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The Czechs during World War I (especially 1917–1918): Economic and political developments leading toward independence

Rees, H. Louis, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990
THE CZECHS DURING WORLD WAR I (ESPECIALLY 1917-1918):
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS LEADING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

H. Louis Rees, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1990

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INTRODUCTION

The story of the establishment of the first Czechoslovak republic in October 1918 has been the source of conflicting historiographical interpretations and political arguments for over seventy years. In the interwar years, with the exile leaders (Tomáš Masaryk and Eduard Beneš in particular) dominating the political scene in Czechoslovakia and with all Czech political leaders anxious to prove that they had been anti-Habsburg from the very first moments of the war, Czech historiography was pervaded by the memoirs of these exiles and the study of their activities. All the exiles, of course, had been fervent enemies of the state who had immediately gone into action against the Habsburgs. Developments within the monarchy, on the other hand, usually were ignored. There was no political advantage to be gained from admitting that one had been, at worst, loyal to the empire or, at least, slow to take action against it. Only a few historians dealt with the internal situation, and much of their work was interrupted by the Second World War. (1)

After World War II, Czech historiography was complicated by the fact that many of those who left the Social Democratic Party to found the Czech Communist Party in 1921 were among the most ardent opponents of an independent Czech or Czechoslovak state. This includes the Communist Party’s first head, Bohumír Šmeral. Czech historians
instead concentrated on destroying the reputations of the politicians who had dominated the interwar bourgeois Czechoslovak state. In this interpretation of the war years, the role of the émigré leaders is minimized, that of the domestic politicians virtually ignored, while the role of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia is given preeminence. According to this view, the October Revolution and Lenin's call for national self-determination were the most important impetuses for the growth of a Czech independence movement. Austria-Hungary was overthrown because of the revolutionary activity of the Czech working class, strengthened and lead by the Russian example. (2) This interpretation is best illustrated by the phrase, prominent until very recently on banners in Czechoslovakia: "Without the October revolution in Russia there would have been no October revolution in Austria-Hungary."

This dissertation concentrates on the domestic situation. It attempts to describe the actions of the political leaders inside the empire, in Prague and in Vienna, and to place them within the economic, social, and political context in which they were carried out. This context includes, of course, the October revolution in Russia and the radicalizing effect it had in Austria-Hungary. It also includes, however, numerous other, purely domestic, issues. The most significant of them were the rebirth of parliamentary government and the attendant political responsibility forced onto the politicians, the attitude of the various governments in Vienna to the Czechs and particularly to question of the Czech-German struggle in Bohemia and Moravia, and, most importantly, the abysmal material deprivation that went far in
undermining already weak Czech support for the war effort and for the monarchy. The dissertation deals with the war's final two years because it was only in this period that all these issues really began to come into play. Prior to that, Austria-Hungary was a virtual military dictatorship, with no real political life and no opportunity at all for political expression. The population was cowed into submission. In addition, it was in the war's final two years that the state's economic difficulties began to have a palpable effect. As the stress is on the domestic situation, the dissertation deals with the émigré politicians only when there is relevant interaction between them and the politicians in the empire.
Notes


CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND EARLY WAR YEARS

The Czechs in Austria-Hungary Before World War I

In the decades preceding the outbreak of the First World War, dramatic changes had occurred in the social and political conditions in the Czech lands. In particular, the rapid industrialization and attendant urbanization experienced in the second half of the nineteenth century, combined with the liberalization of the Austrian electoral laws, lead to a multiplication of Czech political parties. Prior to the late 1880's, the Czech political picture was dominated by two groups, the so-called Old Czechs (officially the National Party, Národní strana), generally conservative outgrowths of the 1848 revolution, and Young Czechs (National Liberal Party, Národní strana svobodomyslné), their more liberal competitors who emerged in the mid-1870's. Both parties saw themselves as representatives and protectors of the entire nation, irrespective of social class.

In response to the Dualistic Compromise of 1867, the Old Czechs, in cooperation with the aristocratic (and thus non-Czech) Conservative Party, had enunciated the principle of Bohemian state rights. According to this principle, the lands of the historic Bohemian Crown—the provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia—were
indivisible and were entitled to the same rights that had been granted the Magyars in 1867. When their demands went unfulfilled, the Old Czechs boycotted the Reichsrat, a policy the Young Czechs later also supported. The boycott endured, bereft of any results, until 1879, when the Old Czechs accepted the invitation of Prime Minister Eduard Taaffe to join his "Iron Ring" Government. Cooperation with this Government won the Czechs some practical advantages, including the designation of the Czech language as one of the "outer" languages of the bureaucracy(4) and the division of Prague's Charles University into separate Czech and German units, with the Czech one soon dominant.(5)

In spite of these gains, the conservatism of the Old Czechs was increasingly at odds with the more nationally radical and democratic leanings of a younger generation composed of the growing Czech industrial and intellectual middle class. In the 1889 election to the Bohemian Diet, the Young Czechs for the first time outnumbered the Old Czech-Conservative coalition.(6) In 1890, Taaffe brought the Old Czechs and the Germans together to try to reach a compromise on the language question in Bohemia and Moravia. The resulting agreement, covering such areas as the local boards of education, agricultural advisory boards, primary schools, and district court boundaries, was accepted by the Old Czechs. It was viciously attacked by the Young Czechs, however, because of its alleged national partition of the historic Czech lands.(7) The Old Czechs then were decisively defeated by the Young Czechs in the 1891 Reichsrat election.(8) Czech-German antagonism, in the meantime, grew so severe that martial law had to be declared in Prague for a short time in 1893, for the first time since
1848. The Taaffe Government fell that same year, the Old Czechs lost the last of their political significance. Their fate was sealed in the 1895 general elections to the Bohemian Diet, when they won only three seats, while the Young Czechs took eighty-nine and became the largest party in the Diet.

The Young Czechs, however, in spite of their more radical rhetoric, soon also began to cooperate with Vienna in exchange for political concessions. In 1895, a new Prime Minister, the Polish Count Kazimierz Badeni, secured Young Czech support by agreeing to make concessions to the Czechs on the language issue. In April 1897, he introduce a new language ordinance which included significant concessions in this regard. For the first time, Czech was to be considered an official "inner" and "innermost" bureaucratic language in certain fields of administration in Bohemia and Moravia. The decrees implied the administrative indivisibility of the two provinces, a fundamental Czech demand, and required all officials of the two to prove written and spoken competence in both languages by July 1, 1901. As most Czechs had some knowledge of German, while few Germans knew any Czech, the decrees clearly were more burdensome to the Germans and offered the opportunity for Czech expansion in the bureaucracy. The Germans reacted with outrage. German deputies of all persuasions attacked the Government for months, while mass demonstrations broke out in German areas in the provinces. The emperor yielded to the pressure, dismissed Badeni, and rescinded the decrees.

Badeni's failure, and the intense, and at times violent, nationalistic agitation that accompanied it, ushered in an era of incessant
German-Czech conflict within the *Reichsrat*, conflict so intense that parliamentary government became nearly impossible. Successive Prime Ministers were forced to resort to non-political cabinets of "experts" and to rule by emergency decree.\(^{(14)}\) No further significant attempts were made to solve the linguistic question prior to the outbreak of war.

In spite of the political impasse within the *Reichsrat* and the resulting sterility of political life, the continued economic progress and industrial expansion in the Czech lands in the decades immediately preceding the war helped to generate a multitude of new political parties to compete with the Young Czechs. This economic growth, in conjunction with the various expansions of the Austrian franchise that occurred in 1882, 1896 and 1907, doomed the concept of a supra-class party based solely on nationality. In 1899, the Agrarian party (*Česká strana agrární*), which would eventually become the largest Czech party, was formed under the leadership of Antonín Svéhla. The party offered an alternative for small and middling landowners whose various rural action associations previously had supported the Young Czechs, but who had grown disillusioned with the economic policies of the Young Czechs, which were perceived to have an urban industrial bias.\(^{(15)}\) In the 1901 parliamentary elections, the Agrarians won eight seats, while the Young Czechs fell eight short of their previous total.\(^{(16)}\) In the elections to the Bohemian Diet later that same year, the Agrarians won twenty-one seats while the Young Czech total declined from ninety-one to sixty-eight.\(^{(17)}\) The Agrarians continued to make gains in the 1907 and 1911 parliamentary elections, so that at the outbreak of the war
they constituted the single largest Czech party in the Reichsrat, holding 37 seats. (18)

The other great party that emerged in the 1890's as a rival to the Young Czechs was the Social Democratic Party (Českoslovanská sociálně demokratická strana dělnická). By the beginning of the war, between 70 and 80 percent of the industries of the entire monarchy were situated in the Czech lands. (19) With this rapid industrialization, the size of the Czech working class rivalled that of the agrarian population by the end of the century. In 1872, the Young Czechs sponsored the publication of the by-weekly dělnické listy (Workers' Pages) to address the concerns of this newly emerging class. (20) By January of 1874, the paper had split with the Young Czechs and had added the phrase "Social Democratic Journal" to its title. (21) During this same period, Social Democrats in Austria as a whole had begun to try to organize a supranational party. Ten Czechs from Vienna were among the seventy-four delegates at the Neudorl Congress of April 1874 which attempted to formulate a program for an all-Austrian Social Democratic party. (22) Their efforts were not well received in the Czech lands, and the delegates were attacked both by the working class and the middle class for supporting the all-Austrian concept. (23)

For the next decade, Czech Social Democrats struggled internally with the nationality issue and the question of the ideological direction of the party, and externally with the government, which tried to suppress the movement throughout the empire. (24) The government's efforts met with a great deal of success. Persecution of the Czech Social Democrats was so effective that the party leadership was driven
from Prague and the party's newspaper ceased publication. (25) In January 1885 the government secured the passage of an anti-socialist law, valid for two years, which they used to effectively decimate the most radical elements among Austrian Social Democrats. (26)

With the defeat of the radicals, the fervor for official persecution waned, and the moderates were able to revive the party. A party congress consisting of Social Democrats of Czech nationality from throughout Cisleithania met in Brno (Brünn) (27) in December of 1887 and adopted a Marxist, non-anarchist program that was to be valid until an all-Austrian Social Democratic party could be reconstituted. (28) That occurred less than two years later, after the government's attempts to extend the anti-socialist law in 1888 had failed. (29) In 1889, an all-Austrian congress met at Heinfeld in Lower Austria. The congress adopted a conventional Marxist program and skirted the nationality issue by simply calling for the equality of all nationalities. (30) With this congress, a united, supranational Cisleithanian Social Democratic party came into being.

This supranationalism did not long endure, however. The Austrian party was dominated by Germans, and by the early 1890's, a significant portion of the Czech working class had grown unhappy with what it considered its subservient position. As early as 1890, a dissident faction began publishing a newspaper designed to pressure Czech Social Democrats to establish a party independent of the Austrian one, while pressure to federalize the party continued to grow. (31) The party organization resisted Czech demands for autonomy for a number of years, but finally relented when it became clear that without a restructuring
of the party, the Czechs might leave it. At the sixth party congress in 1897, the party organization was reformed to allow autonomous national parties with their own executive committees and organizational councils. (32)

In spite of the Czech Social Democrats' concern to have some control over their party apparatus, the official attitude toward the nationality issue was far from nationalistic. The party accepted, in general, the concept of proletarian internationalism and stressed class allegiance and the class struggle rather than any sort of nationalistic or ethnic rivalry. (33) At the opening of the Reichsrat session in 1897, the first at which Czech Social Democrats were represented, the gulf between the internationalism of the Social Democrats and the growing nationalism of the other Czech parties was driven home. As a part of the opening of any parliamentary session, the Czech parties regularly had reiterated their demand for the restoration of the historic Bohemian state's right. The newly elected Social Democrats broke with the pattern. They did not just ignore the demand, they specifically repudiated it, attacking the "uneartthing of decrepit historical documents and privileges," which had deflected the attention of the majority of the population from their true enemies. Only the triumph of socialism, not the "erroneous Bohemian state's right," could rescue the Czechs. (34)

The most important consequence of the Social Democrats' declaration was that it hastened the formation of yet another Czech political party. Following the lead of the journalist Václav Klofáč, the more nationally inclined workers split with the Social Democrats and
founded the Czech National Socialist Party (Česká strana národně socialistická) in 1898. The program of the National Socialists differed significantly from that of the Social Democrats. In particular, the former rejected the internationalism of the latter. Instead, the National Socialists broadened the definition of worker to include, in addition to industrial workers, all the lower middle classes (workers in handicrafts and home industries, the self-employed, peasants, clerks, and small businessmen) and then stressed the necessity of dislodging the Germans from their positions of economic control in the Czech lands. Thus, the class struggle was abandoned, to be replaced by the struggle of all classes against the Germans.

The National Socialists in the next decade made significant inroads into the Social Democrats' strength. By 1908 their union (Československá obec dějnická, ČOD) enrolled some 16,000 members; by 1914 the number had increased to about 70,000. The National Socialists were strongest in those areas nearest the Czech-German ethnic frontier, such as the coal-mining districts of northern Bohemia and Moravia, and amongst the employees of smaller concerns, who were often overlooked by the Social Democrats. Their greatest victory occurred in the early 1900's, when the Czech railway workers resigned en masse from the socialist union and joined the National Socialist party and its union. The National Socialists also were strongly represented among the metal-workers and chemical workers in Prague and Plzeň (Pilsen). Electorally, too, the National Socialists made inroads. Of the five Czech Social Democrats elected to the Reichsrat in 1897, three were defeated by National Socialists in 1901.
the 1907 elections, the first held after universal manhood suffrage had been enacted in the Austrian half of the empire, the National Socialists polled nearly 72,000 votes. (42) They increased the total to between 95,000 and 101,000 in the 1911 election. (43) The two parties spent a great deal of time and energy battling each other in the years leading up to the war.

The Social Democrats, in spite of their rejection of the historic state's right, were unable to reconcile themselves to the continued domination of the party by the Germans. The 1899 Brno conference of the all-Austrian party had adopted a nationality policy that called for, among other things, the creation of autonomous national units. It soon became clear, however, that the German Social Democrats viewed autonomy only in a vague, cultural sense, and real power would remain in the hands of the state. (44) Czech attempts after the 1907 universal suffrage reform to force the party to reassess its nationality policy came to naught. After the Germans and the Socialist International refused to sanction independent Czech trade unions, the Czech Social Democrats organized themselves as an independent party in 1911. (45) This move only further fragmented the Czech national movement, as a small fraction of the party rebelled against this repudiation of socialist internationalism and formed yet another, much smaller, party, the Czech Social Democratic Party in Austria (Česká strana sociálně demokracie v Rakousku), commonly referred to as the Centralists. (46) The much larger Social Democratic majority came to be known as the Autonomists.
In addition to the large, mass political parties discussed above, other smaller parties also emerged after the demise of first the Old Czech and then the Young Czech monoliths. The most important of these included the State's Rights Progressives (Státoprávní pokrokové), the Moravian People's Party (Lidová strana Moravě), and two clerical parties, the Catholic National Party (Katolická strana národní), appealing to a more prosperous constituency, and the Christian Social Party (Křesťansko sociální strana), which directed its message to the urban and rural working classes. (47)

One other party that should be mentioned is Masaryk's Czech People's Party (Česká strana lidová) or, as it was more commonly known, the Realist Party. Masaryk had been one of the leading personalities in the so-called Realist wing of the Young Czech Party, but had resigned in 1893 after disputes with the party leadership. (48) In 1900, he founded the Realist Party. The party had few members—"all, or almost all, knew each other" (49)—and at the outbreak of war only one Reichsrat deputy, Masaryk himself. (50) Nonetheless, because of its strong support among the Czech intelligentsia (51) and because of the role Masaryk was to play in leading the foreign struggle for Czech independence, the party had greater significance than its size would indicate.

Of all of these parties, none but the small State's Rights Progressive party of Antonín Kalina was publicly in favor of an independent Czech state prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Led by Lev Borký, the Vienna correspondent for the party's organ, Samostatnost (Independence), the party attempted to draw Czech
attention to the probability of a general European war and to the possibilities this presented to the Czechs. Borsky's campaign met with little success. The only public response, but one which probably accurately reflected the attitudes of the vast majority of Czech politicians, came in the small independent journal Přehled (Survey):

We could not possibly be tempted...by the creation of an independent Czech statelet, which would find itself at the mercy of its more powerful neighbors. And if world events gave us such a state against our will, it would certainly be the first concern of all reasonable Czech politicians to incorporate it by prudent treaties into a powerful Austria-Hungary, justly reorganized. (52)

Undaunted by this lack of interest, the party's congress then issued a manifesto in mid-May 1914 calling on the Czech nation to be prepared for a worldwide catastrophe and to begin planning for an independent Czech state. The manifesto went on:

...we cannot betray either our past of the Slav idea and we advise against the reliance on the Austro-German, anti-Russian partnership. We are against the policy of the Triple Alliance, and Europe and Germany know that the restoration of the Czech state implies the utter failure of this policy. If it is not in our power to forestall the consequences of the present Austro-Hungarian policy, we do not intend to bear even partial responsibility for the catastrophe which this policy will bring.... We are convinced that the Czech question would be solved more justly by war that it has been hitherto solved by peace. (53)

The manifesto was ignored. (54) As war approached, few Czechs, no matter how nationalistic or anti-Habsburg or anti-German, shared the belief that the break-up of the monarchy was either possible, or, in the view of most, desirable. While nationalism among the Czechs had grown noticeably in the decades preceding the war and conflicts with Vienna and with the Germans in the historic Czech lands became more
common and more bitter, the vast majority of Czechs looked to improve their position within the Empire, not to destroy the Empire.

Even the most radical politicians counseled caution. For instance, Karel Kramář of the Young Czechs, the foremost Czech proponent of Neo-Slavism who had, by 1914, accepted the concept of a Russian-led Slavic empire which would include the Czechs,\(^{55}\) remained circumspect. In an August 4 article in Národní listy (National Pages), Kramář, within the constraints of the official censorship, outlined his views:

The historical moment which so many have feared and so many have expected, has arrived. The words of the German Chancellor about the fight between the Slavs and the Teutons have become a reality. The policy of the European Powers will be brought to judgment—now all the mistakes of internal policy will have to be accounted for...we are prepared to state that at the end of this war we shall hardly recognize the map of Europe. Bismarck pointed out that the future war would have to be fought until the complete destruction of the enemy, so that the enemy would no longer present a threat.... At this moment all of us have the future of our nation in mind. Many may think how wise it would have been had we not wasted our strength on squabbles and had used it for firm organization of our national forces, so that we could await the blows of fate without trepidation.\(^{56}\)

Kramář's outlook, which presented the war as a struggle between Slavs and Germans and allowed the Czechs to passively, and without risk, await a Russian victory, appealed to many.\(^{57}\)

The majority of the Young Czechs, however, all too cognizant that Germans surrounded them on three sides, were still prepared to pursue an activist policy in 1914.\(^{58}\) Many of the National Socialists, in spite of their militant rhetoric, also were pursuing an activist policy at the beginning of the war, skeptical of the prospects of freedom being delivered by reactionary, tsarist Russia.\(^{59}\) In addition, the
party was in a state of some disarray in 1914, as it had just been
proven that its vice-chairman, Karel Šviha, had been in the pay of the
Prague police. (60) With the arrest of the chairman, Václav Klofáč, in
September 1914, there was no one in the party’s leadership capable of
carrying on the pre-war radical policy. (61)

The attitude of the Agrarians is best summarized by deputy
František Udržal, who, in an address to the Reichsrat, called for the
preservation of that institution. But, he went on, “we wish to save it
for the Slavs of Austria....The empire is ours by right. The Slav
question must be solved in favor of the Slavs...” (62)

The Social Democrats even more unequivocally accepted the idea of
the continuation of an Austrian state. At the Eleventh Party Congress
in December 1913, they adopted the so-called Žofín resolution (named
for the Žofín Island in Prague where the Congress took place) as their
official position on the nationality question. While the resolution
was critical of the government and its "militaristic policies," and
called for the creation of a "federation of autonomously constituted
nations," it explicitly supported the concept of an Austro-Hungarian
state:

> With the given conditions in Europe and from the standpoint
of maintaining the international balance of power and peace,
and at the same time from the point of view of the most
expedient conditions for the development of the nations in
Central Europe and their proletariat and from the point of
view of the Czech nation and proletariat, it is considered
necessary to do everything in order to contribute to the
maintenance and development of the political and economic
unit in the center of Europe, whose manifestation today is
Austria-Hungary....Czech Social Democracy declares openly and
with no reservation whatever that the Czech question, being
that of the future of a nation with no consanguine people
beyond the boundaries of this state to which it could attach
itself, can be solved only within the framework of Austria. (63)

Among the Catholic parties, there was not only support for the state, but genuine attachment to the monarchy and the Habsburgs. (64) On August 4, all the clerical press published a declaration of the Moravian Catholic party which read:

Our whole nation is aware of the fact that it has the most secure guarantee for its development in an Austria which is strong and just to all her nationalities. At this grave moment in which our Empire, and with it our nation and our country find themselves, we and all our people are unwaveringly faithful and devoted to the state and to its exalted monarch. (65)

The Early War Years

In spite of the warnings from the State Rights Progressives, the coming of war took the Czechs by surprise. There was no general consensus on the attitude to be taken to the war, but it became clear relatively early that the Czechs were far less enthusiastic than were the empire's Germans. The behavior of Czech troops leaving Prague for the front at the end of September scandalized Austrian officials. Prince Thun, the Bohemian Governor, reported:

Yesterday and the day before, troops were departing for the front line. The manner of their departure left a lot to be desired. The soldiers, though most of them older people, were accompanied by relatives and by children; they were obviously drunk. The day before yesterday they were wearing badges in national colors on their forage caps; some, though not very many, wore the Slav colors. Yesterday their behavior was still worse...they carried three large white, red and blue flags, and a red flag with the inscription: we are marching against the Russians and we do not know why....I spoke to the local commander who had received reports on these events; he hopes to prevent their repetition by severe measures. (66)
Civilian on-lookers shouted, "Don't shoot your Slav brothers."(67) Trains carrying troops to the front were chalked with anti-war slogans, and both troops and civilians clashed with the authorities over the wearing of the tricolor.(68) Czechs supported the government's war loans much less generously than did the Germans.(69) In general, it was clear that the Czech public was unenthusiastic about a struggle against the Entente and particularly against Slavic Russia and Serbia.(70)

Adding to the government's, and especially the military's, uneasiness about Czechs attitudes was the appearance of Russian leaflets, both authentic and forged, promising liberation for the empire's Slavs should the Russians triumph. One of the authentic ones, signed by the Russian Supreme Commander, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, was distributed in Prague in December by members of the State's Rights Progressive party.(71) The final straw as far as the hardliners in the military were concerned was the controversial "desertion" of an entire Czech infantry battalion to the Russians at the beginning of April 1915. While it has never been adequately established how many of the Czechs actually deserted and how many were simply captured after offering resistance, only some 250 men were reassembled from the 2000 of which the battalion had originally consisted.(72) Austrian military officials assumed the worst. The divisional commander reported:

...the battalion was captured by one Russian company and more or less led away from its positions, without having once fired at the enemy...The original troops may have been quite reliable, but only several days before the battle one company was added...which had been infected by Pan-Slav ideas at home. From this reserve unit several reconnaissance groups had deserted to the enemy on the day before the battle....It
is obvious that the deserters informed the Russians about the mood of the battalion.\(^{(73)}\)

This incident only intensified the military's efforts, which had been going on since the very beginning of the war, to gain greater political control in the Czech lands. The civilian government already had responded to the approach of war with a good deal of heavy-handed repression. The Bohemian Diet already had been dissolved in the summer of 1913 because of the seemingly intractable quarrels between its Czech and German members. It was replaced by an eight-member commission appointed by the emperor to administer Bohemia's affairs.\(^{(74)}\) On March 16, 1914, the Reichsrat was prorogued. The government now operated on the basis of Article 14 of the 1867 constitution, which allowed the emperor to rule by decree. Finally, on the eve of the war's outbreak, the last two outlets for Czech political expression were eliminated with the indefinite prorogation of the Moravian and Silesian Diets.\(^{(75)}\)

An Imperial decree of July 25, 1914 suspended many constitutional guarantees, including freedom of speech, public gathering, press, travel, the privacy of one's home, and the secrecy of the mails.\(^{(76)}\) The right to trial by jury was suspended and the military courts were given jurisdiction over civilians accused of committing broadly defined treasonous activities.\(^{(77)}\) In addition, a large number of offenses were transferred from the jurisdiction of the civil courts to that of the military courts. High treason, \textit{lese majeste}, offenses against the Emperor and the members of his House, disturbances of the public peace, insurrection, riot, violent disturbance of a court or meeting called by the government for the transaction of public business, or willful
damage to railways or any object belonging to a concerned with them were among the offenses turned over to the military courts.\(^{78}\) Large areas of the empire were designated part of the war zone and, thus, came under the jurisdiction of the military authorities.\(^{79}\) Václav Klofáč, the chairman of the National Socialist Party, was arrested in September on suspicion of treason, while another party member was tried by a military tribunal and shot.\(^{80}\)

In spite of these measures, the military authorities were determined to tighten their grip even further on the areas they considered politically suspect. The most important move in this direction was the creation of the War Supervisory Office (Kriegsüberwachungsamt, KÖA) under the Supreme Army Command, which soon began to interfere in all aspects of civil administration.\(^{81}\) The KÖA's activities were resisted for a short time by the Bohemian Governor, Prince Thun, until his replacement in March 1915 by Count Max Coudenhove.\(^{82}\) Under Coudenhove, the military was given a relatively free rein. Thousands were arrested, including Karel Kramář and his associate Alois Rašín and the head of the Sokol organization, Josef Schreiner.\(^{83}\) Kramář and Rašín were convicted of treason and sentenced to death, although their executions were postponed and later commuted to terms of penal servitude.\(^{84}\) Press censorship also was tightened. The National Socialists' Český dělník (Czech Worker) already had been banned in the fall of 1914; now the party's other organ, České slovo (Czech Word) met the same fate.\(^{85}\) Other newspapers with a Czech nationalistic bent were cowed into extreme caution,
including eventually Národní listy and the Moravian People's Party organ, Lidové noviny (People's News).(86)

Under these difficult circumstances, the caution exhibited by the parties and their official organs is understandable. In addition, with the arrest of the most vocal nationalist radicals (Kramář, Klofáč, etc.), leadership of their parties tended to fall into the hands of much less radical, if not overtly loyal, elements.(87) As a result, by early in 1915, the only active political group plotting against Vienna was the so-called Czech Mafia (Maffie). This small secret group was organized at the instigation of Masaryk after his move to Switzerland. He instructed Beneš to:

form a secret committee from among our political workers. In the manner of the Russian revolutionary methods, such a committee would have numerous ramifications at home; it would illicitly keep up communication with abroad and would be permanently in touch with official Czech and Viennese politics. From behind the scenes it would exert an influence on the conduct of policy at home and would keep the organized political émigrés informed about what was happening there.(88)

Such a group was organized, led first by Benes and then by Přemysl Šámal after Benes left for France in May 1915. The Maffie was an important means of keeping the émigrés apprised of the situation within the monarchy and acted as a conduit for information from the émigré leaders to the politicians in Prague and Vienna.(89) Otherwise, the Czech political leadership had been cowed into passivity by the end of the war's first year. Clearly the majority of the parties, and of the population, were not considering pursuing any sort of actively disloyal, anti-Austrian policy. This sentiment was only strengthened with the defeat of the Russian armies and their retreat from Poland in
the late spring of 1915. With that retreat, the prospects, however
dim, for a Russian liberation of the Czechs ended, and the prospects
for the continued existence of Austria-Hungary were enhanced.

Under these circumstances, and with most of the radical leaders
under arrest, the more conservative Czech leaders began to contemplate
a more active Czech political role. Not only did they hope, thereby,
to ameliorate the governmental and military persecution, but also to
strengthen the Czechs against the resurgent German nationalists. In
the spring of 1915, all the German parties except the Social Democrats
had banded together to demand a reorganization of the state based on
the 1882 Linz program. This called for the cessation of Dalmatia to
Italy and Galicia to Poland, with the remainder of Austria maintained
as a unitary state with German as the official language.\(^{90}\)

Faced with these threats, the Czech parties began to discuss the
possibility of creating an all-national political organization to
protect the national interest. In view of the political situation,
such a group would necessarily have to be publicly loyal to the
monarchy. Negotiations began in early autumn of 1915, but eventually
foundered the following year on the very issue of loyalty. Austro-
phobes within some of the parties (particularly the Realists and the
National Socialists) worked to undermine any agreement, while the
opposition of the imprisoned Kramář and Rašín drove away many of the
Young Czechs.\(^{91}\) In addition, the government of Count Karl Stürghk
gave the Czechs little encouragement.\(^{92}\)

After two years of warfare, therefore, Czech political life had
become dispirited and without direction. Those loyal to the monarchy
watched with trepidation as the German nationalists grew ever more vocal, as political repression worsened, and as the military tightened its grip on many aspects of Czech life. The disloyal elements, increasingly on the defensive, had seen their one great hope, a Russian juggernaut rolling into Bohemia and Moravia, come to nought.

