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[Illustration: Professor Thomas G. Masaryk]

INDEPENDENT BOHEMIA

# AN ACCOUNT OF THE CZECHO-SLOVAK STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

By VLADIMIR NOSEK

Secretary to the Czecho-Slovak Legation in LONDON

1918

## PREFACE

In the following pages I have attempted to outline the story of our movement for independence. The manuscript of this book was completed over four months ago. Since then many important changes have occurred in the international situation. Chapters in which we dealt with the then still existing Dual Monarchy must of course be read in the past tense, since Austria exists no more. And again, many things which we anticipated and hoped for in the future have already become accomplished facts. However, I trust that the story itself has not only lost none of its value thereby, but has acquired an additional interest from a historical point of view.

Our aim of national independence, only quite recently declared by our adversaries to be "an empty dream of moonstruck idealists," has become to-day not only a practical proposition, but an accomplished fact. We have our own army, which is by no means the smallest Allied army, and we also have our own Provisional Government in Paris, recognised not only by the Allies and by all Czecho-Slovaks abroad, but even by Czech leaders in Bohemia, with whom we have since the beginning of the war worked in complete harmony and understanding. The organisation of our independent State is rapidly proceeding. Austria-Hungary, exhausted economically and bankrupt politically, has fallen to pieces by the free-will of her own subject peoples, who, in anticipation of their early victory, broke their fetters and openly renounced their allegiance to the hated Habsburg and Hohenzollern rule, even before Austria had actually surrendered to the Allies.

Events have moved rapidly in Austria, especially since the momentous British declaration of August 9, 1918, recognising the Czecho-Slovaks--those resident in the Allied countries as much as those in Bohemia--as an Allied nation, and the Czecho-Slovak National Council--in Paris as well as in Prague--as the Provisional Government of Bohemia. British statesmen already then foresaw the coming collapse of Austria and acted accordingly. It is also no more a secret to-day that because of the promulgation of the British and United States declarations our Council was able to conclude special conventions with all the Allied Governments during September last, whereby all the powers exercised by a real government have been granted to it.

In the meantime Germany had been losing more and more control over her allies, being herself hard pressed on the Western front, and the consequence of this was a growing boldness on the part of the Austrian Slavs. On October 2 deputy Stanek declared in the name of the whole Czech

deputation that the National Council in Paris were their true spokesmen and representatives with whom Austria would have to negotiate. Soon afterwards the Austrian Poles went to Warsaw, where they formed a new all-Polish Government, and the Southern Slavs entrusted the government of their territories to their National Council in Zagreb. Similar councils were formed also by the Ruthenes and Rumanians. On October 14 the Czecho-Slovak National Council in Paris constituted itself as a Government of which the Council in Prague acts as an integral part. The latter took over the reins of government in Bohemia a fortnight later. On October 19 the Czecho-Slovak Council issued a Declaration of Independence which we publish in the Appendix, and from which it will be seen that Bohemia will be progressive and democratic both in her domestic and foreign policy. A glorious future is no doubt awaiting her. She will be specially able to render an immense service to the League of Nations as a bulwark of peace and conciliation among the various peoples of Central Europe.

The break-up of Austria will, of course, affect enormously the constitution of the future Europe, and in our last chapter we have tried to give an outline of these impending changes of conditions and international relations. The break-up of Austria was bound to come sooner or later, whether some misinformed critics or prejudiced pro-Austrian politicians liked it or not. We ourselves were always convinced, and we declared openly, that Austria could not survive this war, because she was at war with the majority of her own subjects, who wished for nothing more than for her destruction. Unfortunately the fact that the sympathies of the thirty million of Austrian Slavs and Latins were on the side of the Entente, constituting such an incontestable moral asset for the Allies as it does, has not always been fully appreciated by Allied public opinion. We ourselves, however, never doubted for a moment that the Allied cause would ultimately triumph and that we would achieve our independence, because we knew that in struggling for this aim we were only carrying out the unanimous will of our whole nation. Without waiting for any pledges, without regard as to which side would be victorious, our nation has from the beginning staked its all on the Allied victory and has contributed with all its powers to hasten it. Despite all adverse circumstances, our people, at first completely at the mercy of their enemies, ruthlessly persecuted and tortured by them, nevertheless remained firm and resolute. Their attitude was most outspoken and courageous at all times, and they have also rendered the Allies active assistance, which is being duly appreciated by them. It is chiefly due to the efforts of the subject peoples themselves, of whom the Czechs have certainly been the most outspoken, that the collapse of Austria has occurred, which finally sealed the fate of Kaiserism and of the Pan-German plans of Mitteleuropa.

To-day our hopes for a better future are at last being fulfilled as a result of the Allies' complete victory, assuring the creation of a new and just international order. Our much-afflicted yet undaunted people already consider themselves as independent. The Peace Conference, at which the Czecho-Slovak Government will be represented, will only confirm the existence of an independent Czecho-Slovak State.

In conclusion, we should like to express our deep gratitude to all our English friends for their valuable assistance in our struggle for the

realisation of our ideals. We especially wish to thank once more the British Government for the generous step taken by them in recognising us as an Allied and belligerent nation. It was chiefly because of this recognition and of the gallant deeds of our army that we achieved all our subsequent diplomatic and political successes. We may assure Great Britain that the Czecho-Slovaks will never forget what they owe to her, and that they will endeavour to do their best to merit the trust so generously placed in them.

VLADIMIR NOSEK.

9, GROSVENOR PLACE, LONDON,  
\_November\_, 1918.

[Illustration: The International Position Of The Czecho Slovak Republic In Future Europe]

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## WHAT IS AUSTRIA-HUNGARY?

1. The Habsburg Empire is built upon centuries-old traditions of reaction and violence. Its present power is chiefly based on the alliance which Bohemia and Hungary concluded with Austria against the Turkish peril in 1526. The Czechs freely elected the Habsburgs to the throne of Bohemia which remained a fully independent state, its alliance with Austria and Hungary being purely dynastic. But soon the Habsburgs began to violate the liberties of Bohemia which they were bound by oath to observe, and this led finally to the fateful Czech revolution of 1618. At the battle of the White Mountain in 1620 the Czechs suffered a defeat and were cruelly punished for their rebellion. All their nobility were either executed or sent into exile, and their property confiscated. The country was devastated by the imperial hordes, and its population was reduced from 3,000,000 to 800,000 during the Thirty Years' War.

In 1627 Ferdinand II. greatly curtailed the administrative rights of Bohemia, yet he did not dare to deprive her entirely of her independence. In his "Renewed Ordinance of the Land" Ferdinand declared the Bohemian crown to be hereditary in the House of Habsburg, and reserved legislative power to the sovereign. But otherwise the historical rights of Bohemia remained valid, notwithstanding all subsequent arbitrary centralising measures taken by the Habsburgs. Bohemia's rights were repeatedly recognised by each succeeding Habsburg. Legally Bohemia is an independent state to-day.

The heavy persecutions inflicted upon Bohemia had a disastrous effect upon her intellectual life and national development which were completely paralysed until the end of the eighteenth century, when owing to the humanitarian ideals of those times, and as a reaction against the Germanising centralistic efforts of Joseph II., the Czechs again began to recover their national consciousness. This revival marked the beginning of the Czecho-Slovak struggle for the re-establishment of their independence. The movement was at first literary, and only in the forties became political. It was a continuous struggle against reaction and absolutism, and if the Czecho-Slovaks to-day can boast of an advanced civilisation, it is only owing to their perseverance and hard endeavours, and not because of any good-will on the part of the Austrian Government which put every possible obstacle in their way.

2. The present Austria-Hungary is primarily a dynastic estate, for the crown was always its supreme political driving force, although at present the Habsburgs are mere slaves of their masters, the Hohenzollerns. It is this characteristic which justifies us in concluding that Austria is an autocratic state par excellence. If there were no other reason, this should be sufficient to make every true democrat an enemy of Austria. Furthermore, it is this characteristic which makes us comprehend why the Habsburg monarchy is fighting side by side with German autocracy and imperialism against the allied democracies of the world.

Notwithstanding the so-called constitution which is a mere cloak for absolutism, the monarch in Austria is emperor by "Divine Right" alone, and is the absolute master of his subject peoples in virtue of his privileged position which confers on him an inexhaustible amount of power and influence. The internal as well as the foreign policy of the monarchy is directed in the real or supposed interests of the dynasty. The principle *\_divide et impera\_* is its leading idea in internal politics, and the increase of dynastic power in foreign policy. The question of war and peace is decided by the emperor, to whom it also appertains to order matters concerning the management, leadership and organisation of the whole army. And though in Hungary the power of the monarch largely depends on the Budapest Parliament, yet even here the constitutional power of the dynasty is enormous, the King of Hungary being a governing and legislative factor by no means inferior to that of the parliament.

Even when attempts were made at enfranchising the masses (as in 1896 and finally in 1905), the motive again was purely dynastic. Such constitutional measures as were taken, only strengthened racial dissensions and were equally insincere and inefficient. The present constitution of 1867, as well as the previous constitutions of 1849, 1860 and 1861, was granted by the crown, to whom it was reserved to reverse or modify the same. The parliament is absolutely powerless in Austria. It is a mere cloak for absolutism, since the famous Paragraph 14 provides for absolutist government by means of imperial decrees without parliament in case of emergency. The dynasty took ample advantage of this clause during the first three years of this war when absolutism and terrorism reigned supreme in the Dual Monarchy. While since 1861 up to the beginning of the war 156 imperial decrees had been issued, fully 161 have been passed during the first three years of the present war.

The arbitrary power of the dynasty is based: upon the organisation of the army, the leadership of which is entrusted to the Germans; upon the feudal aristocracy who are the only real Austrians, since they have no nationality, though they invariably side with the dominant Germans and Magyars; upon the power of the police who form the chief instrument of the autocratic government and who spy upon and terrorise the population; upon the German bureaucrats who do not consider themselves the servants of the public, but look upon the public as their servant, and whose spirit of meanness and corruption is so characteristic of the Austrian body politic; finally, the dynasty relies upon the Catholic hierarchy who hold vast landed property in Austria and regard it as the bulwark of Catholicism, and who through Clericalism strive for political power rather than for the religious welfare of their denomination. In alliance with them are the powerful Jewish financiers who also control the press in Vienna and Budapest. Clearly Austria is the very negation of democracy. It stands for reaction, autocracy, falsehood and hypocrisy, and it is therefore no exaggeration to say that nobody professing democratic views can reasonably plead for the preservation of this system of political violence.

When we remember the enormous power of the dynasty and the political system which supports it, we understand why in the past Austria has always played the part of the most reactionary, autocratic and tyrannic state in Europe.

Hopes have indeed been expressed by some Austrophils in the good-will of the new Austrian Emperor on account of his amiable character. The Slavs have ample reason to distrust the Habsburgs who have proved to be treacherous autocrats in the past, and whose records show them as an incapable and degenerate family. As a political power Kaiser Karl is the same menace to his subject Slavs as his predecessors. Above all, however, he is of necessity a blind tool in the hands of Germany, and he cannot possibly extricate himself from her firm grip. The Habsburgs have had their chance, but they missed it. By systematic and continuous misgovernment they created a gulf between the Slavs and themselves which nothing on earth can remove. Every Habsburg believes he has a "mission" to fulfil. The only mission left for Kaiser Karl is to abdicate and dissolve his empire into its component parts. There is no reason whatever why Austria should be saved for the sake of the degenerate and autocratic Habsburg dynasty.

3. Let us now examine the much misunderstood racial problems of the Dual Monarchy. There is no Austrian nation, since there is no Austrian language. Austria is a mere geographical expression. In fact the Slavs, constituting the majority of Austrian subjects, would think it an insult to be called Austrians. During the war they have been treated as subjects of an enemy state, and to-day they have no part or lot with Austria. The Czech statesman Rieger once declared that when the Slavs no longer desired the existence of Austria, no one would be able to save her. And indeed, the claims raised by the majority of Austria's population to-day mean the death warrant of the Dual Monarchy.

To get a clear idea of the racial issue, we will quote the official Austrian statistics, which tell us that in Austria-Hungary there are:

	AUSTRIA.	HUNGARY.	BOSNIA.	TOTAL.
SLAVS:	Million.	Million.	Million.	Million.
Czecho-Slovaks	6.4	2	--	8.4
Yugoslavs	2	3	1.8	6.8
Poles	5	--	--	5
Ruthenes	3.5	0.5	--	4
			--	24.2
LATINS:				
Italians	0.8	--	--	0.8
Rumanians	0.3	2.9	--	3.2
			--	4
GERMANS	10	2	--	12
MAGYARS	--	10	--	10
OTHERS	0.6	0.4	--	1
	28.6	20.8	1.8	51.2

Thus it appears that the Slavs alone (without Italians and Rumanians) form about 48 per cent. of the total population. The Germans form only 24 per cent. of the population of Austria-Hungary, while in Hungary proper the dominant Magyars do not form quite 50 per cent. of the population. The predominance of the German and Magyar minorities is apparent not only from the fact that they hold the reins of government, but also from their unfair

proportional representation in both parliaments. Thus instead of 310 seats out of 516 in the Reichsrat the Slavs hold only 259, while the Germans hold 232 instead of 160. By gaining 83 Polish votes in return for temporary concessions, the Germans have thus always been in the majority in the Reichsrat in the past. In Hungary the proportion is still more unjust. The Magyars hold 405 seats instead of 210 in the parliament of Budapest out of the total number of 413, while the non-Magyars, entitled according to their numbers to 203 seats, have in reality only five representatives in the "democratic" parliament of Budapest.

All the above calculations are based upon official statistics which are grossly exaggerated in favour of the Germans and Magyars. The picture would be still more appalling if we took into consideration the actual number of the Slavs. The Austrian census is not based upon the declaration of nationality or of the native language, but upon the statement of the "language of communication" ("Umgangsprache"). In mixed districts economic pressure is brought against the Slavs, who are often workmen dependent upon German masters and bound to declare their nationality as German for fear they should lose their employment. From private statistics it has been found that the percentage of Germans in Bohemia can hardly exceed 20 per cent, as against 37 per cent, given by the official census. Still greater pressure is brought to bear against the Slavs by the Magyars in Hungary, who are famous for the brutal methods in which they indulge for the purpose of shameless falsification of their official statistics. Thus the actual strength of the rival races of Austria-Hungary may with every justification be estimated as follows:

SLAVS:

Czecho-Slovaks	10 million \
Yugoslavs	7-1/2 "
	> 27 million
Poles	5 "
Ruthenes	4-1/2 " /

LATINS:

Italians	1 million \
	> 5 "
Rumanians	4 " /
GERMANS	10 " \
	> 18 "
MAGYARS	8 " /
OTHERS	1 "

---

51 million

4. The rule of the German-Magyar minority over the Slav and Latin majority, finally established by the introduction of dualism in 1867, was made possible only by the demoralising system of violence described above. One race was pitted against the other in Austria and this enabled the Germans to rule them better, while the Magyars in Hungary, by keeping their subject races in the darkness of ignorance and by using the most abominable methods of violence, succeeded in securing for themselves the entire monopoly of government. The Magyars, who are a race of Asiatic origin, are truly the faithful descendants of the ancient Huns, and true allies of the Huns



of to-day.

When Kossuth came to England in 1848, he was hailed as the champion of freedom and liberty, and entranced his audiences in London and other English cities by his remarkable oratory. As a matter of fact Kossuth, though called "the father of the Magyars," was himself a denationalised Slovak; instead of a "champion of liberty," he might with much greater justification have been called the champion of the greatest racial tyranny in Europe. For even then, while fighting for their own liberty and for the independence of Hungary, the Magyars denied the most elementary political and national rights to the other peoples living in Hungary.

In 1910 there were 2,202,165 Slovaks in Hungary according to the official census. These two million Slovaks had only two deputies (Dr. Blaho and Juriga), while the 8,651,520 Magyars had 405 seats, so that every Slovak deputy represented one million electors, every Magyar deputy, however, 21,000. As regards administration, all civil service officials in Hungary have to be of Magyar nationality. The cases of persecution for political offences are innumerable: Slovak candidates were prevented from being elected by being imprisoned. Corruption and violence are the two main characteristics of all elections in "democratic" Hungary. Even to-day when some Radicals in Budapest talk of electoral reform, they want suffrage to be extended to Magyar electors only, and also stipulate that the candidates shall be of Magyar nationality. No Magyar politicians will ever abandon the programme of the territorial integrity of Hungary, their aims being expressed in the words of Koloman Tisza: "For the sake of the future of the Magyar State it is necessary for Hungary to become a state where only Magyar is spoken. To gain the Slovaks or to come to a compromise with them is out of the question. There is only one means which is effective--Extirpation!" And this aim the Magyars have faithfully kept before them for at least the last hundred years.

In the same way also the economic development of the non-Magyar nationalities has been systematically hampered, because the Magyars know that economic dependence means also political subservience. The Slovaks and Rumanians are not allowed to found co-operative societies or banks on the ground that such institutions "are opposed to the interests of the elements which hold the Magyar State together."

But it is not only the non-Magyars who suffer. The Magyar working classes and the majority of the Magyar country people themselves are deprived of political rights, for Hungary is ruled by an oligarchy and scarcely 5 per cent. of the population has the suffrage right.

We may say, therefore, without exaggeration that to-day Hungary is the most reactionary country of Europe. Nowhere else (not even in Prussia) have the people so little power as in Hungary, where the Socialists have not a single seat in parliament. The "politics" in Hungary are the privilege of a few aristocrats. Hungary is a typical oligarchic and theocratic state.

When the Magyars plead to-day for "peace without annexations" and for the integrity of Hungary, they want to be allowed to continue to oppress and systematically magyarise the Slavs and Rumanians of Hungary. The triumphant

allied democracies will not, however, stoop before autocratic Hungary. The dismemberment of Hungary, according to the principle of nationality, is a *\_sine qua non\_* of a permanent and just peace in Europe.

5. The four strongest races in Austria-Hungary, then, are the Germans, Magyars, Czecho-Slovaks and Yugoslavs, numbering from eight to ten million each. The Austrian Germans and the Magyars occupy the centre, while the Czecho-Slovaks inhabit the north (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia), and the Yugoslavs ten provinces in the southern part of the monarchy. In order to facilitate German penetration and domination and to destroy the last remnants of Bohemia's autonomous constitution, the Austrian Government attempted, by the imperial decree of May 19, 1918, to dismember Bohemia into twelve administrative districts with German officials at the head, who were to possess the same power to rule their respective districts as had hitherto appertained only to the Governor (Statthalter) of Bohemia, legally responsible to the Bohemian Diet.

But not only are the Czecho-Slovaks and Yugoslavs divided between both halves of the monarchy and among numerous administrative districts which facilitate German penetration. Dissensions were fomented among the different parties of these two nations and religious differences exploited. The Yugoslavs, for instance, consist of three peoples: the Serbs and Croats, who speak the same language and differ only in religion and orthography, the former being Orthodox and the latter Catholic; and the Slovenes, who speak a dialect of Serbo-Croatian and form the most western outpost of the Yugoslav (or Southern Slav) compact territory. It was the object of the Austrian Government to exploit these petty differences among Yugoslavs so as to prevent them from realising that they form one and the same nation entitled to independence. At the same time Austria has done all in her power to create misunderstandings between the Slavs and Italians, just as she tried to create dissensions between Poles and Ruthenes in Galicia, and between Poles and Czechs in Silesia, well knowing that the dominant races, the Germans and Magyars, would profit thereby. Fortunately the war has opened the eyes of the subject peoples, and, as we shall show later on, to-day they all go hand in hand together against their common enemies in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest.

II

## AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND THE PRESENT WAR

In order to understand fully what is at stake in this war and why the Slavs are so bitterly opposed to the further existence of Austria-Hungary, it is necessary to study the foreign policy of the Central Powers during the past century. The "deepened alliance" concluded between Germany and Austria-Hungary in May, 1918, resulting in the complete surrender of Austria's independence, is in fact the natural outcome of a long development and the realisation of the hopes of Mitteleuropa cherished by the Germans for years past. The scares about the dangers of "Pan-slavism" were spread by the Germans only in order to conceal the real danger of Pan-Germanism.

1. The original theory of Pan-Germanism was the consolidation and unity of the whole German nation corresponding to the movement of the Italians for national unity. In fact it was a German, Herder, who first proclaimed the principle of nationality and declared the nation to be the natural organ of humanity, as opposed to the idea of the state as an artificial organisation: "Nothing seems to be so opposed to the purpose of government as an unnatural extension of territory of a state and a wild confusion of holding different races and nations under the sway of a single sceptre." It was this humanitarian philosophy recognising the natural rights of all nations, great or small, to freedom which inspired the first Czech regenerators such as Dobrovsky, Jungman and Kollar.

The legitimate claims of the Germans to national unity became unjust and dangerous for Europe when the Germans began to think of subduing the whole of Central Europe to their hegemony, which meant the subjugation of some 100 million Slavs and Latins. At first it was Austria which, as the head of the former Holy Roman Empire, and the traditional bulwark of Germany in the east (Oesterreich--an eastern march), aspired to be the head of the Pan-German Empire. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Austrian Emperor became the head of the German Confederation. Prussia at that time entirely gave way and left the leadership to Metternich's system of absolutism.

By and by, it became obvious that Austria was, on account of her non-German population, internally weak, condemned to constant employment of violence and reaction, and therefore unfit to stand at the head of a strong modern Pan-Germany. Prussia therefore, as the greatest of the homogeneous German states, became Austria's rival and was accepted by the Frankfurt Assembly as the leader of the Confederation. The rivalry between Austria and Prussia ended in 1866, when after Austria's defeat the clever diplomacy of Bismarck turned the rivalry between Austria and Prussia into friendship. Since the Germans in Austria began to feel their impotence in the face of the growing Slav power, a year later the centralising efforts of the Habsburgs were finally embodied in the system of dualism which gave over the Slavs and Italians in Austria to German hegemony and the Slavs and Rumanians in Hungary to Magyar tyranny. For the support of this hegemony the Austrian Germans and Magyars, whose ambitions are identical with those of Germany, were entirely dependent on Berlin. Thus Austria-Hungary became inevitably Germany's partner and vanguard in the south-east. Finally, the present war was started by the Germans and Magyars with the object of achieving the ambitious plans preached and expounded by Pan-German writers for years past. The Germans wanted at all costs to become the masters of Central Europe, to build an empire from Berlin to Bagdad, and finally to strike for world domination.

2. In this turn of events Magyar influence played a greater part than might be thought. Already in 1848 Kossuth defined the Hungarian foreign policy as follows:--

"The Magyar nation is bound to maintain the most cordial relations with the free German nation and help it in safeguarding Western civilisation."

And while the Hungarian Slavs were prohibited from attending the Pan-Slav Congress held in Prague in 1848, the Magyars sent two delegates to Frankfurt in order to give practical expression to the above Magyar policy.

