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## “THERE WILL BE NO FREE BOHEMIA WITHOUT FREE POLAND, NO FREE POLAND WITHOUT FREE BOHEMIA”. MASARYK’S VISION OF INDEPENDENT STATES\*

### Abstract

The aim of the paper is to examine, using the comparative perspective, how politicians and historians perceived the ideas applied in the process of formation of the states of Poland and Czechoslovakia. The situation in the period of 1918–20 seemed to be open to various opportunities for constituting and cooperation of independent countries, but not all these opportunities were acceptable at that time. Although some of them had a stabilising potential, the official narrative became the foundation for national historiography.

The traditional master narrative (roles of Masaryk, Dmowski, Piłsudski), interrupted by the caesura of the 1945/54–89 period, understandably affects the current understanding of a state and celebration of its anniversaries, which raises a need to find a paradigm of interpretation that deviates from the nation state. The author disputes the approach of historiography which considered military violence a defining element of the process of formation of a state. He regards choosing a perspective which explains the transfer of the traits of the founders to the states as social institutions (quasi-figures) to be beneficial. Using archival documents, he shows how Masaryk’s ideas of forming a New Europe were received in Poland and what image of the situation in Poland was presented to Masaryk. Criticism of the neighbouring state in the speeches of the members of the Sejm was instrumentalised with regard to the tensions in the home politics. That is why the author puts the dispute about the Seven-day War and the Polish-Ukrainian conflict into a broader perspective.

**Keywords:** successor states, nationalism, military violence, transnational transfer, historiographical narrative

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## I INTRODUCTION

The quotation in the title of this study is from Tomáš G. Masaryk's letter to Ignacy J. Paderewski dated 6 September 1918.<sup>1</sup> Although, during the war, Masaryk's foreign campaigns maintained some restrained respect for the Polish movement for the restoration of an independent state, the ongoing course of events showed conclusively that both movements would succeed in persuading the USA to do its utmost to ensure that these independent states would be established.<sup>2</sup> What they would look like and what they would face when the war was over was not yet known. In their self-justifications, the Polish and the Czech movements had similar conceptions of the nation, stressing the language aspect. This also entailed the subordinate categories of national history, folklore, natural conditions and historical rights, so the state could defend its borders. The proposal of a Polish-Czechoslovak federation was instead a proposition of economic collaboration and military alliance against Germany. This is how Masaryk wanted to gain the trust of people at home.<sup>3</sup> The experts' task was to objectify these categories systematically, but the founders of Poland and Czechoslovakia differed over their emphasis. They clarified their positions quite quickly during the autumn of 1918, defending them during the first years in which both states were being constituted and putting forward their arguments during the 1920s, when the pressure was on to determine the events that would commemorate the establishment of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Politicians and historians formulated theses on the founding of the state over a long time. This master narrative also ultimately informs contemporary understandings of the state and the celebration of its anniversary.

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<sup>1</sup> Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR, Archiv Ústavu TGM, collection Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk – Republic (hereinafter: MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R), box 515, inv. č. 56/a, Tomáš G. Masaryk's letter to Ignacy J. Paderewski, 6 Sept. 1918: "It is my conviction that Poles and us must now work in close union – our history teaches us that there will be no free Bohemia without free Poland, no free Poland without free Bohemia".

<sup>2</sup> Paderewski submitted his memorandum to Woodrow Wilson on 1 Jan. 1917, Masaryk later (Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation by its Provisional Government, 18 Oct. 1918).

<sup>3</sup> Jaroslav Valenta, 'Masaryk i sprawy polskie', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, xxxii, 3 (2000), 61–77 (here 71–2).

This study aims not to reinterpret the processes unfolding in both newly established states, but to observe from a comparative perspective how Poland and Czechoslovakia reflected the ideas being applied in each other's neighbouring state. Which categories were used to collect arguments in defence of an independent state, and how was the narrative of national and state history created?<sup>4</sup> The situation in 1918 appeared to be open to several possible new arrangements.<sup>5</sup> Various sectors of the population were calling for this. How were experts involved in the justification of the new state at the Paris Peace Conference?

Even more important is the question of how historians themselves worked with this narrative during the twentieth century. The successor states' centenary celebrations presented historiography with some stimuli that need to be evaluated as to whether they just tended to highlight the anniversary or opened up a mainstay interpretative framework.<sup>6</sup> Not least, memory institutions have also made a large number of relevant digitised archival materials available. Here I would like to point out the irreplaceable role played by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk in the light of newly inventoried archival documents relating to Poland between 1918 and 1920 and to revise a certain interpretative stereotype that was created in Poland by works back in the interwar period.<sup>7</sup> The formation of the two states was celebrated even after the Second World War, although Czech and Polish historiography

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<sup>4</sup> Jan Horský and Miroslav Hroch (eds), *Sto let: hodnota svobody, nebo cena za nezávislost?* (Praha, 2018); Jolanta Kolbuszewska, 'Historia w służbie propagandy? Współpraca polskich historyków z Naczelnym Komitetem Narodowym w latach 1914–1917', in Sławomir Nowinowski, Jan Pomorski, and Rafał Stobiecki (eds), *Pamięć i polityka historyczna. Doświadczenia Polski i jej sąsiadów* (Łódź, 2008), 271–89.

<sup>5</sup> The sociologist Georg Simmel in his essay 'Conflict of Modern Culture' measured the situation in 1918, "how the present is too ambivalent to remain in it", see Georg Simmel, *Peníze v moderní kultuře a jiné eseje* (Praha, 1997), 173.

<sup>6</sup> Antoni Dudek, 'Spory o Polską politykę historyczną po 1989 roku', in Nowinowski, Pomorski and Stobiecki (eds), *Pamięć i polityka historyczna*, 193–200.

<sup>7</sup> 1920 was chosen because the Supreme War Council at the Spa Conference on 28 July issued a resolution about the Polish-Czechoslovak border and in the same year the Polish-Soviet War ended (the Preliminary Treaty of Peace and Armistice Conditions was signed on 12 October in Riga, see Henryk Batowski, *T.G. Masaryk a Polska* (Lwów, 1930); Kazimierz Kierski, *Masaryk a Polska* (Poznań, 1934); Janusz Gruchała, *Tomasz G. Masaryk* (Wrocław, 1996); Marek Kazimierz Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918–1921* (Warszawa, 2001).

modified its interpretation. The traditional master narrative (roles of Masaryk, Dmowski, Piłsudski) was interrupted by the caesura of the 1945/54–89 period. At first, Czechoslovak Communists pointed out Masaryk's significance as a democratic philosopher. Later they started to erase his name from the collective memory and destroy his statues (1954). The deconstruction of the image of Józef Piłsudski in the Polish historical memory happened right after the Second World War (1945).

## II

### THE CZECH MASTER NARRATIVE

If the situation in 1918 was open to various solutions, which ideas did Masaryk use to build an independent state? Indeed, from the 1890s onwards, his conception of the meaning of Czech history was influential within the Czech lands and resonated with other peoples in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including the Poles (e.g. translations of his book *The Czech Question*). Masaryk saw the transformation of 1918 as a religious revolution and a victory of the Reformation principle over Habsburg dynastic Catholicism, which was hardly likely to find any considerable sympathy among the Poles.<sup>8</sup> Was this thesis also applicable to other successor states? And did it find acceptance among the Czechs?

Czech politicians before the First World War articulated the demand for the nations within the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire to be given equal status. During the First World War the federalisation of the Slavic nations was still under consideration among both the Czechs and the Poles. The argument based on the historical state rights of the lands of the Czech crown was logical, but it could not be applied to the annexation of Slovakia, which had no statehood. What helped here was the construct of the ethnic and cultural affinity of Czechs and Slovaks as one Czechoslovak nation with two branches. Experts

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<sup>8</sup> However, Masaryk actually understood this revolution to be a quasi-religious one: the decision for an independent state was rational and had ethical reasons, supported by the experience of the world war that Austria and Germany had unleashed. Jan Horský, 'Samostatný stát a ideály humanitní. Masarykova seku-larizovaná reformace jako model řešení situace roku 1918', in Horský and Hroch (eds), *Sto let*, 25–81 (here 35).