The Czech torpor is captured, though probably exaggerated, in a January 1916 dispatch from the American consul in Prague:

...I am compelled to say that life here seems absolutely normal. The streets are crowded with well-dressed people and coffee houses, cinematographs, theaters and cabarets are going full blast. Of course, I am not speaking of underlying conditions but of the general appearance of things.

The Bohemian national spirit which was so rampant before the war has absolutely evaporated. To judge from what the Germans say, no Czech was to be considered as anything but anti-German before the war, but superficially, at least, that is certainly not the case now, for one constantly hears Czech officers proclaiming loudly in broken German the superiority of everything German. At every victory the Czech houses are beflagged and the Czech newspapers are more Germanophile than the Germans themselves. Germans volunteer the information that this is all the result of official orders and that the Czechs say nothing, but whatever the cause may be there is no questioning the fact that on the surface at least there is loyalty to the Government.

...One of the Czech newspapers recently published an editorial advocating a neorientierung for all Czech political parties on the basis, briefly, of the recognition of Bohemia's status as an integral part of the Empire. All the other papers hastened to protest that this was not necessary as they had always been loyal Austrians.

It is not safe to say whether this attitude of the Czechs is due to official pressure, but the Czechs are certainly showing no spirit in defending what I had been led by the Germans to believe was the political creed of all of them, that is, the separation of Bohemia from Austria. (93)

By the war's second year, then, the Czechs, as a result of a combination of reasons, presented a quiet, submissive, and seemingly loyal front. By the second half of 1916, however, profound changes in
the political and economic situation within the monarchy would begin to force the Czechs from this torpor. In the war's last two years, the attitudes exhibited in the report above would slowly, but ever so surely, give way to widespread and increasingly open antipathy toward Austria-Hungary.
Notes

(1) Tobolka, Politické dějiny; 2: 348.


(3) After the overwhelming Imperial victory over the Czechs at the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620, many of the rebellious Czech nobles were executed, many more fled, and all had their lands confiscated. These were then given over to, or purchased very inexpensively by, officers loyal to the Emperor. The Bohemian and Moravian aristocrats of the 19th Century, therefore, were the descendants of the Emperor's multi-national officer corps of the 17th Century. They were, on the whole, not nationalistic, but rather loyal to the crown and all it represented.

(4) There were three main subdivisions of the Amtsproche, the language used by the government authorities. The "outer" or "external" language was that used by the bureaucracy to communicate with the parties concerned and the public in general. This was distinguished from the "inner" language, used within an individual bureaucracy, and the "innermost" language, used to communicate between bureaucracies, particularly with higher authorities, crownland administration, and the central imperial government. Robert A. Kann, The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918, vol. 1: Empire and Nationalities; vol. 2: Empire Reform; 2 vols. (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 1: 199-200.

(5) Campbell, p. 9.

(6) Kann, Multinational Empire, 1: 201.

(7) Ibid., 202-203.


(9) Kann, Multinational Empire, 1: 202; E. Garrison Walters, The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), p. 78.
(10) Campbell, p. 10.


(12) Kann, Multinational, I, 202; Campbell, p. 10.

(13) Kann, Multinational, I, 203; Campbell, p. 10-11.

(14) Campbell, p. 11.


(17) Ibid.

(18) Campbell, p. 11. The distribution of the vote and the seats among Czech parties in the 1911 parliamentary elections, the last before the war, was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Democrats</td>
<td>376,608</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrarians</td>
<td>257,717</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Catholics</td>
<td>128,056</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Socialists</td>
<td>95,901</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Socialists</td>
<td>83,124</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Czechs</td>
<td>56,673</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressives</td>
<td>34,443</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Rights</td>
<td>20,881</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Czechs</td>
<td>9,872</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realists</td>
<td>4,984</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Porcelain—100%
- Glass—92%
- Sugar refineries—92%
Malting houses—92%
Coal—86%
Lignite—84%
Chemicals—75%
Textiles—75%
Paper—75%
Leather—70%
Metallurgical products—60%
Breweries—57%


(21) Ibid.


(24) Austrian Social Democrats were split throughout much of the 1880's between anarchist and moderate wings. The moderates ultimately were successful, partly because the government's vigorous suppression of the Social Democrats, which was occasioned by official fears of anarchism, drove many of the anarchists to more moderate positions. Chrisslock, pp. 12-18.


(27) At first mention, names of places in the Czech lands will be given in Czech, with the German alternative in parentheses. Thereafter, the Czech name will be used. For those few place-names for which a common English form exists (e.g., Prague, Bohemia), the English form will be used.

(28) Ibid., p. 16.

(29) Ibid., p. 17.


(32) Ibid., p. 23.

(33) Bernard Wheaton, *Radical Socialism in Czechoslovakia: Bohumír Šmeral, the Czech Road to Socialism and the Origins of the Czechoslovak
(34) Chrislock, p. 29.

(35) Wheaton, p. 33.

(36) Ibid., pp. 33-34.

(37) Ibid., p. 34.

(38) Ibid., p. 35.

(39) Ibid., p. 34.

(40) Ibid., p. 35.

(41) Chrislock, p. 25.

(42) Wheaton, p. 34.


(44) Chrislock, p. 31.

(45) Ibid., pp. 31-32; Campbell, p. 12.

(46) Chrislock, p. 24; The Centralists won over only a small portion of the Czech Social Democratic vote, polling only about 19,000 votes in the 1911 Reichsrat election, compared to the Autonomists' total of over 357,000. Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," pp. 3-4; They did, however, weaken the Autonomists' position in Moravia, especially in the Ostrava and Brno (where they were centered) regions. Chrislock, p. 24; Wheaton, p. 41.

(47) Garver, pp. 68-70.


(50) Garver, Young Czech Party, p. 304; Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p.3; The Realists polled fewer than 5,000 votes in the 1911 Reichsrat election.

(51) Garver, Young Czech Party, p. 304

(53) Quoted in Ibid., p. 21.

(54) Kalvoda, p. 33.


(56) Quoted in Zeman, p. 43.


(59) Ibid., p. 38.

(60) Ibid., p. 33; Zeman, p. 23.

(61) Ibid., p. 42.

(62) Kalvoda, p. 38.

(63) Quoted in Chrislock, p. 37 and Kalvoda, p. 32.

(64) Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p. 16.

(65) Quoted in Zeman, pp. 43-44.

(66) Quoted in Paulová, Dějiny meří, 1: 205 and in Zeman, p. 51; see also František Soukup, 28. Říjen 1918, 2 vols. (Prague: Ústřední dělnická knihkupectví a nakladatelství a Orbis, 1928), 1: 284.


(68) Campbell, p. 24; Chrislock, p. 66; British soldiers on the Serbian front reported seeing railway cars scrawled with "Export of Bohemian Meat to Serbia." May, 1: 353.

(69) Campbell, p. 24.
(70) See Paulová, Dějiny maffie, 1: 84-85; Soukup, 1: 284; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 85.

(71) Zeman, p. 54.

(72) Ibid., pp. 54-55; May, 1: 357.

(73) K.u.K Korpskommando, Nr. 359-32, quoted in Zeman, p. 56.

(74) Chrislock, p. 58.

(75) Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p. 5.

(76) Chrislock, p. 58.


(79) Zeman, pp. 40-41; Chrislock, pp. 58-59; Redlich, p. 80.


(81) Redlich, pp. 85-86; Zeman, p. 50.

(82) May, 1: 356-357.

(83) May, 1: 358; Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p. 5; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 75-76.

(84) Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p. 5; May, 1: 359-360; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 75-76.

(85) Wheaton, p. 42.

(86) May, 1: 357.

(87) Chrislock, p. 83; Zeman, pp. 44-45.

(88) Beneš, p. 41.

(89) See Paulová, Dějiny maffie; and ______, Tajný výbor (Maffie) a spolupráce s Jihoslovany v letech 1916-1918 [The Secret Committee (Mafia) and Cooperation with the Yugoslavs in the Years 1916-1918] (Prague: Academia, 1968).

(91) Tobolka, *Politické dějiny*, 4: 200; Chrislock, pp. 112-113.


In autumn 1916 much that had shaped internal conditions in the Habsburg Empire during the early years of the war had changed. These changes included both sharp breaks with the situation as it had existed since the beginning of hostilities and more gradual processes that had been occurring throughout the war years but were by the autumn of 1916 and the winter of 1916/1917 beginning to be palpably felt. The former were primarily political in nature. As a result, the wartime dictatorship began to give way to a return to constitutional government and a rebirth of political life among all the Empire's national groups. The latter changes were essentially economic and consisted in the main of a steady deterioration of the state's ability to provide the basic necessities of life. This deterioration, which had appeared manageable in the early years of the war, was beginning to look dire by late 1916.

These two developments--the dismantling of the wartime dictatorship and the continued deterioration of the economic situation--would together play a decisive role in altering the Czech attitude toward the Empire. The political changes, as was the case with the other nationalities of the Empire, led to a renewal of political activity among the Czechs after two and one half years of submission enforced by the military. The reestablishment of Parliamentary government in
Vienna in the spring of 1917 would offer the opportunity for Czech political expression. It also offered, on the other hand, the potential for renewed threats to Czech interests from the government and from the other major national group inhabiting the Czech lands, the Germans.

The return to constitutional government also carried with it responsibilities. It forced the Czech political leaders, for the first time since the beginning of the war, to take a stand on the issues confronting the Habsburg state. That also required responding to the activities of Czechs in exile. Because of the prorogation of the Reichsrat in March 1914 and the stringency of wartime censorship they had been able to avoid making policy commitments publicly. The rebirth of political life meant the end to that luxury.

Complicating the new political situation, the economic problems confronting Austria acted as a catalyst for the growing tide of popular unrest and, hence, popular pressure with which Czech politicians had to contend. As the economic situation worsened, there were demonstrations, strikes, and riots in the Czech lands. These began as protests against economic hardships and the state's inability to relieve them, but grew to take on more overtly political and nationalistic overtones. Thus, just as constitutional government was tenuously reemerging from its long interruption, it was subjected to intense pressure from a population growing weary of wartime deprivations, one increasingly alienated from the government in Vienna.

The first change in the political situation took place on October 21, 1916, when the Prime Minister, Count Stürgkh, was assassinated by
Friedrich Adler, son of the Social Democratic Party leader Viktor Adler. Stürghk was replaced on October 28 by Ernst von Koerber, a former Prime Minister who indicated a desire to reconvene the Reichsrat. On November 21, Emperor Franz Josef died after a 68 year reign. He was succeeded by his 29 year-old grandnephew Karl, who had virtually no experience in government. Karl, like von Koerber, expressed a desire to return to parliamentary government. He also gave every indication of desiring an early end to the hostilities. The demise of the wartime dictatorship appeared imminent.

Czech political life was also stimulated by the change in the status of the Polish areas of the Empire and those acquired from Russia. On November 5 Franz Josef and his German counterpart, Wilhelm II, had issued the Two Emperors' Manifesto. This called for a Polish state, closely linked to the Central Powers, to be created out of conquered Russian Poland. The day before the publication of the manifesto, Franz Josef announced that Galicia, the Polish-inhabited area of Austria-Hungary, was to receive a special autonomous status within the Empire. It was therefore likely that Vienna and Berlin would settle on the "Austrian solution" for Poland—the merging of Russian Poland and Galicia and the creation of a trialistic Austrian-Hungarian-Polish state.

The prospect for such a radical change helped to convince the Czechs better organization was needed to protect their interests. Even if the "Austrian solution" were not in the offering, the granting of autonomy to Galicia implied that the Poles would have their own parliament and very likely would be represented in the Reichsrat only when
issues involving Galicia were discussed. Thus, as the German nationalist leaders had long hoped, the Slavic preponderance in the Reichsrat would be significantly reduced. This, too, influenced Czech political activity.

Czech politicians reacted to the events of autumn 1916 by creating an organization that would allow them to speak with a unified, and presumably stronger, voice. The lead was taken by Antonín Švehla, chairman of the Agrarian Party, Zdeněk Tobolka, head of the Young Czech Party in Karel Kramář's absence, and Bohumír Šmeral, head of the Social Democratic Party. These three parties had the largest Czech parliamentary delegations. At a meeting on November 11 they agreed to the creation of the Czech Union (Český svaz). This was to be a unified organization of Czech parties in the Reichsrat. It was to be based on the principle that the majority would rule on all questions of a constitutional nature involving the Czechs.

All other Czech parties were invited to join the organization; all but two did. Only Masaryk's Realist Party and the rabidly nationalistic State's-Rights Progressives refused. Both feared that the Union would take a pro-Habsburg stance. František Staněk of the Agrarian Party became chairman of the Union, with Šmeral as the first vice-chairman and Jindřich Maštalka of the Young Czech Party as second vice-chairman. Membership was apportioned according to the strength of the parties in the 1911 Reichsrat election.

At the same time the National Committee (Národní výbor) was established. This group, headquartered in Prague, consisted of eminent
Czechs from outside the Reichsrat. On November 19 the announcement of
the formation of the two organizations was published:

Contemporary events compel the Czech parties to adopt a
common position on a number of questions. On the horizon are
changes which may affect the foundations of our state and the
constitution; a one-sided solution would not be in the
interest of the state or our nation.

In the moving times of current world-wide historic
events, one party alone cannot carry the responsibility for
the security of the political rights of the entire nation,
nor for the subsequent development which will follow after
conclusion of hostilities on the battlefield.

In the conviction that we express the will of all of our
nation, which more than ever calls for unity, and at the same
time act in the interest of the venerable dynasty and of the
great historical mission of the Empire, which rests first of
all on the unity and indivisibility of its kingdoms and lands
as well as the absolute equality of all its nations, we have
united on the basis of the principle of the majority all our
depuities in the Parliament into one body, the Czech Union.

Besides this Union, the aim of which is a united
position on political and constitutional questions, the
National Committee has been formed from the representatives
of the parties, which will support the undertakings of the
Czech Union and at the same time will be the highest moral
authority in those fields of political life that are outside
the sphere of activity of the deputies.

The formation of both of these bodies was approved
unanimously at a meeting of the competent representatives of
the parties yesterday. (6)

It is clear from the wording of the announcement that the fears of the
abstaining parties were justified. The Union's claim that it would
"act in the interest of the venerable dynasty and of the great
historical mission of the Empire" and its statement that the Empire's
mission "rests first of all on the unity and indivisibility of its
kingdoms and lands" reveal sentiments at odds with those of the
exiles. They also contradicted the exiles' claims that the Czechs
yearned for independence.

Subsequent actions only reinforced the impression created by the
announcement. The Union sent delegations to Franz Josef's funeral on
November 30 and to the coronation of Karl as king of Hungary on December 30. (7) Even more telling was the Union's reaction to the Allied reply to President Woodrow Wilson's request for a statement of war aims. The Allied note of January 10, 1917 included the liberation of the Czechoslovaks among their war aims. The note caused a stir in Prague and Vienna. The National Catholic Party quickly repudiated the note on January 14. (8) The Czech Union agreed that it would have to reject the Allied offer, but disagreed on the form the rejection should take. (9) After meeting on the 22nd and 23rd of January, the Union proposed a statement expressing its negative attitude toward the Allied note, but couched the statement in language implicitly critical of the Monarchy. (10) Foreign Minister Ottokar Czernin considered this an insufficiently forceful reply, however, and pressured the Union to accept a proposal drafted by him. The Union accepted Czernin's draft, which was published in the form of a letter from the Union to the Foreign Minister:

With respect to the response of the Entente states to President Wilson of the United States of America in which these states, which are at war with our Monarchy, present the "liberation of the Czechs from foreign mastery" as one of the goals which they want to obtain with military might, the Presidium of the Czech Union rejects this insinuation, which rests on completely incorrect presuppositions, and the Presidium emphatically proclaims that the Czech nation, as in the past, so in the present and in the future, sees its future development only under the cæsper of the Habsburgs. (11)

This constituted a thorough repudiation of the Allied note and of the work of the Czech exiles. The members of the Czech Union believed that the Allied aims were unrealistic in view of the military situation, and a refusal to accept Czernin's draft would only undermine
their efforts to protect Czech interests. (12) They also hoped to ensure that the recall of the Reichsrat, which they thought imminent, would be done without any unacceptable preconditions. (13) Finally, they assumed that the acceptance of Czernin's draft would favorably impress the new Emperor, whose views were not well known. (14)

While the statement was a serious setback for the exiles, the benefits the Union hoped for were only partially realized. The Emperor may have been impressed with the display of loyalty, but its effect on the new Government seems to have been transitory.

At his accession, Karl's views on the nationality problems in the Empire were, indeed, not at all clear, but his initial reaction was an attempt to be conciliatory. For example, on January 5, 1917 he commuted the death sentences of Kramář and Rašín to long terms of imprisonment. (15) On the other hand, many of his advisors tended to be unsympathetic to the nationalistic aspirations of the Empire's Slavs. Foremost among this group were Count Heinrich Clam-Martinic, Count Czernin, and Dr. Joseph M. Baernreither, Bohemian German representatives of the conservative aristocratic forces, culturally German and loyal to the Habsburgs. (16)

Their power over the young Emperor was evident almost immediately with the demise of the short-lived Government of von Koerber. While a number of factors were responsible for von Koerber's dismissal, including the animosity of the Hungarians (who considered him the strongest opponent to further economic concessions to Budapest), (17) the opposition of Clam-Martinic and Czernin and various elements of the German nationalist parties was decisive. (18) On December 20, 1916, von
Koerber was replaced as Prime Minister by Count Heinrich Clam-Martinic, while Czernin became Foreign Minister in place of Count Stephan Burian. It was hoped the new ministers would be able to rally conservative elements in Bohemia in support of the crown. (19) The Government also included: Dr. Joseph Baernreither as Minister without portfolio; Dr. Karl Urban, a German from Bohemia, as Minister of Trade; and Dr. Alexander von Spitzmüller, an outspoken German nationalist, as Finance Minister. The only Czech member of Stürgh's and von Koerber's cabinets retained was the non-political Minister of Public Works, Otakar Trnka. (20) Thus, in the words of Josef Redlich, "the German character of the new Government was inimicable from the outset." (21)

The German character of the Government made itself immediately felt. While Clam-Martinic intended to summon the Reichsrat, he also intended to accede to the demands of the German nationalists before parliamentary government would be restored. Besides the granting of autonomy to Galicia mentioned above, the German program for the Empire included: (1) establishment of German as the sole language of administration throughout the Austrian half of the Empire; (2) provisions to prevent Czech obstruction in the Reichsrat; (3) division of Bohemia and Moravia into self-governing districts based on ethnic identity. (22) These conditions were, of course, totally unacceptable to the Czechs. They were, in fact, precisely the kind of preconditions for the recall of the Reichsrat that the Czech Union had hoped would be forestalled by their reply to the Allied note of January.

The Czechs had earlier been willing to attempt a compromise with the German nationalists. During the summer of 1916 Count Ernst
Silva-Tarouca, another powerful Bohemian conservative aristocrat and future Minister of Agriculture, had arranged a private meeting between Czech and German representatives. It was hoped they might reach some agreement that might pave the way for a reopening of the Reichsrat. The Germans, however, remained obstinate and nothing was achieved. (23)

The Czechs had still been willing to cooperate with von Koerber in the Autumn of 1916, but with the demise of that Government any hope for Czech flexibility was lost. The Czechs did not trust Clam-Martinic—he had not consulted with them during the formation of his Government and its composition was too exclusively German for Czech tastes. (24)

The Prime Minister realized, therefore, that attempting constitutional reform through the parliamentary process would only lead to chaos in the Reichsrat. He proposed, instead, that the German program be enacted by Imperial decree (Octroi) based on Paragraph 14 of the constitution. Paragraph 14, as stipulated by the 1867 Constitution of the Austrian half of the Empire, granted the Emperor the right to enact emergency measures by decree when the Reichsrat was not in session.

Both Clam-Martinic and Czernin believed that this was the only solution to the nationalistic impasse in Bohemia and the only means to ensure the survival of the state. (25)

The loyalty toward the state and the dynasty displayed by the Czech Union had not succeeded in softening the "German" attitude of the Clam-Martinic Government. It was still pursuing a policy inimical to the interests of most Czechs. Only the hesitant attitude of the monarch and the unexpected pressure of external events delayed for the time being the implementation of the German program. Karl was
unenthusiastic about carrying out constitutional changes that required
the use of Paragraph 14. In a February 6 conversation with Dr.
Baernreither he declared that "all the people must feel happy and at
home in Austria."(26)

The Russian revolution in March, with its calls for democracy and
national self-determination, further complicated the situation.
According to Foreign Minister Czernin, the Socialists, already cool to
the Octroi plan, were emboldened by the revolution in Russia and grew
more insistent in their opposition.(27) Karl's reluctance to use such
an autocratic device also was heightened. On April 11 he instructed
his Cabinet Chief, Count Arthur Polzer-Hoditz, to inform the Prime
Minister that the Octroi plan should be abandoned and the Reichsrat
recalled.(28) The Government finally gave in. In a ministerial
meeting on April 16, Czernin explained the change of heart. In his
view, the authorities should not be imposing a settlement by thoroughly
undemocratic methods which were so clearly in opposition to the spirit
of the times. In addition, if the Octroi solution was allowed to die,
the Socialists had agreed to try to make contact with their Russian
counterparts at the conference of the Socialist International in
Stockholm in June. The regime's hope for a settlement with the
Russians was too important to alienate the Socialists. An imposed
settlement regarding the Czechs would make negotiations with the
Russians very difficult.(29)

With that, the plan for a solution by Imperial decree was tempo-
rarily abandoned and the way was cleared for recalling the Reichsrat;
it was done by Imperial decree on April 26. The Reichsrat was
scheduled to reconvene on May 30. In spite of this apparent victory for the Czechs, it was clear that neither the German nationalists nor the Government considered the matter irrevocably settled. Clam-Martinic and Czernin assured the Germans that the Government's goals remained unchanged, only the methods were to be altered.\(^{(30)}\)

With the summoning of the Reichsrat, Czech politicians realized that they would be forced to take a stand on the constitutional issues bedeviling the Empire. By this time, however, any stand they took would be subject not only to pressures from the Government and the Court, but also from below, from the increasingly discontented Czech populace in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. The Government's German program had itself drawn protest, though it was primarily confined to newspapers and had not been translated into popular displays. As early as mid-December 1916 Czech newspapers were warning against handling the situation by means of an Octroi.\(^{(31)}\) The Czech Union's reply to the Allied note also had engendered popular unrest. According to Tobolka, public opinion was incensed by the letter to Czernin.\(^{(32)}\)

The real popular pressure originated, however, not as a result of the political differences between Czechs and Germans, or between Prague and Vienna, but from the growing discontent caused by economic conditions in Cisleithania (the Austrian half of the dual monarchy).

The economic problems of the Empire as a whole are well documented.\(^{(33)}\) According to Josef Redlich, by the autumn of 1916 von Koerber "was well aware that the home food position was growing alarmingly worse, that it was the most difficult war problem facing the Austrian Government and
one directly connected with the breakdown of the dualist constitution in the most important sphere of war government."(34)

This assessment is buttressed by the statistics on agricultural production in the Empire. A comparison of the average production figures for the five main cereal grains (wheat, rye, barley, oats and maize) for the five years preceding the war and the war years gives perhaps the most graphic picture of the Austrian problem. In the period 1909 to 1913 the average area of cultivation for these five grains was 6.5 million hectares and the average yield per hectare was 13.5 quintals. For the period 1914 to 1918 the comparable figures were 4.6 million hectares and 10.34 quintals per hectare. This translated into a drop in average production from 88.9 million quintals to 43.9 million quintals, a decline of 51 percent.(35) The figures for the most important cereal grain for human consumption, wheat, reflect the overall grain average. The area of cultivation declined from 1.2 million hectares to 770,000; the average yield fell from 13.6 quintals per hectare to 10.5; the overall production fell from a yearly average of 16,560,000 quintals to a wartime average of 7,930,000 quintals.(36)

The relevant figures for the winter of 1916/1917 mirror the dismal wartime averages. In 1914 Austria produced 46.5 million quintals of wheat and rye. In 1915 production had dropped to 24.4 million quintals. The 1916 harvest, the source of supply for the following winter, fell to 20.3 million quintals, a mere 44% of the 1914 figure.(37) The combined cereal production of the Empire likewise plummeted. From a 1914 figure of 90.2 million quintals, production by 1916 had fallen to 62.9 million quintals.(38) To complicate the
situation, imports fell precipitously in 1916/1917. As a consequence, Austria was unable to meet its domestic consumption requirements. (39) In addition, milk, eggs, cheese, and meat were also in short supply. (40) (The number of meatless days already had been raised from two to three per week in early 1916.) (41)

By the winter and spring of 1917, then, the economic situation had begun to look disastrous. It was felt most severely in Cisleithania. Most of the fighting that occurred in the Empire had taken place there and, thus, most of the areas lost to cultivation were also there. In addition, Hungary refused, for nationalistic reasons, to share its more than adequate supply of grain. Within Cisleithania, it was the urban areas, of course, that were most seriously affected, with the working class and the urban poor feeling the shortages most acutely. Prague reported a 24.5 percent increase in tuberculosis cases between 1913 and 1916. (42) A report to the Military Chancellery in Vienna of February 1917 warned that the provisioning regulations, while theoretically very good, were in practice leading to a very uneven distribution of necessities. Food that was supposed to be available for holders of ration cards often was not. Instead it was being sold on the open market for four to six times the established maximum price. The workers and the poor were relegated to consuming only the cheapest foods. The lack of potatoes, fats and legumes was so serious that the report warned of potential health problems and a decline in worker productivity. (43)

The authorities recognized that the cities' wealthier classes were better off than the majority of the urban residents. A Military
Chancellery report noted that the upper classes could afford the higher prices demanded on the open market. They bartered at an advantage for tobacco, salt, oil, flour, bread or butter. The potential for social conflict was apparent to the authorities. The report warned that "a profound bitterness must arise when the poor man sees the rich provisions of delicatessens and restaurants while he must wander from one small gasthaus to another for a warm soup."(44)

To further complicate the situation for all levels of the population, during the 1916/1917 winter the effects of a coal shortage began to be felt. While military-related industries still had sufficient supply, coal for non-military industries and household use was falling below the necessary levels.(45) By mid-February 1917 the shortage of coal in Bohemian cities was beginning to alarm the authorities. This shortage, in fact, as much as the food problem, was described as the cause of the despair overtaking the urban poor.(46)

Much of the blame for the shortfall of coal can be traced to the food shortage. In mid-February the food situation in the coal mining areas of northwest Bohemia was described as critical by officials of the local procurement central. They warned the military commander in Prague, Gen. Paul Kestřanek, that if the situation was not remedied by the beginning of April there would be a complete cessation of mining in the district.(47) By early March production was already down to 75 percent of the normal rate.(48) Kestřanek was warned that, barring a turnaround in the provisioning situation, there would likely be no coal whatsoever by summer.(49)
Because of growing shortages of basic necessities, discontent spread in the Empire, including the Czech lands. Economic problems were evident and immediate and by the winter of 1916/1917 were leading to widespread popular unrest. This unrest in its early stages was prompted by economic needs and remained essentially apolitical. It was characterized by demonstrations, often by women and children, demanding food, or by short-lived strikes in the areas most affected by shortages. The demonstrations did not have an anti-government or a nationalistic tone. In February the situation still appeared controllable; the authorities in the Czech areas at least would claim that "in general there is the impression that the population is still prepared for greater sacrifices." The same report went on to warn, however, that the sacrifices would be easier to bear if prompt government relief action were undertaken. (50)

Vienna recognized the potential danger as early as autumn 1916. The only response, however, was the creation in February 1917 of the Joint Food Committee (Gemeinsamer Ernährungsausschuss, GEA) to coordinate provisioning for the Empire, the occupied areas, and the Army. Gen. Ottokar Landwehr von Pragenau was appointed its chairman on February 27. (51) The Joint Food Committee had no real executive power and acted solely as a mediating body between the various competing interests within the Empire. It was incapable of bringing any significant improvement to bear on the provisioning situation. (52)

As a result, the situation in the Empire worsened by the spring. The Arbeiter Zeitung reported that "even potatoes belong, alas, to the treasures for which one walks miles. Many of the rich pay any price
for them....If the cold continues they will be sought like gold
pieces."(53)

The decline was reflected in reports from the Czech lands. As
the food situation worsened, manifestations of popular unrest grew more
common, involving greater numbers of people, and there were scattered
incidents of violence. On March 30, Gen. Kestřanek reported that the
food shortages in Bohemia were at the root of all expressions of the
popular mood, especially among the working class.(54) By the end of
March, potatoes, which had become the most important staple as grain
supplies dwindled, were in short supply in the northern Moravian coal
mining areas.(55) These were crucial areas, producing nearly 40
percent of the Empire's hard coal(56) and employing 34,000 coal miners
and 49,000 ironworkers.(57) They also were areas where the National
Socialist Party was especially strong (See above, p. 12). The potato
shortage was also felt throughout Silesia.(58)

In spite of efforts to speed transport of supplies from Galicia,
the situation continued to deteriorate. The military commander in
Moravská Ostrava (Mährisch-Ostrau), the principal city in the northern
Moravia/Silesia region, reported on April 15 that potatoes were
nowhere to be found and other food, including bread, was in short
supply.(59) This resulted in a rash of strikes that slowly spread
throughout the district. By mid-April, fourteen mines were shut
down.(60) The strikers consistently demanded food and fuel and a wage
increase to counter rising costs.(61)

The strikes continued sporadically for most of April as the
authorities sought to provide food for the district. There were pleas
that supplies destined for Vienna be diverted to the Moravská Ostrava
region.\textsuperscript{(62)} By April 21 supplies were sufficient to cover present
needs and work had returned to near normal.\textsuperscript{(63)} Younger miners
continued to press for further action to force a wage increase, but
their efforts failed. On April 24, after nearly a month of unrest, the
authorities were able to report that all the miners were again working
and the mines producing normally.\textsuperscript{(64)}

The unrest was not confined to the northern Moravian coal mining
areas, however, but spread throughout the Czech lands. In late March
and early April a series of strikes protesting the potato shortage
closed four mines in the Sokolov district in northern Bohemia, another
National Socialist stronghold.\textsuperscript{(65)} Strikes continued there throughout
the month, spreading to other mines.\textsuperscript{(66)} By early May the situation
grew more ominous; mass demonstrations resulted in violence, food shops
were robbed, and the military was called in to restore order.\textsuperscript{(67)}

Demonstrations in Cheb (Eger) in western Bohemia on April 13
resulted in similar violent outbursts, with attacks on food shops and
delivery vehicles. Order was restored only after police intervened and
food was distributed.\textsuperscript{(68)} Demonstrations on May 9 and 10 brought
hundreds into the streets and necessitated police and military
assistance to restore order.\textsuperscript{(69)} On April 2 in Čáslav (Časlau) in
central Bohemia demonstrators marched to the mayor's office demanding
an increase in the flour ration and distribution of potatoes to the
citizenry. Placards calling for an end to the war were also in
evidence.\textsuperscript{(70)}
The story was the same throughout the Czech lands. In Žatec (Saaz) on April 4 several hundred people demonstrated before the city hall and the offices of the district commissioner. Seventeen hundred workers stopped work in Hradec Králové (Königgrätz) demanding a wage increase and food, while two hundred more staged a four-day walkout in Rakovník for the same reasons. On April 19 approximately three thousand workers staged a one-day strike in Hradec Králové; on April 20 and 21, one thousand railroad workers walked out in Plzeň (Pilsen); on April 21, thirteen hundred went out in Kladno; on April 24 and 25, five hundred struck in Slany (Schlan). In each of the incidents, and scores of others, improvement of the food supply was the preeminent demand.