The value of Hungary for the Pan-German plans has been expressed by Friedrich List who, in 1862, dreamt of "a powerful oriental German-Magyar Empire," and declared:

"The way towards the realisation of this plan runs through Hungary, and while without Hungary we can do nothing, with her aid we can do everything. Hungary is for Germany the clue to Turkey and the Near East, and at the same time a bulwark against a superior power from the north."

The Magyars realised from the beginning the importance of an understanding between themselves and Prussia, and they directed their foreign policy accordingly. The setting up of dualism in 1867, which finally established the German-Magyar hegemony in Austria-Hungary in the interests of Prussia, was the work of two Magyars--Julius Andrassy and Francis Deak, who took advantage of Austria's defeat at Sadova to further their interests. In 1870, when Vienna contemplated revenge against Prussia, the Magyars again intervened in favour of Prussia. When questioned as to Hungary's attitude, Andrassy, then Premier, declared in the Hungarian Parliament that under no circumstances would he allow any action against Prussia, and exerted all his influence in Vienna to that effect. It was also due mainly to Magyar influence that all attempts of the Czechs to weaken German influence in Austria were frustrated. Francis Joseph always promised to be crowned King of Bohemia when he wished to placate the Czechs in times of stress for Austria: in 1861, 1865, 1870 and 1871. But he never carried out his promises. In this he was guided not only by considerations of dynastic interest, but also by the advice of the Magyars.

But the most decisive and fateful exercise of Magyar influence upon Austria's foreign policy occurred in 1879, when the Austro-German Alliance was finally concluded. This was equally the work of Bismarck, who spared the defeated Austria in order to make an ally of her, and of a Magyar--Count Andrassy--who from 1871 to 1879 was the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister. It was this Magyar help which made Bismarck utter words of gratitude and declare in 1883:

"Our political judgment leads us to the conviction that German and Magyar interests are inseparable."

It is true that there always was a Magyar opposition against Austria (though never against Prussia). But this opposition was used as a weapon to extort concessions from Austria. At the bottom of their hearts, however, the Austrian Germans were always at one with the Magyars in their common desire to oppress the Slavs. And the responsibility of Count Tisza for the present world catastrophe is just as great as that of the Kaiser himself.

3. The Czechs saw clearly the progress of events. Bismarck was well aware of the importance of Bohemia, for he declared that the master of Bohemia would become the master of Europe. He did not desire to annex any Austrian

territory, since he knew that sooner or later Germany would swallow the whole of Austria, as she has done in this war. Indeed, at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Bismarck did not conceal his intention of using Austria-Hungary in Germany's interests. At the bottom of his heart he was at one with the radical Pan-German writers, like Lagarde, Treitschke, Mommsen, Naumann and others, who openly declared that the Slavs should be subjugated and the Czechs, as the most courageous and therefore the most dangerous of them, crushed.

The Slavs always bitterly opposed the encroachments of Germanism, and saw in it their chief enemy. The Czech leader Palacky rejected the invitation to Frankfurt in 1848 and summoned a Slav Congress to Prague. It is true that Palacky at that time dreamt of an Austria just to all her nations. He advocated a strong Austria as a federation of nations to counterbalance Pan-Germanism. Yet at the same time Palacky has proved through his history and work that Bohemia has full right to independence. He was well aware that a federalistic and just Austria would have to grant independence to the Czecho-Slovaks. But later on he gave up his illusions about the possibility of a just Austria, when he saw that she abandoned the Slavs entirely to German-Magyar hegemony, and declared that Bohemia existed before Austria and would also exist after her. In 1866 he wrote:

"I myself now give up all hope of a long preservation of the Austrian Empire; not because it is not desirable or has no mission to fulfil, but because it allowed the Germans and Magyars to grasp the reins of government and to found in it their racial tyranny."

Exasperated by the pact of dualism which the Czechs never recognised, Palacky went to Moscow and on his return declared:

"I have already said that I do not cherish any hopes of the preservation of Austria, especially since the Germans and Magyars made it the home of their racial despotism; the question therefore as to what will happen to the Slavs hitherto living in Austria is not without significance. Without attempting to prophesy future events which for a mortal man it is difficult to foreshadow, I may say from my inner conviction that the Czechs as a nation, if they fell under the subjection of either Russia or Prussia, would never rest contented. It would never fade from their memory that according to right or justice they should be ruled by themselves, that is by their own government and by their own sovereign. They would regard the Prussians as their deadly enemies on account of their germanising rage. But as to the Russians, the Czechs would regard them as their racial brothers and friends; they would not become their faithful subjects, but their true allies and, if need be, vanguards in Europe."

Moreover, modern Czech politicians always clearly saw what the Germans were aiming at. Dr. Kramar, for instance, foresaw the present situation with remarkable perspicacity. In the *\_Revue de Paris\_* for February, 1899, he wrote on "The Future of Austria," declaring that her subject nationalities should be on guard lest she should become a vassal of Germany and a bridge for German expansion into Asia:

"The Austrian Germans wish to see Austria subordinated to German policy, and with the help of a subordinated Austria, the sphere of German political and economic activity would extend from Hamburg to Asia Minor."

Similarly also he warned Great Britain in the *National Review* for October, 1902, that if Pan-German plans were realised,

"Austria would become an appanage of Germany as regards international relations, and the policy of Europe would be obliged to reckon, not with a free and independent Austria, but, owing to Austria's unconditional self-surrender, with a mighty, almost invincible Germany.... The Pan-Germans are right, the Czechs are an arrow in the side of Germany, and such they wish to and must and will remain. Their firm and unchangeable hope is that they will succeed in making of themselves an impenetrable breakwater. They hope for no foreign help; they neither wish for it nor ask for it. They have only one desire, namely, that non-German Europe may also at last show that it understands the meaning of the Bohemian question."

In 1906 Dr. Kramar wrote again in detail on the plans of German domination in Central Europe, in the Adriatic and in the Near East. In a book on Czech policy he declared that to prevent the realisation of these plans was the vital interest of the Czech nation: "A far-seeing Austrian policy should see in the Czech nation the safeguard of the independence of the State." And then followed the famous passage which formed part of the "evidence" quoted against him during his trial for high treason:

"If Austria-Hungary continues her internal policy by centralising in order to be better able to germanise and preserve the German character of the State, if she does not resist all efforts for the creation of a customs and economic union with Germany, the Pan-German movement will prove fatal for her. To preserve and maintain a state the sole ambition of which was to be a second German State after Germany, would be superfluous not only for the European Powers, but also for the non-German nations of Europe. \_And if, therefore, a conflict should break out between the German and the non-German world and the definite fate of Austria should be at stake, the conflict would surely not end with the preservation of Austria\_."

And on November 10, 1911, he admitted that his former hopes for the destruction of the Austro-German Alliance and a rapprochement between Austria and Russia proved to be in vain:

"... \_I had an aim in life and a leading idea. The events of the annexation crisis have proved calamitous for the policy which I followed all my life\_. I wished to do everything which lay within the compass of my small powers, to render my own nation happy and great in a free, powerful and generally respected Austria ... \_I have always resented the fact that when they talked about Austria people really meant only the Germans and Magyars, as if the great majority of Slavs upon whom rest the biggest burdens did not exist\_. But now--and no beautiful words can make me change my opinion on that point--an

entirely independent policy has become unthinkable, because the only path which remains open to Vienna leads by way of Berlin. Berlin will henceforward direct our policy."

4. To offer any proofs that the present war was deliberately planned and provoked by the Governments of Berlin, Vienna and Budapest seems to me superfluous. Who can to-day have any doubt that Austria wilfully provoked the war in a mad desire to crush Serbia? Who can doubt that Austria for a long time entertained imperialist ambitions with respect to the Balkans which were supported by Berlin which wished to use Austria as a "bridge to the East"?

No more damning document for Austria can be imagined than Prince Lichnowsky's Memorandum. He denounces Austria's hypocritical support of the independence of Albania. In this respect he holds similar views to those expressed in the Austrian delegations of 1913 by Professor Masaryk, who rightly denounced the Austrian plan of setting up an independent Albania on the plea of "the right of nationalities" which Austria denied her own Slavs. Professor Masaryk rightly pointed out at that time that an outlet to the sea is a vital necessity for Serbia, that the Albanians were divided into so many racial, linguistic and religious groups and so uncivilised that they could not form an independent nation, and that the whole project was part and parcel of Austria's anti-Serbian policy and her plans for the conquest of the Balkans. Prince Lichnowsky admits that an independent Albania "had no prospect of surviving," and that it was merely an Austrian plan for preventing Serbia from obtaining an access to the sea.

He apparently disagrees with the idea of "the power of a Ruling House, the dynastic idea," but stands up for "a National State, the democratic idea." That in itself seems to indicate that he is in favour of the destruction of Austria and its substitution by new states, built according to the principle of nationality. He admittedly disagrees with the views of Vienna and Budapest, and criticises Germany's alliance with Austria, probably knowing, as a far-sighted and well-informed politician, that Austria-Hungary cannot possibly survive this war.

Prince Lichnowsky frankly admits that the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand was a mere pretext for Vienna, which in fact had resolved on an expedition against Serbia soon after the second Balkan war by which she felt herself humiliated. In scathing terms he denounces the Triple Alliance policy and thinks it a great mistake that Germany allied herself with the "Turkish and Magyar oppressors." And though he says that it was Germany which "persisted that Serbia must be massacred," he makes it quite clear that it was Vienna that led the conspiracy against Europe, since on all questions Germany "took up the position prescribed to her by Vienna." The policy of espousing Austria's quarrels, the development of the Austro-German Alliance into a pooling of interests in all spheres, was "the best way of producing war." The Balkan policy of conquest and strangulation "was not the German policy, but that of the Austrian Imperial House." What better testimony is required to prove that Austria was not the blind tool, but the willing and wilful accomplice of Germany?

## CZECH POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE AND DURING THE WAR

The Czech policy during the past seventy years has always had but one ultimate aim in view: the re-establishment of the ancient kingdom of Bohemia and the full independence of the Czecho-Slovak nation. From the very beginning of their political activity Czech politicians resisted the Pan-German scheme of Central Europe. They preached the necessity of the realisation of liberty and equality for all nations, and of a federation of the non-Germans of Central Europe as a barrier against German expansion.

The chief reason for the failure of their efforts was the fact that they sometimes had illusions that the Habsburgs might favour the plan of such an anti-German federation, although the Habsburgs always mainly relied on the Germans and Magyars and could not and would not satisfy the Czech aspirations. The Czechs were greatly handicapped in their political struggle, because they had only just begun to live as a nation and had to face the powerful German-Magyar predominance, with the dynasty and the whole state machinery behind them. Moreover, the Czechs had no national aristocracy like the Poles or Magyars, and their leaders lacked all political experience and all sense of reality in politics which was so marked in a state built on deceit and hypocrisy. They continually defended themselves with declarations about the justice of their claims, satisfied themselves with empty promises which Austria has never kept, and cherished vain illusions of obtaining justice in Austria, while Austria was *\_via facti\_* steadily depriving them of all their rights. On the other hand, it should be remembered that they were faced with a government that had the whole powerful German Empire behind it, and that they had to struggle for freedom in a state where genuine constitutional government and democracy were unknown. The Czech efforts to obtain some measure of freedom by struggling for democratic reforms were consistently opposed by the dominant Germans. To-day, of course, the situation has greatly improved as compared with the situation seventy years ago. The Czecho-Slovak nation, through its own work and energy, is a highly advanced and economically self-supporting and rich nation, and in its struggle for a just resettlement of Central Europe it has the support not only of all the other non-German nations of Central Europe, but also of the Entente on whose victory it has staked its all. The Czecho-Slovaks are resolved not to let themselves be fooled by Austria any longer and claim full independence from Berlin, Vienna and Budapest, which alone will safeguard them against the possibility of being again exploited militarily, economically and politically against their own interests for a cause which they detest.

1. Although as early as 1812 the Bohemian Diet (then a close aristocratic body) demanded the restitution of the rights of the kingdom of Bohemia, the political activity of the Czechs did not really begin until 1848 when, on April 8, the emperor issued the famous Bohemian Charter recognising the rights of Bohemia to independence. It was that year which marked the end of Metternich's absolutism and in which revolution broke out in Western and Central Europe, including Hungary and Bohemia. Already at that time the Czechs counted on the break-up of Austria. Havlicek, who in 1846 began to



publish the first national Czech newspaper, wrote on May 7, 1848, when inviting the Poles to attend the Pan-Slav Congress in Prague:

"An understanding between us--the Czecho-Slovaks and the Poles--would be to the mutual advantage of both nations, especially under the present circumstances when everything, even the break-up of Austria, may be anticipated. I am sure that if the government continues to pursue its present policy, Austria will fall to pieces before next winter and the Czechs are not going to save her. The Czecho-Slovaks, Poles and Yugoslavs, united politically and supporting each other, will surely sooner or later attain their object, which is to obtain full independence, national unity and political liberty."

It is characteristic of Austria that during the present war she has prohibited the circulation of this article written seventy years ago.

Similarly, also, Palacky in his letter to Frankfurt, explaining why the Czechs would not attend the Pan-German Parliament, made it clear that he had no illusions about the good-will of Austria to adopt a just policy towards her nationalities:

"In critical times we always saw this state, destined to be the bulwark against Asiatic invasions, helpless and hesitating. In an unfortunate blindness this state has never understood its true interests, always suppressing its moral duty to accord to all races justice and equality of rights."

At the Pan-Slav Congress presided over by Palacky, Bakunin, the Russian revolutionary, openly advocated the dismemberment of Austria in the interests of justice and democracy, and proposed a free Slav federation in Central Europe.

The Pan-Slav Congress, in which also the Poles and Yugoslavs participated, issued a manifesto to Europe on June 12, 1848, proclaiming the "liberty, equality and fraternity of nations." It ended prematurely by the outbreak of an abortive revolt in Prague, provoked by the military, which resulted in bloodshed and in the re-establishment of reaction and absolutism.

2. In the first Austrian Parliament of 1848, eighty-eight Czech deputies formed a united Nationalist Party (later on called the Old Czech Party), led by Palacky, Rieger and Brauner. They formed the Right wing which stood for democratic and federalist ideals. The Left was formed by the Germans who stood for centralism and a close union with Germany. Only an insignificant number of Germans formed the Centre which stood for the preservation of Austria.

In October, 1848, fresh troubles broke out in Vienna, partly directed against the presence of the Czechs. On November 15, the parliament was summoned to Kremsier, in which the Czechs, Ruthenes, Yugoslavs and some Poles formed a Slav bloc of 120 members. On December 2, Francis Joseph ascended the throne, and a constitution was proposed by a parliamentary committee of which Rieger was a member. The proposal was opposed by the government, because it defined "the people's sovereignty as the foundation

of the power of the State," and not the dynasty. On March 6, 1849, the parliament was dissolved and a constitution imposed by an imperial decree.

The Czech Radical Democrats, led by Fric, Sabina and Sladkovsky, who already in 1848 stood for a more radical policy than that of the Liberal Nationalists led by Palacky, now again thought of organising an armed revolt against Austria. But the leaders of the conspiracy were arrested and sentenced to many years' imprisonment. After the Austrian victories in Italy and the collapse of the Hungarian revolution, absolutism again reigned supreme.

During the ten years that followed, Bach tried, relying upon the army and the hierarchy, to centralise and germanise the empire. In January, 1850, Havlicek's Narodni Noviny was suppressed and later, also, three of the other remaining Czech journals. Palacky openly declared that he abandoned political activity and Rieger went abroad. Havlicek continued to work for the national cause under great difficulties, until he was arrested in December, 1851, and interned without a trial in Tyrol where he contracted an incurable illness to which he succumbed in 1856. Even as late as 1859 the Czechs were not allowed to publish a political newspaper.

3. After the defeats at Magenta and Solferino in 1859, Austria began to see the impossibility of a continued rule of terrorism and absolutism. Bach was obliged to resign, and on March 5, 1860, a state council was summoned to Vienna. Bohemia was represented only by the nobility who had no sympathy with the Czech national cause, and on September 24 the Rumanian delegate, Mosconyi, openly deplored the fact that "the brotherly Czech nation was not represented."

The era of absolutism was theoretically ended by the so-called "October Diploma" of 1860, conferring on Austria a constitution which in many respects granted self-government to Hungary, but ignored Bohemia, although formally admitting her historical rights. This "lasting and irrevocable Constitution of the Empire" was revoked on February 26, 1861, when Schmerling succeeded Goluchowski, and the so-called "February Constitution" was introduced by an arbitrary decree which in essence was still more dualistic than the October Diploma and gave undue representation to the nobility. The Czechs strongly opposed it and sent a delegation on April 14 to the emperor, who assured them on his royal honour of his desire to be crowned King of Bohemia.

In the meantime Dr. Gregr founded the Narodni Listy in Prague in November, 1860, to support the policy of Rieger, and in January, 1861, the latter, with the knowledge of Palacky, concluded an agreement with Clam-Martinic on behalf of the Bohemian nobility, by which the latter, recognising the rights of the Bohemian State to independence, undertook to support the Czech policy directed against the centralism of Vienna. The Bohemian nobility, who were always indifferent in national matters and who had strong conservative and clerical leanings, concluded this pact with the Czech democrats purely for their own class interests. This unnatural alliance had a demoralising influence on the Old Czech Party and finally brought about its downfall.

The Czechs elected two delegates to the parliament summoned for April 29, 1861, while Hungary and Dalmatia sent none, so that the parliament had 203 instead of 343 deputies. In the Upper House the Czechs were represented by Palacky. In the Lower House the Slavs, forming a united body, again found themselves in a hopeless minority which was absolutely powerless against the government. In June, 1863, the Czechs decided not to attend the chamber again, seeing that all hopes of a modification of the constitution in the sense of the October Diploma were in vain. The government replied by depriving them of their mandates and by suspending the constitution in 1865. A period of "Sistierung," that is of veiled absolutism, then set in.

4. In the meantime, a new political group came to the front in Bohemia, called the Young Czechs. The party was led by Sladkovsky, and had more democratic leanings than the Old Czechs. In the diet, however, the Czechs remained united in a single body. The Young Czechs opposed the policy of passive resistance which the Old Czechs pursued for fully sixteen years, that is up to 1879. The Young Czechs clearly saw that it enabled Vienna to rule without the Czechs and against them. The Czechs, of course, still reckoned upon the break-up of Austria, although, as we shall see later on, they failed entirely to profit from Austria's difficulties in that period.

In 1865 Rieger openly warned Austria:

"Those who direct the destinies of Austria should remember that institutions based on injustice and violence have no duration. If you desire to save Austria, the whole of Austria, you must make justice the basis of your policy towards the Slavs. Do not then say that we did not warn you. Discite justitiam moniti."

In the same sense also Palacky warned the government against dualism, pointing out that if it were introduced it would inevitably lead to the break-up of Austria. Seeing that Austria did not listen to his warning, he later on declared that he no longer believed in the future of Austria, and added: "We existed before Austria, we shall also exist after her."

The greatest mistake the Czechs made was when in 1866, after the battle of Sadova, they thought that Austria would cease to be the bulwark of Pan-Germanism and would do justice to her subject Slavs, and thus become a protection against Germany. It is true that Austria did cease to be the head of the Pan-German Confederation, but instead of becoming a bulwark against Prussia, she became her faithful ally and obedient tool. The Czechs, who feared lest they should be annexed by Prussia, failed to grasp the subtle plans of Bismarck who in a short time succeeded in converting Austria into Germany's bridge to the East.

When the victorious Prussians entered Prague in 1866, they issued a proclamation to the Czechs recognising their right to independence. This proclamation was probably drafted by the Czech exile J.V. Fric, an ardent democrat who fled abroad after the abortive revolution of 1848. Fric, who was a man of keen sense for political reality and a great friend of the Poles, exerted all his influence with the Czech leaders to proclaim Bohemia independent, without an armed revolt, simply by means of a plebiscite, as he was aware that the masses were always thoroughly anti-Austrian and desired nothing more than independence. He proposed to his

fellow-countrymen to establish a monarchy, with some other dynasty than the Habsburgs on the throne, preferably the youngest son of the Italian king, Victor Emmanuel. Even while peace negotiations between Prussia and Austria were going on, he conducted an active propaganda and distributed a proclamation all over Bohemia in which he declared himself as "the deadly enemy of the Habsburg dynasty and of Austrian militarism and bureaucracy":

"The Hungarians are preparing, the Yugoslavs are ready. Let us come to a common agreement with them and we shall succeed. And when all the Austrian nations have been freed they may form a great federation on the basis of international law which will be an example to Europe. \_A federation without the freedom and independence of the nations who form part of it is an empty dream. Let him who desires a federation work for the independence of his nation first\_. It is not a question of a revolution, it is a question of a public proclamation of the Czech nation so that Europe may realise that we live and what we want. Europe will surely lend us a helping hand, but she expects us to ask for it. Let us therefore, my brother Czecho-Slovaks, proclaim aloud, so that the whole world may hear us: ' \_We do not want Austria because we realise that she not only does no good to us, but directly threatens our very existence. We are able to and want to maintain an independent state existence without Austria\_."

Unfortunately, however, the Czech leaders at that time did not follow Fric's advice and, as we have already pointed out, they fell into Bismarck's trap.

In November, 1866, the Bohemian Diet uttered a warning against the danger of dualism, pointing out that Bohemia had the same right to independence as Hungary. Relying upon the support of the other Slav races of Austria, the Czechs declared they would never enter the Reichsrat.

In February, 1867, Beust concluded an agreement with Hungary, and on December 21 the "December Constitution" was introduced. Thus \_dualism\_ became a \_fait accompli\_.

5. Exasperated by this step, the Czech leaders visited Moscow in the same year and fraternised with the Russians, thus showing their hostility to Austria. In 1868 they published an eloquent declaration, written by Rieger, declaring that they would never recognise dualism and emphasising Bohemia's right to independence. When Francis Joseph visited Prague in the same year, people left the city in crowds, anti-Austrian demonstrations were held throughout the country, and flowers were laid on the spot where prominent members of the Bohemian nobility had been executed by the Austrians in 1621.

Vienna answered by fierce reprisals. Baron Koller was sent to Prague where a state of siege was proclaimed. Czech papers were suppressed, and their editors imprisoned. This only strengthened Czech opposition. The passive policy of the Old Czechs gained popularity and the Czechs did not even attend the Bohemian Diet. Finally, when the Franco-Prussian War was imminent, the dynasty was forced to yield, and Potocki began to negotiate with the Czechs.

Meanwhile the Czechs again entered the Bohemian Diet on the day of the battle of Sedan, August 30, 1870, and issued a declaration of rights with which also the Bohemian nobility for the first time publicly identified themselves. On December 8, 1870, the Czechs (without the nobility) presented the Imperial Chancellor, Beust, with a memorandum on Austrian foreign policy, declaring their sympathy with France and Russia and protesting against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and against an alliance of Austria with Germany.

