

bias or pride prevent them from seeing things the way they are. Undoubtedly, there will be those who will not be pleased that this book mentions the criticism of Masaryk by the Czech historian, Pekař; that it quotes Masaryk's statement that the sending of Voska to Steed in August 1918, was "the beginning;" that it documents Masaryk's connections with the British intelligence service and the British financing of Voska's intelligence network in the United States, Russia, and elsewhere; that it points out that some of Masaryk's statements were not true; that it shows how it was possible for Masaryk, who in 1914 had been so discredited by the Šviha affair that most leading Czech politicians did not want to speak with him, to return from abroad in 1918 and the president of the new state.⁵ Since all these and other facts and events were related to the genesis of Czechoslovakia, they had to be discussed in this work.

The achievement of Czechoslovak independence resulted from a series of historical accidents that were exploited by the leaders of the independence movement at home and abroad. In the final phase of the war the exile leaders received full support from the Czech political leaders at home and thus could claim to speak for the nation. The Czechoslovak independence movement was rising and falling with the great international events; it was strengthened by some and weakened by others, as Beneš had observed during the war.⁶ He and the other members of the independence movement abroad were fully aware of the importance of the home front, and the exile movement never separated diplomatic-political work from the military exploits of its armed forces. Thus, those who fought for Czechoslovak independence at home and abroad realized the interdependence of work at home, on the military fronts, and abroad.

Because of his tragic death in May 1919, Štefánik was not able to shape the destinies of the Czechoslovak state, as Masaryk and Beneš were. Despite their unity of aims during the war, the two leaders differed in their fundamental outlooks. Before the war Masaryk was a "realist" in politics; for Beneš "realism" was "non-political, without life, dry, doctrinaire, sometimes trivial, and in its essence non-revolutionary and non-radical."⁷ Beneš cooperated closely with radical elements and was close to the Social Democratic party, being a contributor to *Právo lidu*, a paper published by the party, which had offered him a position as an editor. Masaryk was a middle-class politician. In his *Social Question*, Masaryk saw revolution as a sign of "weakness and imperfection." For his revolution was "political

superstition. The revolution is a political act. Beneš believes in a revolution which suits him. He would be a hero. He goes into a revolution which he made and admitted. Beneš's automatic action for the war was "always pursued by a philosophy and a

Despite the fact that Beneš had much in common with realism and pragmatism, Beneš's belief in a revolution was not shared by Stalin. They were not themselves and were centered and were a sacred law of a political nation which was created after World War I. Beneš's western-oriental view of Czechoslovakia was not shared by Masaryk and Beneš. Beneš was idealized by the political sphere of irrationality and was not rational.

Before the war Beneš was in politics; he was not a realist—sometimes with his own ideas, sometimes with those of others. The war offered a chance to the masses, since it was

superstition," "political and social mysticism and mythus." He described the revolutionary as a gambler who plays with life, "a superstitious man, political fetishist who believes in social and political miracles. He believes in accident and is convinced that $2 \times 2 = 5$ or 4, depending on how it suits him. He is convinced of his geniality and greatness, he pretends to be a hero. Revolutionary is an aristocrat, absolutist and tyrant, though he goes into struggle with the slogan of equality and brotherhood." Yet Masaryk himself became a revolutionary, credited "lucky accidents" (among which he specifically recalled the Siberian "Anabasis") for his success, and admitted making "tactical mistakes" and improvising in his diplomatic activity.⁸ Beneš, on the other hand, boasted that the main reason for the wartime success of the movement for independence was that he "always pursued scientific politics" and that he consistently applied his philosophy and scientific method to politics.⁹

Despite the differences in their outlook and ages, Masaryk and Beneš had much in common. Both tended to identify political illusions with realism and sobriety, as evidenced by Masaryk's letter to Chicherin and Beneš's belief in the magic of the League of Nations and his trusting Stalin. They saw reality through their own eyes only, never looking at themselves and at situations through alien eyes, thus becoming self-centered and self-righteous, and applying in concrete situations "the sacred law of selfishness." For both of them the Czech question was the problem of a small nation living between east and west, not that of a political nation whose history and traditions tied it to central Europe. (In World War I, Masaryk and Beneš strove to make the future state into a western-oriented political entity; during World War II, Beneš brought Czechoslovakia into the eastern, Soviet-dominated orbit.) Also, both Masaryk and Beneš represented the trend in modern politics characterized by the political manipulation of human relations, in which the atmosphere of irrationality is artificially created by those who are technically rational.

Before the war Masaryk's "new politics" made no headway in Czech politics; he was rather isolated, constantly bickering with other politicians—sometimes with National Socials, sometimes with Social Democrats, sometimes with both—and almost always with Kramář and the Catholics. The war offered an unusual opportunity for his kind of manipulation of the masses, since it created an artificial atmosphere of hysteria, fear, and

hope in which propaganda and manipulation techniques became effective; the words and actions of Masaryk (and Beneš) were not analyzed by their competitors as they normally would have been in peacetime. Before the war the Czechs lived, fundamentally, by the principles embodied in their Christian culture and tradition. They were tolerant, and the intolerant attitude and semi-religious (or pseudo-religious) zeal of Masaryk's politics was alien to them; so were Masaryk's (and also Beneš's) fundamental conceptions of man and history, nature and time, being and truth. The maxim that permeated Masaryk's and Beneš's political practices could have never originated in Bohemia: "In politics you may even make alliance with the devil to achieve your goals, but you must be certain that you will outwit him, not that he will outwit you." As it happened, Masaryk died before Czechoslovakia collapsed. Beneš, however, as former British Prime Minister Clement R. Atlee noted, "put far too much confidence in his own cleverness" in his dealings both with the Germans and later with the Russians; and "did not seem to realize how long a spoon was needed to sup with the devil."¹⁰

