orme Sargent's minute on Jaksch's memorandum for the formation of a Democratic Sudeten German Committee, Sept 9, 1944.

This leap is explicitly created in Czech propaganda tracts and speeches. Vojta Beneš, American immigrant and older brother of Edvard Beneš, put forth a deterministic historical argument in the English-language tract *The Vanguard of the "Drang nach Osten."* In it he traced the origins of the German *Drang nach Osten* to the German colonization of Bohemia. He posited the origins of Hitler's contemporary pursuit for *Lebensraum* into Czech history: the German desire to dominate the world was "already under way in the first half of the seventh century."[30] He concluded that the Germans had and forever would pose a threat to European stability since they "have never changed their nature."[31] Vojta legitimated the transfer plan with *quid pro quo* logic: "For more than a thousand years [the Germans] have poisoned the soul of the civilized world with a "New Order" of human perfidy….We do not call for revenge. But who is there to assert that we, the small nations of Central Europe, do not possess the right to defend ourselves?"[32] Vojta invoked the familiar myth of long-standing German oppression to propagandize and imbue the Czechoslovak campaign with contemporary relevance. By emphasizing the past precedent, Vojta framed the contemporary situation within a historical trajectory of inevitable and insoluble conflict. By associating the Czech's national history with the modern war, he presented the Czech nation to be, then and now, the foremost defenders against German militarism.

The Czech campaign for the transfer of their German population thus found a niche within Germanophobia that was circulating throughout British society. While

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[30] Vojta Beneš, *The Vanguard of the "Drang nach Osten"* (Chicago, Illinois: Czechoslovak National Council of America, 1943), 3.
[31] Beneš, *The Vanguard of the "Drang nach Osten,"* 167.
[32] Vojta Beneš, *The Vanguard of the "Drang nach Osten,"* 100.

the Nuremberg Trials at the end of the war were meant to signify the rejection of collective guilt and punishment, the Allied acceptance of the transfer scheme reflects otherwise. And this acceptance was due, in part, to the conviction that the Germans within Czechoslovakia were collectively responsible, due to their perceived inherent membership in the broader "German nation." This perception is evident within a minute by Lord Reay, a clerk within the Central Department; in response to an article in the *Times* regarding the transfer, he stated:

> [the] difficulties [of the transfer] should not prove insuperable….The German `nation deserves far severer punishment than the widest stretch of imagination [which it] will ever be allowed to receive….it is inconceivable that the country's occupied by the German [sic] will allow large numbers of Germans to remain in their midst. On the contrary if these Germans are not transported quickly the chances are that they will be killed to the very last man.[33]

The transfers were thereby integrated and perceived within the broader plan to mete out justice in the post-war settlement. The Czech propaganda campaign, which depicted the inevitability of post-war national conflict unless a transfer transpired, resonated with Lord Reay. In a monograph written during the war but unpublished due to paper shortages, John David Mabbot, an expert on nationalism and eastern Europe who was consulted during the war, wrote that population transfers should only be adopted if "for historical or other reasons there is no chance whatever of a co-operative spirit being achieved."[34] The Czech national myths of long-standing German oppression consequently found a place within the wartime Germanophobia, and created the sense that a war of national retribution would erupt between the

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[33] FO 371/39091 C 2261/220/18 Lord Reay minute on Feburary 19, 1944, to a *Times* extract, "Transfer of Population: Frontiers and Minorities in the Peace Settlement," dated February 16, 1944.

[34] Mabbot, ARIIA 20/11 J. D. Mabbott. Unpublished study on 'National Minorities', manuscript, section C, p5. Brown, *Dealing with Democrats*.

Czechs and Germans of Bohemia if nothing was done to channel it. This logic

cloaked the transfers, which were inherently imbued with the principle of collective

guilt in a shroud of legitimacy and integrity

**The British Development of the Transfer Plan:**

 It is, however, significant to note that the receptivity of the transfer plans in the

Foreign Office was not simply the product of British wartime Germanophobia. Nor

was the planning of the transfer confined to the realm of Czechoslovak war aims.

British academic support for population transfer is evident within the work of a non-

government body, the Foreign Research and Press Service. The FRPS was established

in August of 1939 under the directorship of British historian, Arnold Toynbee.