In February, 1871, Hohenwart was appointed Minister President with the object of conciliating the Czechs, and Francis Joseph addressed to them an imperial proclamation, called the "September Rescript," in which he declared:--

"Remembering the constitutional ('Staatsrechtliche') position of the Crown of Bohemia and the glory and power which the same has lent to Us and Our ancestors, remembering further the unswerving loyalty with which the population of Bohemia at all times supported Our throne, We gladly recognise the rights of this Kingdom and We are ready to acknowledge this recognition by Our solemn Royal Oath."

It is well known, of course, that Francis Joseph did not keep his word and was never crowned King of Bohemia.

6. In answer to the rescript, the Czechs formulated their demands in the so-called "fundamental articles," the main point of which was that the Bohemian Diet should directly elect deputies to the delegations. The Narodni Listy declared that the "fundamental articles" meant minimum demands, and that the Czechs would in any case work "for the attainment of an independent Czecho-Slovak state, as desired by the whole nation."

At this stage Berlin and Budapest intervened. The emperor yielded to the advice of William I. and Andrassy, and signed an unfavourable reply to the Czech address on October 30, 1871. Czech opposition was now openly directed against the dynasty. Hohenwart resigned on October 27. In November, Baron Koller was again appointed Governor of Bohemia and repressive methods of administration were once more introduced.

In 1873 elections were held, marked by violence and corruption. Notwithstanding the passive resistance of Czech deputies, the parliament continued to meet in Vienna. In 1878 Austria occupied Bosnia and thus inaugurated the conquest of the Balkans for Germany. In 1879 Count Taaffe at last induced the Czechs to abandon their policy of "passive resistance" and to enter the parliament in return for some administrative and other concessions, including a Czech university. On September 9, the Czechs, united in a party of fifty-two members, entered the Reichsrat to maintain their protest against the dual system.

7. In parliament it became clear that the Old Czech Party, now led by Rieger, was inclined to be too conservative and too opportunist. In 1887 the Young Czechs left the national party and entered into opposition. Their party grew steadily, and during the elections in 1889 gained a decided

victory in the country districts. The Old Czechs finally sealed their fate when, in 1890, they concluded an unfavourable agreement with the Germans, called the punctations, to the detriment of Czech interests and of the integrity of Bohemia. This roused popular indignation throughout Bohemia and brought about the complete collapse of the Old Czech Party.

At the same time the so-called "Realist" movement originated in Bohemia, led by Professor Masaryk, Professor Kaizl and Dr. Kramar. It was not a separate party movement, but a philosophic effort for a regenerated democratic national policy. The Realists demanded a practical, forward movement, such as would at last secure independence for the Czechs. In 1890 the Realists published their programme and joined the Young Czechs. This meant the end of the political career of Rieger and the Old Czechs.

8. In parliament the Young Czechs inaugurated a radical anti-German policy. In 1891 they openly attacked the Triple Alliance, and in 1892 Dr. Menger called Masaryk a traitor for his outspoken defence of the right of Bohemia to independence.

A Radical movement was also started at this time in Bohemia, mainly by students and advanced workers of the Young Czech Party, which called itself "Omladina" (Czech word for "youth"). Its object was to rouse the young generation against Austria. In 1893 anti-dynastic demonstrations were organised by the "Omladina." A state of siege was proclaimed in Prague and seventy-seven members of this "secret society" were arrested; sixty-eight of them, including Dr. Rasin, were condemned for high treason, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

In 1893 Professor Masaryk, realising the futility of his efforts against the encroachments of Germanism, resigned his mandate and devoted his energies to scientific and philosophical work. In 1900, however, he founded a party of his own, with a progressive democratic programme.

In the elections to the Bohemian Diet in 1895, the Young Czechs gained eighty-nine seats out of ninety-five; in the Moravian Diet seventeen seats were held by the People's Party, corresponding to the Young Czech Party in Bohemia, thirteen by the Old Czechs and five by the Clericals. In 1896 Badeni made an attempt at enfranchising the masses; seventy-two additional deputies were to be elected by universal suffrage. In these elections the Young Czechs again won in Bohemia. In Moravia the People's Party concluded a compromise with the Old Czechs and gained fifteen seats, the Socialists gained three seats and the Clericals one. On entering the parliament the Czechs again made a declaration of state right. In 1897 Badeni, a Pole, issued his famous Language Ordinances, asserting the equality of the Czech and German languages in Bohemia and Moravia. The Germans raised a fierce opposition, supported by the Socialists, and the Reichsrat became the scene of violent attempts on the part of the Germans to obstruct sittings by throwing inkstands at the leader of the House and using whistles and bugles to make all proceedings impossible. Badeni lost his head and resigned, and his decrees were rescinded. The dynasty, afraid of a repetition of German obstruction, gave the Germans a completely free hand in all matters of government.

9. Owing to the rapid cultural, economic and industrial development of Bohemia, the Czech party system began to expand. The \_Czecho-Slav Social Democratic Party\_, founded in 1878, began to acquire increasing influence. At first it was based on purely international socialism, and in 1897 it even opposed the national Czech demands. Later, seeing the duplicity of their German comrades who recognised the state right of Finland and Hungary, but not that of Bohemia, and who openly preached the necessity of assimilating the Slavs, the Czech Socialists began to identify themselves more and more with the national struggle for independence. They organised their own trade unions, which brought them into open conflict with the Austrian Socialists. This question was discussed at the Socialist International Conference at Copenhagen in 1910. It is, moreover, on account of these differences on nationality questions that the various Socialist parties of Austria have not met since 1905.

In April, 1898, the \_Czech National Social Party\_, led by Klofac, was formed in opposition to the Socialists. It was radically nationalist, and consisted mainly of workmen, as it was evolved from the workers' organisation in the Young Czech Party.

On January 6, 1899, the \_Agrarian Party\_ was formed. It was chiefly composed of farmers and peasants. It defended the interests of their class and acquired considerable influence among them. In national matters it subscribed to the programme of Bohemian independence, and its organs have during the present war adopted a courageous anti-Austrian attitude.

In 1900 the so-called \_State Right Party\_ was founded by some of the members of the former "Omladina." It had a radical programme and stood uncompromisingly against Austria, demanding independence for Bohemia chiefly on the ground of her historic rights.

In the elections of 1901 the United Czech Club gained fifty-three seats, the National Socialists four and the Agrarians five. But the real influence of the various new parties began to appear only in 1907, after the introduction of the universal suffrage which deprived the Young Czechs of their predominance. The Reichsrat elected in 1907 consisted of 257 non-Slav and 259 Slav members, of whom 108 were Czechs. The result of the election in Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia was as follows:--

28 Agrarians  
24 Social Democrats  
23 Young Czechs  
17 National Catholics  
9 Radicals  
4 Moravian People's Party  
2 Realists  
1 Independent Candidate.

This result showed that the Young Czechs, owing to their deficient organisation, had lost ground, especially among the country population, which formed the bulk of the nation. Among the workers Socialist doctrines were spreading with remarkable rapidity.

The parliamentary activity of the Czechs soon revealed to them how vain were their hopes that a new era of democracy was dawning in Austria. They soon found out that in Austria parliamentary institutions were a mere cloak for absolutism and that all their efforts were doomed to failure.

The Czechs were strongly opposed to the annexation of Bosnia. In 1909 Professor Masaryk gained a world reputation by his courageous defence of the Yugoslav leaders, who were accused of high treason at Zagreb (Agram). During the Friedjung trial it was again chiefly due to Professor Masaryk's efforts that forgeries of the Vienna Foreign Office, intended to discredit the Yugoslav movement, were exposed and the responsibility for them fixed on Count Forgach, the Austro-Hungarian minister in Belgrade. Professor Masaryk clearly saw that Austria aimed at the conquest of the Balkans and intended at all costs to crush Serbia.

10. In 1911 new elections to the Reichsrat took place with the following result for the Czechs:--

- 40 Agrarians
- 25 Social Democrats
- 14 Young Czechs
- 13 National Socialists
- 7 Radicals
- 7 Clericals
- 1 Old Czech
- 1 Socialist (Centralist).

The Radicals (four Moravian People's Party, two State Right Party, one Realist) formed a party of independent deputies with Professor Masaryk at their head. They demanded full independence for Bohemia, some of them laying greater stress on her historical rights, some on the natural right of Czecho-Slovaks to liberty.

The whole group of Czech deputies stood in opposition against Vienna with the exception of Kramar, who tried to imitate the Polish positivist policy in the hope of obtaining concessions in return. But, as we have already shown in a previous chapter, Dr. Kramar abandoned this policy even before the war, when he saw how completely Austria was tied to Germany. The bulk of the Czech people were, of course, always solidly anti-Austrian. During the Balkan War the Czechs openly showed their sympathies with their brother Slavs who were struggling for liberty.

The \_Clerical Party\_ had comparatively little influence and prestige. All their deputies (seven) were elected in country districts of Moravia, where civilisation is comparatively less developed than in Bohemia. In Bohemia and in the more developed districts of Moravia, people resist the efforts of the clergy to mix religion with politics. The three million Slovaks in Hungary, who speak a dialect of Czech and who form with the Czechs a single Czecho-Slovak nation, had only two deputies (Dr. Blaho and Father Juriga), and were without any influence in the Budapest Parliament.

11. Although many Czech politicians foresaw that Austria's anti-Serbian policy in the Balkans and her increasing dependence on Germany must lead to



war, yet on the whole the Czechs were not prepared for this contingency. The Reichsrat was closed when war broke out, and the Diet of Bohemia had been replaced by an Imperial Commission in 1913. War was declared by Austria against the will of the Slavs, and yet they did not dare to protest, as an organised revolution was impossible in view of the presence of German troops and of the perfect police spy system in Austria. Two German divisions would have been sufficient to suppress the best organised revolutionary movement in Bohemia.

The immediate effect of the declaration of war was the unity of the whole Czech nation. One of the leaders, Professor Masaryk, escaped abroad, and is at the head of the Czecho-Slovak Government, recognised by the Allies as the trustee and representative of the Czecho-Slovak nation.

Political activity was of course out of the question until the Reichsrat reopened on May 30, 1917. Before that date there was an absolute reign of terror in Bohemia. Some of the leading Czech newspapers were suspended soon after the outbreak of the war. The few Slovak papers published in Hungary were suppressed at the same time.

Those newspapers which survived were subject to strict censorship and were compelled to publish leading articles written by government officials and supplied to them by the police. Dr. Kramar, one of the most prominent Czech leaders, his colleague Dr. Rasin, and five National Socialist deputies were thrown into prison, and some of them even sentenced to death.

The effect of these persecutions was that all the Czecho-Slovaks became unanimous in their desire to obtain full independence of Austria-Hungary. Old party differences were forgotten and some of the Czech deputies who had formerly been opportunist in tendency, such as Dr. Kramar and the Agrarian ex-minister Prasek, now at last became convinced that all hopes of an anti-German Austria were futile, that Austria was doomed, as she was a blind tool in the hands of Germany, and that the only way to prevent the ten million Czecho-Slovaks from being again exploited in the interests of German imperialism was to secure their complete independence. On entering the Reichsrat on May 30, 1917, all the Czech deputies, united in a single "Bohemian Union," made a unanimous declaration that it was their aim to work for the union of all Czechs and Slovaks in an independent, democratic state. To-day Dr. Kramar is in complete agreement with the Radicals who formerly were his most bitter opponents. In fact four Czech nationalist parties (the Young Czech, Realist, State Right and Moravian People's Parties) united in February, 1918, as a single body under the name of "The Czech State-Right Democracy." The president of its executive is the former Young Czech leader Dr. Kramar, who was sentenced to death in 1916, but released in July, 1917. The executive committee of the new party included all the leaders of the four former parties, namely, Dr. Stransky, Dr. Herben, M. Dyk, Professor Drtina, and others.

In their proclamation published in the *\_Narodni Listy\_* of February 10, 1918, the executive declared that:

"The chief aim of the new party will be to engage in a common national effort for the creation of an independent Bohemian State, the

fundamental territory of which will be composed of the historical and indivisible crown-lands of Bohemia and of Slovakia. The Bohemian State will be a democratic state. All its power will come from the people. And as it will come from the Czech people, it will be just towards all nationalities, towards all citizens and classes."

In a speech to the Young Czech Party before its dissolution, Dr. Kramar openly declared that "at the moment of the outbreak of the war it became quite clear that, despite all tactics of opportunism, our party remained true to the programme of Czech independence. It became at once evident to all of us that \_the chapter of our former policy was forever closed for us\_. We felt with our whole soul that the Czech nation would not go through the sufferings of the world war only to renew the pre-war tactics of a slow progress towards that position to which we have full historical rights as well as the natural rights of a living and strong nation...." And again, in an article in the *\_Narodni Listy\_* of December 25, 1917, Kramar wrote under the heading "By Order of the Nation":

"We have sought with utmost sacrifice to find a compromise between our just claims and the international situation which was unfavourable to us. The war has completely changed all our policy, removing the possibility of a compromise to which we might have been disposed, and we cannot once more roll up our flag now so proudly unfurled, and put it aside for the next occasion."

As we shall show also later on, there is not the least doubt that the necessity for the independence of Bohemia was proclaimed not by a few extremists, but by all the Czech parties with the approval of the entire nation.

When Kramar in 1917 again took over the leadership of the Young Czech Party, which led to the amalgamation of four nationalist parties, a change took place also in the leadership of the Czech Social Democratic Party which hitherto was in the hands of a few demagogues and defeatists, such as Smeral, who dominated the majority of the members. The return of the Socialist Party to its revolutionary traditions and its entire approval of the Bohemian state right and the national policy of Czecho-Slovak independence means a complete and absolute consolidation of the whole Czech nation.

As the Social Democrats became quite loyal to the Czech cause, the National Socialist Party lost its *\_raison d'être\_*. Owing to the great sufferings of the working class during the war, it became imbued with Socialist ideas.

On April 1, 1918, the Czech National Socialist Party held its eighth annual conference in Prague, at which it adopted a resolution endorsing international Socialism and changing its name to "The Czech Socialist Party." The conference was attended also by two representatives of the Czecho-Slav Social Democratic Party, J. Stivin and deputy Nemec. The National Socialist leader, deputy Klofac, welcomed the representatives of the Social Democrats "whom we have for years past been struggling against, but with whom the trials of this war have united us." He declared that his party accepted the Socialist programme and would join the new Socialist

International. On September 6, 1918, the executive committees of the two parties elected a joint council. Its object is to work for the consolidation of the Czech working classes and for the formation of a united Czech Labour Party, composed of Social Democrats as well as of the former National Socialists. A similar process of consolidation is taking place also among the other parties, so that soon there will probably be only three Czech parties, on the basis of class difference, viz. Socialists, Agrarians and Democratic Nationalists (\_bourgeoisie\_), all of whom will stand behind the programme of full Czecho-Slovak independence.

The most significant demonstration of the Czech national sentiment took place at Prague on January 6, 1918, at a meeting of all the Czech deputies of the Reichsrat and of the diets of Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia, with which we deal in another chapter, and at which a resolution was unanimously carried demanding full independence and representation at the peace conference.

Finally, on July 13, 1918, a National Council or Committee was formed in Prague on which all the parties are represented and which may rightly be described as part of the Provisional Government of Bohemia.

The whole Czech nation to-day is unanimously awaiting the victory of the Entente, from which it expects its long-cherished independence. The Czecho-Slovaks are only waiting for a favorable opportunity to strike the death-blow at the Dual Monarchy.

#### IV

#### TERRORISM IN BOHEMIA DURING THE WAR

Austria-Hungary declared war not only on her enemies outside her frontiers, but also on her internal enemies, on her own Slav and Latin subjects. From the very first day of war terrorism reigned supreme in Bohemia, where the Austrian Government behaved as in an enemy country. Three political parties (the National Socialist, Radical and Realist Parties) were dissolved and their organs suppressed. Fully three-quarters of all Czech journals and all Slovak journals were suspended. Political leaders were arrested, imprisoned, and some of them even sentenced to death. Many leaders have been imprisoned as hostages in case an insurrection should break out. Over 20,000 Czech civilians have been interned merely for being "politically suspect," and about 5000 were hanged in an arbitrary way by military tribunals, since juries had been abolished by an imperial decree. Other Slav districts were no better off: the Polish Socialist deputy Daszynski stated in the Reichsrat that 30,000 persons were hanged in Galicia alone, and another deputy stated that the number of Slavs (Austrian subjects) who were executed by Austria exceeded 80,000. Czech troops were marched to the trains watched by German soldiers like prisoners of war. Thousands of them were massacred at the front. The property of those who surrendered was confiscated, while the families of those Czech leaders who escaped abroad were brutally persecuted. It is impossible for us to give a detailed description of all the persecutions committed by Austria on the

Czecho-Slovaks, but the following is a brief summary of them:--

\_(a) Czech Deputies and Leaders imprisoned and sentenced to Death\_

The most important perhaps was the case of Dr. Kramar, one of the most moderate of the Czech leaders. Dr. Kramar was arrested on May 21, 1915, on a charge of high treason as the leader of the Young Czechs; together with him were also arrested his colleague, deputy Dr. Rasin, Mr. Cervinka, an editor of the \_Narodni Listy\_, and Zamazal, an accountant. On June 3, 1916, all four of them were sentenced to death, although no substantial proofs were produced against them. Subsequently, however, the sentence was commuted to long terms of imprisonment, but after the general amnesty of July, 1917, they were released. Among the reasons for which they were imprisoned and sentenced to death were the following, as given in the official announcement, published in the Austrian press on January 4, 1917:

Dr. Kramar before the war was "the leader of Pan-Slav propaganda and of the Russophil movement in Bohemia." He was also alleged to have kept up a connection with the pro-Ally propaganda conducted by the Czecho-Slovaks and their friends abroad during the war, and the Czech military action against Austria on the side of the Entente. Dr. Kramar was further blamed for the "treasonable" behaviour of Czech regiments who voluntarily surrendered to Russia and Serbia, and for the anti-German sentiments cherished by the Czecho-Slovaks for centuries past. Obviously in striking Dr. Kramar Austria meant to strike at the Czech nation. The "proofs" for the high treasonable activity of Dr. Kramar before and during the war were the following:[1]

(1) Dr. Kramar was (before the war) in communication with Brancianov, Bobrinski, Denis, Masaryk, Pavlu and others, who now preach the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary.

(2) In his articles in the \_Narodni Listy\_, published during the war, Dr. Kramar advocated the liberation of small nations as proclaimed by the Entente. His organ, "the \_Narodni Listy\_, laid special stress on news favourable to our enemies and on the state of disruption of Austria, and indirectly invited Czechs to passive resistance."

(3) A copy of \_La Nation Tcheque\_ was found in Dr. Kramar's pocket at the time of his arrest.

(4) Dr. Kramar had a conversation with the Italian consul in April, 1915, which is "an important cause of suspicion."

(5) In a letter to the Governor of Bohemia, Prince Thun, Dr. Kramar admitted that, always faithful to his political principles, he refrained from everything that might appear as approval of the war.

This was the evidence brought up against Kramar, on the ground of which he was to be hanged. These are the "proofs" of his responsibility for the distribution of treasonable Russian proclamations in Bohemia, repeated manifestations of sympathy with the enemy, and the refusal of Czech deputies to take part in any declarations or manifestations of loyalty.

Equally characteristic is also the case of the National Socialist leader, deputy Klofac, who was arrested in September, 1914. Owing to lack of proofs the trial was repeatedly postponed, while Klofac was left in prison. A formal charge was brought against him only when the Reichsrat was about to open in May, 1917, so as to prevent him from attending the meeting. Nevertheless he was released after the amnesty of July, 1917. Writing in the *Narodni Politika* about his experience in prison, deputy Klofac says:

"Many educated and aged political prisoners were not allowed out to walk in the yard for five months or more, which is contrary to all regulations. They were also not allowed to read books given to them by the judge, and they had to do the lowest work. One student who refused to wash the floor was beaten and confined to a dark cell. No wonder that many committed suicide. Dr. Vrbensky could tell how he used to get excited by the cry of the ill-treated prisoners. Even his nerves could not stand it. It is quite comprehensible, therefore, that Dr. Scheiner (the president of the 'Sokol' Union) in such an atmosphere was physically and mentally broken down in two months. Dr. Kramar and Dr. Rasin also had an opportunity of feeling the brutality of Polatchek and Teszinski. In the winter we suffered from frosts, for there was no heating. Some of my friends had frozen hands. We resisted the cold by drilling according to the Mueller system. This kept us fit and saved us from going to the prison doctor, Dr. A. Prinz, who was a Magyar and formerly a doctor in Karlsbad. If a prisoner went to this 'gentleman,' he did not ask after his illness, but after his nationality, and for the reason of his remand imprisonment. On hearing that a prisoner was Czech and on remand for Par. 58\_c (high treason), he only hissed: 'You do not want any medicine. It would be wasted, for in any case you will be hanged.'"

Besides Klofac, the following four National Socialist deputies were also imprisoned: Choc, Burival, Vojna and Netolicky. The accused were condemned on July 30, 1916, for "failing to denounce Professor Masaryk's revolutionary propaganda."

Professor Masaryk, who escaped abroad in 1915, was sentenced to death in Austria in December, 1916. Unable to reach him, the Austrian Government revenged themselves on his daughter, Dr. Alice Masaryk, whom they imprisoned. Only after an energetic press campaign abroad was she released. A similar fate also met the wife of another Czech leader, Dr. Benes, who escaped abroad in the autumn of 1915 and became secretary general of the Czecho-Slovak National Council.

Dr. Scheiner, president of the "Sokol" Gymnastic Association, was imprisoned, but was again released owing to lack of proofs. A similar fate also met the Czech Social Democratic leader Dr. Soukup, who was for some time kept in prison.

(b) Monster Trials, Arbitrary Executions, Internment of Civilians, etc.

A notorious reason for imprisonment, and even execution, was the possession of the so-called Russian Manifesto dropped by Russian aeroplanes, being a proclamation of the Tsar to the people of Bohemia promising them the

restoration of their independence. Mr. Matejovsky, of the Prague City Council, and fifteen municipal clerks were sentenced to many years' imprisonment for this offence in February, 1915. In May, 1915, six persons, among them two girls, were condemned to death in Kyjov, Moravia, for the same offence. On the same charge also sixty-nine other persons from Moravia were brought to Vienna and fifteen of them sentenced to death. One of the Czech girls who were executed for this offence was a Miss Kotikova, aged twenty-one, who, according to the *Arbeiter Zeitung* of September 8, 1917, refused to say from whom she had received the manifesto, and through her heroic attitude saved the lives of others.