While unrest occurred throughout Bohemia and Moravia, it was most pronounced in Prague, Bohemia's capital. Besides being the largest city and the greatest industrial center, Prague was also the political and cultural heart of Bohemia. It had been the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia and remained the provincial capital, seat of the provincial assembly (Landtag) and the provincial governorship. It was also the home of the most important symbols of Czech culture, including the Czech National Theater and Charles University. In April and May 1917 it was also to become the center of discontent within the Czech lands over the government's inability to provide basic necessities.

Tension had been building in Prague since late winter. It centered in the working class districts of Žižkov (Zizkov), Karlín (Karolinenhal), Libeň (Lieben), Holešovice (Holeschowitz), Vysočany
Wysotschan), and Smíchov (Smichow), where demonstrations and isolated incidents of violence had occurred as early as February. Zlíchov was the most seriously affected area. The supply of potatoes had been a problem since early January; at the same time coal and kerosene were in critically short supply. By the end of the month the scarcity of all three had pressed poorer inhabitants. A spell of mild weather in mid-February eased the fuel supply problem, but the food shortage continued, as bread and flour joined the list of scarce items. By the end of the month demonstrations and riots were widespread; bread was stolen from delivery vehicles and shops, guards were pelted with rocks and shop windows were broken. This activity, generally confined to the working class districts, continued throughout March.

As elsewhere, with the coming of April, the situation in Prague worsened. The demonstrations grew larger, the strikes occurred more frequently, and increasingly political and nationalistic reasons were used to justify them. On April 5, one of the first of the larger manifestations of unrest occurred in Karlín as 3200 workers of a machine factory demonstrated, voicing the usual demands for a wage increase and an improvement in food supply. On the following day the workers of two factories in the adjoining district of Vysočany stopped work for several hours to protest food shortages. On the 12th there was another strike at one of the same factories; 2200 workers participated.

By the middle of the month the authorities became alarmed. Gen. Kestřanek was warned on April 10 that the Prague working class was very
discontent. While work stoppages had thus far been short-lived, with
factory management able to convince workers to return to work,
dissatisfaction continued. Some workers were clearly mal-
nourished. Some hoped to be dismissed from their factory jobs in order
to return to the countryside where they might at least be better
fed.

The dissatisfaction generated demonstrations in the factories and
deputations streamed to the factory military heads (Militärleiter)
demanding relief. What particularly alarmed the military
authorities was the realization that the workers seemed to be both
organized and prepared for action. The atmosphere, as described to
Kestřanek, was one of strange or peculiar calm (eigene Ruhe).

Kestřanek passed this warning on to the Military Chancellery in
Vienna on April 12, adding that only a drastic improvement could bring
about a change in the hostile attitude of the workers and the city
population as a whole. He went on to warn that it was only one small
step from demonstrations to full-scale strikes, and the number of
factories in which stoppages had occurred or were threatened grew "from
hour to hour."

Kestřanek appears to have had excellent intelligence information;
that same day the calm was shattered. On the right bank of the Vltava
in the Karlín, Libeň, and Bubeneč (Bubentsch) districts strikes began
and quickly spread. Within two days over 10,000 workers had walked off
the job. The unrest spread across the Vltava into Smíchov and then
throughout Prague.
Passions were further inflamed at this time by two unrelated announcements from Vienna. The first concerned the individual flour ration, which was reduced on April 15 from a barely sufficient 200 grams to 175 grams per person per day. (97) Throughout the winter Clam-Martinic, fearing the consequences, had resisted Gen. Landwehr's entreaties that the ration be lowered. (98) By April, however, with food growing scarcer, Landwehr convinced him of the necessity.

This announcement broadened the unrest and brought housewives and children into the streets again. On April 25 between 500 and 600 staged a demonstration in front of the city hall in Karlín. (99) An even larger group gathered before the city hall in the Vršovice (Wrschowitz) district of Prague to protest the ration reduction. They dispersed when the authorities distributed the 200 gram ration. The demonstration broke up with the chant, "We want peace," indicating a desire for more than food. (100) In Žižkov, one of the city's poorest sections and one particularly hard-hit by food shortages, the authorities noted that the overriding concern was an end to the war. (101)

The situation in Prague remained tense throughout April and into May as the authorities scrambled to relieve food shortages wherever and whenever unrest threatened. Their efforts were futile, however, and demonstrations grew in size and frequency. (102) During the first week of May there were almost daily marches of 1000 to 1500 women to the office of the Governor of Bohemia protesting the shortages. (103)

To add to the burdens of the authorities, May 1st brought further signs of a changing mood of the Czechs. The previous May Day had passed uneventfully, but May Day 1917 was celebrated with rallies in
all the major cities. The Social Democratic Party leaders pleaded for order, and the gatherings were orderly; there was little violence. But that there were demonstrations at all in 1917, given the apathy of the previous year, is significant.

In addition to a reduction in the flour ration, the Government's April 26 announcement to reassemble the Reichsrat added excitement to politics in Prague and the Czech lands. Czech politicians would again be required to address the issues raised by Masaryk and the exiles—the future relationship of the Czechs to the Empire. This time, however, they would have to take into account the changes that had occurred since the Czech Union's last public statement. The atmosphere was significantly different than it had been five months earlier when the Union replied to the Allied note (See above, pp. 38-39).

In the first place, the Russian revolution in March 1917 added a new dimension to the political equation. By destroying the tsarist autocracy, the revolution thereby removed the most important reason many in Austria-Hungary had supported the war. It was the fear of a victory by backward, autocratic Russia that had convinced many otherwise skeptical liberals and socialists that the war was necessary. More to the point, for nationally conscious Czechs, the Russian revolutionaries made national self-determination one of their rallying cries.

The entrance of the United States into the war also had an effect. Though the military impact of United States intervention would not be significant for some time, the Americans also championed the cause of national self-determination.
The consequences of the Czech Union's earlier loyalty to the Empire could not have but given them pause also. In spite of their repudiation of the Allied promise to "liberate" them from Habsburg domination, they knew that the Clam-Martinic Government had still been prepared to use the Imperial Octroi in order to implement the German nationalists' administrative and language solution for Bohemia. The Emperor's reluctance prevented that eventuality, but it had been made perfectly obvious that the Government did not view the setback as final; rather it was considered merely an unavoidable delay. It was clear to Czech politicians that Clam-Martinic was prepared to strive for the same result by other means (See above, p. 43). Thus, public protestations of loyalty, even ones so strong that they could not fail to damage the emigre leaders' efforts in the West, had brought no tangible advantages.

Beneš and Masaryk, in an attempt to prevent a repeat of that damage, sent a long message to Prague in the second half of April pleading that nothing be done in connection with the Reichsrat opening that might further undermine the emigres' efforts.(105) The message (which provides compelling evidence of the degree to which the emigres exaggerated the extent of anti-Austrian feeling among the Czechs) read in part:

...If the Austrians were able to say that they are entitled to speak in your name, if you were to make a declaration of loyalty, if you failed to show clearly that you are opposed to Austria, you would deprive us of our last weapon, and justify the Entente in concluding with the dynasty a separate peace, in the framing of which we should not be able to express any opinion. The present situation makes it imperative for us to show whether it is the dynasty and the diplomats, or whether it is the nations themselves who are entitled to negotiate on behalf of the Austrian
nation. Unless you make it clear at the present moment that
the dynasty and its diplomats are not entitled to do so, we
are lost.

...We still have powerful opponents who are producing
proof here that the Austrian nations do not wish to be
liberated. Prevo lida [Right of the People, the official
organ of the Czech Social Democratic party] is being read and
quoted here as a proof against us that we are not entitled to
speak on behalf of our people, who desire merely an Austrian
federation.

Today, then, is the decisive moment. It is now no
longer sufficient to repeat that your manifesto and your
guarded attitude were the result of compulsion. We are
aware that it is so, but the people here cannot understand
it...they see no reason why our people should be so much
afraid of prison or even greater sacrifices.

In no case must all our deputies attend Parliament....Here
it would not be understood how our people can attend...with­
out causing obstruction and disorder.

The message ended with a final plea:

...these are essential for our preservation, which rests in
your hands:

1. Not to vote with the Government on any point.
2. Not to be present at the manifestations of loyalty in
   Parliament.
3. The radicals at least, if not all, must set up a
   passive opposition.
4. Not to disavow us.
5. To demand state rights.

Finally, Czech politicians had to take into account changing
public attitudes. The indifference that had characterized Czech
opinion during the period of oppressive military dictatorship began to
change under the pressure of the worsening material situation. The
economic hardships accompanying an increasingly unpopular war had begun
to take their toll on the Czechs. Czech politicians could not
completely ignore the unmistakable signs of popular despair.

A manifestation of the despair, although representing a very
narrow strata of the population, was the famous Writers' Manifesto of
May 17, 1917. The Manifesto, addressed to the Czech Reichsrat
deputies, was signed by 222 Czech authors, including Alois Jirásek, the well-known and popular author of historical novels.\(^{(106)}\) It came about partly as a result of the efforts of the exiles, who were trying to increase the pressure on the deputies on the eve of the Reichtag's reopening.\(^{(107)}\) While the Manifesto was couched in language sufficiently ambiguous to allow it to clear the censors, it was an obvious warning to the Union that its opportunistic tactics were not popular with all segments of the population. It called on Czech politicians to defend Czech rights and Czech aspirations to the utmost and reminded them that, with the Bohemian Diet unable to meet, they had a special responsibility to the nation. Specifically, measures the Union should champion included: 1) restoration of civil rights; 2) removal of all restrictions on public expression; 3) amnesty for all Czech political prisoners. The Manifesto also reminded the politicians that, since the war, in their view, was leading Europe towards a democratic future, their policy must aim toward greater liberty for all.\(^{(108)}\)

In the face of these accumulated pressures, and with the storm of popular unrest swirling about them, the leaders of the Czech parties met on May 27 in Prague to draft a statement for the opening session of the Reichtag. There was general agreement on some points. Members of the Union wanted to include traditional demands for Czech state rights and they asked for a parliamentary committee to revise the constitution; they also asked for an inquiry into the treatment of the Czechs during the war and an amnesty for Czech political prisoners. More radical proposals looking toward the establishment of an independent state without reference to the Habsburges—one which might include the
The representatives of the Czech nation are deeply convinced that the present dualist form of government had produced the emergence of ruling and subject nationalities, detrimental to the interests of the whole. The transformation of the Habsburg monarchy into a federal state consisting of free and equal national states is necessary if all national privileges are to be done away with and if the general development of nationalities in the interest of the Empire is to be secured. Relying at this historic moment on the natural rights of nations, on self-determination and free development, reinforced in our case by inalienable historic rights, we shall demand the unification of all the branches of the Czechoslovak nation in one democratic state; we must not forget the Slovak branch, which forms a close historical unity with the Czech lands.

While the declaration caused a stir in Vienna and Budapest, it was essentially ambiguous. Moreover, the call for a transformation of the monarchy into a federal state and the concern shown for the "interests of the Empire" could not have pleased Masaryk and the radical nationalists. Tobolka, in fact, described the Union's declaration as a renunciation of the exiles' position. On the other hand, the call for a "free and equal national state" and the inclusion of the principle of national self-determination in addition to the older state rights argument required a radical transformation of the existing political system. Also, the inclusion of the Slovaks in this new state struck at two of the fundamental political realities of the Empire--the indivisibility of the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen and the dualism so cherished by the Hungarians. In spite of its ambiguity, the Czech Union's statement showed that the attitude of the
political leadership had evolved a great deal in a mere five months. It had a very different tone than the reply to the Allied note of the previous January.

Other Czech speakers at the opening session reinforced the sense of Czech disaffection. Jaroslav Stránský of the Moravian People's Party paid a glowing tribute to the Czech political figures who had been imprisoned for subversion during the first years of the war. National interests were displacing loyalty to the Empire. The National Socialist Jiří Strčíkmy declared:

I only know of a Czech, a Polish, a Ruthenian, an Italian, a Yugoslav patriotism, and so on. An Austrian patriotism is an artificially encouraged plant.

Without calling for the state's dismemberment, Strčíkmy had implicitly attacked the ideological cornerstone of its existence. Antonín Kalina, leader of the State's Rights Progressive Party (which remained outside the Czech Union), issued the strongest statement, calling for an independent Czecho-Slovak state with no reference to a continued role for the Habsburgs. While this was the first public statement of the exiles' program within the Monarchy, it received scant attention. The Progressives held only two seats in the Reichsrat and were considered a fringe group even by the Czechs.

At the same time that the Czech politicians were trying to formulate a united policy for coming parliamentary battles, conditions in Prague were worsening. Vienna had been warned on May 23 that food supplies for factories throughout Bohemia were at a critically low level and that constant worker unrest and strikes would be the consequence. On the following day the War Ministry issued a
proclamation which was to be posted on the 26th by all industries under the control of the military. The proclamation declared that the establishment in March of commissions to handle workers' complaints in the factories (Beschwerdekommissionen) precluded the necessity of strikes. It appealed to the workers' sense of patriotic duty and urged them to provide for their fathers, brothers and sons in the trenches and to hold out for the "coming honorable" peace.

This appeal met with remarkably little favor. On May 24, 1600 of the 1800 workers in the railroad workshops in Plzeň walked off the job. In spite of the government proclamation, the workers did not return to their jobs until May 30. On the following day 2000 more railroad workers demonstrated before the offices of the district commissioner. On June 1 they were joined by 2000 others from the Škoda Works, and deputations were dispatched to the commissioner. In addition to the usual demand for improvements in food supply, the demonstrators voiced purely political concerns. They called for the establishment of freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, and also for support for the Reichsrat declaration of the Czech Union.

In Prague the situation was the most tense and more politically charged. Three thousand workers from area machinery and munitions factories under military control marched through the city and sent a deputation to Count Coudenhove, the provincial governor, complaining about the food situation and also about the delay in implementing the amnesty for Václav Klofář. The police were called out; bridges across the Vltava were closed; and a proclamation was read forbidding processions and threatening the use of force if the ban were
violated. (121) The warning had little effect, for strikes and demonstrations continued the following day. The strikes spread to nearly every factory in Prague and its environs, while 8000 demonstrators gathered in the Old Town Square, singing patriotic songs and cheering both Masaryk and the Russian revolution. Another delegation was received by Coudenhove, who promised to consult with the workers weekly about their problems. This, however, was not enough to placate the demonstrators, who marched on to Wenceslas Square. The strikers did not return to work until the 4th and 5th of June. (122)

The Czech Reichsrat declaration and the manifestations of popular unrest in Prague and other cities clearly indicated that Czech attitudes had changed considerably in the seven months since the wartime dictatorship had begun to unravel. With the establishment of parliamentary government in Austria, Czech politicians were intent on protecting Czech interests and, as a consequence of the work of the exiles, forced to take a stand on the fundamental issue of the future of the Empire. While nothing about the military situation in the spring of 1917 suggested that the Allied offer to liberate the Czechoslovaks was any more possible than it had been five months earlier, Czech politicians were clearly prepared to take a much stronger stand in May than they had in January. The statement of the Czech Union at the opening of the Reichsrat, while much milder than Masaryk and his colleagues might have desired, was a significant step toward the program of the Czechs abroad.

Czech politicians were also radicalized because of the intransigence of the German nationalists and their allies in the
Clam-Martinic Government. Because the Reichsrat was recalled, German nationalists took new initiatives. Their proposals to divide Bohemia and Moravia into self-governing districts based on ethnic identity, enact measures to prevent Czech obstruction in the Reichsrat, and establish German as the language of administration (See above, p. 40) were unacceptable to most Czechs. The threat of their enactment could not but fail to sour relations between the Czechs and the Government.

Much of the responsibility for radicalization of the Czechs in the Reichsrat must be credited to popular pressure on Czech politicians. Tobolka, a member of the Czech Union and no radical nationalist, realized that the Union's reply to the Allied promise of liberation had been very unpopular with Czechs. It failed to recognize even minimal Czech demands for some degree of autonomy. As economic hardships of the third year of the war worsened in the spring of 1917, popular resignation gave way to widespread unrest. This unrest, originating in response to the growing scarcities of basic necessities, had spread throughout the Czech lands and had begun, ever so slowly, to take on revolutionary and nationalistic overtones.

Vienna was pressing for commitments to the dynasty and the continued existence of the Empire. Meanwhile, German nationalists were hoping to restructure the state to their own liking, while economic pressures were driving larger numbers of Czechs into the arms of the radical nationalists. Czech politicians would need to take a stand.
Notes

(1) Zeman, p. 115.
(2) Ibid., pp. 100-101.
(4) Zeman, p. 100.
(5) Discussions of the creation of the Czech Union and the National Committee can be found in Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," pp. 9-10; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 201-209; and Paulová, Tájný výbor, pp. 49-56.
(6) Soukup, 1: 355, quoted in Chrislock, p. 123.
(7) Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 214.
(8) Beneš, p. 227.
(9) Ibid., p. 218.
(12) Chrislock, pp. 141-142; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 218.
(13) Ibid., p. 221.
(14) Ibid.
(16) Redlich, pp. 139-140; Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p. 11.
(17) Redlich, p. 136.
(18) Ibid., pp. 136-137.
(19) May, 2: 637.

(20) Redlich, pp. 139-140.

(21) Ibid., p. 140.


(23) Redlich, p. 146.


(26) Ibid., p. 145.

(27) Ibid., p. 146.

(28) Ibid., p. 147.

(29) Ibid., p. 148.

(30) Ibid., p. 151.

(31) Ibid., p. 135.

(32) Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 223.


(34) Redlich, p. 136.


(36) Ibid.
(37) Gratz and Schüller, p. 45.

(38) Ibid., p. 46.

(39) Loewenfeld-Russ, p. 147.

(40) Ibid., pp. 52-53, 66.

(41) May, 1: 331.

(42) Czekner, p. 86.

(43) Österreichische Staatsarchiv-Kriegsarchiv, Militarkanzlei seiner Majestät des Kaisers und Königs 1917, 93-2/80 (Hereafter cited KA-MKSM).

(44) Ibid.

(45) Gratz and Schüller, p. 96.


(47) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/20.

(48) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-4/2-1.

(49) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/20.

(50) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/80.


(52) Loewenfeld-Russ, pp. 45-46.

(53) May, 2: 665.

(54) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/29 ex 917.

(55) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/29 ad I.

(56) Wegs, Kriegswirtschaft, p. 84.

(57) KA-MKSM, 93-2/29-2.

(58) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/29 ad I.

(60) Ibid.


(63) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/29-5.

(64) Ibid.


(66) Ibid., doc. 1771, 1789, 1790, pp. 221, 223-224.

(67) Ibid., doc. 1847, p. 231.

(68) Ibid., doc. 1750, p. 218.

(69) Ibid., doc. 1845, p. 230.

(70) Ibid., doc. 1731, p. 215.

(71) Ibid., doc. 1743, p. 217.

(72) Ibid., doc. 1755, p. 218.

(73) Ibid., doc. 1759, p. 219.

(74) Ibid., doc. 1774, p. 221.

(75) Ibid., doc. 1778, p. 222.

(76) Ibid., doc. 1777, p. 222.

(77) Ibid., doc. 1799, p. 225.

(78) In 1882 the German university in Prague was divided into separate German and Czech institutions. This was the sole Czech university in the Empire.

(79) Otáhalová, doc. 1565, p. 194.

(80) Ibid., doc. 1578, p. 195.

(81) Ibid., doc. 1595, 1603, pp. 198-199.

(82) Ibid., doc. 1614, p. 200.

(84) Ibid., doc. 1641, 1650, 1675-1679, pp. 204, 205, 209.

(85) Ibid., doc. 1690-1697, 1720, pp. 211-212, 214.

(86) Ibid., doc. 1736, p. 216.

(87) Ibid., doc. 1737, p. 216.

(88) Ibid., doc. 1752, p. 218.

(89) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/10 nr. 21 KP.

(90) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/10 nr. 5713; The War Services Act (Kriegsleis-
tungsgesetz) of July 25, 1914 forbid workers under 50 years of age from
leaving employment in a factory covered by the act. This included any
war-related industries. The law was liberalized in 1916 to allow
transfers to another factory subject to the act if two weeks notice was
given. Wegs, Kriegswirtschaft, p. 94.

(91) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/10 nr. 5713.

(92) Ibid.; KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/10 nr. 21 KP.

(93) Ibid.

(94) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/10 nr. 5713.

(95) Otáhalová, doc. 1767, p. 220.

(96) Ibid., doc. 1768, 1769, 1781, 1783, 1784, pp. 221-223; KA-MKSM
1917, 28-2/10 nr. 5713-1.

(97) Gratz and Schüller, p. 80.

(98) Landwehr, pp. 30, 35, 42.

(99) Otáhalová, doc. 1802, p. 225.

(100) Ibid., doc. 1805, p. 225.

(101) Otáhalová, doc. 1811, p. 226; While revolutionary sentiments had
not taken root among the populace, pamphlets containing revolutionary
messages were beginning to appear in the city. For example:

Soldiers-Citizens: Bloodbath, Hunger and Sickness.
These are the results of the World War. Soldiers, the
weapons are in your hands and therefore the power and
strength to put an end to this misery. Long live the
revolution. Long live Liebknecht and Adler. Down
with the despots. Ibid., doc. 1910, p. 239.

(103) Otáhalová, doc. 1835, p. 229.
(104) Chrislock, p. 145.
(105) Beneš, pp. 229-230.
(106) Zeman, p. 123.
(107) Ibid., pp. 122-123; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 233-236.
(108) The text of the manifesto is in Soukup, 1: 396-399.
(109) Zeman, p. 125; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 237-245.
(110) The text is in Soukup, 1: 247.
(111) Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 247.
(112) May, 2: 644.
(113) Ibid., 643.
(114) Zeman, p. 126; The text of Kalina's address is in Naše revoluce, VI (1929-1930), pp. 157-159.
(115) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/39 nr. 3171.
(116) See Wegs, Kriegswirtschaft, pp. 100-105 for a discussion of the Beschwerdekommissionen.
(117) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/18 nr. 3288.
(119) Ibid., doc. 1957, p. 246.
(120) Ibid.
(121) Ibid., doc. 1963, p. 247.
(122) Ibid., doc. 1964, p. 247.
CHAPTER III
SUMMER 1917

The Czech Union's declaration caused an uproar in the Vienna Reichsrat. The usual defense of Bohemia's historical state's right had been expected. Neither the government nor the German deputies were prepared for the new emphasis on natural rights of nations and the open attack on the dualist system. (1) Clam-Martinic asked the Union to withdraw the declaration, claiming it was an admission that what was being said abroad about the monarchy was true. The Union declined. Social Democratic deputy Vlastimil Tusar, speaking for the Union, argued that foreign opinion was not entirely misinformed about conditions inside the monarchy. At any rate, he added, it was best that the monarchy's affairs be openly discussed. (2)

The German deputies reacted vehemently. Deputy Pacher, speaking for the Christian Socialists and the united German parties, attacked the Czechs for their insistence on rights which might "force millions of Germans in the Sudetenland into a new state entity against their will." This, according to Pacher, was rejected not only by the Germans in Bohemia, "but by Germans of all lands and all parties once and for all." (3)

Hungarian officials also were irate. Because of the inclusion of the Slovaks in the Union's declaration, Budapest denounced it as a
threat to the integrity of the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen.\(^{(4)}\)

Hungarian officials also berated the government in Vienna for tolerating such an open attack upon the sacrosanct dualist system.\(^{(5)}\)

On May 31, Emperor Karl delivered an elaborate speech from the throne. While he touched on all the problems facing the state, particular attention was directed to constitutional issues. In dealing with them, Karl remained vague, but at least hinted at the possibility of a change in direction. He talked of his belief that the "rejuvenation of constitutional life" in Austria was not possible without the "creation of constitutional and administrative foundations of the whole of our public life," and went on to ask the deputies to unite with him in creating the preconditions which would "give scope, within the unity of the state and under the reliable security of its functions, to the free national and cultural development of equally privileged peoples."\(^{(6)}\)

Prime Minister Clam-Martinic did not reply to the declarations at the opening of the Reichsrat until June 12 at the beginning of the budget debate. In his reply, he held out no hope for the Czechs or any of the other of the monarchy's dissatisfied nationalities. He rejected the various pleas for constitutional reform on the grounds that they conflicted with each other and were mutually exclusive.\(^{(7)}\) According to the Prime Minister, this was caused by the "special ethnic conditions in which the nations and national minorities live in this very center of Europe and which have of necessity led to the formation of our state."\(^{(8)}\) In place of the demands for autonomy, Clam-Martinic offered this cheerful alternative:
The program of the government is Austria—the Austria which has arisen and grown in a glorious historical evolution; the Austria which has discovered in this war a new awareness of its indestructible strengths; the Austria which, fully conscious of its reborn life force (Lebensenergie), is prepared to become a powerful factor in the future economic and social development of the world—Austria as the venerable, proud, steadfast and eternal citadel of its people.

With this statement, Clam-Martinic effectively ignored the declarations which opened the Reichsrat. The government's program not only ignored the pleas for immediate change, it contained no hint that the prospects might be any brighter at war's end. For the Czechs, and especially the growing numbers who were dissatisfied with the status quo, the Clam-Martinic government presented no clear reason to be optimistic about the future.