Attached to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the FRPS set out to research

and develop policy for post-war reconstruction. The stated aim of the FRPS was to

"tell policy-makers not only why the past had broken down, but also how to establish

a solid post-war peace."[35] The FRPS assembled a body of experts on central and

eastern Europe to provide Whitehall with foreign news clippings and research on the

historical-political background of the countries concerned. The role of the

professional expert was elevated once more to inform the decision-making elite with

facts from the past. Seton-Watson himself was called back to duty and began work in

the FRPS on September 9.[36] In 1943, after a series of protracted discussions, the

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[35] Robert H. Keyserlingk, "Arnold Toynbee's Foreign Research and Press Service, 1939-1943 and its Post-War Plans for South East Europe," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21, no. 4 (October 1986): 539.
[36] Jan Rychlik, Thomas D. Marzik, Miroslav Bielik, eds., *R.W. Seton-Watson and His Relations with the Czechs and Slovaks: Documents 1906-1951* (Prague: Ustav T.G. Masaryka, 1995), 49.

FRPS was brought into the government to become the Foreign Office Research

Department (FORD). Governmental status provided the experts with insider

knowledge of wartime developments, and greater proximity to the decision-making

elite.[37]

In May of 1940, the FRPS issued a memorandum on population transfers,

which was written by the nationality expert, John David Mabbot. The request for the

study, which came at the behest of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, reflects that

the outbreak of war produced a conviction in the failure of the League's minority

system, and the necessity of a creating a new post-war settlement of ethnically

homogenous nation-states to create European stability. It also reflects the conviction

that only a radical solution would be able to solve the nationality conflicts of eastern

and central Europe, which had proven themselves to be historically insurmountable.

Since the creation of the minority system, the ethnic minorities of the region had,

rather than subside, become an irritant in British affairs. The points of Mabbot's

memorandum reflect how the transfers in general, and those in Czechoslovakia in

particular developed in Whitehall independent of Beneš's own demands for a

population transfer.[38]

Under the rubric "General Considerations," the memorandum asserted that

minority problems did not alone cause the war, but they were and could be a

"disturber of peace."[39] Mabbot conceded that in regards to Czechoslovakia and

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[37] Keyserlingk, "Arnold Toynbee's Foreign Research," 540.

[38] John David Mabbot, "Transfer of Minorities Memoranda" (Great Britain: Royal Institute of International Relations, 1940) in "Memorandum of the British Royal Institute of International Relations on the Transfer of National Minorities" ed. Jan Rychlík, *Cesk. Cas. Hist.* 91 no. 4 (1993): 612-631.

[39] Mabbot, "Transfer of Minorities Memoranda," 615.

Poland, the transfers "will be necessary in any case."[40] He couched the necessity of

the transfer is in a convoluted moral justification that "No movement of Germans

after the war is likely to approach in its injustice and inhumanity the German

treatment of Poles and Czechs."[41] He expressed a sentiment of *quid pro quo,* and

consequently, ascribed the transferees with collective guilt. Despite the

"inconvenience" which the transferees would undergo, "this consideration is

weakened" on account of their behavior, for they are "in any degree responsible for

the situation."[42] It is significant to note that Mabbot's support for collective

punishment was presented at the same time that British internment began. Mabbot

censured the ethnic German population of central and eastern Europe, and attributed

the outbreak of war to their incongruous national existence in the region.

Mabbot identified the drawbacks of the transfers, which included the

"difficulty of determining nationality" and the misrepresentative nature of census

data: "Census figures are usually classified by language, but language is not a safe

guide to national feeling."[43] He concluded the section with the reflection that

"forcible assimilation has never yet succeeded in stamping out national characteristics

and national feeling."[44] While Mabbot acknowledged the drawbacks of the transfer,

he conversely affirmed their seeming inevitability. In specific regards to

Czechoslovakia, Mabbot posited that a transfer "would only complete and regularize

a movement which will occur anyhow."[45] According to expert opinion, a mass exodus

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[40] Mabbot, "Transfer of Minorities Memoranda," 616.
[41] Ibid., 616.
[42] Ibid., 616.
[43] Ibid., 617.
[44] Ibid., 617.
[45] Ibid., 620.

of Germans would leave on their own accord in a flight from inevitable revenge. Due

to the indefensibility of the state's post-Munich frontiers, the memorandum advised

that Czechoslovakia will not only demand, but "ought to receive" her former

territory.[46] In apparently contradictory terms, Mabbot described the transfer as

"inadvisable" and a "permanent wound to German 'pride and honour,'" and, at the

same time, a "doubtful benefit to Czechoslovakia."[47] The memorandum accurately

portrayed the complexity of the situation by highlighting the inadvisability and

injustice of the transfer, alongside its perceived inevitability and equal, if not greater

role in meting out justice.

