

Austrians, Czechs, and Sudeten Germans as a Community of Conflict in the Twentieth Century

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In a speech at the University of Vienna on March 15, 1993, the Czech President, the playwright Václav Havel, lamented the fact that the citizens of Austria and the Czech Republic, despite the “intrinsic affinity” of their views, their traditions, and their destiny, “had long lived rather alongside each other than really with each other.” During the entire twentieth century, their relations had “sometimes [exhibited] more difficulties, bitterness, suspicions or envy than real creative co-operation.” In the understandable euphoria over the newly won independence and the creation of a democratic order after 1918, Austria became for the Czechs “a synonym for the past and the foreign rule that had been overthrown,” while many Austrians regarded the Czechs “as having destroyed a unique central European empire.” Twenty years later, “many of our German-speaking citizens” had taken Hitler’s side and contributed “to our subjugation,” “which deepened the wound in our relations.” After 1945, although Czechoslovakia belonged to the “victorious powers,” it lost its freedom, while occupied Austria won its freedom and was able to build up a modern democracy. For decades, it was widely believed in Prague that “we could have been as well off as Austria.”¹

“Austrians” and „Czechs” have traditionally been closely bound, yet also divided. This was true for the nearly 400-year long joint history in the Habsburg Monarchy. In the fall of 1918, the two republican successor states—Austria and Czechoslovakia—went in different political and ideological directions despite their many common interests in economic, social, and cultural matters. The “Sudeten Germans,” who became a minority in Czechoslovakia after 1918, constituted one divisive element for both Vienna and Prague. Yet the differences between majority and minority (including the Munich agreement, the German protectorate, the expulsions after 1945, etc.) do not provide a sufficient explanation for why the Sudeten German question again became a foreign-policy problem between Austria and the Czech Republic after 1997. In

the following contribution, an effort will be made to resolve this problem using the concept of an Austrian-Czech-Sudeten German “community of conflict.”

1) The Current Political Conflict

The second half of the 1990s witnessed a sudden increase in the interest of the Austrian parties and media in the “Beneš Decrees.” This followed the “Joint Declaration” of January 21, 1997 by the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Czech Republic in which the German side “assumed responsibility for Germany’s role in the historical developments that led to the Munich Agreement of 1938, the flight and expulsion of persons from Czechoslovak border areas, as well as the destruction and occupation of the Czechoslovak Republic.” The German side further expressed regret for “the suffering and injustice done to the Czech people through National Socialist offences and by Germans.” The German side also admitted “that the National Socialist policy of violence toward the Czech people had prepared the way for the flight, expulsion, and forced evacuation after the end of the war.” At the same time, the Czech side regretted “that as a consequence of the expulsion, as well as the forced evacuation of Sudeten Germans out of Czechoslovakia after the war, suffering and injustice had been inflicted on innocent people, also in view of the collective character of the accusations. It regretted especially the excesses that stood in contradiction to basic principles and to the legal norms in force at that time, and further regretted that the law no. 115 from May 8, 1946 made it impossible to regard these excesses as illegal.”²

In his criticism of this “Declaration,” the specialist in international law, Otto Kimminich, pointed out 1) that the resolution of the Council of the League of Nations from January 10, 1939

also recognized Germans (mostly German Jews, Social Democrats, and Communists) as refugees from the “Sudetenland;” 2) that on the basis of the German-Czechoslovak Citizenship Treaty of November 20, 1938 the Sudeten Germans mostly became foreign citizens; 3) that international law prohibits the confiscation of foreign property without compensation; and 4) that the Hungarian Foreign Minister János Gyöngyösi successfully protested at the beginning of 1947 against the insertion into the Paris Peace Treaty, as demanded by Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, of an article justifying expulsion and forced evacuation.³

The Austrian side attributed little importance to these questions for more than 50 years. They were regarded as a German-Czech matter, although the Nazi oppression of the Czechs in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the Beneš Decrees, as well as the expulsion and forced evacuation of the Sudeten Germans naturally also affected Austrian-Czech relations. Beginning in 1998, the Beneš Decrees became an issue of public interest in Austria. This resulted, on the one hand, from the new strategy of the Sudeten German organization in Germany and the Freedom Party in Austria and was connected, on the other hand, to the discussion about the expansion of the European Community into east central Europe. In the fall of 1998, the Upper Austrian government passed a resolution in which it requested the Austrian federal government “to conduct negotiations with the Czech government concerning the repeal of the so-called Beneš Decrees, which were felt to be unjust.” In the spring of 1999, after similar resolutions in a series of Austrian diets, the lower house of the Austrian parliament followed with an equivalent resolution. Because of these manifestations of opinion, the subject was included in the program adopted in February 2000 by the new coalition government of the conservative People’s Party and the Freedom Party. In part as a result of the successful conclusion of negotiations by Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel with the US government concerning large restitution payments to

former forced labourers and surviving Jewish victims of National Socialism—in each case about 500 million dollars—Austrian public pressure increased for the compensation of its “own victims” of the crimes of the “other side.”⁴

At the very latest, after the much-publicized interview in *Profil* of the Czech Prime Minister Miloš Zeman concerning the Austrian referendum against Temelín, the Czech atomic power station located some fifty miles from the Austrian border, the past caught up with the present. Zeman referred to the Sudeten Germans as “Hitler’s fifth column” that had been out “to destroy Czechoslovakia as the only island of democracy in central Europe.” He asserted that “many of them had committed treason,” which according to the law at that time was punishable by death.⁵ The former advisor on German affairs to President Havel, Pavel Tigrid, called Zeman’s attacks a “diplomatic lapse as big as the Schneekoppe (Sněžka).” In the newspaper *Mladá fronta dnes*, he wrote that it was time for the Czechs to face up to the fact that the Czechoslovak government of Beneš had committed “one of the most extensive ethnic cleansings of modern European history.” Based on the “unacceptable [notion of] collective guilt,” three million people had been forcibly expelled from the country in cattle cars. Their property had been confiscated without compensation and their citizenship had been annulled. In the first phase of the so-called “evacuation,” the Czechs had committed “cruelties, acts of violence, and murders comparable to what the Nazis had done.”⁶

Austrian and German politicians avoided protesting in such language against Zeman’s remarks, but they did intimate that the admission of the Czech Republic (and Slovakia) to the European Community would depend on the repeal of the Beneš Decrees. The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán took the same standpoint: “This is a European issue and I am convinced

that once central Europeans join the Union these legal leftovers from a bad period in history will wither and fall to dust, as did the systems that created them.”⁷

Beginning in February 2002, national and international polemics concerning the Beneš Decrees increased yet again in connection with the campaign underway for elections to the Czech parliament on June 14-15, 2002. The German-Czech commission of historians censured the “misuse of historical arguments in current political disputes,” but failed to make a clear statement about the problems stemming from the past. The “Association of Historians of the Czech Republic” (*Sdružení historiků České republiky*) issued a rather partisan statement called “Historians opposed to the Rape of History.” Containing 15 points, it drew problematic parallels between the Habsburg Monarchy and the first Czechoslovak Republic and defended the Beneš Decrees as “instruments in the fight against Nazism and for denazification” as well as “in the service of the renewal of the democratic rule of law on the territory of Czechoslovakia.”⁸

On April 24, 2002, the Czech parliament passed a resolution stating that

“1) the Czechoslovak legislation from the years 1940-45, including the decrees of the president of the republic, came into existence, as was the case in other European countries, as a result of the war and the defeat of National Socialism; 2) the postwar legislation and the decrees of the president of the republic were passed and implemented in the period after their enactment and today no new legal situation on their basis can come into existence; 3) legal and property relationships created by them are inviolable and unchangeable.”

With a call to “stop nationalism,” four hundred Czech intellectuals tried to prevent the parliamentary debate and the resolution. The “national front” of Czech politicians nevertheless saw the resolution as a reaction to the attempts of the Austrian parliament, of the “so-called Christian faction in the European parliament,” and of the Bavarian Minister-President Edmund Stoiber to call the “denazification legislation of postwar Czechoslovakia” into question.⁹

The historian Hans Lemberg, a descendent of a Prague German family and a young victim of the expulsion, rightly criticized the exclusion of political and legal questions connected

to the past from the German-Czech Declaration of 1997. He demanded that “uncomfortable truths be recognized as the truth and that the departure from the prison of historical self-justifications not be sacrificed to interests of state.” The old Federal Republic of Germany “came to terms with its own dark past” in a painful process lasting decades. Such a “historical controversy” must now move forward in the Czech Republic as well.¹⁰ One could add that the Sudeten Germans need to pass through a similar process of “historical controversy,” which could best take place in the framework of discussions regarding the German-Czech-Austrian “community of conflict.”¹¹

In mid-August 2002, just at the time that a heavy flood afflicted large parts of Upper and Lower Austria, Bohemia, and Saxony, *The Economist* asked whether “one obscure side-effect of the Second World War could threaten the enlargement of the 21st century European Union.” The Czechs were not willing to annul the Beneš Decrees partly because this would open the door for claims of restitution by Germans, “but mostly for patriotic reasons: Czechs...feel those who began an appalling war have no claim to revise its effects.” During the expulsion, a series of excesses had been committed, to be sure, against the Sudeten Germans, but the Czechs had been the victims of a brutal occupation for more than six years. That the British magazine accused Minister-President Stoiber, Federal Chancellor Schüssel, and Carinthian Governor Haider of populism in their support of Sudeten German interests provoked the political scientist George Schöpflin to the fundamental criticism:

“If we rightly condemn ethnic cleansing in Bosnia in 1992, then how can it have been acceptable in 1945? If the issue is, as you say, a matter of ‘ancient wrongs’ then why is this not applied to the Holocaust? Does a state have the right to declare a group to be no longer a part of its demos simply because it is ethnically different? Can a democratic state like the Czech Republic ever live at ease with Germany and Austria unless it comes to terms with the undemocratic acts committed in 1945?”¹²

2) Historical Conflicts regarding the Postwar Order

The Czechoslovak Republic that came into existence on Wenceslaus Square on October 28, 1918 and the Republic of “German Austria” proclaimed at the parliament in Vienna on November 12, 1918 faced each other from the beginning with mostly with antagonism and distrust. On October 31, 1918, the future Czechoslovak President Tomáš G. Masaryk enjoined his most important fellow protagonist for independence in the emigration, the later Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš, to “[b]e very careful – no weakness, but rather uncompromisingly demand full independence from the Habsburgs...Our Germans will be downcast when Germany surrenders; insist on the historical-legal unity [of Bohemia]...It is more just to subjugate 3 million [Germans] than that 10 million [Czechs and Slovaks] be subjugated.”¹³

One day earlier, on October 30, 1918, the provisional national assembly in Vienna had appealed to President Woodrow Wilson in the following terms:

“We are convinced, Mr. President, that you will reject, after careful consideration and in accordance with your stated principles, the subjugation of 3 ½ million Germans against their will by the Czech state that would compel them to a desperate fight against foreign rule. The era of democracy in central Europe cannot begin with the subjugation of 3 ½ million people. Lasting peace cannot be based on the creation of German irredentists in the new Czechoslovak state whose calls for help to Berlin and Vienna would endanger the peace in Europe...”¹⁴