Masaryk's religion was likewise foreign to the vast majority of Czechs and Slovaks before the war, as was his tendency to move from one extreme to another. His preoccupation with religion led him to believe that the Czech and Russian questions were religious questions.¹¹ Masaryk contended that the revolutionary movements in Russia before World War I were, in substance, religious movements. During the years 1906-07 he closely followed religious developments in Russia, and ascribed great importance to them. However, when he was in Russia in 1917, he paid no attention to the religious ferment in the country, though it was more manifest than ever. If Masaryk overemphasized the religious issue before the war, he left it out of his concerns in 1917. This indicates that religion was for him merely a means of influencing the masses to prop up a particular program and advance his own political objectives.

Though Masaryk originally intended to establish a new church rather than to initiate a new political group, the Realist party, the ideology of that party reflected his own philosophy and religion. It proved to be an inadequate instrument for changing the outlook and attitudes of the vast majority of the Czechs before the war. But after the war, while he was president of the state, he could and did mold the intelligentsia and the younger generation in accordance with his own image.

The hazards of any method mentioned earlier in this work may be a Gnostic turned politician like Plato. He belongs to a long line of teachings are dualism and his first presidential message delivered on December 22, 1918, in the struggle in which "the spirit of his 'inner vision,' believed in laws, as well as independent religious truth and moral values, qualified teacher of truth, and of the *illuminati* who have turned into truth—one of those who stand before the supreme court of truth.

In his theoretical writings as a politician, he separate the such as defense of truth, which his war time political method spelled out his theories clearly and his political method is good. Masaryk was a combination of a politician. Already in his *Czechoslovakia* when he asked, "Why must this really necessary and inevitable to Masaryk, the Czechs have the passivity of their character animal for whom nothing success ever method, regardless of progress to have been the ultimate aim characteristics were so different from ascribed to the Czechs. (Incidentally as martyr diametrically opposite soldier Schweik.)

In his criticism of "Masaryk" Czech historian Josef Pekař noted that his was more than a scholar, and that his aim

The hazards of any attempt at categorizing Masaryk have been mentioned earlier in this work. However, to this writer Masaryk appears to be a Gnostic turned politician whose spiritual great-grandfather was Plato. He belongs to a long line of Gnostics, basic to whose diversified teachings are dualism and the antagonism between matter and spirit. (In his first presidential message to the Revolutionary National Assembly, delivered on December 22, 1918, Masaryk described World War I as a struggle in which "the spirit won over the matter.") The Gnostic, because of his "inner vision," believes himself to be above all civil society and its laws, as well as independent of an hierarchical church that teaches religious truth and moral virtues; and he regards himself as the supremely qualified teacher of truths about God and His creation. Masaryk was one of the *illuminati* who have believed themselves to have a special insight into truth—one of those who had made their private conscience the supreme court of truth.

In his theoretical writings Masaryk subordinated politics to ethics; as a politician, he separate the two completely. The highest moral values, such as defense of truth, were not Masaryk's highest political values, as his war time political method amply demonstrates. Though he never spelled out his theories clearly, and though the gap between his moralizing and his political method is quite obvious, it may be argued that the real Masaryk was a combination of the theoretician and the propagandist-politician. Already in his *Czech Question* he hinted at the real Masaryk when he asked, "Why must Hus die and Wiclif not? . . . was his death really necessary and inevitable? Why could Luther live?"¹² According to Masaryk, the Czechs have a tendency toward martyrdom, reflecting the passivity of their character. But Masaryk was an activist, a political animal for whom nothing succeeds like success. To succeed by whatever method, regardless of professed ethics and objective truth, seems to have been the ultimate aim of this charismatic leader, whose characteristics were so different from those that he—not quite accurately—scribed to the Czechs. (Incidentally, Masaryk's stereotype of the Czech as martyr diametrically opposes another Czech stereotype, the good soldier Schweik.)

In his criticism of "Masaryk's Czech Philosophy"¹³ the prominent Czech historian Josef Pekař noted that Masaryk was an agitator rather than a scholar, and that his ambition, zeal, anti-Catholic feelings, and

proselytizing efforts impaired his ability to see the structure of reality. His pamphlet "In the Struggle for Religion" (1904) reflects his Gnosticism or even atheism. Masaryk writes, "Jesus required faith from the pious, but we no longer believe and we cannot, and we will not, believe, because we have come to understand that to believe in god always means to believe man, another one or oneself." Though he said in his "American Lectures," delivered in 1902, that every man should be his own pope,¹⁴ he himself became the pope of the "Masaryk sect"—a fringe group before the war. After the war, when he became president of Czechoslovakia, this sect became a whole church; now, protected by the Law for the Protection of the Republic, adopted in 1923, he exercised a strong influence on the whole nation. Opportunists jumped on his bandwagon, trying to outdo the prewar "sectarians" in adulation of "papa Masaryk." To question, not merely the faith and morals, but even the methods, theories, writings, and politics of the "national pope" became a tabu, a sacrilege, to those of the "Masaryk democrats" who uncritically promoted the Masaryk mythology.