Mabbot identified that the argument for the viability of a population transfer

was precedent in the Greco-Turkish Transfer of 1924, in which an exchange of

populations was mandated in Lausanne Conference of Near Eastern Affairs (1922-

1923).[48] Taken within its context, when the conference decided to sanction the

population exchange, the decision was legitimated by its supposed role as

"complimentary," and not antithetical of minority protection.[49] Mabbot's memoranda

subsequently conveys that the German population transfer was not simply a product

of a *fait accompli* of wartime developments, but the transfer plans developed

independently in Whitehall as a possible post-war settlement for central and eastern

Europe's nationality conflicts. Mabbot's opinions reaffirm the conviction that

European peace and stability was predicated on the establishment of nation-states.

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[46] Mabbot, "Transfer of Minorities Memoranda," 620.
[47] Ibid., 620.
[48] Ibid., 614.
[49] Catriona Drew, "Population Transfer: The Untold Story of Self-Determination" (Paper prepared for the Global Fellows Forum, New York, NY, October 4, 2006): 5, http://www.nyulawglobal.org/fellowsscholars/globalfellowsforumfall2006.htm (accessed April 10, 2008).

While the external events of war would subsequently precipitate the official sanction of the population transfer, the transfer, as a solution to nationality conflicts, was not antithetical to the British vision of a new European order. Contrary to the last war, the transfers would create real and not nominal nation-states.

**The Population Transfer in Parliamentary Debates:**

When Mabbot first produced the memoranda in May 1940, the population transfer was yet an academic discussion. By 1944, however, as parliamentary debates convey, the transfers had entered discussions throughout Whitehall and Westminster. The parliamentary debates represent a limited yet direct expression of personal sentiments towards minority, nationality and transfer concerns. While by no means authoritative, these personal statements may be abstracted to present a brief assessment of contemporary views, ideas and convictions regarding the German transfers, and therefore may help grasp the mood of the time.

In a House of Lords debate of March 1944, the Earl of Mansfield appealed to the HMG and Allied governments to redraw the map of Europe as homogenous nation-states, so that the "members of such minorities [which are] likely to be a future menace to the peace of Europe shall be compulsorily transferred to the land of their racial origin."[50] The Earl conveyed his conviction in collective punishing the minorities, who he portrayed as incongruous and disruptive elements because they were outside of their "racial origin." According to his logic, the Bohemian Germans would be brought *home* to the Reich. Thereafter, the Earl indicted all German-

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[50] FO 371/39091 C 3184/220/18 Earl of Mansfield, House of Lords Debates, March 8, 1944.

speaking enclaves as potentially dangerous and radical, and described them as the "last people who deserve any consideration."[51] But the Earl's callous indictment is challenged by appeals, which invoked concern over the humanitarian crisis that anticipated to arise with the conclusion of the war. Population transfers would only frustrate a grave situation, whose first and foremost concern will not be "whether or not a man belongs to this or that racial group in such and such an enclave of Europe, but whether he is starving and how he can be kept alive."[52] Couched in practicality and morality, the humanitarian appeal of Lord Strabolgi, sought to contain wartime Germanophobia before it dictated post-war plans for peace. He reminded his fellow peers that the enemy was the Nazi machine, and not the German people.

Lord Strabolgi also challenged the Earl of Mansfield to consider the applicability and logic of the transfer solution if it were applied to "one of the sore spots of Europe…Northern Ireland. What if it were suggested as a solution of the difficulties in Ireland that the whole of the Protestants in the Six Counties should be shipped back to the countries of their racial origin, back to Scotland and England?"[53] Lord Strabolgi thus related the transfer in familiar terms to drive home the Earl's erroneous logic. The purported logic, which posited that the German enclaves would find themselves accepted and at home in Germany because it was their "racial origin," was fallacious.

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[51] FO 371/39091 C 3184/220/18 Earl of Mansfield, House of Lords Debates, March 8, 1944.