It was already clear at the beginning of November 1918 that the control of sugar and coal production gave the government in Prague an advantage vis-à-vis both the newly formed German-Bohemian provinces of Deutschböhmen, Sudetenland, Böhmerwaldgau, and Südmähren and the government in Vienna. The Social Democratic State Chancellor Karl Renner, a native of southern Moravia, wanted to express his opposition to “the surrender of such important parts of German territory to Czech foreign rule and the sacrifice of the right of self-determination of our nation.” The State Secretary Otto Bauer, also a Social Democrat, felt compelled to warn Prague

to avoid a policy of spite and hostility, as the German nation with its 70 million people would always surround Czech territory on the north, west, and south (sic!). However, the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Karel Kramář, head of the Czech National Democrats, characterized the issue as settled for both him and the Entente at the start of 1919: German Bohemia was “an unconditional part of the historical kingdom of Bohemia and the Sudetenland a part of the historical margravate of Moravia.” He otherwise urged the Viennese government to come to terms with its role as a vanquished power and to stop “living as a *rentier* off the work of others.”¹⁵

In the winter of 1918/19, the “Sudeten Germans,” as all Germans in Czechoslovakia for the first time came to be known, accepted the occupation of their territories by the Czech military. Through the conversion of the former Austrian-Hungarian currency (*Kronen*) by the new finance ministry in Prague, they thereby escaped the hyperinflation then beginning in Austria and, except for war loans, managed to save a large part of their property and savings. On the initiative of the Sudeten German Social Democrats, however, demonstrations in various Bohemian and Moravian cities took place on March 4, 1919, the day on which the new Austrian constituent assembly met, in favor of the right of self-determination. The Czech military and police killed 54 persons and wounded 84 others in seven cities. Neither Sudeten German nor Austrian notes of protest or memoranda produced any results. The Supreme Council in Paris was interested in weakening Germany and the Germans and thus confirmed the historical boundaries of Bohemia, Moravia, and the Silesian duchies of Jägerndorf (Krnov) and Troppau (Opava) as requested by the Czechoslovak delegation. Part of Teschen (Český Těšín, Cieszyn) was given to Poland. For strategic reasons having to do with railway lines, Austria itself lost territory to Czechoslovakia near Feldsberg (Valtice) and Gmünd (Cmunt).¹⁶

The terms of the peace treaty of Saint-Germain from September 10, 1919 satisfied neither the approximately 3.2 million Sudeten and Carpathian Germans (some 23.6% of the Czechoslovak population) nor the roughly 80,000 Viennese Czechs (of whom some 50,000 were Austrian citizens). Both Austria and Czechoslovakia had been compelled to accept provisions for the protection of minorities, which provided for instance for primary schools for minorities. But Czechoslovakia recognized no collective nationality rights for the Germans, such as had been accorded the Czechs after 1867 in Habsburg Cisleithania. Beneš and Renner nevertheless quickly concluded an agreement in Prague in January 1920 that made the provision on the language of administration, as provided for in the treaties of Saint-Germain for the protection of minorities, “a purely domestic matter” for each state. Complaints by minorities were to be submitted only through the League of Nations.¹⁷

That the Czech leadership under Masaryk and Beneš, as well as the entire Czech political class, regarded their republic as a Czechoslovak nation-state left the Germans in the uncomfortable role of “guests” whose ancestors had entered the country as “immigrants and colonists.” Neither the mass dismissal of some 33,000 German officials for linguistic reasons, whose number was augmented by German railwaymen from state-owned and private enterprises, nor the expropriation of some 40% of German large landed properties, a measure supposedly justified historically by the confiscations after 1620, did anything to reconcile the Sudeten Germans to the Czechoslovak Republic. The Viennese government tried to mediate in individual cases, but the Christian Socialist Federal Chancellor Ignaz Seipel regarded the establishment of a satisfactory relationship between the two states as “of the greatest importance” and very valuable in general for central Europe. After consultations with Seipel, Beneš indeed contributed decisively to securing a loan for Austrian financial consolidation from the League of Nations.¹⁸

Although Beneš asserted in September 1920 “that he had always been in favour of the incorporation of Austria into Germany,” he regarded political discussions between Vienna and Berlin with considerable suspicion. The issue of the so-called *Anschluss* was of great strategic importance for Prague’s foreign policy. The nervousness of the Czechoslovak foreign minister in that regard expressed itself in open threats made to the Austrian envoy in Warsaw: in case of an *Anschluss* coming about through the collapse of the Austrian government or a putsch, “he would take ruthless action such as closing the borders, expelling all Austrians, sequestering Austrian capital, and persecuting Austrians in Czechoslovakia with all means at his disposal.” The approximately 300,000 Austrians living in Czechoslovakia would become the complete responsibility of Austria.¹⁹

Following the Locarno Pact of 1925, the international situation changed to the extent that Germany guaranteed its western borders with France and Belgium, but not its eastern borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia. As a member of the Council of the League of Nations, the Weimar Republic could furthermore take up the cause of the Sudeten Germans, who in the census of 1930 numbered 3,070,938 persons (29.5% of the population) in the Bohemian lands. In 50 administrative districts and in 120 judicial districts, they held majorities and in cities such as Praha (Prag), Brno (Brünn), České Budějovice (Budweis), Jihlava (Iglau), Olomouc (Olmütz), and Ostrava (Mährisch Ostrau), they made up significant minorities. In defending Locarno in 1925, the German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann had spoken of a “correction of the eastern borders,” but had not thereby meant Czechoslovakia, not even with respect to the Czech-populated Hlučinsko (Hultschiner Ländchen) that the Germans had ceded.²⁰

In spite of intensive economic, social, and cultural contacts, the political psychology between Prague and Vienna continued to be characterized in the second half of the 1920s by irritations.

After receiving Foreign Minister Beneš in Vienna on March 4, 1926, the Christian Socialist Federal Chancellor Rudolf Ramek received praise from the other parties for the new treaty of arbitration with Czechoslovakia. His German nationalist coalition partners criticized, however, the “unified nation-state of German Austria” for having behaved too submissively to Czechoslovakia, which was characterized as a “multinational state [sic!] being torn apart by inner divisions.”²¹ The General Secretary of the Austrian foreign ministry, Franz Peter, a native of the Eger district in western Bohemia, nevertheless did not perceive a “grave risk to Germandom in Czechoslovakia,” especially in comparison with the permanent worries of the Ballhausplatz about the fate of the Germans in the South Tyrol at the hands of Fascist Italy. Peter wrote: “The Germans in Czechoslovakia are so numerous and economically so strong that with a little skill they should not only be able to maintain themselves, but also to exercise decisive influence on public life in their native land.” Federal Chancellor Ramek and Foreign Minister Stresemann both agreed that the Sudeten Germans should enter the government in Prague. Stresemann explicitly rejected, however, the idea of an official guarantee by Germany to Czechoslovakia.²²

Despite the participation of Sudeten German “activists” from the Union of Farmers (*Bund der Landwirte*) (the professor Franz Spina) and the Christian Socialist People’s Party (the jurist Robert Mayr-Harting) in the Prague government beginning in October 1926, and of a Social Democrat (Ludwig Czech) starting in December 1929, the “*Anschluss*-phobia” and the “Habsburg-complex” of the Czech parties did not go away. Even Masaryk, Beneš, and Kramář pursued a policy of “de-Austrianization” (*odrakouštění*)—despite the presence of numerous Czech officials from former Viennese ministries and many Czech general-staff officers from the old imperial and royal army²³—that at least indirectly pushed the Sudeten Germans into the arms

of the Weimar Republic. Thanks to the German section of the University of Prague (since 1920 officially the “German University”), the Technical University, the German middle schools, the German Theater, the German House, the Urania, and the newspapers *Prager Tagblatt* and *Deutsche Zeitung Bohemia*, the Prague Germans, including many German-speaking Jews, managed to preserve their special cultural position. The Germans in Brno (Brünn) secured a similar special position thanks to a German Technical University and several German middle and technical schools. Especially in cultural and scientific matters, many contacts continued to exist between Sudeten Germans and Austria.²⁴

In many discussions with Czech and Sudeten German politicians and representatives of banks and industry, the long-serving Austrian envoy in Prague, Ferdinand Marek, sounded out ideas for more intensive economic cooperation in central Europe. Given its advantages for the Czechoslovak economy, the “farmers’ tsar” and head of the Agrarian Party, Minister-President Antonín Švehla, envisaged closer cooperation with Germany and Austria, in the case of Vienna even a customs union. For political reasons, however, Beneš preferred French plans for the creation of a Danubian Federation in which at first Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Yugoslavia, and later Hungary, Rumania, and Poland should work together without economic nationalism and protectionist policies. The chief director of the *Živnostenská banka*, Jaroslav Preiss, recognized the necessity of closer cooperation in the form of a cartelization of certain sectors of industry, but otherwise believed that the *Anschluss* was inevitable.²⁵

The boom years down to 1929 were not exploited to bring about closer economic cooperation, also not during Seipel’s visit in February 1928 to Masaryk and Beneš in Prague. In May 1928 at the Wilhelmstraße in Berlin, the German State Secretary Carl von Schubert asked the Czechoslovak foreign minister “whether a provisional economic union of Czechoslovakia,

Austria, and the German Empire might perhaps better correspond to the logic of the situation.” Beneš agreed that “that would be a very logical development,” but otherwise offered the excuse “that Italy and France would energetically oppose it, also England for economic reasons.” Nevertheless, Beneš’ deputy, the history professor Kamil Krofta, declared in an internal discussion with the permanent undersecretaries of the foreign ministry in Prague that the idea of an *Anschluss* attracted ever more adherents: “We must be aware that the *Anschluss* can hardly be prevented at a future date.” He thereby conceded that the idea of an *Anschluss* did not lack a certain ethical basis.²⁶

Under the pressure of the massive economic crisis in central Europe, the German and Austrian Foreign Ministers, Julius Curtius and Johannes Schober, made public a plan in March 1930 for a German-Austrian customs union. This provoked a storm of protest from the envoys of France and the Little Entente that led to a severe deterioration of the bilateral relations between Vienna and Prague. Deputy Foreign Minister Krofta did not mince words with the Austrian envoy: “One would never have believed that the Austrian foreign minister would secretly go to the Germans and conclude such a treaty—Austria and Germany are following in the footsteps of prewar policy and have evidently not changed their mentality.” The Quai d’Orsay and the Czernin Palace indeed equated the plan for a customs union with the *Anschluss* and spoke unjustifiably of “preparations for a new war.” For fear of negative economic consequences, even Sudeten German industrialists and political parties came to support Prague’s criticism. Beneš tried to undermine the project for a customs union by portraying it as a violation of the treaty of Saint-Germain and the Geneva Protocols. The International Court of Justice ruled in a vote of only eight to seven on September 5, 1931 that the customs union was incompatible with the

Geneva Protocol I from 1922 and only six of the 15 justices held the opinion that the project violated Article 88 of the peace treaty of Saint-Germain.²⁷

Seven years later, after the *Anschluss*, the opinion of a leading American specialist in international law, Charles Fenwick, pointed up the miscalculation of French, British, and Czechoslovak foreign policy:

“It has been said that statesmanship is the ability to see today the effects which a particular policy will have ten years hence. Judged by any such test the Governments of Great Britain and France were singularly lacking in statesmanship when they set their hands not only against a political union of Austria and Germany, but even against a restricted customs union which might have brought economic relief to Austria without the necessity of closer political ties... A mere customs union might not have relieved the economic situation for Austria; but the withdrawal of prohibitions against it would have eased the political situation and would have greatly strengthened the democratic forces both in Austria and in Germany. Today we witness not a customs treaty between two independent states, not even a confederation of Austria and Germany leaving the national integrity of Austria unimpaired, but the complete assimilation of Austria into Germany. Austria is henceforth to be a mere province of Germany, and the name of a country, whose origins go back to the century or earlier, is now erased from the annals of international law. Diplomatic relations of Austria with third states will be merged with those of Germany. Treaties made with Austria come to an end; and there is only the question of the extent to which Germany may be expected by law to succeed to obligations once binding upon Austria.”²⁸

3) The Disintegration of Two Peoples in One State

The Great Depression speeded up both the “disintegration of two peoples in the same state” (Eugen Lemberg) and the critical development of a “community of conflict” in the Bohemian lands (Jan Křen). The catastrophic breakdown of the export market increased the number of unemployed in Czechoslovakia in the winter of 1932/33 to over one million (15% of the workforce). Because of the concentration of export-dependent light industry in the Sudeten German territories and the collapse in tourism in the northwestern Bohemian spas of Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), and Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), the

number of unemployed among the Sudeten Germans alone reached 600,000. In other words, at the height of the crisis, some 40% of Sudeten German workers were affected. Given the relative stability in basic industries, Czech unemployment, on the other hand, hardly exceeded more than 10%. This resulted in a grave national inequality that increasingly became a domestic political problem.²⁹

The “activists” among the German political parties—the Social Democrats, the Union of Farmers, and the Christian Socialists (with the German *Gewerbepartei*), who had received a total of 1.25 million votes and 51 of 66 mandates—had clearly come out ahead in the parliamentary election of October 27, 1929. However, Sudeten German “activism” increasingly came under pressure because of the economic crisis.³⁰ Apart from the fact that little had distinguished “activism” from “negativism” outside of parliament and the ministries in Prague, the fight for jobs once again became—as it had been in the upheaval of 1918-19—a fight for German jobs. Among the Czechs, anti-German sentiment clearly increased. This was especially clear in September 1930 during the so-called “talking film affair” in Prague. In response to two successful German entertainment films, the apparently manipulated “Prager Gasse” riots attempted to inflame emotions with slogans such as “down with the Germans,” “down with the Jews,” and “long live Czech Prague.” German and Jewish businesses were also demolished. The city council of Prague welcomed “the worthy demonstrations for the protection of the Slavic character of Prague.” In parliament, Czech fascists and German nationalists attacked each another, with the former urging the latter to move to Germany and the latter agreeing to do so, taking German territory with them. Although the Czechoslovak foreign ministry expressed its regret for the occurrences, the German foreign minister Curtius condemned such “hatred of

Germans” and “acts of terror” in Prague and demanded respect in keeping with “the dignity of German culture.”³¹

The Association of German Industry (*Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie*) and the Conference of German Industry and Commerce (*Deutscher Industrie- und Handelstag*) quickly rejected the idea of an economic boycott, although the management of a health spa in Württemberg was not shy about calling for a boycott of the “Czech spas” in Karlsbad and Marienbad. The nervousness of the Czech public regarding the rise of National Socialism was apparent in treason trials against domestic Nazis (“hakenkrejcler”) and in the dissolution of voluntary associations and the prohibition of newspapers. It was increasingly discernable as well in the foreign ministry. In answer to a question by the Austrian envoy Marek about the influence of the National Socialist regime on the Sudeten Germans, Foreign Minister Beneš replied: “We would tear the National Socialists to pieces and lock them away as criminals.”³²

Despite the election success of Hitler in 1932, the danger from Germany had not yet taken on concrete form. Nevertheless, the sport association (*Volkssport*) of the German-Bohemian German National Socialist Workers’ Party, which called ever more loudly for the *Anschluss*, faced prosecution in 1933. Its leadership, which fled to Germany, dissolved the group to stave off imminent prohibition. The authorities in Germany, however, strongly objected to the growing stream of Sudeten German refugees and former Sudeten German National Socialists were not admitted to membership in the German Nazi party. As late as March 1934, the German foreign office and the “Union (later People’s League) for Germans Abroad” (*Verein (später Volksbund) für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA)) agreed that the “new and rising national movement [abroad] had to establish itself without the help of German organizations.” By the time Adolf Hitler took power, however, new and more radical elements had taken over leading positions in

Sudeten German politics. Paradoxically, they included many students and supporters of the professor for economic and social theory at the University of Vienna, Othmar Spann, whose neo-étatist, universalistic, and paternalistic ideas constituted rather an alternative to the egalitarian, racist, anti-Semitic, and social Darwinist National Socialism. The so-called “Comrades League” (*Kameradschaftsbund*), which grew out of the group around Spann, became one of the original core organizations in the “Sudeten German Home Front” (*Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront*), which was founded in October 1933.³³

Under the leadership of the “Comrades League” and with the strong participation of the “German Sport Association” (*Deutscher Turnverband*),³⁴ the “Sudeten German Home Front” (SHF) developed in the course of 1934 into a Sudeten German mass movement. Its leader became Konrad Henlein, a native of the primarily Lutheran town of Asch (Aš) in the northwestern corner of Bohemia. In 1931, he took over the leadership of the “German Sport Association” and, symbolically, he was the first card carrying member of the SHF. He emphasized “the safeguarding and expansion of our national property,” the common interests of the “Sudeten German tribe,” and the connection to the “larger German cultural community.” In a programmatic speech in Böhmisches Leipa (Česká Lípa), on October 21, 1934, Henlein clearly distanced himself from National Socialism and fascism and called for the “state loyalty” of Sudeten Germans to Czechoslovakia. The German envoy Walter Koch interpreted his stance against the background of disputes between traditionalist members of the “Comrades League” and radical National Socialists: “The National Socialists, whose goal is a Greater Germany, reproach the Comrades League with wanting to create a ‘Sudeten German breed’ analogous to the ‘Austrian breed’ whose goal is not toward, but rather away from the *Reich*. This opened up the possibility of creating a Swiss-type situation.”³⁵

The Austrian envoy Marek regarded the speech much more sceptically given that the SHF naturally could not admit connections to the German Nazi Party, even though Henlein had also taken over the leadership of the dissolved German-Bohemian Nazis and the German National Party. Six weeks before the Czechoslovak parliamentary elections of 1935, Marek passed almost prophetic judgment on the chances for success of the “Sudeten German Party” (*Sudetendeutsche Partei*) (SdP): “It’s an open secret that the younger and middle generation of Bohemian Germans is more than ever in favor of the National Socialists and that these circles, since they cannot openly agitate for the Nazis, will unconditionally vote for Henlein. If nothing happens at the last minute to reverse the trend, Herr Henlein will emerge from the elections with a larger number of mandates than he could ever have dreamed of.”³⁶ Thanks to the financial support of the VDA and a number of ministries in Berlin, the Sudeten German Party captured 15.2% of the vote in the election of May 19, 1935, and thus became, with its 44 mandates, the strongest party in Czechoslovakia. News of the economic recovery in Germany, of the fast reduction of unemployment, and the success of the Saar plebiscite drowned out the warnings of refugees from Nazism in Prague.³⁷

While the Sudeten German question caused ever more trouble after 1933 in the relations between Prague and Berlin, political and ideological motives prompted the government in Vienna to maintain its distance from the Henlein movement. This may be explained in part by the increasingly sharp confrontation with National Socialism of the dictatorial Christian Socialist government of Engelbert Dollfuß, who paid for his politics with his life in the abortive “putsch” of July 1934.³⁸ Surprisingly, this attracted far less notice in Prague than Dollfuß’ previous conflict with his Social Democratic opposition that led to the uprising of the “Republican Defense Alliance” (*Republikanischer Schutzbund*) in February 1934 and its suppression by the

federal army with the support of the fascist *Heimwehr*. In spite of the flight of some 2,000 insurgents to Czechoslovakia and the creation in Brünn (Brno) of an “Office of Austrian Social Democrats Abroad,” Prague’s foreign policy lost all influence in Vienna.³⁹

Under Federal Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg, Austrian-Czech relations at first remained tense. An important contributory factor here was the abolition in July 1935 of the ban on the house of Habsburg, a move that even led the powers of the Little Entente to create new mobilization plans. Only his visit to Prague in January 1936 enabled Schuschnigg to reassure somewhat the Czech Prime Minister Milan Hodža: only in the event of the threat of the incorporation of Austria into Germany as the eighth so-called *Gau* would a restoration of the dynasty be considered, with the creation of an “Austrian principality within its current borders.” The Slovak Hodža cautioned against both a legitimist move as well as a “societas leonina” of a small state with the great power Germany. Only with the re-organization of “central Europe”—Hodža was referring here to a rapprochement between the states of the Rome Protocols and the Little Entente—could negotiations with Germany be opened, though he was not sure “whether with Hitler or with the generals who will one day not need Hitler anymore” (sic!).⁴⁰

Hitler’s surprise coup in reoccupying the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland six weeks later meant the revocation of the Locarno Treaty and sent an alarm signal to Czechoslovakia, which was allied with France and the Soviet Union. Schuschnigg continued trying to maneuver between Italy and the western powers, but after secret negotiations with the German envoy Franz von Papen, finally came down on the side of the Germans.⁴¹ Especially disagreeable for the government in Prague was the conclusion of the “July Agreement” between Berlin and Vienna. Foreign Minister Krofta, a historian and diplomat who tended to a conciliatory policy with respect to the nationality problem, openly told the Austrian envoy Marek that Prague now

regarded Vienna as an ally of Berlin and that National Socialist ideology would win the upper hand in Austria. At the same time, Prague sought its own contacts to Berlin. The secret talks in November and December 1936 of the geographer Albrecht Haushofer and the diplomat Count Maximilian Trauttmansdorf with Beneš and Krofta failed, however, because of divergent interests. Hitler was interested in stronger commercial ties, a limitation on the political activities of German emigrants in Czechoslovakia, and Prague's neutrality in the event of a German-Soviet conflict. Beneš proposed only widening the German-Czechoslovak treaty of arbitration from 1925.⁴²

During another visit to Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg on March 26, 1937 in Vienna, Minister-President Hodža unhesitatingly told his host of the possibility of a "conflagration" between Germany and Czechoslovakia. He therefore planned to attend the coronation of King George VI in London to "ascertain" that the western powers would not accept quietly a German *fait accompli* regarding Czechoslovakia. Schuschnigg admitted "the natural parallels in our interests," but "for Austria ruled out appearing anyhow or at anytime as the ally of Czechoslovakia." The Federal Chancellor, who was kept regularly informed by the Christian Socialist minister in the government in Prague, Erwin Zajicek, merely underlined the "need to offer the German activist parties in Czechoslovakia something concrete and really to give them something." Hodža indicated that he was prepared to make far-reaching concessions to the "German element loyal to the state," but categorically objected to involving Henlein, "whose loyalty to the state must be doubted with every reason," in the action planned by him.⁴³

Henlein in fact sent a memorandum to Hitler on November 19, 1937 in which he characterized the politics of autonomy pursued up to that point by the Sudeten German Party as a necessary camouflage and suggested the "annexation by the *Reich* of the entire Bohemian-