(diplomats, scientists and intellectuals) gathered evidence to support the validity of this construction for the Paris Peace Conference.

Czech historiography of contemporary history (e.g. Jaroslav Werstadt) in the interwar period deliberately ignored alternative concepts to Masaryk's and created a master narrative that legitimised the combined argumentation of Czechoslovakia's historical borders in the west and ethnic borders in the east.

However, one competing conception did emerge in Czech historiography. In 1917–18 Josef Pekař, apprehensive of such a state hybrid, offered Czech politicians in Prague (e.g. Antonín Švehla) a solution in the form of historical state rights because Czech politicians had the experience of this state territory. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, they had used this to successfully resist the demands of the Bohemian Germans for the secession of the border areas. According to Pekař, such a state would be fairly defined and stable. He recalled his counter position on the tenth anniversary of the Republic's establishment in 1928.<sup>9</sup> Although this was a logical position, it proved unacceptable at the time. The Masaryk intelligentsia rejected it, thus continuing the next phase of the dispute over the meaning of Czech history.<sup>10</sup> The fact that Masaryk's conception of Czechoslovakia did not find complete agreement was already politically evident during the 1938 state crisis.

On what did Masaryk base the idea of independent nation-states? On the humanitarian ideal. In his book *Nová Evropa* [New Europe], he contemplated a new European man and a new Czech man. This leads me to wonder to what extent Masaryk's readers were absorbed in their own nation-state and how they perceived the broader European context? Masaryk's humanitarian ideal at least stood a chance in Czech (Czechoslovak) society – as it was understandable and quite acceptable, but it would be a mistake to say it was deeply rooted.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Josef Pekař, *Smysl českých dějin: o nový názor na české dějiny* (Praha, 1929), 61–70.

<sup>10</sup> This superficial phase of the dispute (1918–28) was burdened by personal relations to Masaryk. Although some other historians (e.g. Kamil Krofta) critically revoked Masaryk's ideas, the thesis about the World Revolution did not affect historiographical disputes about periodisation of Czech history. Miloš Havelka, *Dějiny a smysl. Obsahy, akcenty a posuny "české otázky" 1895–1989* (Praha, 2001), 98–109.

<sup>11</sup> Horský, 'Samostatný stát', 56. The tension between credits of Masaryk's foreign campaigns and domestic resistance (the Maffie) was analysed by Jan Hálek and Boris Moskovič, "The Past is Still Alive": The Czech Anti-Austrian Resistance

Looking at the demands for Slovak autonomy, the tragic break-up of Czechoslovakia in 1938/9, and the ‘fraternal’ break-up of the two federations in 1992, it can be shown that Pekař’s interpretation later became more acceptable. Still, neither the Masaryk intelligentsia nor mainstream Czech historiography could accept this statement.<sup>12</sup> The solution would be to refer to Masaryk’s ‘revolution in minds and hearts’ or his slogan ‘democracy is discussion’. This is where contemporary historiography seeks some innovation.

### III THE POLISH MASTER NARRATIVE

After 1905, Polish politicians in Russia believed in the promises of state autonomy (Aleksander Lednicki and Roman Dmowski) and the transformation of the Empire into a federation of free nations (Leon Wasilewski). In fact, after the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, they adopted the German idea of the Polish state as a buffer zone defending Western European culture against ‘Asian despotism’. A federative conception of the Central-Eastern European states under the baton of Poland was then promoted by Piłsudski.

The downside of the founding myths is that they focus on the complicated process of creating successor states into one nodal point. In the Polish case, there were disputes over which day to commemorate.<sup>13</sup> Which narratives about the emergence of Poland competed with each other during the interwar period? Both party leaders and ideologues, and historians were involved in these disputes. The credit for independence was mainly given to the Piłsudskiite Camp. The historical master narrative for this was created by the Institute for Research in Modern History of Poland [Instytut Badania Najnowszej Historii

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as Symbol and Matter of Politics (1918–1925)’, *Střed/Centre*, xi (2019), 11–31. Otherwise most of historiography on the centenary of Czechoslovakia just tended to highlight the patriotic credits.

<sup>12</sup> Havelka, *Dějiny a smysl*. The debate on the Czechoslovakian term was opened by Adam Hudek, Michal Kopeček, and Jan Mervart (eds), *Čecho/slovakismus* (Praha 2019).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. 1 Nov. 1918 (transfer of power to Piłsudski), 7 Nov. 1918 (origin of the Provisional People’s Government in Lublin), 28 Oct. 1918 (origin of the Polish Liquidation Committee in Cracow), 15 Aug. 1917 (origin of the Polish National Committee in Paris), 5 Nov. 1916 (proclamation of the Kingdom of Poland).

Polski] (from 1936, named after Piłsudski – in 1939 it went into exile).<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the socialists recalled the merits of Ignacy Daszyński, whom Piłsudski had commissioned to form the first government. The master narrative was enriched by Piłsudski's idea of *Intermarium* (even after 1921) and in the 1930s by the concept of Prometheanism [*prometeizm*] – a movement geopolitically committed to opposing the influence of the USSR.<sup>15</sup>

The historiography of the successor states of Central-Eastern Europe found strong support in Polish historians, who in 1927 initiated the formation of the Federation of Historical Societies of Eastern Europe (although the first Chairman was a Czech, Jan Bedřich Novák, followed by Jaroslav Bidlo). Closer Czech-Polish cooperation was established in August 1933 during the Seventh International Congress of Historical Sciences in Warsaw.

What narratives have emerged in recent historiography?<sup>16</sup> Let us leave aside the purely commemorative anniversary books.<sup>17</sup> Two new starting points have recently appeared in principle. Both have sparked controversy. Andrzej Chwalba has published a book, *1919. Pierwszy rok wolności* [1919. The Independence's First Year], in which he shows the economic, social and mental divisions experienced by the political elites and the Polish population (including minorities)

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<sup>14</sup> The Józef Piłsudski Institute for Research in Modern History of Poland (New York 1943) has declared a continuity in their master narrative.

<sup>15</sup> Przemysław Waingertner, 'Argumentacja historyczna w wielkich sporach politycznych II Rzeczypospolitej', in Nowinowski, Pomorski, and Stobiecki (eds), *Pamięć i polityka historyczna*, 291–313; Piotr Okulewicz, *Koncepcja 'Międzymorza' w myśli i praktyce politycznej obozu Józefa Piłsudskiego w latach 1918–1926* (Poznań, 2001), 245–309.

<sup>16</sup> See Sławomir M. Nowinowski, *Konstatacje i nadzieje. Dyplomacja czechosłowacka wobec kwestii bezpieczeństwa zbiorowego w Europie. 1919–1925* (Toruń, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> E.g., a representative book *Polska 1918* by Paweł Skibiński explains very different areas of the interwar Poland and Polish society, but not inner social struggles, violence and different political expectations or the process of the creating of a new state. The extensive accompanying illustrations show the new horizons which the scanned period photographs, freely available at the National Digital Archives [Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe], have revealed. However, the images used for illustrative purposes only tempt us to interpret the states as quasi-characters, while historians can interpret them in the sense of pictorial sources – as an ethnographic gallery, in what light was the new state society documented and what myths did it create.

as the new state was being built.<sup>18</sup> Although it is a popular book, such a history of everyday life provides a better understanding of political culture over a substantial period of state formation than an anniversary of a single event can cover.

The second starting point was the study of the broader processes at work in Central-Eastern Europe during the First World War and the early years in which the successor states were being constituted.<sup>19</sup> This made it possible to assess the explosion of collective violence and social tensions following the war's wake. On this topic, a book was written by Jochen Böhler, which set the issue of violence in Poland in the category of civil war in Central-Eastern Europe as a necessary effect of decolonisation processes within the former empires.<sup>20</sup> However, this book is too reductive. The author inorganically links the manifestations of violence in different regions, identifying them as the primary source of nation-building movements. Militant conflicts after the First World War arose not only due to the emergence of successor states, but also because of the spreading Bolshevik revolution and apprehensions in that regard. In each region, social tensions escalated differently and naturally conflicted with any state power.<sup>21</sup> In the media, interwar Polish politicians blamed the opposition as much as the former empires and kept a close eye on their neighbours' activities.