While the government seemed to offer nothing positive, the Emperor provided a long-sought conciliatory gesture. Karl had been warned by the Czech Union's chairman, the Agrarian František Staněk, that the Union would be hard pressed to continue an activist policy without an amnesty for the political leaders jailed in the early years of the war. (10) Karl reacted sympathetically and, in spite of strong opposition from the military and German nationalists, ordered the chief of his personal cabinet to prepare an amnesty decree. (11) In order to make such a step more palatable to its opponents, on June 6 the Czech Union sent Field Marshal Svetozar Boroyević a telegram congratulating him for a victory on the Italian front. (12) The telegram was designed to counter the impression created when numerous Czech deputies turned their backs to the Speaker when the victory was announced in the Reichsrat. (13) The gesture went virtually unnoticed in the West and thereby avoided generating the consternation connected with the Union's
reply to the Allied note. Among Czech nationalists within the empire, however, it was genuinely unpopular. (14)

Nonetheless, the telegram served its purpose, and on July 2 Karl's amnesty manifesto was issued. It covered all political prisoners convicted by military courts and excepted only army deserters and emigre politicians. The manifesto expressed Karl's hope that all the state's peoples would now join together to heal the wounds of war. He explained that he had chosen the date because it was "the day on which my dearly beloved eldest son...is keeping the feast of the patron saint of his name. Thus the hand of a child who will be called one day to guide the destinies of my peoples leads those who have erred back to the Fatherland"(15)

Czech reaction, naturally, was enthusiastically supportive. The amnesty meant freedom for Kramár, Rašín, Klofáč, and hundreds of others. It should also have been a boon for the pro-Habsburg Czech leaders who worked to convince the Emperor of its necessity. Unfortunately for this group, the bureaucracy's handling of the amnesty destroyed much of the goodwill generated by its announcement. The authorities originally refused to release Kramár and Rašín on the grounds that they had been tried before courts-martial and convicted of violating the military code. Thus, according to the authorities, amnesty for political prisoners did not apply to them. (16) Klofáč on the other hand was refused release because he had never been brought to trial and thus had never been convicted of any crime. (17) Only pressure from the Czech Union forced Klofáč's release on July 7 and Kramár's and Rašín's on July 10. (18) The Reichsrat went further in
poisoning the atmosphere by refusing to restore the parliamentary mandates of Kramář and Rašín on the grounds that they were convicted felons; it also refused to allow Kramář to return to Prague until October. (19)

The bungled way in which the amnesty was handled came as a welcome relief to the emigre leaders. They had feared that the amnesty might undermine the growing radicalism of the Czechs and might also presage a significant shift in governmental policy. The persecution of Czech political leaders was their most effective argument in the West and the amnesty threatened to deprive them of it. Beneš hastily sent a letter to Dr. Šembera in Prague, pleading with the politicians to remain aloof from the government and warning that any compromise would be exploited by those in the West who wanted to preserve Austria-Hungary:

...As the situation is now developing, Austria will become weaker and weaker. So will Germany. They will be defeated, and when this comes about you must not be involved in any responsibility for the war....Our movement today is very extensive. We have two millions of our people adequately organized, and the Allies have a good opinion of us because of the correct and orderly manner in which our policy is carried on. If you do not make any political blunder, we shall gain our purpose. There are still many here who would be willing, in case of peace, to make some compromise with Austria which would not give us what we want. For them, any compromise of yours with Austria would constitute a reason for saving Austria. It is absolutely essential for our policy to be reciprocal, and for you not to disavow us in any way...or else we should lose all our prestige. It can no longer be said that you cannot speak out, since the deputies went so far in their proclamation. (20)

The emigres need not have worried. The amnesty utterly failed to accomplish what Karl had hoped. To Germans, Magyars and many in the military it was denounced as an intolerable coddling of traitors and was regarded as an insult to those who had been steadfastly loyal to
the crown and the state. Cries of "Long live treason" and "Kramář for Prime Minister" greeted the reading of the manifesto in the Reichsrat.\(^{(21)}\) Conversely, the manner in which it had been carried out destroyed most of the positive impact it might have had upon the Czechs. This was especially disappointing to pro-Habsburg Czech politicians. They had taken a politically unpopular stand in order to speed the amnesty along, hoping to show that an activist, conciliatory policy could bring concrete advantages for the Czechs. While the advantages were indeed won, the credit did not accrue to the moderates. Šmeral, for one, was vilified for his role in the telegram to Borojvič.\(^{(22)}\)

In addition to the flawed attempts at conciliation, the easing of restrictions on the state's political life and the rebirth of parliamentary government contributed to the radicalization of Czech political life in a way that neither Karl nor the government had expected. The deputies who returned from the front for the reopening of the Reichsrat contained a disproportionate number of radicals who began almost immediately to pressure their more cautious colleagues. Jiří Stříbrný, for example, on his return seized control of the small National Socialist Party of the still-imprisoned Václav Klofás and began to turn it into a vehicle for radical nationalism. Although the party's newspaper had been suspended at the very beginning of the war, the Reichsrat provided a forum to trumpet Stříbrný's strident nationalism. In a speech delivered on June 14 he attacked the state for the horrors of the political prisoners' camps, accused Vienna of upholding only German interests at the expense of the Slavs, and concluded with a
statement first uttered by Palacký: "The Czech nation existed before Austria and will remain after her."(23)

The leadership the Young Czechs also was being pressed by more radical elements within the party. Since the arrests of Kramár and Rašín, the party press and parliamentary leadership had been in the hands of moderates inclined towards an activist, pro-Habsburg policy. This group was led by Zdeněk Tobolka, František Fiedler and Jindřich Mařáňka. On the other hand, the party's executive committee, headed by General Secretary František Šmel, was trying to reorient the Young Czechs away from Vienna. By early summer, they had been at least partially successful and the party was beginning to lean toward the radicals.(24)

Of all the Czech parties, the Social Democrats were probably the most bitterly divided in the summer of 1917. Šmeral had remained consistently and seemingly unalterably opposed to the designs of the radical nationalists. He instead insisted that the party should continue to adhere to the principles of the Žofín Resolution. This document, accepted at the Eleventh Party Congress in 1913, advocated cultural autonomy for the Czechs within the existing political system (See above, p. 17).(25) The party's rank and file, on the other hand, was increasingly in the forefront of popular opposition to the crown. The party's natural constituency, the Czech working class, was one of the groups suffering most severely as a result of the state's economic decline and the one for whom the example of the revolution in Russia held out the most hope. The massive demonstrations in May were symptomatic of the growing gap between the policy of the party's
leadership and the expectations of its rank and file. In addition, as with the National Socialists, deputies returning from the front proved to be an especially radical influence. In particular, Rudolph Bechyně and František Modráček began immediately to try to change the orientation of the party.\(^{(26)}\)

The divisions simmering within the party were brought into the open in June as the Social Democrats prepared to send a delegation to a conference of socialists in Stockholm. The conference was organized by the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee of the Socialist International in order to plan a general peace conference of all members of the International.\(^{(27)}\) The choice of Šmeral as one of the three delegates sent by the Czech Social Democrats caused a furor. The radicals feared that with Šmeral present the delegation would adopt a pro-Habsburg stance. He was attacked by elements from both inside and outside the party and was warned not to portray his views as the views of Czechs in general or of Czech Social Democrats.\(^{(28)}\) The reaction to Šmeral's inclusion in the delegation, in spite of his long years of service to the party, is evidence of the severity of the rift that had developed between the Austrophils and the radical nationalists, even in a party that was ostensibly above nationalism.

The attacks did not succeed in forcing Šmeral to alter his policies. In his statement to the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee (The Czechs met with them on June 26 and 27.) he reiterated his fundamental position—the Austrian state would survive the war and Czechs, therefore, had to develop a positive policy towards the state and work to protect their interests within it.\(^{(29)}\) On the other hand, the
proclamation issued by the Czech delegation after the meetings was hardly a statement that could have pleased officials in Vienna. It stated:

We demand for our Czech nation the creation of an independent Czech state within the framework of a reconstructed Danubian society. We demand the union of all members of the Czech nation inhabiting a contiguous territory; this includes the Slovaks. For the Czech state we demand all attributes of sovereignty to which a state in a federation is entitled to lay claim. The only limitations to this are those powers reserved for the federal empire such as conduct of foreign policy, defense, and insurance of the most necessary economic conditions, all of which must answer to a national council. (30)

For Šmeral and the Austrophils the statement was acceptable because it still talked in terms of a "Czech state within the framework of a reconstructed Danubian society." It was acceptable to the radicals because, while it did not advocate complete separation from the monarchy, it was consistent with the Czech Union's declaration at the opening of the Reichsrat (See above, pp. 57-58). Šmeral's presence had not resulted in a pro-Habsburg statement nor in a repudiation of the emigres. Instead, the declaration, the first made outside Austria-Hungary by a group representing a significant number of Czechs, showed that even the Social Democrats, hitherto stalwart advocates of the empire's continued existence, were moving slowly and cautiously into the radical camp.

Of the major Czech political groups, only the Catholic parties avoided the ferment that the others were going through. The leadership of these parties (the National Catholics and the Christian Socialists) felt a genuine attachment to the state and the crown. Their position
is exemplified by the attitude of Mokřic Hruban, the chairman of the
Club of Czech Catholic Parties, in a Reichsrat address in June 1917:

The Habsburg dynasty is the legitimate dynasty of the Czech
people and the Austrian Emperor is our Czech king. The heart
of every son of our nation yearns for nothing else more than
to see the day when the relationship of the king to the
nation is reconsecrated with that glorious symbol of our
independence within this monarchy, the Crown of St.
Wenceslaus. That is our Austrian program.(31)

The Agrarian Party, under the leadership of the ever opportunistic
Antonín Švehla, continued its policy of keeping "two irons in the
fire." As long as the outcome of the war was in doubt, as it very much
was in the summer of 1917, Švehla was content to bide his time.
Nonetheless, as popular unrest in the Czech lands increased, Švehla too
began to move the Agrarians toward the radicals.(32)

The issue of constitutional reform and the Czechs' role in its
execution emerged in the summer of 1917 as a major point of contention
between the Austrophils and the radicals. In the spring, prior to the
reopening of the Reichsrat, the Czech Union had considered the intro-
duction of a bill to restructure the monarchy and restore Bohemian
statehood within a federalized state. The idea was dropped, however,
when it was decided to base the Unions's opening declaration on the
right of both Czechs and Slovaks to self-determination.(33) The issue
reemerged after the opening of the Reichsrat. Members of the Czech
Union sat on the Reichsrat's Committee for the Constitution. When it
was proposed to create a subcommittee to study the matter and prepare
concrete proposals, the divisions among the Czechs came to the fore.

The Austrophils had long sought constitutional reform and regarded
it as their duty to participate in the process and protect Czech
interests. Others in the Czech Union, while perhaps less fervently Austrophil, still thought of the Czech problem as a domestic issue rather than an international one. They, too, thought it was their duty to help shape any reform to their own designs. (34) In a speech before the Reichsrat on June 13, Šmeral pleaded the case for Czech participation:

We stand unreservedly on the basis of the Austrian state idea and have, consequently, not only the right but also the duty to cooperate in the reform of the empire's constitution, in a manner required by the new times and needs of its people. There is no alternative for any of us to mutual discussion and mutual compromise. (35)

From the radicals' point of view, Czech participation in the reform process carried the potential for disaster. The radicals no longer had any interest in restructuring the monarchy; they were working instead for its destruction. If a compromise could be reached that would be acceptable to significant numbers of Czechs, popular support for the radical cause might suffer enormously. Of even more immediate concern, participation in the reform process would undermine the emigres' efforts in the Allied capitals. Cooperation in any attempt to reform and thereby preserve the monarchy would contradict emigre claims that the majority of Czechs longed for complete separation from Vienna. Gustav Habrmann, one of the Czech Social Democrats who had gone to Stockholm, relayed the emigres' plea to avoid any sort of public declaration calling for a solution to the Czech question within the framework of the existing state. (36)

The presidium of the Czech Union, under pressure from radical elements and cognizant of growing public unrest, felt compelled to refer the issue to a plenary session of the entire Union. At this
session, which took place on July 13, the radicals successfully fought
to delay a decision. They were able to have the issue referred to a
joint meeting of the Union and the National Committee. While anti-
Habsburg demonstrations racked Bohemia, the two organizations met in
Prague on July 25 and settled on a compromise which, ultimately,
resulted in Czech abstention from the reform process. It was decided
that the Union would refrain from taking part in the work of the
constitutional reform subcommittee while the National Committee met
with political experts in an attempt to prepare specific proposals.
Those meetings went on into the autumn, by which time constitutional
reform had become a dead issue. (37)

Vienna's hopes that a return to parliamentary government would be
a step toward defusing nationalist agitation and undercutting the
radicals were proving futile. The excitement that had been generated
in the spring with the revolution in Russia, the recall of the
Reichsrat, the Writer's Manifesto and the statement of the Czech Union
was serving to radicalize rather than moderate the political situation.
The recall of the Reichsrat, instead of acting as a check on
radicalism, was providing a platform for radical attacks on the dualist
system and on the state itself.

To make matters worse, as the political maneuvering was going on
in Prague and Vienna, the economic deterioration and the misery it
cau sed continued unabated. Thus, Czech political leaders, who had
little or no opportunity to voice their concerns during the period of
wartime dictatorship, now were being forced to take stands on
fundamental political issues at the very time they were under the most
intense pressures from the homelands. The long years of warfare, the political reawakening, and the economic disaster and widespread privation were radicalizing the Czechs at the very time newfound political freedom offered an opportunity for expression of their radicalism.

The authorities responded to the popular unrest with a carrot and stick approach. After the rash of strikes in late May, the Beschwerdekommissionen granted wage increases in many of the major industries. At the same time, the War Ministry ordered widespread militarization of factories in the most troubled areas, including most of the largest industries in Prague which were not already under military control as well as the railroad workshops in Plzeň.

This approach had an immediate, though ultimately short-lived, effect in the major industrial centers where the authorities concentrated their efforts. In some outlying areas, however, the excitement generated during the spring resulted in a continuation of overtly political unrest. For instance, on June 4, 1000 of the 1400 workers of the Northwest Railway (k.u.k. Nordwestbahn) workshops in Nymburk (Ninburg) walked off the job. A delegation from the strikers, who claimed to be speaking for workers and residents of the entire district (which included Mladá Boleslav [Jungbunzlau], Kolín, and Poděbrady [Podebrad]), explained that the strike was primarily a means of demonstrating their desire for an end to the war and their support for the declaration of the Czech Union. Similarly, 2500 workers from various firms in and around Holešovice staged a one-day strike and demonstrated before the district headman's office on June 5. Like the
strikers in Nymburk, they demanded an end to the war and called for the protection of Bohemia's state rights. (41)

Even in the major industrial centers the relative calm did not last very long. The wage increases could not solve the problem of food shortages, nor were they generous enough to keep up with the rapidly rising prices demanded on the black market. In July, a kilo of flour was commanding 6-8 crowns and a kilo of butter 20-35 crowns on the black market. (42) Weekly wages at the time could be as low as 20-22 crowns for day laborers at Škoda or on the railroad. (43) Even the highest paid Škoda worker, a senior lathe operator, made only 119 crowns for a 53 1/2 hour week. (44) Thus, the black market was beyond the resources of most.

As a consequence, even militarization of the factories was not enough to ensure calm. Kestřanek warned Vienna on July 5 that in the present circumstances strikes could not be prevented. The workers were too well organized; the number of strikers was such that legal proceedings against all of them were technically impracticable. According to Kestřanek, military law was designed to deal with individual soldiers, not a large modern workers' movement. The only hope was an immediate improvement in the food situation. Additionally, draconian measures needed to be taken against hoarders and profiteers if there was to be any hope of ensuring industrial peace. (45)

Typically, some of the worst labor unrest occurred in the coal-mining areas of northern Bohemia and northern Moravia. At the end of June, widespread strike activity shut down 10 mines in the Most (Brüx)-Duchov (Dux) coalfields in northwestern Bohemia. The authorities...
attributed the strikes to food shortages, but also warned of the influence of "anarchists" among troops that had been released from the army to work in the mines. (46) The most seriously affected areas, however, were the coalfields around Moravská Ostrava and Vitkovice (Vitokovitz) in Moravia. Massive labor unrest convulsed the district in early July, affecting both the factories in the cities and the mines in the environs. According to military officials at the scene, what they described as national considerations (nationale Momente) and food shortages, especially a shortage of potatoes, were the primary causes of the outbreak. (47)

The disturbances began on July 2 as a demonstration by wives of the workers in a Vitkovice machine factory. Troops were called after attempts were made to disrupt the factory shift change and the demonstrators began chanting for an end to the war. While the factory was secured, the demonstrators, reinforced by others, moved into the city. They attacked the city hall and began to plunder the municipal warehouse. More troops were deployed into the town's center, where they were met by a barrage of rocks and bottles. The troops, divided into two groups and with bayonets drawn, were surrounded by demonstrators. According to the military officials in Moravská Ostrava, the commander of one of the groups, fearing his men were about to be disarmed by the surging crowd, ordered them to open fire. As they did, troops from the other group, without orders, also opened fire. Three or four volleys were let loose; five demonstrators were killed and twelve were wounded (including one woman killed and four wounded). (48)
The authorities responded by rushing in reinforcements from nearby garrisons and clamping a stringent curfew on the region. In addition, the War Ministry, hoping to coerce the workers into submission, ordered the immediate establishment of reserve detachments in the mines and factories that did not yet have them.\(^{49}\) It was hoped that the threat of military justice would restore calm.

While the coal mining regions remained a problem throughout the summer, the industrial city of Plzeň was the center of the most prolonged and intense social and political unrest in the Czech lands. Significant food shortages had already hit the city the previous summer, earlier than they had anywhere else. By August 1916 potatoes were unavailable and the city experienced demonstrations that shocked and frightened the unprepared authorities.\(^{50}\) The situation did not improve measurably after that. As economic conditions in Austria-Hungary continued to deteriorate, Plzeň, like urban areas throughout the Czech lands, experienced increasingly frequent outbreaks of unrest. By spring of 1917 the situation had become acute. The municipal authorities warned Prague in late February that the district’s food supply would soon be insufficient.\(^{51}\) No significant aid was forthcoming, and in March the city was beset by widespread unrest which continued intermittently throughout the spring.

As elsewhere, the political reawakening that accompanied the recall of the Reichsrat had a profound impact in Plzeň. On May 31 and June 1, 1917, thousands, mostly railway workers and employees of the Škoda works, marched through the city. They gathered in front of the offices of the district commissioner and appointed deputations to air
their demands. These reflected the radicalization that had occurred during the spring. Typically, the demonstrators called for stricter control over apportioning of food and improvements in the food situation in general. In addition, however, they demanded the establishment of freedom of speech, assembly, and the press and voiced their support for the declaration of the Czech Union. (52)

The situation worsened the following week. On June 6 the Škoda works began to experience intermittent strikes that idled up to 4500 workers. (53) The unrest also began to spread to other factories in the district. (54) Between the 8th and 11th of June, 2500 workers walked off the job at the Müller und Kopea factory, followed immediately on the 11th and 12th by a walkout of 3200 workers of the state railway in Plzeň. (55) The workers demanded the immediate implementation of a wage increase that was to take effect on July 1. (56) The authorities reacted instead by extending the earlier militarization of the railway workshops to include all railway employees. (57)

While militarization quieted, for the time being, unrest among railway workers, the situation at the Škoda works grew worse. On June 27 it finally boiled over as the entire Škoda complex was hit by a near complete walkout. A mass meeting of up to 15,000 workers took place outside the city while the authorities rushed to augment the police force and speed military reinforcements to the district. (58) Major General von Putz was dispatched from Vienna with orders to militarize the entire complex, use the threat of the death penalty for violations of military discipline, and force the workers back to their jobs as quickly as possible. (59)
The efforts did not meet with immediate success. Only a handful of workers responded to the June 28 call to be sworn in as reserves (Landsturm). Instead, another massive rally took place in Boiry outside Plzeň. At the same time, only about 3000 workers returned to work, while fully 30,000 remained on strike. In the face of this resistance, the local police force was strengthened with the addition of 300 men and 11 companies of troops were dispatched to the city.

In addition to the show of force and the threat of punitive measures, the authorities strove to effect a compromise between Škoda management and the workers. An agreement was reached whereby Škoda management offered a series of wage concessions in exchange for the workers' promise to return to work and to facilitate the militarization of the factories. If this agreement did not succeed in bringing about the workers' submission, the military commander in Plzeň was instructed to use his troops and the police to force compliance by any means necessary. To augment the troops already sent by the commander in Prague, 4 companies from the Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) command, 4 from the Vienna command, and 2 from the Innsbruck command were at his disposal should he need them.

The combination of concessions and the threat of force succeeded. Eighty-six percent of the workers returned to their jobs on the night shift on July 4 and ninety percent showed up for the day shift on July 5. According to the military commander, the militarization of the factories generally proceeded without incident. The police were sent after those few workers who did not return. Those without proper
excuses were arrested; even the hospitals were searched to ensure that workers claiming illness were truly unable to work.\(^{(67)}\)

The government's energetic response to the strike at Škoda was repeated in reaction to a short-lived disruption by the Plzeň railway workers, who defied the militarization decrees and walked out on July 2. The military authorities warned that the workers were liable to charges of mutiny and would be subject to the jurisdiction of martial law courts if they did not immediately return to work. Five companies of troops and a large contingent of police were brought to the scene to reinforce the government's hard line. On July 5 work had returned to normal.\(^{(68)}\)

Plzeň remained calm for the remainder of the month. The overwhelming military presence in the district and the specter of military justice successfully quieted the workers. To try to solidify their control, local authorities struggled to alleviate the food shortages. The efforts met with little success, however, in spite of the recognition that improvement was absolutely necessary to prevent further unrest. The War Ministry warned the Volksarmührungsamt on July 18 of the "extraordinarily grave consequences" that would result from further unrest in the Škoda works and pleaded for an energetic effort to rush supplies to Plzeň as soon as possible. There was only a three day supply of flour on hand at the time.\(^{(69)}\) The city government of Plzeň also tried to alleviate the shortage, but with minimal success. Pleas directed to Count Coudenhove, the governor of Bohemia, on July 15 met with no response.\(^{(70)}\) The intervention of Reichsrat deputy Franz Lukavský with the Minister for Public Nutrition, Field Marshall Hofer,
likewise brought no improvement. The weekly supply of bread continued to fall 20,000 loaves short of the 70,000 deemed necessary.\footnote{71}

By the beginning of August the situation was critical. In addition to the shortfall of bread, potatoes, which had been in short supply all summer, were no longer available. Fruits and vegetables were also unavailable, and the weekly meat ration could not be covered. Of the daily minimum milk requirement of \(3400\) liters, the city was receiving only \(1400\) liters.\footnote{72}

Under these circumstances, even the large military and police presence could not prevent the outbreak of new unrest. A precursor of the more serious problems to come occurred on the evening of August 7 when 3000 demonstrators, predominantly Škoda workers, assembled outside the office of the district commissioner. Along with the usual complaints about the food situation, the demonstrators also demanded an end to the export of food from Bohemia to other parts of the empire.\footnote{73} This same demand was repeated the next day by representatives of striking railway workers who staged a short walkout and again on August 10 by the municipal transport workers as they shut down the city's streetcar system for an hour and a half.\footnote{74}

To compound the already tense situation, the government realized in August that the meager flour ration that had been established in April was still too generous for the state's resources. On August 11 the ration for the urban population was again reduced, this time to 165 grams per day.\footnote{75} The reaction in Pilsen was swift and dramatic. The previously isolated instances of unrest coalesced into widespread, massive, and violent demonstrations. The trouble began on the 13th
when crowds outside a retail food establishment, realizing that no flour was available, began to plunder nearby wagons loaded with semolina. (76) The police were not able to control the surging crowds, which by mid-afternoon had begun to turn violent. They first attacked the municipal food depot, breaking windows and looting whatever food could be found. (77) Windows were also broken in the mayor's house and in hotels, restaurants, and other business establishments in the center of the city. (78) By 3:00 in the afternoon the authorities had already requested further reinforcements from Prague. (79)

After the initial destruction, the crowds systematically looted any establishment where food might be found. According to the authorities, by evening the rioting had assumed an anti-Semitic character. Many of the looted shops were owned by Jews and some Jewish residences were set upon. (80) Troops sent to quell the rioting were met with a barrage of stones. They responded by opening fire, killing one and wounding three others. (81)

Calm was restored by 10:00 in the evening and the city remained peaceful throughout the night. (82) Plundering resumed, however, early the next morning on a scale the troops were not able to contain. (83) The civilian officials and the police, in the meantime, generally remained passive and did little to hinder the crowds. (84)

The ferment then spread from the streets into the factories, which had remained quiet on the first day of the trouble. The workers in the railway workshops were the first to put down their tools in mid-morning. (85) Rather than simply walking off the job, however, they began to sabotage trains and railway equipment and to stop other
railway personnel from manning the trains.\(^{\text{86}}\) By afternoon the strikes had spread to all the major factories in the area, including the Škoda works. The municipal transit system also was shut down.\(^{\text{87}}\)

In an early evening report to the Bohemian governor, the military commander painted a grim picture. He warned that the situation was taking on a revolutionary character. Three quarters of the Škoda workers were on strike, sabotage of railway equipment continued, trains were not moving and were being looted of food and coal as they sat in the railyards.\(^{\text{88}}\) Worse, without the trains, thousands of workers who normally commuted to their homes would be left in the city for the night. Already the number of demonstrators was too great for the twenty companies of troops in the city to handle.\(^{\text{89}}\)

The War Ministry responded to the crisis by expanding the powers of the military officials on the scene. In view of the rapidly escalating lawlessness and the problems involved in communicating with Prague, the Plzeň commander was granted the power to declare martial law if and when he thought it necessary.\(^{\text{90}}\) On the evening of the 14th the commander exercised the right, placing all of Plzeň and the nearby areas of Lobzí (Lobes) and Skvrňany (Skuman) under martial law.\(^{\text{91}}\) The proclamation announcing the move concluded with the warning that violators of the martial law decrees could expect the death sentence.\(^{\text{92}}\)

The threat of force did not immediately succeed in quieting the unrest. More troops had to be brought in from garrisons in Innsbruck and Benešov (Beneschau), and cordons were established throughout the city.\(^{\text{93}}\) Ironically, this only exacerbated the situation by
preventing many who wanted to work from getting to their places of employment and keeping others from reaching sources of food that were available.\(^{(94)}\) On the 15th, however, the strike at Škoda began to fall apart. On the midnight shift that night eighty percent of the workers were back on the job, and well over ninety percent had returned on the 16th.\(^{(95)}\) Work also resumed in the railway workshops, though the Plzeň commander reported that some of the workers were performing less than enthusiastically.\(^{(96)}\)

On August 18, the commander in Prague was able to report to Vienna that Plzeň had returned to normal. The streets were quiet, and both the Škoda works and the railway workshops were operating peacefully and productively.\(^{(97)}\) The commander cautioned, however, that immediate delivery of flour was necessary to ensure continued calm, especially among the railway workers.\(^{(98)}\)

In the post mortem that followed the Plzeň disturbances, it was agreed that the primary cause of the unrest was the abysmal food situation.\(^{(99)}\) Popular dissatisfaction was heightened, however, by the perception that the shortages were not being evenly shared.\(^{(100)}\) As one police report expressed it, the people thought that only with difficulty were they able to find black flour for themselves, while the Bürgermeister fattened his geese with white flour.\(^{(101)}\) There also was unhappiness with the attitude of the food agencies' personnel, who were described as uncivil and arrogant, particularly when dealing with Plzen's poorer citizens.\(^{(102)}\) Another source of discontent concerned the export of food, both from Bohemia to other areas of the empire and from Austria to Germany. Calls for an immediate end to exports were a
recurring aspect of any mass gathering. A final food-related issue which aroused demonstrators was the significantly greater suffering occurring in the Austrian half of the empire than in the Hungarian half. While solid evidence of the disparity must have been scarce, the public perception, even if based solely upon rumor, only added to the sense of outrage.

By August 1917 the authorities were, of course, no strangers to public unrest precipitated by food problems. Some aspects of the disturbances in Plzen were especially unsettling, however. The extent of the unrest, the numbers of people involved, and particularly the violence that accompanied the disturbances were unlike anything that had been experienced before. Even more troublesome were the political and nationalistic overtones that colored much of what occurred. The desire for an end to the war was an especially obvious, though no longer surprising, sentiment. More shocking was the evidence of ethnic antagonism that motivated many of the demonstrators. In the violent incidents, the perpetrators were overwhelmingly Czech, the victims Germans or Jews. German and Jewish businesses and homes were attacked, looted, and in some instances virtually destroyed. Cafes and restaurants that catered to Germans were attacked, while those patronized by Czechs were left untouched. While the attacks on Jewish property may have been motivated purely by anti-Semitism, the authorities thought that Jewish cultural and linguistic identification with Germans played a role. There were even reports, hotly denied by military officials, that some Czech troops had taken part in the looting.
Czechs also took the lead in labor unrest. The obvious nationalism underlying the Czech workers' actions, what the authorities called "Czech political motives", alienated most of the German workers. In spite of the fact that they were suffering as badly as Czech workers, the Germans responded only half-heartedly to the strike calls. (110)

The actions of the civilian authorities in Plzeň also alarmed officials in Vienna. The municipal authorities were condemned for being uninformed and slow to react. (111) What was much more troubling, however, was the passive behavior of Plzeň's Czech police officers. They did little to hinder the looting and, instead, reacted slowly and very timidly in the face of violence by their co-nationals. (112) Gen. Kestřanek, the military commander for Bohemia, advised the War Ministry that nationalization of the police force was necessary if any future violence in Plzeň was to be contained. (113)

The extent of the unrest that plagued the Czech lands throughout the summer of 1917 and the vehemence which accompanied it, culminating in the widespread and violent disturbances in Plzeň, strengthened the Czech nationalists. The growing and increasingly manifest dissatisfaction with Vienna and the government's seeming inability to stifle dissent emboldened those politicians who wanted to move away from the activist course that had characterized Czech policy. Only the clerical parties were totally immune from the radical pressure. Their genuine fondness for the dynasty still was not shaken by the events of the summer. The other Czech parties, already beset by internal turmoil,
now were faced with even greater discord as the nationalists battled to turn the parties toward a more radical course.