Without a fair trial and without evidence, the editor of the National Socialist organ *Pokrok* in Prostějov, Mr. Joseph Kotek, was sentenced to death on Christmas Eve of 1914. The sentence was passed at noon, confirmed at half-past four and carried out at half-past six. As no one could be found to act as hangman, Kotek was shot. The reason given for the verdict was that the accused editor of the *Pokrok*, which was suppressed as being dangerous to the State, delivered a speech at a meeting of a co-operative society in which he said that all Czechs were unanimous that they knew that Austria was losing the war and that they prayed to God that her downfall might be soon. He was further alleged to have said that it was doubtful how Europe would be divided after the war, but that in any case the Czecho-Slovak countries would be made independent as a wedge between Germany and Austria, and that if Germany won the Czechs would be germanised, like the Poles in Germany. The accused admitted that he did speak about the reorganisation of Europe, but not in the words used by the prosecution. But, as the *Arbeiter Zeitung* said, even if he did say what the prosecution alleged, as a civilian he should never have been sentenced to death by a military tribunal. According to Czech papers, Kotek was buried among ordinary criminals outside the cemetery. The grave of the innocent martyr was not even marked with his name, and his wife was not allowed to visit it, because the military authorities forbade the sexton of the church to allow any one to see the graves of those executed for high treason.

*Dr. Preiss*, the manager of the Czech bank, *Zivnostenska Banka*, which has its branches in Galicia, Rumania, Serbia and elsewhere, and four of his colleagues were imprisoned, because the Czechs would not subscribe to Austrian war loans and *Dr. Preiss* had done nothing to induce them to do so.

As regards the horrors of the internment camps, in which over 20,000 innocent Czechs, men, women and children, were confined, we will only quote the revelations of the Czech National Socialist deputy *Stribrny*, who declared in the Reichsrat on June 14, 1917:

"This war was begun by the Austrian Government without the consent of the Austrian Parliament, against the will of the Czech people.

"In Bohemia, the most brutal cruelties have been perpetrated by the Austrian authorities against the Czech population. An anonymous denunciation suffices to bring about the arrest and imprisonment of any Czech man, woman or child. Thousands of Czech citizens have simply been seized and placed in internment camps on the ground that their

political opinions are dangerous to the existence of Austria.

"Such prisoners were led away from their homes handcuffed and in chains. They included women, girls and old grey-haired men. They were conveyed from their homes to internment camps in filthy cattle trucks and were cruelly ill-treated with a strange persistence. On one occasion forty-three Czechs, who were being conveyed to a camp of internment, were killed on the way by a detachment of Honveds (Hungarian militia) which was escorting them to their place of imprisonment.

"The conditions under which the Czechs were interned at the Talerhof Camp, near Graz, were absolutely outrageous. They were beaten and tortured on their way there. Immediately after their arrival many were tied to stakes and kept thus day and night in absolutely indescribable sanitary conditions. Many were done to death by their guards. When the thermometer showed 20 degrees of frost, old men, women and girls were left to sleep in the open air, and mortality increased amongst them to a frightful extent. Two thousand unhappy victims of Austria's brutal tyranny lie buried in the cemetery attached to the Talerhof Camp of internment. Of these, 1200 died of epidemics."

Other information concerning the same camp of Talerhof fully corroborates this statement. In a letter to his friends, a Czech interned at Talerhof wrote as follows:

"Many of my friends died from bayonet wounds; out of 12,000 at least, 2000 have so perished. The majority of us did not know why we were interned. Many were hanged without a trial on mere denunciation. Human life had no value for them. The soldiers had orders to strike us with bayonets for the slightest movement....

"We were covered with insects. One day an order was given that everybody should undress to be rubbed with paraffin. Some ladies who objected were undressed by force before our eyes, since men and women slept together, and the soldiers rubbed them with paraffin.

"A Ruthene who protested against the ill-treatment of women, who were forced to do the lowest work, was bayoneted. He was lying for five days between two barracks more dead than alive. His face and body were all green and covered with lice and his hands were bound. Then the Austrian officers and soldiers ill-treated him till he died."

In consequence of the general political amnesty, over 100,000 political prisoners in Austria were released. Thousands of them emerged from prison or internment camps reduced to mere skeletons by the systematic lack of food.

According to reports published in the Austrian press, one of the Ukrainian prisoners, named Karpinka, was left in solitary confinement without any fire in winter, so that his feet were frost-bitten and had to be amputated.

A Czech named Jary, who was condemned to twelve years' hard labour, came

out with consumption contracted through the rigour of his imprisonment. Many others were reduced to such weakness through starvation that they had to be carried out of the prison.

(c) Persecution of the Press

Among the Czech journals suppressed in Bohemia at the beginning of the war, the following deserve to be especially mentioned:

Ceske Slovo, organ of the National Socialist Party; the editors have been imprisoned. Cas ("Times"), organ of Professor Masaryk (Realist Party); the editors Dusek and Hajek were imprisoned. Samostatnost, organ of the State Right (Radical) Party; the editors were imprisoned or sent to the front.

The Narodni Listy (Kramar's organ) was twice suspended, and in May, 1918, suppressed altogether because it "fostered sympathies for the Entente."

The Lidove Noviny, organ of Dr. Stransky (Moravian People's Party), was also several times suspended during the war.

All Socialist journals were suppressed except Pravo Lidu and Rovnost.

According to the Wiener Zeitung, seventy-eight Czech journals were suspended during the months of April, May and June, 1916, alone. All Slovak newspapers were also suppressed.

As regards censorship, we need only mention that even speeches delivered in the Austrian Parliament were censored in the press. The sense of the speeches delivered by Allied statesmen was invariably distorted and declarations in favour of Czecho-Slovak independence were suppressed. Foreign newspapers were not allowed to be quoted; and the journals were forced to publish unsigned articles supplied to them by the police....

The Union of Czech Journalists declared on April 25, 1917

"We protest against the practice prevailing in Prague as against means quite contradictory to the moral principles of modern journalism, as in Prague the newspapers are forced to publish articles supplied by the Official Press Bureau, as though written by the editor, without being allowed to mark them as inspired. Thus the journals are not in reality edited by the editors themselves, but by the Press institution of the state."

The same union again protested on November 16, 1917

"After the victorious Russian Revolution which brought about also the opening of the Reichsrat, the fetters binding the Czech press were a little relaxed, but only for a short time, and to-day we see the same conditions prevailing in which we lived for the first three years of war. Every free reflection in the Czech journals is confiscated. They are even prohibited to publish articles which appeared in the German and Austrian press. Furthermore, they are again compelled to publish



articles written by officials without marking them as such. They cannot even inform their readers correctly about parliamentary debates, \_as speeches and interpellations delivered in parliament are suppressed\_. We ask the Union of Czech Deputies to protest again against this violation of parliamentary immunity, and to obtain a guarantee that in future the Czech papers will not be compelled to print articles not written by the editorial staff and that the Czech press shall enjoy at least the same freedom as the press in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest."

#### \_(d) Reichsrat Interpellations\_

To complete the picture of Austrian terrorism, we will quote some of the interpellations addressed to the Austrian Government by Czech deputies in the summer of 1917.

The Czech deputies\_ Prokes, Jaros and Charvat\_ (Socialists) have demanded an explanation from the Minister for Home Defence respecting 300 Czech teachers from Moravia who were interned in 1915, being suspected of disloyalty, although there was no charge made against them either by the civil or by the military authorities. They were first interned in Lower Austria and then in Hungary, and had to do the hardest work. Though the educational authorities reclaimed them they were not set free even to attend to the burials of their relatives. The only exception made was when one teacher was allowed to be married in Vienna, and even then he was followed by the guard with fixed bayonets. In Hungary the conditions were still worse, and many of these teachers died and many of them are still in hospitals.

A long interpellation was addressed to the government by the Czech deputies\_ Binovec, Filipinsky and Stejska\_ (Socialists) regarding the outrageous and inhuman treatment of the Czech political prisoners. They mentioned a vast number of appalling instances of deliberate torturing and starving of the prisoners. All rights of the prisoners were suspended and they depended entirely on the will of the commander: many of these political prisoners were imprisoned together with ordinary murderers; they were not allowed to read books or to write letters; their families were not permitted to visit them or even to send them provisions from home, so they starved in prison. Such cruel treatment did not affect only political prisoners but even people on remand, and it was nothing extraordinary for them to be imprisoned for years on remand only. The deputies asked whether the authorities wanted these prisoners to die from starvation.

The most interesting document is the interpellation of deputies \_Stanek, Tobolka and Co\_. on the persecutions against the Czech nation during the war. The interpellation has been published as a book of 200 pages which has been prohibited by Austria to be sent abroad, but a copy of which we have nevertheless been able to secure. The following are short extracts from the volume:

The Behaviour of the Austrian Government towards the Czech Nation during the War

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,--At a time when it proved impossible to continue to rule in an absolute way in this empire and when after more than three years the Reichsrat is sitting again, we address to you the following interpellation in order to call your attention to the persecutions which during the past three years have been perpetrated on our nation, and to demand emphatically that these persecutions shall be discontinued. They were not done unintentionally or accidentally, but, as will be shown from the following survey, this violence was committed deliberately and systematically by the Austrian Government on our nation, which took the abominable view that the present war is the most suitable period for realising the plans and aims of German centralism in the Habsburg Monarchy by curing the Czechs forever of all hallucinations about equality among nations, and about the glorious past of Bohemia and her relationship with other Slav nations. A general attack was made upon the Czech nation during the critical situation created by the war: our participation in civil service was curtailed, German was made the official language of the state, the press was muzzled, schools persecuted, the Sokol idea declared to be high treason, men distinguished for service in the state arrested, imprisoned, persecuted and sentenced to death, everything reminding the population of the famous past of Bohemia removed, the ancient Czech aspirations for political independence or even aims for a mere reorganisation of the Habsburg Monarchy on a federal basis were not allowed and were suppressed, even the name of the ancient kingdom of Bohemia, which was the foundation stone to the Habsburg Monarchy in 1526, was to disappear for ever.

"The persecutions against our nation were very cruel indeed.

"In the first place, \_Dr. Kramar\_ was attacked as the veritable leader of the Czech nation. In return for his valuable services for this state and for his nation, in return for his endeavours to educate the Czech nation towards realism in politics, he was recompensed by being arrested, imprisoned and sentenced to death, although a member of the delegations and therefore enjoying immunity. He was not brought up before the ordinary tribunal, but before a judge who was absolutely ignorant of Czech or foreign politics, so that his condemnation might be assured.

"The same fate also met his political friends, deputy Dr. Rasin and the editor of \_Narodni Listy\_, V. Cervinka.

"Incredible proceedings were taken against the deputy Klofac. Although being a member of the delegations and therefore enjoying immunity, he was arrested on September 7, 1914, and has been imprisoned ever since. A charge was hurriedly prepared against him on May 24, 1917, that is when the Reichsrat was to be opened. Both Dr. Kramar and Klofac were prosecuted by the Vienna court-martial under the direction of Colonel Gliwitzki and Dr. Preminger in such a way that no ordinary judge would dare to act.

"The way in which the military tribunals treated the ordinary

uneducated people is apparent from the following examples:

"The tailor Smejkal in Vienna was sentenced to six months' hard labour for saying, 'The government does not want to give us Czech schools in Vienna.'

"For saying, 'I do not know whether the Emperor Francis Joseph was ever crowned King of Bohemia or not,' a boy gardener named Tesar was sentenced to six months' hard labour, which sentence was altered to sixteen months by the High Court of Justice (the poor boy died in prison).

"The shoemaker's assistant Hamouz, of Vienna, sixty-seven years of age, ill and mentally stunted, served in his youth with the 28th Regiment. He defended this regiment, therefore, by saying, 'It is a good regiment.' He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

"Private Cepera from Moravia was sentenced to three years' hard labour for saying, 'The German Kaiser is responsible for the war.'

"For saying that 'those of the 28th Regiment are our "boys,"' gunner Purs, of Benatky, was sentenced to four years' imprisonment. He was sent in chains to the military prison in Moellersdorf.

"The wilfulness of military tribunals, culminating in many cases in apparent hatred against everything that is Czech, is shown by the following, out of many examples:

"The editor of *Ceske Slovo*, E. Spatny, of Prague, was arrested on September 26, 1914, and interned in Prague, without being told the reason. In March, 1915, he was transferred to the internment camp at Goellersdorf, in Lower Austria. The Czechs interned there arranged on July 5 a Hus anniversary at which the editor E. Spatny and Dr. Vrbensky spoke about the life and importance of Hus. Being accused by a certain fellow-prisoner, Davidovsky, that they had been speaking against the Germans and that 'the speakers expected deliverance by a certain state but were disappointed,' they were transferred to the military prison in Vienna, and charged with high treason according to Par. 58\_c\_. The latter was discharged for want of proofs, but the editor Spatny was sentenced to fourteen years' hard labour.

"The Sarajevo prisoners were not allowed to be visited by their relatives in contravention of the orders of the official statutes D 6. Out of five of those prisoners, three have already died, the fourth is dying, and the last one, a student Cubulic, was allowed a visit after two years when it became certain that the Reichsrat would meet.

"The extent to which starvation and inhuman treatment is raging in the state prisons is best shown by the conditions prevailing in the prison of Moellersdorf. In the years 1915-16, 61 prisoners died there out of 350 to 450 prisoners on the roll. Between January 1, 1917, and May, 1917, 101 prisoners were doomed to death. The majority belong to the sixth category of prisoners. The thieves, criminals and impostors, if

they had served previously in the army, enjoy special treatment in Moellersdorf prison. They wear civilian clothes, and are treated with consideration and well fed. On the other hand, political prisoners, especially those classed as second category, are dying from ill-treatment and insufficient nourishment. The judge, auditor A. Koenig, famous for his arbitrary verdicts against the Czech people, was a solicitor's clerk in civil life, and now recommends to his wealthy defendants his Vienna lawyer friends as splendid specialists and advocates in political matters. Thus, for instance, he forced Dr. Glaser upon Mr. Kotik as the counsel. Kotik was sentenced to death by Koenig, and Glaser sent him a bill for 10,000 kronen (L400) for the 'successful defence.'

#### The Persecutions of the Sokols

"Terrible persecutions were inflicted on the Sokol Gymnastic Association during the war. The sphere of the Sokols' activity does not touch political affairs at all, being reserved to gymnastics and spiritual education. Their activity was public, open to official inquiries and supervision. But this did not save them from persecutions. The first persecution was already committed in 1914 in Moravia, when some branches of the Sokol Association were dissolved for various reasons. Numerous societies were afterwards dissolved throughout Bohemia and Moravia.

"\_On November\_ 23, 1915, \_the Central Czech Sokol Association (Ceska Obec Sokolska) was dissolved\_ as the centre of the Czech Sokol movement, which before the war kept up lively relations with foreign countries and manifested brotherly feelings of sympathy towards Serbia and Russia. It was alleged that the Central Sokol Association had had relations with the American Sokol branches during the war through its president, Dr. J. Scheiner, and conducted an active propaganda against Austria. The alleged relations were founded on a communication of the American branches to the president, Dr. Scheiner, asking him whether he would be willing to distribute money collected in America to people in Bohemia afflicted by the war. Dr. Scheiner was arrested and kept in prison for two months.

"Very characteristic was the way in which the military authorities treated the members of Sokol societies. In many cases soldiers, especially recruits, were questioned whether they belonged to the Sokol Association. The authorities searched for Sokol badges or membership cards, and those who were found to have these in their possession were severely punished. The members of the Sokol societies as long as they were in the army were invariably subjected to ill-treatment and persecution. They were transferred to do heavy work, and not recommended for promotion, and in every way treated more brutally than other soldiers. In the case of both civil and military trials, one of the most important questions asked, was whether the accused belonged to any Sokol society, and if the accused did belong to a society this always went against him.

#### Bohemian History

"Every possible means was employed to wipe out the memory of important events in Bohemian history. Not only were historical books (like Luetzow's *Bohemia* and others) confiscated, but even scientific lectures on John Hus and the Hussite movement were prohibited. The metal memorial plate with the names of Bohemian lords executed in 1621 inscribed upon it was removed from the Town Hall, and that part of the square which showed the spot on which they were executed was ordered to be repaved.

"In order to destroy the idea that the Czechs are of Slav origin, any use of red, blue and white colours was prohibited. Varnishes in these colours were not allowed to be used. The street plates of pre-war times had to be repainted in black and yellow. Newspaper posters, match-boxes and other articles were not allowed to be sold or exhibited, if they were painted in the Slav tricolours.

#### The Suppression of Czech Literature

"More than two hundred books published before the war were confiscated. The tendency of this action was clear. The government wanted to destroy the memory of the glorious past of Bohemia, of John Hus and the Hussite movement, of the suffering of the Czech nation after the defeat of the White Mountain, to restrict all progressive and liberal movements and to kill the 'Sokol' idea, and further to destroy the consciousness that Czechs and Slovaks are the same nation and belong to the great Slav family. The apostles of this idea were proclaimed traitors, especially Dr. Kramar, J.S. Machar and others. These persecutions cover a great period before the war, and the following is a list of the books suppressed (follows a list comprising eleven foolscap columns). The government treated the Czech nation with special brutality. The persecutions in Bohemia were opposed not only to the liberal ideas of Czechs, but especially to their national feelings. The anxiety of the censor for the safety of the monarchy often bordered on absurdity. The word 'shocking' was deleted from a play, for instance, because it was English. *Henry IV* was not allowed to be played 'until we reach a settlement with England,' and it was only when it was reported by the Vienna and Berlin papers that the prohibition was withdrawn.

#### Persecution of the Czech Press

"The Czech press was persecuted in a peculiar manner. Its editors were not allowed to receive papers from neutral countries and to express their own opinions as regards the propaganda of the Czechs abroad. Under threats of suppression of the journals and imprisonment of the editors, the journals were obliged to print and publish articles supplied to them by the police, without mentioning the source from whence they came. The articles had to be put in in such a way that they appeared as if they were the editors' views. The articles betrayed the low intellectual level of the authors who lacked any knowledge of Czech affairs. Such articles which the Czech journals were compelled to publish were, for instance: 'In Foreign Pay,' published March 25, 1916; 'The Czechs in America against Masaryk's Agents,' published in all

Czech papers on April 8, 1916; on January 16, 1917, the article 'Our Answer to the Quadruple Entente.'

"The Police Directorate ordered first that such articles should appear on the same day in all papers and in the same wording, but recognising the stupidity of such an action, they compelled only one journal to publish them and the others had to 'quote' from them.

"Preventive censorship was established and a number of articles were passed by the censor for publication in Czech papers only when proofs were supplied that the articles had already appeared in some other journal in Austria. \_Independent articles or reports were not allowed to be published\_. The \_Narodni Listy\_ was treated with special spite by the censorship.

"\_Almost ninety important journals were suppressed by the government\_, the majority of them without any apparent reason or justification.

#### The Suppression of Czech School and National Literature

"Words, sentences or whole paragraphs in school books were found objectionable, since they were alleged to propagate Pan-Slavism and to encourage in the pupils hostile feelings against Austria's allies. According to the official ideas about Austrian patriotism, purely educational paragraphs were considered as wanting in patriotic feeling; not only literary but also historical paragraphs were 'corrected,' and official advice was issued as to how to write handbooks on patriotic lines on special subjects, as for instance on natural history, physics, geometry, etc. The foundations of all knowledge to be supplied to the pupils in the public schools had to reflect the spirit of the world war.

"Numerous folk-songs with absolutely no political tendency in them were confiscated, merely because they expressed the Czech national spirit. All songs were suppressed which mentioned the word Slav--'The Slav Linden Tree'--the army or the Allies. Even if the publishers offered to publish new editions without the objectionable songs they were not allowed to do so, and were asked to put in more 'loyal songs' and to replace melancholy songs with cheerful ones.

"In every secondary school a zealous library revision was started and many books were removed, so that these libraries lost all their value for the students. The Czech youth must not know the principal works either of their own or foreign literature. Certain libraries had to be deprived of some hundreds of books. All this happened at a time when the discussions here and abroad were taking place about the importance of raising the standard of knowledge of the educated classes.

"The opening of Czech minority schools has been postponed since the beginning of 1914. Consequently the Czech School Society must keep them up and pay the expenses in connection with them, amounting to a loss of more than two million kronen up till now. On the other hand, many German schools have been established in Bohemia.

"The steps which are being taken against Czech schools in Lower Austria, especially in Vienna, are not only contrary to the standing laws but also to the decisions of the ministry concerned.

"We conclude by asking:

"Are the above facts of systematic persecution of the Czech nation during the war known to your Excellency?

"Is your Excellency prepared to investigate them thoroughly?

"Is your Excellency prepared to stop the persecution of the Czech nation and the wrongs suffered by us through these proceedings?

"\_In Vienna, June\_ 6, 1917."

[Footnote 1: For the full text of this document see Dr. Benes' \_Bohemia's Case for Independence\_.]

V

## HOW THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS AT HOME ASSISTED THE ALLIES

From the foregoing chapters it is clear that by continuous misrule and by the attempt to reduce the Czecho-Slovak nation to impotence through terrorism and extermination during this war, the Habsburgs have created a gulf between themselves and their Czecho-Slovak subjects which can never again be bridged over. Realising this, and seeing that since Austria has voluntarily sold herself to Berlin their only hope for a better future lies in the destruction of the political system called Austria-Hungary, the Czecho-Slovaks have from the beginning staked their all on the victory of the Entente, towards which they have contributed with all possible means at their disposal.

1. Since they could not think of revolting, the Czecho-Slovaks at home tried to paralyse the power of Austria in every way. Not only individuals but also Czech banks and other institutions refused to subscribe to the war loans. Their newspapers published official reports with reluctance, and between the lines laid stress on news unfavourable to Austria so as to keep up the spirit of the people. Czech peasants refused to give up provisions, and thus the Czechs, who already before the war boycotted German goods, accelerated the present economic and financial ruin of Austria.

2. Politically, too, they contributed to the internal confusion of the Dual Monarchy, and to-day their opposition forms a real menace to the existence of Austria. Czech political leaders unanimously refused to sign any declaration of loyalty to Austria, and they never issued a single protest against Professor Masaryk and his political and military action abroad. On several occasions they even publicly expressed their sympathies and approval of this action. For nearly three years they prevented the opening

of the Austrian Parliament which would have been to their prejudice. Only after the Russian Revolution, when Austria began to totter and her rulers were apprehensive lest events in Russia should have a repercussion in the Dual Monarchy, did the Czechs decide to speak out and exerted pressure to bring about the opening of the Reichsrat, where they boldly declared their programme, revealed Austria's rule of terror during the first three years of war, and by their firm opposition, which they by and by induced the Poles and Yugoslavs to imitate, they brought about a permanent political deadlock, menacing Austria's very existence internally and weakening her resistance externally.