Moravian area” [sic!].⁴⁴ This corresponded surprisingly well to the declaration made by Hitler to German political and military leaders on November 5: “The goal of German policy is to safeguard and preserve the entirety of the *Volk* [more than 85 million people] and its increase... Violence is the only solution to the German question... Our first goal must be involvement in a war to improve our military-political situation, to destroy *Tschechei* [sic!] and Austria to eliminate the threat to our flank by possible action in the west... the incorporation of *Tschechei* [sic!] and Austria could mean winning food for an additional 5-6 million people provided that a forced emigration from *Tschechei* [sic!] of two, and from Austria of one million people be carried out.”⁴⁵

During their meeting on September 27, 1937 at the Hotel Herzoghof in Baden near Vienna, Schuschnigg and Hodža discussed for the last time the threat from Germany. Even more so than in March, the Czechoslovak prime minister expressed concern about the possibility of German intervention in Czechoslovakia or Austria. Schuschnigg assured Hodža “that Austria would resist its territory being misused for the passage of troops.” After his dressing-down by Hitler on the Obersalzberg, the Austrian federal chancellor nevertheless capitulated to the German chancellor on the evening of March 11, 1938 and opened the way to the *Anschluss*. On the following day in a circular to the missions abroad, the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Krofta explained, after reassuring declarations by the Prussian Prime Minister Hermann Göring, that Czechoslovakia was “not immediately affected” since “it [concerned] a matter between Berlin and Vienna on the basis of the treaty of 1936.”⁴⁶

4) Between Munich and Prague

The annexation of Austria with the energetic help of the Austrian National Socialists offered a new political model for the Sudeten Germans.⁴⁷ In a talk on March 28, 1938, Henlein promised Hitler “always to demand so much that we can never be satisfied.” In April 1938, he had the “Karlsbad Program” adopted with its demands for full autonomy and turn towards National Socialism. In May, he won 87% of Sudeten German votes in local elections. The Sudeten German historian Josef Pfitzner, who less than a year later would be named “deputy-primator,” (deputy-mayor) represented the Sudeten German Party in the city council of Prague. In the poisoned atmosphere of national conflict and in view of the mass unemployment and social misery, many Sudeten Germans already regarded the annexation to Germany as a worthwhile alternative to what was regarded as the hopeless situation in Czechoslovakia.⁴⁸

Around the same time, Hitler ordered his general staff to work out a plan of attack on Czechoslovakia. In May 1938, the danger of war thus existed in the area for the first time. British diplomacy began looking for a way out of the “Sudeten crisis” that would concede the Sudeten Germans the right of self-determination. The Czechoslovak government proposed new autonomy plans, but Henlein turned them down definitively at the beginning of September 1938. After a first visit by the British Prime Minister Chamberlain to Hitler, the western powers pressured Prague to cede Sudeten German territories. On September 21, President Beneš and the government in Prague finally yielded in face of the acute German threats of war, though they gave the order for mobilization a few days later. They naturally understood that a war would mean thousands of dead, at least the partial destruction of the country, and a probable military defeat. Taking up a suggestion by the foreign office in Berlin, Benito Mussolini stepped in as

intermediary and facilitated the signature of the Munich Agreement in the night of September 29/30, 1938. This was a diktat of the great powers similar to the Treaty of Saint-Germain. On behalf of the president and government, Foreign Minister Krofta had to accept the “decision that had been made without and against us.”⁴⁹

The “system of Versailles” collapsed definitively with the Munich Agreement. The constellation of alliances of “status-quo powers” versus “revisionist” powers dissolved with the disintegration of the Little Entente and the triumph of the idea of homogenous nation-states. At the beginning of October the parliaments in Paris and London approved the resolution at Munich with large majorities. The overwhelming majority of Czechs regarded the Munich Agreement, immediately or later, as a “threefold treason” by the western powers, by the Sudeten Germans, and—especially after 1948—by Beneš. As early as November 1938 from his London exile, the ex-president pointed out, however, that only three alternatives had existed in September of that year: either a military defeat by Germany or a humiliating agreement with Germany or a *nolens-volens* acceptance of the diktat of the great powers.⁵⁰

The vast majority of the Sudeten German population greeted the entry of the German army into the territories ceded to Germany with great enthusiasm. The area between Eger (Cheb) and Troppau (Opava) became the “*Reichsgau Sudetenland*.” Southern Moravia—as well as the Slovak communities Theben (Devín) and Engerau (Petržalka)—was incorporated into the “*Reichsgau Niederdonau*” and southern Bohemia into the “*Reichsgau Oberdonau*.” Some 400,000 Czechs, Jews, and Germans fled, emigrated or resettled in the Czechoslovak rump-state, while 300,000 Czechs remained in what had become part of the German empire. The violence of National Socialist totalitarianism was brought home quickly to the Sudeten Germans and Czechs

during the empire-wide pogrom of November 8-10, 1938, with synagogues in flames, plundering, and murders.⁵¹

On the other hand, some 375,000 Germans in Praha (Prague), Jihlava (Iglau), Brno (Brünn), and the Carpathians remained in the second Czechoslovak republic. 225,000 of these later came under the jurisdiction of the “Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.” In spite of his declaration of guarantee, Hitler ordered the Wehrmacht on October 22, 1938 “to be able at any time to destroy the rest of *Tschechei*” (sic!) and he had this done on March 15, 1939. The statute for the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, dictated by Hitler himself, has rightly been labelled the first breach of civilization between Czechs and Germans.⁵²

It was not the creation of the protectorate, but rather the Munich Agreement that gave impetus to the first Czechoslovak plans for expulsions. In the middle of September 1938, President Beneš, who resigned on October 5, 1938 and went into British exile, developed a secret, so-called “Fifth Plan:” the cession of certain border areas would rid the republic of one-third of the Sudeten Germans; one-third were to be expelled, and one-third, particularly the “democrats, Socialists, and Jews,” could remain in Czechoslovakia. Given the unfavorable course of the war, Beneš was prepared as late as the fall of 1940 to sacrifice the three districts or cantons of Jägerndorf, Reichenberg, and Karlsbad.⁵³

5) Divided societies in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

With the addition of Austrian, Sudeten German, and Czech military-economic potential, the “Greater German Empire” had in the course of a year become Europe’s greatest power. At the same time, the degradation of Czechs, including those in Vienna, began in relation to Germans in

Germany proper, in Austria, and in the Sudetenland. A general work requirement was introduced for Czech men and women, although the men were not liable for military service (in keeping with an announcement by Hitler in a speech at a Nuremberg party rally). With the beginning of the Second World War, the National Socialist occupation policy intensified. The Gestapo arrested 2,000 persons as potential resisters, especially politicians from leftist parties, former legionnaires, Sokol functionaries, and clergy.⁵⁴

After demonstrations on October 28 and November 15 and the execution of ten student functionaries, Czech universities and institutions of higher learning were closed on November 17, 1939. Around 1,200 students were deported to the concentration camp Oranienburg. The “German Charles University” and the technical universities in Prague and Brünn attracted many Germans, Sudeten Germans, and Austrians, such as the famous gynecologist Hermann Knaus from Carinthia.⁵⁵ In response to the call in the summer of 1941 by the government of the protectorate for approximately 20,000 Czech secondary school graduates to matriculate in medicine or technology at universities in Germany proper, only 42 potential students responded during the four-day registration period that ended on September 18, 1941.⁵⁶ The situation remained the same in the years 1942-44, when only a few Czech students studied technical or scientific subjects at German universities or schools of higher learning.

After France’s capitulation in June 1940, districts of “Greater Germany” neighboring the protectorate began claiming its territory. The “*Gau Niederdonau*” demanded Moravia together with the area around Olmütz (Olomouc), or at least Brünn and its environs. In August 1940, the German Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, Baron Konstantin Neurath, proposed “the total incorporation into the Greater German Empire” and “filling the area with Germans.” State Secretary Karl Hermann Frank simultaneously recommended a “policy of assimilation or re-

peopling,” combined with the “re-settlement of racially indigestible Czechs and intelligentsia hostile to the empire.” Hitler decided for the moment to retain the protectorate. By the fall of 1940, the protectorate already numbered some 245,000 Germans, as some 40,000 Sudeten Germans had moved there since March 1939 and a further 20,000 persons had suddenly remembered their German descent. With the exception of Prague and Pilsen, all cities with more than 25,000 inhabitants received German mayors. The autonomous and occupation authorities numbered some 15,000 German officials, while Czech public officials still made up 400,000 persons.⁵⁷

In the summer of 1941, the “Czech spirit of resistance stiffened considerably,” a phenomenon attributed by Protector Neurath to the unexpectedly tenacious Soviet resistance to the attacking Wehrmacht and to the dissatisfaction among Czech workers with the deteriorating supply situation. Strikes and sabotage organized by the resistance and by the exile government in London increased, also in the armaments industry. In response, Hitler decided after consultations at his headquarters to recall Neurath and to appoint the *SS-Obergruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich as deputy Protector. Only a few hours after his arrival in Prague, Heydrich proclaimed a state of emergency and had a wave of arrests carried out. The head of the government of the protectorate, General Alois Eliáš, was also arrested and condemned to death. Within two months, Heydrich had more than 400 men and women shot and some 4000 to 5000 persons arrested, of whom 1,299 were deported to the concentration camp Mauthausen. In contrast to the terror visited upon the Czech intelligentsia, he had admission tickets to cinemas, theaters, and soccer matches distributed gratis to Czech workers, while 7000 workers in the armaments industry received a free vacation. Because of a reform of the administration in May 1942, 1,100 Germans were added to the protectorate’s administration. The offices of the protector and the

Oberlandräte continued to employ 700 persons. By May 1941, the Gestapo, the Kripo, and the *Sicherheitsdienst* had recruited 2,241 persons.⁵⁸

In a secret speech in Prague on February 4, 1942, Heydrich outlined his idea of the “final solution” for Jews and Czechs: “Those who cannot be Germanized can perhaps [be deployed] to open up the area of the polar seas – where in the future concentration camps will provide the ideal homeland for Europe’s 11 million Jews –, perhaps we could deploy there the Czechs who cannot be Germanized, using the promise of productive work, as overseers, as workers to lay the preliminary groundwork, etc. with the chance of their families’ following them.” The Holocaust was in fact carried out: the names of the 77,297 Jews from Bohemia and Moravia killed in Auschwitz and Theresienstadt may be found today inscribed on the walls of the Pinkas synagogue in Prague.⁵⁹

After Heydrich’s assassination – ordered by Beneš and František Moravec – carried out on May 27, 1942 by agents parachuted into the protectorate, special military courts in Prague and Brno had by September 1 condemned 1,357 Czechs to death, including high officials, officers, professors, jurists, doctors, engineers, clergy, journalists, and students. By June 10, all 192 men of the village of Lidice, which had not been involved in any way, had been shot. They were joined by seven women from legionnaires’ families, as well as all 32 adults from the village of Ležáky, where the SS had located the assassins’ secret transmitter. The children of Lidice and Ležáky were abused in “racial experiments.” Heydrich’s terror and, even more so, that which followed his death naturally provoked fright and horror in the Czech population. A sharp rise in the shooting of hostages was feared.⁶⁰