The infighting was still least of all a problem for the Agrarians. Antonín Švehla, the party's wily, opportunistic, and unchallenged leader, had avoided committing himself to either side and remained on good terms with both the radical nationalists and the loyalists. With the radicals in the ascendancy, he was prepared to gently redirect party policy to reflect the changing public attitudes.\(^{(114)}\) For the National Socialists, too, the move to a more radical policy was comparatively painless. Jiří Šťárný had already succeeded in reorienting the party. With the release from prison of the party's founder, the ardent nationalist Václav Klofáč, the new orientation was solidified.\(^{(115)}\) The National Socialists were firmly in the nationalist camp.

For the other major Czech parties, the move away from an activist policy proved considerably more wrenching. After the Emperor's amnesty decrees, the third largest Czech party, the Young Czech Party, was torn by the wide gap between the views of the party's leadership and its deputies in Vienna. With the return of Karel Kramář and Alois Račín, the party was confronted with a virulently anti-Austrian leadership and a Reichsrat delegation that was generally loyal. The unrest of the summer further weakened the loyalists and helped Kramář finally wrest control of the party press from Tobolka and his allies in early autumn.\(^{(116)}\)

The Social Democratic Party was similarly divided. In this case, however, the problem was a loyal leadership, in the person of Bohumír
Šmeral, and an increasingly radical rank and file. The summer of industrial unrest drove many Social Democrats to the conclusion that the party was in danger of losing the loyalty of vast numbers of its constituents if the Austrophilism of the leadership was not tempered.

Opposition to Šmeral's national policies was not new (See above, pp. 75-77). The party organization in Plzeň, headed by Gustav Habermann, had long argued for a more radical approach. The Plzeň group's paper, Nová doba, had been in open opposition to the official line, as represented in Právo lidu, since the previous spring.\(^{(117)}\) The return of deputies from the front for the reconvening of the Reichsrat increased the radical contingent in the party, as it had with other Czech parties. By late summer, with the worsening economic situation, opposition to the Šmeral line had permeated the rank and file and spread to many influential party leaders.

In addition to the Habermann group in Plzeň, opposition to Šmeral was centered around František Modráček, another deputy recently returned from the front. In August Modráček organized a group of his supporters into the Radical Socialist Caucus (Směr radikální socialistický). The Caucus issued a proclamation calling for, among other things, support for a radical interpretation of the Czech Union's May 30 Reichsrat declaration, including the call for an independent state that would include the Slovaks.\(^{(118)}\) The Plzeň group, mindful of the temper of its constituents, came out openly in support of the Caucus on September 14 and printed the proclamation in its entirety in Nová doba.\(^{(119)}\) A week later, the paper demanded Šmeral's ouster as party chairman:
We recognize that the whole party cannot always speak and act for itself and that spokesmen are necessary to express its sense and feeling, but as the past has shown, Šmeral was not a spokesman of the true sense and feeling of the Party. Therefore the Party must now answer for the personal views of its chairman, for his opportunistic policy and for speeches not supporting the tradition and tactics of Social Democracy. The Party was assailed, not for its views, but for the views of its chairman. Šmeral's position on Žofín and continuing it brought him into collision with the modern state's right policy of the Czech nation. Insistence on the Žofín resolution is not correct because in fact it was long since rejected. Against the revolution in the spirit of the Party stood the strong individuality of Šmeral, too headstrong to retreat before the obvious facts. (120)

The struggle among the Social Democrats came to a head at a meeting of the Party Council on September 28 and 29. While the anti-Šmeral faction was not strong enough to have its way completely, it was able to force the adoption of a compromise resolution designed to prove to the rank and file that the Party was moving away from its earlier national policies. The resolution stated:

The Party supported the May 30 Declaration and the Stockholm Declaration. Mere national autonomy, the December Constitution, and dualism were not acceptable. The Czech question had to be solved with a complete transformation of the empire. (121)

Šmeral, regarding the resolution as a personal defeat and dispirited by the attacks against him, resigned as party chairman on September 29 and as vice president of the Czech Union on October 4. (122)

By the end of the summer of 1917 the major parties had all experienced an at times painful reevaluation of their attitudes toward the Empire and the Czechs place in it. The renewal of political life and the undoing of some of the worst abuses of wartime dictatorship had not had the salutary effects their proponents had expected. The moderate activist whose positions were to have been strengthened by
these moves were, instead, losing influence to the nationalist radicals.

The enormous personal popularity of the radicals—"the martyrs of the nation"—that accrued to them from their years in prison undoubtedly strengthened the nationalist position. Released leaders like Kramář, Rašín and Klofář were welcomed as heroes and were able to capitalize on that popularity to regain their political power. In the process they were able to speed the reorientation of their parties' away from the activist policies that had characterized them in the early war years. The moderates, who had been instrumental in pressuring the government to relax the wartime dictatorship, were being pushed aside by the radicals whose freedom they had worked to regain. The government, instead of reaping the popular goodwill it so sorely wanted, found itself confronted by a more radical Czech political leadership.

Part of the blame lay with the government itself. In spite of the liberalization instigated by the Emperor, neither Clam-Martinic nor his successor, Ernst von Seidler, were at all sympathetic to the aspirations of the state's non-Germans and were not prepared to make concessions to the Czechs. Clam-Martinic had flirted with the German nationalists' program for a settlement of the linguistic antagonisms in Bohemia, only to be thwarted by Emperor Karl, and had made it unmistakably clear at the opening of the Reichsrat that there would be no hope for meaningful change from his government.

Seidler succeeded Clam-Martinic on July 22 when the Prime Minister was unable to secure a majority for the budget and was asked to resign.
Dubbed the errand boy of Czernin,(123) Seidler was a former department head in the Ministry of Agriculture who had, according to Josef Redlich, "absolutely no first-hand knowledge of the national and political conditions and problems of Austria."(124) One of his first official acts was to drop the sole Czech, Otakar Tmka, from the Cabinet.(125) When the new Cabinet of technicians was greeted with little enthusiasm, Seidler tried in August to form a more broadly-based government including representatives of the nationalities. First Šmeral and then Stanšek were offered positions. Both, cognizant of the uproar acceptance would create in the heated atmosphere of late summer, refused.(126) Seidler's effort, while conciliatory, was not enough to counter the perception that his sympathies were with the German nationalists. He seemed to offer no hope to disaffected Czechs.

Finally, the worsening popular unrest was making it ever more difficult for the moderate politicians. As the discontent over economic hardships evolved into anger directed at the government, the politicians who counselled cooperation with Vienna lost much of their support and with it much of their influence within their parties. The nationalist radicals were the beneficiaries of the abysmal economic situation. They were able to use the widespread unhappiness to discredit the moderates and direct Czech policy, still ever so slowly, in an anti-Habsburg direction.

Instead of bringing about a reconciliation among the peoples of the empire and an easing of the tensions between the populace and its rulers, the events of the summer of 1917 helped to strengthen the
centrifugal forces within the state. Among the Czechs, the radicals, while far from victorious, were in the ascendancy.
Notes

(1) Zeman, p. 126.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Christine Kosnetter, "Ministerpräsident Dr. Ernst Ritter von Seidler" (Dissertation, University of Vienna, 1963), p. 80.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Höglinger, p. 182; May, 2: 641-642.
(7) Höglinger, pp. 187-188.
(8) Zeman, p. 129.
(9) Höglinger, p. 188.
(13) Chrislock, p. 166.
(15) May, 2: 649.
(17) Ibid.
(18) Ibid.
(19) Ibid.
(20) Beneš, pp. 342-343.
(21) May, 2: 649.
(22) Chrislock, p. 166.
(23) Ibid., p. 165; Paulová, Tažný výbor, p. 263.

(24) Ibid., pp. 220-221; Chrislock, p. 165.

(25) Ibid., p. 37.

(26) Ibid., p. 146.

(27) Ibid., p. 159; Beneš, p. 234.


(30) Ibid., p. 172; Chrislock, pp. 163-164.


(36) Habrman, p. 158; Chrislock, p 167; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 259-260.


(38) Wege, Kriegswirtschaft, p. 102.

(39) Österreichische Staatsarchiv-Kriegsarchiv, Kriegsministerium Präsidialbüro 1917, 52-4/24 (Hereafter cited KA-KM Präs.).

(40) Otáhalová, doc. 1978, p. 249.


(42) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/37.

(43) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/34.

(44) Ibid.

(45) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/37.
(46) Otáhalová, doc. 2038, p. 258.
(47) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/33.
(48) Ibid.
(49) Ibid.
(50) KA-MKSM 1917, 52-4/25, Enclosure 4.
(51) KA-MKSM 1917, 52-4/24.
(52) Otáhalová, doc. 1957, p. 246.
(53) Ibid., doc. 1982, p. 250.
(54) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/34.
(58) Ibid., doc. 2046, p. 259.
(59) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/34.
(60) Otáhalová, doc. 2046, p. 259.
(61) Ibid.
(62) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/34.
(63) Ibid.
(64) Ibid.
(65) Otáhalová, doc. 2073, p. 262.
(66) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/34-2.
(67) Ibid.
(68) Otáhalová, doc. 2072, p. 262.
(69) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-2/49.
(70) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-4.
(71) Ibid.
(72) Ibid.
(73) Otáhalová, doc. 2229, p. 282.
(74) Ibid., doc. 2230, 2231, pp. 282-283.
(75) Gratz-Schüller, p. 80.
(76) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-4.
(77) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53.
(78) Ibid.; Otáhalová, doc. 2232, p. 283.
(79) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53.
(80) Otáhalová, doc. 2232, p. 283.
(81) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-3.
(82) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-7.
(83) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-3.
(85) Otáhalová, doc. 2233, p. 283.
(87) Otáhalová, doc. 2232, p. 283.
(89) Ibid.
(90) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-5.
(91) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-4.
(92) Ibid.
(94) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-7.
(98) Ibid.


(104) Ibid.

(105) Ibid.


(107) Ibid.

(108) Ibid.

(109) Ibid.


(111) Ibid.


(113) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-7.

(114) Zeman, p. 171.

(115) Chrislock, p. 164.

(116) Paulová, Tajný výbor, pp. 220-221.

(117) Chrislock, p. 146.

(118) Ibid., pp. 172-173.

(119) Ibid., p. 175.

(120) Ibid., p. 176.

(121) Ibid., p. 180.

(122) Ibid.

(123) May, 2: 647.


The autumn and winter of 1917/1918 were to see the continued radicalization of the political scene in the Czech lands and the continued deterioration of the Czech moderate's position. The economy showed no signs of recovery, but rather declined even more precipitously; the misery in the Czech lands, as throughout Cisleithania, worsened. As it did, anti-war, anti-Habsburg, and anti-German sentiment hardened and spread. By early February 1918, the Czech political parties were well on their way to coalescing into a socialist and a bourgeois bloc, both dominated by radical nationalists. The politicians willing to compromise with the monarchy were becoming a small, and increasingly isolated, minority.

The Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia muddled the issue for Czech politicians. The Bolshevik call for an immediate peace fell on fertile ground. It offered the long-suffering population the hope of a quicker end to hostilities. It also threatened to dash the hopes of the radical nationalists, however, whose plans depended on the military defeat of Austria-Hungary. Had the Bolshevik initiative succeeded, the monarchy would have been left intact. The October revolution also heightened social tensions in Austria-Hungary. It offered a model for the war-weary proletariat of all the monarchy's nationalities, a model
that many feared was being followed in the January strikes that engulfed the state.

The economic situation as the autumn approached offered little reason to be optimistic that the standard of living would improve any time soon. In a report at the end of September, the military commander in Bohemia, Gen. Kestřanek, offered a generally grim assessment of the situation in Bohemia. While it was true that the worker unrest that he had expected in mid-September had not occurred, Kestřanek was not convinced that this was necessarily a sign that the worst had passed. Rather, he assumed it was partly a result of the adjournment of the Stockholm Conference (See above, pp. 76-77) for an undetermined period, and much more a result of the impending harvest which, it was popularly hoped, might relieve some of the worst of the food shortages. Those foods that had been in short supply all summer—fat, legumes, and to a lesser extent potatoes—were still unavailable, and the food that was available was enormously expensive. The general warned Vienna about what he described as the "legitimate, boundless animosity" that resulted from the "exorbitant" food prices. He went on to warn that there were rumors that active resistance would result from any attempt to requisition foodstuffs. (1)

To illustrate his concern, Kestřanek forwarded a September 15 newspaper article which reported on a speech by the Czech Social Democratic Reichsrat deputy, Ferdinand Jirásek, denouncing the widespread flouting of food price regulations. (2) To make his point, Jirásek compared present prices for some important foodstuffs to their pre-war prices and their legal maximum prices. Wheat flour, for
instance, cost 44 hellers (.44 crowns) in 1914, the legal maximum price was 1.20 crowns, but it was selling for 9.20 crowns. Similarly, butter sold for 2 to 3 crowns in 1914, the established maximum was 10.80 crowns, but the going price in September 1917 was 30 crowns. Other examples cited include: peas, .36 crowns in 1914, .80 crowns maximum, and 6.30 crowns at the time; pork fat, 1.80, 9.60, 19.00; pork, 2.0, 8.20, 16.00; and coffee, 4.00, 8.00, 80.00. In addition, the price of a cubic meter of wood had risen from 10 crowns to 100 crowns.(3)

Jirásek ended his speech with a warning that Kestřanek found particularly alarming: "The Czech working class awaits the time when they will breath free and can settle accounts with their friends and their enemies." (4)

In Plzeň, where the summer's most serious unrest had occurred, the commander of the military police warned that the calm that prevailed was only superficial. He expected further demonstrations as a consequence both of food shortages and "political motives." In the Škoda Works, the center of Plzeň's unrest, the situation was generally calm. Food supplies were somewhat better than they had been in July and August. As a result of intervention by the War Ministry with the Volksarmährungsamt, fat would be available until mid-October, but only if rationed at one half the quota—90 kg per week for heavy laborers and 75 kg for light laborers. After mid-October, ample supplies could not be assured.(5)

The Governor of Bohemia, Count Coudenhove, painted an equally gloomy picture at a meeting of the Monarchy's governors (Staathalterkonferenz) on September 20. According to Coudenhove, a
"pathological fear" of starvation gripped Bohemia and Moravia and encouraged "disloyal elements" to engage in passive resistance or overt sabotage. He went on to paint a rather pathetic picture of the situation affecting many of Bohemia's children, thousands of whom, as young as 6 or 7, worked all night as assistants in factories and were then unable to go to school during the day. What was particularly troubling to Coudenhove was that the situation placed further pressure on the inadequate food supplies, as the children needed scarce meat and fats if they were to be able to work. (6)

In addition to food shortages, the lack of fuels was beginning to grow worrisome by early autumn. The military chief at the Škoda Works reported that there was absolutely no lamp oil available for the workers' quarters. (7) A much more serious problem, however, was the impending coal crisis that Kestšanek expected would arrive with colder weather. The coal shortfall already was considerable (beträchtlich). (Kestšanek had received reports of workers burning furniture to cook their food.) The authorities were discussing the possibility of heating large public buildings (theaters, concert halls, etc.) and opening them to the public during the most severe weather. Kestšanek had objected, and his reasoning is indicative of the nervousness felt by the authorities. Besides the very understandable hygienic concerns, Kestšanek warned that such places could become gathering points for "unreliable elements" who would use the opportunity to foment unrest and violence. (8)

As bad as the situation looked at the beginning of autumn, it only worsened as the empire's economic deterioration continued throughout
the autumn. The harvest of 1917/1918, which it had been hoped would relieve much of the crisis, was a disaster. The grain harvest was nearly 66 percent below the 1909-1913 average.\(^9\) The production of barley and oats, which had not declined as precipitously as some other grains, now experienced declines like those already affecting wheat, rye, and maize. Barley production in 1917/1918 was 69 percent below the 1909-1913 average, while oats were 70 percent below. Wheat production was down by 57 percent, rye by 59 percent, and maize by 66 percent.\(^{10}\) A comment of the Austrian Minister of Agriculture, Count Ernst Silva-Tarouca, expresses both the seriousness of the situation and the one hope grasped at by the Government: "God give us peace or at least Russian wheat."\(^{11}\)

To complicate the situation, Gen. Kastřanek's earlier fears of a winter fuel shortage proved to be all too prescient. By the winter of 1917/1918, the war industries in the Austrian half of the empire were receiving only 40 percent of the coal they needed.\(^{12}\) Nearly 75,000 workers were unemployed at the end of December 1917 as a result of the coal shortage; in January the number climbed to over 100,000.\(^{13}\) In Bohemia at the end of December, thirty-three factories were seriously affected by the coal shortage, and the number of unemployed workers had grown to over 36,000. Nearly 27,000 of these were in Plzeň alone.\(^{14}\)

A Ministry of Labor report dated 21 December explained that the primary cause was the "extraordinarily worsened transport difficulties."\(^{15}\) In some of the coal mining areas, the amount of transportation available was from 40 to more than 50 percent less than what was needed, and in all the districts it was inadequate.\(^{16}\) As a
consequence, coal was piling up at the mines.\(^{(17)}\) In November the use of railroads for the transport of anything other than food, coal, and military goods and personnel was forbidden.\(^{(18)}\) Even this did not solve the problem. The Ministry of Labor report warned that if the military authorities and the Railway Ministry were not able to find a solution, the already untenable situation would degenerate into an "economic catastrophe."\(^{(19)}\)

Gen. Kestřanek advised Vienna in the middle of December that the amount of coal available would only barely be enough for Prague's factories and not at all sufficient for the needs of the city's population. The situation was critical enough that Kestřanek worried that it would soon have an impact on the city's ability to supply water, gas, and electricity. He warned Vienna of the dangers both to the health of the population and to the hopes of preserving public order if a city of a half million should be without these basic needs and without the streetcar system that was dependent on electricity.\(^{(20)}\)

The Governor of Moravia issued a similar warning in mid-November, advising of the "catastrophic consequences" he feared might be unavoidable because of the shortages.\(^{(21)}\) In late November, Gen. Ottokar Landwehr, the head of the Kriegsmährungsamt, sent the War Ministry a warning to expect large-scale unrest in Bohemia by the middle of December. He pleaded with the Ministry to ensure that there would be a sufficient number of "reliable" troops available to control the situation.\(^{(22)}\)

The radicalizing effect of the summer and autumn's events and the intensity of Czech unhappiness by the autumn of 1917 was evident in
the boisterous welcome given the amnestied Karel Kramár when he finally was allowed to return to Prague in mid-October. Thousands gathered in Wenceslaus Square on the evening of October 15, sang pan-Slavic anthems, and cheered his return. At a welcoming party on Žofín Island on the Vltava, an overflow crowd listened as Kramár was hailed as a martyr and a hero. Czech patriotic songs were sung (including Kde domov muj, the national anthem of the future Czechoslovak state) and calls for independence were met with thunderous applause. According to an eyewitness, "no monarch would be more enthusiastically welcomed in his country." Czech antagonism also was more evident and open in the Reichsrat. At the opening of the session in late September, the Agrarian deputy Karl Prášek announced that the price of Czech cooperation with the Seidler Government would be the abolition of the dualistic system, the unification of Czechs and Slovaks, and autonomy for the national communities. In an even stronger statement in the midst of a debate in mid-November, Staněk declared that "no peace, no recovery of Europe is possible...until on the ruins of the Monarchy flourishing national states blossom."

The Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia in November presented the radical nationalist Czech politicians with a troubling dilemma. One of the Bolshevik's first acts was the promulgation on November 8 of the "Declaration of Peace" with its famous call for an "immediate peace without annexations and without indemnities." Such a program obviously held a great deal of appeal for the average Czech, weary of the war and the hardships it wreaked on the homefront. However, it
would be a disaster for the aspirations of the radical nationalists, whose hopes for an independent state were based upon the collapse of the empire. A general peace would, of course, completely dash those hopes; even a separate peace on the Eastern Front would seriously lessen the prospects of a collapse.

This dilemma was particularly acute for radical nationalists in the Czech Social Democratic Party, who were faced with having to choose between proletarian solidarity with the Bolsheviks and their desire to ensure the defeat of Austria-Hungary. In general, reactions within the various factions in the party tended to mirror the strength of that faction's nationalist convictions. Those allied with resigned party head Bohumír Šmeral were, naturally, the most enthusiastic about the Bolshevik initiative. Právo lidu, the party paper published in Prague, espoused a conventional Marxist position, upholding the interests of international socialism over the aspirations of Czech nationalists. While admitting that the Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent peace initiative possibly constituted a setback for Czech national interests, it hailed the socialist nature of the revolution as a "liberator of nations," and claimed that there was no power in Europe strong enough to resist the slogan of peace without annexations.(29)

The more nationally inclined Social Democrats were much less enthusiastic. The strongest negative reaction came from František Modráček, who considered the Bolshevik seizure of power a severe setback for Czech aspirations and who publicly argued that a middle class democracy that would continue the war was preferable to a socialist dictatorship desiring peace at any price.(30) The party
organization in Plzeň, on the other hand, straddled the issue. Gustav Habrman and Ludvík Pik praised the revolution and the slogans that accompanied it, but they refused to unequivocally support the Bolsheviks or their peace initiative. Rather, they would support the initiative only if it resulted in a general peace, not merely a separate peace on the Eastern Front, and, more importantly, only if it guaranteed the Czechs the right of national self-determination. (31) František Soukup, a member of the Prague circle and heretofore no radical, argued along these lines in Právo lidu, emphasizing that the Czechs must be allowed self-determination and a state of their own (without indicating if this state would or would not be part of a reformed Austria-Hungary). (32)

The Bolshevik's inclusion in their peace initiative of the call for national self-determination provided an opportunity for the bourgeois and socialist parties to coordinate their reactions to the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. When it soon became clear that there was no hope for a general peace, a cease-fire between the Russian forces and those of the Central Powers was agreed to on December 15, 1917, with peace negotiations to begin on December 22. (33) The Czech Union, recognizing an opportunity to introduce the issue of their national rights to an international forum, placed two demands before the Seidler Government: 1) Austria-Hungary should accept the principle of national self-determination and, 2) representatives of the Empire's nationalities should take part in the negotiations. (34) The South Slav deputies in the Reichsrat made the same demands. (35)
Prime Minister Seidler rejected the latter demand on December 19.\(^{(36)}\) Foreign Minister Ottokar Czernin, the representative of Austria-Hungary at the peace conference, presented the government's position on national self-determination on Christmas day:

...the question of self-determination for national groups which possess no political independence cannot, in the opinion of the Quadruple Alliance, admit of international settlement but must, if necessary, be solved by each state independently together with the nationalities concerned, and in accordance with the constitution of that state.\(^{(37)}\)

The radical nationalists, already upset by the Government's renewal for an additional two years of the dualistic compromise with Hungary, were infuriated by this reply. The Reichsrat was adjourned for the Christmas recess, however, and the Government refused to reconvene it to discuss Czernin's statement.\(^{(38)}\) The Czech Union therefore decided to issue an extra-parliamentary declaration. They convened a meeting in Prague on January 6 attended by Czech Reichsrat deputies as well as some Czech members of the provincial Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian Diets. The radicals wanted to issue a statement that would revise the Union's May 30, 1917 parliamentary declaration as it pertained to the Czech state’s relationship to Austria-Hungary. (That statement had been ambiguous but had implied a continuation of some type of relationship between the Czechs and the Habsburgs [See above, pp. 67-68].) More conservative elements, on the other hand, wanted a restatement of the May declaration.\(^{(39)}\) The compromise that resulted favored the radicals. The basic declaration was drafted by Alois Rašín (the Young Czech associate of Kramář who had been amnestied the previous summer) and expanded on by others.\(^{(40)}\) Commonly known as
the Epiphany Declaration, it defended the right of national self-
determination in the strongest terms:

Our nation with all democratic nations of the world longs for
a general and lasting peace. It is, however, fully conscious
of the truth that only a peace which abolishes old injustices
and the brutal force of armed supremacy of nations over other
nations can be a lasting one. Only such a peace can
guarantee to nations, great and small, an independent
development and, above all, liberate those nations which
suffer under foreign rule. The right of a free national life
and of the self-determination of nations, whether small or
great and regardless of citizenship, must be the basis of
future international law, the guarantee of peace and friendly
cooperation among nations, and the ideal estate which
humanity will obtain from the horrors of the world war.

We, the representatives of the Czech nation, proclaim
that a peace which would not bring justice and freedom to our
nation would not be for us a peace, but only the beginning of
a new, powerful, and consequential struggle for state
independence in which our nation would exert to the limit its
entire material and moral strength and would not desist from
this ruthless struggle until its successful resolution.(41)

While conservative deputies (primarily members of the clerical parties)
tried to downplay the radicalness of the declaration and made it clear
that not all Czech deputies were enemies of the dynasty,(42) the
Epiphany declaration, unlike the May statement, made no mention of a
future role for the Habsburgs or the Empire.