3. But the most important assistance the Czechs rendered to the Allies was their refusal to fight for Austria.

Out of 70,000 prisoners taken by Serbia during the first months of the war, 35,000 were Czechs. Of these, 24,000 perished during the Serbian retreat, and 8000 died of typhoid fever and cholera at Asinara. The remaining 3000 were transferred to France and voluntarily joined the Czecho-Slovak army.

Over 300,000 Czecho-Slovaks surrendered voluntarily to Russia whom they regarded as their liberator. Unfortunately the old regime in Russia did not always show much understanding of their aspirations. They were scattered over Siberia, cut off from the outer world, and often abandoned to the ill-treatment of German and Magyar officers. It is estimated that over thirty thousand of them perished from starvation. It was only after great efforts, after the Russian Revolution, and especially when Professor Masaryk himself went to Russia, that the Czecho-Slovak National Council succeeded in organising a great part of them into an army. Finally, when Austria desired to strike a death-blow at Italy in 1918, and began again to employ Slav troops, she failed again, and this failure was once more to a large extent caused by the disaffection of her Slav troops, as is proved by the Austrian official statements. Indeed, whenever Austria relied solely on her own troops she was always beaten, even by the "contemptible" Serbians. The Czechs and other Slavs have greatly contributed to these defeats by their passive resistance. It was only the intervention of German troops which saved Austria from an utter collapse in 1915, and which prevented the Czechs from completing their aim of entirely disorganising the military power of Austria. Slav regiments have since then been intermixed with German and Magyar troops. The Slavs receive their ammunition only at the front, where they are placed in the foremost ranks with Germans or Magyars behind them, so that they are exposed to a double fire if they attempt to surrender. Nevertheless, up to 1916 some 350,000 Czechs out of a total of 600,000 in the Austrian army surrendered to the Allies.

4. From the very beginning of the war Czech soldiers showed their real feelings. They were driven to fight against the Russians and Serbs who were their brothers by race and their sincere and devoted friends. They were driven to fight for that hated Austria which had trampled their liberties underfoot for centuries past, and for a cause which they detested from the bottom of their hearts. They were driven to fight in the interests of their German and Magyar enemies against their Slav brothers and friends under terrible circumstances.



In September, 1914, the 8th Czech Regiment refused to go to the front until threatened by the German troops. The 11th Czech Regiment of Pisek refused to march against Serbia and was decimated. The 36th Regiment revolted in the barracks and was massacred by German troops. The 88th Regiment, which made an unsuccessful attempt to surrender to Russia, was shot down by the Magyar Honveds. A similar fate befell the 13th and 72nd Slovak Regiments.

On the other hand, many Czech troops succeeded in surrendering. The 35th Regiment of Pilsen went over to the Russians in a body half-an-hour after arriving at the front. Soon after, the 28th Regiment of Prague surrendered *\_en masse\_*, having been "fetched" by the Czechs fighting on the Russian side. Immediately afterwards the Austrian commander-in-chief issued an order of the day in which he declared.

"On April 3, 1915, almost the whole of the 28th Regiment surrendered without fighting to a single enemy battalion.... This disgraceful act not only destroys the reputation of this regiment, but necessitates its name being struck off the list of our army corps, until new deeds of heroism retrieve its character. His Apostolic Majesty has accordingly ordered the dissolution of this regiment, and the deposition of its banners in the army museum."

And indeed "new deeds of heroism" did follow. A fresh battalion was founded composed of Czech youths who were sent to the Isonzo front and exposed in a dangerous position to deadly artillery fire. Almost the whole battalion was thus unscrupulously wiped out. Only eighteen of them survived. This was followed by a new imperial order saying that the disgrace of the 28th Regiment was "atoned for" by the "sacrifice" of this regiment on the Isonzo.

As regards Italy, over 20,000 Czechs surrendered voluntarily on the Italian front up to 1917, and 7000 during the last offensive on the Piave in June, 1918. Of recent cases we need mention only the "treachery of Carzano," where, on September 18, 1917, some Czech officers went over to the Italians, communicated to them the Austrian plans of campaign and led them against the Austrians whose front was thus successfully broken through. This incident was not the only one of its kind. It has been repeated several times by Czech officers whenever they found an opportunity of going over to the Italians. During the offensive of June, 1918, the Austrian press openly attributed the Austrian failure to "Czech treachery," asserting that the plan of the offensive was communicated to the Italian headquarters staff by Czecho-Slovak officers. This the Austrian military authorities themselves admitted later, when they published the following official statement, which appeared in the German press on July 28:

"On the morning of June 15, we started a vigorous offensive on the whole front between the Tyrolese mountains and the Adriatic, with a power that can be attained only by complete co-operation of all the units and with an accurate execution and a common and uniform action. But, just at the beginning of the attack, it became apparent that the enemy were making a counter-attack according to a well-defined plan, as in the case of a projected vigorous offensive. It was also found out that the enemy was perfectly aware of the extent, the day and the hour

of our attack. The intended surprise, so important for the success of an offensive, has thus failed. In due course Italy also obtained, from documents which some deserters handed to the Italian high command, information which gave her a sufficiently precise idea of our dispositions. English, French and Italian officers and men captured by us declare unanimously that their regiments were advised on the evening of June 14 that the Austrian offensive would start at two o'clock on the following morning.

"The exact time of the beginning of our offensive must have been betrayed by \_Yugoslav and Czech deserters\_. The enemy took steps against the bombardment by means of gas, which was expected. These steps later proved insufficient. As an example we may mention only the following facts: The battalion of bersaglieri received, at 3.20 on June 14, a quantity of ammunition at 72 to 240 cartridges per man. The Pinerolo Brigade took up fighting position at 2 o'clock at night. An order, captured late on July 14, said: 'According to reports received, the enemy will commence early on June 15 their bombardment preparations for attack. At midnight hot coffee and meat conserves will be distributed. The troops will remain awake, armed and prepared to use their gas-masks.'

"For some time now the Italian command have tried to disorganise our troops by high treasonable propaganda. In the Italian prisoners-of-war camps the Slavs are persuaded by promises and corruption to enlist in the Czecho-Slovak army. This is done in a way prohibited by law. Their ignorance of the international situation and their lack of news from home, partly caused by Italian censorship, are exploited by means of propaganda without scruples. An order of the 5th Italian Army Corps (1658 Prot. R. J.) of May 14, 1918, refers to active propaganda by Czecho-Slovak volunteers with the object of disorganising the Austro-Hungarian army. The Italian military authorities on their part deceive the Czecho-Slovaks by telling them of the continuous disorders and insurrections in Bohemia. In the above-mentioned order it is asserted that in the corps to which it is addressed, as well as in other corps, some attempts of the Czecho-Slovak elements have been successful in causing confusion among enemy ranks. \_Some of our Czecho-Slovak soldiers deserted and went over to the Italians\_. Others remained in touch with them and declared themselves ready to stay in our positions as a source of ferment for future insurrections. Although the high treason miscarried owing to the heroic resistance which our troops, without distinction of nationality, offered to the enemy, it is nevertheless true that some elements succumbed to the treacherous enemy propaganda.

"The gunner Rudolf Paprikar, of the machine gun section, according to reports of the 8th Army Corps jumped off the river bank into the Piave below Villa Jacur and swam across under danger of being drowned. He betrayed the position, strength and composition of his sector, and through observation and spying, he acquired some valuable information by which our projected attack against Montello was disclosed. Further, he revealed to the enemy some very secret preparations for the crossing of the river Piave, and also supplied him with plans of the

organisation of troops, battery positions, etc.

"The principal part in the treachery is attributed by the Italian high command, not without reason, to Lieutenant Karel Stiny of an infantry regiment, who deserted near Narenta. It appears from the detailed Italian official report in which his statements are embodied, that he betrayed all our preparations on the Piave and provided the enemy with a great deal of most important information. Let us mention further that Stiny in his mendacious statements to the Italian command about the Austro-Hungarian situation at the front and in the interior, followed the line of all traitors in order to appear in a favourable light. It is characteristic that in his declaration about our offensive he said that many Austro-Hungarian troops would have surrendered if it had not been for the German and Bulgarian bayonets behind their backs.

"\_It is proved by various documents to what extent the Czechs have forgotten their honour and duty\_. By breaking their oath to Austria and her emperor and king, they have also forgotten all those who were with them at the front, and they are responsible for the blood of our patriots and the sufferings of our prisoners in Italy. The false glory which is attributed to them by the Italian command, who have lost all sense of the immorality of these proceedings, cannot efface the eternal crime which history always attaches to the names of traitors."

5. We could give many proofs of the great service the Czecho-Slovaks rendered the Allies by their surrenders. But for our purpose it will be sufficient to quote only some more admissions of the Germans and Magyars themselves.

Count Tisza admitted that Czech troops could not be relied upon, and Count Windischgraetz stated that the chief of staff dare not use them except when mixed with Magyars and Germans.

Deputy Urmanczy declared in the Budapest Parliament on September 5, 1916, that during the first encounters with Rumania, a Czech regiment retired without the slightest resistance, provided themselves with provisions, entered a train and disappeared. The men went over to Rumania. He blamed the Czechs for the Austrian reverse in Transylvania.

On June 22, 1917, when the case of deputy Klofac was discussed by the Immunity Committee of the Reichsrat, General von Georgi, Austrian Minister for Home Defence, according to the Czech organ *\_Pozor\_* of June 24, described

"... the conditions prevailing in the army, especially the behaviour of certain Czech regiments, and brought forward all the material which had been collected against the Czechs since the outbreak of the war, and which had been used against them. He referred to the 28th and 36th Regiments as well as to eight other Czech regiments which had voluntarily surrendered to the Russians. He mentioned also that Czech officers, not only those in reserve but also those on active service, including some of the highest ranks of the staff, surrendered to the enemy; in one instance fourteen officers with a staff officer thus

surrendered. Czech soldiers in the Russian and French armies, as well as in other enemy armies, are fighting for the Entente and constitute legions and battalions of their own. The total number of Czechs in the enemy armies exceeds 60,000. In the prisoners' camps in the enemy countries, non-German prisoners were invited to join the enemy's ranks. Czech legions and battalions are composed almost entirely of former prisoners of war. The minister further went on to describe the propaganda of the Czechs abroad, the activity of Czech committees in enemy and neutral countries, especially in Russia and Switzerland. He also mentioned the case of Pavlu, a Czech soldier, who in a Russian newspaper described how he penetrated the Austrian trenches in the uniform of an Austrian officer, annihilated the occupants and after a successful scouting reconnaissance returned to the Russian ranks. The minister described the attitude of the 'Sokols' and the Czech teachers. The tenor of his speech was that Klotfac is responsible for the anti-Austrian feeling of the Czech nation and that therefore he should not be released."

When the Russian offensive of July, 1917, started, Herr Hummer, member of the Austrian Reichsrat, addressed the following interpellation to the Austrian Minister for Home Defence:

"Is the Austrian Minister for Home Defence aware that in one of the early engagements of the new Russian offensive, the 19th Austrian Infantry Division, which consists almost entirely of Czecho-Slovaks and other Slavs, openly sided with the enemies of Austria by refusing to fight against the Russians and by surrendering as soon as an opportunity offered itself?"

The most interesting document in regard to the attitude of Czecho-Slovaks during the war is the interpellation of ninety German Nationalist deputies (Schurf, Langenhahn, Wedra, Richter, Kittinger and others), of which we possess a copy. It contains 420 large-size printed pages, and it is therefore impossible for us to give a detailed account of it. The chapters of this interpellation have the following headings:

1. The dangers of Pan-Slavistic propaganda.
2. The situation at the outbreak of the war.
3. Motives for the arrest of Kramar.
4. The behaviour of Czechs in Austria:
  - \_(a)\_ Demonstrations of Czech national spirit in Prague;
  - \_(b)\_ Czech school-books;
  - \_(c)\_ Czech officials;
  - \_(d)\_ The activities of the "Sokols";
  - \_(e)\_ What happened at Litomerice and elsewhere;
  - \_(f)\_ The Czech attitude towards war loans;
  - \_(g)\_ The Zivnostenska Banka and the war loans;
  - \_(h)\_ The financial policy of the Zivnostenska Banka;
  - \_(i)\_ The Czechs and war emergency affairs;
  - \_(k)\_ The Czechs and the question of food supplies.
5. The anti-Austrian attitude of Czechs abroad:
  - \_(a)\_ In France;
  - \_(b)\_ In England;

- \_ (c) \_ In Russia;
  - \_ (d) \_ In America;
  - \_ (e) \_ In Switzerland;
  - \_ (f) \_ The campaign of Professor Masaryk;
  - \_ (g) \_ The Czech secret intelligence service.
6. The conduct of Czech soldiers on the battlefield.
  7. Military consequences.
  8. Some recent documents.

According to the *Neue Freie Presse* of June 6, 1918, the Austrian Minister for Home Defence made the following important admissions in reply to the part of this interpellation concerning the Czech contribution to the defeats of Austria:

"The 36th Regiment, according to unanimous reports of the high command, failed to do its duty in May, 1915, on the Russian front, and thereby caused a heavy defeat of other detachments. This regiment was dissolved by the imperial decree of July 16, 1915.

"The unsuccessful fighting and heavy losses of the 19th Division in the battle north of Tarnopol between September 9 and 11, 1915, were caused by the weak resistance of the 35th Regiment.... During the battles of June 29 to July 2, 1917, near Zloczow the resistance offered by this regiment was weak.

"As regards Regiment No. 28 of Prague, according to the statement of regimental commanders, it appears that the whole detachment, without firing a single shot, was taken prisoner by a single enemy battalion, or rather was brought by that battalion from its position."

And in this policy Czech soldiers continue by surrendering voluntarily to the Entente troops whenever they have the opportunity.

VI

## THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL ACTION OF THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS ABROAD

When war broke out, the Czecho-Slovaks all over the world felt it their duty to prove by deeds that their place was on the side of the Entente. The Czecho-Slovaks in Great Britain, France and Russia volunteered to fight for the Allies, while in the United States of America, where there are some one and a half million Czecho-Slovaks, they have counteracted German propaganda and revealed German plots intended to weaken the American assistance to the Allies.

1. In France 471 Czechs, *i.e.* over 60 per cent., entered the Foreign Legion and greatly distinguished themselves by their bravery. The majority of them have been mentioned in dispatches and received the Military Cross. They have also won five crosses and twenty medals of the Russian Order of St. George. Their losses amount to more than 70 per cent.

Further, many Czechs living in Great Britain at the outbreak of the war joined the French Foreign Legion in France, and after His Majesty's Government allowed Czechs to volunteer for service in the British army in the autumn of 1916, practically all Czechs of military age resident in Great Britain enrolled so far as they were not engaged on munitions. In Canada, too, the Czechs joined the army in order to fight for the British Empire.

The most important part was taken, however, by the Czecho-Slovak colonies in Russia and America. In Russia, where there are large Czecho-Slovak settlements, numbering several thousand, a Czecho-Slovak legion was formed at the outbreak of the war which has rendered valuable services, especially in scouting and reconnoitring. This legion grew gradually larger, especially when Czech prisoners began to be allowed to join it, and finally, under the direction of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, it was formed into a regular army. In September, 1917, it had already two divisions, and in 1918 fresh prisoners joined it, so that it counted some 100,000.

In order to be able fully to appreciate this achievement, we must remember that this was an army of volunteers, organised by the Czecho-Slovak Council without the powers of a real government. At the beginning of the war the Czecho-Slovaks not only had no government of their own, but not even any united organisation. And if we realise that to-day, after three and a half years of strenuous effort, the National Council are recognised by the Allies as the Provisional Government of Bohemia with the right of exercising all powers appertaining to a real government, including the control of an army as large as Great Britain had at the outbreak of the war, it must be admitted that the action of the Czecho-Slovaks abroad was crowned with wonderful success.

In Russia the difficulties with which the National Council had to cope were especially grave, and mainly for two reasons. In the first place, the Czecho-Slovak prisoners who voluntarily surrendered were scattered all over Russia. It was extremely difficult even to get into touch with them. In addition there was a lack of good-will on the part of the old Russian Government. Thus very often these prisoners, who regarded Russia as Bohemia's elder brother and liberator, were sadly disillusioned when they were left under the supervision of some German officers, and thousands of them died from starvation. Nevertheless they never despaired. Eager to fight for the Allies, many of them entered the Yugoslav Division which fought so gallantly in the Dobrudja. Nearly all the Czech officers in this division were decorated with the highest Russian, Serbian and Rumanian orders. Half of them committed suicide, however, during the retreat rather than fall into the hands of the enemy.

It was not until after the Russian Revolution, and especially after the arrival of Professor Masaryk in Russia in May, 1917, that the Czecho-Slovak army in Russia became a reality.

The Czecho-Slovaks have been mentioned in Russian official \_communiques\_ of February 2, 1916, and March 29, 1917. The most glorious part was taken by the Czecho-Slovak Brigade during the last Russian offensive in July, 1917,

in which the Czechs showed manifestly the indomitable spirit that animates them. Since every Czech fighting on the side of the Entente is shot, if he is captured by the Austrians, the Czechs everywhere fight to the bitter end, and rather commit suicide than be captured by their enemies. For this reason they are justly feared by the Germans. As in the Hussite wars, the sight of their caps and the sound of their songs struck terror in the hearts of the Germans and Magyars. At the battle of Zborov on July 2, 1917, the Czechs gave the whole world proof of their bravery. Determined to win or fall, they launched an attack almost without ammunition, with bayonets and hand-grenades--and they gained a victory over an enemy vastly superior in numbers.

According to the official Russian \_communique\_:

"On July 2, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, after a severe and stubborn battle, the gallant troops of the Czecho-Slovak Brigade occupied the strongly fortified enemy position on the heights to the west and south-west of the village of Zborov and the fortified village of Koroszylow. Three lines of enemy trenches were penetrated. The enemy has retired across the Little Strypa. The Czecho-Slovak Brigade captured sixty-two officers and 3150 soldiers, fifteen guns and many machine guns. Many of the captured guns were turned against the enemy."

Finally, however, when the Russians refused to fight, the Czechs had to retire as well. General Brussiloff declared:

"The Czecho-Slovaks, perfidiously abandoned at Tarnopol by our infantry, fought in such a way that the world ought to fall on its knees before them."

2. The spontaneous and unanimous political action of the Czecho-Slovaks abroad became co-ordinated when Professor Masaryk escaped from Austria and placed himself at the head of the movement.

\_Professor Masaryk\_, the distinguished Czech leader and scholar, whose name we have already mentioned in the preceding chapters, went to Italy in December, 1914, and although he desired once more to return to Austria before leaving finally for France, he found it too dangerous, as the reign of terror had already been established in Bohemia. He accordingly went to Switzerland and afterwards on to France and England. In October, 1915, he was appointed lecturer at the newly founded School of Slavonic Studies at King's College, University of London. Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, who was prevented through indisposition from presiding at Professor Masaryk's inaugural lecture on October 19, 1915, sent the following message to the meeting:

"I congratulate King's College on Professor Masaryk's appointment, and I can assure him that we welcome his advent to London both as a teacher--the influence of whose power and learning is felt throughout the Slav world--and as a man to whose personal qualities of candour, courage and strength we are all glad to pay a tribute. We believe that his presence here will be a link to strengthen the sympathy which unites the people of Russia and Great Britain."

"First and foremost the Allies are fighting for the liberties of small nations, to the end that they may be left in future free from the tyranny of their more powerful neighbours to develop their own national life and institutions. Above all, to-day our thoughts and our sympathies are moved towards Serbia, whose undaunted courage wins day by day our unbounded sympathy and admiration."

During the lecture on the Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis, Professor Masaryk outlined his political programme which he has ever since insisted the Allies should adopt, to destroy the German plans of Mitteleuropa. He declared:

"Great Britain came into this war to protect little Belgium, and now with her Allies she is faced by the task of protecting Serbia. This evolution of the war is almost logical, for Germany's aim is and was Berlin--Bagdad, the employment of the nations of Austria-Hungary as helpless instruments, and the subjection of the smaller nations which form that peculiar zone between the west and east of Europe. \_Poland, Bohemia, Serbo-Croatia (the South Slavs) are the natural adversaries of Germany\_, of her \_Drang nach Osten\_; to liberate and strengthen these smaller nations is the only real check upon Prussia. Free Poland, Bohemia and Serbo-Croatia would be so-called buffer states, their organisation would facilitate and promote the formation of a Magyar state, of Greater Rumania, of Bulgaria, Greece and the rest of the smaller nations. If this horrible war, with its countless victims, has any meaning, it can only be found in the liberation of the small nations who are menaced by Germany's eagerness for conquest and her thirst for the dominion of Asia. The Oriental question is to be solved on the Rhine, Moldau and Vistula, not only on the Danube, Vardar and Maritza."

Soon afterwards Professor Masaryk issued a proclamation signed by representatives of all Czecho-Slovaks abroad, the full text of which reads as follows:

"We come before the political public at a moment when the retreat of the victorious Russian army is exploited against Russia and her Allies. We take the side of the struggling Slav nations and their Allies without regard to which party will be victorious, simply because the Allies' cause is just. The decision as to which party in this fatal struggle is defending the right, is a question of principle and political morality which to-day cannot be evaded by any honest and clear-thinking politician nor by any self-conscious nation. But we are prompted to step forward also by our vivid sense of Slav solidarity: we express our ardent sympathies to our brother Serbs and Russians, as well as to our brother Poles, so heavily struck by the war. We believe in the ultimate victory of the Slavs and their Allies, and we are convinced that this victory will contribute towards the welfare of the whole of Europe and humanity. The spiteful anti-Slav attitude of Ferdinand the Koburg and his government cannot retard the victory of a just cause."



"The Czech nation made an alliance with Hungary and the Austrian Germans by a free election of a Habsburg to the throne of the kingdom of Bohemia in 1526; but the dynasty created through a systematic centralisation and germanisation a unitary absolutist state, thus violating their treaty guaranteeing the independence of the Bohemian State within and without. The Czech nation, exhausted by the European and Habsburg anti-reformation, has only since the Czech regeneration at the end of the eighteenth century been able to resist this violence. It was especially the revolution of 1848 which challenged it.

"The revolution was crushed, and the secured rights of nations, especially of the Czechs, were again sacrificed to absolutism which, however, was shattered by the war of 1859, and replaced by an incomplete constitutionalism. Then Vienna gave way to the Magyars. But the Czechs had to content themselves with solemn promises that were never kept. The Czech nation started a struggle of passive opposition. Later on it also took an active part in the new parliament, but whether in parliament or in the diets, it always claimed its historic right of independence and struggled against the German-Magyar dualism. The attempts made to come to an understanding were frustrated by the obstinate spirit of domination of the Germans and Magyars.