Even after Lidice, the new “German State Minister for Bohemia and Moravia,” Karl Hermann Frank, a Sudeten German, tried to keep the protectorate’s administration and war-

industry running with concessions to Czech officials, doctors, engineers, technicians, and workers. There were salary raises, increases in pensions for the elderly, widows, orphans, and invalids, as well as additional allocations of cigarettes. More and more Czechs, some 250,000 by May 1943, were deported into Germany proper as armaments workers. Until the summer of 1944, the German armaments' commands regarded Czech discipline at the workplace as "satisfactory." Thereafter attacks on the rail system occurred; beginning in early 1945 other acts of sabotage as well. There were, however, no further measures of severe persecution and no partisan war took place. The Czechs thus emerged from the National Socialist occupation with far fewer losses in dead than the Jewish population of the former Czechoslovakia (including the Carpathian Ukraine). A total of 265,000 Jews and 5,900 Roma were victims of "racial persecution." Political persecution claimed some 40,000 Czechs, and roughly 8,000 persons were executed; more than 20,000 were killed in concentration camps and prisons; approximately 8,000 Czechs died in armed confrontations on the territory of the protectorate; and, there were at least 1,000 victims in territories that had been ceded along the borders of the Bohemian lands. Beyond that, there were 4,000 victims of aerial bombardments. Some 5,600 soldiers fell in the Czechoslovak units on the eastern front and 1,200 on the other fronts.⁶¹

After Lidice, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London and the Czech civil and military resistance in the protectorate pushed for the complete expulsion of the Germans. On July 6, 1942, the British war cabinet annulled the Munich Agreement and agreed to the "general principle of the transfer of German minorities in central and southeastern Europe to Germany."⁶² In a letter to the Sudeten German Social Democrat Wenzel Jaksch, the exiled President Beneš referred cryptically to the consequences of National Socialist violence: "And the most terrible part is that this leaves behind a legacy that none of us can know how to rid ourselves of."⁶³ The

Czech resistance movement had already demanded the confiscation of all German property. After a discussion on December 16, 1943 with Stalin in Moscow, Beneš determined that he wanted the German problem solved once and for all with the creation of a Slavic Czechoslovak state freed of Germans and Maygars.⁶⁴

6) Revenge and Expulsion

The existence of the protectorate destroyed the history of Czechs, Germans, and Jews living together and alongside one another. “Total war” had led to total separation and, in the case of the Jews, to genocide. Fear, anxiety, hatred, and feelings of revenge had accumulated over the course of six years. As early as July 1944, Beneš advised the resistance to carry out the political revolt with all national groups, if possible as a “peoples’ uprising” without sensational courts and executions. Since an international solution to the “transfer of our German population” could not be relied upon, it was necessary that “we finish off much in the first days of the liberation, that as many guilty Nazis as possible flee in the first days of revolution out of fear of the citizens’ revolt directed against them, and that as many as possible of those who as Nazis defend themselves and resist be slaughtered.” On November 3, 1944, Defense Minister Sergej Ingr told the BBC: “When our day comes, the entire people will take up the call of the Hussites: ‘Beat them, smash them, don’t spare any of them!’”⁶⁵

During the Prague uprising of May 5, 1945—after the withdrawal of the still brutally retaliatory SS—up to 15,000 Germans fell victim to pogrom-like excesses. Thousands died during the “death march” of some 25,000 Germans from Brno towards the Austrian border near

the end of May and during the “Aussig Massacre” on July 31, 1945. There was also a mass murder of 265 Germans, including 120 women and 74 children, in Prerau (Přerov). Even Soviet tank commanders and political officers were shocked by various sadistic acts of violence by Czech mobs. Of the approximately 350,000 Germans held in camps and prisons, 30,000 at most were killed. There is no doubt that leading Czech politicians knew of and tolerated the wild anti-German excesses of subordinate authorities, especially of the communist-influenced “revolutionary” national committees, various revolutionary guards, officials of National Security, the “Svoboda army,” and even former National Socialist collaborators. The excesses were taken into account in formulating domestic and foreign strategy. Punishable offenses against the “occupation” and its “helpers” were exempted from prosecution by a law of May 8, 1946.⁶⁶

On June 10, 1945 in Lidice, the anniversary of the destruction of the village, Beneš stressed the collective guilt of the Germans: “It is a matter of the direct guilt of the vast majority of Germans; the Germans as a whole are therefore responsible.” The returned president therefore spoke publicly and repeatedly of the necessity “to liquidate the German problem definitively.”⁶⁷ By the end of July 1945, the wild expulsions had already chased some 750,000 Germans from the country—clearly the second breach in civilization in Czech-German history. Even worse, the Czech leaders had expected an even higher figure. Stalin was not prepared, however, to allow the Red army to help with the deportations of Germans and Magyars, though he assured the new Czech Prime Minister Zdeněk Fierlinger: “We won’t disturb you. Throw them out. Now you will learn what it means to rule over someone else.”⁶⁸

On July 3, 1945, the government in Prague presented the victorious powers with a plan for the transfer of the “large majority” of the Germans and Magyars. Article XIII of the Potsdam Agreement from August 2, 1945 provided that the German population of Poland,

Czechoslovakia, and Hungary be transferred in an “orderly and humane way” to Germany. A resolution of the Czechoslovak government from August 3, 1945 ordered the complete deportation of all Germans. According to the figures of the Czechoslovak Interior Minister Václav Nosek, Czechoslovakia expelled 2,165,135 Germans by the end of October 1946, of whom 1.2 million went to the American and more than 800,000 to the Soviet zones of occupation. Nearly 200,000 Germans remained behind in Czechoslovakia: 60,000 miners, chemists, technicians, and other industrial specialists with their families remained in border areas, together with 40,000 Germans in mixed marriages and 5,000 who were spared deportation (*odsun*) by an act of “grace.” Between the summer of 1947 and 1949, some 60,000 others marked for deportation were transferred and scattered in the interior of the country.⁶⁹

7) Beneš Decrees

The Czechoslovak legal norms that determined the fate of Sudeten and Carpathian Germans after the Second World War were already prepared in exile in London and Moscow. On the recommendation of the government and because of the lack of a lawmaking body, President Beneš issued 45 such decrees from London.⁷⁰ In the Košice Program from April 5, 1945, the head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Klement Gottwald, announced that loyal citizens of German and Magyar nationality, members of National Socialist and fascist organizations, and war criminals would be treated differently, though the confiscation of the property of the German and Magyar nobility and the closure of German and Magyar schools was also foreseen. Between his return to Prague and the first meeting of the new parliament on October 28, 1945, President

Beneš signed a further 98 constitutional and juridically normative decrees that would only lose their validity if not later confirmed by parliament.

In several respects, these presidential decrees went further than the measures against Germans and Magyars announced in the Košice Program: 1) all property of the Germans, Magyars, traitors, and collaborators was placed under national administration (no. 5 from May 19, 1945); 2) the agrarian property of Germans, Magyars, traitors, and enemies of the Czech and Slovak people was confiscated without compensation and divided up (no. 12 from June 21, 1945); 3) Czechoslovak citizens of German and Magyar nationality were (with few exceptions) stripped of their citizenship, for the Sudeten Germans effective as of October 10, 1938, for the Germans of the protectorate effective as of March 16, 1939 (no. 33 from August 2, 1945); 4) persons of German and Magyar nationality who had lost Czechoslovak citizenship became liable to forced labor, for men between 14 and 60 years of age, for women between 15 and 50 years of age (no. 71 from September 19, 1945; and 5) moveable and immoveable enemy property that had been in the actual possession of physical or juridical persons until the end of the German and Magyar occupation was confiscated without compensation (no. 108 from October 25, 1945). A presidential decree had also prepared for the expulsion and resettlement of the Sudeten Germans, but its issue became unnecessary after the Potsdam Agreement. Decisive instead was the permission granted by the Allied Control Council on November 20, 1945 for the transfer of the German population out of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.⁷¹

Thus, not only were nearly three million Sudeten and Carpathian Germans expelled and resettled, but, in the Bohemian lands alone, 2,400,449 hectares of land were confiscated without compensation. This meant that German Austrians, Italians (South Tyrolians), Swiss,⁷² Belgians, Danes, and persons from Liechtenstein and Luxembourg could be and were expropriated. The

Germans also lost banks, insurance companies, glass and steel works, mines, chemical and textile factories, as well as middle-sized and smaller industrial and commercial property, in all around 3,900 industrial and 34,000 commercial enterprises that made up some one-third of the industrial potential of the republic. If estimates in 1947 by the Czechoslovak “Funds for National Renewal” put the probable total worth of all confiscated objects at some 300 billion Czechoslovak prewar crowns, the Paris Peace Conference assumed Czechoslovak war damages in an amount of 347.5 billion crowns (the exchange rate from 1938). In 1948, the expelled and resettled Sudeten Germans calculated the worth of all expropriated property as of September 30, 1938 at 33.516 billion German marks, which at the exchange rate of 1938 (100 crowns = 8.7 German marks) made for 385.4 billion crowns.⁷³

8) The Expulsion of Sudeten Germans and their Resettlement in Austria

The expulsion of more than 250,000 Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia and their resettlement in Austria was a large and unexpected problem for both the government in Vienna and the Austrian population. Already in May 1945, thousands of persons, some badly mistreated, took refuge in the building of the Austrian mission in Prague, where they were taken care of. At the same time, the rural population along the Austro-Czech border in Lower and Upper Austria gave shelter to tens of thousands of refugees, though thousands of others were turned back by border guards controlled by the communist interior minister Franz Honner. In a meeting of the cabinet on June 12, 1945, Federal Chancellor Renner described the difficult situation as follows: “Our country is at the moment (...) under threat. It cannot be described in any other way: the

Germans of southern Moravia and southern Bohemia are being expelled. Beneš has once again declared that he will not allow himself to be hindered in deporting all Germans and Magyars from Czechoslovakia. Countless German-speaking Czechoslovakian citizens are fleeing across our border. We can accept only the Austrians, but even that is infinitely difficult. In Prague and Brno, revolutionary disturbances—one cannot express it otherwise—are taking place constantly. The situation there is such that Germans can almost not be sure of their lives, that in fact murders and other such things occur.”⁷⁴

Primarily for lack of adequate provisions for their care, the government in Vienna tried to stem the flow of refugees. Renner demanded from the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Zdeněk Fierlinger that the masses of German-speaking Czechoslovak citizens illegally deported across the border be removed from Austria and threatened to raise claims of compensation. The government in Prague cited, however, the Potsdam resolutions. Thereafter, the Soviet occupation authorities began via the refugee camp at Melk to deport part of the Sudeten Germans, if they were not considered “valuable” workers, to the German occupation zones.⁷⁵

Communist, Social Democratic, and Christian Socialist functionaries in Austria regarded the expelled Sudeten Germans as members of the “Henlein party.” The manner in which the deportations took place, to be sure, was harshly criticized; on the other hand, public sympathy was also shown for the attitude of the Czechs in not wanting to live together in one country with a German “minority.” The Sudeten German catastrophe was “seen as an almost inevitable consequence of German treason and German forced rule.” After his visit in December 1945 to Prague, the Austrian Foreign Minister Karl Gruber commented that the position of the Czechs should not be surprising given the long years in which they had stood under the yoke of the “Nazi master race.” Only the Austrian bishops’ conference under Theodor Cardinal Innitzer, a

native of the Erzgebirge (Krušné hory), appealed to the Allied Council not to sacrifice the hundreds of thousands of Sudeten Germans to hard physical and moral misery.⁷⁶