The declaration was censored, of course, but it was attacked so
vigorously by the Government and German deputies that it came to the
attention of the general population and the Allied Powers.(43) Prime
Minister Seidler, speaking in the Reichsrat on January 22, deplored the
differences between the Epiphany and May declarations and especially
the lack of even the "remotest suggestion" of a future role for the
dynasty or the empire. He went on to describe the statement as one
which could be interpreted in an "outright subversive sense," and which
gave fresh ammunition to the "warmongering elements in the enemy
camp."(44) It was, concluded Seidler, merely the product of "war psychosis."(45)

Many of the German nationalist deputies, especially those from Bohemia, Moravia or Silesia, were even more vehement in their denunciations. Deputy Pacher countered with a demand for the creation of the independent province of German Bohemia (Deutsch-Böhmen), while Deputy Oberleithner from Silesia attacked the Czech "misinterpretation of the slogan 'right of self-determination of peoples.'" Silesia, he declared, recognized that right only within the realm of the present constitutional arrangement; matters of statewide interest were to be handled by the Reichsrat in Vienna, those concerned with the national, cultural, or economic life of Silesia by the Diet in Troppau (Cz. Opava).(46) Deputy d'Elvert of Moravia described the declaration as an "assassination attempt" against the state and railed against the "Russian interpretation" of the right of self-determination which would even dare envisage the tearing away of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia as well as "Hungarian Slovakia" and their incorporation into an independent sovereign state. He vowed the strongest resistance to this "damnable scheme" against the German people and the Monarchy.(47) Deputy Kemetter of the German Center Party accused the Czechs of hypocrisy—their goal was not the creation of a Czech state, according to Kemetter, but rather hegemony over Bohemia and its Germans. Social Democrat Seitz argued in the same vein, and vowed to resist any attempt to surrender the Germans of the Sudetenland to a "national despotism."(48)
The Czech deputies replied in kind. According to the Agrarian
František Udržal, Seidler's speech exhibited the imprint of the
"German-Magyar hegemony built on the principle of violence."(49)
Klofáč addressed the apprehensions of the Germans by noting sarcasti-
cally that they must completely misunderstand the present situation.
In this period of great change and revolution, he exhorted the Germans
to embrace the flag of democracy and freedom which "will result in a
lasting peace, will give to peoples and nations that to which they are
entitled, and will remove all the issues that the Government has used
to incite hatred against the Czechs." He closed with the call: "Long
live democracy; long live the new, free Europe; long live the free
Czechoslovak state; long live the self-determination of peoples, which
means the end of the present, shameful murder and the restoration of
the blessings of peace for the work and civilization of all
humanity."(50)

Deputy Karel Baxa gave a more reasoned response, but one which
reflected the same spirit. He declared that the Czech demand for
independence precluded acceptance not only of centralized control from
Vienna, but the dualistic system itself; mere national autonomy could
not be substituted for true self-determination of peoples. He
acknowledged that the coming democratization meant that new problems in
the relationship between Czechs and Germans were unavoidable. Bohemia
had a thousand-year history as a unified geographical entity and must
remain one; the rights of the minorities there would be secured through
universal, equal suffrage with proportional representation.(51) Social
Democratic deputies answered much the same, though stressing their
identification of the Czech demands with the Bolshevik call for
democracy and self-determination. (52)

Only deputy Kadlčak of the Catholic National Party spoke in a
relatively moderate tone, though even he attacked the Government for
the "preferential treatment" given to the Germans. Austria was not, he
argued, a German state, and rigid centralization must be ended.
Nonetheless, he concluded with a plea for the return to the "sound
idea" of a federated, imperial Austria. (53)

Seidler's speech was greeted with satisfaction by the German
nationalists both inside and outside the Reichsrat. Since the amnesty
of the previous summer, they had watched in growing horror at what they
considered treasonous sentiments were uttered ever more openly, with
little or no reaction from the Government. Minister without portfolio,
Dr. Joseph Baernreither recorded in his diary on January 23: "...then
I heard Seidler's statement in the Abgeordnetenhaus (the lower house of
the Reichsrat). Finally a clear, public word—unfortunately, it should
have been spoken long ago." (54) Vienna's Neue Freie Presse sounded a
similar theme: "Seidler's speech gives expression to the indignation
stored up in wide segments of the population; he has finally used the
word that describes the common view of the Czech drive—subver-
sive." (55)

The Epiphany Declaration was seized upon by the emigre leaders
and portrayed in the Entente nations as evidence of the truly radical
nature of Czech popular opinion. In the Czech lands, however, the
declaration seems to have had little immediate effect. Gen. Kestřanek
reported that the politically interested circles had already heard the
sentiments it expressed by reading the speeches in the Reichsrat since the previous May. For the rest of the population, the voluminous censoring of the morning newspapers on January 8 probably caused more excitement than the full text would have, according to Kestřanek. (56)

Officials in Bohemia, however, appear to have been concerned. At a gathering of Czech war invalids on January 8 the participants were warned at the door that political themes were forbidden. Nonetheless, the gathering went on record supporting the Declaration. (57) Censorship was also being used more extensively, especially against the National Socialists' paper, Národní listy. The large white spots, often several columns long, were generating enough public curiosity that people were trying to acquire the uncensored originals. (58) In addition, some censored material was being circulated surreptitiously. Staněk's speech to the Reichsrat and Diet deputies on January 6, which had been censored, was reproduced by hectograph and was in circulation. (59)

In general, however, the authorities still were able to report in early January that the population remained calm, but they warned that the mood seemed very unstable and inclined toward worsening. The shortage of coal and raw materials that was curtailing industrial operations was also thereby resulting in reduced wages and food rations. (60) In Plzeň, for instance, the Škoda works were shut down from December 15 to January 1. During that time, only about one third of the normal work force was employed doing inventory, clean up work, loading and unloading, and the like. (61) Of the rest, about half were
provided benefits, the remainder were dismissed and were left essentially destitute.\(^{(62)}\)

In Prague, the military commander reported that the popular mood was very depressed. The supply of food was absolutely inadequate; even the lowest quality food could be found only at the most "fabulous" prices. To make matters worse, the "coal calamity" was worsening daily. The sense of alarm was spreading and beginning to grip both the working class and the middle class. The poor, according to the military commander, were "just barely eking out a wretched existence."\(^{(63)}\)

By the middle of the month the situation in the Czech lands was positively desperate. Gen. Kostfanek reported that the coal supply at the militarized factories had not improved. Dozens of companies were totally shut down, while others were functioning only partially. The military station commander in Prague reported that "the populace has nothing to eat, cannot clothe itself, suffers from the cold, suffers from the enormous price increases...." Coal trucks were set upon and looted in the streets, with the obvious approval of most of the population. The police, in fact, were reluctant to intervene for fear it would only cause the expected unrest to break out.\(^{(64)}\) The situation was no better in Plzeň where, as in Prague, not only coal and food but now also clothing, footwear, and lighting oil were in short supply. The station commanders in both cities wondered at the patience shown so far, and both implied they expected it soon to be at an end.\(^{(65)}\)
On January 11, Count Coudenhove, the Governor of Bohemia, wrote to Foreign Minister Czernin at Brest-Litovsk:

I do not doubt that you have already been informed by the Austrian government about the serious situation of our corn reserves until that next harvest. But judging by impressions I got in Vienna I doubt that you know the whole truth, that we are faced with a catastrophe that will hit us during the next few weeks, unless at the last moment we receive foreign help. At best, the reserves in Bohemia will last until the middle of April, but only if Bohemia does not have to supply other lands. In other crownlands the situation is much worse; there, starvation has already begun. Also there are already the beginnings of unrest in Bohemia, because sufficient corn for the rations is difficult to procure even in small amounts. During the last few days in Vienna I had an opportunity of convincing myself of the desperate situation in the whole of the monarchy. As early as September and October, I had requested the lowering of the flour ration; the government refused this, because it wanted to avoid giving the impression that our economic situation demanded such measures. But now the sad truth will out.

Austria gets only a small amount from Hungary. From Rumania it should still get 10,000 railway wagons of maize; that means 30,000 wagons less than planned, without which it will go under. As soon as I discovered what the real situation was, I went to see the Premier. I asked him whether he knew that this will mean that in a few weeks the war industry and railways will come to a standstill; the supply of the army will become more difficult and the army will collapse, and that such a catastrophe will mean the end of not only Austria, but Hungary as well. To all these questions the reply was yes, he knew about it, and he told me that everything was being done to bring about an improvement, especially as far as supplies from Hungary were concerned. Nobody, not even the Emperor, has so far succeeded in achieving anything in this respect. He can only hope that some deus ex machina will, at the last moment, save the monarchy from the worst. (66)

Three days later, on January 14, the Government was forced once again to lower the flour ration for factory laborers in the Austrian half of the empire, this time from 200 to 165 grams per day. The action generated almost immediate reaction, particularly among the working class in and around Vienna. Demonstrations broke out in the industrial suburbs of the capital. They very quickly developed into a
mass strike movement which spread throughout the industrial areas of both halves of the empire. In its most extreme manifestations, the strike movement included the election of Soviets at a number of factories and exhortations to the workers to follow the example of the Bolsheviks.(67)

In the Czech lands, however, the strike movement took on a significantly different tone. Initially, in fact, the strikes in Austria generated very little interest or excitement in the Czech lands, despite the fact that the Czech workers suffered just as severely as the Austrian from the lowering of the flour ration. Instead, the ongoing negotiations at Brest-Litovsk were the primary topic of public interest, with attacks on German "obstructionism" the most common means of stirring up the public.(68) Thus, in contrast to the spontaneity and the social radicalism that characterized the uprisings elsewhere, in Bohemia, after some scattered outbursts, the protest movement generally fell under the control of the Czech political parties, in particular the Social Democratic and National Socialist parties. As a result, while the protests had undoubted social and political aspects—the demands for peace and more food were a part of any demonstration—they often were overshadowed by the demands of Czech nationalism.

Gen. Kastřanek recognized this and warned Vienna on January 18 that as the strike movement made its way from Austria to the Czech lands it would take on an entirely different tone than that found elsewhere in the Monarchy. According to Kastřanek, a major part of the Czech intelligentsia and those people over whom they had some influence
had taken on the "destructive ideas" of Masaryk. Under the cloak of real or fictional food shortages, he warned, they will try to advance these ideas. The result, according to Kastranek, is that the protests in Bohemia will have a very much more nationalistic undercurrent to them. Because of that undercurrent, Kastranek felt that it would not be advisable to use companies of troops that were too heavily Czech. He thought that the only reliable troops were those that had been assembled in Hungary, and on the 17th he had asked for ten such companies.

In general, the mood in Prague was described as one of wary pessimism. The population expected a "harsh persecution" as rumors—true but wildly exaggerated—circulated about the arrival of foreign troops in the city. Many Czechs also were outraged by stories that the troops were being stationed in the Hradčany castle, "profaning" the ancient seat of Bohemia's kings. In Plzeň the population also remained generally quiet, probably because of the appearance there too of additional troops. (Though there was much speculation about whether they were there as a precautionary measure to intimidate the Škoda workers or were part of larger preparations to counter an expected popular uprising.)

Scattered strikes began in the Czech lands as early as January 16. On the following day, a delegation of eighty representatives of the workers from Prague and its surroundings, led by Social Democratic and National Socialist Reichsrat deputies, presented a list of demands to Count Coudenhove. They began by declaring their solidarity with the Viennese workers and their support for the strike
movement. They went on to demand a prompt conclusion to the war and protested against alleged procrastination in the peace negotiations. They also protested the reduction in the flour ration. Finally, the delegation called for the implementation of the principle of self-determination for all peoples. (74)

A similar delegation presented itself to the office of the district headman in Plzeň on January 18. Like their counterparts in Prague, spokesmen for Plzeň's workers expressed their desire for an increase in the flour ration and a prompt end to the war; they also voiced their support for the concept of a peace without annexations based on the right of self-determination. (75) On the following day, 15,000 workers from the Škoda Works and the railway workshops marched to the same office. Spokesmen for the group reiterated the desires expressed the previous day and also demanded the restoration and the expansion of workers' civil rights. (76) In spite of the size of the group, there were no disturbances.

Strike activity continued sporadically for the next few days, as did demonstrations by Czech housewives demanding an improvement in the food situation. (77) In Duchov in northwestern Bohemia, workers in five factories (four of which were under military control) walked out on January 19. (78) In Mladá Boleslav in north central Bohemia strikes occurred in two factories under military control on January 21, and 2000 workers demonstrated in front of the district headman's office demanding better provisioning and declaring their support for the Epiphany Declaration. (79) All the military industries plants in Hradec Králové, as well as some of the local railway operations and
numerous other factories, were struck on January 21. Eight thousand people marched to the center of the city behind banners with phrases like "freedom for the people" (svobodu národu) and "for peace and bread" (pro mír a chléb). (80)

The most serious unrest up to this point occurred in Kladno, the important mining and steel center, northwest of Prague. On the morning of January 19, workers at the giant Poldi Foundries went on strike. Seven thousand of the strikers marched to the district commissioner's office to voice the usual demands for peace and better provisioning, along with calls for the democratization of the electoral laws and an end to the militarization of the work force. (81) That afternoon, workers at five nearby coal mines joined the strike. (82) On the following day, January 20, the strike spread to mines of the state railway and to the rolling mills and blast furnaces of the Prague Iron Industry Corporation (Eisenindustriegesellschaft). Over 20,000 foundry and mine workers marched through the city, declaring their support for the demands voiced by the Poldi workers on the 19th. (83) All the groups came together on the 21st, as workers from Poldi and the Prague Iron Industry Corporation and all the miners from the railway-owned and foundry-owned mines (a total of some 27,000 workers) walked off the job. Joined by about 3,000 others, they demonstrated in the center of the city. There was no violence, but the authorities described the mood as agitated (erregt) and 400 troops were sent from Prague. (84)

The scope and intensity of this activity surprised the Czech political leadership. It was of particular concern, of course, to the Czech Social Democratic leadership, whose constituents made up the bulk
of the strikers. The Social Democrats realized that they had to take steps to get some control over events. They did not want to appear to be lagging behind the German Austrian Social Democrats and the Czech Social Democratic Centrists or, worse, the Czech National Socialists. They also feared that the strikers, left to their own devices, might try to engineer a true revolution. The party leadership thought such a step would be premature. Finally, there was a sense that, after three years of passivity, the party simply had to begin to play an active role in the political process. (85)

The first steps were taken on January 19 when the executive committee of the Social Democratic Party met with representatives of the Czech National Socialists and the Czech Social Democratic Centrists and reached an agreement to coordinate their actions in regard to any strike activity. All three groups then agreed to call for a one-day general strike in Prague on January 22. (86) The evening newspapers on the 21st made it clear that the Czech workers' demands would not be confined only to social issues, but would address political and national concerns as well. (87)

In all, some 122,000 workers took part in the strike, which was effective in Prague, Plzeň, Kladno and a number of other locations. (88) In Prague, the strike affected not only workers in factories and in the railway workshops, but also clerical employees of the city's streetcar system, print shops, and numerous other establishments. (89) Some 50,000 demonstrators marched from various parks where they had gathered to the Old Town Square in the center of Prague. From there they dispatched a delegation headed by Antonín Němec of the Social Democrats.
and Jiří Strýčný of the National Socialists to the office of the Bohemian Governor.\(^{(90)}\) The delegation voiced the demonstrators' demands for a speedy conclusion to the war, liberalization of press censorship, and improvements in the availability of food.\(^{(91)}\) In addition, the delegation demanded the recognition of the Czechs' right to national self-determination. Němec, reflecting the continuing Social Democratic ambivalence on the nationality question, talked about self-determination within the framework of the Monarchy, while the more radical Strýčný demanded complete independence.\(^{(92)}\) The delegation then returned to the Old Town Square and reported on the meeting. In describing the discussions, Němec told the crowd that he had relayed their desire for an independent, sovereign state; he did not mention his inclusion of a continued role for the Monarchy.\(^{(93)}\)

During the course of the rest of the afternoon there were isolated attempts to generate demonstrations and some scattered arrests, but generally the situation remained orderly and the strikers returned to work the following day.\(^{(94)}\) Over the following week, however, there were numerous incidents of unrest---some of them violent---throughout the city, and strikes continued to plague the authorities. The worst outbreaks were centered in the Vinohrady (Weinberge) and Vršovice districts of the city. On the 24th hundreds demonstrated outside the Vršovice district's administration building. That evening shops were broken into and robbed and windows were broken by mobs. Police and military had to intervene.\(^{(95)}\) The unrest continued the following day, with more looting and more arrests.\(^{(96)}\) On the 25th, the entire Prague military garrison was put on alert as large crowds gathered in Purkyně
Square in the Vinohrady district. Two companies of troops were dispatched as looting broke out. The troops, reinforcing the local police, cleared the square and chased the crowd down the side streets. (97)

The violence also spread to other areas of the city on the 26th. Crowds marched to Wenceslaus Square, for instance, the center of the modern city, breaking windows and looting shops as they went. Some twenty business establishments on the square were damaged and more looting occurred. An eighty-man contingent of police and six hundred troops were assembled, and the police commissioner ordered a ban on any sort of demonstrations or marches. In addition, shops in the neighborhood were ordered shut. (98)

Gen. Kestřanek, reflecting on the day's events in a series of reports to Vienna, described them as a sign that the "national crisis" was now a greater threat in Bohemia than the "social crisis." (99) This was evident from the tone of the speeches—particularly Stříbrný's—in the Old Town Square and Ludvík Píšťák's given at the same time in Plzeň. Both made it quite clear that nationalistic concerns were to be added to the social and political ones heard earlier in Vienna and elsewhere. (100) According to Kestřanek, the National Socialists were increasingly successful in implanting the idea of an independent Czech state in the minds of the Czech working class. (101) The outward calm since Epiphany had been merely a facade; in private and in the press an excited agitation was evident. This would only get worse, Kestřanek warned, when word of Minister President Seidler's denunciation of the Epiphany Declaration became known (it had not yet been in the
newspapers). As a consequence, under no circumstances could the military presence in Prague, Kladno, or Plzeň be reduced.

One aspect of the situation in Bohemia that particularly troubled Kestřanek—and one that presaged greater problems to come—was the occasional participation in the demonstrations of military personnel who worked in the factories. In the early outbreaks at the Poldi works in Kladno on the 19th, military personnel were among the main agitators and also were instrumental in trying to get workers from the Prague Iron Industry Corporation (also in Kladno) to join the strike. Military personnel also participated in the demonstrations on the 20th. To counter this, Kestřanek asked that the means of invoking martial law be liberalized to allow its speedy imposition if necessary.

While social unrest beset the Czech lands, the political situation vis-a-vis Vienna remained muddled. The day before the drafting of the Epiphany Declaration, David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, outlined his Government's position on the future of Austria-Hungary in a speech to the Trade Union Conference. In it he announced:

...though we agree with President Wilson that a 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 those causes of unrest in that part of Europe which have so long threatened the general peace.

Three days later, President Woodrow Wilson issued his famous "Fourteen Points." The tenth was concerned with the nationality conflicts within the empire. It stated: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity for autonomous development." Both of
these statements were far from a call for the dismemberment of the empire and the creation of an independent Czech or Czechoslovak state. It surprised and disappointed the Czech leaders within the empire, who, based on information from the emigres, had come to assume that the Entente leaders were intent on destroying Austria-Hungary. Šámal, leader of the Masaryk's Realist Party and head of the Maffie, sent an inquiry to Beneš in Paris on January 13, demanding to know exactly what the Entente's attitude was toward the monarchy and its nationalities:

Prague informs you that it is desperate and that it has no news from the National Council in Paris. Its trust-worthiness suffers, and nobody believes that it has any connections at all....Prague begs for detailed and exact answers to the following questions:

1. Does the National Council in Paris know, officially or unofficially, the attitude of the Entente (of each particular Power) to the solution of the Czech question?
2. If it is known, how?—a treaty, gentlemen's agreement, etc.?
3. Has the Entente a minimal and maximal program in the Czech question?
4. What is the minimal program, which the Entente will carry out at any price? (This is important for our policy in Vienna.)
5. The frontiers of the Czechoslovak state?
6. Is the National Council agreed on the form of the state—monarchy or republic?
7. Who for the king?
8. Has the National Council agreed with the Entente(a) the amount of national debt the Czechoslovak state will have to carry (b) help by aid, currency reform, supply of raw materials, etc.?
9. What will be the position of the Germans in Bohemia? Should the Czech parliamentary delegation in Vienna start making far-reaching promises to the Germans?
10. Has the National Council reckoned with the possibility of armed resistance of Bohemian Germans and Magyars against the Czechoslovak state?
11. How does the National Council evaluate Czech policy from 30 May 1917? Is there anything that should be changed?

Directives:
12. Will the Czechoslovak army in France really consist of 120,000 men and where from? (America?) Does this army imply
13. What about a separate peace with Russia?
14. The Pope's attitude towards the Czechoslovak state?
15. Does the Entente (who?) still tolerate the Habsburg dynasty?
16. The attitude of Entente press and Entente working classes towards the Czechoslovak state?
17. How many and which newspapers have been won over for it?
18. What will happen to the Czechoslovaks in Russia in the case of a separate peace?
19. Does an agreement exist between the National Council and the Entente about Czech representatives at a peace conference? (a) only the National Council's representatives? (b) also from Austria-Hungary? (c) both?

We beg you to answer the same questions concerning the Yugoslavs.

This communication graphically indicates how little Prague knew of what was going on in the Entente capitals. Although Beneš never received it, he could not, at that time, have given a reassuring reply to any of Šamal's queries. None of the Entente leaders were yet prepared to commit themselves to the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, and none, certainly, had even begun to think about such issues as borders or share of national debt. When Beneš finally did communicate with Prague in early February, he was only able to report that "...we rely on France in particular, although we enjoy real sympathies from other allies as well...it would be a great error to draw pessimistic conclusions from the speeches of Lloyd George and Wilson..."(108)

In order to better cope with the rapidly changing situation, the Czech political parties heightened their efforts to try to present, if not a united front, at least a somewhat less faction-ridden one. The first efforts, which had actually begun tentatively the previous summer and dragged on throughout the autumn, came to naught. In that case, the most nationally radical parties--the National Socialists, Young
Czechs, State's Rights Progressives, and the Realists--tried to form a united party to lead the struggle against the Monarchy.\textsuperscript{(109)} These efforts foundered on the inability of the Young Czechs and the National Socialists to agree on a common social program. While the Young Czechs had abandoned some of their earlier, very conservative principles and had agreed at a party meeting in October that far-reaching social reform was in order, they could not reconcile themselves to the socialism of the National Socialists.\textsuperscript{(110)} In addition, many of the middle class members of the National Socialist Party had been radicalized by wartime oppression and deprivation and were prepared to accept an even more radical social agenda than was traditional with the party.\textsuperscript{(111)} As a result, the non-socialist parties decided to try to come to an agreement among themselves. After months of meetings, the three joined with Stránský's Moravian People's Party to form the Czech State's Right Democracy Party (\v{C}eská státoprávní demokracie) on February 10, 1918.\textsuperscript{(112)} Šveha's Agrarians remained aloof but supported the general goals of the party.\textsuperscript{(113)}

The National Socialists, their position weakened by the merger of the bourgeois parties and their membership growing increasingly radical, now stepped up efforts to reach an agreement with the Social Democrats. Under the influence of younger members of the party leadership, particularly Jiří Stršeň and Emil Franke, the social policy of the National Socialists was moving rapidly to the left during the autumn and winter of 1917/1918.\textsuperscript{(114)} At a conference in Prague in early December, the party adopted a resolution supporting social policies based on principles very like those of the Social
Democrats. (115) The party was radicalized further in February when the small Anarcho-Syndicalist party of Bohumil Vrbenský agreed to unite with it. (116)

Within the Social Democratic party, however, feelings about a merger with the National Socialists were decidedly mixed. The radical nationalists were, naturally, most amenable to the idea. The faction centered around František Modráček and the Radical Socialist Caucus (See above, p. 95) were enthusiastic supporters of merger with the National Socialists and argued for it in the party's theoretical journal, Akademie. (117) In Plzeň, too, there was support for a merger, though a more cautious approach was evident. While a plenary meeting of the Plzeň party organization voted on December 20 to approve a merger with the National Socialists, Habermann and Pik warned the group that the party as a whole was less than enthusiastic. Neither wanted to jeopardize their standing within the party by leading a fight for a merger. (118)

On January 20, representatives of several regional party organizations voted overwhelmingly against merger, but called instead for cooperation with the National Socialists when possible. A similar tack was taken in the February Akademie, which argued that the parties should coordinate their policies and work for the same goals. (119) On February 17, at a conference of Bohemian party organizations, the party officially rejected the idea of a merger, but recommended joint action on economic, social, and political questions. (120)

On that same day, representatives of the two parties met to discuss the prospects for cooperation and coordination. Klofáč read a
statement describing the new, more radical program of the National Socialists. It included support for the Socialist International, acceptance of a version of the class struggle, and a call for the unification of the socialist parties. Vlastimil Tusar of the Social Democrats counselled patience and proposed that the two parties continue to meet and to cooperate; union would come eventually. (121)

While the socialist parties were not yet able to achieve formal union, the cooperative spirit that had characterized relations between the two parties during the January strikes had been solidified. Because of the rabid nationalism of the National Socialists, such cooperation could only strengthen the hand of the more nationally inclined Social Democrats. As the bourgeois parties had done with the creation of Czech State's Rights Democracy, now the socialists, though less formally, were moving towards the creation of a nationalist-dominated party.

The deprivations of the autumn and winter contributed much to this movement. It radicalized the National Socialists and made the social policies of the Social Democrats more acceptable to them. At the same time, as the Social Democrats, like all the Czech parties, grew increasingly frustrated with the Government's inability to solve the economic crisis, nationalistic appeals became ever more popular with its constituency.

For the other Czech parties, the autumn and winter had a similar radicalizing effect. The continuing, intractable economic despair weakened the already tenuous loyalty to the monarchy, while the government's helplessness did little to defuse the situation. Vienna could
only pray for miraculous harvests or hope for grain from the defeated
states to the east. Politically, too, it did nothing to undercut the
radical nationalists' appeal. Its response to the Bolshevik peace
initiative and its continued heavy-handed control in the Czech lands
only played into the hands of the radicals. The results could be seen
in the Epiphany Declaration, which contained no mention of a future
role for the Monarchy, and in the tone of the January strikes in the
Czech lands, with their strong nationalist undercurrent. As Gen.
Kestřanek warned, the social crisis in Bohemia and Moravia was rapidly
turning into a national crisis by the winter of 1918.
Notes

(1) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-10 ex 917.

(2) Bohemia, Nr. 253, September 15, 1917, in ibid.

(3) In describing these flagrant violations, Jirásek repeated the saw about national differences: "In England, what is not forbidden is allowed; in Germany, what is not allowed is forbidden; in Austria, what is forbidden is allowed."

(4) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-10 ex 917.

(5) Ibid.

(6) Kosnetter, Ministerpräsident, p. 144.

(7) KA-MKSM 1917, 28-2/53-10 ex 917.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Czekner, p. 87.

(10) Ibid.


(12) Gratz-Schüller, p. 97.

(13) KA-MKSM 1918, 55-2/12.

(14) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-8.

(15) KA-MKSM 1917, 93-4/2-6 ad I.

In the northwestern Bohemian and Falknov (Falkenau)-Loket (Elbogen) brown coal districts there were about 263,300 tons of coal stored on December 19, while 120,300 tons of coal and 45,000 tons of coke were available at the Moravská Ostrava-Karviná (Karwin) hard coal district. KA-MKSM 1917, 93-4/2-6 ad I, nr. 8238.

Wegs, Transportation, p. 127.

KA-MKSM 1917, 93-4/2-6 ad I, nr. 8238; Getting the cooperation of the Railway Ministry, which tended to downplay the seriousness of the situation, proved difficult. The Railway Minister, Karl Freiherr v. Bannhans, claimed that the serious shortage of railway cars in late 1917 was merely the result of the "glorious offensive against Italy and the subsequent transport of more than 250,000 Italian prisoners-of-war back to the Monarchy" after the battle of Caporetto. Wegs, Transportation, p. 128.


KA-MKSM 1917, 28-1/3.

Otáhalová, doc. 2298, p. 293.

SOA Litoměřice/Žitenice, R937 15/104.

May, 2: 674.

Ibid., p. 650.

Ibid., p. 651.


Právo lidu, November 14 and 15, 1917, quoted in Chrislock, p. 190.

Chrislock, p. 189.

Ibid., p. 190.

Právo lidu, December 2, 1917 and January 1, 1918 in ibid., p. 191.

Wheeler-Bennett, p. 93.

Zeman, p. 173; Chrislock, pp. 191-192; Soukup, 2: 593-594.

Zeman p. 173.
(36) Ibid.
(37) Wheeler-Bennett, p. 121.
(38) Zeman, p. 175.
(39) Ibid., p. 173.
(40) Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 314.
(41) Chrislock, p. 193; Soukup, 2: 612-613.
(42) Zeman, p. 174.
(44) Zellmayr, "Das Österreichische Parlament in Jahre 1918" (Dissertation, University of Vienna, 1951), p. 66.
(45) Kosnetter, p. 108.
(46) Zellmayr, p. 67.
(47) Ibid.
(48) Ibid., p. 68.
(49) Sitzungsprotokolle der XXII Session 1918, p. 2863 in ibid., pp. 68-69.
(50) Sitzungsprotokolle, p. 2863, in ibid., pp. 69-70.
(51) Sitzungsprotokolle, p. 3497 ff in ibid., pp. 70-71.
(52) Ibid., p. 71.
(53) Sitzungsprotokolle, p. 3088 ff in ibid., pp. 71-72.
(54) Kosnetter, p. 110.
(55) Neue Freie Presse, January 22, 1918, in Zellmayr, p. 68.
(56) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-8.
(57) Ibid.; The official title of this group gives some indication of the national testiness afflicting the Monarchy: "The War Invalids of Czech Nationality from the Lands of the Crown of St. Wenceslaus."
(58) Ibid.
(59) Ibid.
(60) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-1 ex 918.


(62) Ibid.; KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-8; Military officials in Plzeň claimed that providing benefits to the unemployed was undermining the willingness to work of many who still were employed.

(63) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-1 ex 918.

(64) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-8.

(65) Ibid.


(67) Ibid., p. 135.

(68) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-2; KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-8.

(69) KA-KM Práš. 1918, 52-4/1.

(70) Ibid.

(71) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-8.

(72) Ibid.

(73) Chrislock, p. 194.

(74) Otáhalová, doc. 2395, p. 309.

(75) Ibid., doc. 2384, p. 307.

(76) Ibid.

(77) Ibid., docs. 2394 and 2397, p. 309.

(78) Ibid., doc. 2368, p. 305.

(79) Ibid., doc. 2369, p. 305.


(81) Ibid., doc. 2371, p. 306.

(82) Ibid., doc. 2372, p. 306.

(83) Ibid., doc. 2373, p. 306.

(84) Ibid., doc. 2374, p. 306.
(85) Chrislock, p. 195.

(86) Ibid.

(87) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-2.

(88) Zeman, p. 136; Otáhalová, docs. 2368, 2370, 2375, 2377, 2379, 2383, 2385, 2386, 2390, 2392, 2399, 2406, 2413, 2414, 2417, 2421, 2423, 2427, 2429, 2430, 2434, pp. 305-314; Chrislock, p. 196.

(89) Otáhalová, doc. 2399, p. 309.

(90) Ibid.; Chrislock, p. 196.

(91) Otáhalová, doc. 2399, p. 309.

(92) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-2; Chrislock, pp. 196-197.

(93) Chrislock, p. 197.

(94) Otáhalová, doc. 2400, p. 309.

(95) Ibid., doc. 2439, p. 315; KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-3.

(96) Otáhalová, docs. 2440, 2441, p. 315.

(97) Ibid., doc. 2444, pp. 315-316.

(98) Ibid., doc. 2442, p. 315.

(99) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-2.

(100) Ibid.

(101) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-3.

(102) In Kestřanek's words, it would be like "pouring oil on an already smoldering fire." KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-2.

(103) Ibid.

(104) Ibid.

(105) Zeman, p. 178.