[52] FO 371/39091 C 3184/220/18 Lord Strabolgi, House of Lords Debates, March 8, 1944.

[53] FO 371/39091 C 3184/220/18 Lord Strabolgi, House of Lords Debates, March 8, 1944.

In a different House of Lords debate, the presence of ethnic minorities was described as an impediment to peace. The speaker, Lord Jowitt, attempted to legitimate the forthcoming transfer:

> I do [not] think we should…ask these people to risk the very experiment which proved so disastrous in the past, and therefore, I believe, not on the ground of punishment, but on the ground of future peace, that future peace is best secured by removing the German population, which has proved that it is not digestible or assimilable, back from those countries to Germany.[54]

In describing the last post-war settlement as an "experiment," Lord Jowitt construed the German presence in Czechoslovakia to be an unnatural and untenable construct. The natural recourse was, therefore, their removal "back to Germany." Lord Jowitt assumed that the since the Germans of Czechoslovakia were derived from the same "racial origin" of the Reich Germans, they would be "digestible" or "assimilable" within Germany. He surmised that the League's minority system failed, not because of defective machinery or discriminatory practices, but because the Germans failed to cooperate. Czechoslovakia "really tried to give its German minority population a fair and reasonable chance of assimilation."[55] In the House of Commons nine months later, the speaker Mr. McNeil, acknowledged the situation's "misery and great suffering," but at the same time upheld a conviction in the collective guilt of the German nation as a whole: "They are Germans and either through their rulers or themselves they visited on Poles, Czechs, Russians, and on Christians, as well as Jews, monstrous cruelties."[56] These debates reveal that the transfers were conceived

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[54] FO 371/55391 C 1286/12/18 Lord Jowitt, House of Lords Debates, January 30, 1945

[55] FO 371/55391 C 1286/12/18 Lord Jowitt, House of Lords Debates, January 30, 1945

[56] FO 371/46813 RC 6935/95/18 Mr. McNeil, House of Commons Debate, October 10, 1945.

through a strictly ethnic lens and that by 1945, the ethnic Germans of central and eastern Europe had lost the right to call anyplace outside of Germany their home.

The official and final decision to sanction the transfer reflects the parallel hesitancy and perceived necessity that Mabbot's memorandum and the debates in Westminster evinced. In a report on *Transfer of Populations*, three justifications were given for the transfers: "They can be justified solely on grounds of (a) security (b) saving transferees from maltreatment if they remain (c) possibility that in the long run a Europe composed of homogenous States would work more harmoniously."[57] As the war neared its end, arguments against a continued German presence in central and eastern Europe resonated throughout Whitehall, Westminster, and academic circles.

In minutes from November of 1945, Sir J. M. Troutbeck, the former First Secretary at Prague, expressed with casual concern, sympathy towards Sudeten Germans Social Democrat's who had not only been handed a "raw deal," but had no recourse to appeal against the transfers, because the British government was "not in a position to do anything about it."[58] While Jaksch appealed for aid from a British led inter-allied agency, intervention at this time would in Troutbeck's mind cause "much heat…but nothing much else," and had already been discounted "as paying too much attention to the feelings and interests of the Germans."[59] By 1945, the real cause of the war had been obscured by nationality. On a collective and individual level, the

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[57] FO 371/39091 C 3216/220/18 Draft letter for circulation to the members of the Committee on Transfer of German Populations, March 11, 1944

[58] FO 371/46901 C 9669/1429/18 Troutbeck minutes to Jaksch Report, November 24, 1945

[59] FO 371/46901 C 9669/1429/18 Troutbeck minutes to Jaksch Report, November 24, 1945

good democrat, the good mother, the good child, and the good Czechoslovak German citizen were obscured by the indiscriminating image of the bad German.

