6-1-1960

An inquiry into methods used by anti-Habsburg nationalists to gain support for a sovereign Czechoslovak State

Ward Maynard Koons
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/399

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.
AN INQUIRY
INTO METHODS USED BY ANTI-HABSBURG NATIONALISTS
TO GAIN SUPPORT
FOR A SOVEREIGN CZECHOSLOVAK STATE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
The University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
WARD MAYNARD KOONS
June 1960
The study of the formation of the Czechoslovak State, following World War I, has proved most rewarding. No new Nation, arising out of the remnants of the once-great Habsburg Empire, achieved its independence in a more interesting manner.

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. A. Stanley Trickett, who patiently guided the study to its completion, and to my wife, Mary, for her great understanding and assistance.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: A NATION IS SUBMERGED</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Defenestration of Prague&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohemia Laid Waste</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebirth of Czech Nationalism</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaryk Calls for Federalism</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE WAR OFFERS A CHANCE: THE STEP IS TAKEN</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaryk Turns to the West</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Maffia&quot; Is Formed</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian Government Rules by Decree</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Émigré Leaders Divide Duties</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds Arrive from America</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The John Hus Address</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaugural Lecture at King's College</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American-Czechoslovak Organizations</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems in Russia</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Foreign Committee Declares War</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovak National Council Formed</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEGIONS: A MOVE TO THE FRONT</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovaks Desert Austro-Hungarian Armies</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlements in Russia Recognize the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Forces Formed</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaryk Goes to Russia</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Agree to Removal of Czech Forces from Russia to France</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaty of Brest-Litovsk</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous Czechoslovak Army</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Legions in Entente Countries</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italo-Yugoslav Friction</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Enters the War</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ACTION AT THE FRONT HAS MANY EFFECTS AT HOME</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reichsrat Prorogued</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Turns to Repression</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Maffia&quot; Continues Its Work</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Manifesto of Czech Writers&quot;</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epiphany Day Meeting</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubilee of Czech National Theatre</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Committee Formed in Prague</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Deputies Reject Autonomy</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian Peace Note</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifesto of Emperor Charles</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Replies to Peace Offer</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. ACTION AT THE FRONT AFFECTS ALLIED DIPLOMACY</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Friends Support Independence</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda Begins in America</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechs, Slovaks Work Together</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Negotiations of 1916</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Hall Meeting</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. S. Declares War on Austria-Hungary</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fourteen Points Speech</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansing Favors New States</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Congress of Oppressed Nationalities&quot;</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain Recognizes Czechoslovak Army</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaryk Arrives in America</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Pittsburgh Convention&quot;</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Uprising Causes Sensation</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaryk Meets President Wilson</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain Recognizes Belligerency</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. RETURN TO THE EASTERN FRONT: THE ALLIES

| INTERVENE | 103 |
| Difficulties With the Soviets | 104 |
| Chelyabinsk Incident | 106 |
| Czechs Seize Trans-Siberian Railway | 108 |
| Entente Leaders Favor Intervention | 110 |
| Japanese Land at Vladivostok | 116 |
| America Decides for Intervention | 118 |
| Aide Memoire | 120 |
| United States-Japan Disagree | 121 |
| Soviets Oppose Intervention | 124 |
# VII. THE ANABASIS TO VLADIVOSTOK: THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

- Trotsky Orders Legions to Disarm 128
- Legions Overrun Siberia 129
- American Mediation Efforts 130
- Czechoslovaks Return to the West 131
- Gajda Is Successful 133
- Legions Begin Retreat 137
- Omsk Government 138
- Reaction Sets In 140
- American Public Favors Intervention 143
- General Graves Follows Orders 144
- Czechs Begin Repatriation 145
- Japanese Intervention Continues 146

# VIII. FREEDOM AT LAST: A NEW NATION IS CREATED

- America Recognizes Czechoslovaks 148
- Czechoslovak Provisional Government 150
- Wilson Turns Down Austro-Hungarian Peace Offer 151
- Czechoslovaks Meet at Geneva 152
- Revolt in Prague 153
- Slovaks Declare for Czechoslovakia 153
- Declaration of Geneva 154
- Emperor Charles Withdraws 155
CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: A NATION IS SUBMERGED

The history of the Czecho-Slovak nation is a proud one. During the long course of time it records how a nomadic Slav tribe developed into a modern-day nation of culture and industry, and yet one which retains many characteristics of a nation of another era.

Basically, the Czechs and Slovaks both spring from the same racial and linguistic background, but they have experienced a different history. The Czechs (Bohemians and Moravians) developed largely under their own leadership, either independently or under the Habsburg Crown; while the Slovaks very early came under the domination of the Magyars of Hungary and long were held in subjugation by that and other groups of Asiatic background.

The rapid advance of the Turks into Europe early in the Sixteenth Century, under the great Ottoman ruler, Suleiman the Magnificent, caused consternation among the Christian nations. Much of Hungary was overrun, and with the death, at the Battle of Mohács on August 28, 1526, of King Louis Jagellon, who occupied both the Hungarian and Bohemian thrones, the Estates of Austria, Hungary and Bohemia united in a free federation. Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and Louis' brother-in-law, was chosen to unite the forces of the three embattled states and with them resist the advance of the Moslems.
Under terms of the federation, each of the three independent states, bound together solely through the person of the monarch, was to retain its sovereignty unimpaired. As the Moslem drive lost its vigor and Christian forces began the long struggle to drive the Turks out of Europe, however, the Bohemian State was even more closely linked with Habsburg interests, until, during Ferdinand II's regime, unwilling to accept his religious aims regarding Catholicism and centralization of power, the Czechs rebelled in 1618, deposed the Habsburgs, and chose Frederick of the Palatinate as King of Bohemia.

The Czech struggle for independence began when the Bohemia nobles, defending their feudal rights and their Protestant religion, literally threw the royal officers out of the windows of Hradčany Castle on May 23, 1618, in the famous "defenestration of Prague." This event culminated the efforts of Ferdinand, an ardent Catholic, to decrease Bohemian rights earlier granted in the so-called Majestats-brief (Letter of Majesty) issued by Rudolph II in 1609 to assure freedom of religion to the Bohemian peoples.

Ferdinand did not delay long in accepting this challenge to his royal absolutism and Catholicism. Frederick and his forces fought valiantly, but were defeated in the humiliating Battle of White Mountain during November, 1620, when the Imperial forces under Tilly were aided by Maximilian I of Bavaria. Although the son-in-law of King James I
of England, and fully expecting support in men and money from the Island Kingdom, Frederick's pleas for assistance were ignored by James, with the result that the embattled Bohemian ruler and his allies were decisively defeated in this first major battle of the Thirty Years' War. Bohemian independence died at Bílá Hora (White Mountain), not to be regained for nearly three centuries. Frederick's reign, thus, was brief, and the often-used name, "Winter King," is an indication of the fact.

During the Thirty Years' War, much of Bohemia was laid waste, and the Protestant nobility was exiled and replaced, as one author aptly states,

...with a carpetbagger, alien nobility, gathered from the four corners of the far-flung Habsburg domains. This new nobility became speedily 'Bohemian' but never 'Czech' in sentiment. In culture, it became German.¹

S. Harrison Thomson sums up the unfortunate results of the war for the Czech peoples:

It would be almost impossible to overestimate the significance of the Battle of the White Mountain in the history of the relations between the Hapsburgs [sic.] and the Czech Kingdom. Up until that fateful date there was always the possibility that a workable modus vivendi might be found under which the ruler and the people, although of different nationality and, it might be truly said, of different religious faith, might work together in peace and contentment. The shadow of the two years of struggle, 1618-1620, and

the crushing humiliation the Czechs suffered at the end of that time hovered over the whole course of Czech history until 1918.²

From 1618 to 1918, Bohemia became closely associated with Austria, although it never completely lost its identity, as it remained a distinct unit within the Habsburg Empire. After the Peace of Westphalia (October 24, 1648), which ended the Thirty Years' War, a series of ruthlessly repressive measures was enacted by the vindictive Ferdinand in Bohemia. Forcible Germanization, oppressive taxation, absentee land ownership, among other things, reduced the Czechs, except for a few favored magnates, to a life of degradation and misery.

Emperor Ferdinand's saying gives the key to the Counter-Reformation period of Czech history: "Better no population at all than a population of heretics." At the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, there were 3,000,000 people in Bohemia, nearly all Protestants. At the end, there were only 800,000, all (nominally) Roman Catholics...The towns were repopulated by German immigrants belonging to the Church of Rome, and the estates of the nobles were confiscated and given to aliens...The Czech language ceased to be the official language...and eventually German became the dominant language.³

The spirit of Bohemian independence, however, lived on during the several centuries of Habsburg rule; and with


the dawn of the Nineteenth Century, a rebirth of Czech nationalism and interest in the Czech language came upon the heels of the revolutionary era. The Czech language was brought back into general usage under pressures generated by the growing demands for revival of the Czech Nation.

Under the enlightened leadership of František Palacky, nationalist, historian and political realist, the Czechs began the long development toward national consciousness and eventual recognition as a state. Far from wishing the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Palacky advocated its reorganization into a federation of autonomous national states, as a step towards the solution of a major European problem. A liberal in the best sense of the word, Palacky advocated national liberation through education and enlightenment, rather than by the methods of revolution. "One of the earliest Austrians to become aware both of the Russian danger and of German predominant influence, Palacky proposed the establishment of a multinational federation."4

It was Palacký who coined the famous phrase: "If there were no Austria, it would be necessary to create her."...But, it was he too, who struck a more radical note in that other phrase: "Before Austria was, we were, and when Austria no longer is, we still shall be."5

---


Of the many subject peoples of the Dual Monarchy, the Czechs were the most advanced politically, and nationalism developed most rapidly and fully within them. Yet even in Bohemia the most advanced leaders sought only autonomy under the Habsburgs which would put the Czechs on a level with the Magyars of Hungary. "No one yet dreamed of complete, economic, and customs separation from the other parts of the realm," Joseph Redlich, a former Austrian official has written.

Unfortunately for the Czechs, however, they were not the only racial group at work within the Empire in the quest for national recognition and self-determination. Most important among the others were the Magyars of Hungary, who wielded a much greater influence than was warranted by their numbers, and who proved more effective than the Czechs in realizing their ambitions. Czech aspirations of federation on an equal footing with the German-Magyar elements of the Empire, suffered a severe blow in February, 1867, when the famous Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich (Compromise) was concluded, transforming the Empire into the Austro-Hungarian ("Dual") Monarchy.

It was in effect an alliance between the Germans of Austria and the Magyars of Hungary against the rest of the nationalities, or more especially an alliance be-

---

between the ruling classes of Austria and Hungary. The statement, "You take care of your Barbarians, and we shall take care of ours," which von Beust is supposed to have made to the Hungarian representative, Francis Deák, is probably apocryphal, but it expresses perfectly the purpose of the Ausgleich from the point of view of the ruling classes of Austria and Hungary."

A dozen years later, in 1879, Graf Eduard von Taaffe, premier for a second time (the first, briefly in 1868-1869), made limited concessions to the Czechs, including a provision that Czech delegates would be seated in the Reichsrat (Parliament) in Vienna. The immediate effect of the Ausgleich, however, was that many Czechs began to work for full independence from the Habsburgs and the Dual Monarchy. As Woodrow Wilson was to write in The State, Elements of Historical and Practical Politics:

"No lapse of time, no defeat of hopes, seems sufficient to reconcile the Czechs of Bohemia to incorporation with Austria. Pride of race and the memories of a notable and distinguished history keep them always at odds with the Germans within their gates and with the government set over their heads. They desire at least the same degree of autonomy that has been granted to Hungary."

7Mamatey, op. cit., p. 12.

Many Czech leaders realized that such a Slav partnership within the Monarchy would be of great benefit to their people. Not the least of these was Thomas G. Masaryk, a Slovak of humble parentage, born in Moravia, who became a professor of philosophy in the Czech University of Prague. As he became interested in the political welfare of Bohemia, he took an active part in the political affairs of the day and was elected to parliament in 1907. Outlining his beliefs, he was to write, while a member of the governing body:

We want a federal Austria. We cannot be independent outside of Austria next to a powerful Germany, having Germans on our territory....Therefore we are going to fight for the reorganization of the Austrian state so that it may be useful to us nationally and politically.9

This study proposes to trace the steps followed in the realization of the dream of the re-establishment of a sovereign Czechoslovak State. It will attempt to show how a small band of Czechoslovak leaders, well supported by education and propaganda, planned and carried out their program. In the achievement of the goal, these men employed the Czechoslovak Legions which were formed as a result of the Austro-Hungarian defeats during the great war of 1914-1918, and were effectively employed on far-flung battlefields in the interests of the aspiring Republic of Czechoslovakia.

9Mamatey, op. cit., p. 18, citing Cas, May 18, 1909, quoted in Evzen Stern, Nazory T. G. Masaryka (The Opinions of T. G. Masaryk), Prague, 1918, p. 60.
CHAPTER II

THE WAR OFFERS A CHANCE: THE STEP IS TAKEN

Farsighted Austrian leaders did not fail to realize the problems which the reviving Slav nationalism of the Nineteenth Century created. The baiting of Russia and Serbia, during the Bosnian Crisis (1908-1909), gave more rabid Austrians the satisfaction which can result when opponents, as the Slavs were now considered, are humiliated. The successful annexation—brought off thanks to Germany's support of her ally—failed to resolve Austria's difficulties with the Slavs, both within and without the Empire and, in fact, merely postponed its solution for a short time. The Serbs, and other Balkan and Central European Slavs, turned after 1909, with ever greater frequency, to Russia for advice and leadership, "with whom...they were bound by the two powerful ties of Slav kinship and Orthodox religion."\(^1\)

The Dual Monarchy won another diplomatic victory over Serbia in 1913, when she forced the withdrawal of Serbian troops from Albania. Backed by Germany, as in 1908-1909, the Austrians allowed the Serbs only eight days in which to call back their military forces. Belgrade, while reluctant,

was forced to comply. Despite this second and sharp setback, the Serbs gained increased stature in the eyes of the world, and those Slavs living inside the Dual Monarchy came, as a result, to look more and more toward Serbia as the potential leader in the forming of a fully independent South Slav State.

The growing threat of a "Slav Piedmont," adjacent to the borders of the Dual Monarchy, in turn, led the non-Slavs in the Habsburg domains— the Germans and Magyars—to believe that "the Monarchy must either crush Serbia or be destroyed by it."3 The rapid acceptance of this view, by both Austrians and Hungarians, must be considered a primary factor behind the ultimatum and declaration of war against Serbia in 1914. Victor S. Mamatey expresses it in these words:

The declaration of war on Serbia in 1914 was also motivated by an internal political consideration: the inability to solve the mounting Yugoslav problem at home. A little victorious war to wipe out Serbia, the supposed source of Yugoslav agitation, was just the medicine needed.4

The assassination at Sarajevo of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, which was used by the Austrians as the reason for the 1914 declaration

---

2Fay, op. cit., pp. 474-75.


of war on Serbia was, therefore, looked upon as an event that might serve to finally remove the South Slav threat. The result was otherwise. "Serbia was intended to reassert the position of Austria-Hungary as an independent Great Power; instead, it ended both greatness and independence," says the English historian, A. J. P. Taylor.

The war was not popular with the Czechoslovak peoples for two reasons. The fact that they were forced to serve in the Austro-Hungarian armies under other than their own officers, and often under German rather than Austro-Hungarian leadership, caused resentment. More important, however, was the fact that they were forced to fight against other Slavs, including the Serbians and Russians. During the war, both Czech and Slovak soldiers proved to be the most determined and implacable foes of the Empire, manifesting this antagonism by wholesale desertion to the enemy. In this they were supported by a stubborn and growing resistance to the authorities on the part of the civil population.

At first many Czech patriots were encouraged by the advances of the Russian forces on the Eastern Front. Quickly they came to believe that it would soon be possible to link themselves with their great Slav protector and, thus, secure for the Czech cause recognition as a step towards

---

freedom from the Habsburgs. They were, therefore, inclined to be content to await the seemingly assured defeat of the Austro-Hungarians by Czar Nicholas' forces, and limited themselves to combatting the German-Magyar rule as well as they could on the home front. When, however, the Russian armies were driven back with terrible losses, and as the German High Command took over complete control of the armed forces of the Central Powers, and the tides of war seemed to set in against the Russians, many Czechs became despondent, fearing that the help upon which they had counted so strongly would not come.

But while the ultra-Russophils (all Czechs were Russophils up to a certain point) were depressed by the terrible reverses which followed upon the first victories of the Tsarist armies, Masaryk never lost his balance, and soon realized that the fate of his nation was bound up with that of the Western democracies and America, and also that a great educational and propagandist work would be required before the Western public could be expected to understand the Czech problem in its Austrian setting, and to accept the idea of active cooperation.6

Professor Thomas G. Masaryk was almost alone among his countrymen, at the start of the war, in the belief that the ultimate fate of the Czechoslovak Nation was closely linked with the attitude of the Western Powers, particularly America, to their ambitions. A few Czechs and Slovaks, realizing that all avenues of help must be explored, looked toward the other members of the Entente for assistance, but

---

it was Masaryk's special genius, at this time, to see across the mists of the Atlantic the future importance of the United States in Central European affairs.

Masaryk...was one of the few great European intellectuals who appreciated America at a time when she was still completely an unknown quantity in Europe. In looking from the beginning of the war to the Western Allies for support and sympathy, not only was he solitary among the Czechs and Slovaks, but he also defied conceptions generally held in the Dual Monarchy. From the vantage point of Prague, Vienna, and in Budapest alike, Russia was the principal Entente Power; France was only very secondary, and insular Britain hardly figured at all.7

In his own words, Masaryk points out this divergence of opinion among the Czechoslovak leadership—those awaiting national redemption at the hands of Russia, and those who determined to seek assistance from other sources:

Therefore, I favored vigorous action abroad, not in Russia alone, but also in the other Allied countries, so as to gain for us the good will and the help of all. I insisted that, like me, Dr. Kramár should get away, so that we could share the work abroad; but he, I was told (for I had no chance of approaching him personally) was determined to stay at home since he expected that the Russians would themselves settle the Czechoslovak question once for all.8

Immediately after the outbreak of the war, Masaryk made three trips abroad to determine what the possibilities were of securing Western aid for the Czechoslovak cause.

7 Mamatey, op. cit., p. 32.
Early in August, 1914, he proceeded to Holland, where he made contact with his friends, Henry Wickham Steed, Foreign Editor of The (London) Times, and Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson, a leading British student of Slav problems. Both of these men were very influential publicists in Great Britain, and both promised to give him what support they could. They proved to be, throughout the long struggle for Czechoslovak independence, true friends of the Czechs and Slovaks, and implacable enemies of the Habsburgs. Thus, Masaryk early in the war demonstrated an amazing ability to draw to him men capable of great accomplishments and willing to make personal sacrifices for the cause of Czechoslovak independence. Seton-Watson was especially helpful to Masaryk through his preparation of many of the latter's papers for publication in English. In addition, the Britisher wrote many articles favorable to the Czechoslovak cause himself.  

Shortly after his return from this first wartime trip, Masaryk called together a meeting of his friends in the Progressive Party. "...this meeting, like several of those which followed, was a focus from which later was formed what was known as the 'Maffia'." Recalling the meeting, Masaryk

---


later wrote:

We discussed the situation at home, as well as in Austria and Germany and among the Allies, in a word, everything that mattered. We agreed upon our whole plan of campaign and also about our helpers at home and abroad. As long as possible Beneš was to remain at home and to organize communications with me after the fashion of the Russian Secret Societies. So arose our secret organization, the "Maffia," which was led at first by Beneš, Šamal and Rašín; and after the arrest of Rašín and the departure of Beneš, by Šamal and others.11

Eduard Beneš, Czech scholar and ardent disciple of Masaryk, in his book, My War Memoirs, points out the value of the "Maffia" during the long and bitter struggle for liberation:

1. It enabled us to establish our first revolutionary organization abroad, while systematically keeping in touch with the responsible politicians at home throughout the war...

2. At critical moments it enabled us either to send our news home or to interpret authentically in the Allied countries, on the basis of news received from our friends in Prague, the trend of events at home. This gave us an opportunity of exerting a considerable influence upon the development of political affairs both at home and in the Allied countries.

3. From its very beginnings the "Maffia" sent abroad valuable reports on political, economic and military affairs in Austria-Hungary, which often proved of service to the Allies in military operations, in political action, and in economic or financial measures. This served our cause by enabling us to gain the sympathies of various Allied official circles, and thus the "Maffia" had a great practical significance.12

11Masaryk, Making of a State, pp. 27-29.
Following a meeting in Prague of this secret organization in 1915, Dr. Karel Kramár, outspoken foe of the government and leader of the Young Czech party, was arrested by the Austrian police.

On May 1 of that year, Professor Ernest Denis, a staunch supporter of the Czechs in academic circles in France, where he was a prominent educator, began publishing a fortnightly paper, under the title of La Nation Tchèque, which carried news of interest about the liberation movement obtained from its supporters in Prague and elsewhere. It became a medium through which word of the movement could be spread to an ever increasing audience, especially in the West, and served as a forerunner of later companion propaganda news sheets in Russia, England and the United States. Systematic and regular contributions were obtained by secret couriers, from Prague.  

Masaryk stated:

Our first and most urgent task was to organize "subterranean" work, the sending of messengers to and from Prague. It went well, for we all worked with a will... To some extent we communicated with Prague "legally," by post. In the early days, at least, non-political letters got through.  