"The present war has only accentuated the Czecho-Slovak opposition to Austria-Hungary. War was declared without the parliament being consulted: all other states presented the declaration of war to their parliaments for ratification, only the Viennese Government was afraid to consult its peoples, because the majority of them would have declared against the war. The representatives of the Czech nation would have certainly protested with the greatest emphasis. That is why the government did not consult a single Czech deputy or politician with regard to taking so momentous a step.

"The Czech nation has always in modern times defended a thoroughly Slav programme. Also during this war, which has found our nation unprepared like all other peaceful nations, the Czechs have since the very beginning expressed their sympathies for Russia, Serbia and their Allies, notwithstanding the unprecedented Austrian terrorism, suppressing every manifestation of the real feelings of the people. The pro-Austrian declarations are enforced by the government. To-day the leading Czech politicians are in prison, the gallows have become the favourite support of the incapable administration, and Czech regiments have been decimated for acting spontaneously up to our national Czech programme. The rights of the Czech language have been ruthlessly violated during the war, and the absolutist military rule has reigned throughout Bohemia and other non-German and non-Magyar parts of the monarchy as in enemy countries. Every declaration in the Czech journals is suppressed, while our national adversaries are not only allowed to make propaganda against the Czech nation, but even the pan-German orgies in the spirit of Lagarde, von Hartmann, Mommsen, and Treitschke are supported by Vienna and Budapest.

"Under these circumstances the Czech nation cannot continue to keep silence. That is why the Czech and Slovak emigrants abroad deem it

their duty to inform foreign opinion about the true situation of Bohemia, to interpret the aspirations of the Czecho-Slovak nation to the Allied statesmen, politicians and journalists, and to defend the Czecho-Slovak programme.

"The Czech parties have hitherto striven for the independence of their nation inside Austria-Hungary. \_The course which this fratricidal war has taken and the ruthless violence of Vienna make it necessary for all of us to strive for independence without regard to Austria-Hungary. We are struggling for an absolutely independent Czecho-Slovak State\_.

"The Czech nation has come to the conclusion that it must take its destiny into its own hands. Austria was defeated not only by Russia, but also by the small and despised Serbia, and became a dependency of Germany. To-day it has recovered a little under the direction of Berlin, but that desperate strain of forces does not deceive us: it is only a proof of the abdication of Austria-Hungary. We have lost all confidence in the vitality of Austria-Hungary, and we no more recognise its right to existence. Through its incapability and dependence it has proved to the whole world that the assumption of the necessity of Austria has passed, and has through this war been proved to be wrong. Those who have defended the possibility and necessity of Austria-Hungary--and at one time it was Palacky himself--demanded a confederated state of equal nations and lands. But the dualist Austria-Hungary became the oppressor of non-German and non-Magyar nationalities. It is the obstacle to peace in Europe and it has degenerated into a mere tool for Germany's expansion to the East, without a positive mission of its own, unable to create a state organisation of equal nations, free and progressive in civilisation. The dynasty, living in its absolutist traditions, maintains itself a phantom of its former world empire, assisted in government by its undemocratic partners, the barren aristocracy, the anti-national bureaucracy, and the anti-national military staff.

"To-day there is no doubt that Austria-Hungary wrongly used the assassination at Sarajevo as a pretext against Serbia. Vienna and Budapest did not hesitate to use forged documents manufactured by their own embassy against the Yugoslavs, and in this policy of deceit Vienna and Budapest have persisted during this war. To this deceit they have now added revengeful spitefulness and cruelty truly barbarian against the non-Germans and non-Magyars.

"Germany shares the guilt with Austria-Hungary; it was in Germany's power and it was her duty towards civilisation and humanity to prevent the war and not to take advantage of the imperialist lust of Vienna and Budapest.

"Austria-Hungary and Germany are fighting with their Turkish and Bulgarian Allies for a cause which is unjust and doomed."

Later on, when \_Dr. Edward Benes\_, lecturer at the Czech University of Prague and author of several well-known studies in sociology, also escaped abroad, the Czecho-Slovak National Council was formed, of which Professor

Masaryk became the president, \_Dr. Stefanik\_, a distinguished airman and scientist, Hungarian Slovak by birth, the vice-president, and Dr. E. Benes the general secretary. A French review was started in Paris (\_La Nation Tcheque\_) in May, 1915, which became the official organ of the Czecho-Slovak movement. Up to May, 1917, it was published under the editorship of Professor Denis, and since then its editor has been Dr. Benes. A Central Czech organ is also published in Paris called \_Samostatnost\_ ("Independence"), edited by Dr. Sychrava, an eminent Czech journalist.

The undisputed authority enjoyed by Professor Masaryk among all the Czecho-Slovaks is undoubtedly the secret of the great strength and unity of the movement. It is also the reason for the great diplomatic successes achieved by the Czechs. The chief lieutenants of Professor Masaryk were Dr. Benes, an untiring worker with rare political instinct and perspicacity, and Dr. Milan Stefanik, who entered the French army as a private at the beginning of the war, was gradually promoted, and in May, 1918, rose to the rank of brigadier-general. He rendered valuable service to France as an astronomist before the war, and as an airman during the war. He has rendered still greater service to the Czecho-Slovak cause as a diplomat. These three men, unanimously recognised by the two million Czecho-Slovaks in the Allied countries as their leaders, were finally, in the summer of 1918, recognised also by the Allies as the \_de facto\_ provisional government of the Czecho-Slovak State, with all rights and powers of a real government. The central seat of the Czecho-Slovak Government is in Paris, and official Czecho-Slovak representatives and legations are in all the Allied capitals.

3. The first political success of the National Council was the Allies' Note to President Wilson of January 10, 1917. The Czechs are especially grateful to France for this first recognition of their claims.

In this Note, in which the Allies for the first time stated publicly and explicitly their war aims, the Allies declared that these include:

"The reorganisation of Europe guaranteed by a stable settlement, based upon the principle of nationality, upon the right which all peoples, whether small or great, have to the enjoyment of full security and free economic development, and also upon territorial agreements and international arrangements so framed as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjust attacks; the restitution of provinces or territories formerly torn from the Allies by force or contrary to the wishes of their inhabitants; \_the liberation of Italians, Slavs, Rumanians and Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination\_; the liberation of the peoples who now lie beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks, and the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, which has proved itself so radically alien to Western civilisation."

The greatest success of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, however, has been the formal recognition by France of the formation of an autonomous Czecho-Slovak army in France with the National Council at its head. By this act France recognised:

(1) That the Czecho-Slovaks have a right to form an army of their own, which right appertains only to a sovereign and independent nation;

(2) That the Czecho-Slovaks have a right to fight on the side of the Entente, and therefore are to be considered as one of the Allies;

(3) That the political direction of the army is reserved to the Czecho-Slovak National Council, which right is usually accorded only to the government of an independent state.

The full text of this historic document, signed by the President of the French Republic, M. Poincare, the French Premier, M. Clemenceau, and the Foreign Secretary, M. Pichon, and dated December 19, 1917, reads as follows:

"1. The Czecho-Slovaks organised in an autonomous army and recognising, from the military point of view, the superior authority of the French high command, will fight under their own flag against the Central Powers.

"2. This national army is placed, from the political point of view, under the direction of the Czecho-Slovak National Council whose headquarters are in Paris.

"3. The formation of the Czecho-Slovak army as well as its further work are assured by the French Government.

"4. The Czecho-Slovak army will be subject to the same dispositions as regards organisation, hierarchy, administration and military discipline as those in force in the French army.

"5. The Czecho-Slovak army will be recruited from among:

(\_a\_) Czecho-Slovaks at present serving with the French army;

(\_b\_) Czecho-Slovaks from other countries admitted to be transferred into the Czecho-Slovak army or to contract a voluntary engagement with this army for the duration of war.

"6. Further ministerial instructions will settle the application of this decree.

"7. The President of the War Cabinet, the Secretary of War, and the Foreign Secretary are charged each in his own sphere to bring into effect the present decree, which will be published in the Bulletin des Lois and inserted in the Journal Officiel de la Republique Francaise."

In a covering letter, dated December 16, 1917, and addressed to M. Poincare, the French Premier and the Foreign Secretary declared:

"France has always supported by all means in her power the national aspirations of the Czecho-Slovaks. The number of volunteers of this

nationality who at the outbreak of the war enlisted to fight under the French flag was considerable; the gaps created in their ranks prove unquestionably the ardour with which they fought against our enemies.

"Certain Allied governments, especially the Russian Provisional Government, did not hesitate to authorise the formation on our front of units composed of Czecho-Slovaks who had escaped from the oppression of their enemy.

"It is only just that this nationality should be given means of defending, under their own flag and side by side with us, the cause of right and liberty of peoples, and it will be in accord with French traditions to assist the organisation of an autonomous Czecho-Slovak army."

Needless to say, the joy over this recognition was very great in Bohemia, while the German papers were furious. The *Neue Freie Presse* of December 28 devoted its leading article to the Czecho-Slovak army on the Western front, and concluded with the following remarks:

"Although the strength of this new army is estimated at 120,000 men, the Czecho-Slovak army will not have a decisive influence on the military operations. Nevertheless, it may do us considerable harm in case we should transfer troops to the Western front. However, the greatest harm is in the moral effect which this act of wholesale treachery of the Czechs will have on the military power of the monarchy. In any case the co-operation of the Czecho-Slovak army on the side of the Entente will only strengthen the Allies' belief that right is on their side."

Soon afterwards Italy also generously allowed an expeditionary corps of the Czecho-Slovak army to be formed from the Czecho-Slovak prisoners of war who surrendered to her. On May 23, 1918, the Czecho-Slovak troops welcomed the Prince of Wales to Rome, and soon afterwards they distinguished themselves on the Piave and were mentioned in one of General Diaz's dispatches and also in the official Italian *communique* of September 22, 1918.

From the recognition of the Czecho-Slovak army followed the full recognition which the National Council obtained from the Allies.

4. While the general secretariat was actively working for these concessions in the West, Professor Masaryk, after devoting his attention to the education of public opinion in Great Britain on the importance of Bohemia, by means of private memoranda and various articles in the *New Europe*, *Weekly Dispatch* and elsewhere, decided in May, 1917, to go to Russia.

In Russia, Professor Masaryk succeeded admirably in uniting and strengthening all Czecho-Slovak forces, and in organising a regular army of the many thousands of Czecho-Slovak prisoners there. As we have already pointed out elsewhere, before the Revolution these efforts of the National Council and the Czech prisoners, who were always eager to fight for the Allies, were rendered immensely difficult by the obstacles inherent in the geographic conditions of Russia and by obstacles placed in their way by the

old Russian regime.

Unfortunately now, when the Czecho-Slovaks had at last succeeded after much work in realising their plans, the Czecho-Slovak army became powerless owing to the collapse of Russia. Without ammunition, without support from anywhere, the Czecho-Slovaks thought they could no more render very effective service to the Allies in the East. They decided, therefore, to go over to join their compatriots in France.

The position of our army was as follows: After the offensive of July, 1917, the Czechs retreated to Kieff where they continued to concentrate fresh forces. At that time they numbered about 60,000, and this number had gradually increased to 80,000 by the end of 1917. They always observed strict neutrality in Russia's internal affairs on the advice of their venerable leader, Professor Masaryk. It was necessary to counsel this neutrality for the sake of our army itself, since it contained partisans of different creeds and parties disagreement among whom might have led to its dissolution. On the whole, the Czecho-Slovaks, who are an advanced nation, fully conscious of their national aspirations, remained unaffected by the misleading Bolshevist theories. The Czechs abstained throughout from interfering with Russian affairs, yet they did not wish to leave Russia as long as there was any chance for them to assist her. It was not until the shameful peace of Brest-Litovsk in February, 1918, that Professor Masaryk decided that the Czecho-Slovak army should leave Russia via Siberia and join the Czecho-Slovak army in France. The Bolsheviks granted them free passage to Vladivostok.

This journey of some 5000 miles was not, however, an easy task for an army to accomplish. The troops had to move in small echelons or detachments, and concentration at the stations was prohibited. They had to procure their trains and their provisions, and they had constant trouble with the Bolsheviks, because in every district there was a practically independent Soviet Government with whom the Czechs had to negotiate. The first detachments with the generalissimo of the army, General Diderichs, at the head arrived in Vladivostok at the end of April, 1918. But the other detachments were constantly held up by the Bolsheviks and had great trouble in passing through.

They moved from Kieff via Kursk, Tambov, Penza and Samara. The two last-named towns lie on the line between Moscow and Tcheliabinsk at the foot of the Urals, whence a direct line runs across Siberia to Vladivostok.

As we have already pointed out, the Bolsheviks agreed in principle to allow our troops to leave Russia. Their commander-in-chief, General Muraviev, allowed the Czechs free passage to France on February 16. The same concession had been granted by the Moscow Soviet. On the whole the Czechs were on tolerably good terms with the Bolsheviks. Professor Masaryk rejected every plan directed against the Bolsheviks submitted to him even by such of their political adversaries as could not justly be called counter-revolutionaries. The Czecho-Slovak troops went still further; they actually complied with the request of the Bolsheviks and partially disarmed. The trouble only began in May, 1918, when the Bolsheviks yielded to German intrigues and resolved to destroy our army.

Already at the beginning of May the Czechs had begun to feel embittered against the Bolsheviks, because in defiance of the agreement their troops were constantly being held up by local Soviets. At Tambov, for instance, they were held up for a whole month. At Tcheliabinsk the Czechs had a serious scuffle with Magyar ex-prisoners on May 26, and the Bolsheviks sided entirely with the Magyars, even arresting some Czecho-Slovak delegates. The Czechs simply occupied the city, liberated their comrades, and at a congress held by them at Tcheliabinsk on May 28 it was decided to refuse to surrender any more arms and ammunition and to continue transports to Vladivostok, if necessary with arms in their hands. This was a reply to Trotsky's telegram that the Czecho-Slovaks should be completely disarmed, which the Czecho-Slovaks defied as they knew that another order had been issued by Trotsky simultaneously, no doubt on the instigation of Count Mirbach, saying that the Czecho-Slovak troops must be dissolved at all costs and interned as prisoners of war. The Bolsheviks now arrested prominent members of the Moscow branch of the Czecho-Slovak National Council on the ground that they were "anti-revolutionaries." They alleged also that they had no guarantee that ships would be provided for the Czechs to be transported to France, and that the Czechs were holding up food supplies from Siberia. The Bolsheviks deliberately broke their word, and Trotsky issued an order to "all troops fighting against the anti-revolutionary Czecho-Slovak brigades" in which he said:

"The concentration of our troops is complete. Our army being aware that the Czecho-Slovaks are direct allies of the anti-revolution and of the capitalists, fights them well. The Czecho-Slovaks are retreating along the railway. Obviously they would like to enter into negotiations with the Soviets. We issued an order that their delegates should be received. We demand in the first place that they should be disarmed. \_Those who do not do so voluntarily will be shot on the spot.\_ Warlike operations on the railway line hinder food transports. Energetic steps must be taken to do away with this state of affairs."

The Czecho-Slovaks were greatly handicapped, since they were not only almost unarmed, but were also dispersed along the trans-Siberian line in small detachments which had considerable difficulty in keeping in touch with each other. Nevertheless the fates were favourable to them. They were victorious almost everywhere, thanks to their wonderful spirit and discipline.

The first victories gained by the Czecho-Slovaks over the Bolsheviks were at Penza and Samara. Penza was captured by them after three days' fighting at the end of May. Later the Czecho-Slovaks also took Sysran on the Volga, Kazan with its large arsenal, Simbirsk and Yekaterinburg, connecting Tcheliabinsk with Petrograd, and occupied practically the whole Volga region.

In Siberia they defeated a considerable force of German-Magyar ex-prisoners in Krasnoyarsk and Omsk and established themselves firmly in Udinsk. On June 29, 15,000 Czecho-Slovaks under General Diderichs, after handing an ultimatum to the Bolsheviks at Vladivostok, occupied the city without much resistance. Only at one spot fighting took place and some 160 Bolsheviks

were killed. The Czecho-Slovaks, assisted by Japanese and Allied troops, then proceeded to the north and north-west, while the Bolsheviks and German prisoners retreated to Chabarovsk. In September the Czech and Allied troops from Vladivostok joined hands with the Czecho-Slovaks from Irkutsk and Western Siberia, and thus gained control over practically the whole trans-Siberian railway. By this means they have done great service to the Allies, especially to Great Britain, by defending the East against the German invaders. Furthermore, it was the Czecho-Slovaks' bold action which induced Japan and America at last to intervene in Russia and for the sake of Russia, and it was their control of the Siberian railway which made such intervention possible. Let us hope that their action will lead to the regeneration and salvation of the Russian nation.

The service rendered by Czecho-Slovak troops to the Allied cause was, of course, justly appreciated by the Allies. Mr. Lloyd George sent the following telegram to Professor Masaryk on September 9:

"On behalf of the British War Cabinet I send you our heartiest congratulations on the striking successes won by the Czecho-Slovak forces against the armies of German and Austrian troops in Siberia. The story of the adventures and triumphs of this small army is, indeed, one of the greatest epics of history. It has filled us all with admiration for the courage, persistence and self-control of your countrymen, and shows what can be done to triumph over time, distance and lack of material resources by those holding the spirit of freedom in their hearts. Your nation has rendered inestimable service to Russia and to the Allies in their struggle to free the world from despotism. We shall never forget it."

The deeds of our army met with equal admiration and gratitude also in Bohemia. This is clearly shown by the speech of the Czech deputy Stribny, delivered in the Austrian Reichsrat on July 17, and entirely suppressed in the Austrian and German press. Despite the vigilance on the part of the Austrian authorities, however, we have been able to secure the full text of this remarkable speech which reads as follows:

"GENTLEMEN,--Let me first of all emphasise that my speech is not a defence of the Czech nation and of the Czech soldiers. There are no judges in this parliament competent to judge us.

"You call us traitors. We accept your declaration as the view of our enemy. Nothing more--nothing less.

"You gentlemen on the German benches, you dared, however, to touch the honour of our soldiers--you called them cowards. And in this respect we are not going to keep silent. We shall always protest against such injustice! We shall never permit these heroes to be abused by being called 'cowards.' If there is a single gentleman among you he ought for a moment to reflect on the soul of a Czech soldier--a soldier who has been compelled by force to fight in a war which the German Imperial Chancellor has openly called 'a war of Germans against the Slavs'; a soldier who was compelled under the threat of immediate execution to take up arms against the interests of the Slavs, against the interests



of his brothers, against the interests of his own country--Bohemia. Well then, was it cowardice on the part of this soldier when he, exposed to the fire of Austrian and German guns and machine guns from behind, went over to the other side? Was he a coward when, while free to remain in his captivity as a prisoner of war safely waiting until the end of the war, he volunteered to fight again and was ready to risk his life and health once more? Is that Czech soldier a coward who went once more into the trenches, although aware that if he were captured he would not be treated as an ordinary prisoner of war but as a deserter, and hanged accordingly? Is that man a coward who sacrifices his family which he has left behind and his soil and property inherited from his ancestors? Is that man a coward who sacrifices himself, his father and mother, his wife and children for the sake of his nation and country?

"Is that Czech soldier not a hero who to-day is voluntarily fighting from the Ural Mountains to Vladivostok, on the Piave and in France?

"If there is a single gentleman, a real gentleman among you, let him stand up and answer these questions.

"And if there is not such a gentleman among you, remember the words of our bitter enemy the late Minister for Home Defence, Baron Georgi, who related to this House in a secret sitting all that our regiments have accomplished. He could not as a soldier suppress a sigh and say, 'We regret all those treacheries of Czech soldiers, still more because from their deeds committed on the side of our enemy we can realise what a splendid military material we have lost.' And if this is not sufficient, I will remind you of the opinion of those who are in your eyes the best judges--the Prussian officers. In an Austrian officers' canteen where Czech soldiers had been abused the whole evening by being called cowards, the Prussian officers present were asked to give their opinion on this point. They answered, 'We shall only be able to judge as to whether the Czechs are cowards or not when they begin to fight against us.'

"You should at least be gentlemanly enough not to slander your enemies who have proved themselves to be greater heroes than any other soldiers, because they are voluntary heroes, whereas the others are heroes under compulsion!

"This question of cowardice is therefore, I hope, settled forever.

"And now with regard to the title of 'traitors.' \_We are traitors to Austria--every one of us admits it honestly\_. Not one of you, however, has the right to reproach us for this. All of you are patriots by order, and it cannot be otherwise in a dynastic state like Austria.

"With regard to the patriotism of the Magyars, we have proofs of this dating from 1866. They have done the same as we are doing to-day. They surrendered and organised Klapka's legions against Austria. The fact that they were punished for their treachery by being given their own independence does not speak against us.

"Yes, gentlemen, we are traitors as much as you Magyars, or as you Germans were, or would be under similar circumstances. And \_we want the same as you want\_, i.e. \_to be free citizens of our own state\_. Our own state--that does not mean to have a few officials or one more university. To have a state of our own--that means to be able to decide freely if our soldiers shall go to war again, and if they do, to see that they go only for the interests of their own nation, and not for the interests of their enemies. An independent state--that means for us no longer to die by order of foreigners, and no longer to live under foreign domination.

"Let me remind the gentlemen on the German benches of a lesson in history. Up till 1866 Germany was nominally under the sceptre of the Habsburg dynasty--a German dynasty, mind you. Prussia and Northern Germany felt the indignity of the 'foreign' rule of the Habsburgs--and they started the fratricidal war in 1866 in order to get rid of this rule....

"It is for you gentlemen on the German benches to speak! Let him who regrets the blood then spilt stand up and speak. Let him stand up and condemn Bismarck and William I. who started the war in order to deliver Germany from the same yoke from which we are trying to free ourselves to-day. If there is a single man among the Germans who would be prepared to say that the war against Austria should never have happened, let him stand up. That war was carried on to free Germany from the incapable rule of Vienna and it had the same aim in view which you reproach us with to-day and call high treason!

"You are silent, gentlemen! We are satisfied with your silence. And now go and continue to stone and abuse us."

5. In the meantime, Professor Masaryk arrived in the United States \_via\_ Japan in May, 1918. He was accorded a splendid reception at Chicago where some 200,000 Czecho-Slovaks, as well as various Allied representatives, greeted him. His presence in the United States not only stimulated recruiting among Czecho-Slovaks there, but had also political results, especially when the Central Powers launched their peace offensive.

At the end of May, Mr. Lansing issued the following statement:

"The Secretary of State desires to announce that the proceedings of the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities of Austria-Hungary which was held in Rome in April have been followed with great interest by the Government of the United States, and that the nationalist aspirations of the Czecho-Slovaks and Jugoslavs have the earnest sympathy of this government."