**The Potsdam Conference and the Population "Transfer:"**

On July 17, 1945, Churchill, Truman and Stalin met at Potsdam to discuss the terms of the peace and the post-war administration of Germany.[60] The Potsdam Accords, which were signed on August 2, stipulated the first official sanction of the population transfer. Article Twelve, the "Orderly Transfer of German Populations," delineated that the transfers were to be "effected in an orderly and humane manner" and administered by the "Control Council in Germany;" the third point sought to stop the "wild expulsions," which had been occurring since the Soviet liberation in May. It requested that the Czechoslovak, Polish and Hungarian governments "suspend further expulsions pending an examination."[61] Without concerted Allied organization and relief, this unregulated phase produced much human misery, driving approximately 660,000 Germans from their homes.[62] While the death toll is disputed, the Czech-German Historical Commission estimated that between 19,000 and 30,000 died from human retribution. Higher estimates, the greatest at 272,000, may reflect German

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[60] Halfway through the Conference, the results from the recent British General Election announced Clement Attlee's victory for the premiership. While the new Labour government introduced radical post-war domestic reforms, the transfer of power from Churchill to the new Labour premier did not affect international policy. At Churchill's request, Attlee had been present at the Conference from its beginnings.

[61] The Berlin (Potsdam) Conference: July 17-August 2, 1945, "Article Twelve: Orderly Transfer of German Population" [A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1941-49] (Washington, DC : Government Printing Office, 1950), The Avalon Project, available from http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/decade/decade17.htm; Internet; accessed April 7, 2008.

[62] Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005),, 34.

deaths from "disease, exhaustion, and other unnatural causes."[63] The German-speaking population of Czechoslovakia, its men, women and children, were forced from their homes carrying only a few personal possessions, and driven westward into Germany. The able-bodied were sent to communist labor camps in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Nazi-esque methods were instituted, as civil liberties were curtailed, cattle cars used, and identification armbands invoked.

In the decade following the expulsion, the excesses of rape, theft, and violence were well-documented in oral accounts, compiled by expellee organizations in West Germany.[64] While these compilations reflect a distinct political lobby, contemporary historiography has brought the expulsions within a new critical discourse, which seeks to leave behind the polemics. Recent historical research has, as well, reassessed the purported spontaneity of the violence. The impetus behind the expulsions was not solely derived from a natural reaction against six years of German oppression, or purely the product of Red Army excesses. While five years of Nazi occupation had inspired anti-German sentiments in the Czech population, civilian violence against the German population, which was evident in the Prague Uprising of May, was instigated and channeled through a concerted campaign of agitation. In a broadcast to the home-resistance on July 14, 1944, Beneš gave the leaders at home with the "full power of attorney to take the expulsion into their own hands until the Czech

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[63] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 34.

[64] Theodor Scheider, ed, *Documentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa*, 5 vols, and 3 supps (Bonn: Bundesministerium fur Vertreibene Fluchtlinge und Kriegssachgeschadigt, 1953-1963) and Dr. Wilhelm K. Turnwald, *Documents on the Expulsion of the Sudeten Germans,* trans. Gerda Johannsen (Munich: University Press, Dr. C. Wolf and Sohn, 1953).

government was reestablished in Prague."[65] As the Soviet troops neared Prague, home-resistance groups, each vying for power in the post-war state, called upon the Czech people to invoke national retribution against the Germans.

The Nazi's policies in the Protectorate drew from identity politics that subjugated the Czech nation under the German presence in the Bohemian lands. Antagonism was, therefore, present within the population, and the expulsions underwrote a "national cleansing" campaign that was implemented by the multi-party government and largely carried out by the Prague military command. A pamphlet issued on June 5 directed, "The Germans have remained our irreconcilable enemies. Do not cease to hate the Germans…Behave towards the Germans like a victor...Be harsh to the Germans…German women and the Hitler Youth also bear the blame of crimes of the Germans."[66] Violence was thus channeled through official mandate, and national retribution coalesced with revolutionary change in Czechoslovakia.

As the summer progressed, the expulsion came under greater administrative control. Throughout the summer, President Beneš began to issue presidential decrees to consolidate the state's power. A significant degree established the District National Committees and three levels of a court system: a National Court, regional People's Courts, and local tribunals to mete out so-called "justice" to the German nation. The People's Courts played a significant role in the expulsions in providing an authoritative voice on nationality. The Courts "looked at associational and party membership, census responses, language usage, Nazi citizenship, behavior during the occupation, and supposed heritage, among other things, to mark nationality on

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[65] Vardy, *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*, 264.
[66] Beneš and Kural eds., *Facing History,* 217.

individuals whose nationality was still in question."[67] The Courts tried more than 32,000 alleged war criminals, of which 135,000 were indicted for "offenses against national honor."[68] Theses courts sustained the "spontaneity" of the expulsion, which occurred alongside a resettlement process urged by the National Committees. The Committees, largely under communist influence, urged Czechs to settle in the borderlands and displace the Germans from their homes.