Independently of the slow, if ultimately very successful integration of more than 150,000 Sudeten Germans into Austrian society, the Austrian side soon pressed for a general regulation of the legal position of Austrian citizens and their property in Czechoslovakia. Questioned in 1948 about the still unresolved question of Austrian property, the Czechoslovak President Klement Gottwald pointed out that during the German occupation of Czechoslovakia many Austrians had been in the service of the NSDAP, the Gestapo, and the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*) and had often been more radical than the Germans. It was therefore difficult to make the Czechs understand why Austrian property should be given preferential treatment.⁷⁷

Only with Czechoslovak accession to the Austrian State Treaty did the foreign ministry in Prague announce its readiness to regulate the property claims of those who had held Austrian citizenship on March 13, 1938. In 1958, the Austrian envoy Rudolf Ender asked the Czech Prime Minister Viliam Široky to explain the “moral” difference between an “old and a new Austrian.” He received the curt reply: “Do not forget that the Sudeten Germans put themselves completely and totally in the service of another state.” The government in Prague merely showed itself prepared to compensate “small property” (land up to 13 hectares or property worth up to 100,000 Czechoslovak crowns). In November 1960, the Soviet envoy in Vienna also declared that “the property of the Sudeten Germans [could] in no way be a subject of negotiations between Austria and the ČSSR.”⁷⁸

In a meeting of the Austrian council of ministers on June 13, 1960, Foreign Minister Bruno Kreisky made it clear “that for Austria, the question of property—with no prior restriction on the group of [eligible] persons—was the central problem of bilateral relations.” In agreement with

the Federal Chancellor Julius Raab, he nevertheless decided to ask the Czechoslovak government to name a lump sum. When this led nowhere, the Austrian envoy, in accordance with a resolution of the council of ministers, named a total claim of 12 billion Austrian schillings and, during a private visit in July 1962 to Prague, Kreisky declared Austria's readiness to renounce intervention on behalf of the Sudeten Germans. But the Czech Minister Václav David reacted evasively and the initiative failed. Even five years later, the Czechoslovak President Antonín Novotný lectured the Austrian envoy Rudolf Kirchschräger on the necessity of the Munich Agreement first being declared "ex tunc null and void." Only on December 19, 1974, after the agreement in principle between Bonn and Prague about the invalidity of the Munich Agreement, was a treaty of compensation for 1.2 billion schillings signed in Vienna.⁷⁹

Only after the political-ideological transition of 1989 did juridical discussions about the Beneš decrees begin. Of the original 143 presidential decrees, some had lapsed because of the passage of time, while others had been explicitly rescinded. In 1992, the Czech justice ministry published a list of valid regulations that included 26 decrees that were still at least partly in force, among them the decrees on expatriation and both decrees of confiscation. The rules on restitutions issued since 1990 allow claims for return of property only to owners expropriated after February 25, 1948. The preamble to the law of restitution from February 21, 1991 mentioned the expropriations from the pre-communist period "including the unlawful actions toward citizens of German and Maygar nationality." It furthermore expressed the intention that "similar unlawful actions should not occur again." The constitutional law of the Czech and Slovak Republic from January 9, 1991 had already determined that national affiliation could not disadvantage a person, that no citizen could be compelled to leave his country, and that no one could be expatriated against his will. All contrary regulations were declared invalid beginning on

January 1, 1992. As of that date, it should no longer have been possible to apply the Beneš decrees.⁸⁰

Unfortunately, this did not turn out to be true in several legal disputes, especially in the cases of Dreithaler, the prince of Liechtenstein, and Des Fours-Walderode. The ancestors of Rudolf Dreithaler, a Czech citizen of Sudeten German origin, were not expropriated before, but rather after the qualifying date of February 25, 1948 (the day of the communist takeover of power). In the 1990s, Dreithaler therefore demanded the return of his house in Reichenberg (Liberec) and protested against Beneš decree no. 108 from October 25, 1945. The Czech constitutional court in Brno confirmed Dreithaler's entitlement to a claim, but also upheld the validity of decree no. 108.⁸¹ On July 12, 2001, the European Court of Human Rights rejected the legal complaint of Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein against German courts concerning the return of a painting that had been expropriated from his family in 1945 and lent by the Moravian Provincial Museum for an exhibition in Cologne.⁸² Karl Des Fours-Walderode was a Czechoslovak citizen after 1918 and in 1945 was expropriated without compensation. Based on his loyalty to Czechoslovakia during the protectorate, his citizenship was restored after 1945.⁸³

In the spring of 2002, the presidium of the European parliament commissioned the experts in international law Ulf Bernitz (Stockholm), Jochen A. Frowein (Heidelberg), and Lord Kingsland, Q.C. to examine the current validity and legal repercussions of the so-called Beneš decrees as well as their compatibility with EU law, with the Copenhagen criteria of 1993, and international law relevant to accession to the EU. Together they came to the conclusion that neither the confiscations of German and Magyar property provided for in the Beneš decrees nor the expatriations violated EU law, as this could not be made retroactive. They also found that the amnesty law of May 8, 1946, which made crimes against Germans and Hungarians not

punishable, did not stand in the way of the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU. To be sure, the amnesty law contravened human rights, and therefore could no longer be valid after accession. Questionable, on the other hand, was whether persons could be tried today for actions that had fallen under the amnesty law and for which they had therefore believed for over 50 years that they would not be punished. Frowein even made the more than questionable legal argument that “the actions referred to in the Czechoslovak legislation of 8 May 1946 were actions in reaction to what had happened to the Czechoslovak population by Germans between 1938 and 1945,” as if the murder of a defenseless and innocent Sudeten German of any age or sex were less punishable than that of a Czech in the same situation during the war.⁸⁴

The federal chairman of the Sudeten German Association (*Landsmannschaft*) and foreign policy speaker of the German Christian Socialist Union in the European parliament, Bernhard Posselt, immediately submitted an alternative report by the specialist in international law at the University of Würzburg, Dieter Blumenwitz, that in essential points contradicted Frowein’s conclusions. Blumenwitz concluded that the Beneš decrees are in no way completely obsolete. All of the presidential decrees concerning the laws of citizenship and property are still valid parts of Czech law and continue to discriminate against members of the German minority in the Czech Republic (still 38,000 persons in 2001). The decrees and the amnesty law of 1946 collide with the Copenhagen criteria of the EU, the community law of the Union, the European Convention on Human Rights, and Article 26 of the Human Rights’ Charter of the United Nations.⁸⁵

A balance sheet of the community of conflict of Austrians, Czechs, and Sudeten Germans unfortunately shows, besides an impressive list of discoveries, inventions, and technical developments, data on economic and social growth, and significant works of science, literature,

and art, an equally long list of wars, destruction, persecution, and expulsions, of genocide, and of movements of refugees. In view of the many negative experiences and burdens from the past, the beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed continued uncertainties and a lack of faith in the validity of universal moral values. “The wish to be free of the burden of the knowledge of what has happened, of the responsibility for what has happened, of the burden of remembering what has happened” is understandable but futile. The past lives on as individual and collective memory: “People in the present want to know what actually happened in the past, why it happened, and how it could happen.” The investigation and interpretation of the past as history experienced, the “historicization” of what has happened, can perhaps help in understanding old and new prejudices and fears, inherited views of the “other side,” and national sensitivities. At least it can bring to the surface the psychological difficulties in bringing about European political and economic unity. The historical burdens that have arisen from the community of conflict between Austria, the Czech Republic, and the Sudeten Germans cannot therefore be consigned to oblivion. The experiences of the “short twentieth century” between 1914 and 1989 were simply too varied. One cannot expect relaxed and calm relations after so many radical and rapid changes and often-repeated accusations and claims. Given what Austrians, Sudeten Germans, and Czechs have done to one another – especially in the context of National Socialist and communist totalitarianism, but also beyond that – “the moral arrogance of one-sided accusations is uncalled for.” A policy of political stability in east central Europe can only be successful if the complicated history of this area is known.⁸⁶

NOTES

¹ Václav Havel, „Das historische und das gegenwärtige Verhältnis zwischen der Tschechischen Republik und Österreich,“ *Österreichische Osthefte* 35/3 (1993), 371-376.

² The German-Czech declaration, 21 January 1997, in *Češi a Němci, doba podeklarační. Deutsche und Tschechen, die Zeit nach der Erklärung*, ed. Nadace Bernarda Bolzana und der Ackermann-Gemeinde (Prague, 1997), 221-227.

³ Commentary by Otto Kimminich, the international legal implications of the German-Czech declaration, in *Češi a Němci*, 196-206.

⁴ Cf. the opening speech by the governor of Upper Austria Josef Pühringer on the occasion of the official inquiry by the Upper Austrian Provincial Archives on 8 June 1999, in *Nationale Frage und Vertreibung der Deutschen in der Tschechoslowakei. Fakten, Forschungen, Perspektiven aus dem Abstand von 50 Jahren* (= Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs 19, Linz, 2000), 7-11; Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi, „Kein Stoff fürs gemeinsame Schulbuch,“ *Die Presse, spectrum*, 12/13 October 2002, I-II.

⁵ Otmar Lahodynsky, „Populistischer Pro-Nazi-Politiker. Interview. Der tschechische Premierminister Miloš Zeman über das Veto-Volksbegehren, Jörg Haider und die FPÖ, die Beneš-Dekrete und die Vertreibung der Sudetendeutschen,“ *profil*, 33/4, 21 January 2002, 22-25.

⁶ *Mladá fronta dnes*, 31 January 2002; cf. *Die Presse*, 1 February 2002.

⁷ *New York Times*, 27 February 2002.

⁸ Karl-Peter Schwarz, „Geschichte im Dienst der Politik,“ in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, 21 March 2002, 10; Jaroslav Pánek a Jiří Pešek, „Historikové proti znásilňování dějin. Stanovisko Sdružení historiků České republiky“ [Historians against the Rape of History: The Standpoint of the Union of Historians of the Czech Republic], in *Příloha ke Zpravodaji Historického klubu*, 12 (2001), 2.

⁹ Berthold Kohler, „Eine nationale Front,“ *FAZ*, 25 April 2002, 1; *Der Standard*, 25 April 2002, 5. Several deputies appeared at the parliamentary debate in white t-shirts bearing a map of the Czech Republic with the Czech and German designations of the cities Praha/Prag, Ústí/Aussig, Domažlice/Taus, Trutnov/Trautenau und Karlovy Vary/Karlsbad. The German names were crossed out.

¹⁰ Hans Lemberg, „Unter schlechtem Stern,“ *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21 May 2002, 17.

¹¹ Cf. Jan Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft. Tschechen und Deutsche 1780-1918* (Munich, 1996, Czech edition, Prague 1990); see further the 12 volumes of the German-Czech and German-Slovak Historical Commissions (Essen, 1993-2001), as well as both volumes of the Austrian-Czech-Slovak Historical Commission (Vienna, 1995 and 1997).