Beneš, too, began to travel, and, on returning from a trip to Geneva, brought back several copies of La Nation

---


14 Masaryk, Making of a State, pp. 48-49.
Tchèque so that the underground workers in Prague could see the results obtained from their efforts at provision of news materials for outside publication. One of the copies was given to Kramář, after the "Maffia" meeting mentioned above, with the following result:

Kramář had looked in at the office of Narodní Listi [chief Prague daily newspaper] and then proceeded to his villa. Just as he was about to enter he was arrested. Among other things the copy of La Nation Tchèque was taken from him and proved to be... evidence against him. 15

Arrests became common after the Austrian War Government, operating under the authority of the "Dictatorship Paragraph" (Paragraph 14) of the Constitution, began to issue emergency decrees having the force of law. "There were 181 such Imperial decrees from March 16, 1914 to May 30, 1917...". 16 Yet the government, while possessing the necessary legal authority to support its rather regular use of arbitrary arrests, was not always assured of the unanimous support of such a program by its own leaders. On several occasions, key civilian members of the Government tried to get the Emperor Franz Joseph to temper the harsh actions stemming from the demands of the military group, as one historian has noted:

15 Beneš, op. cit., p. 66.
When the Supreme Command, without consulting the Prime Minister, arrested Dr. Karel Kramarz [sic], a deputy, and the most respected leader of the Czech nation at that time, Count Stuerghkh went to the aged Emperor in person and complained in the most bitter terms of the evils and dangers caused by the practical dictatorship, without success, however. Even in political matters, the authority of the army must not be interfered with or diminished!17

That little real consideration was given to requests for more temperate action is borne out by the fact that Dr. Kramar remained a prisoner from the time of his arrest in May, 1915, until after the general political amnesty proclaimed by the new Emperor, Charles I, in July, 1918. This is further attested to by statements from reliable witnesses which indicate that an "estimated 20,000 Czech civilians were interned as 'political suspects,' and that close on 5,000 were sentenced to death by courts-martial," during the war-time reign of Franz Joseph.18

While diminishing the effectiveness of the Czechoslovak leadership at home, the widespread program of arbitrary arrests provided excellent fuel for the propaganda fires being lighted beyond the borders of the Dual Monarchy. The arrests helped prepare the development of a potent, and finally, overwhelming propaganda against Austria and Hungary, based on the need for reform of internal political condi-


It was an Austrian war government, presenting the external appearance of complete detachment from every form of national or class politics, which, without knowing what it was doing, tilled the soil in which these enemy seeds would grow and ripen. The first impulse and the chief moral encouragement was given by the emigration of leading men among the Czechs and South Slavs. This was the initial act of pressure that led to the crystallization of forces working for the destruction of the historic union of the various Austrian nationalities now struggling for independence. 19

In view of conditions in Prague, and after several surreptitious trips to Switzerland, during which he was aware that his actions were under strict surveillance by the Austrian police, Eduard Beneš decided to flee to the West at a propitious time. He escaped to Paris in September, 1915, where he was to serve as the acknowledged Czech leader under Masaryk and to work with Milan R. Štefánik, a colorful Slovak astronomer, meteorologist, traveler and officer in the French air service. These two men, working happily under Masaryk's leadership, made a highly effective team. "There were no personal rivalries or political differences between them. The authority of Masaryk over the two younger members of the liberating triumvirate was complete." 20

A division of areas of operation was soon made between Masaryk, Beneš and Štefánik. Masaryk arrived in London in April, 1915, and decided to stay there at least for

19Redlich, op. cit., p. 98.
20Mamatey, op. cit., p. 32.
a while, as London was the center of Entente political activity; meanwhile Beneš and Štefánik were to work in Paris, even more the military headquarters of the Allies.\textsuperscript{21}

Prior to Beneš's departure from Prague, and while on one of his clandestine visits to Switzerland to consult with Masaryk, the latter pointed out to Beneš that he believed the only people who could ultimately assure the success of the Czechoslovak movement were the Czechs and Slovaks in the New World and the freedom loving peoples of America. Funds for continuing the struggle were badly needed, and, Masaryk said, "'Somebody would have to be sent there to collect money from our friends.' I mentioned my brother Votzak, Beneš," Eduard Beneš reports, "and Dr. Masaryk agreed..."\textsuperscript{22}

Thus, another very influential worker was added to the movement and a definite plan to secure support on the western side of the Atlantic began to take shape. In this plan, they were encouraged by the fact that some money from friends and sympathizers in America already had been made available to Masaryk, who reported, "Mr. Charles Crane [Chicago industrialist and Masaryk's long-time friend] sent me personally a considerable sum."\textsuperscript{23}

Money, however, was not overly plentiful and a com-

\textsuperscript{21}Masaryk, \textit{Making of a State}, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{22}Beneš, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{23}Masaryk, \textit{Making of a State}, p. 8.
mon fund was necessary to assure that all aspects of the work for liberation could be continued. Following his escape from Prague to Paris, even with his considerable personal wealth, Beneš reports that the timely arrival of money from the United States was necessary to keep his work going forward:

Towards the end of 1915 Professor Masaryk received the first funds from the American collections, so that he was able to let me keep about 20,000 francs which I had brought with me when I escaped from home. This enabled me to live from my own resources and remain independent in a financial sense.  

The Czech people have always been known for their industriousness and thrift, and it is interesting to note that the leaders of the liberation movement proved themselves true members of the Czech Nation. Masaryk states:

...in Europe we inverted the Czech proverb, "Little money, little music," and got plenty of music for our little money...I doubt whether revolutionary propaganda abroad has ever been so cheaply carried on; nor does modesty prevent me from saying that few political campaigns have been so well thought out as ours was. Here is an account of the money I received from America for the cause:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914-1915</td>
<td>$37,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>71,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917 (up to the end of April)</td>
<td>82,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918 (from May onwards)</td>
<td>483,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$674,885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While I was in Russia in 1917-1918 Dr. Beneš received about $300,000, so that the whole work cost less

24Beneš, op. cit., p. 53.
than $1,000,000. The subscriptions from America did not increase notably until after the United States had entered the war. Almost all of them came from Czechs. During the war the Slovaks gave little, though they sent $200,000, including some amounts from my American acquaintances, after I had become president.23

The first full year of the war, 1915, was an active one for the émigré Czechoslovak leaders, marked by the opening salvos fired against the Dual Monarchy from their propaganda guns. Masaryk spoke on John Hus, the Fifteenth Century religious martyr and symbol of Czechoslovak toleration, before an assembled crowd of Czechs at Zurich on July 4, 1915:

...and on July 6, the fifth centenary of his martyrdom, Professor Denis and I held a meeting in the Hall of the Reformation at Geneva....Even in Austria the Geneva celebration of 1915 hit the mark, the "Neue Freie Presse" denounced it as "the first Czech declaration of war against Austria."26

In England, later in the year, Masaryk continued his revolutionary propaganda, supported by the indispensable assistance of Wickham Steed and Seton-Watson. Their friendship was instrumental in obtaining for him a professorship at the University of London. Here, Masaryk took advantage of the excellent opportunity to present the merits of the Czechoslovak cause before an influential audience on the occasion of his Inaugural Lecture at the School of Slavonic Studies, King's College, on October 19, 1915. Thus the

25Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 85.

propaganda campaign which Masaryk had gone to London to wage, received an auspicious start, under ideal sponsorship. Lord Robert Cecil, member of the British ministry, presided at the lecture, in the absence of the Prime Minister, Mr. Herbert Henry Asquith, who was prevented, because of illness and not because of any lack of sympathy, from attending in person. The gaining of the interest and good will of Asquith and Cecil, two pillars in British politics, was a diplomatic triumph and of great value to the Czechoslovak cause, and did much to assure Masaryk's acceptance in the West as the acknowledged leader of the liberation movement. Cecil read a letter from Asquith to the assembled audience, which said in part:

First and foremost we are fighting for the liberty of small Nations in order that they may be liberated from the oppression of their more powerful neighbors and in the future be permitted to develop their own national life and institutions. 27

"Masaryk's lecture, 'The Problem of the Small Nation in the European Crisis,' was a sensation, and strengthened the logical foundation of the movement in the British mind." 28

We soon produced an impression on Western Europe, not only because we were well informed politically, and supplied accurate diagnoses of Central Europe, but also because Masaryk was able to explain from the philosophy of history the significance of the World War, and how it


28Thomson, op. cit., p. 249; Cf., Beneš, op. cit., p. 87.
should be regarded by Western Europe.\textsuperscript{29}

While these activities were being carried on, the Czech and Slovak leaders had many other "irons in the fire," as they waged an all-out campaign against Austria and Hungary. It was necessary to establish relations with the politicians, statesmen and Governments of the Allied nations, to organize united action among Czech and Slovak people in the various Allied countries and, "above all to create an army from among Czech prisoners-of-war...Indeed, the idea of forming an army abroad was so natural that Czechs outside Austria began everywhere to act spontaneously upon it,"\textsuperscript{30} Masaryk stated.

The time had come to take public action against Austria. All Czech colonies abroad expected and demanded it. In Russia a Czech Military Unit, or "Druzina," had been formed in the Autumn of 1914. In France our fellows had joined the army. In all Allied countries our people were vigorously opposing Austria and Germany...We made this widely known with good effect.\textsuperscript{31}

The largest Czech and Slovak groups abroad were in the United States and Russia, with Chicago, in America, properly described as the "largest Czech city" outside of Bohemia. Within the United States, several Czech and Slovak organizations quickly sprang into being to promote the Czechoslovak cause, including: the National Alliance of Bo-

\textsuperscript{29} Beneš, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{30} Masaryk, \textit{Making of a State}, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 58.
hemian Catholics, the Slovak League of America, the Slovak Catholic Alliance, and the Bohemian National Alliance. It was soon clear that the Czechs and Slovaks in America must finance the movement if it was to be successful. In fact, the chief role of all the groups mentioned above came to be the financing of the campaign for Czechoslovak independence and the influencing of public opinion in America in favor of it.32 The important results of the attempt to raise money in America have already been alluded to. In Russia, on the other hand, it was hoped to raise a Czechoslovak army that would fight in the field against the Dual Monarchy and, thus, gain recognition and prestige for the aspiring new nation that was being dreamed of by so many patriots.

In Russia, however, the Czechoslovak cause experienced some of its greatest difficulties. The Russian attitude, while generally pan-Slav, was often hesitant to support the liberation movement against Imperial Germany and the Dual Monarchy, especially as the political arrangements of the Central Powers were more like those of Czarist Russia, and because Masaryk's open, and frequent criticism of Russian political institutions made him persona non grata.

at the Romanov Court.*33 Added to this was an open political rift between Czech conservatives and radicals living within Russia. Russian politicians, complicated the issue by supporting a Czech exile, Josef Dürich, a former Agrarian deputy in the Austrian Reichsrat, who had been sent abroad by the Czech "Mafia" to coordinate activities with the Russians. Soon after his arrival in Russia, in the summer of 1916, however, Dürich had allied himself with the conservative Czechoslovak elements there and "became involved in the intrigues of the 'dark forces' in the Russian capital and thus soon discredited himself even in the eyes of many Czech and Slovak exiles in Russia."34

...before long old Mr. Durych [sic] was superseded by the Czech National Council. He had been endeavoring, it seemed to take the conduct of negotiations out of Masaryk's hands and to entrust the fortunes of the Czechs to the Russian Ministers for Foreign and Internal Affairs...many of his countrymen complained that he was far too much identified with the Russian Conservatives.35

After the fall of the Romanovs in 1917, Dürich experienced a loss of influence and political oblivion followed. The unity of the Czechoslovak movement in Russia, thereafter, was not seriously threatened, although minor disagreements among the "exiles" were noticeable occasionally. It should

---

33Mamatey, op. cit., p. 32.
34Ibid., pp. 32-33; Cf., Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 76.
be recorded, however, that many friendly forces were active in Russia, counteracting, in part at least, the difficulties raised by Dürieh and his coterie, even while the Russian Empire was still in existence.36 These, of course, gained in strength after the 1917 Revolutions.

Meanwhile, Masaryk and his followers decided to take definite action and make an "official" declaration of war upon the Habsburg Empire. This was done on Sunday, November 14, 1915, in conjunction with a demand of the "Czech Foreign Committee" for the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak State within the historical boundaries of the two peoples.37

The proclamation, aligning the Czechs and Slovaks with the Entente Powers, had been coordinated with and approved by the Czech leaders in Prague and was signed by representatives of the Czechs and Slovaks residing in France, Russia, Great Britain and the United States.38 Mamatey points out the dilemma which faced the Czechoslovaks until the fall of the Romanovs:

...The declaration said nothing of the future form of the Czechoslovak government, but it was a foregone conclusion that it would be a monarchy under a Romanov prince. Even Masaryk reluctantly admitted that the


37Masaryk, Making of a State, pp. 78-79; Beneš, op. cit., p. 82; Mamatey, op. cit., p. 33; Capek, op. cit., p. 39.

38Thomson, op. cit., p. 252.
Idea was so popular with his countrymen that it was inevitable. It was only the fall of the Russian Monarchy that permitted him to plan for a republic.39

The prospect of a Russian sovereign ruling Bohemia, however, caused Masaryk great misgivings:

Privately he quipped that a Grand Duke in Prague would mean "champagne and French mistresses in the Hradčany," the royal castle in Prague. Such a spectacle, he feared, would speedily disabuse his countrymen, a people of solid and sober virtues, of their native Russophilia.40

While Masaryk was establishing connections with influential persons in England and carrying forward the Czechoslovak propaganda effort there, Beneš and Štefánik were not idle in France, where the latter was extremely popular with military and political leaders. Professor Thomson reports that Štefánik was successful in arranging countless interviews for Masaryk with prominent French politicians, including a first visit with French Premier, Aristide Briand, on February 3, 1916. The interview was "very sympathetic, and Briand never thereafter wavered in his open advocacy of Czechoslovak independence."41

I saw him on February 3, and laid before him a small map of Europe and my view of the war—that the division of Austria into her historical and natural elements was a condition of the reconstruction of Europe and of the real enfeeblement of Germany, that is to say of French security...but Briand...grasped the

39 Mamatey, op. cit., p. 33.
40 Ibid.
heart of the matter at once. Above all, he accepted our policy and promised to carry it out... My visit to him was announced in an official communique... 

Benes, too, achieved considerable success in France. Early in his work there he gained the support of many influential people for the Czechoslovak cause and R. H. Bruce Lockhart, writing in the *Fortnightly Review*, spoke warmly of the great contribution the slight Czech lecturer made thereby to the Czechoslovak movement:

Once more his indefatigable pen stood him in good stead—a book appeared which at once aroused the keenest attention of the Allied leaders, "Detruises L'Autrichel"—the young Prague lecturer had achieved his first great success... The leading statesmen of the Western Powers grasped eagerly at this new weapon for destroying Germany, and the difficulties of the Czech leaders disappeared as if by magic. Theory now gave place to action. In France, in Italy and in Russia, Czech Legions were formed which took their stand in the trenches side-by-side with the Allied troops.

In 1916, to give formal and permanent character to the movement, the Czechoslovak National Council was organized to take over the work of the "Czech Committee Abroad," and the "Czech Foreign Committee." The Council was headed by Masaryk as president, with Beneš named to handle the duties of the General Secretariat in Paris. To Štefánik "fell the task of directing the military activities of the various contingents of Czechs serving in the Allied armies."

---

Following establishment of the National Council, the Czechoslovak movement gathered greater impetus. Branch headquarters of the Council were soon established in all the Entente countries, and Denis' *La Nation Tchéque* became the medium through which news of the Czechoslovak cause was disseminated to an ever-increasing audience. Companion journals in Russia, Great Britain and the United States were soon established to carry on the growing work of propaganda.45

The Entente governments viewed the activities of the Czechoslovak Council with mixed feelings. On one hand, they were anxious to encourage these activities to weaken the Central Powers, but on the other they were reluctant to accept their ultimate aim: the complete dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. The Habsburg Empire had been a part of the European balance-of-power system for four centuries, and the Entente statesmen feared the consequences of its disappearance.46

Nevertheless there was still division in feeling between the western and eastern partners of the Entente. Western statesmen tended to fear that a breakup of the Danubian Monarchy would result in a number of satellite nations with a Russian orientation. Czarist statesmen, on the other hand, believed that the area might ultimately be filled with western-oriented democracies. The Russians seemed afraid of the possible adverse effects the establishment of such democratic states might have on both the minority groups in Russia and the growing revolutionary movement, which was now giving

---

the statesmen in St. Petersburg reason for great concern. Contrary to popular opinion, and for a great variety of reasons, Imperial Russia did not wish to see the complete destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.47

In spite of the qualms of many Entente statesmen and politicians, the Czechoslovak National Council, now established, launched a more active program and soon was at work with Czech and Slovak groups and committees all around the world. Close liaison and coordination were maintained with the "Maffia" and other opposition groups at home and, at the same time, arrangements for financing their work were perfected. This close working relationship between the "Maffia" and the National Council was to continue throughout the long struggle for independence, despite some minor points of disagreement, and attests to the wholehearted support given the leaders abroad because of the favorable impression their work made on the leaders and peoples outside the boundaries of the Czech and Slovak homeland.48

Within Bohemia and Moravia, and to a much lesser extent in Slovakia, separatist propaganda was carried on with an intensity and efficiency unrealized by the outside world. That this propaganda was well-directed and well-accepted is probably best demonstrated by the effectiveness of the cam-

47Ibid.

48Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 373; Redlich, op. cit., p. 148.
Campaign to recruit members for the Czechoslovak Legions after Masaryk issued his call for volunteers. The Slovaks were more cautious in flaunting the authority of their officers, even when held prisoner, than the Czechs, and separate propaganda had to be prepared to reach them effectively. Dr. Seton-Watson writes, as follows, of the different propaganda techniques employed to reach both groups:

There was the greatest possible difference between the propaganda among the Czechs and that among the Slovaks, both in Russia and in the West. With the former the soil had already been sufficiently prepared at home, and thus the propaganda bore rapid and ample fruit. Among the Slovaks there had been no such preparation, and the propaganda met with many difficulties, both internal and external...for a time, propaganda among the Slovaks in Russia and the West had to be confined to the insertion of Slovak articles in the various Czech newspapers and periodicals. 49

With the knowledge that they had the necessary support and backing of the Czech people, and the hope of like support among the Slovaks, Masaryk and the National Council launched a concerted effort to reap the utmost advantage from their chief source of favorable propaganda in the Entente countries—the Czechoslovak Legions.

CHAPTER III

THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEGIONS: A MOVE TO THE FRONT

The Czechoslovak leaders, within and without the Empire, were working toward a single goal—recognition of their country as an independent nation—and, if not from the beginning, soon realized that the Legions could be the strongest force that they could have in the struggle to gain the recognition which they sought. After the victory had been won, Beneš wrote:

In my opinion, it is often forgotten that our Siberian army was our strongest political factor at the end of the war and during the peace conference. I made use of its retention in Siberia to win our peace terms. ¹

When Austria declared war on Serbia and, subsequently, on Russia, both the Czech and Slovak peoples condemned the declaration. Very soon the soldiers drawn from Bohemia and Moravia, and, perhaps to a lesser extent from Slovakia, showed their disapproval by deserting and by joining the Allied armies. "This movement, and it is necessary to emphasize this fact, was spontaneous and truly popular, the Czech soldier-voters refused obedience to the Habsburgs,"²

Masaryk has stated.

Many Czech regiments which did not desert were deci­mated and then finally dissolved, the soldiers being scattered among German and Magyar regiments. This only increased the dislocation and disruption of the Austrian army, which, within a year was virtually put under the control of officers from Germany. 3

Bitterly opposed to the Habsburg Crown because of its long record of past discriminations against them and because of the continued failure to take into consideration their national feelings, Czech and Slovak soldiers, officers and enlisted men alike, early showed a disinclination for the war against Russia, a nation that they looked upon as a protector and possible future ally in their struggle for freedom and Czechoslovak independence.

Thousands of Czech and Slovak soldiers deserted the Austro-Hungarian armies, or were captured while offering only token resistance. "This was at first a perilous operation, for they had to run the gauntlet between German and Magyar machine-gunners in the rear and suspicious Russians in front." 4 Later, elaborate surrender patterns were worked out between the Czech and Slovak soldiers on the one hand

---


and the Russian forces on the other. Before the struggle was over, all along the Eastern Front, whole companies, and even regiments of men deserted *en masse*, almost overnight. One account reads: "...our soldiers should make themselves known to the Russians by singing the song, 'Hej Slovane'," which served as a code, telling of the arrangements reached with the Russians. Careful accounts of the war include statements like the following, detailing the extent of the desertions:

It has been stated that, of the 70,000 prisoners taken by Serbia in the winter of 1914, roughly half were Czechs; at least 300,000 more surrendered voluntarily to the Russians, and close upon 30,000 to the Italians.

In a desperate attempt to stop the wholesale desertions, the Austrians were forced to reassign Czech and Slovak soldiers to Austrian and Hungarian regiments, where it was hoped that tighter discipline could be maintained. Later, when German troops were transferred to Austro-Hungarian sectors to bolster the flagging morale of those units, even stricter measures were adopted. By that time, however, the damage had been done—the National Council had

---


a large potential force of manpower available, outside the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, from which to draw men for the Legions it desired to gain recognition for the proposed Czechoslovak State. It was these Legions and their exploits that helped the struggling leaders of the national movement secure the world-wide support needed as the basis for recognition of these national aspirations.

Through his contacts in England, Masaryk early discovered that Lord Kitchener, (Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl), Secretary of State for War, and other Western military leaders believed the war would last for at least three years. This knowledge profoundly influenced his whole political strategy, especially as he clearly understood the value of time as a necessity for laying the groundwork for complete Czechoslovak independence. A shorter period of time might have meant that the Allies would have been willing to consider only national autonomy within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy.7

Following their desertion from the Austro-Hungarian armies, or capture by the Russians, many of the prisoners-of-war quickly volunteered to fight with the Czarist armies, provided that they would be put into action against the hereditary enemies—the Habsburgs. Although these prisoners-

of-war made up the bulk of the Czechs and Slovaks in Russia, there were additional sizable groups of Czechs and Slovaks, residing in Russia that were subjects of the Czar. "Colonies of businessmen, merchants and artisans resided in the larger cities, while in Volhynia and the Caucasus were large agricultural settlements which possessed...schools." Not all of the members of these groups were of the same political bent, however, and, as noted earlier, sharp differences of opinion separated the conservatives from the more radical elements. The principal centers in which these people lived were St. Petersburg and Kiev. But little early use was made of either the prisoners-of-war or the "residents" as the pro-German faction within the Russian court thought that any full-scale force of this sort would ultimately lead to the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire along national lines, unwanted, so far as Imperial Russia was concerned. The feeling has been expressed as follows:

Naturally, the old Tsarist officials were very much opposed to the idea of a national Czechoslovak army in Russia. Apart from the fact that they had revolted from the Habsburg Emperor, would they not be setting

---


an iniquitous example to all other nationalities in Holy Russia?\textsuperscript{10}

Most of the internal differences between the Czech and Slovak groups were ironed out after the settlements in Russia recognized the Czechoslovak National Council, following a meeting held in Kiev during April, 1916.\textsuperscript{11} Actually, the Czech and Slovak elements resident in Russia reached an early decision to fight against the Austro-Hungarians. On August 4, 1914, a day before the Austrian declaration of war against Russia, they took action looking to the formation of an army of Russian Czechs and Slovaks, and laid a plan for a Czechoslovak Legion to accomplish that end before the Czarist Government.\textsuperscript{12}

On August 12th the proposal was accepted by the Ministry and on August 20th the formation of a Česká Družina (Czech Brigade) was approved of by the Army Council.... On the same day, delegates of the Czech Committee at Moscow were given an audience by the Tsar in the Kremlin, and submitted to the Monarch a memorandum dealing with the Czechoslovak question. Reflecting the strongly Russophil sentiment of the Czechoslovak settlers, the delegates expressed the loyalty to the Tsar of the Russian Czechs...\textsuperscript{13}

By late October, 1914, the Družina had departed for the Eastern Front, the first contingent of anti-Habsburg


\textsuperscript{11}Thomson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 254; Stewart, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{12}Masaryk, \textit{Making of a State}, p. 149.

\textsuperscript{13}Baerlein, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 22.
Czechs to take the field against the Dual Monarchy. At the front they were used primarily as spies and agitators among Czech regiments of the Austrian army. The success of the Družina encouraged Czech leaders in Russia to expand their activities by seeking to enroll other Czechs and Slovaks, who were serving in Russian regiments, in the Družina and through attempts to get permission to allow Czech and Slovak prisoners-of-war to volunteer for such service. The results, however, were not very heartening:

Though everything showed that the Government and the military authorities did not want a Czechoslovak army of any size, a regiment of Czechoslovak Riflemen was formed out of the Družina in January, 1916; and in May, the creation of a brigade was permitted. It was more or less a nominal affair, for its strength was small; but it was a beginning. Štefánič was then in Russia and used his influence to this end.

Following the audience with the Tsar in mid-August, 1914, at which the Czechoslovak leaders expressed their loyalty to the Romanovs, a special memorandum, entitled, Dokladnaya Zapiska, was circulated to all the members of the Russian cabinet. This memorandum was the first clearly formulated program of modern Czechoslovak aims, and became the basis for practically all later negotiations with the Imperial Russian Government on matters concerning the Czechoslovak question. As the political situation degenerated

---

14 Stewart, op. cit., p. 97.
15 Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 150.
16 Baerlein, op. cit., p. 23.
with the March and October Revolutions, and as Russia got out of the war, this working arrangement was replaced with agreements designed to meet the exigencies of prevailing conditions, and no permanent arrangement was ever established with the Provisional or Bolshevist Governments.