This declaration was endorsed by the representatives of Great Britain, France and Italy at Versailles on June 3, 1918. On June 29, Mr. Lansing completed and explained his statement as follows:

"Since the issuance by this government on May 29 of a statement regarding the nationalist aspirations for freedom of the Czecho-Slovaks

and Jugoslavs, German and Austrian officials have sought to misinterpret and distort its manifest interpretation. In order, therefore, that there may be no misunderstanding concerning the meaning of this statement, the Secretary of State to-day further announces the position of the United States Government to be that \_all branches of the Slav race should be completely freed from German and Austrian rule\_."

On the following day, that is on June 30, 1918, President Poincare presented the Czecho-Slovak army with a flag and delivered an inspiring speech to them.

On the occasion of the handing of this flag by President Poincare to the Czecho-Slovak army, M. Pichon, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the government of the French Republic, addressed the following letter to Dr. Edouard Benes, the general secretary of the Czecho-Slovak National Council in Paris:

"At the moment when the 21st Regiment of Chasseurs, the first unit of the autonomous Czecho-Slovak army in France, after receiving its flag, is leaving its quarters to take up its position in a sector amongst its French brothers-in-arms, the Republican Government, in recognition of your efforts and your attachment to the Allied cause, considers it just and necessary to proclaim \_the right of your nation to its independence and to recognise publicly and officially the National Council as the supreme organ of its general interests and the first step towards a future Czecho-Slovak Government\_.

"During many centuries the Czecho-Slovak nation has enjoyed the incomparable benefit of independence. It has been deprived of this independence through the violence of the Habsburgs allied to the German princes. The historic rights of nations are imperishable. It is for the defence of these rights that France, attacked, is fighting to-day together with her Allies. The cause of the Czechs is especially dear to her.

"France will never forget the Prague manifestation of December 8, 1870. Neither will she forget the resistance of its population and the refusal of Czech soldiers to fight for Austria-Hungary, for which heroism thousands of these patriots paid with their lives. France has also heard the appeals of the Czech deputies of January 6, April 13, and May 16, 1918.

"Faithful to the principles of respect for nationalities and the liberation of oppressed nations, \_the Government of the Republic considers the claims of the Czecho-Slovak nation as just and well founded, and will, at the right moment, support with all its solicitude the realisation of your aspirations to independence within the historic boundaries of your territories\_ at present suffering under the oppressive yoke of Austria and Hungary.

"It is very pleasant for me, Monsieur le Secretaire General, to make this declaration. Your sentiments, reflecting those of your

compatriots, are for me the measure of the high degree of the future happiness of your country.

"In the name of the Government of the French Republic I tender \_my warmest and most sincere wishes that the Czecho-Slovak State may speedily become, through the common efforts of all the Allies and in close union with Poland and the Yugoslav State, an insurmountable barrier to Teutonic aggression\_ and a factor for peace in a reconstituted Europe in accordance with the principles of justice and rights of nationalities."

It is unnecessary to add long comments to this clear and explicit state paper which forms a veritable pledge on the part of France to secure Czecho-Slovak independence. It is a recognition of Bohemia's right to independence and of the National Council as the supreme organ of the Czecho-Slovak nation abroad. At the same time it is also an acceptance of our programme of the reorganisation of Central Europe, necessitating the break-up of Austria, and in this respect it is also a success and a pledge for the Poles and Yugoslavs.

6. If France and Italy showed such deep understanding of the cause of Bohemia's liberty, exhibited in practice by special military conventions concluded with our National Council, Great Britain may be proud of no less generosity. Although having no direct interests in seeing Bohemia independent, Great Britain, true to her traditions as a champion of the liberties of small nations, did not hesitate to give us a declaration which not only fully endorses all pledges of France and Italy, but which goes still further and practically recognises our full national sovereignty.

On August 9, 1918, His Majesty's Government issued the following declaration:

"Since the beginning of the war the Czecho-Slovak nation has resisted the common enemy by every means in its power. The Czecho-Slovaks have constituted a considerable army, fighting on three different battlefields and attempting, in Russia and Siberia, to arrest the Germanic invasion.

"\_In consideration of their efforts to achieve independence, Great Britain regards the Czecho-Slovaks as an Allied nation and recognises the unity of the three Czecho-Slovak armies as an Allied and belligerent army waging a regular warfare against Austria-Hungary and Germany\_.

"Great Britain also recognises \_the right of the Czecho-Slovak National Council as the supreme organ of the Czecho-Slovak national interests, and as the present trustee of the future Czecho-Slovak Government to exercise supreme authority over this Allied and belligerent army\_."

It will be readily seen of what a tremendous significance this declaration is from an international point of view. Apart from the fact that it recognises our efforts towards independence, the declaration says explicitly that the Czecho-Slovaks, abroad and at home, are an Allied

nation, which implies that the Allies will treat them henceforward as such, and will allow their government to establish consular service and to send representatives to Allied conferences. The sovereignty both of the Czecho-Slovak army and of the National Council is fully recognised in this declaration which proclaims "the unity of the three Czecho-Slovak armies (in Russia, France and Italy) as an \_Allied and belligerent army\_ waging \_regular warfare\_ against Austria." Only a sovereign army is a belligerent army waging regular warfare. Thus the Czecho-Slovaks, according to international law, are no more rebels but regular soldiers whom, when captured, Austria has no more the right to execute. Similarly also the recognition of the National Council as the "trustee" of the Czecho-Slovak Government is clear and explicit; in fact a "trustee" is the word applied to a provisional government of a state. As a matter of fact, the National Council, on the ground of this recognition of full sovereignty, was constituted as a Provisional Government on October 14, 1918, and has the power to exercise all rights appertaining to a sovereign and independent government.

Thus implicitly Great Britain considers Czecho-Slovak independence already a \_fait accompli\_. It speaks of and considers a Czecho-Slovak State no more as a probability, but as a certainty. As with the Czecho-Slovaks so with Great Britain, Austria exists no more.

The recognition is of additional importance because it comes from Great Britain who has always been considered a traditional friend of Austria, and who is known for conservatism in foreign politics. The decision to issue a declaration of such far-reaching importance was surely arrived at only after due and careful deliberation. The step which Great Britain has taken thereby once more proves the deep sense of justice and the far-sightedness of British statesmen. Needless to say that the Czecho-Slovaks will always remain grateful to Great Britain for this bold and generous act. Its immediate effect has been consternation in Vienna and encouragement both to the Czecho-Slovak soldiers fighting on the side of the Entente and to the Czech leaders courageously defending Bohemia's rights in Vienna. As deputy Klotfac put it at a meeting in Laibach on August 15:

"Henceforward the Czechs will refuse to hold any negotiations with Vienna, with whom any compromise is now out of the question. The Czecho-Slovaks will firmly continue the struggle for complete national independence, strengthened by the support of other Slavs, and by the knowledge that the British and other Allied governments had formally acknowledged and were working for the establishment of an independent Czecho-Slovak State."

This chapter would not be complete if we did not quote the subsequent declarations of the United States of America and Japan, practically endorsing the British declaration.

On September 3, Mr. Lansing issued the following statement:

"The Czecho-Slovak peoples having taken up arms against the German and Austro-Hungarian empires, and having placed in the field organised armies, which are waging war against those empires under officers of

their own nationality and in accordance with the rules and practices of civilised nations, and Czecho-Slovaks having in the prosecution of their independence in the present war confided the supreme political authority to the Czecho-Slovak National Council, the Government of the United States recognises that a state of belligerency exists between the Czecho-Slovaks thus organised and the German and Austro-Hungarian empires.

"It also recognises \_the Czecho-Slovak National Council as a\_ de facto \_belligerent government\_, clothed with proper authority to direct the military and political affairs of the Czecho-Slovaks.

"The Government of the United States further declares that it is prepared to enter formally into relations with the \_de facto\_ government thus recognised for the purpose of prosecuting the war against the common enemy, the empires of Germany and Austria-Hungary."

A week later the Japanese Government, through the medium of its ambassador in London, communicated the following declaration to the Czecho-Slovak National Council:

"The Japanese Government have noted with deep and sympathetic interest the just aspirations of the Czecho-Slovak people for a free and independent national existence. These aspirations have conspicuously been made manifest in their determined and well-organised efforts to arrest the progress of the Germanic aggression.

"In these circumstances, the Japanese Government are happy to regard the Czecho-Slovak army as an Allied and belligerent army waging regular warfare against Austria-Hungary and Germany, and to recognise the rights of the Czecho-Slovak National Council to exercise the supreme control over that army. They are further prepared to enter into communication with the duly authorised representatives of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, whenever necessary, on all matters of mutual interest to the Japanese and the Czecho-Slovak forces in Siberia."

VII

#### THE CZECHS AT HOME BEGIN TO SPEAK

The opening of the Reichsrat in May, 1917, was intended to give Austria the appearance of a "democratic" country in which diverse nationalities live in peace and happiness. Democratic indeed! A parliament, subject to censorship, lacking the freedom of speech and all influence on the government, with 463 members instead of 516, many of whom were still in prison and in exile! And if there was still any person in the Allied countries having any doubts concerning the attitude of the Czechs and Yugoslavs, these doubts were certainly dispelled after the courageous indictment against Austria made by the Slav deputies, representing practically all the Czech and Yugoslav political parties. The declaration

of the Poles in favour of a united and independent Poland, the statement of Messrs. Stanek and Korosec in the name of \_all\_ Czechs and Yugoslavs in favour of a Czecho-Slovak and Yugoslav State, the speech of deputy Kalina denying all responsibility of the Czechs for the war, and expressing Czech sympathies with the Entente Powers, and the terrible story of persecutions which the Czechs had to suffer from Austria during the war, told by deputy Stribrny, formed a veritable "Mene Tekel," a death sentence pronounced by the Austrian Slavs on their tyrants in Vienna and Budapest.

The revelation in the Reichsrat of the hopeless state of decay prevailing in Austria-Hungary was, of course, due to the Russian Revolution. If it was not for the Russian Revolution, the Austrian Emperor and Clam-Martinic would perhaps have continued their reign of absolutism by way of imperial decrees, and they would never have dreamt of convoking the Reichsrat.

However, the desperate economic and political situation forced Austria to find some way out of her difficulties, and to plead for peace as she began to realise that otherwise she was doomed. The change of order and the situation in Russia and the uncertain attitude of some Allied statesmen seemed favourable for the Austrian calculations respecting a separate peace. But Austria could not possibly hope to deceive free Russia or the Allies and lure them into concluding a premature peace if the reign of terrorism and absolutism still prevailed in the Dual Monarchy. For this reason Tisza, with his sinister reputation, was forced to go, and the Reichsrat was convened. Austria based her plans on the ignorance of some Allied politicians who really believed in the "new orientation" of the Vienna Government because of the Bohemian \_names\_ (not sympathies) of Clam-Martinic and Czernin. In the same way Austria wanted to make outsiders believe that a change in the name of the Hungarian Premier meant a change of system, and that the convocation of the Reichsrat meant a new era of "democracy" in Austria.

Neither of these assumptions was, of course, correct. If the Magyars talk of introducing universal suffrage, they want to extend it to Magyar electors, and on one condition only, viz. that all the candidates shall be of \_Magyar\_ nationality, or, as the Hungarian Premier, Count Esterhazy, put it, "democracy in Hungary can only be a Magyar democracy"--that is, a system utterly at variance with the principles of justice.

But far from averting the doom of Austria and bringing her peace and consolation, the opening of the Reichsrat only hastened Austria's downfall, for it enabled the Austrian Slavs, who now felt that the moment had come for them to speak, to declare before the whole world their aspirations, and their determination to destroy the monarchy.

\_(a) The Czech Declaration of May\_ 30, 1917

Before entering the Reichsrat, the Czechs made it clear that they no longer desired any compromise with Austria. In a manifesto signed by 150 Czech authors and subsequently endorsed by professors, teachers and various societies and corporations, the Czech deputies were reminded that the fate of their nation was at stake:

"The doors of the Austrian Parliament are opening and the political representatives of the nations have for the first time the opportunity of speaking and acting freely. Whatever they may say and decide will be heard not only at home, but also throughout Europe and overseas.... The programme of our nation is founded on its history and racial unity, on its modern political life and rights. The present time emphasises the necessity for carrying out this programme completely.... To-day you are forced to develop this programme, to defend it to the last breath before the forum of Europe, and to demand its realisation without limitations.... Democratic Europe, the Europe of free and independent nations, is the Europe of the future. The nation asks you to be equal to this historic occasion, to devote to it all your abilities and to sacrifice to it all other considerations...."

And to this appeal of their nation the Czech, deputies did not turn a deaf ear.

On entering the Reichsrat on May 30, 1917, Mr. Stanek, president of the Union of Czech Deputies, made the following memorable declaration in the name of all the Czech deputies:

"While taking our stand at this historic moment on the natural right of peoples to self-determination and free development--a right which in our case is further strengthened by inalienable historic rights fully recognised by this state--we shall, at the head of our people, work for \_the union of all branches of the Czecho-Slovak nation in a single democratic Bohemian State\_, comprising also the Slovak branch of our nation which lives in the lands adjoining our Bohemian Fatherland."

Both the Yugoslav and the Polish press greeted this declaration with undisguised joy and sympathy.

The \_Glos Naroda\_ welcomed the Czech declaration, and added: "Those who to-day are asking for an independent national existence do not claim anything but the minimum of their rights. Nothing less could satisfy them (\_i.e.\_ the Czechs and Yugo-slavs), seeing that even smaller and less historic nations claim the same." The \_Nowa Reforma\_ also said that the Czechs were quite right to ask for full independence. "They are entitled to it by their position in which they can lose nothing more than they have lost already, but gain a great deal. Among the Entente Powers there is nobody who would have an open or disguised interest in opposing even the boldest claims of the Czecho-Slovak nation."

The declaration of deputy Stanek was completed by a statement of deputy Kalina who made it quite clear that the Czechs refuse responsibility for the war, and that their sympathies are with the Entente. Kalina, a prominent leader of the State Right Party, said:

"As deputies elected by the Czech nation, \_we absolutely reject every responsibility for this war\_.

"After three years, the government has summoned the \_Reichsrat, which the Czechs never recognised\_, and against which, as well as against the



so-called constitution, they again make a formal protest. The great Russian Revolution forced the government to a plausible restoration of constitutional life.

"\_The Czech nation hails with unbounded joy and enthusiasm the liberation of Eastern Europe\_. The main principles of that memorable Revolution are closely related to our own traditions, \_i.e.\_ to the principle of \_liberty, equality and fraternity of all nations\_. Bohemia is a free country. Never in her history did she accept laws from aliens, not even from her powerful neighbours in Europe. Liberty of individuals, liberty of nations is again our motto which the nation of Hussites is bringing before the world. In these historic moments, when from the blood-deluged battlefields a new Europe is arising, and the idea of the sovereignty of nations and nationalities is triumphantly marching throughout the Continent, \_the Czech nation solemnly declares before the world its firm will for liberty and independence\_ on the ground of the ancient historic rights of the Bohemian Crown. In demanding independence, the Czech nation asks, in the sense of the new democracy, for the extension of the right of self-determination to the whole Czecho-Slovak nation."

#### \_ (b) Courageous Speeches delivered by Czech Deputies in the Reichsrat \_

During the subsequent session of the Reichsrat, various Czech deputies, representing all the Czech parties, made declarations, some of which we will quote in order to show the remarkable unanimity of the Czechs in their opposition to Austria and in their demand for independence. \_It was chiefly this unanimity of all Czech parties and classes in Bohemia and the absolute harmony between their action and the Czecho-Slovak action abroad which formed the real strength of the movement\_.

\_Dr. Stransky\_, leader of the Moravian People's Party, delivered a long speech in the Reichsrat on June 12, 1917, from which we quote the following significant passages:

"The Germans say that germanisation is not carried out except where it is in the interests of the state. We do not think that the interests of the state should go first. If the interests of a state are not identical with the liberties and interests of a nation, then \_such a state has for that nation no right to exist\_.

"If Clam-Martinić thinks that we will enter the Reichsrat which the Polish deputies would not attend in their present strength, then he is greatly mistaken. We heartily wish the Poles to achieve their national independence, but should we be denied an equal right, then it would mean an end to this Reichsrat. We want to enjoy the same happiness as the rest, \_we want to be free from all oppression, from all foreign domination. We want to decide for ourselves the form of our political existence\_. We want to choose our own laws, we want to govern ourselves. \_We claim the restitution of our political independence and of the supreme historic right of the Czech nation in the lands of the Bohemian Crown. The time is ripe also when the Austrian fortresses of St. Peter and St. Paul will open, and when their prisoners will change

places with their persecutors. The state and dynasty have lately taken away the rights and liberties of our nation and trampled them underfoot\_."

On June 15, the National Socialist deputy \_Stribrny\_, openly demanded the creation of a Czecho-Slovak Republic:

"The German annexationist plans are doomed. The Czechs greet with joy the new era of equality and fraternity, an era in which a \_democratic republic\_ is considered as the best form of government. The Czechs demand the creation of a Bohemia in which they will possess their own independent government. \_Too long have they been oppressed by Austria, and now they are determined to achieve their national liberty\_"

On June 26, \_Dr. Soukup\_, the leader of the Czecho-Slav Social Democratic Party, made an equally remarkable statement:

"As a Social Democrat I say that we, the Czecho-Slovak nation, have also a right to a place in the sun, and we want to be seen. Do you consider that a nation numbering over ten million and boasting of a highly developed civilisation can continue to breathe under such oppressive conditions, seeing what an important role is being played by four million Bulgars, two million Greeks, two million Danes and other small nations? \_We welcome the resurrection of the great and united Polish State, we witness the great Yugoslav nation shaping its boundaries along the Adriatic, and we also see Ukraina arising. At such moments we want to live as well, and we will live\_"

\_ (c) After the Amnesty \_

The political amnesty of July, 1917, intended to appease the Slavs, had just the opposite effect: it only strengthened the Slav resistance which acquired fresh strength and impetus by the return of the old leaders.

Kramar was hailed like a sovereign when he entered Prague again. He now became the recognised leader of the whole nation. The \_Narodni Listy\_ became the mouthpiece of all the most eminent leaders of the nation without party distinction. Its issue of October 31, 1917, contained a map of the future independent Czecho-Slovak State and a series of articles. We will quote only a few passages from an article written by deputy Rasin which read as follows:

"The war has brought our problem home not only to us but to the whole world. Nothing could have better expressed our situation than the propaganda of Mitteleuropa. Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria had to form a bridge for the imperialistic march of Germany to the Persian Gulf \_via\_ Constantinople and Bagdad. The Czechs and Yugoslavs were to be crushed and become the victims of those plans. This was the ideal that the German nation considered as its war aim and as a war aim of Austria-Hungary. They could not have obtained a better reply than was given to them by the Czechs and Yugoslavs in their demand for their own independent states, which would be able to form a permanent bulwark against the \_Drang nach Osten\_ as planned by the Germans and Magyars.

Even if Herr Naumann ceases to promote the idea of Central Europe, in reality \_a new programme which would do away with the old evils and assign a new mission to Austria-Hungary is inconceivable\_. All the declarations of the government are only destined to conceal their real intentions. The German-Magyar hegemony is as strong as ever, and the Polish question is to be solved only according to the Pan-German programme. During this war Austria's real face has been unmasked before the whole world by her persecutions, arbitrary decrees and the Pan-German propaganda.

"The Czechs, who in their policy always went hand in hand with the Yugoslavs, saw all this, and consequently the only thing left for them to do is to insist on their attitude, constantly to reveal Austria's insincerity, to reject all pretty phrases without any meaning in them, and all compromises, which we know would never be kept. \_We also must reject a compromise peace which would lead to fresh wars\_.

"\_The policy of the Czechs cannot but aim at the absolute independence of the whole Czecho-Slovak nation\_, and all our action at home and abroad must tend towards persuading the world that only thus can a stable peace in Europe be achieved."

It was about this time also when Seidler made desperate attempts to induce the Slav leaders to participate in a special commission for the revision of the Austrian Constitution. Dr. Stransky, speaking in the name of the Czechs, openly refused the proposal, declaring that the Czech problem could not be solved by Austria, but only by the Peace Conference, that is after the victory of the Entente. A joint committee of representatives of the Young Czech, National Socialist, Progressive Independence and Moravian Progressive Parties issued a proclamation protesting against any participation of Czechs in Austrian politics, and declaring that since the Czech question is an international one and can therefore be decided only at the Peace Conference, the duty of the Czech deputies is not to assist in the revision of the Austrian Constitution, but to insist upon the creation of an "\_independent Czecho-Slovak State with all the attributes of sovereignty\_."

Simultaneously also the Czech Agrarian deputy, \_Zahradnik\_, made the following remarkable declaration in the Reichsrat on September 26:

"In view of the prevailing policy directed against the Czech people, can any one wonder that \_they have lost all confidence in Vienna\_ and that they refuse to let this parliament decide their fate? \_It is necessary to secure for all peoples, great or small, the right to decide their own destinies\_. This applies also to the ten million Czecho-Slovaks who, moreover, cannot rightly be considered merely as a 'small' nation: the Czechs, too, do not desire anything more than peace, but it must not be forgotten \_that our men did not shed their blood merely for imperialism or for Pan-Germanism. We do not want anything but an honourable peace which would bring equality to all peoples\_, a peace assuring liberty and equality to all, and not a peace which would leave our fetters unbroken. We regret that the Pope omitted to mention the Czechs in his peace offer although he mentioned the

Poles. \_But we shall obtain our right without alien support. The Czechs will never swerve from their demand for an independent Slovak State with all the attributes of sovereignty. The Czechs are convinced that the question of Bohemia is too great to be solved in Vienna. It must be decided at the Peace Conference.\_"

On November 9, deputy Stanek made it clear that the Czecho-Slovaks expect the resurrection of their independence only from the break-up of Austria:

"We cannot conceive of peace or of the transformation of Europe except when \_on the ruins of the Dual Monarchy\_ new national states shall arise. The German-Magyar misrule must be destroyed."

And when on November 21 Seidler talked about the peace conditions of the "enemy," Dr. Stransky interrupted him by exclaiming, "Our enemies are here, in Vienna and in Budapest!"

\_ (d) During Peace Negotiations with Russia \_

When peace negotiations were opened with the Bolsheviks, the Austro-Hungarian delegations were also summoned, for the first time during the war, on December 3, 1917. During the speech from the throne the Czechs demonstratively left the hall. On the same day the Bohemian Union, the Yugoslav Club and the Ruthenes issued a protest against the government having published a distorted version of the Russian peace offer. In this protest the Slav deputies asked:

"How can the government answer for having purposely distorted such a highly important document as the Russian Note of November 28, and why did the government suppress just the paragraph out of it containing guarantees for national self-determination?"