¹² „The Beneš decrees. A spectre over Central Europe,“ *The Economist*, 17 August, 2002, 23-24; Georges Schöpflin (London), „Letters,“ *The Economist*, 7 September, 2002, 18.

¹³ Brief Tomáš G. Masaryk an Edvard Beneš, Washington, 31 October 1918, in *Weg von Österreich! Das Weltkriegsexil von Masaryk und Beneš im Spiegel ihrer Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1914 bis 1918. Eine Quellensammlung*, ed. Frank Hadler (= Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte Osteuropas XXXIV, Berlin, 1995), 537 ff.; Czech original in *Masaryk a Beneš ve svých dopisech z doby pařížských mírových jednání v roce 1919*, ed. Zdeněk Šolle, vol. II (Prague, 1994), 122 f.

¹⁴ Stenographisches Protokoll zur 2. Sitzung der Provisorischen Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich, Vienna, 30 October 1918, in *Außenpolitische Dokumente der Republik Österreich (ADÖ), 1: Selbstbestimmung der Republik, 21. Oktober 1918 bis 14. März 1919*, ed. Klaus Koch, Walter Rauscher, and Arnold Suppan (Vienna-Munich, 1993), 3, 77.

¹⁵ Verhandlungsschrift zur 26. Sitzung des Staatsrates, Vienna, 8 November 1918, in *ADÖ* 1/11, 107-123; Denkschrift Staatssekretär Otto Bauer an alle in Wien vertretenen Mächte und Regierungen der Ententestaaten und der USA, Vienna, 25 December 1918, in *ADÖ* 1/104, 316-328; Bericht Ferdinand Marek an Staatssekretär Bauer, Prague, 10 January 1919, in: *ADÖ* 1/126, 371-374.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans. A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (London-New York-Toronto, 1938), 79-96; Fritz Felner, „Der Vertrag von St. Germain,“ in *Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. Erika Weinzierl and Kurt Skalnik, 1 (Vienna, 1983), 85-106.

¹⁷ *ADÖ* 3/447, 361-372; Arnold Suppan, „Die außenpolitischen Beziehungen zwischen Prag und Wien 1918-1938,“ *Prague Papers on History of International Relations* (1999), 213-286, hier 225-228.

¹⁸ Ferdinand Seibt, *Deutschland und die Tschechen. Geschichte einer Nachbarschaft in der Mitte Europas* (Munich-Zürich, 1993), 279-282; Suppan, „Außenpolitische Beziehungen,“ 233-239; Jiří Kovtun, *Republika v nebezpečném světě. Éra prezidenta Masaryka 1918-1935* [The Republic in an Uncertain World: The Era of President Masaryk 1918-1935] (Prague, 2005), 207-215.

- ¹⁹ Envoy Marek to Foreign Office, Prague, 9 September 1920, in *ADÖ* 3/464, 418 ff.; Envoy Post to Section Chief Peter, Warsaw, 25 April 1925, in: *ADÖ* 5/796, 333-336.
- ²⁰ Manfred Alexander, *Der deutsch-tschechoslowakische Schiedsvertrag von 1925 im Rahmen der Locarno-Verträge* (Munich, 1970); Jaroslav Kučera, *Minderheit im Nationalstaat. Die Sprachenfrage in den tschechisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1918-1938* (Munich, 1999), 11; Peter Krüger, *Die Außenpolitik der Republik von Weimar* (Darmstadt, 1985), 299 ff.; Klaus Hildebrand, *Das vergangene Reich. Deutsche Außenpolitik von Bismarck bis Hitler 1871-1945* (Darmstadt, 1995), 457-461.
- ²¹ Amtsvermerk Sektionschef Peter, 5 March 1926, in *ADÖ* 5/826, 493-499; Stenographisches Protokoll zur 138. Sitzung des österreichischen Nationalrates, 18 March 1926, in *ADÖ* 5/828, 502 f.
- ²² Sprechprogramm für Besprechungen Bundeskanzler Rameks mit Außenminister Stresemann, 27 March 1926, in *ADÖ* 5/832, 515-520; Niederschrift über Besprechungen zwischen Bundeskanzler Ramek und Außenminister Stresemann, Berlin, 27/28 March 1926, in *ADÖ* 5/833, 520-533; cf. Aufzeichnung Ministerialdirektor Köpke, in *ADAP*, B/3 (Göttingen, 1968), 105.
- ²³ Zdeněk Kárník, *České země v éře První republiky (1918-1938)* [The Bohemian Lands in the Era of the First Republic (1918-1938)], 1.: *Vznik, budování a zlatá léta republiky (1918-1929)* [The Formation, Building-Up and Golden Years of the Republic (1918-1929)] (Prague, 2000), 154-168, 351.
- ²⁴ Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia. A Czech History* (Princeton, 1998), 160 ff.; Christoph Boyer, "Nationality and Competition: Czechs and Germans in the Economy of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938)," in *Economic Change and the National Question in Twentieth Century Europe*, ed. Alice Teichová (Cambridge, 2000), 262-276; Kárník, *České země* 1, 284-296.
- ²⁵ Kárník, *České země* 1, 239-247.
- ²⁶ Envoy Marek to Federal Chancellor Seipel, 10 December 1927 und record of the discussions between Foreign Minister Beneš und Federal Chancellor Seipel, Prague, 13/14 February 1928, in: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), Neues Politisches Archiv (NPA) Tschechoslowakei I/III geheim, GZ 20.779/13, carton 415; cf. Suppan, „Außenpolitische Beziehungen,“ 252-255; Herbert Matis, „Wirtschaftliche Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen in der Zwischenkriegszeit. Der Plan einer „Donaukonföderation,“ in *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Richard G. Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner, Arnold Suppan, Anna M. Drabek and Brigitta Zaar (Vienna, 1995), 229-255; Eduard Kubů, „Die brüchigen Beziehungen: Die Weimarer Republik und die Tschechoslowakei,“ in *Begegnung und Konflikt. Schlaglichter auf das Verhältnis von Tschechen, Slowaken und Deutschen 1815-1989*, ed. Jörg K. Hoensch and Hans Lemberg (Essen, 2001), 71-84.
- ²⁷ Oswald Hauser, „Der Plan einer deutsch-österreichischen Zollunion von 1931 und die Europäische Föderation,“ *Historische Zeitschrift* 179 (1955), 55; F. Gregory Campbell, *Confrontation in Central Europe. Weimar Germany and Czechoslovakia* (Chicago, 1975), 221-233; Rudolf Jaworski, *Vorposten oder Minderheit? Der sudetendeutsche Volkstumskampf in den Beziehungen zwischen der Weimarer Republik und der ČSR* (Stuttgart, 1977), 157 ff.; Suppan, „Außenpolitische Beziehungen,“ 256-260; Kovtun, *Republika*, 653-670.
- ²⁸ Charles Fenwick, "Editorial Comment: Fuit Austria" in: *American Journal of International Law* 32 (1938), 312 ff.
- ²⁹ Seibt, *Deutschland und die Tschechen*, 292 f., 318 f.
- ³⁰ Kárník, *České země* 1, 557-563.
- ³¹ Jaworski, *Vorposten oder Minderheit*, 152-156, 179-188.
- ³² Jaworski, *Vorposten oder Minderheit*, 157-160; Envoy Marek to Foreign Minister Schober, 15 December 1931, in: ÖStA, AdR, NPA Tschechoslowakei, Kart. 757.
- ³³ Jaworski, *Vorposten oder Minderheit*, 161-167; Seibt, *Deutschland und die Tschechen*, 322 f.
- ³⁴ Cf. Andreas Luh, *Der Deutsche Turnverband in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik. Vom völkischen Vereinsbetrieb zur volkspolitischen Bewegung* (München, 1988).
- ³⁵ Envoy Koch to the Foreign Office (AA), 8 November 1934, in *Deutsche Gesandtschaftsberichte aus Prag. Innenpolitik und Minderheitenprobleme in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik. IV: Vom Vorabend der Machtergreifung in Deutschland bis zum Rücktritt von Präsident Masaryk 1933-1935*, ed. Heidrun and Stephan Dolezel (Munich, 1991), 87; cf. Ralf Gebel, „Heim ins Reich!“ *Konrad Henlein und der Reichsgau Sudetenland 1938-1945* (Munich, 1999), 25-42; Ronald M. Smelser, *Das Sudetenproblem und das Dritte Reich 1933-1938. Von der Volkstumspolitik zur nationalsozialistischen Außenpolitik* (Munich-Vienna, 1980).
- ³⁶ Envoy Marek to Foreign Minister Berger-Waldenegg, 8 November 1934, in: ÖStA, AdR, NPA Tschechoslowakei 2/9, GZ 46.950/13-1934, carton 751; Marek to Berger-Waldenegg, 9 April 1935, in Suppan, „Außenpolitische Beziehungen,“ 269 f.

³⁷ The Sudeten German Party won exactly 1,249,530 votes on 19 May 1935, die Czechoslovakian Agrarian Party 1,116,593 votes. – Cf. Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans*, 206; Jiří Sláma und Karel Kaplan, *Die Parlamentswahlen in der Tschechoslowakei 1935-1946-1948. Eine statistische Analyse* (Munich, 1986), 19-26.

³⁸ Cf. Gerhard Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich* (Graz-Vienna-Cologne, 1976); Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Austria – First Target and Adversary of National Socialism 1933-1938* (Vienna, 2002).

³⁹ Edvard Beneš, *Das Problem Mitteleuropa und die Lösung der österreichischen Frage. Exposé des Ministers vor den beiden Kammern des Parlaments* (Prague, 21 March 1934); cf. Rudolf Neck, „Thesen zum Februar. Ursprünge, Verlauf und Folgen,“ in *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz. Studien und Dokumentationen 1927 bis 1938*, ed. Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna, 1975), 151-156; Robert Kvaček, „L'Anschluss et les relations tchécoslovaquo-françaises,“ *Historica* 26 (1987), 47-102; *Drehscheibe Prag. Zur deutschen Emigration in der Tschechoslowakei 1933-1939*, ed. Peter Becher and Peter Heumos (Munich, 1992).

⁴⁰ Notes by Envoy Marek on the discussions between Minister-President Hodža und Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg, Prague, 17 January 1936, in: ÖStA, AdR, NPA Tschechoslowakei I/III geheim, GZ 34.525/13-1936, Kart. 415; cf. Arnold Suppan, „Die Außenpolitik der ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik aus Wiener Sicht,“ *Edvard Beneš und die tschechoslowakische Außenpolitik 1918-1948*, ed. Arnold Suppan and Elisabeth Vyslonzil (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), 15-82, here 74.

⁴¹ Hanns Haas, „Österreich und das Ende der kollektiven Sicherheit,“ in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936*, ed. Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna, 1977), 11-52.

⁴² Conversation Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg – Minister-President Hodža in Vienna, 14 July 1936, in: ÖStA, AdR, NPA Kleine Entente geheim, GZ 40.512/13-1936, carton 412; Gerhard Weinberg, „Secret Hitler-Beneš Negotiations in 1936-37,“ *Journal of Central European Affairs* 19 (1959/60), 368-374; cf. Igor Lukeš, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler. The Diplomacy of Edvard Beneš in the 1930s* (New York-Oxford, 1996), 96 ff.