After the war Masaryk and Beneš had their admirers and enemies in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. They both knew the value of favorable publicity and they saw to it that they got plenty of it at home and abroad. Their critics, however, blamed them for the "Balkanization of Central Europe" that brought economic misery and the curse of "organic nationalism" on the peoples living in the area, and that paved the way for Hitler's expansionism in World War II. During the period between the two wars the followers of Masaryk in Czechoslovakia, the "Masaryk democrats," professed proudly the philosophy of their idol, the "philosopher statesman," while other people in the wings, both right and left, as well as the centrist People's parties, Czech and Slovak, and the German, Polish, and Hungarian minorities did not share their enthusiasm for "papa Masaryk."

Wenzel Jaksch, a German Social Democrat, suggested that Masaryk's political philosophy was not genuine in the sense that "a philosophy is the consistent application of a set of principles." He described it as "a mélange of truths, falsehoods, and contradictions, a doctrine of pure expediency wearing the cloak of democratic ethics and concocted to meet the specific needs of Greater Czech *Machtpolitik*. The result was the propagation of a congeries of political errors which have corrupted the thinking of two generations."¹⁵

Fourteen years after suchlovak independence, Charles Sumner's action in the United States. meeting at Chicago that the not practice the rule of law substitution, that the rights o respected, and that censors in Austria-Hungary during the The "Realist" clique was ra it had the power of the stat fore the war. Furthermore, tion of the Republic, dealing ed criticism of the president truth of any such accusation above the law. The deeds a questioned. A priest-poet a criticism of a philosophical citizen of Austria-Hungary, himself, a native born Czech was deprived of his seat in r from Czechoslovakia on the citizen.¹⁶ The denial of his r peace treaty with Czechoslov tion of 1920.

Pergler also deplored the Masaryk went so far as to forgery and that it "was mea —as if Slovak autonomy in Cz United States. In May 1918, moral support of Slovaks in the agreement. On November ssembly formally ratified all co and he signed a calligraphic ce ber 14, 1918, the day he wa public.¹⁷ (This was his secon name of the republic, Czecho-S spelling was used in all docum gation at the Paris Peace Confe

Fourteen years after succeeding in his efforts to bring about Czechoslovak independence, Charles Pergler, the leader of the Czech political action in the United States during World War I, declared at a large public meeting at Chicago that the Masaryk-Beneš regime in Czechoslovakia did not practice the rule of law as it was prescribed by the Czechoslovak constitution, that the rights of individuals who displeased Beneš were not respected, and that censorship there was much worse than it had been in Austria-Hungary during the reactionary and absolutist regime of Bach. The "Realist" clique was raging there, Pergler said. This time, however, it had the power of the state at its disposal, something it had lacked before the war. Furthermore, paragraph eleven of the Law for the Protection of the Republic, dealing with the president of the republic, prohibited criticism of the president and made inadmissible as a defense proof of truth of any such accusation in a court of law; the president was virtually above the law. The deeds and philosophy of the president could not be questioned. A priest-poet and writer, Jakub Deml, was prosecuted for criticism of a philosophical pronouncement that Masaryk, then a private citizen of Austria-Hungary, had made before the war. In 1932 Pergler himself, a native born Czech and the first Czechoslovak minister to Japan, was deprived of his seat in the Czechoslovak parliament and was barred from Czechoslovakia on the pretext that he was not a Czechoslovak citizen.¹⁶ The denial of his right of citizenship violated article six of the peace treaty with Czechoslovakia (1919) and the Czechoslovak constitution of 1920.

Pergler also deplored the treatment accorded to the Slovaks. In 1929 Masaryk went so far as to claim that the Pittsburgh Agreement was a forgery and that it "was meant for America and American conditions,"—as if Slovak autonomy in Czechoslovakia could ever be applicable to the United States. In May 1918, Masaryk needed the financial, political, and moral support of Slovaks in America; therefore, he drafted and signed the agreement. On November 12, 1918, the Revolutionary National Assembly formally ratified all commitments that had been made by Masaryk and he signed a calligraphic copy of the Pittsburgh Agreement on November 14, 1918, the day he was elected president of the Czechoslovak republic.¹⁷ (This was his second signing of the document.) Implicit in the name of the republic, Czecho-Slovakia, was the idea of a dual republic; this spelling was used in all documents presented by the Czecho-Slovak delegation at the Paris Peace Conference.

In 1920, however, the situation was different: Czechoslovakia existed as a recognized independent state, with a constitution providing for a unitary form of government. Masaryk no longer needed the Slovaks in America. He and his associates believed that the Slovaks in Slovakia could be subdued with the help and collaboration of the Czechophile Vavro Šrobár and some other Protestant politicians, and through stern policies pursued by the centralist government in Prague. The Slovak Populists, however, protested the reduction of Slovakia to a province (or a "Czech colony") of the state dominated by the Czechs and their Czechophile Slovak friends. In 1922, 1930, and 1938, they submitted to the Czechoslovak National Assembly bills calling for Slovak autonomy and based on the Pittsburgh Agreement. Upon their insistence, Law No. 299, of November 19, 1938,¹⁸ which brought the First Republic to its end and ushered in the federalized "Second" Czecho-Slovak Republic, explicitly recognized that "in the Pittsburgh Agreement and other similar agreements and declarations of domestic and international relevance the Czechoslovak nation was granted entire autonomy." The law stated, furthermore, that "the Czecho-Slovak Republic originated in the convergent and sovereign will of the two nations endowed with equal rights."¹⁹