Authority was granted in October, 1916 for the Czecho­slovaks to organize a division within the Russian Army, but this permission was soon withdrawn as differences of Russian opinion, and internal problems among the Czechs and Slovaks hindered progress along these lines. Before the end of 1916, Štefánik left Russia and went to the Roumanian Front, where he was soon at work helping to organize hundreds of prisoners-of-war for service on the Western Front in France.17

Professor Masaryk welcomed the Russian upheavals of 1917.18 The March Revolution saw the barriers lowered which had kept him from visiting Russia and seemed to remove the spectre of a Russian Grand Duke taking over the reins of government at Prague, at the conclusion of the war. With the fall of the Romanovs, who had barred Masaryk from entering their realms because of his democratic and liberal views,


he immediately made plans for a trip to Russia, where he arrived from England in May. He had two principal objectives—the organization of an independent Czechoslovak army, and its transport for employment on the Western Front. By this time he was firmly convinced that a Czechoslovak Legion in France would have profound political significance. 19

Speaking of his visit, he wrote later:

I decided to go to Russia and carry through the creation of an army among our prisoners-of-war. Upon Milyukoff [Pavel] as Foreign Minister I counted especially...we had met in England during the war and he had agreed upon the chief points of a war and peace program...I called at once on Milyukoff, whom I found on the point of resignation—an unpleasant surprise. However, I established relations little by little with the other members of the Provisional Government... 20

Meanwhile, and with great significance for the Czechoslovak cause, the Czech Brigade performed with distinction at the Battle of Zborov, during the Brusilov offensive in 1917. As a result the Brigade was officially commended for its bravery.

The part played by the Czechoslovak Brigade in the June offensive...as well as the heroic incidents of the Tarnopol retreat, aroused sympathy for the Czechoslovak movement both in Russia and beyond the frontiers. Kerensky at once altered his policy towards the movement...at once gave permission for recruiting to be carried on among the prisoners on the widest possible scale. This, and the reputation it won for the Czechoslovak...
slovaks abroad, was the main success of Zborov.\textsuperscript{21} Kerensky's removal of the former restrictions\textsuperscript{22} sharply increased the flow of volunteers into the Czechoslovak Brigade, with approximately 30,000 new recruits quickly enlisted, enabling it to be raised to the status of an army corps.

However, Masaryk was not without problems in Russia, as he sought to work with the Provisional Government of Alexander F. Kerensky. The acknowledged antagonism between the liberal and conservative wings of the Czechoslovak movement there, did not make his work any easier, as each of these elements tended to work closely with the corresponding elements of Russian society. The liberal socialistic Russian group then in power, as the Provisional Government, was not overly sympathetic to those conservative Czechs who still maintained friendly relations with anti-revolutionary Russian groups. This conservative tendency on the part of some of the Czechoslovaks almost cost the anti-Habsburg movement its Brigade in the Russian army; save for its performance in the Battle of Zborov, which helped bring about a change in official thinking, permitting the Czechoslovaks to continue building up their small force.

Masaryk soon realized that the prospect of his suc-

\textsuperscript{21}Baerlein, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 77-78.

\textsuperscript{22}Mamatey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 99.
cess in Russia did not warrant the time involved, nor would he, even if finally successful there, achieve the recognition which he desired in the West for Czechoslovakian ambitions. As a result, he sought to complete negotiations with M. Albert Thomas, on behalf of the Government of France, for the transfer of the first installment of thirty thousand prisoners-of-war to France; which number was to include several thousand Southern Slavs as well as Czechs and Slovaks. The group was to include both men for military service and for industrial work in munitions factories. The Russian General Staff, on May 14, 1917, granted the necessary request for the transfer. "This Agreement...was the first Treaty to be concluded by our National Council with a State; ...France was the first to recognize our National Council as a contracting Power...", Masaryk wrote.

The Agreement worked out by Thomas, who was representing France in its dealings with the Kerensky Government, so eagerly sought by Masaryk, was dictated by four considerations which he hoped would centralize the direction of all Czech and Slovak military activity by the National Council:

(a) To transfer from Russia to France the greatest possible number of prisoners-of-war or other troops.

---


24 Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 166.
(b) To concentrate as rapidly as possible all the prisoners on French soil, together with the prisoners it might be possible to obtain from the Serbian government.

(c) To undertake an extensive volunteer movement in America.

(d) To make full use of the new and large resources which were provided by our numerous prisoners, who in the meanwhile had been collected in Italy.25

Although both the Foreign Office and the General Staff, as agencies of the Russian Government, promised quick action to get the convoy on its way through the port at Archangel, interminable delays were encountered at every turn and the movement of the anti-Habsburg force from Russia to France was held up in the revolution-torn land. As a consequence, only two small contingents of troops, totalling about two thousand, four hundred men, were sent to France, one in October, 1917, and the other in the spring of 1918. After the Bolshevist uprising, chaotic conditions in Russia made additional troop movements impossible.26

The remainder of this group of thirty thousand Legionaries, plus thousands of others who, at that time, were still prisoners-of-war, or members of the Czechoslovak units in service with the Provisional Government were, however, to contribute their part to Czechoslovak independence in an entirely different theatre of operations, far removed from the Western Front as envisioned by Masaryk. Their contribution

26Thomson, op. cit., p. 257.
was to be made in the fields of Russia and along the steel ribbons of the continent-spanning Trans-Siberian Railroad. The Czechoslovak Legion, aided by a limited Allied interventionist force, plus a motley array of anti-Red or White Russian forces, was to harass the armies of Soviet Russia for a period of many months.

The change of plans was occasioned by the October Revolution of 1917, and the subsequent desire of the new Soviet Government to conclude a separate peace with Germany and the Central Powers—at any price. As long as the Bolsheviks continued the struggle against the enemies of the Czechs—Germany and Austria-Hungary—members of the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia continued to fight at their side with dedication and distinction. However, when Soviet support of the Allied cause came to an abrupt halt with the opening of negotiations for the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on December 2, 1917, Masaryk decided that all the Czechoslovak groups should be transferred to the Western Front where they could best be utilized to further Czechoslovak ambitions.

From the moment that the Bolsheviks opened peace negotiations—they did so formally on December 2, 1917, by asking for an armistice, the Peace of Brest-Litovsk being signed on March 3, 1918—it was clear to us that our army had nothing more to do in Russian[\textit{sic}]. Therefore we began as early as possible to march out of the Ukraine into Russia on the way to Vla̧divostok and France.\footnote{Masaryk, \textit{Making of a State}, p. 184; Cf., Kennan, \textit{Soviet-American Relations}, II, p. 137.}

During the period from December, 1917, until the sign-
ing of the treaty which took Soviet Russia out of the war in March, 1918, the German Armies advanced deep into the Ukraine, where they placed the Czechoslovak forces in an untenable military position. Falling back with the last of the resisting Russian forces, the Czechoslovaks gained commendations from the Soviets for their efforts in a four-day battle against the Germans at Bachmach, where they lost some 600 men. As a result of their assistance to the retreating Red troops, the Czechoslovaks were given permission to leave Russia through Siberia as free citizens, and Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, the Soviet Commander in Chief, authorized the Czechoslovaks to leave the Ukraine in an announcement dated March 6, 1918, which read as follows:

Our comrades of the Czechoslovak Corps, who have fought faithfully and valiantly in the region of Zhitomir..., Grebenko and Bachmach, are now leaving the Ukraine and are returning a part of their arms. The revolutionary troops will never forget the fraternal help which the Czechoslovak Corps has rendered the working people of the Ukraine in their struggle against the imperialist looters. The revolutionary troops accept as a token of friendship, the arms which the Czechoslovaks are leaving. Antonov.

The sudden collapse of Red Army units under German pressure, provided the Czechoslovaks the opportunity to get desperately needed supplies and materials from former Imperial Russian military depots with which to support their long


29Bunyan, op. cit., p. 80.
retreat across Russia and Siberia to the port of Vladivostok. "We had to take what we wanted, for it was out of the question to make arrangements with the authorities, so great was the prevailing uncertainty and so rapidly did the authorities change," said Masaryk in a later comment on the situation.30

There is much information to support the claim that, at least in the beginning, both Masaryk and Beneš opposed active intervention against the Soviet regime and direct fighting with the forces of the Red Army. In the end, however, the Czechoslovaks were forced to engage in open combat against Red Russian units in order to extricate themselves from Russia and Siberia. Masaryk says,

...the revolutionary conditions in Russia dictated categorically the principle of non-interference—conditions the more complicated because districts and towns as well as races made themselves more or less independent....In Russia, though not yet in Siberia, the Bolshevists were beginning to organize an army. To the East and in Siberia there were fewer troops, and therefore the Siberian route was the surest way to France.31

After nearly a year in Russia, negotiating for the withdrawal of Czechoslovak forces from that war-torn land, Masaryk took leave of his countrymen on March 6, 1918, in a special farewell proclamation which recognized the possibility of many difficulties on the Legion's long journey to Vladivostok. "...I was convinced that," he said later, "by avoiding interference in Russian affairs, it would end by

30Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 167.
31Ibid., p. 190.
reaching its transports safely."32

The Czechoslovaks found themselves, at this time, in a position at once favorable and unfavorable. They were the only large body of troops on the Eastern Front with any remaining semblance of cohesion, discipline, and loyalty to the Entente cause, but, "the Corps found its position near the front an exposed and—in view of the overwhelming superiority of the...Central Powers on the other side of the line—a dangerous one."33

There was, in the unfolding of events as between the Allies and Russia in the summer of 1918, no single factor that played a more significant role than the unique armed force known subsequently as the Czechoslovak Legion.34

While the above events were taking place in Russia, in December, 1917, an "Autonomous Czechoslovak Army," composed of Czechoslovak forces serving with the Western Allies, was recognized by the Allied powers as a regular Allied military force, subordinate to the French High Command. During the course of the following winter, arrangements were made to incorporate the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia and Siberia as an integral part of this organization, "and agreement was reached with the French Government that the Corps should be

32Ibid., p. 197; Cf., Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, II, p. 139.
34Ibid., p. 136.
evacuated to France as rapidly as possible."^35 Good reasons for this hoped for speedy transfer of the Czechoslovaks to the Western Front were clearly apparent to the military leaders of the Entente:

The Russian collapse meant that perhaps six hundred thousand Germans would be released for duty on the western front, while it seemed that Allied strength might fall off...an equal number.^36

Prior to leaving Russia and his beleaguered countrymen for the long trip, via Vladivostok, to Washington and a meeting with President Woodrow Wilson, Dr. Masaryk felt that he had made satisfactory arrangements with the Soviets for the Legions to move peacefully over the Trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok and the sea. Eventually, under his plan, they would arrive on the Western Front, to enter actively in the fighting on the Allied side against the Central Powers. As he reported later:

On March 26 a treaty was signed with the Bolshevists guaranteeing our men an unmolested passage to Siberia and Vladivostok. True, this had been already agreed upon with Muravieff [N. N. Muraviev, Soviet Administrator in the Far East] after the Bolshevist troops had reached the Ukraine; but, to make assurance doubly sure, we negotiated also with the Moscow Soviet. On March 26, indeed the Moscow Commissar, Stalin, telegraphed to the local Soviets that the Czechoslovaks were not going through as an armed unit but as free citizens, and that they carried a certain number of weapons as protection against the counter-

---

^35Ibid., p. 138; Cf., Temperley, Peace Conference, IV, pp. 260-61; Stewart, op. cit., p. 102; Bunyan, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

revolutionaries. He added: "The Soviet of the People's Commissars wishes every assistance be given to them on Russian soil."37

Events which appeared to be moving smoothly when Masaryk left Russia, were to take a new turn, with the addition of violence, before long—and the violence was to continue for many months in the future.

While the Legions in Russia were preparing to fulfill their as yet unknown mission, Czechs and Slovaks in other lands, were making their contribution to the winning of independence for Czechoslovakia. From the very beginning of the war, Czech émigrés had been enlisting in the French Army, until, by the war's end, some twelve thousand were serving honorably on the Western Front. Included in this number were many Czechs and Slovaks resident in London and elsewhere in Great Britain, who had enlisted in the British forces.

It was...Masaryk who realized that by the formation of Legions, that on entering the Allied armies under their own flag, that by showing a willingness to shed blood for their country, a most convincing argument would be presented of the sincerity of the Czechoslovak claims.38


Even if the number of Czechs and Slovaks serving with the Allies on the Western Front was small, it made it possible for the National Council to use the fact of their service in its propaganda and education campaign, especially among the leaders and people of France. By conference, and through private interviews, Beneš and his General Secretariat in Paris were able to support their thesis—that the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire and the liberation of the subject peoples within the Dual Monarchy, was an absolute requirement to assure lasting peace after the war.\(^{39}\)

In an article written in 1918 for *The Nation*, entitled, "The Czecho-Slovak Nation," Masaryk declared, "Our army, then fighting on three fronts—in France, Italy and Russia—is, on the basis of our historical and natural rights, a regular army..."\(^{40}\) As early as December 16, 1917, the French Government had recognized the Czechoslovak forces as an autonomous army, fighting under its own flag against the Central Powers, which, while it acknowledged the military authority of the French High Command, was under the political control of the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris.\(^{41}\)

Realizing that every such recognition of its armies would

\(^{39}\)Thomson, op. cit., p. 197; Beneš, op. cit., p. 276.


help secure greater recognition for the National Council, the leaders among the Czechs and Slovaks all over the world bent every energy toward achieving that end. The effect of the French action and the recognition of other nations is pointed out by Thomas Capek, Czech author, "This, and similar decrees, coming from the other Allied nations, gave them a special military status which eventually led to a recognition of belligerency." 42

With Czechoslovaks enrolled in the armies of France, Britain and Russia, there still existed the large, and virtually untapped, numbers of Czechoslovak prisoners-of-war even in the West that might be drawn upon to build up Entente forces—especially those prisoners controlled by Italy. Until the disaster at Caporetto (October 24-November 1, 1917) Italian leaders were not particularly receptive to representations made by the National Council, nor did they show great interest in the possibility of these prisoners-of-war being formed into a Czechoslovak unit for service with the Italian Army. Following that debacle, however, and after lengthy preliminary negotiations, Milan Štefánik was instrumental in concluding a treaty on April 21, 1918, with Italian Premier Vittorio Orlando, 43 to permit formation of an independent Czechoslovak Army, commanded by General Andrea

42Capek, op. cit., p. 58.
43Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 215.
Graziani, but led by both Italian and Czechoslovak officers. Like the early arrangements with the French, political control was to remain with the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris.

The Italian treaty was the first concluded by the National Council which clearly recognized it as a sovereign political body. The diplomatic victory was all the more significant in that an initial prejudice against the Czechoslovaks had to be overcome. Although scarcely noticed in England, shortly thereafter, when the Prince of Wales visited Rome on May 23, 1918, the guard of honor was formed by Czechoslovaks. The honor, nevertheless, caused a profound sensation throughout Austria-Hungary.

Recognition by Italy came as a fitting reward after many months of patient labor on the part of all the members of the Czechoslovak National Council, during which they had to overcome the strongest resistance to their cause, because of deep suspicion on the part of the Italian Government. This suspicion stemmed from the increasingly bitter dispute over the Adriatic coast lands between the Italians and another group of Slav peoples fighting for separation from the Habsburgs, the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The Czechoslovaks were not concerned with the quarrel between the South Slavs and Italy, but their cause suffered harm as

44 Thomson, op. cit., p. 264.
this enmity became more pronounced. The Czechs, therefore, were hampered by the animosity of the Italians for the Yugoslavs, all the while they were working to create an atmosphere more favorable to their own cause. Much was done to create a favorable climate for Czechoslovak aims in Italy during 1916 and 1917, as Czechoslovak propaganda began to give the Italian leaders a better understanding of the Czechoslovak problem. As a result, several prominent politicians and publicists openly advocated independence for the Czechs and Slovaks, and urged that their prisoners-of-war be used in the Italian armies, and "In 1917 Benito Mussolini supported the claims of the Czechs to an independent national existence in his paper, Popolo d'Italia."46

With the signing of the Italian treaty, which was soon followed by the organization and participation of Czechoslovak forces on the Southern Front, news media began to point to the accomplishments of the new allies and, thereby, built for a wider popular acceptance of the Czechoslovak cause in Italy. One influential American weekly news magazine carried the following account:

Many Bohemian troops, according to the London Daily Mail, have joined the Italian colors against Austria. The detachments belonged to a Czechoslovak army which is being formed in many centers from former subjects to Emperor Charles. Their defection has caused much anxiety among the Austro-Hungarian commanders, who

46 Thomson, op. cit., p. 247.
fear the effect on their Slav troops.47

As the Czechoslovak soldiers on the Italian battlefields continued to perform with distinction, bearing out Masaryk's statement, "Our Czech soldiers are good fighters, brave to the point of heroism,"48 Italian acceptance and support of the war aims of the National Council strengthened. Fortunately, the Czechoslovak troops that saw action along with the Italians were seasoned veterans and often were cited for conspicuous bravery, as in the official Italian communique of General Armando Diaz, of September 22, 1918.49

The Legion was in action on the Piave from late June until the end of October, the battle that marked the last serious effort of the Austrian armies to mount a successful offensive. Here, as wherever they were utilized in Italy, the Czechoslovaks proved to be excellent soldiers. Again, it should be noted that these former prisoners-of-war actually were in double jeopardy during their front-line duties: they faced, as all soldiers do, the threat of death in actual combat, plus the almost assured death if they were captured by the Austrians, as technically, they were still subjects of the Dual Monarchy, and their actions were con-

47"Bohemia Ablaze With Revolt," The Literary Digest, LVIII (July 6, 1918), 30.

48Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 173.

49Thomson, op. cit., p. 264.
sidered traitorous by that government.

When the United States entered the war on April 6, 1917, Czechoslovak volunteers enlisted in the American Expeditionary Force in considerable numbers. Beneš points out the result of this enlistment practice on the enrollment of volunteers for the army being recruited by the National Council, saying: "...accordingly the recruiting of volunteers for our own army in France, which had been arranged in the United States by Štefánik, met with comparatively limited success." Nevertheless, about 3,000 American-Czechoslovaks volunteered for service with the Czechoslovakian army in France and saw action on the Western Front. These were the most enthusiastic of the Czechs and Slovaks residing in the United States, who volunteered for duty out of a deep love for their old homeland. Many of them were to return to Czechoslovakia following the war to assist in forming the new nation. Even greater numbers of American-Czechoslovaks, who on immigrating to the United States, had made a definite decision to become citizens of the land of their new residence, saw action as volunteers and conscripts with the American Expeditionary Force. They served with honor and distinction with this great force, in the service of both their new nation and their old interest, as the two were interwoven by events.

Czechoslovaks, thus, were fighting on three battlefields—France, Italy and Russia. The Legions were to add a fourth "front"—Siberia—to their distinguished record of service before the fighting ended. Circumstances determined a line of action there not envisioned by even so farsighted a man as Dr. Masaryk at the time when actual hostilities were at an end in most of the theatres of war.
CHAPTER IV

ACTION AT THE FRONT HAS MANY EFFECTS AT HOME

Within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czech and Slovak nationalists, particularly the former, constantly maintained opposition against the German and Magyar rule throughout the whole period of the 1914-1918 war. This internal dissention provided many anxious moments for the Habsburg leaders in Vienna and Budapest, and made it necessary for the Dual Monarchy to devote a great deal of time, effort, and manpower to maintain control of the areas of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia. This, the Government could ill afford to do during such a bitter struggle and, as a result, the two minority groups seriously embarrassed the Habsburg regime on numerous occasions. Situations, like that of Dr. Kramár, already mentioned, were duplicated thousands of times over and the rebellious Czechoslovak leaders, especially adamant in their opposition to the Imperial war aims, constantly sought means to prevent the successful conduct of military operations by the Austro-Hungarian forces.

Czech obstructionism, even prior to the declaration of war was considerable. In the Austrian Reichsrat it virtually stopped the conduct of business by that body. Every possible type of noisemaking equipment was used by opposition Deputies to disrupt Reichsrat sessions: trumpets, snare drums, the slamming of desk tops, stamping of feet
and other means of expressing audible disapproval of the Government's activities were employed. "The Reichsrat became notorious for its forensic—and physical—battles, carping and singularly unconstructive criticism, filibustering, and incapacity to act," Mamathey points out. This opposition finally lead to the proroguing of the Chamber in March, 1914, setting the stage for the subject peoples' claims that they were not consulted in any way concerning the declaration of war against Serbia, and the following broadening of the war subsequent to that initial declaration.

On the ground that they were not consulted, the Czechs and Slovaks declared that, since they had no part in the declaration of war, their men should not be used in its prosecution. This feeling, which was widespread, resulted in mass desertions from the Habsburg armies to the Russians and the Serbians, as sympathy for the latter people was strong throughout Bohemia and Slovakia. Evidence of this feeling is found in the roles played earlier by Kramar and Masaryk in exposing Austro-Hungarian tactics in the period just before the Austro-Hungarian annexation of the Bosnian


area, during the Balkan Crisis of 1908-1909. Throughout
the war this feeling of friendship for the Serbs was extend-
ed to include all the peoples who were to make up the new
Yugoslav State: the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and was
often evidenced by the actions of the Czechoslovak leaders.
The Czechoslovaks, for example, worked diligently to create
an understanding between the Yugoslavs and the Italians so
that a united front of the subject peoples could be main-
tained against the Habsburgs; and the joint actions taken
by émigré leaders of both the Northern and Southern Slavs
in many propaganda and education activities in the Entente
countries, attest to this close, friendly relationship.
It has been argued that the Czechoslovaks, as a result, were
instrumental in the formation of both their own State and
that of the Yugoslavs.

Despite constant obstructionism, desertions and in-

3H. W. V. Temperley, (ed.), A History of the Peace
Conference of Paris (London: Henry Frowde, Hodder & Stotoun,
1920-1924), IV, p. 249. (Cited hereafter as Temperley,
Peace Conference).

4Dr. Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, The Making of a State,
Memories and Observations (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Com-
pany, 1927), pp. 120-21.

5R. W. Seton-Watson, Masaryk in England (New York:
The Macmillan Company, 1943), pp. 24-25; A. J. P. Taylor,
The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918, A History of the Austrian
Empire and Austria-Hungary, New Edition (London: Hamish
Hamilton, 1955), p. 247. (Cited hereafter as Taylor,
Habsburg Empire).
ternal difficulties fomented by the Czechoslovaks and their leaders, only a few people, other than the most ardent of the revolutionaries and extreme pan-Slavists, however, sought the complete dissolution of the Monarchy at the beginning of the war. Most of the minority leaders asked only for equality within the Empire. With better leadership, Austria-Hungary might have survived the conflict, and even might have been spared the ordeal had it been willing to establish a federal state with autonomy for the principal minority groups within its boundaries.

Many students of the Austro-Hungarian problem claim that the autonomy of the several nationalities as members of a federal empire would be a better solution than the creation of new independent states. In any case, it seems clear that the Czechoslovaks, destined to become the bitterest foes of the Habsburgs, were not, at least early in the war, fully united on a program of independence from the Empire. In fact they appear to have been the most sincere minority group in the Empire in their desire to achieve federalism. Separatist movements among them were negligible, if not entirely absent, in 1914, and sentiment among them was chiefly directed towards the attainment of equality with the dominant German and Magyar groups.