#### IV

#### ECHOES OF CZECH-POLISH RELATIONS IN THE HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SUCCESSOR STATES

Were the successor states created as a result of collective violence or by the creative process of elites persuading the ordinary population to accept the state identity? In the context of the anniversary of the successor states, books have appeared that reflect on their emergence in a broader methodological light, asking questions without anticipating

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<sup>18</sup> Andrzej Chwalba, 1919. *Pierwszy rok wolności* (Wołowiec, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Philipp Ther, 'Czechosłowacja jako państwo pohabsburskie: rozważania o ciągłości dziejów przed i po 1918 roku', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cxxv, 2 (2018), 529–37.

<sup>20</sup> Jochen Böhler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918–1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford, 2018).

<sup>21</sup> Václav Šmidrkal, 'Fyzické násilí, státní autorita a trestní právo v českých zemích 1918–1923', *Český časopis historický*, cxiv, 1 (2016), 89–115.



any dis/satisfied response from the reader. Politicians and historians have often worked with such large formations as the nation, the state or society as if they were individuals endowed with the ability to act, will, and think (i.e. quasi-characters). Do these concepts serve as nodal points in the narrative, or do they ontologically exist?

The historian Miloš Havelka has presented three possible methodological solutions.<sup>22</sup> The sociological-nominalist perspective (Simmel and Weber) understands (national) society not as an independently existing entity but as an accumulation of individuals understanding each other based on a system of values and meanings. The second, essentialist solution (Durkheim and Elias), emphasises how the actions of individuals give rise to social relations that are equally real (i.e. they have their essence). The national society is then able to influence the actions of the individual. Finally, the narrative solution either understands the existence of the nation at the level of language only or says that national society “acts as a quasi-character in historical discourse”.<sup>23</sup> For the interpretation of historiography, Mandelbaum’s theory of social facts could be applied here, whereby social institutions (the state) exist and the characteristics of the chief protagonists can be transferred to them. Indeed, some historians describe interwar Poland and Czechoslovakia in terms of Piłsudski’s and Masaryk’s respective characteristics.<sup>24</sup> The rights of individuals were also transferred to nations. Historian Jan Horský recommends adherence to sociological nominalism (or applying Max Weber’s ideal types) or narrative constructivism, for as Miroslav Hroch reminds us, when an ethnic group proclaims itself as a nation with separate statehood, it can become one under the given circumstances.<sup>25</sup>

I shall attempt to open up the perspective to include the images they had of each other, but in a different way to traditional comparisons. This will involve how historiography testifies to the self-reflection

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<sup>22</sup> Havelka, *Dějiny a smysl*.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Čas a vyprávění*, i: *zápletka a historické vyprávění* (Praha, 2000), 272. Originally published in French as Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, i: *L'intrigue et le récit historique* (Paris, 1983).

<sup>24</sup> Jerzy Gaul, “‘Upojenie wolnością’ i społeczne oraz gospodarcze uwarunkowania odbudowy państwa polskiego w czasie rządów Naczelnika Państwa Józefa Piłsudskiego 1918–1922”, *Dzieje Najnowsze*, li, 1 (2019), 29–54.

<sup>25</sup> Miroslav Hroch, ‘Myšlenka nezávislosti v programech evropských národních hnutí’, in Horský and Hroch (eds), *Sto let*, 85–129 (here 105–8, 117–20).

of Czech-Polish relations and how it analyses the foundational ideas in everyday political life. What did the experts and diplomats observe, and what image did they convey to the centre of their state, Prague or Warsaw? Although the two movements differed, the idea of Czech-Polish cooperation resonated strongly. Putting it into political practice was very complicated, but at the same time, it was one of the few constructive solutions. Suppose Masaryk's conception of modern European man in his book *Nová Evropa* had a broader application than to just the Czechoslovak citizen. In that case, it has to be compared with other national societies.

In the Czech-Polish transnational transfer, let us note: 1) Masaryk's assessment of internal Polish politics and social tensions (including the thorn of Polish Catholic politics), 2) the dispute over the Cieszyn region, 3) the media coverage of Czech issues in the context of the internal political struggle in Poland, and 4) the Polish-Ukrainian dispute, which affected Czechoslovakia indirectly but was important because of the nature of the violence there and its impact on the civilian population, including the Czechs in Lviv and eastern Galicia.

## V

### MASARYK'S REFLECTIONS ON THE POLISH AND CZECH QUESTION

Newly inventoried archival documents in Masaryk's collection show which negotiations Masaryk held with Polish politicians and what reports he received on the development of the internal situation in Poland in 1918–20.<sup>26</sup> In addition to Masaryk's reflections on the Polish question, the stereotype of Czechs, the image of everyday political life in the first year of the new state (with regard to Chwalba's theses), and the fears of violence communicated to Prague by Czechs settled in Poland, especially in Volhynia and Galicia (with regard to the theses of J. Böhler), are evident here.

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<sup>26</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515 and 516. Other issues do not appear in these boxes. One can add Masaryk's interest in the Polish Eastern Front or information about the support for autonomy of Slovaks from Poland; Janusz Gruchała, 'Wschodnia granica Polski w opinii czeskich środowisk politycznych (1918–1938)', in Ewa Orlof (ed.), *Od poznania do zrozumienia: Polacy, Czesi, Słowacy w XX wieku* (Rzeszów, 1999), 35–51; Ewa Orlof, *Polska działalność polityczna, dyplomatyczna i kulturalna w Słowacji w latach 1919–1937* (Rzeszów, 1984), 115–32.

Masaryk had previously written about the Polish question before the war in *Rusko a Evropa* [Russia and Europe, 1913] and then in *Nová Evropa* [New Europe, 1917].<sup>27</sup> During the war, he followed American journalists' assessments of Dmowski's policies, and adopted the following position on him: because of his formerly pro-Tsarist sentiments, he was anti-democratic and pro-imperialist, so it would be difficult to work with him, as well as with other Polish *Endeks*.<sup>28</sup> This position was confirmed by Dmowski in his article 'On the Future of Poland', where he stated that the Polish nationality was of a different nature to the Czechoslovaks and the South Slavs and that Poland did not belong to the Habsburg Empire: "Therefore whilst struggling against Austria, we do not forget that our principal enemy is Germany. On the other hand, we do not belong to the Danubian system, as we are separated from all the rest of the Austrian Empire by the Carpathian Mountains".<sup>29</sup> However, the declaration of the separation of Galicia complicated Czech plans at home, for after the departure of 106 Polish deputies, the German deputies would have 232 seats in the Reichstag in Vienna, leaving only 178 seats for the other nations.<sup>30</sup>

As the situation developed, Masaryk had to revise his pre-war observations on the Polish question considerably. Similarly, during the war, he changed his attitude towards the importance of revolution. He saw an association between revolution and the Reformation at the cultural and political Protestantism level. However, this conception (the ideal type) did not promote Czech exclusivity either in historical or denominational terms, but provided the ethical values on which the successor states were to build.<sup>31</sup> In the victory of the First World War, Masaryk saw confirmation of the historical development of humanity

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<sup>27</sup> Later Masaryk created a determining picture by publishing his memoirs: Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Světová revoluce* (Praha, 1925).

<sup>28</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 56/a, issue James L. McLane, Jr., 'America and Polish Politics', *New Republic* (9 Nov. 1918), 38–40. Masaryk shared common concern before the Clericals, see *ibid.*, inv. č. 56/f, issue 'Hand of Polish Clericals Forced', *Christian Science Monitor*, x (20 July 1918), 1, about the primacy of 'clerical democrats' in the Polish National Army (Masaryk's indication for *Endeks*).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 56/f, issue Roman Dmowski, 'On the Future of Poland', *Christian Science Monitor*, x (29 July 1918), 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 56/f, typescript Štefan Osuský, 'The Polish Problem', Geneva, 26 Aug. 1918.