(107) Ibid., p. 179.

(108) Ibid., p. 181.
(109) Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 264-277.

(110) Zeman, pp. 169-170; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, IV, 269.

(111) Chrislock, p. 199.


(113) Rumpler, p. 69.

(114) Zeman, p. 170.

(115) Chrislock, p. 205.

(116) Ibid.

(117) Ibid., p. 201.

(118) Ibid., pp. 201-203.

(119) Ibid., p. 203.

(120) Ibid., p. 204.

(121) Ibid., pp. 204-205; Soukup, 2: 892-897.
Austria-Hungary emerged from the winter of 1917/1918 seemingly on the verge of economic and social collapse. Its economy was in a shambles, with no obvious signs of renewal; its population was weary of the war and its attendant deprivations. Among many of the subject nationalities, the restiveness was beginning to take on an increasingly nationalistic tone. Among the Czechs, that tone finally dominated as the government, exhibiting an unfathomable lack of national sensitivity, reopened old wounds with its attacks on the Czech leaders and its plans to solve the age-old German-Czech rivalry in Bohemia based on the program of the radical German nationalists. By the end of the summer of 1918, the emigres political successes in winning recognition from the Entente governments, the Entente's military successes against the Central Powers, and the material misery affecting almost all layers of Czech society, completed the process of driving the Czechs and their political leaders inside the Empire to make their break with Vienna.

For the Czech nationalists, the spring began inauspiciously with the signing by the Central Powers of a treaties with the Ukraine on February 9, with Russia (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk) on March 3, and with Romania (the Treaty of Bucharest) on May 7. While the settlements offered the vague hope of an improvement in the food situation
(especially the prospect of wheat from the Ukraine and Romania), they compounded the nationalists' dilemma by increasing the chances that Austria-Hungary might survive the war intact. The treaties offered the Monarchy a respite on the Eastern Front and, militarily more significant, freed the German armies for the final assault on the Western Front, which opened on March 21.

The harsh provisions of the treaties, especially Brest-Litovsk, and the cavalier manner in which the negotiations ignored the desires of the Monarchy's Slavic population further alienated many Czechs. Národní listy, the National Socialist party's organ, was the most vociferous in its denunciations. It showed its disdain for the treaty with the Ukraine by publishing the imperial manifesto announcing it on the second page of the newspaper, in small print, under the rubric "Political Overview."(1) The newspaper described Brest-Litovsk as an "ignominious" (potýpý) settlement(2), the "worst of all possible" peace(3) and a "Bolshevik capitulation,"(4) the result not of negotiation but of the might of the German army.(5) Similarly, the preliminary settlement with Romania was denounced as having nothing in common with the high ideals espoused by President Wilson. Rather, it was merely the work of victorious politicians--assisted by victorious generals--lording it over the defeated politicians.(6) Commenting on March 5, the Agrarian newspaper, Venkov (Countryside), denounced the treaty as a "cruel Diktat" and an utter humiliation unprecedented in modern times.(7) On the following day Venkov wondered aloud if Romania would be forced to swallow the same sort of "harsh and cruel" conditions. The article implied that the Hungarian government would be
delighted to see Romania weakened, thereby lessening the danger of irredentist appeals to the Romanians in Transylvania. (8) The next day, the same newspaper described the preliminary Romanian treaty in much the same terms it had used for Brest-Litovsk, characterizing it as a "total capitulation and an unheard of humiliation." (9)

The treaty settlements also left Czech nationalists disillusioned and dispirited. Much of the enthusiasm generated by the Bolsheviks' call for national self-determination evaporated, as the Bolsheviks' resolve seemed to collapse in the face of German power. The initial German successes on the Western Front only worsened the situation. For the short term, at least, it appears to have shaken the nationalists' confidence, in spite of the fact that the Czech newspapers tended to downplay the German chances for success. (10) A very optimistic report on the political situation in late March described the Czechs as "very easy to manage." Attempts by Adolf Stránský, the head of the Moravian People's Party, to drive the Czech parties to a more openly and intransigently radical position had foundered and Stránský was described as "almost entirely" isolated. The bourgeois parties allegedly were distancing themselves from radicals like Kramář and Rašín and rallying around more moderate politicians, and similar movement was expected of the Agrarians and the National Socialists. This report went on to claim that the Czechs now were prepared to engage in a positive policy and that successful negotiations with the government were possible. The Czechs, according to the report, had "no specific demands to put forth; they would like to hear what is offered them." (11)
This rosy assessment was soon shattered by the reaction to Foreign Minister Czernin infamous speech to a delegation of Viennese municipal officials on April 2. The speech affected relations with the Czechs in two distinct ways, both negative. First, it contained a violent attack on the Czech emigre leaders and the politicians at home:

Certain leaders of the nation, representatives of the people, try to undermine our alliance with Germany and issue resolutions which oppose the ideals of the state; they are unable to find a single word of condemnation for the Czech army, which criminally fights against its own country and her allies in arms; they also intend to steal parts of Hungary and they make speeches, protected by parliamentary immunity, which cannot be understood in any other way than as an appeal to the enemy states...Again and again, in London, Rome and Paris they [the emigres] do their utmost to ensure that the fury of the war may continue. Poor, wretched Masaryk is not the only one of his kind: there are many such Masaryks inside the monarchy itself.\(^{(12)}\)

In the words of Gen. Kestřansk, as a result of the speech, the "none too clear political situation in Bohemia was given another shove in the direction of even greater uncertainty."\(^{(13)}\)

At first, it was not clear to most whether the speech was meant to be a definitive statement of the government's attitude toward Czech aspirations or, as Czech newspapers seemed to indicate, it was Czernin's swan song.\(^{(14)}\) The attack elicited an indignant response from the Czech press, though most, as usual, was censored.\(^{(15)}\) Venkov, for instance, described Czernin's speech as a "repugnant comedy" and denounced it as demagoguery:

Instead of grain--slanderous attacks. It's just like Nero in Rome. The people cry out for bread and they give them animal acts in a circus. And then, in these extremely tense times, Czernin is understood to say that the responsibility for prolongation of the war and thus also for the hunger falls upon the Czech leaders. A convenient excuse that is, at the same time, also the vilest of attacks.\(^{(16)}\)
Národní listy responded in a similar, though much less colorful, vein in an article entitled "Czernin's Self-deception." The editors claimed, by no means entirely truthfully, that the "Czech people think and feel as one." This was affirmed, according to Národní listy, by the reaction of "all the people and all the parties" to Prime Minister Seidler’s outburst against the Epiphany declaration (See above, pp. 116-117). The article ended with shrug of disdain: "The Czech people will continue to pursue their bright and lofty goals, their victorious ideals of national freedom and justice; let Czernin say what he wants and in Vienna let them do what they want."(17) Even still loyal politicians warned that Czernin’s tone was "intolerable and hasty" and only gave Masaryk additional publicity.(18)

Czernin’s speech also generated a widespread public outcry. Speakers at a Czech State’s Rights Democracy Party gathering in the working-class Holešovice section of Prague denounced it as a "provocation."(19) A much larger gathering was organized on April 13 to draft a broadly based Czech reply to Czernin. Some 3500 persons assembled in the Prague Municipal House, including Reichsrat deputies, deputies to the Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian Landtags, members of the executive councils of various Czech parties, representatives of both Czech universities as well as various cultural, economic, and public institutions, and 26 Yugoslav observers. Speakers included Staněk, Klofáč, Kramář, and Habmann, as well as the author Alois Jirásek, the Slovene Reichsrat deputy Anton Korošec and Ante Pavelić, a deputy to the Croatian Landtag.(20) After a series of highly emotional speeches delivered by both Czechs and Yugoslavs, the official response
adapted, which took the form of a vow to continue the fight, was read
by Jirásek: (21)

To the Czechoslovak people! The unending battle
approaches its culmination. Filled with pain and terror
stand immense masses of Czechoslovak men and women. Rivers
of Czechoslovak blood flowed and still flow over the
battlefield....Unbent and tempered by misfortune, our people
believed and still believe that, from the storms of the world
war, for them too will finally blossom a new, better
life....We have demanded and continue to demand nothing other
than to be allowed to lead a free and independent life, to
direct our fates ourselves under our own sovereignty and to
shape our lives freely and without fetters, just as self-
confident peoples strive throughout the civilized world.
That is our sacred right, the national and international
right, the right of a people who have enriched the world's
culture and who, through their development, through their
moral strength and their economic progress, have, with pride
and through their own work, moved into the first row of
democratic peoples of the world. This is the united and
unanimous will of the people.

...We have gathered here as your authorized representa-
tives to demonstrate...that the entire people have united
...that they stand like a granite wall behind everything that
their representatives have proclaimed in their memorable,
historic declarations. Thus we stand!
And with firm, unshakable confidence in the ultimate
triumph of our sacred rights, with confidence in the triumph
of justice, in the triumph of right over force, of freedom
over bondage, of democracy over privilege and of truth over
lies in great historical events, we raise our hands and
solemnly vow on the cherished memories of our ancestors, in
the presence of the revived people and over the graves of the
fallen, in a mighty accord with the souls of all of them for
today and all the future: We remain where we stand!
Faithful in work, faithful in battles, faithful in misfor-
tune, faithful until the grave!

We will endure to the end, until we triumph. We will
endure until we hail the freedom of our people....free in
their own homeland.... (22)

After the resolution was adopted, hundreds of those present marched to
Wenceslaus Square, where they clashed with security forces before being
dispersed. (23) The following day, 4000 people gathered on Žofín
Island in the Vltava to hear speeches by Kramář and others on Czech
political goals. After abuse was heaped on the German Kaiser, the
meeting was dispersed by the authorities. Many of the participants then marched to Wenceslaus Square, chanting anti-government slogans. There they responded enthusiastically to a speech delivered from a hotel balcony by Yugoslav Reichsrat deputy Radíc. The demonstrators, chanting "Down with Czernin" and "Hail Masaryk" and hurling insults at Hungary, then clashed with the intervening police before being dispersed, with numerous arrests.(24)

The second effect on the Czechs of Czernin's speech was less direct but, in the long run, more momentous. In addition to the attack on Czech leaders, Czernin, in an indiscreet moment, revealed that there had been peace feelers between the French and the Austrians. After a series of accusations and counter-accusations between French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau and Vienna, Clemenceau released a facsimile of a letter from Emperor Karl to his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma, in which Karl had promised to support the "just claims of France to Alsace-Lorraine." The Emperor was thoroughly discredited and Czernin was forced to resign on April 14. The Germans, irate over Vienna's apparent treachery, seized the opportunity to force Austria-Hungary to strengthen its alliance with Berlin. The two emperors met at Spa in Belgium, the German General Headquarters, and on May 12 signed an agreement that bound Austria-Hungary ever more tightly to Germany. The agreement called for: 1) the conclusion of a "long-term and close" political alliance; 2) the formation of a military union; and 3) the creation of a customs and economic union.(25) An appendix containing directives for creating a "League of Arms" (Waffenbund) was included.
The Czechs, naturally, were none too enthusiastic about this development. The Reichsrat was in recess, however, so there was no opportunity to protest.\(^{(26)}\) Czech unhappiness was to be expected, of course. More important in the long run, however, was the reaction of the Allied governments. Until this time, the Allies had hoped that perhaps Austria-Hungary could be wooed from its alliance with Germany and a separate peace with Vienna might be possible. The Spa agreements dashed any such hopes.

Even before Karl's journey to Spa, the effect of the Czeminy-Clemenceau squabble had begun to convince the French that there was no hope for a separate peace. Beneš reported to Prague from Paris on May 10 that:

> Our political situation is excellent. The Clemenceau-Czeminy conflict has definitely destroyed all links with Austria-Hungary, against whom they will now proceed here resolutely and with full strength....In France and Italy our position is very good, and in England they are now resolutely moving against Austria.\(^{(27)}\)

The Spa agreements sealed the verdict for the other Allies. In the words of the London Spectator, "Prussia has annexed Austria."\(^{(28)}\) As a consequence, Allied hesitancy about supporting the anti-Habsburg emigre politicians like Masaryk and encouraging nationalistic unrest within the empire vanished.\(^{(29)}\)

A very visible symbol of that unrest was the so-called "Congress of Oppressed Nationalities of Austria-Hungary" which, after many months of negotiations, convened in Rome on April 8.\(^{(30)}\) This gathering was organized by the emigres to coordinate their action vis-a-vis Austria-Hungary. Joining Beneš, his Slovak colleague in exile, Milan Štefánik, and six other Czechs were representatives of the Yugoslavs, Italians,
Poles, and Romanians. The Congress established three basic principles to guide future action:

1) Each of these peoples proclaims its right to constitute its own nationality and state unity or to complete this unity and to attain full political and economic independence.

2) Each of these peoples recognizes in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the instrument of German domination and the fundamental obstacle to the realization of its aspirations and rights.

3) The Congress recognizes the necessity of a common struggle against common oppressors in order that each of these people may attain its complete liberation and complete national unity as a single free state. (31)

While the Allied nations disappointed the gathering by not officially endorsing their proposals, (32) the Congress, in conjunction with the simultaneous Sixtus affair, had a strong effect in the Allied capitals. According to Beneš, in his May 10 secret report to Prague:

....The Congress of Rome has strengthened our position. Cooperation has been arranged between all the Austro-Hungarian peoples, and this was of great significance here. Therefore, be prepared for fresh political successes on our part. After our return from the Congress..., Clemenceau and [French Foreign Minister] Pichon promised us emphatically that they would give us a declaration, and acknowledge us as completely independent. Clemenceau expressed himself similarly on the Commission which dealt with Emperor Karl's letter, and announced that they would recognize and proclaim the independence of the Austro-Hungarian nations. Our work on this matter is now making rapid headway in Paris. (33)

Beneš closed the report with a plea for greater activity on the homefront: "You must do more, not only in political matters but also in other directions, to harm and destroy the whole position of Austria-Hungary." (34)

In fact, the spring and summer were to provide ample evidence of the depth and breadth of Czech disaffection. In addition to the political issues generated by the events of the spring, the economic
collapse of the state and the resultant social unrest continued apace. In some parts of the Czech lands, in fact, unrest had been virtually unremitting throughout the late winter and into the spring. Gen. Kestřanek reported to Vienna in mid-February that the situation, while much improved over January, had not really been stabilized; beneath the surface calm it "crackled precariously." The report listed numerous incidents of rioting, plundering of foodstuffs, and short-lived strikes in the first half of the month. Kestřanek warned that the "bitterness of the people because of the scarcity of food and other of the most ordinary needs was...extremely grave and might—if the organization of the masses progresses further—lead to critical consequences." He was receiving confidential information, most of it from Kladno, that "even the best elements" of the work force viewed the present situation as untenable and were inclining toward "revolutionary communist" ideas. In addition, there were constant rumors of an impending full-scale strike that would effectively shut down the railway system.(35)

In the mining and metallurgical regions around Moravská Ostrava in northern Moravia, for instance, widespread strike activity had reoccurred soon after the end of the January strike. Coal miners began to strike on January 30 and were joined on February 1 by the Vitkovice ironworkers. By the 3rd, some 33,600 miners in 30 mines and 22,000 ironworkers were off the job.(36) Troops in the district already had been heavily reinforced to cope with the January strikes, and they acted quickly and vigorously to suppress this outbreak. By the 6th, the ironworkers' strike had been broken.(37) The miners, however, who appeared to the authorities to have been increasingly imbued with
nationalistic tendencies and were spurred on by a suddenly worsened meat supply, were more of a problem. In Orlova (Orlau) and Karvina, the miners had to be forced back to the mines by troops. It took until the 10th to completely restore order. (38)

Always troublesome Plzeň was another area where unrest was endemic. The military station commander there reported in mid-February that the situation was outwardly calm, but that there was enormous discontent because of the food situation. The mere rumor of a reduction in the sugar ration had increased noticeably the level of tension in the city, while other rumors of future strikes and unrest circulated widely. (39) In late February, strikes did occur at both the railway workshops and the foundries of the Škoda Works. (40) A much larger strike involving thousands of workers shut down the railway on March 20. The strike began on the afternoon of the 20th as all 2400 railway workshop employees and 1800 of the 1850 office and maintenance personnel walked off the job. (41) The military station commander in Plzeň ordered in a company of troops and placed six further companies on alert. (42) The next day, 1000 of the boiler room's 1300 employees joined the strike. The workers demanded temporary monetary assistance and the restoration of the full flour ration. (43) The authorities responded with arrests, the extension of militarization to all the railway's employees (office and maintenance personnel had not been militarized previously) and concessions on monetary assistance. The workshop employees returned the following afternoon, the office and maintenance personnel not until the evening of the 22nd. (44) In the
meantime, coal supplies for the all-important Škoda Works had been affected. (45)

Kestřanek's reports grew gloomier and more alarmist as the spring progressed. On March 1, he reported that the need in some areas was so great that "hope dwindles from day to day and the inclination for revolutionary tendencies grows by the same measure. The bubbling under the quiet surface is unmistakable." (46) The assessment of one of his officers in Prague was typical of those being received by the general:

The food situation grows worse by the day; any thought of supplying coal is out of the question; clothing is not available and even if it were, prices would be prohibitive...only the intervention of the security forces at retail shops prevents the use of any means, including violence, in trying to procure the bare necessities. (47)

Especially troubling to Kestřanek was the possibility that social revolutionary agitation would be able to make inroads among the already nationally disaffected middle class. As the misery of the middle class grew, Kestřanek thought this was all too likely a possibility and one that could lay the foundation for a true revolution. The threat was especially real in Prague where price increases squeezing the middle class had been most severe. (48) The military commander in Plzeň also reported that the middle class there was particularly hard hit. They generally had fixed incomes and could not compete for scarce food supplies with the wealthy and with the better-paid industrial workers who had been able to win wage increases. (49)

By April 1918, Austria was able to cover only 74 percent of the already inadequate 165 grams per person per day flour ration for the urban population. In May, that dropped to 57 percent, then to 45
percent in June.\(^{(50)}\) The Minister of Agriculture, in a personal communication to his wife in mid-April, described the situation as dangerous, with only enough food to perhaps last until the end of the month, and nothing available for May.\(^{(51)}\) The misery engendered by the economic decline, combined with the political, social, and nationalistic excitement generated by the events of the previous months—the October Revolution, Brest-Litovsk, the Sixtus Affair, the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities—resulted in another outbreak of popular unrest and a series of increasingly open and ominous anti-German and anti-government manifestations. Gen. Kestřanek reported to Vienna at the end of March that in Plzeň, at least, anti-military, anti-German, and anti-Hungarian sentiment had become endemic.\(^{(52)}\) At the same time in Prague, military personnel had to be forbidden from participation in various Sokol\(^{(53)}\) gatherings because of the "pronounced national character" such gatherings had begun to exhibit.\(^{(54)}\)

On April 14, Gen. Kestřanek warned Vienna that he was receiving reports of extreme food shortages from almost every locality and every factory under his jurisdiction.\(^{(55)}\) In Prague, the "agitation over the constantly intensifying difficulties in the supply of food" was on the increase. Flour, grease, lard, butter and milk were in short supply, and available only through barter or on the black market for extraordinarily high prices. The situation was expected to worsen rather than improve. Attempts to provide other foodstuffs, especially meat and vegetables, were making no progress. Nonetheless, Kestřanek warned against attempts to conduct house-to-house searches to locate and confiscate food. He cautioned that it would only result in enormous
bitterness and the destruction, rather than the surrender, of any hidden foodstuffs. The situation was no better in Plzeň, where the shortage of meat, in particular, was becoming a "greater and greater calamity." (56)

The result was another outbreak of widespread worker unrest in the major industrial centers. Some of the worst occurred in and around Kladno, the mining and steel center near Prague. The worst trouble there began on the morning of May 4, when workers at three mines walked off the job, demanding an improvement in the food situation. By the afternoon, the strikes had spread to eight more mines in Kladno and neighboring Slaný. (57) By the 6th, fifteen mines were shut down and over nine thousand workers were on strike. (58) The strikers then began to form into bands and to plunder flour mills, estates, and food-laden railway cars. (59) On the 6th, the authorities dispatched police reinforcements to the threatened areas. (60) Nonetheless, the estate of the former Prime Minister, Count Clam-Martinic as well as those of the princely Furstenberg and Schwarzenberg families were attacked and robbed on May 6 and 7. (61) The striking miners, along with their families, moved into the neighboring districts of Lány (Laun), Roudnice (Raudnitz), Kralupy n. Vltavou (Kralup a. Moldau), Mělník, and the Prague suburbs of Smíchov and Karlín, where they stole what food they could find. (62) In Smíchov, roving bands of up to 200 striking coal miners attacked numerous flour mills. (63)

On the 7th, three companies of troops were sent to Kladno and a battalion was sent to Slaný. Late that afternoon, martial law aimed at seditious behavior was declared in the Kladno, Slaný, Rakovník
(Rakonitz), Nové Strašecí (Neustraschitz), Unhošt (Unhoecht), and
Křivoklát (Purglitz) districts.\textsuperscript{(64)} That evening, the martial law
provisions were expanded to allow the military to act in the case of
robbery.\textsuperscript{(65)} Vigorous action by the military, including the use of
automobiles to patrol the district, and the arrest of some 600 people
calmed the situation.\textsuperscript{(66)} By the 10th, Gen. Kestřanek could describe
the situation as "stationary" but warned that it was only the threat of
force that made it so.\textsuperscript{(67)}

May Day offered Prague's workers another opportunity to voice
their grievances. In keeping with their new-found cooperative spirit,
the Social Democrats and the Czech Socialists agreed to a joint
celebration. In addition to the normal May Day calls for social
justice, peace, and national self-determination, speakers emphasized
the demand for a Czechoslovak state.\textsuperscript{(68)} Some 70,000 workers demon-
strated in the old town ring, in Wenceslaus Square, and in front of the
office of Národní listy, singing revolutionary songs, chanting "Hang
the Kaiser," and demanding more food.\textsuperscript{(69)}

The following days saw a surge of unrest throughout the city,
with regular demonstrations, many accompanied by rock-throwing and
sometimes by plundering, that resulted in hundreds of arrests.\textsuperscript{(70)}
According to the military authorities, recent wage increases ordered by
the Beschwerdekommission had not been enough to placate Prague's
working class. In addition, the shortage of bread--and the terrible
quality of that was available--had reached crisis proportions. Vienna
was warned that if bread was not available soon, there would be no
possibility of avoiding widespread strikes. "Nationalist agitation"
heightened the tension, as the accusation that bread was being exported to Germany and to German areas of the monarchy was common. (71) The openness of the Czechs' anti-German and anti-government sentiment by May is striking. Military officials reporting to Vienna were shocked by the flaunting of the "Russian colors" in the lapels of Prague's young workers and apprentices, and by the lack of police concern. (72) German speakers were publicly insulted on the street, even by "well-dressed, middle class" Czechs, and were often refused service in Czech-owned businesses. (73) The military officials warned that the majority of the Czech workers, and especially the young ones, like the majority of the Czech population of Prague, were entirely lacking in any feeling of Austrian patriotism. (74)

Plzeň, too, was hit by increased unrest in conjunction with May Day. On the morning of April 30, strikes occurred in the gun forging, steel finishing, and shot production sections of the Škoda works. By that afternoon, the entire 35,000-man workforce was off the job, and did not return until the afternoon of May 2. (75) Public demonstrations on the 4th forced the authorities to use troops to reinforce the police in protecting the offices of the district headman. (76)

Unrest on a large scale began now to affect smaller, previously quiet, communities. In Náchod in northern Bohemia, for instance, a demonstration of some 2000 people in the afternoon and evening of May 6 turned into a rock-throwing melee. Police and military reinforcements had to be rushed to the scene, and more than fifty people were arrested. (77) Police and troops were forced to break up another demonstration of 1500 people on the following evening. (78) More
serious outbreaks occurred a few days later in Nová Paka (Neupaka), also in northern Bohemia. There, additional police and troops from Jičín and Litoměřice were called in on the afternoon of May 10 to assist against a crowd of some 2000 people gathered in the center of the town. The crowd tried to break into the residences of the district headman and a local tax official, as well as nearby shops, and pelted the police with rocks. That evening, several thousand demonstrators from the city and environs again gathered in the town center, then began to break windows in public buildings, in the residence and offices of the mayor, and in the residence of the district headman. Warehouses and relief kitchens were robbed, and there were attempts to start fires. Property damage was extensive throughout the city. (79)

In this atmosphere, and with the successes of the Rome Congress still fresh, Czech politicians succeeded in turning the long-planned fiftieth anniversary celebration of the founding of the Czech National Theater on May 16 in Prague into a nationalistic and pan-Slavic demonstration. Polish, Ukrainian, and Yugoslav participants in the celebration were greeted by hundreds singing the anthem "Hej Slovánci" at their arrival on the evening of May 14. (80) Thousands demonstrated outside the National Theater the following evening, and then again outside the hotel where the foreign participants were housed on the afternoon of the 16th. (81)

That evening, "many thousands" gathered outside the National Theater during the official celebration. Inside, Kramář welcomed the politicians and journalists and concluded his address by quoting the prophecy of the mythological Libuše (wife of the founder of the first
The Czech dynasty: "Our nation will never pass away...." The crowds then marched to Wenceslaus Square to listen to further patriotic speeches and to cheer Masaryk and Wilson. The police had to be called in to disperse the rally. The city was plagued for the next few days by incessant unrest. On the 17th, a large demonstration occurred in Wenceslaus Square, and the police again had to intervene to disperse demonstrators outside the hotel housing visiting dignitaries. The authorities reacted on May 18 by banning marches and public gatherings and threatened the use of force if the ban was violated. In addition, publication of Národní listy was suspended when it tried to publish this appraisal of the preceding days' events:

The awareness that we are not alone—that we stand firm here in the heart of Europe, and all around, behind the enemy sea, we have sincere, good friends who believe in us and are bound to us—strengthens us and allows us to overlook the misery of the present, and maybe even the hunger.

The authorities' countermeasures were not immediately successful. Daily demonstrations in Wenceslaus Square persisted through the 22nd and forced the police to impose a 9:00 P.M. curfew that was in force until May 27.

Meanwhile, in Rumburk (Rumburg) in northern Bohemia, some 800 Czech troops of the 7th Rifle Battalion, most of whom were returned prisoners of war, mutinied on the morning of May 21. The mutineers were able to heavily arm themselves and occupy the town. A small contingent set out by train almost immediately, the rest began to march south, hoping to reach purely Czech areas and simultaneously spread the revolt to other garrisons. The main body of the
mutineers (about 600), armed with machine guns and grenades, reached Nový Bor (Haida) in the Česká Lípa (Böhmische Leipa) district by the evening of the 21st. There they were met by loyal troops and a short battle ensued. About half the mutineers surrendered, the rest fled.\(^{90}\) The military commandant in Litoměřice declared martial law covering the Rumburk, Varnsdorf (Warnsdorf), Česká Lípa, Děčín (Tetschen), Česká Kamenice (Böhmisch Kamnitz) and Jablonné (Deutsch-nagel) districts.\(^{91}\) Ultimately, over 500 troops were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment, and 24 were sentenced to death (14 of these were subsequently commuted to prison sentences).\(^{92}\) Local officials reported that the civilian population remained generally quiet and there was little overt public support for the mutineers.\(^{93}\) Nonetheless, officials in Prague were genuinely alarmed. Governor Coudenhove reported to the Minister of the Interior on May 24:

> The events were mostly of a military nature, but since they also affected civilians, they were of grave concern to the administration as well. First of all, the connection with the Russian social revolution and the military and internal political situation in the monarchy has become clearer. I need not go into the frightful danger of such happenings, and especially on Czech soil. I am convinced that the military authorities have done and are doing everything in their power in order to anticipate and prevent a catastrophe. Naturally, they will find support and cooperation from the political administration. In order, however, that this preventive activity and cooperation may be successful, I regard a special, painstaking, and precise supervision and screening of the prisoners of war returning from Russia as essential....