For the Czechs, from the first awakening of the democratic national spirit until the dissolution of the monarchy, were not disinclined to accept the plan that the

---

7 Strong, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
future Bohemia would become a part of a federal state and they would have willingly participated in a central parliament including all the nations of the monarchy as equal members.8

Men, who were later to become avowed foes of the Dual Monarchy, expressed a desire, early in the war, to develop an autonomous system under the Habsburg Crown. Eduard Beneš, later one of the most ardent anti-Habsburg leaders among the Czech émigrés, was one of these. Professor Kerner, writing after the war, points out this change in Beneš' beliefs:

He [Benes] had believed in the possibility of a democratic federalized Austria-Hungary; but when the World War began, Eduard Beneš was among the first to see that such a conflagration could create much more formidable forces against the Empire from without than the German Alliance or any binding forces from within.9

The Austro-Hungarian Government, under the aged and senile Franz Josef, however, was not sympathetic to an Empire-wide federal system. Its strength, it was thought by its leaders, was dependent upon a highly centralized, bureaucratic organization. The Dual Monarchy comprised eleven nations, speaking ten languages; yet the government demanded that the administration be conducted through the media of two legal and official languages, i.e., German and Magyar. "The actual possessors of power, and the indispensable support of the dynasty, were the bureaucrats, German to a man."

---


Redlich reports of the Austrian half of the Monarchy.\textsuperscript{10} In Hungary, the positions of authority were manned by the Magyars in a similar exclusive fashion.

Of the many Slavic peoples in the Austrian portion of the Dual Monarchy, the Poles of Galicia enjoyed preferential treatment above the others, having obtained, at least in a \textit{de facto} manner, approximately the position of the Magyars. This resulted from a "tacit understanding that in exchange for a free hand in Galicia, the Polish delegation in the \textit{Reichsrat} in Vienna would support the Crown."\textsuperscript{11} Nothing of the same sort of arrangement was made for either the neighboring Czechs or Slovaks, and the Austrians, varying their tactics to meet current situations, managed to maintain their supremacy in the \textit{Reichsrat}, until that body was prorogued. The challenge to the Habsburgs, coming in the main from the Czechs, developed as the war advanced. Of all the subject peoples, they alone had growing and clear understanding of who was their real enemy. "The Czechs were threatened only by the Germans: they had everything to fear from a German victory and nothing from a German defeat," says one of the most distinguished historians of the period.\textsuperscript{12} Coupled with their growing realization that the Germans had no in-


\textsuperscript{11}Strong, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19; \textit{Cf.}, Redlich, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 78.

terest in assisting in the restoration of Czech independence, the Czechs soon saw that the Austrian Government's role was maintenance of German supremacy.

This...gave rise to a sense of despair among the intellectual classes of the non-German peoples, which, spreading through the population, found expression in the mass desertion of Slav divisions from the army in the field. 13

Suppression of opposition movements within the Empire became increasingly ruthless as the war advanced, as the men responsible for Austria's military, political and administration activities saw little hope of maintaining the Empire and their positions, save through a decisive victory of German arms. Thus "until the change of regime which followed the death of Francis Joseph, the Czechs were as completely muzzled as any people in Europe."14 While the most ardent leaders of the oppressed nation slipped over the frontiers to carry on political and military action against the Habsburgs, those who remained at home faced a stern and implacable foe, determined to use every means of repression at his command to counteract the flood of propaganda which threatened to inundate the Empire. Such repressive measures, coupled with the hardships encountered at home, created "despair and indignation, with the result that anti-Habsburg propaganda found fertile soil. And, significantly, this was particu-

13Redlich, op. cit., p. 98.
14Temperley, Peace Conference, IV, p. 251.
larly true of the peasants," reports David F. Strong, an
able historian of the Central-European scene.15

One of the earliest manifestations, as we have seen,
of opposition to the established regime was the formation of
the strong "Maffia" organization in Bohemia. Besides pro-
viding information for the emigrés to use with Entente lead-
ers, the "Maffia" also served as a rallying point for the men
and women who remained behind. Close contact was maintained
between Masaryk, Beneš and all the leaders in the Entente
countries, and Kramár, Dr. P. Šamal and their supporters in
Prague—which kept the fires of revolution burning through­
out the conflict. Because of the conditions within the Em­
pire under which the resistance forces had to operate, says
Strong, it is easy to understand why the emigrés seemed to
have the more advanced political ideas:

In general it may be said that the Czech National
Council at Paris, working with the tacit encouragement
of the Entente, and later with its benediction, repre­
sented the most advanced position, while the Czech
leaders at home followed their leaders in Paris.16

Constant pressure was exerted on the Czech leaders
in the Empire by the Austrian War Government, and Czernin
exacted from the Parliamentary clubs of the Czechs, Yugo­
slavs and Deputies of other subject nationalities, state­

15Strong, op. cit., p. 72.
16Ibid., pp. 75-76.
ments affirming their loyalty to the Empire. For example, the Czech parliamentary association, "while upholding the demands for the Bohemian Staatsrecht, had proclaimed, 'their attachment to the dynasty and its historic mission.'" The Austrians were quick to use this statement in an effort to drive a wedge between the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris and the Czech and Slovak peoples at home. Little, if any, success attended these efforts, as the Czechoslovaks in the Dual Empire and Masaryk and the National Council in the West both realized that the statement was issued under duress. Considerable Allied credence was given to the statement, however, and, for a time at least, it delayed recognition and international support of the Council under Masaryk's leadership. It was another hurdle which he and his devoted followers had to take in stride in their drive toward independence, as Masaryk points out:

We also had to convince the Americans that we meant to be free and were fighting for freedom. Again and again we were told that the Czech leaders at home were not in opposition to Austria, and the disavowal which we had received...was constantly thrown in our teeth.

---


19 Mamatey, op. cit., p. 48.

20 Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 274.
As the war dragged on into 1917, and as secret peace negotiations were being conducted behind the scenes by the Entente and Charles' Government, the subject peoples were becoming increasingly active in their opposition to the Habsburg Empire. In May, 1917, on the initiative of Jaroslav Kvapil, Czech poet and dramatist, the Manifesto of Czech Writers was addressed to Bohemian members of the Reichsrat, "If you cannot carry out all that the nation demands of you and charges you with, then resign your right to sit and appeal to the highest authority—to your nation," the Manifesto charged. The Czech Deputies responded to this stirring appeal when the parliamentary assembly reopened later in the month. On May 30, Frantešek Štaněk, spokesman for the Czech Parliamentary Club, offered a resolution demanding the transformation of Austria-Hungary "into a federal state of free and equal national states," and the union of the Czechs and Slovaks "in a single democratic Bohemian State." Included

21 Perhaps the most interesting peace attempt was the celebrated "Sixtus Affair," secret discussions carried on by Emperor Charles and Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma, his brother-in-law, an officer in the Belgian Army. Discussed fully in Kann, Multinational Empire, pp. 267ff.


in these demands was recognition of the historic rights of
the Czech Nation and acceptance of the principle of national
self-determination. Among other things, this was a direct
challenge to Hungary, as Czechoslovak unity could not be
achieved without dissolving the Kingdom of Hungary, as con-
stituted under the Ausgleich of 1867. The Czechoslovak ques-
tion was, thus, the key to the life or death of the Habsburg
Empire, as Mamatey points out, "the threat of complete dis-
memberment...was clearly understood by the statesmen of Vi-
enna, and they were terror-stricken." 25

Another important event, destined to have a powerful
effect on the future of the Dual Monarchy, took place in the
summer of 1917. In the Declaration of Corfu of July 20,
1917, the South Slavs made Yugoslavian union an official Ser-
bian and South Slav war aim. 26 Partial unification was re-
jected, and Southern Slav leaders within the Monarchy dis-
carded all thought of further cooperation with either the
Austrians or the Hungarians. From this time forward, "South-
ern Slav Deputies in the Reichsrat conferred frequently with
the Czech Deputies, and supported the latter in their parlia-

24 Robert J. Kann, The Habsburg Empire, A Study in In-
tegration and Disintegration (New York: Frederick A. Praeger,
1957), p. 147. (Cited hereafter as Kann, The Habsburg Em-
pire).

25 Mamatey, op. cit., p. 47.

26 Ibid., p. 114.
mentary opposition and obstruction,"^27Strong has noted.

Events continued the rapid drift in the direction of a Czechoslovak plan for complete independence during 1918. On January 6, all the Czech Deputies in the Reichsrat held a meeting in Prague with leaders of the literary and business world, marking the real break of the Czech leadership with the dynasty. This Epiphany Day meeting reaffirmed the principle of self-determination for the Czechoslovak peoples and strongly protested the Austrian policy in the negotiations for the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. As a result of his part in the negotiations, Count Czernin was accused of forsaking true Imperial interests for the benefit of Germany.^28

Hopes for an intra-empire national compromise, if they ever existed, vanished completely. The Czech political declaration of Epiphany 1918 in Prague, the last move before the actual outbreak of the revolution, proclaimed in much stronger terms outright self-determination as the principle goal of the Czech people. There could be little doubt now that this was only a thinly camouflaged advance notice of their goal of complete independence.^29

Czernin angrily struck back, attacking "the miserable Masaryk" and those other Masaryks within the Monarchy, who used

---

\(^{27}\)Strong, op. cit., p. 74.


\(^{29}\)Kann, The Habsburg Empire, p. 149.
their immunity to encourage the enemy. But the Czechs were not to be cowed by the Foreign Minister, who had long since lost their confidence and respect, and some six thousand demonstrators assembled in Prague on April 13 to answer the allegation that the Czechoslovak people did not stand behind their leaders. A solemn oath to "hold on till victory" and independence, which, while in no way official, showed the growing strength that the separatist movement had with the rank and file in Prague.

Nationalist sentiment reached a fever pitch during the Jubilee celebration of the Czech National Theatre held in Prague on May 15. Held ostensibly in celebration of the anniversary of the theatre, the Jubilee actually was staged to serve as a demonstration against the Empire, and was attended by representatives of all the Czech and Slovak parties and by prominent Polish, Italian, Yugo-Slav and Rumanian figures. The names of Masaryk and Wilson were repeatedly acclaimed by the crowd, which, in a turbulent session, demanded full independence for Czechoslovakia and the establishment of a democratic government.

---

30Temperley, Peace Conference, IV, p. 83.
31Ibid., p. 258.
Four days later, Emperor Charles added further fuel to the fires of anger consuming the Czechoslovaks, when, in an Imperial Rescript, he declared that the dominantly German districts of Bohemia would, on January 1, 1919, be separated from the Czech districts. This determined the Czechs to work harder for complete independence and the defeat of the Central Powers. "Henceforth, it was to be either complete independence or partition for Bohemia." The Rescript welded even closer the bonds between the Czechoslovak leaders at home and the National Council abroad. On July 16, 1918, Vlastimil Tusar, a militant Czech Deputy, declared in the Reichsrat that "the war must end with the creation of a Czecho-Slovak State," while the next day, M. Stříbrný, another Czech Deputy, sang the praises of the Czech troops fighting for the Entente against the Central Powers.

These revolutionary statements were made in the Reichsrat less than a week after the "Czech Mafia boldly came into the open and constituted itself as the Czech National Committee of Prague." With Kramář as its president, the committee represented all political parties in Bohemia, with membership based on party strength in the last Austrian election of 1911.

---

33Strong, op. cit., p. 75.
34Temperley, Peace Conference, IV, p. 262.
35Mamatey, op. cit., p. 318.
36Ibid.
When the Reichsrat reconvened in October, 1918, Baron Max von Hussarek, Austrian Premier, told the assembled delegates that the introduction of national autonomy must be regarded as inevitable. But this concession to the desires of the subject peoples was too late. Their representatives had not come to the Reichsrat to listen to plans designed to strengthen or save the Empire; instead they were there to announce their intention of withdrawing from it. During the first session of the body, the Czech Deputy, František Štaneck, speaking for all Czech Deputies, rejected autonomy under the Habsburgs and declared their solidarity with the Czechoslovak movement abroad.37 He said in part, as quoted by Temperley:

The Czech Legions, fighting in conjunction with the Allies, had been called a rabble, but it is just with them that the Austrian Government will have to discuss the future of the Czecho-Slovak nation, "and that is why we will not discuss it with you here."38

Masaryk attributes a similar statement to Dr. Alois Rašín, a prominent Czech leader who remained in the Empire throughout the war as an active member of the "Maffia". Dr. Rašín said to the gathered deputies in the Reichsrat:

You wished to exclude us from the peace negotiations, but now, against your will, you will find Czechs taking part in them, as representatives of the Czechoslovak brigades. With them you will have to negotiate upon the Czech question, not with us; and hence we decline to

37Ibid., p. 323.
38Temperley, Peace Conference, IV, p. 94.
negotiate with you. This question will be solved elsewhere than in Austria. Here there are no factors competent to solve it. 39

Following the Austrian Note of October 4 to President Wilson, offering to negotiate peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points, Baron Hussarek admitted to the Reichsrat that such objectives were incompatible with the existing structure of the Monarchy. As soon as the intention to negotiate on these terms was made known, "Magyar public opinion stampeded for separation" from Austria as a partner in the Dual Monarchy. 40 The peace note, tendered by Count Stephen Burian, a Magyar serving as the Austrian Foreign Minister, which arrived in Washington through Swedish diplomatic channels on October 7, had offered to

...His Lordship the President of the United States...to conclude with him and his allies an armistice...and to enter immediately upon negotiations for a peace for which the fourteen points...should serve as a foundation... 41

In a last desperate effort to save the Empire, Emperor Charles issued his famous Manifesto "To My Loyal Austrian Peoples," on October 16, 1918, agreeing to the federalization of Austria in a futile attempt to comply with the

39 Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 386.

40 Temperley, Peace Conference, IV, 95.

ideas expressed by President Wilson in his declaration of January, 1918, relating to Austria-Hungary. By the terms of the Manifesto, Austria in the future would be composed of four national States—German, Czech, Yugo-Slav and Ukranian; Trieste was to be made a free port, while the Poles of Galicia were to be free to unite with Poland if they wished. Under existing conditions, with the Dual Monarchy reeling under Allied military attacks and subjected to ever-greater pressures for dismemberment from within, the Manifesto pleased no one and was universally accepted as a formal notification of the death of the Empire. "The boldest blueprint ever drawn up in the Hofburg to rebuild the Empire," said Gordon Shepherd, "was used instead as its demolition order."

Just three days later, the Czech National Committee in Prague declared that the Czech people could no longer negotiate with Vienna, and that the Bohemian question was, in the future, an international question which could be solved only on the basis of absolute national independence.

---

45 Temperley, Peace Conference, IV, p. 102.
This declaration was based on President Wilson's reply (delayed purposely for eleven days) to Count Burian's peace proposal. In his answer, the President stated that the situation had changed since January 8, when he had announced his Fourteen Points, and for the men in the Ballplatz, as well as those of both the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris and the Czechoslovak National Committee in Prague, this could mean but one thing:

an armistice could be obtained only by the official recognition of the independence, not only of the Poles, as had been agreed, but also of a Czechoslovak State, involving a loss to Austria of Böhemia and Mähravia, and a loss to Hungary of Slovakia, as well as the complete separation of the Southern Slav lands of both halves of the Monarchy, to mention the larger blocs only....While the Central Government hesitated to sign its own death warrant in this manner, the various heirs and executors were busy establishing their own administrations.

The stage was thus set for the final dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the demise of the Habsburgs, one of Europe's oldest and most powerful ruling families, just as the last sounds of the long struggle of the World War of 1914-1918 were about to recede into history.

---

47 Strong, op. cit., p. 100.
CHAPTER V

ACTION AT THE FRONT AFFECTS ALLIED DIPLOMACY

When Dr. Masaryk left the capital of his native land in the winter of 1914, a fugitive from the Austrian police, because of his nationalistic ideas, he knew that he faced a long bitter struggle before he would be able to return to Prague—especially if his homecoming was to be to the capital of a new and independent state. His role as leader of the anti-Habsburg elements of the Czech nation was made more difficult early in the war, when the German Empire took over the conduct of military operations for the Central Powers. To all intents and purposes, this was the only reason that the Austro-Hungarian armies were able to remain in the field. Nevertheless, Franz Josef and his subjects won a certain degree of sympathy in some places because of this Germanic ascendancy and American demands for war with Austria-Hungary did not gain much favor until late in the struggle.

The leaders of the subject peoples early had determined that they would have to engage in a long propaganda battle if their ultimate objectives were to be realized. For that reason they conducted a strong education and propaganda campaign during the whole of the war in the United States and in the Entente countries. As one of the most politically knowledgable of the anti-Habsburgs, Masaryk
clearly understood the problems that he faced:

...there was little knowledge of, or interest in these subject races; how few knew or cared anything about the Czechs, let alone the Slovaks, or Slovenians, or Slovenians! It took three years of carefully organized propaganda before the leading members of the British Government had been won over to the scheme.¹

On his arrival in Great Britain from Italy in April, 1915, Masaryk quickly turned to his few, but energetic and able, friends there in an effort to start the propaganda battle intended to win supporters for his country's objectives. Wickham Steed, Seton-Watson and others came to his aid and wrote authoritative articles for influential news media informing the British people of the justice of the Czechoslovak cause and the ultimate benefit which would accrue to Britain from the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy.²

Seton-Watson points out the result of this effort:

...On three successive days in September, The Times printed letters, written quite independently of each other, by Sir Valentine Chirol (whom Steed had recently succeeded as foreign editor), George Trevelyan and myself, intended to bring home to an uninformed public some of the main issues involved in the so-called "Question of Nationalities" in Central Europe.³

¹Sir James Headlam-Moreley, "Fall of Austria," Atlantic Monthly, CXLIV (October, 1929), 560-61.
G. M. Trevelyan, one of the great British historians, in an article for the influential publication, The Fortnightly Review, earlier had written:

The Empire of Vienna and Buda-Pesth is an anachronism, dependent for support upon the Prussian arms. It is the domination of the two races, the Austria-Germans and the Magyars, over a half-dozen other races.  

Again, Trevelyan carried the cause of the subject peoples into public print, writing, "There will be no peace in Europe until the subject populations of Austria-Hungary obtain liberty in one form or another. The rule of the sword cannot give permanent peace."  

Seton-Watson, in his colorful writing style, gave the émigré leaders a substantial boost, declaring:

Poland, Bohemia, and Jugoslavia—these three together form the keystone to the arch of European liberty. Without the emancipation of the Southern Slavs and the Czecho-Slovaks from German aggression, Austrian inertia and Magyar tyranny...there can be no regeneration of the European commonwealth, no permanent settlement, no durable peace after the horrors of the Great War.  

Wickham Steed, not to be outdone by his friends, devoted considerable space and writing ability to the Central European problem, and wrote telling editorials against the Dual Mon-

---


archy. In his program for peace, published in *The Edinburgh Review*, "the constitution of an independent, or at least autonomous, Bohemia, including Moravia, and the Slovak country of north-western Hungary," was a major point. In another article he blasted away at the "sympathetic" view of the Austro-Hungarian Empire held by some of his compatriots, "no false solicitude, for the welfare of 'those nice people, the Austrians,' ought...to militate against... formation of an independent Bohemia, or Czecho-Slovakia." Popular support for the Czechs and Slovaks built up slowly in Great Britain and spread throughout the free world's press, where it began to gain for them much-needed sympathy and support, when war aims and peace terms came up for discussion.

With each succeeding article and introduction to another politician, Masaryk intensified his campaign to influence opinion, which he realized was entirely uninformed on questions relating to the Dual Monarchy and her subject peoples. The help of his friends was invaluable to the Czech leader, and to repay the friendship in part, Masaryk furnished information to Allied intelligence services both in Europe and the United States, gathered by members of his

---


Czechoslovak organizations, who were located in many key areas around the world.

Czechoslovak propaganda in the United States had begun shortly after the outbreak of the war, directed by Emanuel Victor Voska of the Bohemian National Alliance. Voska was an influential member of the Czechoslovak counterespionage organization which, in 1915, had turned over information to the United States Government, implicating the German Army and Naval Attaches, Captains Franz von Papen and Karl Boy-Ed, in sabotage activities, leading to the expulsion of the two Attaches. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Washington, Dr. Constantin Dumba, who had been detected in some rather bungling attempts to slow munitions manufacture for the Entente Armies, also was recalled when the Czechoslovak organization provided information on his activities. Such acts gained friends for the Czechoslovaks, but it took a long period of time before the war aim expressed in the following article became accepted by the American people:

Certain nations built up in flagrant denial of the rights of nationalities—Austria-Hungary, for example—

---


can claim no absolute right of existence. National boundaries must be completely retraced before international law may be properly invoked in defense of an alleged right to exist.\footnote{Philip Marshall Brown, "Elements of a Just and Durable Peace," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LXXII (July, 1917), 81.}

Before the Allied and Associated Powers came to believe that Austria-Hungary should be broken up, however, several years of bloody warfare had to be fought, countless speeches had to be made, news articles written, and personal contacts completed to create popular support for this radical departure from the status quo. Even in the lands held by the Habsburgs, such a deviation from the established order had not been seriously considered by any sizable segment of the population, until the war had been in progress for some time. It was on autonomous principles that the Entente countries first based their plans for post-war settlements in Central Europe. The breakup of the Dual Monarchy into its component national parts, was not foreseen until late in the conflict.

Behind this radical change in thinking, by the Entente leaders and the broad masses of people living both within and without the Dual Monarchy, was a brilliantly conceived plan of education and propaganda. The plan was put into effect by Masaryk and implemented by the National Council, using excellent timing and daring diplomatic maneuver—and was, at all times, backed by the dauntless courage of the Czecho-
slovak Legions in every theatre of the war.

The headlines of the popular press and the thoughtful articles in the opinion-forming periodicals of the day were not made available to the Council and its leaders merely for the asking. On the world scene, Austria-Hungary, as a major force in the balance-of-power politics prevalent in Europe for centuries, held a position of extreme importance, even to her opponents in the great conflict which had engulfed the world. However, the thought patterns were changed. Entente leaders eventually made the decision to dismember the once-great Empire, and a new Republic, Czechoslovakia, emerged from the rubble as a bright contribution to the finally expressed goal of the Allies to give self-determination to the subject peoples of the Habsburgs. The Allied leaders were guided to their unprecedented decision by a handful of men, some of whom fought their battles in the halls of international diplomacy, while the others fought in the trenches of France and Italy, or on the broad and endless battlefields of Russia and Siberia.

Czechoslovak leaders had decided that it would be necessary to extend their efforts over a wide portion of the world if they were to achieve their aspirations. Because of the great exodus of Czech and Slovak peoples from the Dual Monarchy by emigration to other lands, such a base upon which to work was available. Roucek reports that during the forty years preceding World War I, "No fewer than 793,665 Slovaks
emigrated, mostly to the United States." These and other large settlements of peoples of Czech and Slovak heritage, resident in many countries of the world, had drawn closer to each other in their new homelands. Because of the common heritage and similar customs which made them recognize their kinship in their new homes, many minor difficulties which sometimes plagued them within the Empire were disregarded. With the clearer perspective that distance gives, the sometime rivals within the Empire could see that they had a common goal and heritage that would lend themselves to a joint community effort. "To Masaryk, himself perhaps more Slovak than Czech, such a united effort had been a self evident necessity from the beginning of the war," Thomson states. Czechoslovak National Committees and Congresses sprang up around the world—in January of 1915 organizations were formed in Switzerland, the United States, Russia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. All differences between the Czechs and Slovaks did not disappear, it must be noted, but in the United States, at the great Congress held at Cleveland, Ohio, in

---


October, 1915, the majority of the Slovaks supported the joint Czecho-Slovak cause. Masaryk writes, "The Slovaks and Czechs agreed upon unity and cooperation; and the American Slovak leaders were among the signatories of the first anti-Austrian manifesto of November 14, 1915."\(^{15}\) The "Czech Foreign Committee", which threw down this gauntlet to the Habsburgs on that memorable day, soon became the Czechoslovak National Council and bent every effort toward the creation of an effective fighting force capable of gaining prestige and diplomatic stature for the Czechoslovak Nation, for which they yearned. On the basis of its Legions, the National Council hoped to "gain the political recognition of a de facto and de jure existence of a Czechoslovak Government from all the Entente powers."\(^{16}\)

In an around-about way the Central Powers provided the means by which the idea of Czechoslovak independence became included as one of the Entente war aims. On December 12, 1916, from what they considered a position of great strength, the Central Powers sent a message to the United States, offering to negotiate peace and asking that the United States transmit this intelligence to the Entente members.\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 223.