Unfortunately, giving the Slovaks their due came too late—too late for the Czecho-Slovak state. As Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University, put it, "had the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia at the time of its organization in 1919 been based upon the cantonal system, its history . . . might have been very different and far happier."²⁰ Already in 1919 and early in 1920 Kramář bitterly denounced the mistakes made by the Prague government in Slovakia and Sub-Carpatho-Russia (Ruthenia), blaming the weakness of the administration and its socialistic tendencies, which he claimed were Bolshevik-inspired. As for the Slovaks, they had many reasons for disliking the Czechs. Many of the Czechs who had been sent to Slovakia by the Prague government were corrupt, incompetent, and arrogant. Also, the Czech soldiers, specially those of the Twenty-Eighth Regiment, behaved very badly, desecrating shrines and churches, and treating Church-going Slovaks with contempt.²¹ Masaryk did not want to recognize the injustices perpetrated by the new state against the Slovaks, nor did he admit to being inconsistent in demanding the right of self-determination for the Czechs but denying it to the Slovaks and the minorities of Germans, Hungarians, and Ruthenians living in Czechoslovakia.

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But his principal critic in Czechoslovakia, Kramář, reproached Masaryk most for the inconsistency of his treatment of Russia.

Kramář pointed out that Masaryk had written a work published after the war, that "the Tsarist Sodom and Gomorrah had to be eradicated by fire and brimstone."²² Yet the same Masaryk assigned Constantinople and the Straits to tsarist Russia in his memorandum for Secretary Grey of the British Foreign Office, dated April 6, 1915, and submitted to him at the beginning of May 1915. (See chapter 4 above.) At that time Masaryk stated that "a Bohemian republic" was advocated merely "by a few radical politicians," and he projected Bohemia as "a monarchical state" in which a "Russian dynasty in any form would be the most popular one. In any case, the Czech politicians wish to establish the Kingdom of Bohemia in complete accord with Russia. Wishes and intentions of Russia will be of determining influence."²³ One year later, in his "Message to the Czechs and Slovaks in Russia" of April 6, 1916,²⁴ he wrote, "Your colony in Russia has a special place among other colonies—you are the only people who live in a Slavic state, in the state of determining importance." Masaryk emphasized that "since we expect so much from Russia for our liberation, it is, therefore, extremely important that you have a correct attitude toward the Russian political world." Masaryk then reported himself "to the Russian representatives abroad first and foremost," and he "asked them for brotherly help." The reader may recall that, despite the warnings that Masaryk had received from his friends in Russia, he wrote an article for a paper published by Minister of the Interior Protopopov, the gravedigger of Russia, as Kramář called him, just a few weeks before the fall of the monarchy in Russia. Yet Dürich was expelled from the CSNC for doing exactly what Masaryk urged the Czechs and Slovaks in Russia to do and what he himself, ostensibly, did: for taking "the correct attitude toward the Russian political world." After the war Kramář was denounced for taking that kind of attitude toward Russia. Kramář resented it and claimed that there was no difference between what he did after the war and what Masaryk wrote to the Czechs in Russia in 1916.²⁵

There was, however, one great difference between Masaryk and Kramář: whatever Kramář said about Russia, he said with strong conviction, while for Masaryk, being pro-Russian was merely a tactic. Kramář never learned about Masaryk's connections with British intelligence; or, if he did, he

could not prove anything, since the matter remained secret. Štefánik had had the evidence; but Štefánik was dead. Kramář was an honest man who made no charges he could not prove; Beneš and Masaryk, who had no moral scruples whenever their own political interests were involved, had an unfair advantage over him. As it happened, Kramář's concept of the state foreign policy orientation was rejected and Masaryk's concept prevailed. Štefánik, being no longer any threat to anyone alive, became a national hero. It was, however, Beneš's destiny to become the most controversial person of the three who were credited by many with winning Czechoslovak independence. As president of the state, he decided to capitulate in the fall of 1938, and during and after World War II he led Czechoslovakia into the Soviet orbit.

But no matter what one thinks of any one of the three, Masaryk, Beneš, and Štefánik took upon themselves a gigantic task and struggled against great odds when they attempted to destroy an almost four-hundred-year-old monarchy and a viable economic and political unit in central Europe, long taken for granted and considered a bulwark against Russia and Germany. It was, indeed, the Czech nineteenth-century historian, František Palacký, who said that "if Austria had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent her."²⁶ Long after the Ottoman Turkish threat (mentioned in Masaryk's memorandum to the U.S. secretary of state on August 31, 1918) was gone, the existence of Austria-Hungary was taken for granted even by Masaryk and Beneš. In his dissertation, published as a book at Paris in 1908, Beneš wrote, "People have often spoken of a dismemberment of Austria. I do not believe in it at all. The historic and economic bonds among the Austrian nations are too strong to make such a dismemberment possible. The introduction of universal suffrage and the democratization of Austria, particularly in Bohemia, prepare the soil for national reconciliation."²⁷ In 1909, Masaryk, too, saw no better alternative to Austria-Hungary, and he continued to believe in its inevitability till the arrival of the war.²⁸

After the war Beneš recalled that, when he arrived in Paris in 1915, he had presented his views on the need to destroy Austria-Hungary before a group of French journalists in the presence of a member of parliament, who, after Beneš's speech, told the journalists, "He is a nice boy, but he is crazy."²⁹ According to the general climate of opinion at that time, the idea of dismembering Austria-Hungary was insane. And yet Austria-Hungary collapsed at the end of the war.