<sup>31</sup> Masaryk was convinced by interpretation of both terms by Adolf Harnack.

and the criticism of monarchies and the Church. For democracy and humanitarian ideals, Masaryk had a higher vertical setting for the value principles by which the conduct of the state is measured (e.g. Jesus as the source of standards). However, he was not so much concerned with the Christian ideal as with ethical rationalism. Masaryk actually broke with some Protestant theologians (e.g., Josef L. Hromádka), even though the emerging generation of experts was made up of Masarykite intellectuals, often of Protestant persuasion.<sup>32</sup>

The philosopher's analysis of the spiritual currents and culture of the Slavic peoples was now confronted by the pragmatic questions surrounding the new states' politics. His notes faithfully illustrate this from his meetings with Polish politicians. These were not reflected in historiography, and concerning the Poles, they were often limited to quotations from Masaryk's books, not published until after the war. In the USA, Masaryk also had to start dealing with Poles other than those with whom he had an understanding, such as Władysław Grabski, Casimir Czarnecki and Ignacy Paderewski. Through Paderewski, he first met Dmowski in New York on 10 September 1918.<sup>33</sup> Masaryk noted after the meeting: "Dmowski is against an independent Ukraine. I told him that an independent Ukraine would [serve] the Germans against Russia and the Poles". He warned Dmowski that Polish domestic politics needed to be unified so that not all Jews would be opposed, and to bring Poland and Lithuania together. This clearly did not win Dmowski's sympathy. Note Dmowski's demand for the Cieszyn area. Masaryk responded, "I: Nothing against it, just so long as the Racibórz area and the coal mines [are] secured for us".<sup>34</sup> He placed stress on rational reasoning. He then invited Dmowski to formulate the text of a preliminary agreement, which Dmowski did not do.

Masaryk's remarks show that, in the long run, he was much closer to other Polish politicians (such as Ignacy Daszyński). Yet, many scholars focus on the parallels between Masaryk and Dmowski. Both

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<sup>32</sup> Horský, 'Samostatný stát', 111–51.

<sup>33</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 56/b, Tomáš G. Masaryk's telegram to Roman Dmowski, 1 Sept. 1918, *ibid.*, inv. č. 56/c, Tomáš G. Masaryk's letter to Ignacy J. Paderewski, 6 Sept. 1918.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 56/d, Tomáš G. Masaryk's note from meeting with Roman Dmowski, New York, 9 Sept. 1918.

had already influenced political and intellectual thought before the war. Both emigrated and led the foreign resistance. Both argued on historical and geographical grounds. They were pretty different, and each was playing another game. It was historiography that created the legend of the founders of the two democratic states, according to which their careers only diverged after the war because Dmowski, unlike Masaryk, was pushed into opposition. Milan Scholz's latest book on the search for a Czech and Polish identity also makes this judgment.<sup>35</sup> However, Dmowski's Darwinian conception of the modern nation as a strong organism that has won over weaker societies differed greatly from Masaryk's. Dmowski's emotionally and irrationally tinged anti-Semitism had more influence on the National Democrats [*Endecja*] in the early 1920s than Italian fascism, which *Endecja* at that time admired rather than adopted.<sup>36</sup> Scholz believes that Dmowski's anti-Semitism only intensified at the end of the war, but his calls for a boycott of Jews during the pre-war elections refute this.<sup>37</sup> The rhetoric of Dmowski's texts grew into a media discourse of hate, which provoked acts of anti-Semitic violence after the war.<sup>38</sup> Hence I wish to consider how Dmowski's and Masaryk's political-philosophical concepts resonated in concrete actions. The brevity of Dmowski's post-war texts<sup>39</sup> contrasts sharply with Masaryk's syntheses *Nová Evropa, Světová revoluce* [World Revolution, 1925] and *Slované po válce* [The Slavs after the War, 1923]. Dmowski's views and attributes were projected by *Endecja* onto the social reality of the

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<sup>35</sup> Milan Scholz, *České a polské hledání identity: myšlení Tomáše Garrigua Masaryka a Romana Dmowského v komparativní perspektivě* (Praha, 2020).

<sup>36</sup> Paweł Brykczynski, *Gotowi na przemoc: mord, antysemityzm i demokracja w międzywojennej Polsce*, transl. Michał Sutowski (Warszawa, 2017), 21–2, 49, 84–5, 110. Originally published in English as Paul Brykczynski, *Primed for Violence: Murder, Antisemitism, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Poland* (Madison, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> Scholz, *České a polské*, 419. I cannot agree with his conclusion that “Darwinistic inspirations affected only Dmowski's interpretation of the history of national collectives, but not the role of historical actors. On the individual human level Dmowski held the Christian position of human ethics”, *ibid.*, 606.

<sup>38</sup> Grzegorz Krzywiac, ‘Komitet Narodowy Polski wobec kolektywnej przemocy antysemitkiej: przyczynek do dziejów antysemityzmu nacjonalistycznego na ziemiach polskich (1917–1919)’, in Kamil Kijek and Konrad Zieliński (eds), *Przemoc antyżydowska i konteksty akcji pogromowych na ziemiach polskich w XX wieku* (Lublin, 2016), 89–121.

<sup>39</sup> Roman Wapiński, *Roman Dmowski* (Lublin, 1988), 342.

Polish nation, as it might be expounded, based on the postulates behind Mandelbaum's theory of social facts.

In Masaryk's conception of the nation-state, the Polish sociologist Jarosław Kilias noticed the flexibly approved emphasis on natural law (moreover, this category better integrated Slovaks into Czechoslovakia than did historical rights).<sup>40</sup> Historical, economic and linguistic arguments were instead meant to support Masaryk's cultural understanding of the Czechoslovak nation. Even state institutions were to serve the implementation of a broader 'all-encompassing cultural programme'.<sup>41</sup> The state and the citizen are indicators of social reality, in the words of Reinhart Koselleck. With this endeavour, Masaryk traced developments throughout Central and Eastern Europe; within the space of similar wartime experience [*Erfahrungsraum*], where different horizons of expectation [*Erwartungshorizonte*] and variously generated forms of violence competed with each other between 1918 and 1921 (the approach of the Polish-Soviet War as a term of stress and conflict of the whole three years).

After the establishment of the successor states, Masaryk closely followed developments in Poland. In Prague, he welcomed the Polish emissary Stanisław Gutowski, who gave him a letter from Piłsudski referring to his interest in friendly relations between the two states. Masaryk urged Prime Minister Karel Kramář to appoint an envoy to Warsaw and, in response to Piłsudski's proposal, "to form a joint commission of five to six members to regulate economic and other relations".<sup>42</sup> Kramář did not take this suggestion any further, as he was a Russophile and critical of Poland.

However, Masaryk pursued his own foreign policy through his closest associates at the Prague Castle and in concert with Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš. It was through Masaryk's daughter Alice, Chairwoman of the Czechoslovak Red Cross among other things, that the President was approached on diplomatic matters. For example, because of the Ukrainian-Polish violence in Lviv, the lawyer Jan Nechutný

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<sup>40</sup> Jarosław Kilias, *Naród a idea narodowa: nacjonalizm T. G. Masaryka* (Warszawa, 1998), 131–7.

<sup>41</sup> Masaryk, *Světová revoluce*, 528.