\(^{16}\)Thomson, op. cit., p. 253.

his position of neutrality, and with a natural desire to end the bloody conflict, President Wilson at the time was working on a peace program which he had intended to submit to the warring nations. The Central Powers' offer caught him off-balance, but he decided to ask the war aims of the combatants anyway, and on December 18, 1916, instructions were sent to all American diplomats, to representatives accredited to the belligerent governments, and to all neutral governments for their information.\textsuperscript{18}

The President is not proposing peace; he is not even offering mediation. He is merely proposing that soundings be taken in order that we may learn, the neutral nations with the belligerents, how near the haven for peace may be for which all mankind longs with an intense and increasing longing...and he confidently hopes for a response which will bring a new light into the affairs of the world.\textsuperscript{19}

Thus read the dispatch of Robert Lansing, the United States Secretary of State. The Central Powers did not send an outline of their war aims in reply, but suggested a direct exchange of views between delegates of the warring states at a meeting to be held on neutral grounds.\textsuperscript{20} On the other hand, the Entente Powers came up with a definite proposal, includ-

\begin{center}

\textsuperscript{19}Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 22.
\end{center}
ing this important point, "a brilliant success," as Masaryk states, for the Czechoslovak cause:

But the civilized world knows that they [the objectives of the war] imply in all necessity and in the first instance, the restoration of Belgium, of Servia, and of Montenegro...the liberation of Italians, of Slavs, of Roumanians and of Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination...22

This was an important milestone in the Czechoslovak quest for recognition, and its inclusion in the war aims of the Allies can be attributed in great part, to the interest of the French Government in their cause, fostered by the continuing efforts of Beneš and the National Council in Paris.23

And they [the French] added some suggestions of their own, namely, the inclusion in the Entente program of the liberation of the Czechoslovaks, to whom no previous secret or public pledge had been made...With good French logic, the French leaders concluded that the inclusion of the Czechoslovaks in the Entente program would give it greater consistency; after all, if the Italians, Yugoslavs, Rumanians and Poles were to be liberated in the name of President Wilson's principle of National self-determination rather than under the terms of specific Entente agreements, why not also the Czechoslovaks?24

The exchange of notes did nothing to settle the basic differences between the belligerents, and was quickly follow-

21Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 124.


23Mamatey, op. cit., p. 46.

ed by the German decision to use unrestricted submarine warfare to cut off all commerce by sea with the Allied countries. In reply to this German decision, delivered by her Ambassador to the United States, Count Johann von Bernstorff, the United States severed diplomatic relations with the German Empire, and on April 2, President Wilson addressed a joint session of Congress, asking for a Declaration of War. Congress answered the President's request by declaring war on Germany on April 6, 1917.²⁵ No action was taken by Congress at this time, to declare war on the allies of Germany, but within a few days, diplomatic relations were broken off with the Dual Monarchy and Turkey. Bulgaria, alone of the Central Powers, thus, was represented in America.²⁶

Although not at war with the Dual Monarchy, the United States was thus placed in the opposition camp, fighting against her allies, and in a position to become more closely aligned with the anti-Habsburg elements operating within the United States. The latter did not delay long in increasing their efforts for recognition by the United States. On June 18, 1917, Štefánik, then Vice President of the National Council, arrived in the United States, bent on a dual mission: to win the sympathy of Americans of all ranks for the Czechoslovak cause, and to seek permission from the United

²⁵Scott, op. cit., p. 93.
²⁶Mamatey, op. cit., pp. 70-71.
States Government to recruit soldiers among the Czech and Slovak immigrants. 27

Štefánik met with limited success in his recruiting campaign, but he was able to draw the Czech and Slovak elements closer together and scored a propaganda success by promoting a great public meeting held in New York's Carnegie Hall on September 14, 1917. The meeting was prominently reported in the New York press, and shortly thereafter, the New York Herald printed a long "interview with Štefánik which appears to have been the first serious discussion of the Czechoslovak problem in the American press." 28

When entering the war against Germany in April, 1917, President Wilson purposely did not call for a declaration of war on Austria-Hungary, hoping that the Dual Monarchy would respond to the separate peace efforts conducted by the Allies. However, efforts to draw the Emperor Charles into an early peace failed, and at last, on December 7, 1917, war was declared against Austria-Hungary. In his speech calling for this action, given on December 4, the President did not call for dissolution of the Dual Monarchy, but said:

...we do not wish in any way to impair or rearrange the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is no affair of ours what they do with their own life...we only desire to

27 Ibid., p. 129.
28 Ibid., p. 132-33.
see that their affairs are left in their own hands, in all matters great and small.29

President Wilson's speech to Congress caused widespread comment in Great Britain, "the militants approved the will to victory...and the endorsement of the aspirations of subject nationalities in Austria-Hungary and Turkey."30 The émigré Czechoslovaks were encouraged by the President's request for war against the Dual Monarchy, "but discouraged by his assurance against dismemberment."31 They had cause for greater encouragement, however, in President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points speech of January 8, 1918, which followed close on the declaration of war. Although the President did not call for independence of all subject peoples, a marked change was noted as he stated in Point Ten: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development."32 Further in an ad-

---


31 Mamatey, op. cit., p. 162.

dress to Congress on February 11, 1918, he emphasized the principle that territorial settlements must be made in the interest of the populations concerned—saying that "all well-defined national aspirations should be granted the fullest satisfaction that can be afforded them."33

The Allied leaders, it appeared, all were approaching much the same program of peace. Three days before Wilson gave his Fourteen Points address, Prime Minister David Lloyd George made a statement of British war aims, the content of which was so near to that proposed by Wilson that the latter very nearly decided not to make his speech.34 Lloyd George referred to the December 4, 1917, address of the President in his speech:

Similarly, though we agree with President Wilson that the break-up of Austria-Hungary is no part of our war aims, we feel that unless genuine self-government on true democratic principles is granted to these Austro-Hungarian nationalities who have long desired it, it is impossible to hope for the removal of these causes of unrest in that part of Europe which have so long threatened its general peace.35

Fortunately for the subject peoples who needed the support his speech offered, the American Chief Executive decided to

33Ibid., p. 112; Cf., Scott, op. cit., p. 270.
34Charles Seymour, American Diplomacy During the World War (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1934), p. 287.
continue with his plans to make the address, even though it was closely related to that of Lloyd George, and it became a primary rallying point for émigré leaders. His remarks reflected a growing conviction that the territorial matters of the Dual Monarchy should be considered carefully before peace terms were discussed, thus giving the Czechoslovaks added cause for hope. J. A. M. De Sanchez, Director of the Economic Division of the French Commission in the United States from 1919 to 1921, pointed out the value of the Fourteen Points speech and the other statements of war aims to the Allied cause in an article written after the war:

...the Fourteen Points were as definitive a part of the military campaign of the last year of the war as were the operations of the American Army in the St. Mihiel Sector. Whether they were intended as such is not yet perfectly clear; that they became such is certain.36

Although the Czechoslovak leaders were somewhat disappointed in the Fourteen Points, especially because of the autonomous development feature,37 the pronouncement gave them some encouragement and spurred the National Council to renewed propaganda activities.38

Yet it was almost the summer of 1918 before the Czechoslo-


37Mamatey, op. cit., p. 215.

38Strong, op. cit., p. 77.
slovak National Council in Paris, with its American affiliate, the Bohemian National Alliance, was able to observe a change in the American Government's attitude toward the Czechoslovak cause. The autonomy promised in the Fourteen Points was,...hardly satisfactory.39

Despite the popular appeal and the very strong propaganda value of the Fourteen Points address, Robert Lansing, Wilson's Secretary of State, was not entirely satisfied with the speech and wrote a memorandum on it:

...I think that the President will have to abandon this idea and favor the erection of new states out of the Imperial territory and require the separation of Austria-Hungary. This is the only certain means of ending German power in Europe.

Convinced of this, I think we should consider the erection of a Polish State, a Czech State and possibly a Ruthenian State...40

Others also saw the coming disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and more and more propaganda activity was directed into the effort to obtain political support among the Great Powers for the eventual recognition of new sovereign states. Fenwick, writing on the possible realignment of nations in the Balkans, stated, "...an independent Czechoslovak State, especially if supported by an independent Jugo-Slav State, would be a permanent barrier to the plan of a Pan-German Mittel-Europa."41 Such an arrangement, it was

39Kertesz, op. cit., p. 34.
believed, would be a military advantage for the future, as well as a present-day recognition for services rendered during the war. Late in the conflict, the popular magazine, Outlook, however, questioned the advisability of placing too much emphasis on parts of the Fourteen Points, stating:

Professor J. Holland Rose [noted English historian] of Cambridge, England, distinctly claims that the tide of events has swept forward with such speed since January 8, 1918, that several of the Points are entirely inadequate and that the Central Powers would not concede nearly enough even if they gave a bonafide assent to the Points as formulated.42

Articles in the popular press began to echo the opinions of Lansing, and other figures in American Government called for support of the subject nationalities. Congressman Adolph J. Sabath of Illinois, for example, introduced a resolution: "That Bohemia be made free and independent and be given a rightful place among the nations of the world."43

Early April, 1918, was a period of great activity which was to have an important significance in Czechoslovak history. The German Armies launched a massive offensive on the Western Front and the weakened Allies sought more and more replacements for the trenches in this great struggle of attrition. Although coincidental, the subject peoples chose

42Joseph H. Odell, "The President's Fourteen Points—Are They Clear and Final?" Outlook, CXX (November 6, 1918), 344.

at this time to hold a "Congress of Oppressed Nationalities of Austria-Hungary" at Rome. The Congress, therefore, met under highly favorable conditions and was able to demonstrate not only the "anti-Austrian solidarity of the oppressed peoples but also to convert and firmly commit the Allies... to a strong anti-Austrian policy."  

Delegates representing the Yugoslavs, Czechs, Slovaks, Roumanians and Italians, along with Allied representatives, met and developed a series of resolutions, under which they agreed to lay aside their national disputes until after a victory had been won. One resolution stated, "Each of these people proclaim its right to constitute its own nationality and state unity or to complete it and to attain full political and economic independence." The Congress did not go unnoticed by the friends of the subject peoples living in the United States, or by the American Government. Secretary of State Lansing stated on May 29, that the "nationalistic aspirations of the Czechs and Jugoslavs for freedom have the earnest sympathy of this Government." On June 3, following the example set by the United States, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando, meeting at Versailles, issued a declaration concerning the Congress, expressing their

---

44 Mamatey, op. cit., p. 244.
46 For. Relts. of U. S., 1918, Sup. 1, I, p. 112.
"earnest sympathy for the nationalistic aspirations towards freedom of the Czechoslovak and Yugo-Slav peoples."47 Later, on June 28, Lansing issued a new statement, emphasizing in stronger fashion, the position of the American Government to be, "that all branches of the Slav race should be completely freed from German and Austrian rule."48 This was a "decisive advance as compared with President Wilson's Fourteen Points which spoke only of the rights of the Austrian nations to autonomous development,"49 an able historian later wrote.

The vaguely defined intention of Wilson's Point Ten was now clarified. The clarification meant recognition of the independence of smaller nations...a disruption of the Dual Monarchy,50 as Guido Kisch, a modern-day writer, has pointed out. Events favoring Czechoslovak independence moved rapidly thereafter, in the Entente countries and in the United States. On June 7, the British Government stated that in view of the formation of Czechoslovak military units in Italy, France, and Russia it was prepared to recognize the Czechoslovak Army "as an organized unit labouring in the cause of the Allies."51

47Ibid., p. 809.
50Kisch, op. cit., p. 237.
51For. Rel. of U. S., 1918, Sup. 1, I, 810.
Equally important to Masaryk and his co-workers, His Majesty's Government was prepared to recognize the National Council in Paris as the political agency representing the army. The Government of France followed suit and stated that it would recognize "publicly and officially the National Council as the supreme organ of the general interests and policy of the future Czechoslovak Government." 

While these events were taking place, Masaryk arrived in Washington on May 9, having left Russia and the Czechoslovak Legions more than two months earlier. He had been greeted royally by the Czech and Slovak residents of the United States. Charles Pergler, a member of the Bohemian National Alliance, reported, "At least one hundred thousand Czechs and Slovaks greeted him...in that city (Chicago)." He had been out of touch with the National Council much of the time while with the Legions in Russia, and only learned of the Rome Congress on his arrival in Tokyo, enroute to the United States; but he recognized the importance of the actions taken there, particularly the agreement upon common action against the Habsburgs.

---

53 Čapek, op. cit., p. 81.
55 Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 206.
56 Ibid., p. 242.
On his arrival in America, Masaryk at once addressed himself to the important task of gaining public favor for the Czechoslovaks. He turned to the press to achieve popular and widespread publicity, and before long placed "interviews and articles in the largest and most influential daily papers, weeklies and reviews, and established personal relations with prominent writers of all opinions." Recognizing the value of this editorial comment and support, later Masaryk wrote, "to American journalism in general, I owe a debt of gratitude."

Working with leaders of other subject nationalities in the United States, particularly the Yugoslavs, Masaryk gained many new friends for the cause of Czechoslovak independence, and at the same time helped further the national aspirations of these subject peoples. Masaryk's enthusiastic reception by the Slovaks, as well as the Czechs, proved an important factor in the success of his mission in the United States. In Pittsburgh, after a mass rally at which he received a public ovation, Masaryk drew up and signed with American Czech and Slovak representatives, the "Pittsburgh Convention," under which the Slovaks were to be given a degree of autonomy within the Czechoslovak State. This agreement, signed on May 30, 1918, established Masaryk

57Ibid., p. 235.
58Ibid.
in the minds of the American Government as the leader of all the Czech and Slovak peoples, and "American officials never questioned his right to speak in the name of the Slovaks."\(^{59}\) Professor Thomson has since written:

The organization of Czechoslovak sentiment and war effort proceeded harmoniously and enthusiastically under the guidance of Masaryk from this time on until independence and union of the two peoples in their native land were achieved.\(^{60}\)

Lansing and Masaryk held their first interview four days after the signing of the Pittsburgh document, and Masaryk pleaded his case for American assistance in transporting the Czechoslovak Legions from Russia to France. At the time of the interview, neither knew that the Legions had become involved in a conflict with the Bolsheviks, and the American Secretary of State was non-committal, as the "whole project seemed to him fantastic."\(^{61}\)

When the story of the Czechoslovak uprising in Russia became known, the situation was altered greatly for Masaryk and his fellow workers in the United States. Doors were opened to him that hitherto had remained closed. He has described the situation as follows:

The effect in America was astonishing and almost incredible—all at once the Czechs and Czechoslovaks were

\(^{59}\)Mamatey, op. cit., p. 284.

\(^{60}\)Thomson, op. cit., p. 273.

\(^{61}\)Mamatey, op. cit., p. 284.
known to everybody. Interest in our army in Russia and Siberia became general and its advance aroused enthusiasm... Our control of the railway and our occupation of Vladivostok had the glamour of a fairy-tale, which stood out the more brightly against the dark background of German successes in France.62

The Czechoslovak Legions caught the public fancy, and the popular press clamored for news of the movements of the almost legendary force.

Until May, 1918, the New York Times index had mentioned Czech and Czechoslovak only under the general heading, "Austria-Hungary". In July and September, two full pages in the index were given to the Czechoslovak Army and a half-page to other aspects of the situation. This demonstrates Masaryk's wisdom in insisting that it would be necessary for the Czechoslovaks to have an army before they could expect to exert influence on the statesmen of the world.63

Most Americans recognized the Czechoslovaks as a people almost entirely through the daring exploits of the Legions, fighting their way toward Vladivostok. Helping this recognition were many newspaper and magazine articles published during the closing months of the war.

Then at last came the amazing truth about Vladivostok: part of the Czechoslovak army had fought its way six thousand miles across Siberia to the Pacific port; the remainder of the army was stretched out along sections of the Trans-Siberian Railroad...64

62 Masaryk, Making of a State, p. 276.


Another typical article read:

A report came across the seas that a Czechoslovak Army of less than one hundred thousand men had practically freed Siberia from the misrule of the Bolshevists in one of the most dramatic adventures in history. 65

These and many similar newspaper and periodical articles built a ground swell of public approval for the fighting forces of the Czechoslovaks, and for the independence of the nation. As it was recognition that he had sought, and as he had planned to use the Legions to achieve that recognition, such public interest in the Czechoslovak troops was extremely valuable to Masaryk and the others working for Czechoslovak independence.

After June 19, 1918, when Professor Masaryk, as head of the Czechoslovak National Committee, met with President Wilson, the cause of the Czechoslovaks began to advance even more rapidly. It has been said that Masaryk's presence in Washington at this time, and the Legions in Siberia, Italy and France, were most important factors in gaining Czechoslovak recognition. One editorial writer summed it up in the following manner, attesting to Masaryk's great personal influence, "Masaryk in Washington is worth an extra regiment in France." 66

65 Herbert Francis Sherwood, "A New Declaration of Independence," The Outlook, CXX (November, 1918), 406.

66 Editorial, "Czechoslovak Independence," The Independent, XCVI (November 9, 1918), 149.
Great Britain, on August 14, recognized the Czecho-
slovak National Council as the "supreme organ of the Czecho-
slovak national interests, and as the present trustee of the
future Czecho-Slovak government."67 This gave the Govern-
ment of the United States further reason for all-out support
of the Czechoslovaks, and on September 3, a statement was
published recognizing "that a state of belligerency exists
between the Czechoslovaks thus organized and the German and
Austro-Hungarian Empires."68 Included in the declaration
was the following statement:

It also recognizes the Czechoslovak National Council
as a de facto belligerent government clothed with proper
authority to direct the military and political affairs
of the Czechoslovaks.69

Following quickly on the heels of this recognition
by the various members of the Allied and Associated Powers,
a second great meeting was held in New York's Carnegie Hall,
under the motto, "The Will of the Peoples of Austria-Hun-
gary." George Creel, head of the American Committee of Pub-
lic Information, gave his support to the meeting, and all of
the subject peoples were represented by important émigré

68United States Department of State, Papers Relating
to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing
Papers, 1914-1920, (Washington: Government Printing Office,
1940), II, p. 145.
leaders. An outstanding propaganda maneuver, the meeting demonstrated the solidarity of the subject peoples, and the American public applauded a resolution which was adopted stating, "we demand the dissolution of the present empire and the organization of its freed peoples according to their own will."

The stage was thus set for the final act in the events leading to the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy and the establishment of the new sovereign states. A look behind the scenes, on the actual fighting fronts, will show how the Czechoslovak Legions profoundly affected the recognition sought by Masaryk and his followers.

---

70 Mamatey, op. cit., p. 316.
CHAPTER VI

RETURN TO THE EASTERN FRONT:

THE ALLIES INTERVENE

During the year he remained in Russia, Masaryk worked diligently to smooth out differences between the Czechoslovak Legions and the Soviet Government, and as long as the Red Armies occupied the trenches opposing the Central Powers, there was little friction. After the signing of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, which took Russia out of the war, however, he realized that the safety of his soldiers was endangered, and that they must leave Russia to go into action on the Western Front, where they could achieve greater recognition for Czechoslovak ends. At that time, the major concentration of Czechoslovak troops in Russia centered near Kiev, where some forty thousand men opposed the Austro-German armies.\(^1\) By March 15, Czechoslovak leaders had been given approval by the Soviets to make the overland journey to Vladivostok,\(^2\) with one of the requirements being that the Legions would hand over part of their weapons to the Soviet Army. Again, after some difficulties arose between the Legions and local

---


Soviets, on March 26, the Soviets approved movement of the Czechoslovaks "as a group of free citizens\(^3\) (this was the agreement signed by Stalin referred to earlier) and the long anabasis to Vladivostok again got underway. Bene\'s has indicated the wholehearted desire of the Czechoslovaks to leave Russia for France:

From the moment when, in February and in March, 1918, the transfer of our troops to France had definitely become the order of the day, no serious-minded person amongst us reckoned with the possibility of intervention in Russia. The one endeavor was to reach France as rapidly as possible.\(^4\)

The Czechoslovak agreement to turn over part of their arms and equipment, thereby gaining approval to move through Russia and Siberia, worked satisfactorily for a short time, but distrust on both sides finally caused the Soviets to change the conditions of the movement. The Red Government ordered that all weapons be surrendered by the Czechoslovaks, and called for the enlistment of most of the Czechoslovaks in Red Army units or in labor pools.\(^5\) Neither the rank and file

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 355.


nor the officers of the Legions subscribed to these terms as they wished to get into action against the Germans, and relations between the Legions and the Bolsheviks became increasingly strained. Masaryk, disturbed at this unwarranted interruption of the movement of his troops, later writing to the Soviets concerning their attempts to detain the Legions, said:

I would not oppose your demand of disarmament if you can guarantee us free and unmolested passage to France. I assure you our soldiers' only wish is to fight the common enemy and help, by that, Russia.

The Bolsheviks continued their demands, however, and in May, 1918, relations between the Czechoslovaks and the Soviets finally were stretched to the breaking point at the little way station of Chelyabinsk in Siberia, and the Czechoslovaks determined to fight their way through Russia and Siberia, if necessary, to reach their homeland. Prior to this time, there was little, if any, antagonism on the part of the men of the Legions towards the Russians. Lansing, in fact had been in touch with Masaryk in Washington and wired to the American Ambassador in Russia, David R. Francis, that the Czechoslovaks "are determined to fight Austro-Germans and not

---

fellow Slavs, except when provoked, in self-defense."

The affair at Chelyabinsk, virtually determined the
trend of future relations between the Legions and the Soviets.
Enroute to Vladivostok, under terms of the agreement with
Stalin, a train of Czechoslovaks pulled into the station
alongside a train loaded with Hungarian prisoners-of-war
being returned in accord with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
An altercation developed between the two groups, easily under­
standable under existing conditions, and one of the Hungar­
ians killed a Czech, hitting him with a heavy piece of iron.
The Czech's friends retaliated by killing the Hungarian, and
were arrested by the local Soviets and taken to the city for
a hearing. This brought about a full-scale effort on the part
of their fellow Legionaries, and a detachment of Czechoslo­
vaks went into the city and secured their release. In a
pitched battle, following this incident, the Legions were
victorious and returned to their unit.

Although the Chelyabinsk incident in itself was settled
between the conflicting groups a few days later, the damage
had been done. On receipt of the news of the Legions' action
at the railroad station, Leon Trotsky, Soviet Commissar for

---

7For. Rels. of U. S., 1918, Russia, I, p. 571.

8John Albert White, The Siberian Intervention (Prince­
ton: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp. 247-48; Kennan,
War, directed the Siberian Soviets to detrain all Czecho-
slovaks in their regions and to "organize them into labor
artels or draft them into the Soviet Red Army". Some eight
thousand, four hundred members of Masaryk's forces were in
Chelyabinsk at the time, attending a "Congress of the
Czechoslovak Revolutionary Army," called to determine the
further course of action to be followed by the Legions. The
Chelyabinsk incident occurring during the Congress, immedi-
ately followed by Trotsky's peremptory order, angered the
Czechoslovaks who, defying the directive, proclaimed their
decision to keep their arms and proceed to Vladivostok. Trotsky then telegraphed the local Soviets:

All Soviets are hereby ordered to disarm the Czechoslovaks immediately. Every armed Czechoslovak found
on the railway is to be shot on the spot; every troop
train in which even one armed man is found shall be un-
loaded, and its soldiers shall be interned in a war
prisoner's camp....Inform all railway workers that not
a single car of armed Czechoslovaks is to be allowed to
move eastward. Those who submit to violence and assist
the Czechoslovaks in their movement east will be severely
punished.