**The "Objective Criteria" for the Transfers**

Following the appeal from Potsdam, the Czechoslovak National Council largely desisted from further unregulated expulsions. The organized transfers started in January 1946, and over the next two years, approximately 2.26 million Germans were transferred from Czechoslovakia. But the "orderly and humane" transfer called attention to the unique problem of nationality. On August 3, Beneš issued the Presidential Decree (no. 33), "Adjusting the Czechoslovak Citizenship of German or Magyar Race." The decree denied the Bohemian Germans, who had acquired Reich citizenship within the Protectorate, the requisition of Czechoslovak citizenship. In effect, the presidential decree legalized Hitler's own nationality and citizenship laws. Technically, the decree stipulated that Germans with proof of wartime loyalty, active resistance, or compulsory registration" could reacquire Czech citizenship.[69] But this technicality was rarely applied. Consequently, the Germans became illegal aliens

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[67] Chad Bryant, "Either German or Czech: Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1946," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 4 (Winter, 2002): 687

[68] Frommer, *National Cleansing,* 2.

[69] FO 371/47154 N 16747/4440/12 Dr. Cisar (Czechoslovak Embassy) to Mr. Lambert, December 3, 1945, attached Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic, dated August 2, 1945, adjusting the Czechoslovak Citizenship of Persons of German or Magyar Race.

within their own ancestral home, and the Czech government had, therefore, the legal

right to remove them. Confronted with the technical problem of differentiating

Czechs from Germans, Beneš resorted to the only existing objective criteria: Hitler's

own documentation of Bohemia's national composition.

The Nazi nationality laws sought to identify, according to their own terms, a

categorical difference between the Czechs and Germans of the Bohemian lands. The

nationality law of 1939 differentiated between Germans as Reich citizens within the

*Volkgemeinschaft*, and Czechs as nationals of the state, *Staatsangehörige*. Due to the

difficult task at hand, the law was not compulsory, nor did it define "Germanness." It

did, however, provide recourse for any Czechoslovak citizen to register as a citizen of

the Reich and therefore acquire a German nationality. The law was not, however,

strictly enforced, thus providing Bohemian Germans with recourse to "opt out of the

legally defined *Volksgemeinschaft* by passively avoiding registration."[70] When the

Protectorate first formed, the uncertainty of the future and the disadvantages of the

present made Reich citizenship and German nationality appear undesirable and

burdensome for the Bohemian Germans. Citizenship imposed work details, mandated

conscription and hurt the German economy in the borderlands; the Czech

underground resistance had encouraged the Czechs to "buy Czech" and avoid

German businesses.[71]

Within two years, however, as the Reich consolidated its hold on the

Protectorate, German citizenship and nationality began to look more enticing and

opportune. As a result, German registration in the Protectorate surged: "On March 1

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[70] Bryant, "Either German or Czech," 688
[71] Ibid., 688-689.

the Reich Protector's office counted 189,000 registered Germans in the Protectorate. By 1 October 1940 that number had jumped to 245,000."[72] Economic advantages, work promotions, larger rations, and, no less, the fear of persecution impelled many *Staatsangehörige* to apply for Reich citizenship. The surge did not, however, go unnoticed by the Nazi leadership, which began to realize that the indeterminate nature of the nationality laws had allowed undesirable elements to infiltrate into the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Upon his appointment as Reichs-Protector, Heydrich radicalized the *Germanization* campaign: racial "experts" were appointed to differentiate Germans from the Czechs, and to identify latent and suppressed "Germanness" within members of the Czech population. In early 1942, racial screening and identification were enacted for all Czechs over the age of eight. At the same time, problems of objectivity and consensus obstructed the Nazi leadership from explicitly defining "Germanness." Arbitrary criteria like blood, spirit, speech, or physiognomy simply reiterated the elusive and constructed nature of national identity.