<sup>42</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 56/e, Stanisław Gutowski's letter to Tomáš G. Masaryk, 21 Dec. 1918, French; letter by J. Piłsudski to TGM, 12 Dec. 1918, French; letter by Kancelář prezidenta Republiky to Karel Kramář, 25 Dec. 1918.

contacted the government authorities in Prague in December 1918 to arrange assistance for the endangered Czechs in Lviv. The Poles had also committed grave sins, but what about the Ukrainians? "Gouging out eyes, ripping open stomachs, shooting innocent Polish children – all this was done under the patronage of the Ukrainian government".<sup>43</sup> However, Kramář did not take any action in the matter, so Nechutný turned to Alice to appeal for diplomatic action from her father to save the Lviv Czechs when the Ukrainians entered the city. He called on Masaryk "in the name of love of one's neighbour and humanity", invoking his name as a human rights advocate from the time of the Hilsner affair, thus confirming Masaryk's reception of the humanitarian ideal. If we imagine it as an ideal type, we can observe how it resonated in society (in the same way that Weber thought of relating the concept of the state to empirical reality). Although there was sympathy for the Ukrainians on the Czech side, Nechutný feared their violence: "The saddest thing, however, is that the Ukrainians, whose efforts I cannot, as a Czech, deny sympathy for, are using Tartar methods, as well as the help of Prussian and Hungarian officers, as I can prove myself. And everyone knows very well what they are capable of".<sup>44</sup> The letter makes an important observation about the involvement of foreign officers in organised or military violence threatening Poland. This fact became a decisive argument for Polish military intervention in Galicia.<sup>45</sup>

## VI THE DISPUTE OVER THE CIESZYN AREA AND THE SEVEN-DAY WAR

Extensive historiographical output was devoted to the development of the Czech-Polish dispute over the Cieszyn area, dominated initially by the work of Adam Przybylski (1932) and the respected study by Jaroslav Valenta (1961). Local tensions were exacerbated between 1938 and 1945, and were not eased until after the war due to Soviet

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<sup>43</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 56/f, Jan Nechutný's letter to Alice Garrigue Masaryková, 26 Dec. 1918.

<sup>44</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 56/f, Jan Nechutný's letter to Tomáš G. Masaryk, 26 Dec. 1918.

<sup>45</sup> This context was marginalised by Böhler, *Civil War*.

pressure. It is thanks to Valenta's work that professional and media interest in the subject grew in the 1960s, and this wave emerged again after 1989 and then in association with the centenary of the Seven-Day War. The master narrative of most of the works came to a halt over the classification of the interstate diplomatic dispute.<sup>46</sup> But the drama over Cieszyn primarily testifies to the agreement of the local Polish and Czech elites (they agreed on the historical border demarcation on 5 November 1918) and the rejection of this agreement by both the Prague and Warsaw centres, both taking on the assistance of experts to elaborate their arguments.<sup>47</sup> Concerning the Cieszyn area, Warsaw argued on ethnic grounds, while Prague argued on economic and strategic grounds (e.g. the railway connection with Slovakia). The conflict over Orava/Orawa and Spiš/Spisz was also involved, but economic and ethnic arguments were insufficient. The experts had to prove where the regions belonged linguistically and culturally. The Polish geologist Walery Goetel also collected anthropological arguments to justify the required referendum, while Václav Vážný, a Czech linguist and professor at the Comenius University in Bratislava, collected evidence of the dialect on the southern slopes of Orava/Orawa to scientifically prove its historical affinity with the Slovak language. Naturalists distanced themselves from the linguistic nationalism argument when they directed attention towards joint nature conservation in the Tatras, calling for establishing an interstate national park.

In this study, I shall narrow my focus to the role of President Masaryk. As a diplomatic politician, he developed his own approach toward Poland through the Presidential Office, because he correctly perceived the limits of Kramář's foreign policy and his unpopularity with the Poles (he offered Dmowski the formulation of a memorandum). As Commander-in-Chief of the Czechoslovak troops, he was the one who gave his consent to the 'imperialistic' occupation of the locality to prevent the elections to the Constituent Sejm

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<sup>46</sup> Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski*, 180–240, who criticises mainly Edvard Beneš, but does not analyse the inner side of the conflict or the paramilitary violence, which escalated as a result of the Paris Peace Conference. See Edward Długajczyk, *Polska konspiracja wojskowa na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w latach 1919–1920* (Katowice 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Włodzimierz Dąbrowski, *Rok walki o rządy na Śląsku Cieszyńskim* (Cieszyn, 1919), 25–8; see *Kwestja cieszyńska: zbiór dokumentów z okresu walk o Śląsk Cieszyński 1918–1920*, ed. Włodzimierz Dąbrowski (Katowice, 1923).



from taking place, seeing that Warsaw had automatically called elections to the central parliament on the territory of the Cieszyn area (and minorities could not vote at that time). Both antipodes need to be explained!

When a Polish diplomatic mission headed for Prague at the end of November 1918, it was ignored by the Revolutionary Assembly. The Czech politicians – known as the Men of 28 October – were satisfied that France had guaranteed their borders within the historical limits. However, the Czech seizure of the western part of the Silesian Cieszyn area was not unequivocal. The National Committee initially accepted the local agreement on the demarcation of the border (on 5 November). Still, it was unwilling to accept the Karviná coalfield's loss and a Košice-Bohumín railway section. Polish Foreign Ministry envoy Roman Wegnerowicz had been in Prague since 21 November, but encountered delays in discussions. Archival documents show that he later complained to Masaryk that Finance Minister Alois Rašín had taunted him about which government he represented: Warsaw, Cracow or Poznań? "When he said none of them and wanted to add that he was the representative of the Polish nation, the real government, Rašín jumped in and with a spiteful laugh told him: So this is the fourth government! And he congratulated him on having so many governments".<sup>48</sup> Damian Wandycz, the father of the well-known historian Piotr S. Wandycz, sent from Warsaw to respond to Piłsudski's proposal to form a joint commission, also met with neglect. Wandycz, a chemical engineer, had once studied in Lviv and Prague. Now no one in Prague wanted to meet him. Kramář did not receive him at all, and he was not allowed to see Masaryk.<sup>49</sup> Masaryk only learned about these abortive communications from the Poles.

The fact that Warsaw called elections for 26 January 1919 in a region whose borders had not yet been demarcated was understood by Prague as interference in its internal affairs. Masaryk decided to intervene militarily on 17 January 1919, with the proviso that a memorandum be sent to Warsaw to give it at least 48 hours to respond. But there was a breakdown in communication. Masaryk then apologised

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<sup>48</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 56/ch, note about Wegnerowicz's complaining about the behaviour of Prague politicians, 18 Feb. 1919.

<sup>49</sup> See Piotr S. Wandycz, 'Listy Józefa Piłsudskiego do Masaryka i Focha', *Niepodległość*, xv (New York-London 1982), 108–10.

to Paderewski in reply to his telegram of 26 January 1919 about taking over as Foreign Minister. He referred to a friendly personal relationship: "In all this official uncertainty..."<sup>50</sup> Masaryk's comments in the margin of the letter show his dissatisfaction with the fact that on 15 January, the Prime Minister made unnecessarily angry remarks about Poland and the Cieszyn area, but did not make any proposal to them: "It was probably a mistake not to deal more seriously with the Poles at once and to let them take the lead. I decided on the occupation".<sup>51</sup> Later, in interviews with journalists and in his memoirs, he showed that Dmowski had not taken advantage of Masaryk's generous offer to formulate a memorandum. The occupation of the coalfield by Poles as instructed by the Polish government, which was still awaiting international recognition, could not be allowed by Czechoslovakia. Without trying to justify Masaryk's command of military occupation, one can consider in the *Světová revoluce* two kinds of nationalism – negative and positive. Masaryk trusted that in successor states a negative nationalism based on egoism and chauvinism would fade away.<sup>52</sup> Could Masaryk consider the elections to the Constituent Sejm in the Cieszyn area as an act of Polish (or Piłsudski's) egoism?

The historiography put up the Czechoslovakian master narrative with the memories of the founders as well as with the publications of the young generation of Czech scholars. At the Paris Peace Conference, Czech experts made a significant contribution to apologising Czechoslovak interests in the Cieszyn area. They might be described with only some exaggeration as Masaryk intelligentsia. Some of them were Masaryk's students at the university. After 1918 they felt themselves to be the bearers of the humanitarian ideal. Through their studies, they 'objectified' and shaped the quasi-character of the Czechoslovak nation. Their rational and, at the same time, totally loyal attachment to the state had its grounds in their social origins. Czech scholars often came from the lower strata of society and had

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<sup>50</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 59/a, Tomáš G. Masaryk's telegram to Ignacy J. Paderewski, 26 Jan. 1919.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 59/b, Tomáš G. Masaryk's note on the reverse side of the letter by Karel Kramář, 16 Jan. 1919. The goal wasn't the occupation of territory, rather stopping of the votes to Sejm; Valenta, 'Masaryk i sprawy polskie', 55.