As far as the events of May 21 are concerned, it is perhaps superfluous to point at the great danger that they mean to us. It was only because of the lack of organization and leadership among the rebels on the one hand, and on the other because of the immediate, powerful and well-directed intervention by the military and political organs and the gendarmes that the mutiny was suppressed in a few hours without losses on our side. Had the rebels succeeded in advancing southward and had they found support—and this was
by no means impossible—among the civilians in these regions, we might have by now faced a regular revolution in several parts of Bohemia. (94)

To compound Czech unhappiness, the Seidler Government in the winter and spring grew more receptive to the demands of the radical German nationalists for the partitioning of Bohemia into distinct Czech and German administrative units. The German deputies began to talk in terms of a German Bohemian Staatsrecht to mimic the Czech's centuries-old claim to Bohemia. (95) As early as January, Prime Minister Seidler promised the German nationalists in the Reichsrat that he would support the establishment of a German district court in Trutnov (Trautenau) in northern Bohemia, a concession the Germans had been fighting for since the 1870's. (96) This promise was vehemently denounced by the Czechs. (97) As the enactment of this legislation required by law an opinion of the Bohemian Landtag, which was not in session, nothing was accomplished immediately. (98) (By the time this legislation was finally enacted in late summer 1918, the situation had evolved so far that the Czechs simply ignored it.) (99)

By April, Seidler had moved even closer to the nationalists' position, primarily under the influence of the radical nationalist Baron Pantz. (100) In a ministerial meeting on April 29, while the Reichsrat was recessed, he suggested that the government issue an ordinance which would administratively divide Bohemia into national districts, a policy historically anathema to the Czechs. (101) Seidler seems truly to have believed that this was not a one-sided concession to the Germans and would be accepted by the Czechs with only a minimum of protest. He talked of eventually mollifying them with the
appointment of an Oberstlandmarschall.\(^{(102)}\) The Minister of the Interior, Count Toggenburg, argued in a similar vein, foreseeing perhaps an eventual royal coronation in Bohemia as a sop for the Czechs, while the Justice Minister argued that the only disadvantage for the Czechs was that it ended any hope for the "unrealizable Czech state."\(^{(103)}\)

Support for this policy within the Cabinet was not unanimous. The Minister of Agriculture, Count Sylva-Tarouca, for instance, argued against it and warned that the Czech reaction would be greater than Seidler had expected.\(^{(104)}\) Nevertheless, the Prime Minister was insistent, and on May 19—in the midst of the celebrations in Prague surrounding the anniversary of the founding of the Czech National Theater—the government announced its plans for the reorganization.\(^{(105)}\) Bohemia was to be divided for administrative purposes into twelve districts, seven purely Czech (Čáslav, Jičín, Hradec Králové, Plzeň, Tábor, Písek, and Prague), four purely German (Cheb, Litoměřice, Liberec [Reichenberg] and Trutnov), and one mixed (České Budějovice [Budweis]).\(^{(106)}\)

The South Slav Reichsrat deputies joined with the Czechs in protesting the sudden administrative resolution of this long-running constitutional problem, especially as it was accomplished with no Czech input.\(^{(107)}\) Both groups discussed the possibility of boycotting the Reichsrat in retaliation, but decided against it.\(^{(108)}\) They did, however, rail against the proposals. Deputy Kalina's denunciation was typical of Czech radical nationalist reaction:

\[\text{The Prime Minister wants thus to retain the Crown Lands but then crumble them into districts....that is not union, but}\]
further division. *Divide et impera.* Another centralizing, Germanizing tendency lies in his program.(109)

At the same time Seidler decided to follow the so-called "German course", his ability to govern was in the process of being undermined by the defection of the Poles from the governing coalition.(110) Seidler reacted by campaigning, as Clam-Martinić had done the previous spring (See above, pp. 41-42), for government based on the use of Paragraph 14 of the 1867 Constitution. He wanted to convocate the Reichsrat only to pass the budget, then use Paragraph 14 to impose the "German course" on Bohemia.(111)

The threat posed by Seidler's plans for Bohemia and especially the threat of the use of Paragraph 14 acted as a strong impetus to speed the revival of the Czech National Committee, which had fallen into inactivity since the previous summer. The arrival of news that the French government (on June 29) recognized the right of the Czech National Council in Paris to represent Czech interests also hastened the process.(112) The task had been entrusted to a committee headed by Antonín Švehla, who devised a plan that apportioned membership in the National Committee to the political parties based on their relative strength in the 1911 parliamentary election, the last one held.(113) At a meeting on July 11 led by Kramář, the party leaders accepted this scheme, and on July 13 the creation of a new "Czechoslovak National Committee" was announced.(114)

The newspaper announcements the following day stated that the Committee was to represent the political will of the Czech nation in its drive to seek "the right of self-determination in an independent, democratic Czechoslovak state, with its own administration, its own
home, and under its own sovereignty." (115) The Committee was chaired by Kramář, with the Agrarian Švehla and the Socialist Klofáč as vice chairmen, and the Social Democrat František Soulup as secretary. (116) The entire Committee consisted of 38 members (including the above four), with ten Social Democrats, nine Agrarians, nine State's Rights Democrats, four Socialists, four Populists, one Old Czech, and one Realist. (117)

By using the 1911 election results to determine its make-up, the National Committee was almost certainly more socially conservative than the population as a whole. Material deprivation, war weariness, months of strikes and unrest, and the example of the Russian revolution had radicalized much of the Czech population. In particular, Klofáč's Socialists probably were the most significantly under-represented in relation to their popularity. (118) The Socialists and Social Democrats accepted this arrangement, in spite of the fact that the Committee was under the control of Kramář and the State's Rights Democrats.

As it became clear, however, that the State's Rights Democrats were thinking not only of the struggle for independence, but also in terms of post-independence policy planning, the socialist parties began to organize themselves to be in a position to represent the interests of the Czech working class. (119) The culmination of this effort, not achieved until September 6, was the formation of the so-called Socialist Council (Socialistická rada). It consisted of the presidium of the Socialist Party and the directorate and executive committee of the Social Democratic Party, a total of thirteen, most of whom were simultaneously members of the National Committee. (120) With the Social
Democratic Party firmly under the control of its nationalistic wing and with the strident nationalism of the Socialist leaders Klofáč and Štěpán unabated, the Socialist Council was prepared to subordinate itself to the National Committee. (121)

In the meantime, the food situation in the Czech lands took another turn for the worse. In mid-June, the bread ration was halved, to 82.5 grams per person per day, with the reduction being somewhat less for manual laborers. (122) Kestřanek reported that, in fact, in Prague and Plzeň the ration had been effectively halved long before; now there were no supplies coming in from outside to even keep it at that level. (123) In the third week in June in Plzeň, for instance, the city went for five full days without any flour or bread available. (124) The result was another outbreak of unrest and rioting. The worst occurred in Plzeň, where plundering on the 21st was answered by police gunfire that killed five people, some of them, according to the military report, probably innocent bystanders. (125) Even the postal workers, a previously non-militant group that did not think of itself as working class, copied the working class and staged a one-hour demonstration strike in Prague on June 20. (126)

The military head in the Vysočany district of Prague reported that no flour had been delivered for two weeks, the bread supply was irregular, inadequate, and what was available was of low quality, the meat supply was insufficient, and fruits and vegetables were available only at "unjustifiably enormous" prices. (127) Making the situation even more tense were the widely accepted newspaper reports that the Viennese population, and especially its workers, were much better
provided for than were the Czechs, and the equally widely accepted belief that the some shops were hoarding food made available only to the wealthy. The military head in Plzeň reported much the same situation. There had been no bread, flour, or potatoes for two days, and significant parts of the population of the city and its environs now had gone without these commodities for weeks. He warned that the repeated promises to the workers about supplies from the Ukraine, Hungary, and Germany were increasingly ineffective as nothing improved. Besides, the official warned, the population was too intelligent not to be able to tell from the newspapers that the promises were all empty.

The situation did not improve as the summer progressed. Gen. Kestřanek reported at the end of July that total and partial strikes were bedeviling the economy as the food shortages showed no sign of improvement. In Plzeň, the situation was quiet since the deaths on June 21, but, according to the station commander there, it was only with the most energetic measures that it remained that way. Profiteering was being carried on openly, with little fear of state authority. The blame for both the lack of food and the outrageous profiteering was being placed by the public solely on the government. By August, the military authorities were warning Vienna that something was going to have to be done about the nationalistic and anti-government public speeches being given by Czech politicians. With the shortages of food and the costs of even the most basic necessities of everyday life (matches, tobacco, clothing) increasingly beyond the reach of not only the working class, but now the middle class, the
inflammatory speeches were falling on very fertile ground. The most disturbing problem for Kastřanek was the growing number of desertions in the military. Many of the deserters had turned to crime, and their activity was having a demoralizing and pernicious effect on the population as a whole.

In the meantime, the Seidler Government's struggle to devise a means to govern effectively proved futile. The Prime Minister could generate no support within his own Government for resorting to extraparliamentary government based on the use of Paragraph 14. Even the German nationalists objected to that course. Seidler offered his resignation on June 23, but the Emperor refused to accept it and on June 28 instructed the Prime Minister to reconvene the Reichsrat on July 16. In a conference with all the parties that lasted until midnight on July 13, Seidler made one last try, but finally had to resort to appealing to the parties not to do anything that might make a bad impression outside the monarchy.

For the Prime Minister, the reopening of the Reichsrat was a disaster. In his opening speech, he tried to justify his plans for the "German course":

...And if under these circumstances, when the Government finally foresees the agreement between the nations that it has been striving for so long and so patiently, the suggestion of a German course is perceived, far be it from me to want to contradict that suggestion. For if there is a political course in Austria, it can only be one which grants full protection to the legitimate interests of the German people.

It is an old and true dogma that in Austria one cannot govern against the Germans no more than one can govern without them. This is not merely valid for this Government, but for every Government; even more striking, it is a barely intelligible mistake when it is widely accepted that an alliance of non-German parties could lead to the formation of
a majority. The German people are today the backbone of this polymorphic state, and they shall always remain so.

It is in this spirit and in no other that the present Government decided to hold fast to the course adopted and to stand firm in its further pursuit....Among the many political fairy-tales with which our age is so rich, there is the belief that the Germans of Austria aim to suppress the other nationalities, that they want to humble them under German domination. What the Germans in Austria do demand, and with complete justice can demand, is only the acknowledgement of the principle that, within the sphere of equally entitled nationalities, the German people, based on their history and their culture, are to be granted their rightful status.(138)

The speech was received icily, with only the radical German nationalists showing any signs of support.(139) The Czechs responded acidly. Stránský introduced a motion to charge Seidler with four constitutional violations, including the adjournment of the Reichsrat since March, the inducement to an extra-legal state of affairs, "dishonest and false speech", and the division of the Bohemian kingdom.(140) While legally groundless, the action offered the Czechs the opportunity to use the Reichsrat to vilify the Government in terms that left little doubt about the depth of their disaffection.(141) Stránský, for instance, declared:

The Slavic peoples of Austria have clearly and distinctly stated in their declarations what they want and what they do not want. If, instead of making all despotic factors subservient to our national will, Herr Seidler endeavors to erect an Austria which must have the German people as the spine and the head, then he must be made to understand that we abhor to the end of time his Cisleithanian Austria infected with a German spine, that we will fight it to the very last, and we will, God willing, surely demolish it so that not even the stench of Seidler's Austria remains.(142)

Soukup, more precisely if less colorfully, spelled out the Czech radicals' goals. "What we want," according to Soukup, "is not national autonomy as an alternative to a national state; we do not want the departmentalization (Departmentiesiering) of the nation and people
under the tutelage of the central bureaucracy; we call for the organization (Konstituierung) of the nation under the full sovereignty of the will of the people."(143)

The Czech motion was defeated (though it did receive 162 votes, including, besides the Czechs, those of the Yugoslavs and some of the Poles and Italians, to 213 against), but Seidler still was not able to command a majority, and resigned on July 22.(144) He immediately was appointed by the Emperor to the post of Cabinet director, thereby helping to mollify the German nationalists.(145) Seidler was replaced by Baron Max von Hussarek, a conservative former minister of education. Hussarek hoped to engage the Czechs in serious negotiations that might win their support for his Government, but soon turned to a version of Seidler's policy when it became clear that the Czechs were no longer interested.(146) He continued to negotiate with them, nonetheless, but only as a means of proving that agreement was impossible.(147) Stanš used his efforts in early August, declaring that the Czechs "cannot have confidence in either the constitutional or national view of the Cabinet."(148) The Government did contemplate taking action against the National Committee in late August, but the Minister of the Interior argued that action would only call attention to its existence and would be politically difficult because of the toleration of similar German organizations.(149)

By the beginning of September, any hope of agreement with the Czechs was doomed.(150) The German offensive on the Western front had ended in failure in August, removing the threat of an Allied collapse and emboldening the Czechs. More important, on August 9, the British
had joined the French in recognizing the Czechoslovak National Committee in Paris as the legitimate representatives of the Czechslovaks. The United States, going even further, recognized the Committee and accepted it as the representative of a belligerent nation. With this, the rupture between the Czechs and the Austrian government was complete. At Beneš's urging, the National Committee in Prague and the Union of Czech Reichsrat deputies adopted a resolution on September 29 which solidified the break. It declared:

Our nation can never expect to get its liberty from those who at all times regard it only as a subject of ruthless exploitation....Our nation has nothing in common with those who are responsible for the horrors of this war....The Czech nation will follow its anti-German policy whatever may happen, assured that its just cause will finally triumph, especially today when it becomes a part of the great ideals of the Entente, whose victory will be the only good product of this terrible war.

Hussarek began to scramble to try to secure the German areas of Bohemia before they could become an issue at a future peace conference. Under heavy pressure from the German nationalists, he hastened to introduce the "German course" begun by Seidler, including the establishment of the court at Trutnov and the reorganization of district government in Bohemia. By this time, however, events were moving so quickly outside the monarchy that Hussarek's moves were meaningless. The final, well-documented, stages in the dissolution of the Monarchy were well underway. By September, Vienna began to fear that its position was hopeless. When his German allies would not cooperate, Emperor Karl unilaterally addressed a note on September 14 to all the belligerents inviting them to enter into discussions of the "fundamental principles" of peace. All the Allies rejected the
proposal. By October, the German military's confidence had flagged and they were ready to try to deal with the Allies. On October 4, both states offered to discuss peace terms based on Wilson's Fourteen Points. To show its readiness to comply with the spirit of the Fourteen Points, the Government issued an Imperial Manifesto on October 16 which called for the federalization of the Austrian half of the Empire (the Hungarian government refused to do the same). To carry it out, the manifesto recognized existing national committees and encouraged the creation of others. As far as the Czechs were concerned, the manifesto promised too little and came far too late. Most important, with the Hungarian refusal to cooperate, the Czechs and Slovaks could not be united in a single political entity.

The National Committee moved ahead with plans to assume power. In the meantime, however, the Socialist Council decided on October 12 to call a general strike for the 14th as a means of protesting the export of food and coal from Bohemia. The speeches drafted by the Council to be read at protest meetings included mention of a sovereign Czechoslovak state. Both the National Committee, fearing the action might jeopardize the peaceful transfer of power, and the government in Vienna, fearing a Bolshevik revolution, moved to avert it. The National Committee sent word around the country that they did not support the demonstrations, while the Bohemian Governor banned them. Nonetheless, they went on throughout much of the country, and were backed up by a token general strike. They did not, however, turn into any sort of a revolution. The Austrian government, on the other hand, seeing it as a first step in a feared social
revolution, began to view the National Committee as a bulwark against violence and Bolshevism. (161)

The National Committee, having successfully defended its authority vis-a-vis the Socialist Council and buoyed by Wilson's October 19 reply to Vienna stating that Austria-Hungary would have to negotiate, not with Wilson, but with the Czechs and Slovaks, moved to affect a peaceful transfer of power (162) The opportunity presented itself when, on October 27, the government in Vienna asked the United States for an immediate armistice based on acceptance of Wilson's October 19 note, which implied the recognition of the right of the Czechs and Slovaks to independence. On the following day, representatives of the National Committee, professing to be acting to carry out the Emperor's federalization manifesto, informed the Bohemian Governor's deputy that they were assuming administration of the country. That evening, a general meeting of the Committee passed its first law, establishing an independent Czechoslovak state. (163) With the refusal of the troops of the Prague garrison to act against the Czech population on October 30, (164) the National Committee was safely in control, and Czechoslovak independence was assured.
Notes

(1) Národní listy, February 14, 1918, in Otáhalová, doc. 2483, p. 321. Publication of the newspaper was temporarily curtailed because of this.

(2) Národní listy, March 6, 1918, in ibid., doc. 2531, p. 329.

(3) Censored from Národní listy, March 24, 1918, KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-9 ex918.

(4) Národní listy, March 4, 1918, in Otáhalová, doc. 2528, p. 328.

(5) Národní listy, March 5, 1918, in ibid., doc. 2529, pp. 328-329.

(6) Národní listy, March 7, 1918, in ibid., doc. 2533, p. 329.

(7) Venkov, March 5, 1918, in ibid., doc. 2534, p. 329.

(8) Venkov, March 6, 1918, in ibid., doc. 2535, pp. 329-330.

(9) Venkov, March 7, 1918, in ibid., doc. 2536. p. 330.

(10) Censored material from Venkov, March 30, 1918, KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-9 ex918.

(11) SOA Litoměřice/Žitenice, Ch 341 15/92-93.

(12) Hlas, April 5, 1918, cited in Zeman, p. 175.

(13) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-9 ex918.

(14) Ibid.

(15) General Kestřanek reported that the large number of gaps resulting from the censoring of the "extensive commentaries" in the press occasioned snide and ironic criticism.

(16) Material censored from Venkov, April 7, 1918, in Otáhalová, doc. 2593, pp. 338-339.

(17) Material censored from Národní listy, April 4, 1918, in ibid., doc. 2594, p. 340.

(18) Kalvoda, p. 255; Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 428.

(19) Národní listy, April 4, 1918, in Otáhalová, doc. 2594, p. 339.

(20) Otáhalová, doc. 2622, p. 344.
(21) Kalvoda, p. 256; Otáhalová, doc. 2622, pp. 344-345.

(22) The text of the oath is in Otáhalová, doc. 2622, pp. 344-345.

(23) Ibid.

(24) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-10; KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/26; Otáhalová, doc. 2623, p. 345.


(26) Ibid., p. 162.

(27) Beneš, p. 338.

(28) Quoted in May, 2: 726.

(29) Beneš, pp. 325-327.

(30) Masaryk, pp. 242-243; Long negotiations were required because of Italian uneasiness about the prospects of a strong Yugoslavia on its border and because of disputes between the two over exactly where that border might be.


(32) Zeman, p. 197.

(33) Beneš, p. 338.

(34) Ibid.

(35) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-5.


(37) Ibid., 253-254.

(38) Ibid, 254.

(39) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-5.

(40) Otáhalová, docs. 2489, 2490, p. 322.

(41) Ibid., doc. 2558, p. 334.

(42) Plaschka, 1: 256.

(43) Otáhalová, doc. 2558, p. 334.
The Sokols were established in the mid-19th Century, primarily as gymnastic societies. By the early 20th Century, they commanded a large membership and established and supported institutions for intellectual and cultural as well as physical activities.
(69) Otáhalová, doc. 2666, p. 351; May, 2: 675.

(70) Otáhalová, docs. 2667, 2669, 2670, 2711, 2712, 2713, 2714, 2715, pp. 351-352, 356-357.

(71) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-11 ex918.

(72) Ibid.

(73) Ibid.

(74) Ibid.

(75) Otáhalová, doc. 2660, pp. 350-351.

(76) Ibid., docs. 2661, 2662, p. 351.

(77) Ibid., doc. 2697, p. 355.

(78) Ibid., doc. 2698, p. 355.

(79) Ibid., docs. 2700, 2701, 2702, p. 355; Plaschka, 1: 257.

(80) Otáhalová, doc. 2743, p. 361.

(81) Ibid., docs. 2475, 2476, p. 361.

(82) Ibid., doc. 2747, p. 361; Kalvoda, p. 265.

(83) Otáhalová, doc. 2747, p. 361; May, 2: 675-676.

(84) May, 2: 676.

(85) Otáhalová, docs. 2748, 2749, p. 361.

(86) Ibid., doc. 2750, p. 361.

(87) Ibid., doc. 2754, p. 362.

(88) Ibid., docs. 2772, 2773, 2774, 2775, 2776, 2777, p. 365; KA-MKSM 1918 28-3/2-22.

(89) Otáhalová, doc. 2755, pp. 362-363; Plaschka, 1: 361; Zeman, pp. 143-144.


(91) Ibid.


(93) Plaschka, 1: 369; Otáhalová, doc. 2755, p. 363.
(94) Quoted in Zeman, p. 144.
(95) SOA-Litoměřice/Žitenice, R947 15/28.
(96) May, 2: 660; Kosnetter, p. 172.
(97) May, 2: 660.
(98) Kosnetter, p. 172.
(100) SOA-Litoměřice/Žitenice, 15/106-107.
(101) Kosnetter, p. 173.
(102) Ibid., p. 174.
(103) Ibid.
(104) SOA-Litoměřice/Žitenice, 15/151-152.
(105) Kosnetter, p. 175; May, II, 661-662.
(106) Kosnetter, pp. 175-178.
(107) Ibid., p. 178.
(108) SOA-Litoměřice/Žitenice, 15/144-147.
(109) Quoted in Kosnetter, p. 172.
(110) Polish deputies, already unhappy about the creation of the Ukrainian Republic that resulted from Brest-Litovsk, split with the Government when it ceded the Cholm district to the Ukrainians. Rumpler, pp. 23-24; Taylor, p. 245.
(111) SOA-Litoměřice/Žitenice, 15/186.
(113) Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 361; Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p. 23.
(114) Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 362; Rumpler, p. 66; While the Committee styled itself Czechoslovak, it included no Slovak until October. Mamatey, "Czech Political Parties," p. 28.

(117) Ibid., 364.

(118) Rumpler, p. 67.


(122) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-12 ex 1918; May, 2: 735; Kosnetter, pp. 149-150.

(123) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-12 ex 1918.

(124) Plaschka, 2: 49.

(125) KA-MKSM 1918, 28-2/8-12 ex 1918.

(126) Ibid.

(127) Ibid.

(128) Ibid.

(129) Ibid.


(131) Ibid.

(132) KA-KM Pras. 1918, 25-1/22.


(134) SOA Litoměřice/Žitenice, 15/182-183.

(135) SOA Litoměřice/Žitenice, 15/187.


(137) Rumpler, p. 24.

(138) Quoted in Kosnetter, pp. 191-192.

(139) SOA Litoměřice/Žitenice, 15/217.

(140) Kosnetter, p. 205.
(141) Rumpler, pp. 26-27.


(143) Sitzungsprotokolle, p. 4205, in ibid., p. 105.

(144) May, 2: 738; Rumpler, p. 27; Kosnetter, pp. 206-207; Zellmayr, p. 106.

(145) Rumpler, p. 27.

(146) Ibid., p. 65

(147) Ibid., p. 67.

(148) Ibid.

(149) Ibid., p. 69.

(150) By this time, even the Czech clerical parties, the last loyal holdouts, were prepared to abandon the Habsburgs. The Christian Democrats at their party congress in May had demanded the "transformation of the monarchy into a federal union of independent national states," which also was the position advocated by the National Catholics. During the summer, as the two parties discussed the possibility of a merger, it became clear to them that federalism was not a solution with any significant support in Vienna. When the executive committees of the two parties met in September, they agreed that the new party to result from their merger should "work in harmony with other Czech political organizations towards the creation of our own democratic Czechoslovak state, which would secure full freedom for the development of national, Christian and also social justice."

Finally, in late September, the chairman of the Christian Democrats unequivocally repudiated the long-established policy of clerical loyalty and agreed that an all-out fight against Vienna was necessary. Zeman, p. 172.


(152) Quoted in Kalvoda, p. 418.

(153) Rumpler, pp. 70-71.


(156) Ibid., pp. 23-24; Zeman, pp. 221-222.

(157) Chrislock, p. 213; Zeman, p. 223; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 380.

(158) Chrislock, p. 214; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 381.

(159) Zeman, pp. 223-224.

(160) Otáhalová, docs. 3047, 3048, 3049, 3050, 3051, 3052, 3053, 3054, 3055, 3059, 3060, 3061, 3063, 3064, 3065, 3066, 3067, 3068, 3070, 3071, 3072, 3073, 3074, 3075, pp. 405-409.

(161) Zeman, p. 224; Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 4: 383.


CONCLUSION

October 28 is celebrated as the national independence day of Czechoslovakia. On that date the Czech National Committee in Prague proclaimed the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state. The announcement of that decision generated enthusiastic demonstrations throughout the Czech lands. A possibility that very, very few Czechs had even considered at the beginning of the war a mere four years earlier, and one that not many more had been willing publicly to entertain less than two years before, had suddenly come to pass.

Western historiography has tended to credit the emigres (or sometimes the Entente leaders) for this success, ignoring both the circumstances within the Czech lands and the activities of the Czech politicians within the empire. The impression of emigre predominance was strengthened by the publication, in English, of the memoirs of the most important of them. Little of the work of or about the domestic politicians has ever been available in a western language. Post-World War II Czech historians have taken a different tack. They have stressed the influence of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and its radicalizing effect on the Czech masses. In so doing, they have downplayed, or sometimes virtually ignored, the contributions of both the emigre leaders and those politicians who remained in the empire.
This dissertation has attempted to describe and explain the activities of the Czech domestic politicians and to place those activities in the economic, political, and social context in which they were carried out. It has attempted to show that, while the Bolshevik revolution did, indeed, have a significant impact in the radicalization of a great cross section of the Czech populace, the process of radicalization predated the October Revolution and was driven by forces other than it exclusively.

From the very beginning of the war, both the civilian authorities in Vienna and the military authorities in the Czech lands resorted to heavy-handed repression in the face of any evidence of even the mildest Czech dissent. This repression, out of all proportion to the threat posed to the state, alienated many (and, coincidentally, provided grist for the propaganda efforts of the emigres, which they effectively exploited). In the short run, dissent was stilled, but at the price of Czech alienation and the creation of numerous martyrs and heroes who would return to bedevil the state.

The startling changes in the political situation that accompanied the accession to the throne of the young Emperor Karl in November 1916 resulted in the unraveling of much of the repression that characterized the war's first few years. The demise of the wartime military dictatorship and the return to parliamentary government forced the Czech political leaders, for the first time since the war's earliest days, to publicly address themselves to the question of the Czechs' future vis-a-vis the monarchy. The enforced silence of the war's first two and a half years, which probably secretly pleased many of the
leaders, gave way to recurring opportunities, and recurring demands, to take a stand on the war and on the future of the empire.

At the same time that Czech political life was reawakening, there was a simultaneous resurgence of aggressive German nationalism. German nationalists tried to use the opportunity presented by the return to parliamentary government to settle, finally, the decades-old struggle between Czechs and Germans for dominance in Bohemia and Moravia. Successive governments in Vienna turned to the German nationalists as the foundation for the creation of a stable governing coalition. In doing so, they were forced to entertain the various political programs designed to ensure, at least, German domination of the historic Czech lands, and, at most, German domination of the empire. Such plans, some being implemented as late as the summer of 1918, alienated politically aware Czechs.

The American entry into the war generated new hope for the radical nationalists. With the defeat of the tsarist armies in 1915, the dreams of some for the liberation of the Czechs at the hands of a triumphant Russian juggernaut had been dashed, with no other dream to replace it. The American declaration of war, which simultaneously strengthened the Entente militarily and introduced into the public arena Wilson's ideals of democracy and national self-determination, provided that new hope and reinvigorated the anti-Habsburg politicians.

The February and October Revolutions in Russia did much the same. They provided dramatic evidence that even the most radical alterations of the existing political and social landscape were indeed possible. While the Bolsheviks' call for an immediate peace threatened the
radical nationalists' hopes, the revolution's promise of national self-determination mirrored Wilsonian rhetoric, and the calls to overthrow the existing order fell on fertile ground not only among the Czechs, but throughout Austria-Hungary.

While these political changes were occurring, the economic situation continued to deteriorate dramatically, by the final two years of the war approaching utter collapse in many areas. This collapse helped to drive even the politically unaware into opposition to the empire. Czech political leaders were being forced to make difficult, and often politically dangerous, decisions about the Czechs' future in the empire under the influence of widespread, increasingly open, and sometimes violent unrest in response to the state's inability to provide even the most basic necessities.

As the economic situation worsened each year, the unrest took on a much stronger political tone. In its early stages, much of it was unfocused and consisted of little more than the demand for more bread or more potatoes, or a call for an end to the war. As the war dragged on, however, the public mood became much more overtly anti-German and anti-Habsburg. Among most Czechs, the desperate economic straits were identified with Vienna, and even perhaps with Berlin. As a result, circumstances that one might expect to lead to pressure for a social revolution instead only added to the pressure impelling the Czechs toward a national revolution. The material deprivation only added to the long list of Czech grievances against Vienna that had been growing throughout the war. In the minds of most Czechs, want was associated not with a class enemy, but a national one.
All these factors—the indiscriminate repression of the early war years, the pressures emanating from the German nationalists, the responsibilities and pressures attendant on the return to parliamentary government, the American entry into the war with its democratic and nationalistic promises, the fall of the reactionary tsarist government in Russia and then the triumph of the Bolsheviks with their promises of peace and self-determination, the emigres' successes in winning Allied recognition of the Czech cause—helped to focus popular unhappiness about the economic situation and give its manifestations a more defined political and nationalistic tone. A government allied with the despised German Reich, domestically beholden to radical German nationalists, out of step with the idealistic goals of both Woodrow Wilson and V.I. Lenin, and unable to provide even the most basic necessities for survival, was, to most Czechs by 1918, a government to whom allegiance was no longer owed. The Czechs simply turned their backs on Vienna, which was no longer capable of forcing them back into the fold.
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