The Legions were determined to get through to Vladivos-
stok and from this time on, "a state of open warfare existed

---

9Kennan, Soviet American Relations, II, p. 151.
10Bunyan, op. cit., p. 89.
11Ibid., p. 91.
between Red Russia and the Czechs. This struggle was to continue until an armistice was signed (February, 1920), permitting the last of the Legions to sail from Vladivostok in September, 1920, more than two years after the Chelyabinsk incident. The Legionaries were convinced that safety lay in the strength of their arms and they deployed rapidly along the Trans-Siberian railway until a Soviet official is reported to have exclaimed: "France, through concerted action with the Czech troops, has taken Siberia in twenty-four hours." Control of the Trans-Siberian was necessary if the Czechoslovaks were to have uninterrupted lines of communication, and the Legions accepted this as their first challenge. The leading spirit of the Legions in the Chelyabinsk area was Rudolph Gajda, strongly anti-Bolshevik, a fire-eater thirsting for action and the opportunity to attain Czechoslovak aims, he had risen rapidly in the ranks of the Legions. Gajda was to play an important role in the entire Siberian operation.

...it is easy to see that the Czech Corps, representing at the moment—as it did—the strongest compact and unified armed force in all of Siberia, could hardly fail to become, willingly or unwillingly, a factor in the


13 Stewart, op. cit., p. 107.

14 Kennan, Soviet American Relations, II, pp. 163-64.
state of smoldering evil conflict that had been brought into being throughout Siberia by the sudden Communist seizure of power.15

The Legions, some seventy-thousand strong, thus were destined to aid the cause of Czechoslovak independence in an entirely different theatre of operations, and become one of the most important factors in bringing about an Allied intervention in Russia and Siberia.

The disposition and timing of the Czech revolt, accidental though they were, happened to be of the first importance to the entire counter-revolutionary movement. The Czechs who had no real interest in the domestic affairs of Russia and no real wishes other than to complete their roundabout itinerary to Europe, now found themselves by this strangest of fatalities forming a liaison force and linking together all the aimless, planless, anti-Bolshevik groups throughout eastern Russia and Siberia.16

It must be noted that this decision to combat the Soviets was made by the men attending the Congress at Chelyabinsk and their leaders, Gajda, Čech and Voitsekhovsky, were given the task of carrying out the decision.17 There was no contact on a regular basis with the National Council, except through Allied channels, and events were happening too rapidly to depend on this slow means of communication. As an integral part of the French Army (since December of the pre-

15Ibid., p. 165.


17White, op. cit., p. 248.
vious year) the Legions had regular French Army officers assigned in a liaison capacity. The two French officers, Major Alphonse Guinet and Captain Pascal attending the Chelyabinsk Congress, were unable to stay the decision of the Legions, and the French desire to move the Czechoslovaks out of Russia and Siberia with the least possible delay, so that they could embark for the Western Front, was pushed into the background. Because of other diplomatic maneuvers being carried on by the Entente, however, the delay of this well-trained military organization in the East was not unwelcome to many British and French politicians.

Major Guinet, in fact, was instructed to tell Czechoslovaks a short time later:

The French Ambassador makes known to Commander Guinet that he can thank the Czechoslovaks for their actions, this in the name of the Allies. They, the Allies, have decided to intervene the last of June and the Czechoslovak Army and the French Mission form the advance guard of the Allied Army.

The statement, at least as far as the United States was concerned, was without authority, and its acceptance by the Czechoslovaks led them to believe that an Allied interventionist force would soon come to their aid in Western Siberia.

Behind this apparently unauthorized message was a long-stand-

18Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, II, p. 155; For. Bels. of U. S., 1918, Russia, II, p. 158.

19Stewart, op. cit., p. 114; Cf., Bunyan, op. cit., p. 106.
ing effort on the part of certain Entente leaders to effect an intervention of Siberia and Russia, with the intent of opening an Eastern Front and thus relieving the ever increasing pressure of the Germans on beleagured French and British forces in the West.

Entente military and political leaders, for the most part, had hailed the Russian Revolution as a release of the Russians from an autocratic regime and a step in the direction of democracy. With the signing of the ignominious Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and withdrawal of the Russians from the war, however, they recognized that more than twelve million troops were lost to the Allies, and more than seventy German divisions, previously tied down on the Eastern Front, were made available for duty on other battlefields.\(^\text{20}\)

Other considerations of the Russian "defection" were pointed out by Lloyd George in his War Memoirs:

...the fact that there was at Vladivostok a big accumulation of military stores intended for use by our Russian allies against the Central Powers. We did not want these to be used by the hostile Bolsheviks for exterminating those non-Bolshevik movements in Russia which were still opposing the Germans; still less did we want them to be seized by Austro-German forces in Russia, or surrendered by the Bolsheviks to the enemy as a condition of peace. In the second place, Vladivostok remained our one channel of communication with the Anti-German forces operating in Russia—the Cosacks of the Don and the Kuban, the non-Bolshevik governments of the Caucasus. Thirdly, it was imperative to prevent the Germans from penetrating into

\(^{20}\text{Stewart, op. cit., p. 82.}\)
Siberia and securing a hold upon it and its great natural resources.21

Early Entente attempts to interest the United States in a Russian intervention had failed and, in December, 1917, Clemenceau and Alfred Lord Milner, British Secretary of State for War, signed a convention in Paris, calling for joint action and creation of spheres of interest in Rumania and southern Russia, including the Ukraine. As part of the arrangements made with Štefánik and Beneš, recognition was given to the Czechoslovak army as a co-belligerent, serving under the French Government for military matters.22 Masaryk did not hear of this agreement until early in January and caused great embarrassment to his colleagues in Paris and displeasure to the French by refusing to commit the Legions to this use. The Ukrainians, however, had other ideas, and aligned themselves with the Central Powers against the Soviets, thereby calling a halt to immediate British and French plans in that area.23 The Allied decision, referred to earlier, was then made to transport the Legions to France, using the port at Vladivostok. In an enclosure to a letter to Seton-


23 Mamatey, op. cit., pp. 219, 2275.
Watson, dated March 31, 1918, Masaryk indicated the importance of a Czechoslovak force in France, and that the French themselves understood the political implications of such an army:

The significance of having a whole Czech army in France is obvious; and I must acknowledge that France understood the political meaning of the matter from the beginning....In present circumstances, 100,000—nay, even 50,000—trained soldiers may count a great deal.24

Unforeseen at that time, however, were other factors which were to change this French and British decision. Masaryk was not to get his one hundred thousand, nor even fifty thousand trained soldiers to the front in France—one authority has written that at the end of the war, Czechoslovak forces numbered approximately one hundred eighty-two thousand men, of which, only some twelve thousand were serving on the Western Front. The balance of the Legions were divided, with seventy-eight thousand men fighting in Italy and some ninety-two thousand under arms in Russia and Siberia.25

Late in 1917, Clemenceau, at an inter-Allied conference in Paris discussed with Colonel Edward M. House (United States representative to the Supreme War Council) the possi-


bility of sending a Japanese expeditionary force to Russia. House was adamant in refusing to consider such a course as one entirely in opposition to the principles of his govern­
ment. "Any effort at intervention except at the request of the Russian government would be a mistake," he was convinced.26

During January and February of 1918, almost constant pressure was put on President Wilson and his advisors, urging that he approve Japanese intervention. All such counsel was declined, but the arguments mounting one on another, began to have an effect on the President. The Entente requests, coupled with similar appeals from his own diplomatic staff abroad,27 built a strong case for intervention, which became increasingly difficult for him to resist. In late Feb­ruary, Arthur J. Balfour, British Secretary of State for For­eign Affairs, again appealed to the President and this re­quest was backed up by the French Embassy stating that Japan agreed to meet all Allied demands concerning her actions in Siberia. Wilson decided to accept the proposal and drafted a declaration of policy stating that although

the United States has not thought it wise to join the governments of the Entente in asking the Japanese


27 Ibid., p. 21.
Government to act in Siberia, "it would not object to such a request being made by the other Allies".28 Hardly had he sent the statement to the State Department for information of the Allied ambassadors, when he received other intelligence from some of his personal advisors which caused him to reconsider his decision and recall the note that was to have been sent to Japan.29 The time was not yet right for the President to want the Japanese to enter on an interventionist course alone in Russia, nor was he then inclined toward United States participation in a joint endeavor.30 Among his advisors, the military, particularly, did not favor intervention. Newton D. Baker, the Secretary of War, consistently resisted all proposals for intervention in Russia, and was vehement in his opposition to the suggestion that American troops be diverted from France to other fronts.31 General Peyton C. March, American Chief of Staff, also considered intervention impracticable saying that it would not divert a single German division from the Western Front, while General John J. Pershing, Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Force, refused to authorize transfer of any troops from his command in France.32 With such divergent

28Ibid., p. 30.
29Ibid., p. 31.
30Bunyan, op. cit., p. 60.
31Mamatey, op. cit., p. 74.
counsel offered by key diplomatic and military advisors, coupled with almost incessant appeals from the French and British for Japanese intervention, President Wilson was faced with a most difficult decision, informing House that he was "sweating blood" over it. 33

Intervention was brought closer, however, when the Japanese landed a force at Vladivostok on April 5, citing the murder of three Japanese nationals as the basis for the action. 34 The British also sent a small detachment of Marines to guard the Embassy in the face of possible internal disorder, but the United States declined to participate. Behind the British move was an effort to insure that any action taken would be an Allied one, not an independent Japanese venture. 35 The Soviets reacted quickly to the Japanese landing at Vladivostok, and George V. Chicherin, Acting Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, decried the use of force in a situation in which the local Soviet had not even been given an opportunity to investigate, and "instructing the Soviets in Siberia to oppose any forcible invasion of Russian territory." 36 Later in the month, on April 28,

33 Unterberger, op. cit., p. 21.
34 For. Hels. of U. S., 1918, Russia, II, pp. 100-01.
35 Lloyd George, op. cit., VI, p. 167.
Lansing and Viscount Kikujirō Ishii, Japanese Ambassador to the United States, discussed a proposed Japanese intervention in Siberia, at which time the Ambassador indicated that his Government would welcome Allied participation in an expedition to Siberia.\(^{37}\) Outlining the participation of Nipponese troops, Viscount Ishii implied that Japan's sphere of interest would extend only to Irkutsk in Siberia—covering only about half the territory that the British thought they would be able to bring under control. On learning of this self-imposed limitation, American diplomats again lost interest, seeing in Japan's proposals only self-interest, rather than a sincere desire to reopen an Eastern Front, so that they could come into direct contact with the Central Powers.\(^{38}\)

Events followed in rapid succession: the start of the Czechoslovak Legions toward Vladimir, the Chelyabinsk incident, and the Legions' break with the Soviet—all began to call for definite action on the part of the Allies, as tension mounted in the Russian Far East.

The Entente leaders moved desperately to obtain American approval of intervention. At the seventh session of the Supreme War Council, held at Abbeville on July 2, the Allies prepared a note which was submitted to President Wilson on

\(^{37}\)Unterberger, *op. cit.* , p. 44.

\(^{38}\)Ibid.
the following day. Lord Reading pointed out the reasons an Allied intervention in Siberia was an imperative necessity:

(1) the action of the Czechoslovaks had transformed "the Siberian eclipse" and presented an opportunity to seize control of this important area which might never return; (2) the Allies were under moral obligation to "save" the Czechoslovaks, and failure to do so would alienate the Slavs of Austria and the Balkans; (3) the Allies were also under moral obligation to help the "liberal and democratic" elements in Russia against the Bolsheviks, whose power was crumbling anyhow, as well as against the reactionaries, who hoped with German support to restore the Tsar; (4) Allied intervention would be a step towards restoration of the Eastern Front, which was indispensable if the Allies hoped to win the war in 1919; and (5) the Japanese were prepared to intervene if only the United States would assent.39

The skillful interjection of the "moral obligation" to save the Czechoslovaks in the Allied proposal finally moved the President into accepting intervention by the Allies. On July 5, 1918, President Wilson consented to American participation in a limited Allied action in Siberia for the purpose of supporting the withdrawal of the Czechs.40 The following day at a White House Conference, called to discuss the Russian situation, Lansing made the following memorandum:

...That the present situation of the Czechoslovaks requires this Government and other Governments to make an effort to aid those at Vladivostok in forming a junc-


40 For. Relts. of U. S., 1918, Russia, II, pp. 241-43; Stewart, op. cit., p. 114.
tion with their compatriots in Western Siberia; and that this Government on sentimental grounds and because of the effect upon the friendly Slavs everywhere would be subject to criticism if it did not make this effort and would doubtless be held responsible if they were defeated by lack of such support.  

The memorandum continued that because the United States would be unable to provide any considerable number of troops within a short time, that the Japanese should furnish small arms and ammunition to the Czechoslovaks, with the United States to share expenses and supplement the supplies as soon as possible.  

Those attending the conference which established the program of the joint intervention were: President Wilson; Secretary of State Lansing; Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War; Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy; General March, Chief of Staff, and Admiral William S. Benson, Chief of Naval Operations. Although this group was not in complete accord concerning the adventure, the United States was committed to participate.  

The American proposal for a joint expedition to Siberia for the purpose of assisting the eastward movement of the Czechoslovak Legions was formally submitted to the Terauchi Cabinet of Japan for deliberation on July 12. The Japanese decided not only to accept the American proposal,

---

41 For. Rel. of U. S., 1918, Russia, II, p. 263.
42 Ibid.
43 Unterberger, op. cit., p. 70.
but also to dispatch an "independent expedition" on its own initiative. This was the invitation that Japan had been awaiting, as military elements of the Island Empire had made expansion one of the primary objectives of Japanese government and society. John Albert White sums up the situation well in the following statement:

Japan wanted to intervene at the time of the Chinese Revolution in 1911, stating that the continuation of hostilities in China might make it necessary for her to intervene. Finding the Powers unreceptive to a sole intervention, however, she next proposed a joint intervention, first with Great Britain and then jointly with Great Britain and the United States. The intervention as proposed did not, of course, take place. But it is interesting to notice that within a mere six years, these almost identical conditions prevailed and would be followed by the same proposals from Japan. On this occasion, however, the revolution occurred in Russia and the fact that the world was at war made it possible for Japan to obtain consent to the intervention she desired.

The basic American position in regard to the intervention was outlined in an Aide Memoire, dispatched to the Allied Governments on July 17, and given to General William S. Graves, the American Commander of the expeditionary forces to Siberia. Briefly, the United States policy revolved around the following points:

1. Military action is admissable in Russia, as the

---


45 White, op. cit., p. 67.
Government of the United States sees the circumstance's, only to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and get into successful cooperation with their Slavic kinsmen.

2. To steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance.

3. To guard military stores which may subsequently be needed by Russian forces in the organization of their own self-defense.

4. This policy is not intended as a criticism of the activities in which any other government might see fit to engage.

5. Solemn assurance is given to Russia that it was not contemplated that the intervention should involve "any interference of any kind with the political sovereignty of Russia, any intervention in her internal affairs, or any impairment of her territorial integrity..."46

It was in the matter of assignment of troops that the basic differences between the American and Japanese Governments came to light. Originally the joint agreement had been to send seven thousand troops from each nation to assist the Czechoslovak Legions. The Japanese soon stated that the United States, in sending its seven thousand men, plus two thousand additional non-combatants, had violated the agreement, and immediately rushed great numbers of men into the Siberian area, establishing a force of some seventy-two thousand combat effectives.47 By October 18, General Graves

46For. Rels. of U. S., 1918, Russia, II, pp. 287-90.

reported to the War Department that, "Japan had at least sixty thousand troops in Siberia and it was disclosed later, that I had underestimated...by twelve thousand. There was no military situation demanding this increase..."\textsuperscript{48}\hspace{1em} Wilson's belief that this Japanese move violated an agreement on the number of troops to be sent to Siberia alienated him further from that country.\textsuperscript{49}\hspace{1em} Further difficulties associated with relations between the United States, the Allies, and the Russians, led him to the decision that he should disassociate the United States from activities in Russia at the earliest possible moment. On September 26, messages were sent to the Allied Governments notifying them "with the deepest of regret" that the United States found it impossible to give them further assistance in Russia and the Far East.\textsuperscript{50} This notification of termination of American support for the intervention was dispatched just one month after the first American troops, the 27th Infantry, arrived in Siberia from Manila. Although anything other than normal reinforcements were not to be sent to Siberia, the American detachments were to remain in the Far East until

\textsuperscript{48}William S. Graves, America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920 (New York: Peter Smith, 1931), p. 54.


\textsuperscript{50}For. Rel. of U. S., 1918, Russia, II, p. 392.
April 1, 1920. Through strict compliance with the rather vague instructions of the *Aide Memoire*, they were to act as a steadying force in the maelstrom which was Siberia.

No other foreign representatives in Siberia were held to such definite instructions as were the American forces. From the standpoint of active intervention in Russian affairs in which the mood and enthusiasm of the moment carried the French, the British and the Japanese a long way, General Graves' instructions were a handicap and won for him and the American military a little unpopularity.51

To the Japanese, the British and the French, the "*Aide Memoire* was but a scrap of paper containing an idealist's dream, to be torn and scattered to the four winds."52 As an American military author later wrote, this was not to be done:

But in Siberia this flouted paper was bound in a steel frame. Major General William S. Graves, U. S. Military Academy, '89, who first saw service on the western plains...was not a man to be hoodwinked.53

Graves was determined not to become involved in Russia's internal affairs and relationships between the United States and Japan could not be easy under these conditions. In addition, the fact that the Japanese had incurred the displeasure of the American President did not deter them from

---


following their established policy. The Bolshevik Revolution with the consequent civil war and chaos offered them a chance to establish a Japanese sphere of influence over the Maritime Province, Siberia, North Manchuria and all of Mongolia.  

For the Bolsheviks, intervention was another imperialist venture and the Soviet did not wish any part of it. In response to earlier Allied landings at Murmansk and Archangel in North Russia, 55 Vladimir Lenin (President of the Soviet of People's Commissars) and Trotsky stated the Bolshevik position clearly and bluntly:

English landings must be considered an inimical act against the Republic. Their direct aim is to unite with the Czechoslovaks and, in the case of success, with the Japanese, in order to overthrow the power of the workers and peasants and to establish a dictatorship of bourgeoisie. We have ordered the dispatch of troops necessary for the defense of the Murmansk railway against the violators... All assistance, direct or indirect, to the intervening violators will be regarded as state treason and will be punished according to military law.  

Following the Allied landings at Vladivostok, Trotsky, on August 23, again blasted at the intervention, saying in an interview translated from Izvestia (one of the leading

---


56 Ibid., p. 58.
According to the American statement, the intervention of the Allies is for the purpose of assisting the Czechoslovaks against the German and Austro-Hungarian war prisoners who are attacking them. The participation of these prisoners in the struggle against the Czechoslovaks is the most monstrous invention, as is the Japanese statement about the threat to the Siberian road from the Germans.57

Adding to the confusion in Russia and Siberia were the White Russian forces and the other anti-Reds, not necessarily favorable to the Czar and the Imperial cause. The relationships which developed between these groups, the Allied interventionists, and the Legions created a fluid situation, constantly changing as the tides of war ebbed and flowed.

The Legions, meanwhile, the center of this great power struggle, were almost totally disregarded as the major Powers attempted to push through their particular projects. On June 25, shortly before the American decision to call for a joint intervention, Czechoslovak commanders in Vladivostok made a momentous decision, casting the Legions directly into the conflict. About fourteen thousand Czechoslovaks had made the journey overland to Vladivostok and were waiting transportation to take them to France. On learning that the Bolsheviks had cut their lines of communication along the Trans-Siberian Railway, they decided to move westward to ef-

57Degras, op. cit., p. 95.
fect a juncture with their comrades, now ringed about by the Bolsheviks.58

Representatives of the Legions in Vladivostok approached Admiral Austin M. Knight, Flag officer of the U.S.S. Brooklyn, based at the Siberian port, and the Admiral states that the following was among the questions they asked:

If they Czechs remain in Russia to fight on a new Eastern Front they ask to be informed minimum whether this force will be accepted by the Allies as the equivalent of fighting on the Western Front and as entitling them to same consideration when terms of peace are finally agreed upon, as if they had proceeded to the Western Front in accordance with their original agreement with the French Government.59

The decision of the Czechoslovaks on the spot was to remain and try to liberate their countrymen from the depths of European Russia and Western Siberia. The Czechoslovak National Council and Masaryk in the United States, out of direct touch with the Legions, were forced to agree, albeit reluctantly, to conditions over which they had little control. With independence of Czechoslovakia as their primary goal, "they were compelled to abstain from any adverse criticism of the use that the Great Powers contemplated for their eastern army."60 The die was cast, and the Czechoslo-

58Mamatey, op. cit., p. 288.
vaks, remaining in Russia and Siberia, were deeply involved in action there, as Stewart points out:

Eager to win favor with France, England and America, the Legions...remained, a provocation to the Reds and an irritation to many Whites. Their presence was the cause of much suffering on their own part, and no little blood-shed during the winter of 1918-19.

61 Stewart, op. cit., p. 115.
CHAPTER VII

THE ANABASIS TO VLADIVOSTOK: ON THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

Following the Congress at Chelyabinsk, the Czechoslovak leaders returned to their units on May 24, agreed among themselves to "shoot their way through" to Vladivostok, should such a course become necessary. The Legions were to begin their push toward the Far Eastern port immediately and were to prepare for any eventuality. At this time the Legions were spread all the way from Penza, a city west of the Volga in European Russia, to Vladivostok, on the eastern coast of Siberia. General Mikhail Dietrichs of the former Czarist and Provisional armies (he had been Chief of Staff to General Nikolai Dukhonin, acting Russian Commander-in-Chief in 1917) led the first echelons of about twelve thousand men from Penza to Vladivostok, arriving there in early May, 1918. There they waited for the balance of the force to join them, fully expecting that the Entente Powers would provide the shipping necessary to transport them to the Western Front.

On May 25, Leon Trotsky, Soviet Commissar for War, is-

sued an order requiring the disarming of the Legions, bringing about the first serious clash between the Bolsheviks and Czechoslovaks on the same day, at the little railway town of Marianovka, west of Omsk. The Reds were defeated and from this time on the Legions deployed along the railway line, began to take matters into their own hands, initially with great success. Kennan reports:

...in the course of the fortnight following Sunday, May 26, the greater portion of the stretch of the railway from a point west of Samara, on the Volga, to one somewhat west of Irkutsk—a distance of about 2,500 miles—was wrested from Bolshevik hands either by Czech forces strung out along the railway or by anti-communist Russian groups who took advantage of the Czech action to seize points independently and to set up a new civil authority.2

The success of the Czechoslovaks along the Trans-Siberian reads like a railroad time schedule: May 27, Chelyabinsk occupied; May 29, Penza occupied; May 31, Tomsk; June 6-7, Omsk; June 8, Samara; June 19, Krasnoyarsk.3 All along the line, and a number of its branches, the Czechoslovaks wrested control of the area from the Soviets in Siberia and the Volga region.