<sup>52</sup> Marek Bankowicz, *Demokracja według T.G. Masaryka* (Kraków, 2015), 113–14; Masaryk, *Světová revoluce*, 286; Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*. (Praha, 1939), 62, 77.

worked their way up through education to the *Bildungsbürgertum*, while many Polish scholars were of noble birth. Although the intelligentsia constituted a negligible percentage of the state, it succeeded in configuring the transformation of the state and the homogenisation of its standards.<sup>53</sup> It was precisely because of their provincial and plebeian origins that the Czech experts made a more convincing impression on the inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia than Polish experts in the much larger and more heterogeneous area of the Second Polish Republic.<sup>54</sup> The two states also differed in the extent to which cultural patterns overlapped with the historical borders of the Czech lands, or were spread by the civilising mission to Slovakia. Polish lands not only had no clearly defined historical or ethnic boundaries, but there were significant differences between the Poznań region, Galicia, and the former Congress Poland concerning Central and Eastern European patterns of marriage, family, natality, women's status, cultural patterns of land ownership, self-government, urban networks, social policy, etc. This brings me to the question of the extent to which there was a rational attachment to the state that constitutes society [*Vergesellschaftung*] in the actions of the population, and where did affective actions tied to the nation – the tendency to be a nation in the sense of a community [*Vergemeinschaftung*] – prevail?<sup>55</sup> This question shifts attention to the internal tensions and the nature of violence in Poland, as evidenced by reports for Masaryk.

## VII

### INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUGGLES IN POLAND OR CZECHOSLOVAK INTERFERENCE IN POLAND?

Reports to Masaryk show an interest in monitoring Polish domestic politics, including critical references by Poles to Czechs. How can the Polish stereotype be understood? It was undoubtedly updated in the context of the Cieszyn War, but this conflict did not pose a fundamental threat to Poland's existence as a state. The nature of Polish parliamentary

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<sup>53</sup> Milan Hlavačka, 'Vznik československého státu – úkol pro experty. Co udržuje stát při životě?', in Horský and Hroch (eds), *Sto let*, 167–208.

<sup>54</sup> Tadeusz Kania, 'Kwestia Śląska Cieszyńskiego i wojna polsko-czeska w świetle pamiątnika paryskiego Eugeniusza Romera', *Pamiętnik Cieszyński*, xxiii (2019), 145–56.

<sup>55</sup> Horský, 'Samostatný stát', 67.

culture emerges from the reports on the proceedings of the Constituent Sejm meetings that make up the majority of the coverage for Masaryk.

At the first meeting on 10 February 1919, Chief of State Piłsudski let it be known that “Poland, surrounded on all sides by murderers, must have an army”.<sup>56</sup> The Cieszyn War had served to universalise the idea of an all-Poland invasion and justify a larger army. The Marshal of the Sejm, under parliamentary liturgy, the oldest deputy, Ferdynand Radziwiłł, found it desirable in this regard to utter an ultramontane libation: “to pay homage today to the Vicar of Christ, who in his call to the warring states stood up for Poland in particular and called upon the states waging war, which in particular had plunged our country, our poor population, into immeasurable misery and caused extraordinary losses, – to exercise caution towards us”.<sup>57</sup> These and other speeches must have sounded to Masaryk like emotional national romanticism. According to Czech historian Jaroslav Werstadt, Masaryk underwent a transformation during the war. He emphasised rationalist ethical radicalism and became “distrustful of the so-called instinct of the nation”, po-faced heroism and martyrdom.<sup>58</sup>

At the third meeting on 20 February, Paderewski also critically attacked the Czechs, who were accused of surrendering to the Russians during the war, leading to a double historical shortcut. Surrendering was a strategy of survival at the front and was in line with the Slavic belief in assistance from Russia (then still non-Bolshevik). According to Paderewski, Czechoslovakia was supposed to atone for the Cieszyn injustice, and here he appealed to Masaryk’s virtues: “If the Czechoslovak state, headed, as it may well be, by a man of great reputation, great merit and great virtue, if this Czech state wants to make amends for the injustice done to us, then an agreement must come, for this agreement will be inevitable for the good of humanity and for the good of both nations and for the good of Europe”.<sup>59</sup> Masaryk’s model and ideas of humanity and democracy are used here for the benefit

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<sup>56</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 58/a, note of the 1st session of the Constituent Sejm, 10 Feb. 1919; see also Timothy Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence: Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia 1918–1922* (Oxford, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, speech of Ferdynand Radziwiłł.

<sup>58</sup> Jaroslav Werstadt, *Od “České otázky“ k “Nové Evropě“*. *Linie politického vývoje Masarykova* (Praha, 1920), 40.

<sup>59</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 58/a, note of the 3rd session of the Constituent Sejm, 20 Feb. 1919.

of Poland. At this point it can be demonstrated how the sense of the humanitarian ideal was both understandable and acceptable at the time, even in a foreign environment, though acceptance does not necessarily mean adoption but perhaps merely toleration.

In parliament, Daszyński held up Masaryk as a model for Polish politics, especially towards Dmowski, who had not come back home to the state.<sup>60</sup> Because the socialist Daszyński was close to Masaryk both generationally and politically, he came to be the target of a sharp attack by the radical nationalist Wojciech Korfanty. Korfanty stood up for Dmowski, who was unable to make a triumphant arrival like the one Masaryk made in Prague, because he was struggling for Poland in Paris, while Daszyński and Moraczewski had already failed as prime ministers. He accused them of pursuing activist policies during the war and only thinking within the context of a little, i.e. ethnic, Poland. If it had not been for the Dmowski's Polish National Committee, Poland would have remained in three occupation zones as a result of their policies. In Polish politics, even Paderewski's role failed to achieve the same effect as that which linked Masaryk's foreign operations with the domestic activities of what subsequently became known and rounded off after the war as 'the Maffia' (Maffie or Mafie in Czech).

Masaryk also came to act as a link between the ethnically different interests of Czech and Slovak Lutheran politics. Korfanty also learned from the Czech cause by arguing for a combination of the rights to the historical and ethnic borders of Poland, "for our historical rights to Silesia and Masuria are older than the historical rights of the Czechs and Germans. And the ethnographic character of these lands speaks in our favour".<sup>61</sup> In other words, the historical reasoning behind the claims on Polish territory was also rationally supported by the majority population figures. By making this association, Korfanty was strategically focusing on the image of those Germans and Czechs who lied to the Poles: "Finally, it is a well-known fact that Germans and Czechs lie; we are all used to it, and it was right to suspect the Czechs of preaching untruths. (Voices: 'You learned it from them!'). I know better jokes than that. The gentlemen always call an inconvenient

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, note of the 4th session of the Constituent Sejm, 22 Feb. 1919.

<sup>61</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 58/a, note of the 6th session of the Constituent Sejm, 25 Feb. 1919, speech of Wojciech Korfanty.

thing a lie, and suppose that by insisting on it, they make it the truth". However, in examining Korfanty's nationalistic rants, I come to the conclusion that he was not primarily targeting neighbouring ethnic groups in parliament. He used the media's tarnished image of Czechs and Germans (in the Cieszyn, Silesian and Poznań regions) for the internal political struggle within interwar Poland. He lays the blame for the unfavourable development of the Cieszyn conflict on both Jędrzej Moraczewski and Ignacy Daszyński. After all, the latter had seen for himself in Prague just how much the Czechs lie!

The fundamental difference between the two successor states was that Polish socialist politicians were more willing to seek a consensual solution to internal affairs and the Polish-Czechoslovak border, even though they carried the legacy of activist politics from the war, which the right strongly rebuked. Czech nationalist politicians (Kramář) distrusted building up the relations with the Poles that Masaryk had conceived during the war, and was generally critical of Masaryk's and Beneš's foreign activities. It tried all the more vehemently to cover up the traces of any loyalist domestic policy in Cisleithania during the war. Conversely, the Czech Social Democrats gained the tacit but influential support of Masaryk, who had otherwise adopted the role of a non-party member (like Piłsudski).