Despite the subjectivity of their own criteria, the Nazi regime imposed national identities and categorized the people of Bohemia into Reich citizens and state nationals. Hitler had, therefore, done the dirty work for Beneš and the Allied Control Commission, who subsequently relied on his categories to inform their own plans for the post-war population transfer. The British were aware of Beneš's plans to use Hitler's nationality records to execute the population transfers as early as May of 1944.[73] Evidence of this is documented in a report by the British Inter-Departmental

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[72] Bryant, "Either German or Czech," 689.
[73] FO 371/39092 C 6110/220/18 Memorandum for distribution in the Central Department, of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Transfer of German Populations, May 9, 1944.

Committee on the Transfer of German Populations. The Committee accepted these

plans in the acknowledgement that no other objective criteria existed:

> In Eastern Germany and the Sudetenland the religious criterion would be
> valueless. But to select according to race or language would involve the
> production of evidence, which might well not be available, and would,
> moreover, present the well-known difficulties of bilingualism, dialects, mixed
> marriages, recent Germanization under pressure and non-German family
> names. The Committee has reached the conclusion that the difficulties of
> selecting by any objective criterion are so great as probably to be beyond the
> powers of any international authority, and that the most hopeful solution is
> that proposed by Dr. Beneš. He demands that all Germans in Czechoslovakia
> who possess German nationality under German law should in principle be
> considered German citizens, but that the Czechoslovak Government would
> reserve the right to state which Germans could obtain or preserve
> Czechoslovak citizenship. There would be a peculiar justice in applying this
> principle to the Sudeten Germans.[74]

While the Committee appeared to appreciate the "well-known difficulties," it

nonetheless expressed a conviction in the unity of the "Sudeten Germans" as a

distinguishable national group, and accepted Hitler's own subjectively derived criteria

as a "peculiar justice." The passage from the report expressed a sentiment of *quid pro*

*quo*, which situated the predictable injustice of the "transfer" against the undeniable

and acute injustice of the Nazi regime. The Germans of Bohemia were consequently

indicted with collective guilt for the atrocities of the Nazi regime to validate the

legitimacy of the transfer. The acceptance of Beneš's demands provided a convenient

solution for the problem of defining nationality, which was inherently subjective and

personal.

Due to the fluidity of identity that existed beneath the top-down constructs

created by the Nazi regime, the solution was not as convenient as it appeared on

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[74] FO 371/39092 C 6110/220/18 Memorandum for distribution in the Central
Department, of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Transfer of German Populations,
May 9, 1944.

paper. Recent historical research has identified that, even at the end of the war, many of Czechoslovakia's citizens had maintained indeterminate ties to either national group, and alternated between these identities according to the situation.[75] When Czechoslovakia was founded, thousands of "supposed Germans identified themselves as Czechs," and, twenty years later, "an estimated three hundred thousand so-called Czechs…registered as Germans."[76] As the assessment of Nazi nationality laws conveys, behind the Nazi's categories were unwilling Germans, self-aggrandizing Czechs, self-aggrandizing Germans, and amphibians, individuals of indeterminate identity. Benjamin Frommer, a historian of east-central Europe acknowledges that "Thanks to the malleability of national identity and the indiscriminate nature of the violence, many of the Germans may once have been live Czechs."[77] And, perhaps the most striking incongruity in the episode reflects the double-edged sword dealt to the Bohemians of the Jewish-German extraction. For many of Czechoslovakia's Jews, deportation occurred not once, but twice.

The inevitable injustice of the transfer is derived, in its most technical application, from the inherent subjectivity of nationality. Within Czechoslovakia, the two national communities were comprised of elements which both defined and obstructed the characterizations of Czech and German. The Nazi regime in the Protectorate had, for the first time in Bohemian history, constructed and distributed national identities onto the people of the historic Crown lands. National identity, while a construct created in the nineteenth century, ceased to be a personal choice in the twentieth. Perhaps the most idiosyncratic legacy of Nazism in the Bohemian lands

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[75] Bryant, "Either German or Czech," 688.
[76] Ibid., 688.
[77] Frommer, *National Cleansing,* 34.

is, therefore, the process through which national identity became perceivably synonymous with citizenship. While the formation of Czechoslovakia began as a project of civic identification, the expulsion encouraged this civic identity to become defined by a Czech ethnic identity and heritage. For the first time in Bohemian history, the identity of the lands had become decidedly Czech.

**CONCLUSION:**

In the Czech Republic's census of 2001, 90.5 percent of society identified themselves as Czech and only .4 percent of the population identified themselves as German. In the 1921 census, on the other hand, Germans comprised 30.6 percent of the population.[78] The process through which Czech society became homogenized commenced in the nineteenth century as Czech and British rhetorical ostracism rescinded the right of Bohemia's Germans to call the lands their home.