The American Consul General at Irkutsk, Ernest L. Harris, innocently was the cause of one of the greatest stumbling blocks for the Legions in their drive along the


Trans-Siberian. Harris had arrived at Irkutsk on May 23 and was just getting settled into his new position (he had been manager of the Petrograd office of the National City Bank of New York) when the uprising began, and he was unaware of the scope of the activity connected with the Czechoslovak uprising. While at the Irkutsk station on May 26, he watched a detachment of the local Red Guards attempt to stop and disarm a train taking Czechoslovaks to Vladivostok. The Soviet attack was brushed aside by the Legionaries and the train continued toward its destination. The next day, another Soviet-Legion incident developed west of the city, and Harris, assisted by the French Consul General, M. Bourgeois, and Deputy Agent Geitzman, of the Moscow Commissariat for Foreign Affairs at Irkutsk, mediated with the conflicting groups and persuaded the Czechoslovaks to continue their trip to the east. These two trains of Legionaries had been designated as the units to capture Irkutsk in the Czechoslovak plan to gain control of the Trans-Siberian Railway which represented the only means by which they could move through to the ports of the Far East. When he heard the details of the incident at Irkutsk, Gajda,

...was furious...told Americans if ever he caught up with the officers of these first trains he would have

---

4Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, II, pp. 283-84.
them court-martialed for accepting the mediation and consenting to proceed. 5

Because these Legionaries had moved from the area, by-passing their objective, the Soviets were able to control Irkutsk until July 11, and only surrendered the city after undergoing a prolonged attack begun on June 21. Even Colonel George H. Emerson, an American railroad specialist making a tour of inspection of the railway and its facilities, entered into negotiations to compose Czechoslovak-Soviet differences, succeeding in several instances. Emerson helped ward off a major engagement at Marinsk at the time of the uprising, by talking the Czechoslovaks into proceeding eastward to Vladivostok. 6 By June 8, however, Consul General Harris determined that the Czech uprising had developed into a civil war, and that he and other Americans would have to drop efforts at their mediation, as he now considered them a definite interference in Russian internal affairs, 7 and he returned to his post at Irkutsk.

The large Czechoslovak contingent in Vladivostok

5Ibid., p. 286; Cf., William S. Graves, America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920 (New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1931), p. 44.


7Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, II, p. 290.
(some fourteen thousand men) was not involved during the early stages of the uprising. On June 25, however, the commanders of the Legions there reached a decision to retrace their steps along the railway line in an effort to help liberate the eight thousand Czechoslovaks under General Čeček in the Volga area. On June 29, after a three-hour conflict with local Soviet troops, the Legions took control of Vladivostok in order to assure protection of their base and, a few days later, the movement back to the west was begun. Within hours of the Legions' uprising in Vladivostok, the Allied powers, Great Britain, Japan, China and the United States landed detachments of troops and the occupation was given official sanction. At the time of the decision to return westward, General Čeček and his forces had gained complete possession of the railway centers in the Volga region. Simultaneously, General Gajda had captured Ekaterinberg to the northeast, and had swept down another line of the railway toward Omsk. The Red Guards, opposing the Legions, were ex-soldiers, for the most part, with some units

8Unterberger, op. cit., p. 57.


"entirely composed of German and Magyar volunteers, the German officers in command being anxious...to hinder the Czechs from setting out for the front in France".\(^\text{11}\) The success of the Czechoslovak offensive threatened the existence of the Soviet Government by loosening its control on the Volga, the Urals and all of Siberia, and these areas became the centers of various White or anti-Bolshevik movements.\(^\text{12}\) One writer reports:

\[\ldots\] everywhere the anti-Bolshevik elements of the population rallied to the Czechs and began to establish democratic governments. The Siberian atmosphere was wholly different from that of European Russia, and the anti-Bolsheviks were very far from being in sympathy with the old Tsarist regime.\(^\text{13}\)

Among the many anti-Communist political groups opposing the Soviets in Russia and Siberia, the Czechoslovaks were most closely associated with the Social Revolutionary Party. Politically, this group was formed of people very similar to the Czechoslovaks themselves, representing the farmers cooperatives and the middle-class elements of Siberian society. Centers of the Social Revolutionary activity were at Samara on the Volga, in Russia proper, and in the Omsk-Novo-Nikolayevsk area of Siberia, where the Social Revolutionaries

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 147.


\(^{13}\)Baerlein, op. cit., p. 162.
had laid plans for revolt long before the actual uprising of the Legions. As Novo-Nikolayevsk was Gajda's headquarters, he at once coordinated his operations with those of the local underground officers' group to overthrow the Soviet authority and, in a matter of days, control of the entire area from Omsk through Novo-Nikolayevsk to Krasnoyarsk, passed into their hands.

Captain Gajda seized Novonikilajevsk [Novo-Nikolayevsk], thereby changing the war from a purely defensive journey out of the country to an active offensive-occupation and the holding of the region against the Bolsheviks. In this manner, this hitherto unknown captain, on his own responsibility, caused international complications of a serious nature...Gajda played into the hands of Great Britain and France, with the result that the Czechoslovak authorities at Paris were forced into acceptance of a situation entirely beyond their control.

General Graves refers to a statement made on July 27, 1918, by a member of the branch of the Czechoslovak National Council at Washington, pointing out the trend of thinking of some of the Legions' commanders:

A week ago (July 20th), Professor Masaryk received a lengthy cable report from the leader of the Czecho-Slovak forces in which the following words are found, indicative of the present desires of these men; "In my opinion, it is most desirable and also possible to reconstruct a Russia-Germany front in the East. We ask for instructions as to whether we should leave for France or whether we should stay here to fight in Russia by the

---

15 Ibid., p. 163.
16 Vondracek, op. cit., p. 119.
side of the Allies, and of Russia*. Professor Masaryk has since then instructed the forces in Siberia to remain there for the present. 17

The decision to remain in Siberia was a bitter disappointment for many of the Czechoslovaks, but they willingly obeyed the instructions of Masaryk, made at the request of the Allies. The Legions established recruiting stations in every community under their control and a general mobilization of Czechoslovaks in the region was ordered. 18 "Czechoslovaks throughout Siberia were rallied, thousands more drifted into the ranks as prisoner-of-war camps fell into the Družina's [Legions'] hands." 19 The total strength of the Legions soon was brought to approximately one hundred thousand men, which represented a sizeable force that could be of great value to the Entente. Beneš, commenting on an interview in which he participated in May noted, "Mr. Balfour, who, as an Englishman, appreciated plain facts, was particularly impressed by my reference to the hundred thousand volunteers fighting on the three Allied fronts." 20


18 Stewart, op. cit., p. 113.

19 R. Ernest Dupuy, Perish by the Sword, The Czechoslovakian Anabasis and Our Supporting Campaigns in North Russia, 1918-1920 (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1939), p. 82.

20 Beneš, op. cit., p. 404.
British and the French were to appreciate even more the greatly enlarged Czechoslovak force which developed in Siberia.

Late summer and autumn of 1918 found the Legionaries moving on through the Urals and westward, with the months of June, July and August devoted primarily to uniting the scattered elements of the Legions. While the Czechoslovaks were gathering and preparing to make their supreme effort at the request of their friends, the Allies threw the weight of their diplomatic support into the balance against the Soviets. On June 4, diplomatic representatives of the major powers, in a joint demarché, confronted Georgi V. Chicherin, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in Moscow, declaring that "as the Czechoslovaks were to be regarded as a constituent part of the Allied Army, any attempt to disarm them would be treated as a hostile act against the Allies." 21

Most of the Allied diplomatic contingent wanted to retain the Czechoslovak forces in Russia and Siberia and on June 13, Paul S. Reinsch, the United States Minister in China, cabled from Peking:

It is the general opinion of Allied representatives here, in which I concur, that it would be a serious mistake to remove the Czecho-Slovak troops from Siberia. With only slight countenance and support they could control all of Siberia against the Germans. They are sym-

---

21 Ibid., p. 369; Cf., Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, II, pp. 306-8.
pathetic to the Russian population, eager to be accessories to the Allied cause...\(^{22}\)

General Gajda and his units of the Legions pressed westward, early in August occupying the important town of Kazan on the Volga. When the city fell, the Czechoslovaks found that they also had captured the gold reserve of the State Bank of Russia. Later the treasure, worth millions of rubles, was turned over to the White Government at Omsk.\(^{23}\) The victory at Kazan marked the high point of the Czechoslovak advance in the Volga region, however, as the Reds launched a counterattack on the city on September 5, with the result that Kazan had to be evacuated five days later. Simbirsk was lost by the Czechoslovaks on September 15, and on October 8, eight thousand weary, discouraged Legionaries were driven out of Samara by twenty-five thousand Soviets.\(^{24}\) Although the Czechoslovak forces were meeting with serious reverses in European Russia, their position was much better in Siberia, where their principal task, until the Armistice, was to protect themselves and guard the railway line as their one means of communication.

An interesting facet of Czechoslovak life during this period was that many Legionaries lived on trains while pa-

\(^{22}\)For. Rel. of U. S., 1918, Russia, II, pp. 206-7.
\(^{23}\)Stewart, op. cit., p. 116; Dupuy, op. cit., p. 194.
\(^{24}\)Dupuy, op. cit., pp. 194-95.
trolling the Trans-Siberian Railway. Among the cars in each of the trains were the *broneviki* (armored cars), first used by the Czechs and later by all the combatants. Major R. Ernest Dupuy, a military student in the United States Army, has given a concise description of such an armored train:

This offensive vehicle, in its original state, consisted of any kind of car, preferably of the gondola type, which was re-enforced by wooden baulks and iron plating. Buttressed by sandbags banked along its sides and bristling with machine guns peering through embrasures, it presented a formidable, moving fortress. Sometimes a field-piece, anchored on a concrete base, peered from above the sides. Ahead rolled a flat-car loaded with rails. Behind the *broneviki* came the locomotive, and in rear of it rolled the box-cars of the crew. The Czechs began to use the *broneviki* from the time they left Bachmach [June, 1917]. Most famous of the Druzina's *broneviki* was the "Orlik," or "Little Eagle," a victor of many encounters, whose name struck terror into the hearts of Red commanders. 25

The Czechoslovaks did not try to achieve their ends by force of arms alone, as they carried with them a strong desire to inform their men of events happening within the Dual Monarchy, so that they could understand the reason behind the bitter struggle in Siberia, thousands of miles from home. Propaganda and education had been important parts of the Czechoslovak movement from its inception, and the Siberian branch of the Legions did not slight this practice. A special unit of the Legions published the *Československý Deník* (Czechoslovak Daily) on board trains in a hundred different places. First issued in Kiev in 1918, the newspaper was

---

25Ibid., pp. 197-98.
printed wherever its train happened to be on its roving patrol. Special editions were printed in Magyar and German so that prisoners-of-war whose homes were in the confines of the new state might be acquainted with conditions there.\textsuperscript{26}

The Czech press also printed paper money for Admiral Kolchak's government. The Kolchak administration dumped bundles of old Kerensky rubles over the Red lines with a statement printed across their face, "You can have these for nothing!" The Reds did likewise, turning out bushels of forged notes which were sold by the pound.\textsuperscript{27}

The turn of the fortunes of war on the Western Front in Europe in favor of the Allies, the recognition of the National Council in Paris as a government, followed by the signing of the Armistice, proved very heartening to the Legions in Siberia, but they still were asked to remain as a buttress against the Communists.

The anti-Communist elements, led by Admiral Aleksandr (Alexander) Kolchak, announced the formation of a Siberian Government at Omsk, a week after the Armistice. Kolchak became titular Supreme Ruler of the country, receiving encouragement from the French, the British and part of the Czecho-slovak Legions. The latter, headed by Gajda, represented only a small portion of the Legions, as the majority did not wish to support Kolchak because of his extreme reactionary measures.\textsuperscript{28} Because of this conflict with the majority of

\textsuperscript{26}Stewart, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28}Baerlein, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 222.
his countrymen, Gajda lost much of his following and influence in Czechoslovak actions from that time forward.\textsuperscript{29}

Kolchak was the strongest anti-Communist force in Western Siberia, and although he called himself "Dictator" over all of Siberia, his influence in the Far East was never well-established. Indeed, in no area of the vast country did he have the full support of the Russian people: to the extreme reactionaries, he was a liberal; to the middle classes he seemed too reactionary. The peasants and poorer classes did not enter into his consideration at all.\textsuperscript{30} Lieutenant General Dmitri L. Horvath was Kolchak's deputy in the Far East and called himself the "supreme representative of the Kolchak Government," indicating the nature of his concept of the government required to establish order in Siberia. Horvath had chosen as his military commander, Major General Pavel Pavlovic Ivanov-Rinov, an extreme reactionary, who terrorized and pillaged villages throughout Eastern Siberia. Although nominally under General Horvath as Kolchak's representative, Ivanov-Rinov actually acknowledged no superior, and conducted his rapacious actions at will. Further complicating the anti-Bolshevik cause in the Far East were two other unsavory, completely undisciplined characters, Ataman (Cossack Chief) Gregorii Semenov and Ataman Ivan Kalmikov,

\textsuperscript{29}Graves, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 113-16.

\textsuperscript{30}Unterberger, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 118-19.
who used the unsettled conditions of the time to their own advantage. Both were supported by the Japanese who acknowledged no responsibility for their actions, however merciless and disruptive they might be. General Graves, the highly disciplined graduate of the United States Military Academy and commander of America's Siberian forces, had many conflicts with these unprincipled "leaders" in the discharge of his duties and aptly described them as follows: "Kalmikoff murdered with his own hands, where Semeonoff ordered others to kill." Although supposedly accepting the leadership of Kolchak, Semenov did his utmost to disrupt any stabilizing tendencies which the Omsk Government might have.

From the beginning, the intentions of the Japanese, as represented by their support of the lawless Cossack Chiefs, seemed clear to General Graves and his staff:

...their leaders intrigued for political influence in the country, and the lesser ranks meddled in local affairs...treated the local population with a high-handedness and even with a brutality explainable only by the assumption that they smarted with resentment at the attitude of superiority which the Russians had formerly assumed towards them...

In the pay of the Japanese—who were not at all desirous of having the Siberian situation clear up, unless it

31 Ibid.
32 Graves, op. cit., p. 91.
33 "The Situation in the Far East," Foreign Affairs, I (June 15, 1925), 23.
was to their advantage—Semenov conducted independent operations in the Far East, as often against the Omsk Government as against the Bolsheviks. "The Red Terror in Russia was met by a White Terror of equal brutality in Siberia," Stewart points out, saying that the "deeds of the two White chieftains, Atamans Semyonov and Kalmykof, would have done credit to Genghis Khan." Semenov was by far the more powerful of the two, and was able to increase the strength of his army from a handful of the worst dregs of humanity, until at one time he commanded more than sixty-thousand men. While outwardly declaring that they were on the side of the Czechoslovaks, Semenov and his Cossacks did everything possible to cause friction within the Legions, and occasionally the Czechoslovaks had to fight them as well as the Bolsheviks to continue their normal duties of guarding sections of the railway.

In Western Siberia where he had his seat of government at Omsk, Kolchak surrounded himself with a staff, most of whom were of the "worst class of ruthless, corrupt and self-centered ex-Czarists coming from both soldiers and bureaucrats," Dupuy states. "His actions and those of

---

34 Stewart, op. cit., p. 125.
35 Baerlein, op. cit., pp. 177-78; Graves, op. cit., pp. 304-5.
36 Dupuy, op. cit., p. 207.
his staff alienated the Czechs. The Kolchak government in addition alienated the entire Siberian people. Kolchak perhaps believed that with the help of the Allies he could hold off the Bolsheviks in the Trans-Baikal region, "But the Czechs were demoralized, anxious to get home, and completely disillusioned about the character of the Admiral's 'Cause.'"

Despite the many problems associated with American participation in Siberia, the intervention received "considerable public support in the United States," and during the summer the newspapers carried many stories of the progress of the Czechoslovak Legion's across Siberia. The Legions "became a symbol of both the romantic and the heroic. In fact for most Americans the Czechs as a people existed only through the army in Siberia." Kerner points out that "Many Americans could not pronounce their name nor visualize a location for them," yet the popular press

37Ibid.
41Ibid.
called for added support for the Legions, as advocated in this article, typical of the times:

The first thing that must be done is to reach the Czechoslovak forces which have been so ably fighting the Teutonic-Bolshevik regime for the past several months...Here is a strong force with which we can cooperate, so that to reach it must be our first step.42

Despite the fact that he had been sent to Siberia "to help the Czecho-Slovaks" and "steady efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians may be willing to accept assistance," General Graves had very little opportunity to achieve either goal, bound as he was by the Aide Memoire, and thoroughly disgruntled with the activities of all the forces at work in Siberia. Bailey has expressed the reaction of the various factions to this apparent disassociation of the Americans from the problem at hand, as follows:

The Reds were angry because we were indirectly helping their enemies; the Whites were bitter because we did not help enough; the Allies were displeased because we had such limited objectives; and the Japanese were suspicious because we so obviously were trying to hamper their ambitions. Actually by opposing Japanese designs we were promoting the territorial integrity of Russia.43

Following the signing of the Versailles Treaty in June, 1919, the intervention seemed to make little sense to the American military forces and to the American public at large.44

42 J. B. Gardiner, "Our Military Problem in Russia," The World's Work, XXXVI (October, 1918), 603.

43 Bailey, op. cit., p. 245.

ever, political and diplomatic reasons kept American troops there until an official American note was sent to the Japanese Government on January 9, 1920, giving the United States' decision to evacuate Siberia.45 After months of almost ceaseless bickering with the Kolchak Government and the Allies, the last American contingent pulled away from the docks of Vladivostok on April 1, 1920,46 while a Japanese band, played the popular tune, "Hard Times Come Again No More."47 Meanwhile, the Czechoslovaks, also caught in the middle of the power squeeze, had concluded the Treaty of Kujtun, [February 7, 1920] with the Soviets, under which the Legions were to be permitted free passage from Siberia.48 On the day the Treaty was signed, Admiral Kolchak, the "Supreme Ruler", was tried by a Revolutionary Tribunal and shot.49 The abortive Omsk Government, not able to face up to the demands of the times, was ended. Nearly all of the Czechoslovaks were repatriated between April and November, 1920, mainly in Japanese ships, many of which they chartered


46 Graves, op. cit., p. 326.


48 Vondracek, op. cit., p. 136.

49 Fischer, op. cit., p. 212.
and paid for themselves, and in others which were chartered through the American Red Cross. "One of the last transports was carried to Europe on board the first Czechoslovak ship Legie, bought by the Legionaries' Bank in Vladivostok." 50

No body of troops in the Russian Civil War had shown such resolution and unity as the legionnaires. A hunger for independence which had been frustrated since the battle of Bilá Hora in 1620 buoyed them up many times when events threatened to drown them in the morass of politics and bloodshed. The knowledge that they were creating a sentiment which would determine the attitude of powerful nations toward their new state laid upon them a sense of responsibility unshared by many thousands in other armies. 51

With the sailing of the Americans, many of the Czechoslovaks, and the other Allied forces, the field was left to Japan. As early as March 31, the Japanese Government, disclaiming any ambitions in Russia, noted that it was unable to withdraw its forces, stating that:

As soon as the political conditions in the territories adjacent to our country settle down, as soon as the menace to Manchuria and Chosen has been removed, the safety of the lives and property of communications guaranteed, we hereby reaffirm our pledge that the Empire will evacuate Siberia, provided the Czecho-Slovaks have been completely withdrawn. 52

As noted above, the last of the Legions sailed from Vladivostok in November, 1920, yet Japanese expansionists, following their desire to increase their industrial and ter-

50 Baerlein, op. cit., pp. 275-79.
ritorial empire, continued the intervention until October, 1922, when their withdrawal was arranged as part of the agreements stemming from the Washington Conference.53

53 Curry, op. cit., p. 247.
CHAPTER VIII

FREEDOM AT LAST: A NEW NATION IS CREATED

As the Czechoslovak Legions gained world-wide acclaim for their successful exploits in Russia and Siberia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated rapidly, reeling under the military blows of the advancing Entente forces, and feeling more and more the pressure put upon it by nationalistic elements at home. The Dual Monarchy, likewise, continued to fare badly on the diplomatic front and suffered a telling blow when the United States Government recognized the Czechoslovak Nation officially in early September, 1918. For the first time the term, "'actual Government' was unre­servedly applied to the National Council in a solemn com­mitment by a state so important as America," Benes points out.¹ The recognition accorded by the United States was of a unique character in the history of international relations, Fenwick reported in the American Political Science Review, later that year. His concise resumé of the practical politics of recognition, of particular interest to stu-

dents of this period, follows, in part:

The traditional rule of international law has been that a new nation will be recognized by the existing members of the family of nations only when, after successful revolution against the state of which it formerly was a part, it has given evidence of its ability to maintain itself. In most cases the new community is recognized as a de facto belligerent before its final recognition as a de jure state is accorded. In every instance the claimant for international recognition must have obtained possession of definite territory and must have organized a government capable of giving expression to the will of its people. But in the case of recognition of the Czechoslovak Nation, these conditions have not been fulfilled. In the first place, recognition has been accorded, not to a government established in the territory inhabited by the Czechoslovak people, but to a National Council with headquarters in Washington [sic]. Moreover, the new state can hardly be said to have at present a de facto existence. Its active supporters are to be found among the groups of Czechs in Siberia and in the states of the Entente Allies....The National Council is therefore, an absentee government in command of a number of distinct armies fighting against the nation of which their territory is still a de facto part and to which their brethren in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia are still rendering a formal allegiance.2

The American recognition, thus, went further than that accorded by the other Allied Governments. And the American people, "whose interest in the Siberian adventure had given the impetus to the adoption of this measure, approved it wholeheartedly," Mamatey states.3


Believing that the end was near for the Dual Monarchy and fearing that a successful Austro-Hungarian peace offer might rob them of their hard-earned successes, the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris, on October 14, announced the formation of the Czechoslovak Provisional Government, with Dr. Masaryk as President; Eduard Beneš, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Milan Štefánik, Minister of War. The National Council based its action on the successive recognitions by the Governments of the United States, France and Italy, and on the statement made by Deputy František Štanek in the Reichsrat on October 2, in which the National Council was given a mandate to speak for the Czechoslovak peoples at home, as well as on the Czech withdrawal from the Reichsrat on October 9. While Beneš was announcing the formation of the Provisional Government, Dr. Masaryk was busy in Washington, drafting the Declaration of Czechoslovak Independence, with the assistance of a group of American friends. Copies were sent to President Wilson, to the State Department and to Beneš in Paris, where it was issued over the signatures

---

of Masaryk, Beneš and Štefánik on October 18.7

On the same day that the Declaration was released in Paris, President Wilson, addressing his reply to the Habsburg politicians in Vienna, stated that since his Fourteen Points had been promulgated, the situation had changed, and that he no longer could answer for the Czechoslovak leaders on matters pertaining to the Czechoslovak lands and peoples. This change in official position of the President of the United States was warmly welcomed by the émigré leaders and caused consternation in the Dual Empire. "Masaryk has put on record his admiration for the 'manly and honourable' way in which Wilson revised his original views, especially with regard to Austria-Hungary...", Seton-Watson has written.8 Masaryk also noted the effect of the President's position on the leaders of the Dual Monarchy:

German and Austrian writers, military as well as political, agree that President Wilson's answer on October 18, to Austria's offer of peace, sealed her fate and settled likewise the question of our freedom. Both personally and as the representative of the United States, Wilson had become a great moral and political figure in Europe.9

---


The carefully planned propaganda campaign, conducted by Masaryk and the National Council, received another "spectacular" boost on October 26, when Professor Masaryk read the joint declaration of the "Mid-European Democratic Union" at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The Union represented most of the oppressed peoples of Austria-Hungary, and while not in agreement on all matters of policy, their united stand at this time produced very favorable public response. Masaryk read the declaration, "while the Bell of Independence was rung in accordance with historical precedent. The proceedings were thoroughly 'American'," Masaryk later wrote, "but they were sincerely meant and were successful."\(^{10}\) That the proceedings were thoroughly "American", is borne out by this account published in a popular periodical of the day:

Following the signing, Professor Masaryk read the declaration to thousands of persons gathered in Independence Square. As he finished, a second Liberty Bell, cast in the model of the first and paid for by children of the oppressed nationalities in this country, rang out its twentieth century defiance to the autocracy of Austria-Hungary.\(^{11}\)

On this same day, a number of delegates, representing the Czech National Committee at Prague, gathered in Geneva to meet with Beneš and Stephen Osuský, representing the Czechoslovak Provisional Government at Paris, recognized by the

\(^{10}\)Ibid., p. 255.