Reports of paramilitary violence also often entered the discourse, where they played a media role. Masaryk and the Polish socialists were aware of the impact of the dramatic experiences of the First World War and of this social revolution on the populations of every state. If I conclude that references to the Czechs served as a strategic tool for internal Polish political disputes, it is worth adding the context in which warnings about fears of Czech interference appeared. The deputy Wincenty Witos complained about how many Czechs in Poland (especially in Galicia) owned businesses and estates and occupied the positions of experts, officials, etc.: "Aren't there any Poles to fill these roles?"<sup>62</sup> The presence of Czechs here was perceived as state interference. An example of interference in the domestic affairs of a neighbouring country was added three days later by Korfanty when he pointed out that the head of the Polish Military Supply Department in Warsaw was a Czech Colonel Jan Zavřel. Voices echoed

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<sup>62</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 58/a, note of the 4th session of the Constituent Sejm, 22 Feb. 1919, speech of Wincenty Witos.

from the hall: "Get rid of him!"<sup>63</sup> According to Korfanty, Czechs wanted to be citizens of Poland, but they were not loyal to the state, and they did not take on any obligations.

However, this was not actually the case with Zavřel. Jan Zavřel (1864–1923) had a career as an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army in Przemyśl, Cracow and Vienna. At the end of the war, the Regency Council [Rada Regencyjna] accepted him into the Polish Army and appointed him head of the Economic Section at the Ministry of Military Affairs. Piłsudski promoted him to Lieutenant-General. However, it was politically impossible to keep an expert of Czech origin loyal to Poland in the army after the Seven-Day War, so he had to be dismissed on 13 March 1919. Nevertheless, both sons continued their careers in the Polish Army.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, perhaps, Czechoslovak diplomats succeeded in obtaining reports from Zavřel on internal affairs in Poland.

## VIII

### UKRAINIANS AND POLES AND THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON THE CZECHS IN LVIV AND VOLHYNIA

Relations between Slavic nations had traditionally played an important role in Czech politics. Although Masaryk's Mid-European Democratic Union initiative, introduced in Washington and Philadelphia in October 1918, had led the Polish side to protest against cooperation with the Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Masaryk was willing to support the Poles in their demands against the Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Soviet Russia in late November 'in exchange' for the Cieszyn area.<sup>65</sup>

Masaryk was well-informed about Polish-Ukrainian tensions during 1919. He knew about the secret Polish memorandum to Dr Sydir Holubovych (1873–1938), Prime Minister of the West Ukrainian National Republic (16 February 1919), stating that Polish symbols were being defaced and people were being imprisoned.

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, note of the 6th session of the Constituent Sejm, 25 Feb. 1919.

<sup>64</sup> Piotr Stawecki, *Słownik biograficzny generałów Wojska Polskiego 1918–1939* (Warszawa, 1994), 365. The entry with very fragmentary data mentions a wrong year of birth in 1873.

<sup>65</sup> Petr Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy Československa a Polska 1918–1924* (Opava, 2009), 12, 29.

Czechoslovakia's first diplomatic representative in Warsaw, Vladimír Radimský, informed Masaryk of the gloom in Poland caused by the discovery that Lviv would indeed go to the Czechoslovaks, but the peace conference made no mention of the territory east of Lviv. He explained this as a blow to Polish imperialism. At the same time, he signalled to Prague that the Czechs were not to give the Poles any satisfaction here. The Poles saw the encirclement of their state by the red revolutions as a historical mission; Radimský reminds us, "This task depends on whether Poland becomes a Noah's Ark, whether she delivers the beleaguered European West from the shackles of impending Bolshevism, or whether she herself falls victim to it". Poland must move into action, and thereby convince the West. "Without this thorough reconstruction, Poland will never become that ark, though she wants to be, and thus to rebuild...".<sup>66</sup> This Czech conception confirms the Polish identification with the buffer role.

The Silesian People's Party Chairman, Józef Koźdoń, an activist for Silesian autonomy, had a sharp exchange of views with the (hitherto) National Democrat Korfanty, who seriously argued that not only the Ukrainians were seeking Lviv, but also "the Czechs, who were systematically raping the Slovaks and reaching as far east as Užok. The Czechs secretly wish for a Ukrainian victory, as they long for a common border with the Ukrainians in order to secure a connection with the Black Sea and to cut the Poles off from that sea".<sup>67</sup> From the Polish angle, the Czech army's advance into Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia was seen as creating an eastern colony.

Czechoslovakia was primarily concerned about the spread of the Bolshevik revolution and Ukrainian plundering. The violence against the Czech colonists in Volhynia was so extreme that they came to Warsaw to ask the Polish government and army for help. Even in the nineteenth century, Czech villages in the Volhynia formed a distinct cultural element with something to offer the surrounding population with

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<sup>66</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 57/e, typescript *War* by R. Dmowski (23 pages), 19 April 1919, 12.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 57/f, file of notes about political situation in Poland, typescript, 22 March 1919, 12 pages. Józef Koźdoń (1873–1959), teacher, politician, chairman of the Silesian People Party, 1910 member of Silesian Landtag in Opava, 1923–1938 mayor in Czech Těšín. Later Korfanty belonged to the Christian People's Union (1920) and he also did not hide his admiration for Masaryk and Czechoslovakia as a successful result of the Versailles system.



regard to crafts and agriculture. Even after the war, Polish landowners spoke appreciatively of these Czechs. However, the correspondent warns that in return for this assistance, Poland would want to capitalise at the Paris Peace Conference to show how “even the Czechs believe that only the Poles can restore order in Ukraine, so... beware of this intrigue, and if the Poles come to you with this argument, leave the matter to us here. We have documents here, and we are watching everything”.<sup>68</sup> Radimský obtained this information directly from Mr Martínek, a representative of the Volhynian Czechs, who visited him in July 1919. According to him, the Volhynian Czechs were able to keep order in their villages with the help of their own police. The problem was with the neighbouring unsecured territories. Hence, it was possible to resist violence if the local villages had solid self-administration.<sup>69</sup>

However, the overall situation was desperate: “According to Mr Martínek’s reports, there is complete anarchy in Ukraine. Armed bands are headed by some 15–16 atamans (including Symon Petliura), who are robbing and plundering the country”.<sup>70</sup> But even a Czechoslovak diplomat was willing to dilute the pleas of the Volhynian Czechs in the light of geopolitics, when he recommended that the Czechoslovaks should not interfere at the Peace Conference in the Volhynian issue in the Polish-Ukrainian conflict. This might seem to entail overlooking local violence, but prudence was in order. Specific threats were made against the Czechs in the Polish parliament when, during a debate on military recruits to help Lviv, radical MP Eugeniusz Okoń referred to the violence of the Ukrainians, only to then blame it on the Czechs as well: “And what is said against the brutal Ukrainians, we also cry out today against the Czechs, those Slavs whom we used to admire but who today are reaching their hands over our ancient land, over Spisz, Orawa and Silesia; and we cry out to the Czechs: ‘Hands off, or the Polish peasant will show you the flat of his own hand, and then your face will turn pale’”.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 57/ch, copy of the Declaration on Help of Czech Nation to Polish Nation, typescript.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 57/ch, Vladimír Radimský’s letter to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7 Aug. 1919. This context was marginalised by Böhler explaining the military violence a defining element of the process of formation of a state.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 58/a, note of the 7th session of the Constituent Sejm, 26 Feb. 1919, speech of Eugeniusz Okoń.

Okoń was a radical Polish priest and a deputy in the People's Party, a Christian social current. His activities calling for the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the war are reminiscent of their radicalism of Czech priests from the Czech Catholic Clergy Union [Jednota katolického duchovenstva], who were, however, organised within a collective movement.<sup>72</sup> In a sermon at a people's camp on 6 November 1918, Okoń called on 30,000 peasants to take power by revolution and create the Tarnobrzeg Republic [Republika Tarnobrzieszka]. The deposition of officials and attacks on landowners' estates were not without violence, as was the pogrom against the Jews.<sup>73</sup> This example shows how the Polish Liquidation Committee [Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna] temporarily refrained from intervening against the Tarnobrzeg Republic for fear of collective violence, even though its activities were directed against the centrist successor state. The plundering of nobles' and peasants' farms continued into the spring of 1919.<sup>74</sup> The example of the radical deputy Okoń, suspended from the pastorate for his demagogic sermons, shows that the Polish clergy was not always unequivocally loyal to the new state. Such observations were noted with interest by the Prague Castle Office.