Needless to say, the origins of World War I were not related to the national aspirations of the Czechs and Slovaks, but to the national interests of the powers involved in it. It was important for France to defeat Germany, as it had been for Prussia to defeat France in 1870-71. Contrary to the tracts written by Masaryk and his followers, the war was no programmatic and ideological world revolution. It was not caused by the Czechoslovak problem or by the problems of any other small nations within Austria-Hungary. It is true that tsarist Russia planned to establish a Czechoslovak state in 1916, but it collapsed long before the end of the war; and until the summer of 1918 the western Allies were willing to preserve Austria-Hungary in one form or another. Masaryk's claim that the "program of the Allies was, in substance, program for the reorganization of Eastern Europe," and that "dismemberment of Austria-Hungary . . . [was] the main war aim,"³⁰ cannot be substantiated. The great powers recognized the existence and the national aspirations of the small nations in central and eastern Europe only when they came to believe that it was in their own interests to do so. It is quite usual that wars bring about the collapse of some states and give rise to others, but only a person who is unable or unwilling to see the structure of reality would argue that the great powers went to war in order to liberate the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Serbs, etc.

One may argue that Austria's doom was already sealed in 1914, as did Czernin, an embittered man and an apologist for himself, who wrote after the war that the empire had to die anyway. He regretted only that the country, by entering the war, "chose the most terrible manner" of death.³¹ But, the empire would not have had to die, had it reformed itself in time. The true gravedigger of the empire, Francis Joseph, lived too long, failed to solve the nationality problem in Austria-Hungary, and brought the country into a war that developed into a worldwide conflict. His successor, Charles, was confronted with a difficult situation, since an attempt a federalization during the war would in all likelihood have encountered violent German and Hungarian opposition. According to Czernin, the nationality problem in the empire could have been solved during the war only with powerful help from outside³²—with the help of the Allies. Indeed, Emperor Charles attempted to obtain such help when he contacted the Allies and made them a peace offer. The Sixtus affair, however, terminated the negotiations for either a separate or a general peace. When

President Wilson approved Lansing's recommendation "to declare without reservation for an independent Poland, an independent Bohemia and an independent Southern Slav State, and a return of the Rumanians and Italians to their natural allegiance,"³³ "Austria-Hungary as a great European power was doomed."³⁴

The British recognition on August 9, 1918, of the Czechoslovak army and the CSNC as "the present trustee of the future Czechoslovak government"³⁵ was still short of an Allied commitment to dismember Austria-Hungary and the sanctioning of an independent Czechoslovak state, but it did undoubtedly lead to these developments later on. Henry Wickham Steed stated the decisive factor in the British decision to recognize the CSNC in his introduction to Masaryk's book, *The Making of a State*: "Thanks to his army in Siberia and to the Czechoslovak Legions simultaneously organized in France and Italy, Masaryk and his devoted helpers, Beneš and Štefánik, won formal recognition for their people as belligerent Allies."³⁶ While the recognition of the belligerency of the Czechoslovaks still did not imply the recognition of an independent political entity, most historians—communist, anti-communist, Czech, Russian, British, and American—agree that the recognition of the Masaryk-led committee as a provisional government of the future Czechoslovak state was related to the Czechoslovak anti-Bolshevik uprising in Russia in May 1918, and the fight with the Bolsheviks that followed it.³⁷ In Masaryk's own words, "the fact that we had an army and that, in Russia, it was the only political and military organization of any size, gave us importance; and, in the negotiations for our recognition, respect for our army was a weighty factor."³⁸

According to Masaryk, the Czechoslovak army and its Siberian "Anabasis" provoked President Wilson's interest in the Czech question.³⁹ However, Masaryk's refusal to consent to the proposed deployment of the army in Russia and Siberia, at a time when the latter had already been fighting the Bolsheviks for a whole month, his embarrassing Lansing on June 25, and his other activities in the United States, discussed earlier, give us a clue to the reasons for the U.S. government's unwillingness to join the French and British governments in extending recognition to the CSNC.

Both the president and Lansing were very sympathetic to the Czech cause, and so were State Department officials and the American public.

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Urging the U.S. government to supply weapons and other materials to the Czech army in August 1918, Breckinridge Long of the U.S. State Department pointed out that "the position of the Czecho-Slovak forces in Siberia, preventing Siberian supplies from going to Germany and preventing repatriation of German and Austrian prisoners of war," had a direct bearing upon "the campaign on the Western Front." He wrote in his memorandum that "the Czecho-Slovak soldiers in Siberia are saving the lives of American soldiers in France. The honor, as well as the interest of America is involved in their immediate relief. . . ."40 It was the Allied pressure on Wilson, and his recognition of the exigencies of military cooperation with the Czechoslovak army in Russia and Siberia, that led to the U.S. government's decision to recognize the CSNC. Thus, the factors that eventually compelled the American president to grant recognition to the CSNC were the performance of the Czechoslovak army in Russia and Siberia, and the resulting interest of the American public in the Czechoslovak cause.