\(^{11}\)"The New Declaration of Independence Under the Old Liberty Cupola," The Survey, XLI, No. 4 (November 2, 1918), 115.
Allies. Among those making the trip to Switzerland were Dr. Kramár, Václav Klofač, František Štanek and others, members of the "Maffia" and similar resistance groups, who had served as connecting links between the people within the Empire and the Czechoslovak National Council abroad. There was full agreement between the two groups, and while the historic meeting was in progress, a bloodless revolution took place in Prague, with the remaining members of the National Committee, there, proclaiming the deposition of Emperor Charles as King of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia, and the establishment of a free and United Republic of Czechoslovakia. The revolutionaries at home, led by Alois Rašin, Antonín Švehla, František Soukup and Mgr. Štríbrný, took over the government in Prague, and "manoeuvered the Austrian military authorities into a capitulation on October 30th..."

The Slovakian leaders added their contribution to the Czechoslovak cause late in the war and on October 30, at Turčiansky Sv. Martin, agreed to form part of the new state. The proclamation issued at that time severed all connections


with the Hungarian Crown and firmly allied the Slovaks with their Czech and Moravian brothers. It read in part:

The delegates of all the Slovak political parties, assembled on October 30, 1918, at Turciansky Sv. Martin, and organized into a Slovak National Council as members of the great Czechoslovak nation, affirm the right of self-determination, a right admitted by the entire world. The National Council declares that it alone is authorized to speak and act in the name of the Czechoslovak nation living within the limits of Hungary.

In view of this principle, we approve the new legal international situation formulated October 18th by President Wilson and recognized October 27th by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary.\(^{14}\)

On October 31, the National Committee at Prague and the Provisional Government at Paris merged into a single active organization and issued the Declaration of Geneva. Dr. Kramár headed the signers of the Declaration which stated:

...we approve entirely the policy and all the military and diplomatic action of the Czechoslovak National Council, transformed into the Provisional Government of the Czechoslovak Countries, now sitting in Paris, as well as all the engagements undertaken by it, in the name of our nation, toward the Allied and Associated States.\(^{15}\)

The Armistice, ending hostilities of the Great War, was signed on November 11, and of the new States, Czechoslovakia alone participated in the negotiations leading up to this long-awaited event. Beneš states that the selection of the Czechoslovak State to this signal honor was founded "on


\(^{15}\)Ibid., pp. 102-4.
the basis of our juridical recognition and the treaties with the Allies which were signed before the collapse of the Empire."16 Also, on November 11, Emperor Charles announced his withdrawal from "every participation in the administration of the State,"17 ending the rule of the House of Habsburg, which had been a power in Europe for more than six hundred years.

Following the dissolution of the Empire, Hungarian politicians made a last unsuccessful attempt to salvage the remains of the Magyar Kingdom, declaring themselves no longer connected with the once-proud Dual Empire. Allied opinion, however, did not approve when:

The Magyar Government, headed by Count Karolyi, made a vain and very belated plea that the geographical frontiers of Hungary should be preserved, that the Magyars were ready to grant the complete autonomy to Serbs, Slovaks and Rumanians comprised in those boundaries.18

Ten days after the Empire was dissolved, a military convention was signed between the victorious Allies and Hungary alone. This purely military document spelled out the lines

16 Beneš, op. cit., p. 463.


behind which the Magyars were to retire until more permanent frontiers could be determined. "Hungary had indeed become an independent state, but she had collapsed completely before her conquerors and had to accept any terms which they imposed." The Magyars were destined to lose their Slovakian holdings, along with the great influence they once possessed in Central Europe.

Within three days of the Armistice the Czechoslovak Revolutionary National Assembly met in Prague, in accordance with the Geneva Agreement, and elected Masaryk President of Czechoslovakia by acclamation. Dr. Karel Kramár headed the first cabinet as Premier; Dr. Eduard Beneš was named Foreign Minister, and Dr. Alois Rašín was chosen as Minister of Finance.

One of the new President's first official acts, recorded in the following statement, shows his concern with keeping the Czechoslovak troops, who had done so much toward achieving independence for the new state, informed concerning the political situation:

As soon as the Republic had been proclaimed at Prague and I had been elected President on November 14, I sent an Army Order to our troops in France, Italy, Russia and Serbia, informing them of the establishment of our State and defining the task of the army. It announced that

---


the Legions in France and Italy would shortly return home, and commanded those in Russia and Siberia to stand by the Allies. 21

The first small contingents of the Legions from France and Italy, as a matter of fact, arrived in Czechoslovakia on November 14, 22 and were accorded a tumultuous welcome; but it was to be almost two years longer before the last of the members of the war-weary Legions from Siberia were to arrive in Prague, Gratz, Pilsen and elsewhere in Czechoslovakia to take their places in the new State and help build the nation for which they had struggled so long.

---

21 Masaryk, Making of a State, pp. 311-12.
22 Vondracek, op. cit., p. 16.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Although the Habsburg Empire exhibited signs of both internal weakness and loss of stature on the international scene, it enjoyed the status of a major Power in the European family of nations prior to the outbreak of the World War. In the fateful year of 1914, with Franz Joseph entering the sixty-sixth year of his unprecedented reign over Austria, and his forty-seventh year as King of Hungary, about 50,000,000 persons, owed him their allegiance and made up the mélange that was Austria-Hungary. Internal pressures were beginning to give grave concern to the bureaucrats charged with the responsibility for affairs of state, and pressures were growing all along the outer perimeters of the Empire as Slav and Italian elements sought to win greater independence for their kinsmen living within the borders of the Dual Monarchy, if not to effect a new political tie with them. Yet, few foresaw any marked change in Habsburg affairs in the immediate future. A State that had endured for more than six hundred years as a European Power would, it was confidently believed by most people, survive the minor problems of the new Twentieth Century.

Franz Joseph, old-fashioned and anxious to maintain Habsburg family power, tended to resist change and supported those moves of his officials which were designed to preserve
the status quo and continue German-Magyar supremacy throughout the land. The Habsburgs had always maintained their position through adept use of the tactics of balance and maneuver, and the statesmen were only using old methods when they pitted one element against another, internal or external, in their attempt to assure the continued supremacy of the two favored races that controlled the Habsburg lands.

In the twilight of his reign, the aged Emperor grew increasingly determined in his policy of opposing the Slavs who made up the major portion of the population of his domains. These subject races, showing growing signs of nationalism everywhere, groaned under the autocratic rule he and his ministers imposed, but were unable to gain anything but insignificant concessions from the Ballplatz. Irredentism flared in many areas of the Dual Monarchy, but repression, tempered by slight concessions and the constant shifting of Imperial favor from one race to another, appeared to block major uprisings.

One person, in a position of potential great power, did recognize the Slav problem and sought for a solution to it. This was Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir-apparent, who was assassinated at Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. It has been reported that he "inclined to the idea of remodelling the Dual Monarchy into a number of national states, linked
together by a strong Central Parliament." This tendency toward Federalism, in which the Slav peoples of the Dual Monarchy would achieve the status of the Germans and Magyars, earned him no support from those holders of vested interests, and ran directly counter to the objectives of those Slav and Italian elements who wanted independence from the Habsburgs. Franz Ferdinand's death ended serious efforts to obtain a solution to the Slav problem within the boundaries of the Empire, and by a strange irony, gave the Habsburg Monarchy its last chance to act as a Great Power. As A. J. P. Taylor has written:

The murder jolted the dynasty into action: even Francis Joseph favored war, though he despaired of the outcome and, for that matter, was relieved that the death of Francis Ferdinand had vindicated the principles of dynastic purity which had been infringed by Francis Ferdinand's marriage.

With the elimination of their one supporter at Court, and the wrath of the Germans and Magyars turned against the Serbs, the Austrian Slavs were faced with a war they did not wish to support, as well as with the continuation of a system of government which offered them nothing but second-class status in public and private affairs. The declaration of war determined many of their leaders to seek the

---


complete liberation of their peoples from Habsburg misrule. The movement which resulted in the formation of the Czecho-
slovak Republic was one of several nationalist aspirations which arose from the conflict.

Under the capable and dedicated leadership of Mas-
aryk, Beneš and Štefánik, laboring outside the area of the
Monarchy, and Kramár, Stanek, Rašin and others who remained
within Austria-Hungarian territory during the war, the
Czechoslovak cause was the most ably directed national
movement of all those that developed against the Habsburgs.
Endowed with a foresight apparently not given to the leaders
of the other nationalistic movements, Masaryk and the Czecho-
slovaks turned to the Western European nations and, later
to the United States, for help in recognition of their
national independence. The Czechoslovak National Council
established branches in all the Allied and Associated coun-
tries, providing a focus for the campaign of education,
diplomacy and active participation of Czechoslovak forces
on the side of the Allies, which Czechoslovak leaders
deemed necessary for a successful bid for independence.

It is possible that the establishment of a Czecho-
slovak State could have been achieved without the services
of a substantial armed force, but it is doubtful. The
Czechoslovak Legions, fighting in France, Italy, Russia and
Siberia, gave Masaryk and the National Council a propaganda
tool with which to direct the attention of the world to a
hitherto virtually unknown nation, held deep within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and sundered by the component parts of that coalition. The exploits of the Legionaries in the Great War far outweighed their actual numbers. In a struggle which saw some ten million soldiers of all combatant nations killed, the members of the Legions numbered only approximately two hundred thousand devoted soldiers. Yet, so imbued were they with nationalistic fervor, Czecho- Slovakian ambitions could hardly have been better served. Their achievements helped in the raising of funds for the necessary education and propaganda campaigns devised by their political leaders, they won fame by their valiant struggles against vastly superior numbers in Russia and Siberia, and most important of all, they created a sympathetic public opinion which could not have been attained in any other way. It was upon these achievements that their political leaders based the Czechoslovak program calling for national recognition on the part of the powerful Allied Governments.

Funds from the West, fighting forces in the East, undaunted opposition to the Monarchy by the people at home, and shrewd diplomatic maneuvering throughout the world, all these factors combined to create a sovereign Czechoslovakia after three centuries of Habsburg domination. The Czechoslovak Legions, with their ancient heritage undergirding their will for independence, greatly strengthened the political
position of the National Council. They, alone, could have played this important role in Czechoslovak history.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
A. BOOKS

A "popular" treatment of the Czechoslovak Legions' journey across Siberia. One of the first major works on this interesting facet of history.

Much of this very interesting book, written in a popular style, concerns Russo-American relations prior to 1917; however, it is valuable as a source of material pointing out the reasons behind American decisions made following that period.

Personal recollections of the first Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, and one of the triumvirate of Masaryk, Beneš and Štefánik, which headed the long struggle for Czechoslovak independence. Essential for a study of the diplomatic maneuvering connected with establishment of a new state.

An authoritative account. Has excellent and detailed material, presented well and forcefully.

This little book contains much of interest to the student of the struggle for Czechoslovak independence. The documents contained in the Appendix point out the steps taken to separate the Czechs and Slovaks from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

A useful text, presented in a very readable manner.

Somewhat critical of American diplomatic relations with the Japanese, this study is a survey of the foreign policy of the President during the war years and
the subsequent intervention.


An excellent collection of documents dealing with activities of the Soviets during their early access to power, following the Revolutions of 1917. One of the primary sources of information on the Soviet view of Allied diplomatic activity of the period.


Written by a Major in the United States Army, this work is decidedly pro-American, but is a carefully documented work of considerable interest. Written in a free, easy style, not normally associated with military writing. Is of value to any student of this period.


Definitive treatment of the events leading to the World War. One of the best studies of the period, and based on documents available at the time, complete and factual.


A scholarly study of the American president and the diplomatic course he charted in Siberia, China and the Far East. Clearly and concisely treats the subject matter pertaining to the American decision to intervene in Siberia in support of the Czechoslovaks.


Written by an American who early had decided pro-Russian sympathies. Highly critical of Allied activities in Russia. Much of the work is based on personal interview with key Soviet leaders.


Contains the texts of many documents relating to the Czechoslovak political and diplomatic struggle for separation from the Habsburg Empire. Although written quite close to the period, when other documentation was not readily available, this study is of some value today.

By the commander of American forces in Siberia, this volume presents the case for the United States Army. In many instances, the author is highly critical of the contribution of the other Allied forces involved in the intervention, and points out the conflict between American diplomatic and military representatives.


A thorough presentation, in part unfavorable to the Magyars, of the factors affecting the decline of the Dual Monarchy. This volume adds considerable light to the problems of "irredentism" faced by the Monarchy.


A complete, general study of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the problems associated with the various races making up its population.


A very brief analysis of the Habsburg Empire, showing the growth of the Dual Monarchy, and the conditions which brought about its disintegration.


The second volume, *The Decision to Intervene*, treats the period from the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk to the landing of American troops in North Russia and Siberia. A very interesting and rewarding book, essential to a study of this period.


The author and his associates have compiled a wealth of information concerning the factors which influenced the development of the "Czechoslovak Spirit." Written in general terms, the book is rewarding.


A symposium by experts in a number of fields, this volume offers much general information about the early history and development of the Yugoslav State.

A recent study in American relations with the various nations of East Central Europe, this work contains only passing information of interest to the period of this study.


Personal recollections of President Wilson's Secretary of State. This work is of value to this study because of Lansing's close relationship to the President and his influence in helping mold the diplomacy of the United States toward the Austro-Hungarian Empire.


A powerful speaker of his day, Lloyd George's words were influential in the propaganda war which was waged throughout the long conflict. This collection contains several references to the peace aims of the British and their Allies, some of which had considerable effect on the peoples of the Central Powers.


The personal memoirs of the British wartime leader, Volume VI is of particular interest to this study.


Highly interesting reading for the student of Central Europe and the formation of new National States. Very well documented. A source of much valuable information.


Originally written quite close to the actual war period, this book has had several revisions and later chapters have been brought more nearly current with events as they actually happened. Of general interest.

This work contains material that Dr. Masaryk used with telling effect to convince Entente statesmen that a "New Europe" was an absolute requirement as an Allied war aim.

---

**The Making of a State, Memories and Observations.**
New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1927.
Written by the man most instrumental in the formation of the Czechoslovak State following World War I, this volume is a necessity, as it carefully records the hopes, fears, successes and failures of the little group of men who headed the drive for independence.

---

Of limited value to this study, this work is one of the most recent relating to America's long period of isolation.

---

Contains the texts of many documents relevant to this study and includes much other material from sources available at the time of its writing. Except for the documents, the work is of limited value at this time.

---

By a member of the Bohemian National Alliance in America, this little volume recounts in detail the propaganda efforts of the Czech and Slovak people in America. An interesting study.

---

A scholarly treatment of the Austrian Government and its leaders during the war. It is highly critical of the lack of foresight on the part of many of the politicians of the day and traces the steps taken by the subject peoples to break away from the Habsburgs.

---

Written in a highly readable manner, but somewhat lacking in unity. A general treatment of the area and its peoples.

---

The source of much valuable material concerning the various peace proposals attempted during the war. Invaluable to any study attempting to determine the reasons behind eventual Allied acceptance of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as one of their war aims.


Written by probably the most erudite British student of Habsburg affairs. This volume contains much first-hand information and is built around documents prepared by Professor Masaryk in his struggle for Czechoslovak independence. Very valuable.

---


An outstanding and outspoken supporter of the Serbs and other Slavic races, the author attributes to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its allies, the major responsibility for the war.

---


An interesting study on the "other half" of the Czechoslovak Nation. It is a careful analysis of the Slovak personality and the problems the race has had to face in its history.


Authoritative and valuable collection of papers of the chief advisor to the President of the United States. Limited material relating to the Czechoslovaks.

---


Traces the development of American attitudes toward the Central Powers and how they were translated into diplomatic action.


An excellent account. Valuable as a well-written study of the overall Austrian scene down to the last days of the Empire.

This slim book covers much territory, and does it well. It is an account of one of the most interesting periods in European diplomatic history.

A detailed study of the anti-Bolshevist forces which operated in Russia and Siberia. Has information of value concerning the Czechoslovak Legions and their relationship with the various anti-Red armies.

Impressive in its research, but rather biased, as the author was a participant, on the losing side, in the great Russian upheaval.

Less than a year of Austrian history is recounted in this study, yet the author has woven an interesting account of the break-up of the Austrian Empire into its component parts, and the establishment of a German Austrian Republic.

A study of the diplomacy of the Japanese during the World War, with considerable emphasis on the relationship between the United States and Japan. A scholarly study which throws light on the reasons for Japanese intervention in Siberia.

Demonstrating that Austro-Hungarian attempts to maintain their supremacy in the Empire was an impossibility, this very brief work by a distinguished historian is required reading for the period.

Traces the development of the Czechoslovak national spirit, and the problems arising between that Nation and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, by one of the ablest American writers on Czechoslovak history.

A detailed account of American-Russian and American-Japanese diplomatic relations during and after the war. A rewarding study for any person interested in these complex relationships.


An excellent contribution to the study of America's participation in the Allied Intervention. Well-informed and easily read.


Contains very little on the period 1918-1919, but is an excellent study of the 1920-1935 period. The author has traced development of Czechoslovak foreign policy from its earliest beginnings.


An especially valuable study of the intervention in Siberia. Traces the history of the Allied plans to intervene from the earliest source materials. Fully documented, this work covers in detail the period from the initial landing of Allied troops until the Japanese leave Siberia in 1922.


Of limited value to this study, although the work does offer some information concerning the diplomatic and military maneuvers taken by the Japanese in China and Siberia after the Bolshevik Revolution.


Of only passing interest to the present study, this work is of considerable value as a background source of material on matters leading up to the Czech desire for
separation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Interesting and well-written.


Although written by a Japanese, this history of the Island Kingdom is not entirely pro-Japanese in its treatment of the Japanese intervention in Siberia.

**B. BOOKS: PARTS OF SERIES**


A voluminous collection of Wilson's papers. Volume III is of value to this study.


The last volume of this series contains many references to Robert Lansing, Wilson's Secretary of State during the war years. Valuable.


Compiled from original and contemporary sources, this is a "popular" history of the World War, written in the news-magazine style of the day. Volume VII contains material pertinent to this study.


An excellent, thoughtful study of the Peace Conference and the events leading up to the establishment of sovereign nations from the lands of the Central Powers. Volume IV is of particular importance.
C. PUBLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, LEARNED SOCIETIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS


Documentary treatment of matters pertaining to Neutral Rights and Commerce, pointing up development of anti-German and anti-Austro-Hungarian feeling in the United States.


Documentary. Of interest to show trend of United States toward war.


Notes and documents from official United States sources. Contains information concerning the peace moves of 1916.


Documentary. Of particular value to this paper.


Documentary. Invaluable to any study dealing with the relationships between the United States and the other nations engaged in the World War.


Documentary. Valuable information concerning the
United States and its last months in Siberia as a member of the interventionary force.


Documentary. Throughout the war years and beyond, Lansing played an important role in the development of American policy.

D. PERIODICALS

"Bohemia Ablaze with Revolt," The Literary Digest, LVIII (July 6, 1918), 30.

Journalistic. In typical war-time style. This editorial points up the conflict within the Dual Monarchy between the subject peoples and the Habsburgs.


A study of British Labor opinion and President Wilson's policies. The author found the Laborites generally favorable to Wilson's aims.


A thoughtful article attempting to point out steps which should be taken at the time of peace negotiations.

"Czecho-Slovak Independence," The Independent, XCVI (November 9, 1918), 149.

Journalistic treatment of Czecho-Slovak activities on the various war fronts and their effect on achievement of independence.


A very valuable study on recognition of the Czecho-Slovak State by the Government of the United States.

Gardiner, J. B. "Our Military Problem in Russia," The World's Work, XXXVI (October, 1918), 603.

Appeals for support of the Legions in Russia.
A study of the causes underlying the decline of the Habsburgs.

An historio-geographic study of Bohemia, written when the Czechs were first being brought to the attention of the American public.

A carefully documented study of Soviet claims that the United States was the primary force behind Allied intervention in Russia and Siberia. Effectively refutes arguments placed by today's Soviet historians.

A thoughtful report by a prolific writer and editor of materials concerning the Czechoslovaks. Provides a general treatment of the drive for independence.

Points out the value of President Wilson to the establishment of the small "Succession" states following the World War.

Lockhart, R. H. Bruce. "Dr. Edouard Beneš," The Fortnightly Review, CXX (September, 1923), 418-29.
The author, long a British representative in Russia, comments favorably on the activities of Beneš, Secretary General of the Czechoslovak National Council.

Another popular treatment of the Czechoslovak cause in the American press. Designed to create public support for the new nation.

An interesting account by the war-time leader of the revolutionary movement, outside the boundaries of the
Austro-Hungarian Empire. Stresses the right of the Czechoslovaks to independence from the Habsburgs.

The author, a long-time friend of the Czechoslovaks, helped Masaryk draft the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence. Points out the value of the small states as a buttress against a resurgent Germany.

A scholarly study on the great Czechoslovak leader.

Odell, Joseph H. "The President's Fourteen Points—Are They Clear and Final?" Outlook, CXX (November 6, 1918), 343-47.
At the time the Central Powers were on the verge of defeat, this article pointed out the growing demand in some Allied areas for greater concessions from the Central Powers.

An interesting survey of the Czechoslovak form of government by that nation's representative in the United States.

An historian's view of the first President of the Czechoslovak Republic.

By a member of a French Mission to the United States during the war, this article touches briefly on the value of President Wilson's Fourteen Points to the subject peoples.

One of a number of articles appearing shortly after the end of the war which looked optimistically toward the position of the smaller states in the European family of nations.
A powerful piece of anti-Habsburg propaganda, written by a well-known British publicist and student of Slav affairs. Valuable.

Journalistic. Recounts the story of Masaryk's public reading of the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence in October, 1918.

Smetanka, Jaroslav F. "Bohemians and Slovaks—Now Czechoslovaks," The Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science, XCIII (January, 1921), 149-53.
Recounts the successful (at that time) cooperation of the two principal members of the new Czechoslovak State.

A British editor's proposal for future peace terms to be offered the Central Powers. Indicated that the Habsburg peoples should be given, at the very least, autonomy within the Empire.

A detailed study of the position Austria had occupied in the affairs of Europe up until the time of war, and a further demand that the subject peoples be given greater consideration.

A thorough report on how the victorious Allies determined the fate of Hungary at the end of the war and during the Peace Conference.

"The New Declaration of Independence Under the Old Liberty Cupola," The Survey, XLI, No. 4 (November 2, 1918), 115-16.
Another popular account of Masaryk's propaganda gesture in which he read the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia in October, 1918.

An anti-Japanese view of the actions taken by that nation in the Siberian intervention.
A pro-Serbian article, indicating that the Slavs should be given a greater role in the management of their affairs, and possible union with their kinsmen in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

______. "Austria-Hungary and Serbia," The Fortnightly Review, CIII (June, 1915), 978-86.
A noted British historian takes a close look at the relationship between the Dual Monarchy and her Slav neighbor, and the Austro-Hungarians suffer in the comparison.