As this thesis has shown, the modern Czechoslovak state materialized out of a unique relationship with Great Britain's academic and policy communities. Superficially, one may look at the development of the state as a process of directed political decision-making. But this strictly policy-oriented approach cloaks an underlying narrative of how Czechoslovak identity politics came to resonate within British perceptions of the state. This thesis has thus sought to convey the degree to which the constructs of German and Czech identity in the Bohemian lands, in conjunction with the myth of long-standing antagonism, framed the lens through which Czechoslovak policy developed in the British foreign office.

The legacy of the nineteenth century in this narrative conveys how a new mode of seeing developed, which posed linguistic communities as ethnic groups, with distinct national histories and legitimate aspirations to statehood. Through the rhetoric of ethno-linguistic differentiation, nationalized and politicized constructs of Czech and German emerged. These constructs subsequently informed how British

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[78] Czech Statistical Office, "Population by Nationality: as Measured by 1921–2001 Censuses," under "Czech Demographic Handbook 2006," http://www.czso.cz/csu/2006edicniplan.nsf/engp/4032-06 (accessed March 7, 2008).

academics and politicians alike viewed the Bohemian lands throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Beneath these constructs, however, there existed fluid personal sentiments, which did not necessarily derive an identity from the constructed linguistic community.

As was shown in this thesis, during World War One the British academic and political elite came to appreciate the Czech cause as a nation-building project, and subsequently viewed the Czechs as a state-making nation under which the other nationalities would assimilate—civic assimilation at least, ethnic assimilation at most. Assimilation in general was viewed as the means through which an "inferior and more backward portion of the human race" may be absorbed to the advantage of both.[79] With sympathetic British academics wedded to the Czech cause, and complimented by war-induced Germanophobia, the Czech émigrés won over the right to become the state-making nation, which was, one might contest, the equally rightful home of their German-speaking brethren.

But the interwar period revealed a marked shift in Britain's appreciation of the Czechoslovak state. As expectations of German assimilation were perceivably not met, the people of Bohemia became, from an outsider's perspective, further polarized in the image of national conflict. This time, however, the narrative of antagonism conveyed a narrative of Czech oppression and German victimhood. Subsequently, the British became involved in 1938 to arbitrate directly between the Czechoslovak state and the SdP to mitigate the conflict. When Hitler entered the discussions, the

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[79] John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861; repr., New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004): 314. http://books.google.com/books?id=S2Mz1s40Hg0C&client=firefox-a (accessed April 7, 2008).

German-speaking presence in Bohemia was consequently portrayed as unnatural and contrary to the liberal democratic creed of self-determination. The representation of long-standing conflict between the Czechs and Germans of Bohemia informed Britain's approach to the nationality problems as historically and thereby contemporaneously incommensurable.

Five years before the outbreak of war, Bruce Lockhart expressed, "Could anyone reconcile this conglomeration of peoples who had hated one another for centuries? Could there be any settlement in Central Europe without war, or, indeed, a succession of wars?"[80] Within British professional and political circles, the aesthetics of distinction in the Bohemian lands played a consistent and persistent role in the formation of British opinion and policy towards Czechoslovakia. From their incorporation as a minority, to the territorial transfer, and finally to the population "transfer," the Germans of Bohemia were construed and perceived as an outside group. In 1945, they physically became the "Other" as aliens, and were stripped of their Czechoslovak citizenship and forced from their own homeland. In little under a century, Palacký's revisionism of Bohemian history into a community of conflict between Czechs and Germans had become a reality. While the path from St. Germain to Munich to Potsdam was by no means a straightforward trajectory, its twists and turns reflect the process through which a Czech identity was formed, a German Bohemian identity was subsumed, and the overlooked Bohemian identity was eclipsed. What this process subsequently conveys, is how a faraway people in a faraway country came to be perceived, and how, in a self-fulfilling prophecy, this perception grew into tangible form.

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[80] Bruce Lockhart, *Retreat from Glory* (New York, G.P Putnam's Sons, 1934), 104.

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[81] Czechoslovak affairs were transferred out of the Central Department and placed into the Northern Department of the Foreign Office in 1945.

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