⁴³ Memorandum by Envoy Hornbostel (according to information relayed by Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg), 27 March 1937, in: ÖStA, AdR, NPA Tschechoslowakei I/III geheim, GZ 37.430/10, carton 415.

⁴⁴ Smelser, *Sudetenproblem*, 184-189.

⁴⁵ Hans-Ulrich Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt. Deutschland 1933-1945* (Berlin, 1986), 559 ff.

⁴⁶ Memorandum by Envoy Hornbostel (according to information relayed by Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg), 28 September 1937, in: ÖStA, AdR, NPA Tschechoslowakei I/III geheim, GZ 37.430/10, carton 415; „Kvaček, L'Anschluss,“ 63 ff.

⁴⁷ Cf. Gerhard Botz, *Die Eingliederung Österreichs in das Deutsche Reich* (Vienna 1988); Eduard Winter, *Mein Leben im Dienst des Völkerverständnisses. Nach Tagebuchaufzeichnungen, Briefen, Dokumenten und Erinnerungen* (Berlin, 1981), 100.

⁴⁸ Volker Zimmermann, *Die Sudetendeutschen im NS-Staat. Politik und Stimmung der Bevölkerung im Reichsgau Sudetenland (1938-1945)* (Essen, 1999), 437; cf. Alena Mišková and Vojtěch Šuštek, *Josef Pfitzner a protektorátní Praha v letech 1939-1945* [Josef Pfitzner and Prague under the Protectorate in the Years 1939-1945], (Prague, 2000).

⁴⁹ *Dokumente zur Sudetendeutschen Frage 1916-1967*, ed. Ernst Nittner (Munich, 1967), 208-248; Václav Havel, „Beneš und das „tschechische Dilemma“. Das Drama eines europäischen Politikers,“ in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ), 19 April 2002, 6; Seibt, *Deutschland und die Tschechen*, 335-338.

⁵⁰ Synopsis by E. Beneš to L. Rašín concerning foreign and domestic policy, London, 24 November [?] 1938, in *Formování československého zahraničního odboje v letech 1938-1939 ve světle svědectví Jana Opočenského* [The Formation of Czechoslovak Resistance Abroad during the years 1938-1939 as witnessed by Jan Opočenský], ed. Milan Hauner (Prague, 2000), 143-155; Hans Lemberg, „'München 1938' und die langfristigen Folgen für das Verhältnis zwischen Tschechen und Deutschen,“ in *Begegnung und Konflikt*, 103-118.

⁵¹ Zimmermann, *Die Sudetendeutschen*, 98-108.

⁵² Richard G. Plaschka and Arnold Suppan, „Historische Perspektiven zur Vertreibung der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei,“ in *Nationale Frage und Vertreibung*, 13-35; cf. Ulrich von Hassell, *Vom andern Deutschland. Aus den nachgelassenen Tagebüchern 1938-1944* (Zürich-Freiburg/Breisgau, 1946).

⁵³ Detlev Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung 1938-1945. Pläne und Entscheidungen zum ‚Transfer‘ der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei und aus Polen* (Munich, 2001), 24 f., 419 ff.

⁵⁴ Detlev Brandes, „Nationalsozialistische Tschechenpolitik im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren,“ in *Begegnung und Konflikt*, 119 f.

⁵⁵ Alena Mišková, „Německá univerzita za 2. světové války“ [The German University during the Second World War], in *Dějiny univerzity Karlovy 1348-1990*, IV: 1918-1990, ed. Jan Havránek and Zdeněk Poustka (Prague, 1998), 213-231.

⁵⁶ Sicherheitsdienst RFSS, SD-Leitabschnitt Prag, Tagesbericht 231/41, 19 September 1941, in *Deutsche Politik im „Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren“ unter Reinhard Heydrich 1941-1942. Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Miroslav Karný, Jaroslava Milotová and Margita Kárná (Berlin, 1997), 86 f.

⁵⁷ Brandes, „Nationalsozialistische Tschechenpolitik“, 131 ff.

⁵⁸ Brandes, „Nationalsozialistische Tschechenpolitik“, 123-125.

⁵⁹ Cf. Detlev Brandes, *Die Tschechen unter deutschem Protektorat*, 1 (Munich-Vienna, 1969); Eva Schmidt-Hartmann, „Tschechoslowakei,“ in: *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Wolfgang Benz (Munich, 1991), 353-379; Miroslav Karný, „Der Holocaust und die Juden in Böhmen und Mähren,“ *Tschechen, Deutsche und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, ed. Robert Maier (Hannover, 1997), 39-56.

⁶⁰ *Acta Occupationis Bohemiae et Moraviae. Die Deutschen in der Tschechoslowakei 1933-1947*, ed. Václav Král (Prague, 1964), Document 385, 486-489.

⁶¹ Pavel Škorpil, „Probleme bei der Berechnung der Zahl der tschechoslowakischen Todesopfer des nationalsozialistischen Deutschlands,“ in *Der Weg in die Katastrophe. Deutsch-tschechoslowakische Beziehungen 1938-1947*, ed. Detlev Brandes and Václav Kural (Essen, 1994), 161-164; Miroslav Karný, „Die tschechoslowakischen Opfer der deutschen Okkupation,“ in *Begegnung und Konflikt*, 137-146; Zimmermann, *Die Sudetendeutschen*, 427-433; René Küpper, „Karl Hermann Frank als Deutscher Staatsminister für Böhmen und Mähren,“ in *Geteilt, besetzt, beherrscht. Die Tschechoslowakei 1938-1945: Reichsgau Sudetenland, Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, Slowakei*, ed. Monika Glettler, Lubomír Lipták and Alena Mišková (Essen, 2004), 31-52.

⁶² Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung*, 148-150.

⁶³ *Wenzel Jaksch – Edvard Beneš. Briefe und Dokumente aus dem Londoner Exil 1939-1943*, ed. Friedrich Prinz (Köln, 1973), 128.

⁶⁴ G.P. Muraško und A.F. Noskova, „Nacional’no-territorial’nyj vopros v kontekste poslevoennykh realnosti vostočnoj Evropy“ [The National-Territorial Question in the Context of Postwar Realities in Eastern Europe], in *Nacional’nyj vopros v Vostočnoj Evropy* (Moscow, 1995), 231; cf. Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred. Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass. – London, 2001), 114.

⁶⁵ *Slovenské národné povstanie. Dokumenty* [The Slovak National Uprising: Documents], ed. Vilém Prečan (Bratislava, 1965), 238-242; Tomáš Staněk, „Vertreibung und Aussiedlung der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei 1945-1948,“ in *Begegnung und Konflikt*, 207-229, here 217.

⁶⁶ Tomáš Staněk, *Verfolgung 1945. Die Stellung der Deutschen in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien (außerhalb der Lager und Gefängnisse)*, ed. Otfried Pustejovsky and Walter Reichel (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar, 2002, Czech edition, Prague, 1996), 27-63; Jaroslav Kučera, „Statistische Berechnungen der Vertreibungsverluste – Schlußwort oder Sackgasse?,“ in *Begegnung und Konflikt*, 231-244; Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing, Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge and New York, 2005).

⁶⁷ Staněk, „Vertreibung und Aussiedlung,“ 220.

⁶⁸ *Vertreibung und Vertreibungsverbrechen 1945-1948. Bericht des Bundesarchivs vom 28. Mai 1974. Archivalien und ausgewählte Erlebnisberichte*, ed. Kulturstiftung der deutschen Vertriebenen (Bonn, 1989), 42-47; Record of a discussion between Stalin, Fierlinger and Vlado Clementis, Moscow, 28 June 1945, in *Vostočnaja Evropa v dokumentach rossijskih archivov, 1944-1953*, ed. T.V. Volokotina, T.M. Islamov, [et al.], I: 1944-1948 (Moscow, 1997), 232.

⁶⁹ Emilia Hrabovec, *Vertreibung und Abschub. Deutsche in Mähren 1945-1947* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), 330-334.

⁷⁰ *Rozumět dějinám. Vývoj česko-německých vztahů na našem území v letech 1848-1948* [Understanding History: The Development of Czech-German Relations on our Territory in the Years 1848-1948], ed. Zdeněk Beneš [et alii] (Prague, 2002), 275-287.

⁷¹ Helmut Slapnicka, „Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus der Sicht der innerstaatlichen Rechtsordnung,“ in *Nationale Frage und Vertreibung*, 55-75; *Rozumět dějinám*, 287-296.

⁷² In July 1945, a castle in Kamenice nad Lipou in the possession of the Swiss citizen Richard Geymüller was confiscated. In the fall of 1948, Geymüller obtained a ruling in court that acquitted him of the charge of collaboration. The confiscation, however, was not reversed. A claim to restitution by Geymüller’s heirs after 1989 was rejected in the Czech courts. The case is now before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. – *NZZ*, 22 March 2002, 6.

⁷³ Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československa 1945-1947* [The Expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia 1945-1947] (Prague, 1991), 350-356.

⁷⁴ Kabinettsratsprotokoll Nr. 12, 12 June 1945, in „*Ich bin dafür, die Sache in die Länge zu ziehen.*“ *Wortprotokolle der österreichischen Bundesregierung von 1945-1952 über die Entschädigung der Juden*, ed. Robert Knight (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), 85.

⁷⁵ Official record of the discussion on 4 July 1945 in the state office of internal affairs about the problem of refugees, in: ÖStA, AdR, BKA/AA, II-Pol. 1945, GZ 138.

⁷⁶ Karl Gruber, „Prager Eindrücke,“ *Neues Österreich*, 19 December 1945, 1.

⁷⁷ Report about the farewell audience of the Austrian Envoy Vollgruber with President Gottwald, 12 November 1948, in: ÖStA, AdR, BKA/AA, II-Pol. 1948, GZ 118.511.

⁷⁸ ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol., GZ 547.073-58, 236.074-59, 240.061-59, 240.095-59, 72.756-6/60, 83.356-6/60; cf. Paul Ullmann, *Die diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei von 1945 bis 1968* (Phil. Diss., Vienna, 2001), 172-189.

⁷⁹ ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol., GZ 60.139-6/62, 64.893-6/62; cf. Ullmann, *Beziehungen*, 190-197.

⁸⁰ Slapnicka, „Vertreibung der Deutschen,“ 73 f.

⁸¹ Tschechiens Mühe mit der Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Juristische und moralische Aspekte der Beneš-Dekrete, *NZZ*, 22 March 2002, 6.

⁸² European Court of Human Rights of 12 July 2001, Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein vs. Germany, Application No. 42527/98.

⁸³ UN Human Rights Committee No. 747/1997, Des Fours-Walderode vs. The Czech Republic, final views, 30 October 2001, UN Doc. CCPR/C/73/D/747/1997.

⁸⁴ Jochen A. Frowein, Legal Opinion concerning Beneš-Decrees and related issues (September 12, 2002); Common Conclusions by Prof. U. Bernitz, Prof. J. A. Frowein, Lord Kingsland Q.C. (October 2, 2002).

⁸⁵ Ulrich Schmid, „Europa kann mit den Beneš-Dekreten leben,“ *NZZ*, 12/13 October 2002, 2.

⁸⁶ Rudolf Vierhaus, „’Historisierung’ als Gegenwartsbewältigung. Das Deutsch-tschechische Verhältnis 1918-1989,“ in *Begegnung und Konflikt*, 13-21.