The claims of communist historians notwithstanding, it cannot be demonstrated that the Bolshevik Revolution inspired the nation at home to follow the same course; and the idea of an independent Czechoslovak state was not original with the Bolsheviks—in fact, the tsarist government had endorsed it.⁴¹ However, the Brest-Litovsk conference brought the issue of national self-determination to the attention of the oppressed nationalities of the Central Powers. Thus, in the "Epiphany Declaration" of January 6, 1918, the Czech deputies in Vienna, reacting to the slighting of the Czechs at Brest-Litovsk, demanded complete independence for the Czechoslovaks and the "guaranteed participation and full freedom of defending their rights at the Peace Conference."⁴² By its willingness to deal with the Bolsheviks and entertain their proposals at Brest-Litovsk, the Austrian government created for itself a very grave domestic problem.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was also an important factor in the development of the Allied anti-Bolshevik policy, as well as a seed of the future conflict between the Czechoslovak army and the Bolsheviks. Although at the time of its conclusion the treaty was hailed as a great Habsburg victory, in the long run it paved the way to the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. While Austria-Hungary was able, as a consequence of the treaty, to disengage its military forces on the Eastern Front, the Danubian monarchy had to pay a high price. It recognized Lenin's Council of

People's Commissars as the government of Russia, with all the political and moral consequences and ramifications of that act, including the effect on the Poles⁴³ and the rapprochement of the Czech political leaders at home with the exiles. Recognition, it is true, "neutralized" Lenin's Russia in the war; however, the neutrality of Russia, which the Central Powers insisted must be observed to the letter, made the presence of armed Czechoslovak troops in Russia incompatible with the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and hastened the arrival of the conflict that suddenly made the Czechoslovaks in Russia famous. Also, by signing the treaty the Bolsheviks placed themselves in the same camp of the enemies of the Allies and of the Czechoslovaks. This brought about the "emancipation" of the Czechoslovak army as an independent military force, both in the eyes of the Allied public and in fact. It was no longer possible to look upon the Czechs who took up arms against Austria-Hungary as a bunch of traitors who had broken their oath of allegiance to the Austro-Hungarian government, renounced their citizenship, and sworn new allegiance to the Russian tsar. Now their allegiance was no longer to the Russian government, but to the cause of Czechoslovak independence. As Churchill put it, "The Czech troops were no longer mutineers nor traitors to the Habsburg Empire. They were the victorious soldiers and pioneers of Czechoslovakia."⁴⁴ Thus from traitors, as a segment of public opinion even in the Allied countries saw them, the Czechoslovaks became genuine patriots and nationalist heroes. The Bolsheviks acted as midwife in this birth of new heroes. The Czechoslovaks were enemies of the Allies' enemies, and of their Bolshevik "friends" or tools. This enmity, an important psychological factor, was a reason why Brest-Litovsk became the nemesis of Austria-Hungary, both in its internal affairs and in its relations with the Allied and Associated Powers.

Two Czech deputies in the Vienna parliament, an Agrarian, František Staněk, and a Social Democrat, Vlastimil Tusar, brought the disastrous consequences of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk for the Habsburg empire to the attention of Emperor Charles when they visited with him on June 26, 1918. On this occasion the two deputies attacked the foreign policy of Germany and the political agreement concluded by the emperor at Spa on May 12, asserting that by virtue of the latter Austria-Hungary had ceased to be an independent state and had lost the ability to make her own decision on the issue of peace. Charles answered that the agreement

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concluded at Spa was not as far-reaching as the two deputies has assumed, and that peace must be concluded. He added, however, that the enemy did not want to hear about peace and was considering plans for the partition of the empire. To this Tusar replied that the Peace of Brest-Litovsk was responsible for this regrettable situation, since, under its impact, the whole of Europe was against Austria. The emperor, looking very depressed, did not respond to this statement.⁴⁵

The Austro-Hungarian government dug its own grave when it gave respectability to Lenin's Council of People's Commissars by recognizing the latter as the government of Russia. Commenting on the just-concluded "dishonest" Peace of Brest-Litovsk, Masaryk hastened to point out that Kaiser Wilhelm was willing to do business with Trotsky: "a legitimist monarch [deals] with a revolutionary who is, above all, a Jew, and who in his own army could not become even an officer."⁴⁶ Indeed, double standards are resented by many people; morality and moralizing are factors in both domestic and international politics. Whereas the Central Powers recognized the right to independence of some of the non-Russian peoples of the former Russian empire, e.g., the Ukrainians, they denied the same right to some of their subjects, e.g., the Czechs and Slovaks. Furthermore, if the Bolshevik regime was all right for Russia, why should a similar (or much better) regime in Germany or Austria be objectionable? The emperors of the central powers, selfish and improvident, sowed the wind and harvested the whirlwind.

The breakup of Austria-Hungary was sanctioned by the Allies before it actually occurred. Whether or not it was a wise decision is not a matter for consideration in this work, although one may understand or even agree with a noted American historian and diplomat, George F. Kennan, who "deplored the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire," and who had "no sympathy for the fragmentation of sovereign power in the Danube basin to which the outcome of the First World War had led."⁴⁷ With the benefit of hindsight, one could make a case for the proposal made by Emperor Charles to federalize the empire (a proposal that came too late). The Czechoslovak army had, by taking a stand against the Bolsheviks in Russia, already achieved recognition of the exiles as the government of a future Czechoslovakia, though not of the state itself, and the exiles' views on the future of the Habsburg monarchy were accepted by the Allies. The Czechoslovak army's struggle with the Bolsheviks won Allied

recognition of its belligerency, by shedding its blood on the steppes of Russia and the plains of Siberia. Although the number of those who died while fighting on behalf of the independence movement in Russia, Siberia, France, and Italy was relatively small (altogether 4,500 men),⁴⁸ Masaryk was correct when he said that "our freedom was truly bought with blood."⁴⁹