By the end of 1919, Masaryk was intimately informed that even in the Warsaw cafés, discontent with the inept and impotent Republican Polish government was growing. The majority of domestic opinion would thus even have accepted Piłsudski's dictatorship. "And Piłsudski himself is said to be secretly counting on this and would not even refuse a crown if it were offered to him".<sup>75</sup> The admiration for monarchism (in the context of Horthy's rising popularity in Hungary) frightened the Masaryk intelligentsia, as Czech correspondents noticed one other thing: the shift from strong antimilitarism in 1918 to the admiration of the military in October 1919: "In Poland, the military is now considered the most sacred and absolutely inviolable

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<sup>72</sup> Witold Stankiewicz, 'Okoń Eugeniusz', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, xxiii (1978), 698–700.

<sup>73</sup> Böhler, *Civil War*, 104, laconically mentioned the Republic of Tarnobrzeg as only "banditry and anarchy".

<sup>74</sup> See Chwalba, 1919. *Pierwszy rok*.

<sup>75</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 60/i, note 'Piłsudski chce być králem', 12 Nov. 1919, by a confidant from Warsaw.

institution".<sup>76</sup> So what if it wasn't disciplined or adequately armed? It had now become a key quasi-character in the master narrative and would not let this be taken away from it in the years to come. After all, the Czechoslovak legionnaires, upon their return home, dreamed of a similar role.

Certain fears of Polish militarism were justified at the end of 1919, because, as Masaryk's notes show, the Czechoslovak envoy to Switzerland, František Chvalkovský, had discovered that a large army in Poland was preparing to retaliate against both Czechs and Russia. Propaganda against the Czechs increased in Galicia.<sup>77</sup> In this context, it is necessary to mention that Czechoslovak diplomacy was under pressure from the Soviets, and it chose not to permit the transport of weapons to Poland through the Czechoslovak territory. Edvard Beneš did not want to risk the loss of the Cieszyn territory before the eyes of Paris.<sup>78</sup>

According to Poles, Kramář's policy against Piłsudski was instigated by Masaryk, who thus appeared Machiavellian. Chvalkovský also reported as follows:

... internal Polish politics was fragmented. Poznań was separatist. Korfanty criticised the chaotic politics of Warsaw. Internal politics was dominated by the agrarian question. Paderewski's crisis was also essentially an agrarian issue, and there was no majority in the Sejm. Piłsudski was an uncrowned king but couldn't stand Paderewski. Grabski was against Dmowski and against the socialists. Jews everywhere were against Poles, who accused them of wanting a state within a state.<sup>79</sup>

As Masaryk noted, developments in Poland hardly appeared to him to be an ethical and rational revolution, but rather the underestimation of a humanitarian ideal that Polish politics had yet to attain.

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 60/i, note no. 2212/19, 20 Oct. 1919.

<sup>77</sup> MÚA, AÚTGM, collection TGM-R, box 515, inv. č. 57/d, Tomáš G. Masaryk's note from a meeting with F. Chvalkovský, 4 Dec. 1919.

<sup>78</sup> Andrzej Essen, *Polityka Czechosłowacji w Europie Środkowej w latach 1918–1932* (Kraków, 2006), 45.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. č. 57/b, Tomáš G. Masaryk's notes about Poland and its foreign politics.

## IX CONCLUSIONS

The establishment of the Polish and Czechoslovak states can be described as a political revolution. The emergence of the nation-state can be characterised by three aspects: the spiritual, political and economic. The spiritual aspect shows the cultural context in which the idea of a national movement was ultimately realised or modified.<sup>80</sup> The initially declared Czech-Polish cooperation and transformation of the empires into a federation of free national states fell apart in the reality of the last weeks of 1918. This was not actually due to the Cieszyn conflict, but then if the threat or conditions of the peace conference had compelled the successor states to create such a federation, would border demarcations and regional violence have been any better resolved?

With the free-state master narrative, the debate keeps coming back to the question of which interpretation is both methodologically adequate and sufficiently loyal, since the implication of (post-)wartime violence as an integral part of the state-building process is probably not accepted by many historians. Hence, in this respect, neither Böhler's reduction to civil war status nor Chwalba's anthropological interpretation of the population's everyday life is of any help.

If we wish to analyse the creation of the successor state founding myth, we need to interpret the use of categories, narratives and images of the Other applied in the early years of the formation of the state.<sup>81</sup>

The reports presented displayed a reasonable depiction of the Czechs: one might thus innocently criticise the internal political opposition. The Czechs were used to complete the gallery of surrounding neighbours challenging the Second Polish Republic. Note that as far as the political elites were concerned, the Czechs were written about, not the Czechoslovaks. Due to these reports, Prague Castle shared fears of an escalation of the Ukrainian violence. For Masaryk, observing the speeches and actions of the political elites in the neighbouring state confirmed the parallel nature of developments in the space where he placed his philosophical struggle for a New

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<sup>80</sup> Hroch, 'Myšlenka nezávislosti', 105–8, 117–20.

<sup>81</sup> Wiktor Werner, 'Poznawcza rola metafory w polskim dyskursie historyczno-politycznym po 1989 roku', in Nowinowski, Pomorski, and Stobiecki (eds), *Pamięć i polityka historyczna*, 91–105.

Europe. In Poland, the image of Masaryk retained the characteristics of a democratic philosopher and peacemaker. Masaryk himself worked skilfully with people's awareness of this image. In his interviews and memoirs, he created a narrative regarding how he always stood for cooperation with the Poles and misunderstandings were only marginal.

This image was also nurtured by the Masarykite intelligentsia, which expertly promoted the concept of one Czechoslovak nation with two branches. The alternative position taken by Josef Pekař was not acceptable, although it subsequently proved to be realistic in 1938–45 and after 1992. Masaryk's thinking can be criticised historically and methodologically, but at the same time, he can be held in some esteem. "His ethical and political views are one of the most valuable fruits of Czech political thought", says Horský.<sup>82</sup> In his book *Nová Evropa*, Masaryk contemplated a new European man and a new Czech man. The emergence of independent nation-states thus opens up the question of how inward-looking its population, including its intelligentsia, was and how it perceived the broader European context, parallels and analogies. Masaryk followed the news from Poland not only as a statesman but also as a philosopher.

This search for a balance between being a society and being a community is best documented by the attitudes of the intelligentsia. When the *Vergesellschaftung* principle prevails, expert opinions are placed above the emotions and attitudes of politicians. With the *Vergemeinschaftung* principle, what the national collective feels (e.g., national pride and concern for national borders) is greater than the rational arguments of experts. In the context of Poland's disunited politics, this can be documented by the centrist party founded by the intelligentsia: National Public Union [Unia Narodowo-Państwowa] (1922). It was one of the few that tried to apply a policy accommodating national minorities within the framework of historical state borders.

The tensions within the political elites mean that a significant number of them attach themselves to the nation rather than the state. If the nation-state is under threat and democracy is 'under a cloud', this reinforces the narrative quasi-character of the nation and 'legitimises' anger, anti-Semitism, violence and just war (which can be applied to the whole 1919–21 period).

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<sup>82</sup> Horský, 'Samostatný stát', 26.

However, it would be elliptical to claim that the Masarykite intelligentsia in Czechoslovakia was more successful in realising its humanitarian ideals. The experts felt themselves to be the proponents of the idea of statehood, but many began to see it too substantively (and humanities scholars more often than natural scientists). When historians of different generations became too attached to the existence of the humanitarian ideal as a historical fact, they underestimated cultural patterns characterised by ill-considered behaviours, including acts of violence and nationalist disregard for minorities, in the process of state formation.

The founding myths were concentrated in one nodal point (the anniversary) to bolster the positions of the ruling and competing elites in the media. Historiography contributes to this trend when it interprets states as quasi-characters, capable of acting, feeling emotional and wanting.

*transl. Melyvn Clarke*

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