Winning international recognition was a prerequisite for the establishment of Czechoslovakia. However, due credit must be given to the leaders of the independence movement at home, without whose support and cooperation the exile leaders could never have achieved their objectives. The Czechs had their elected representatives and spokesmen living in the empire during the war. Without their declaring independence and assuming power, all the work of the exile movement would have been of little consequence. It was the National Committee that used executive, legislative, administrative, and judicial powers *before* the frontiers of the state were defined; the state boundaries were discussed at the peace conference only *after* the revolutionary government sent troops to Slovakia and to the border regions inhabited predominantly by Germans. The peace conference was confronted with a series of *faits accomplis*; the new state could demonstrate the presence of all elements of statehood as required by international law: it had population, defined territory (as determined by the forces occupying it), and a government exercising effective control over that territory and able to enter diplomatic relations with other states. (Recognition had been extended to the government earlier.) Therefore, the revolution at home, its success, and the ability of the new government to rule, in addition to the previous commitments made by the British and French governments, were among the factors that helped the Czechoslovak delegate to obtain admission to the conference from the very beginning, and then to act with confidence. (Poland had some difficulty at the beginning of the conference, Yugoslavia [not Serbia] was admitted in June 1919, and Albania and some states on the Soviet Russian border did not gain official admission to the conference at all.) Had it not been for the existence of an effective Czechoslovak government determined to employ, and employing, the power of the state, the end of Austria-Hungary would not have been accepted as an accomplished fact by the conference's delegates (some of whom could not get over it for several months), and the issue of Czechoslovak existence (or nonexistence) would have

been discussed by the great Allied powers without the Czechoslovak delegate's having a voice in that discussion. In recognition of the importance of the revolutionary act, October 28 has been celebrated as a national holiday—a national independence day—in Czechoslovakia.

Most likely, the main reason that the "official historians" either play down Kramář's role in the independence movement or ignore him altogether has been that his views on the situation in Russia in 1919 were not in accord with those of Masaryk, Beneš, the Social Democrats, and others. It is known that Masaryk's and Beneš's postwar foreign policy was based on Czechoslovakia's alliance with France. In his message to the Czechoslovak Revolutionary National Assembly in December 1918, Masaryk had clearly stated his pro-western orientation, which eventually became the orientation of the state. Describing the western powers as "non-militaristic democracies defending humanitarian ideals," he unequivocally proclaimed that the Czechs and Slovaks had stood from the beginning of the war on the side of the Allies and that "the destiny of our nation is directly and logically in union with the West and its modern democracy."⁵⁰

Masaryk's rhetoric notwithstanding, the western Allies fought for their own interests rather than for "humanitarian ideals," and they agreed to the establishment of the Czechoslovak state only after they had concluded that the continuation of the Habsburg monarchy was no longer in their interest. When Austria-Hungary crumbled from within at the end of October 1918, the Allies were too busy with other matters and had no desire to struggle for her salvation in one form or another, or to fight for the establishment of a central European federation. In the meantime, the Czechs in Prague, the Hungarians in Budapest, the South Slavs in Zagreb, and the Austrian Germans in Vienna seized political power and thus confronted the victors with *faits accomplis*. The above quoted statement by Masaryk was used as a cue by those who eventually manufactured the "Wilsonian legend" and the theory that Czechoslovak independence was a gift of the Allies. Indeed, Masaryk himself was more interested in personal aggrandizement than in "humanitarian ideals"; the reader may recall that in 1915 and 1916 Masaryk was proclaiming that the Czechs were Russophiles, that Russia was the most important country from the point of view of the Czechoslovak independence movement, and that a Romanov dynasty would be most popular in Bohemia. During the formative years of the new state, however, Masaryk and Beneš asserted that the Czech

action abroad led by them during and after the war was based on an anticipation as far back as 1915 that Russia was out of the game as a great power and that the state would need the support of the other powers in order to attain its aspirations. The second important element in their policy statements was the claim that both of them had persistently refused to intervene in Russia or to use armed Czechoslovak forces against the Bolsheviks.

Kramář criticized Masaryk and Beneš for not pursuing the Czech struggle for independence to its end, but stopping just short of the conclusive blow that would have given security to Czechoslovakia and the world. From 1919 on, his view was that the end to be kept in sight was not the gaining of national independence, but the maintenance of it. In his public speeches as well as in private conversations Kramář emphasized that unless Russia was reconstituted as a democratic federal republic, the Czechoslovak state could not continue to exist. He was certain that the "Little Entente" would be ineffective against Bolshevik Russia; and that neither Yugoslavia nor Czechoslovakia could be made secure in the future without the reestablishment of a strong, Slavic Russia. The Czechs had an unprecedented opportunity "to rise to the pinnacle, to save Russia and gain her on behalf of Slav policy and to save the world from active and passive Bolshevism. The time to do this was in 1917 when the Bolsheviks had just usurped power in Russia and were, according to their own recent confessions, very weak and without an army. Even two army units then could have accomplished wonders. Had the Czecho-Slovaks at the proper time supported the Russian patriots in saving their country from the heroes of Zimmerwald imported into Russia on the initiative of the German general staff, the Russian army which was never better equipped than in 1917, would have shorted the war by a year." Had the Czechs done so, "a rapprochement between Russia and Germany would have been prevented," and the Czechoslovak state would have been safe. Furthermore, "Bolshevism could never have properly been regarded as an internal Russian question because a social movement of that sort which gains possession of Russia represents a universal danger. Bolshevism is a world question and was so from the beginning." The Allies should have adopted Churchill's proposals, Kramář believed, and supported Denikin, Kolchak, and others. The only reason for the failure of the Allied intervention was the inadequacy of its implementation. "The Allies never intervened anywhere in

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Kramář's main reason for the survival of Bolshevism was not Bolshevism itself, but the Czechoslovak situation. He gave three reasons: (1) the Allies failed to offset the Bolshevik revolutionism and the world had meant nothing; (2) the Allies failed to intervene in Russia and (3) the Allies failed to support the process of Bolshevism. He would make no mistake in saying that the Czechoslovak state could not exist without that country. "The Allies failed to intervene in Russia and the world had meant nothing. The Allies could not have done otherwise. The existence of Bolshevism was a universal danger. Bolshevism is a world question and was so from the beginning." The Allies should have adopted Churchill's proposals, Kramář believed, and supported Denikin, Kolchak, and others. The only reason for the failure of the Allied intervention was the inadequacy of its implementation. "The Allies never intervened anywhere in

Masaryk and Beneš. But they perpetuated the new Czechoslovak state with all of the material advantages of the unwillingness of

Russia, they supplied arms, provisions and funds, but even that inadequately." Since the defeat of the Whites, "instead of intervention in Russia, there is now the question of intervention of Russia in Europe."⁵¹

Kramář emphasized the importance of a free, national Russia for the survival of the new sovereign state. The liberation of Russia from Bolshevism not only was in the interest of the new state, but also constituted Czechoslovakia's most important historical mission, for the following reasons: (1) Russia was needed in the European balance of power system to offset the weight of Germany and check the latter's attempts at revisionism and revanchism; (2) the defeat of Bolshevism in Russia would have meant the liberation of the whole world from the totalitarian menace; and (3) the services rendered by the Czechoslovaks to the Russians in the process of liberation would insure them an important place in history and would make possible (and probable) both the continuation of Czechoslovak influences in Russia and in the long run, the democratization of that country.⁵² Kramář believed that the Czechs had, first, a moral obligation to Russia, without whose sacrifices the nation could not have attained its independence (he pointed at Russia's entry into the war in defense of a small Slavic state—Serbia—and its contributions, without which the Allies could not have won the war); and second, a vital interest in the existence of national, Slavic (in contrast to "non-Slavic," Bolshevik-International) Russia. The Czechs should not rely exclusively on the western powers, with whom they have no common boundary; they needed a powerful Slavic ally in order to survive. Because of these views, Kramář was ridiculed by many of his compatriots, some of whom called him "mentally imbalanced," and was dismissed by Masaryk as prime minister of Czechoslovakia. Later he came under political attack and found himself in political isolation on many occasions before his death in 1937. Fate arranged that his principal political rival in foreign affairs, Beneš, became president of the republic in 1935, and lived to see Munich and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

Masaryk and Beneš knew the structural weaknesses of Austria-Hungary. But they perpetuated these defects by including too many minorities in the new Czechoslovak state, thus creating a miniature Austria-Hungary with all of the nationality problems and none of the economic and military advantages of the defunct empire. This situation was worsened by the unwillingness of Masaryk and Beneš to grant the Slovaks the autonomy

promised to them in the Pittsburgh Agreement. Some two decades after the Paris Peace Conference Lloyd George stated that the British delegation at the conference had been misled by "deliberate falsifications"—an argument that was used to justify the revisionism of Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax during the Munich crisis. Nemesis presented her reckoning. From the conference held in 1919, the chain of events led to Munich, and from there to Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam, and, eventually, to the events of 1948 and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Since then Czechoslovakia has been an occupied territory. While for Masaryk and Beneš the Bolshevik regime in Russia and communism in general were a Russian internal affair, history has demonstrated that it has been a European and a worldwide problem.

The Czechs and Slovaks should learn a lesson from their history. In 1918 Masaryk and Beneš tried strenuously to make Czechoslovakia into an outpost of the west in central Europe; twenty years later France and Great Britain agreed to the dismantling of Czechoslovakia at Munich. Then Beneš tried the eastern, Soviet orientation in which Czechoslovakia was to be a bridge between East and West; instead, it was transformed into a Soviet bridgehead into Europe. By their geography and historical traditions the Czechs and Slovaks belong to the center of Europe, and they should try to make the best of it. When Soviet rule comes to its end—and this will happen one day—the Czechs and Slovaks should cooperate with the other small nations in the area and find a federal solution to the problem that is common to all of them: they are too weak to stand alone between the solid masses of Germans and Russians.

Introduction

1. On the early history of the Czechs and Slovaks and other peoples see three volumes: *History and Civilization of the Czechs and Slovaks: Making of Central and Eastern Europe* (Prague: University Press, 1962).

2. Victor S. Mamet, "The Czechs and Slovaks: A Geographical Note," pp. 161-162.

3. Among the historical works see: *Český národ* by Fr. Štáfl, *Geschichte Böhmen* by J. Štáfl, *Dějiny českého národa v Čechách po r. 1618* by J. Štáfl, *Stavby proti Ferdinandovi I. (1547-1548)* by J. Štáfl, *Ferdinand I; Year 1547* by J. Štáfl, *hemia in the Eighteenth Century* by J. Štáfl.

4. For an excellent study see: *Organization Detvan* by J. Štáfl, *vak History in Honour of* by J. Štáfl, *baum* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1962).

Among the many books on the Czechs and Slovaks one may mention