Their declaration naturally exasperated the Germans and the government. The organ of the Austrian Foreign Office, the \_Fremdenblatt\_, expressed regret that the Slav parties in the Reichsrat "place obstacles in the way of peace." It also regretted that "some parties in the Austrian Parliament should take up an attitude incompatible with our state's self-preservation." On the next day, M. Stanek made a declaration in the delegations in the name of Czechs and Yugoslavs, saying:

"We Czech and Yugoslav delegates declare that it is our deep conviction as well as the firm will of our respective nations that a lasting peace is possible only on the ground of the full right of self-determination. \_The Imperial Government deliberately and wilfully distorted the most important part of the Russian peace offer\_, viz. the demand for the self-determination of nations. It is still more surprising that the prime ministers in both halves of the monarchy should try to deceive the public opinion of the world by a false interpretation of the right of self-determination. The Austrian Premier, Dr. Seidler, declared that the Viennese Parliament is a forum through which the nations could obtain self-determination, while the \_Hungarian Premier had the impudence to describe the conditions in Hungary, which are a mockery of all civilisation, as the ideal of national liberty.\_ We, therefore,

declare in regard to any peace negotiations: "Our national development can only then be secured when the right of self-determination of all nations shall be fully, clearly and unreservedly recognised\_ with binding guarantees of its immediate realisation."

At the same time the Slavs made a proposal in the Austro-Hungarian Delegations, insisting that the peace negotiations with Russia should be conducted by a committee selected from both parliaments on the basis of nationality, and consisting of twelve Germans, ten Magyars, ten Czecho-Slovaks, seven Yugoslavs, five Poles, four Ruthenes, three Rumanians and one Italian.

Finally, on December 5, the Czech Socialist deputy Tusar declared in the Reichsrat:

"We want to be our own masters, and if it is high treason to ask for liberty and independence, then let us say at once that \_each of us is a traitor, but such high treason is an honour, and not a dishonour\_. As regards the negotiations with Russia, we declare that \_Count Czernin does not represent the nations of Austria\_ and has no right to speak in our name; he is merely the plenipotentiary of the dynasty. \_The old Austria, based on police, bureaucracy, militarism and racial tyranny, cannot survive this war\_. We also want peace, but it must be a just peace. The Czecho-Slovaks will under all circumstances defend their rights."

In conjunction with this declaration we may quote two other Czech Socialists showing the opinion of the Czechs on the Russian Revolution.

On November 29, deputy Modracek declared in the Reichsrat:

"The Revolution of the Bolsheviks is a misfortune for the Russian Revolution, the Russian Republic and all the oppressed nations of Europe. \_So long as the German Social Democracy permits the working masses to be brought to the battlefield in the interests of Imperialism, the action of the Bolsheviks is not the work for Socialism but for German Tsarism\_. I do not undervalue the significance and the greatness of the Russian Revolution: it is the German Social Democrats who fail to perform their moral duty in this war and do not comprehend the Russian Revolution."

Still more outspoken is the declaration of deputy Winter, who said in the Reichsrat on February 21, 1918:

"The workers of the whole world will never forget that the Russian Revolution was the first social revolution on a large scale. And on this revolutionary movement Germany has directly and Austria-Hungary indirectly declared war. \_Perhaps Austria-Hungary wants to repay the Romanoffs in\_ 1918 \_for the aid which they rendered to the Habsburgs in\_ 1848.... Austria-Hungary once before engaged in the European reaction by crushing revolution in Italy. She gathered the fruits of this act in 1848, 1859, 1866, and in the present war. Formerly France and Russia participated in the Holy Alliance, but \_to-day the Central

Powers are the only refuge of reaction in Europe\_."

\_(e) The Constituent Assembly of Prague\_ 6, 1918

The most important manifestation of Czecho-Slovak national will took place in Prague on January 6, 1918, when all the Czech deputies assembled in order to give expression to their deep gratitude for the French recognition of the constitution of a Czecho-Slovak army on the side of the Entente. At the same time it was a protest against Austria-Hungary and a demand for representation at the Peace Conference.

As to the resolution unanimously adopted by this constituent assembly, there is no doubt about its meaning: in it the Czecho-Slovaks no more act with Austria but demand full liberty. This even the Austrian Premier, Dr. Seidler, had to admit, when he declared in the Reichsrat on January 22:

"This resolution, in which we in vain look for a distant echo of dynastic or state allegiance, adopts to a certain extent an international standpoint, and shows that this people is ready, at any rate on the conclusion of peace, to accept international support with a view to obtaining the recognition of foreign states. Such a standpoint is calculated to encourage our enemies and to prolong the war.

"The resolution demands the right of self-determination in order to dissolve the existing unity of the state, and to assure full independence and sovereignty. \_The resolution gives the impression of having been conceived in a sense absolutely hostile to the state\_, and must be indignantly rejected by every Austrian and resisted by every Austrian Government with all the means in its power."

The Czech declaration of January 6, which is the most important of all declarations of the Czechs and which has been suppressed in the Austrian press, reads as follows:

"In the fourth year of this terrible war, which has already cost the nations numberless sacrifices in blood and treasure, the first peace efforts have been inaugurated. We Czech deputies recognise the declarations in the Reichsrat, and deem it our duty emphatically to declare, in the name of the Czech nation and of its oppressed and forcibly-silenced Slovak branch of Hungary, our attitude towards the reconstruction of the international situation.

"When the Czech deputies of our regenerated nation expressed themselves, during the Franco-Prussian War, on the international European problems, they solemnly declared in the memorandum of December 8, 1870, that 'only from the recognition of the equality of all nations and from natural respect of the right of self-determination could come true equality and fraternity, a general peace and true humanity.'

"We, deputies of the Czech nation, true even to-day to these principles of our ancestors, have therefore greeted with joy the fact that all states, based upon democratic principles, whether belligerent or neutral, now accept with us the right of nations to free

self-determination as a guarantee of a general and lasting peace.

"The new Russia also accepted the principle of self-determination of nations during its attempts for a general settlement and as a fundamental condition of peace. The nations were freely to determine their fate and decide whether they want to live in an independent state of their own or whether they choose to form one state in common with other nations.

"On the other hand, the Austro-Hungarian delegate declared, in the name of the Quadruple Alliance, that the question of the self-determination of those nations which have not hitherto enjoyed political independence should be solved in a constitutional manner within the existing state. This point of view of the Austro-Hungarian representative is not our point of view, because we know, from our own numberless bitter experiences, that it means nothing but the negation of the principle of self-determination. We indignantly express our regret that our nation was deprived of its political independence and of the right of self-determination, and that by means of artificial electoral statutes we were left to the mercy of the German minority and of the government of the centralised German bureaucracy.

"Our brother Slovaks became the victims of Magyar brutality and of unspeakable violence in a state which, notwithstanding all its apparent constitutional liberties, remains the darkest corner of Europe, and in which the non-Magyars who form the majority of the population are ruthlessly oppressed by the ruling minority, extirpated, and denationalised from childhood, unrepresented in parliament and the civil service, and deprived of public schools as well as of all private educational institutions.

"The constitution to which the Austro-Hungarian representative refers, nullified even the right of general suffrage by an artificial creation of an over-representation of the German minority in the Reichsrat, and its utter uselessness for the liberty of nations was clearly demonstrated during the three years of unscrupulous military absolutism during this war. Every reference to this constitution, therefore, means in reality only a repudiation of the right of self-determination for the non-German nations of Austria who are at the mercy of the Germans: and it means an especially cruel insult and injury to the non-Magyar nations \_in Hungary, where the constitution is nothing but a means of shameful domination by the oligarchy of a few Magyar aristocratic families\_, as was again proved by the recent electoral reform proposal.

"Our nation longs with all the democracies of the world for a general and lasting peace. But our nation is fully aware that \_no peace can be permanent except a peace which will abolish old injustice\_, brutal force and the predominance of arms, as well as the predominance of states and nations over other nations, which will assure a free development to all nations, great or small, and which will liberate especially those nations which are still suffering under foreign domination. That is why it is necessary that this right of free national development and of self-determination of nations, great or

small, to whatever state they may belong, should become the foundation of future international rights, a guarantee of peace, and of a friendly co-operation of nations, as well as a great ideal which will liberate humanity from the terrible horrors of a world war.

"\_We deputies of the Czech nation declare that a peace which would not bring our nation full liberty could not be and would not mean a peace to us\_, but would only be the beginning of a new, desperate and continuous struggle for our political independence, in which our nation would strain to the utmost its material and moral forces. And in that uncompromising struggle it would never relax until its aim had been achieved. \_Our nation asks for independence\_ on the ground of its historic rights, and is imbued with the fervent desire to contribute towards the new development of humanity on the basis of liberty and fraternity in a free competition with other free nations, which our nation hopes to accomplish in a sovereign, equal, democratic and socially just state of its own, built upon the equality of all its citizens within the historic boundaries of the Bohemian lands and of Slovakia, guaranteeing full and equal national rights to all minorities.

"Guided by these principles, we solemnly protest against the rejection of the right of self-determination at the peace negotiations, and \_demand that, in the sense of this right, all nations, including, therefore, also the Czecho-Slovaks, be guaranteed participation and full freedom of defending their rights at the Peace Conference\_."

#### \_(f) The Oath of the Czecho-Slovak Nation\_

It will be remembered that Count Czernin delivered a speech to the Vienna Municipal Council on April 2, 1918, which caused his downfall. In this pronouncement he also attacked Czech leaders and blamed them for the failure of his peace efforts. This interesting passage of his speech reads as follows:

"What terrible irony it is that, while our brothers and sons are fighting like lions on the battlefield and millions of men and women at home are heroically bearing their losses and are sending up urgent prayers to the Almighty for the speedy termination of the war, certain leaders of the people and the people's representatives agitate against the German Alliance, which has so splendidly stood the test, \_pass resolutions which no longer have the slightest connection with the state idea, find no word of blame for the Czech troops which criminally fight against their own country\_ and their brothers-in-arms, would tear parts out of the Hungarian State, under the protection of their parliamentary immunity \_make speeches which cannot be considered otherwise than as a call to enemy countries to continue the struggle\_ solely in order to support their own political efforts, and ever anew kindle the expiring war spirit in London, Rome and Paris. \_The wretched and miserable Masaryk is not the only one of his kind. There are also Masaryks within the borders of the monarchy.\_ I would much rather have spoken on this sad matter in the delegations, but, as I have already mentioned, the convoking of the committee has at present proved to be



impossible and I cannot wait."

Thereupon he attempted to absolve the Czech "people" from the charge of high treason.

The Czech leaders did not resent his charge that they were "traitors" like Masaryk. Indeed, the Lidove Noviny openly declared: "We are proud to be called traitors." But they resented his subsequent allegation that the Czech people do not stand behind their leaders. In order to refute this allegation and to assure the Czech soldiers fighting on the side of the Entente of their solidarity, the Czechs summoned a meeting at Prague in which some 6000 delegates of all Czech parties and classes took part, as well as twenty-three delegates of the Yugoslavs. The meeting was most solemn and impressive. It was a new manifestation by the whole nation of its unanimity in the struggle for independence. The Czecho-Yugoslav solidarity was again emphasised. Finally, a solemn oath was unanimously taken by the whole assembly. The following are some of its passages:

"To the Czecho-Slovak Nation!

"The terrible world war is approaching its culmination. In awe and sorrow a great number of Czecho-Slovak men and women are standing here.

"The Czecho-Slovak blood has been and is still being shed in torrents.

"Unbroken, united in suffering, our nation believed and believes that the storm of the world war will ultimately result in a better future and that its humanitarian ideals will be sanctioned by a universal peace which will forever guard humanity against a repetition of the present catastrophe.

"We never asked for anything but to be able to live a free life, to govern our own destinies free from foreign domination, and to erect our own state after the manner of all other civilised nations. That is our sacred right. It is the national and international right of a nation which has done great service to civilisation and can proudly range itself among the most civilised and democratic nations of Europe.

"This is the firm and unanimous will of the nation:

"We have assembled here to-day as the legitimate representatives of the Czecho-Slovak nation in order to manifest unmistakably that the whole nation is united as it never was before, and that it stands like a rock behind the memorable and historic declarations of its deputies.

"So we are standing here, firmly convinced of the ultimate victory of Justice, of the victory of Right over Might, of Liberty over Tyranny, of Democracy over Privilege and of Truth over Falsehood and Deceit.

"At the cross-roads of history, we swear by the glorious memory of our ancestors, before the eyes of the sorrow-stricken nation, over the graves of those who have fallen for the cause of liberty, to-day and for all eternity:

"\_We will hold on and will never give way!\_"

"\_We will be faithful in all our work, struggles and sufferings,  
faithful unto death!\_"

"\_We will hold on unto victory!\_"

"\_We will hold on until our nation obtains independence\_"

"\_Long live the Czecho-Slovak nation!\_"

"Let our nation grow and flourish freely in the great family of  
nations, for its own welfare as well as for the welfare of the future  
liberated humanity!"

#### \_(g) The Slovaks' Attitude\_

The appalling terrorism prevailing in Hungary made it impossible for the Slovaks to manifest their feelings as they would have liked to do. The Slovaks abroad, of course, work hand in hand with the Czechs for their common cause.

Nevertheless, even in Hungary the Slovaks showed their unanimity with the Czechs.

According to the \_Narodni Listy\_ of July 24, 1917, the Slovak political leaders, especially their two deputies, Father P. Juriga and Dr. P. Blaho, and the veteran leader of the Slovak National Party, M. Dula, have been subjected to all sorts of persuasions and threats on the part of the Magyars who were anxious that the Slovaks should disavow the declaration of the Bohemian Club in favour of the union of all Czechs and Slovaks in an independent state. The Slovak leaders, however, refused to become the dupes of the Magyar Government.

According to the \_Narodni Listy\_ of May 5, 1918, a great manifestation was arranged by Slovak Socialists in St. Miklos on May 1 in favour of the union of the Hungarian Slovaks with the Czechs of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Several thousand Slovaks took part in the manifestation despite the obstacles put in the way by the Magyar gendarmerie and police spies. A resolution was carried unanimously demanding amongst other things a just and lasting peace which would prevent the outbreak of fresh conflagrations and assure liberty to all nations in Europe, and "\_self-determination for all nations\_", including also that branch of the Czecho-Slovak nation which lives in Hungary." Besides this manifestation, the Slovaks sent representative delegates to the National Theatre celebrations in Prague, with which we deal in our next chapter.

#### \_(h) The Czecho-Slovak National Council in Prague\_

On July 13, 1918, an important event took place in Prague. The Czecho-Slovaks established an inter-party council which may well be described as part of the \_Provisional Government of Bohemia\_, whose

programme is identical with that of the Czecho-Slovak Provisional Government in Paris.

The inaugural meeting of the council in Prague was opened by the president of the Agrarian Party, Mr. Svehla, who gave a report about the preparatory work and principles which led to the constitution of the council. On the proposal of M. Stanek, president of the Union of Czech Deputies, \_Dr. Karel Kramar\_, the leader of the Independent Democratic Party, was elected president of the council, \_M. Klofac\_, leader of the National Socialists, and \_M. Svehla\_ vice-presidents, and \_Dr. Soukup\_, leader of the Socialists, secretary. Dr. Kramar greeted the assembly in the name of the presidency. Afterwards deputy Klofac delivered a speech in the name of the Socialists, and the vice-president of the Czech Union, supported by deputy Habermann, proposed that the presidency should itself select members of the council. The proposal was unanimously accepted. Deputy Stanek greeted the National Council in the name of the Czech Union as the supreme representative of the whole Czecho-Slovak nation, of all its classes and parties. Thereupon Dr. Soukup proposed a resolution which was carried unanimously and the chief passages of which read as follows:

"To the Czecho-Slovak Nation!

"On the decision of all political parties, representing the united will of our whole nation, the Czecho-Slovak National Council has been formed to-day. The immense gravity of the present times and our common concern for the future fate of the Czecho-Slovak nation have united us in a national organisation.

"The ultimate aim of the Czecho-Slovak National Council in Prague is postulated by the demand of these times: \_to enlist for systematic work, to organise and lead the great spiritual, moral and national resources of the nation\_ to that end which is the most sacred and inalienable right of every nation and which cannot and will not be denied also to our nation:

"\_The right of self-determination in a fully independent Czecho-Slovak State with its own administration within its own borders and under its own sovereignty\_.

"The Czecho-Slovak National Council wish to interpret this will of the nation and to be the executive organ of all the common declarations of its delegates which culminated in the solemn oath of April 13, 1918.

"Our work will not be easy. We shall have to suffer much more opposition and \_we shall have to undergo another great test.\_ But no obstacles are able to arrest our nation's progress. In full mutual agreement with our delegates and with the whole cultural and economic Czech world, the Czecho-Slovak National Council will faithfully fulfil its difficult and responsible task, so that it may be truly said before the conscience of the nation that we did everything that was in our human power.

"\_We know that our whole nation stands behind the Czecho-Slovak

National Council\_ as one united rampart. Full of joy at the great political act which the constitution of the National Council represents, and full of confidence in the victory of our common cause, we address to-day to the whole Czecho-Slovak nation an urgent appeal to support our work with all its strength, to obey all orders of common discipline and to follow firmly our common national aim."

It is significant that the presidency of this council is composed of four of the most eminent leaders of the four greatest parties in Bohemia: Dr. Kramar, Klofac, Svehla and Soukup. All of these have been in prison during this war, as well as the following members of the council: Dr. Rasin and Cervinka, friends of Kramar; Cyril Dusek, former editor of Masaryk's organ \_The Times\_; Dr. Scheiner, president of the "Sokol" Gymnastic Association; and Machar, the eminent Czech poet. Besides these the members of the council include: the Socialist leaders Bechyne, Habermann, Krejci, Nemecek, Stivin, Meissner, Tusar and Vanek; the Clerical leaders Hruban, Sramek and Kordac; the author Jirasek; Agrarians Stanek (president of the Czech Union), Udrzal and Zahradnik, Dr. Herben, of Professor Masaryk's party, and others. \_All Czech parties are represented on the council without exception, from the Socialists on the extreme Left to the Clericals on the extreme Right.

The council is the supreme organ of the Czecho-Slovak nation, and represents all its classes and parties. It is a national organ and its sole aim is to work for the welfare of Bohemia, without any regard to Austria. It stands above all party politics and is the supreme organ to which all disputes are referred that may arise affecting Czecho-Slovak national interests. Its aim is, in the words of its proclamation, "to enlist for systematic work, to organise and lead the great spiritual, moral and national resources of the Czecho-Slovak nation." Its ultimate object is to realise "the right of self-determination in a fully independent Czecho-Slovak State with its own administration within its own borders and under its own sovereignty." Its aims are obviously identical with those of the Czecho-Slovak Government in Paris, who alone, of course, are able to exercise the executive power as a government, especially to organise armies fighting on the side of the Entente. On the other hand, the National Council in Prague is organising the nation for the final blow which the Slavs will, no doubt at an opportune moment, strike at the Dual Monarchy.

Immediately after this important event most significant declarations were made by Czech deputies in the Reichsrat of Vienna. The Czech deputy \_Tusar\_ declared that "\_the war must end with the creation of a Czecho-Slovak State\_, with the victory of democratic ideas and with the defeat of militarism and despotism. We will obtain freedom, cost what it may." Thereupon the Czech deputies sang the Czech national anthem.

The next day deputy \_Stribrny\_ delivered a speech which we have quoted in a previous chapter.

The most significant speech, however, was that of \_Dr. Stransky\_ in the Austrian Reichsrat on July 23, which surpasses any of those we have quoted hitherto in its frank anti-Austrian spirit and expression:

"We want to expose and show up before the whole world the \_intolerable state of foreign domination over us\_. You cannot prevent us, not only before a helpless curtailed parliament, not only before an illusory high court, but before the whole world, raising our voice against the Premier who is a typical representative of that \_Austria whose mere existence is a constant and automatic prolongation of the war. One of the obstacles to peace is the oppression of nationalities in Austria\_ and their domination by the Germans. \_In this war the Germans, even if they do not openly admit it, have come to the conclusion that the German hegemony in Central Europe, and especially in Austria, is standing on its last legs\_. Since they see that their predominance can no longer be maintained, they endeavour to translate all that they have acquired into reality, so as to secure the spoils for themselves. Thus the Germans conceived the idea of establishing a province 'Deutschboehmen' which must be prepared by the establishment of district governments. From this a very interesting conclusion may be drawn--\_that the Germans themselves lost faith in the further existence of Austria\_, otherwise they would not be in a hurry to save their province Deutschboehmen in the present Austria. Because they rather wish for no Austria than for an Austria where they would not be able to rule, \_they are already counting upon the break-up of Austria:\_ since the Germans do not want to accept the solution of a free Danubian confederation of nations, they prepare already their union with the Hohenzollerns.

"But then we must ask the Germans to take nothing with them that does not belong to them. It is more than questionable whether Deutschboehmen really is German.

"There is another reason which speaks against the creation of a Deutschboehmen. I am convinced that \_if a plebiscite were carried out among German people in Northern Bohemia, they would declare against separation from Bohemia\_. Why? Because the Germans are too clever not to know that Bohemia forms not only a historical and geographical unity, but that this unity has besides a historical basis, also a practical foundation. The relation between the Czech part of Bohemia and Northern Bohemia is to a large degree the relation of the consumer and the producer. Where do you want to export your articles if not to your Czech hinterland? How could the German manufacturers otherwise exist? When after the war a Czecho-Slovak State is erected, \_the Germans of Bohemia will much rather remain in Bohemia and live on good terms with the Czech peasant than be identified with Germany, boycotted, opposed and hated by the whole world\_, especially if we guarantee, not only by promises, but by deeds and laws, full autonomy to the German population within the Bohemian State.

"\_The real question which puzzles us to-day is: How can Austria exist at all?\_ That is the question. And I again repeat solemnly Palacky's word that \_Austria may exist only so long as her nations wish for it\_, and that \_she will cease to exist\_ as soon as her nations do not want her to exist. The Slav nations of Austria declared clearly and emphatically their wishes and desires in their proclamations. If instead of working for the conversion of the ruling factor in favour of

these wishes Dr. Seidler shows us Gessler's hat of Austria with a German head and backbone, then let him remember that \_we shall hate this Austria for all eternity\_ (loud cheers and applause) \_and we shall fight her, and God willing, we shall in the end smash her to pieces so completely that nothing will remain of her\_."

\_The President:\_ "I cannot admit such an expression about this state and I call the deputy to order."

\_Dr. Stransky:\_ "Excellency, I really do not deserve such a rebuke. It would be sad if we could not speak freely and with proper emphasis against a state form which has been imposed upon us.

"Let Dr. Seidler remember that \_we regard Austria, whose integrity according to him must not be questioned, as a centuries-old crime on the liberties of humanity. Let him remember that it is not only our political intention, not only our instinct of self-preservation, but our highest duty and--do not hesitate to say so--our national religion and our greatest moral mission to damage Austria wherever and whenever possible, and that our loyalty to our own nation, to our native country, to our history, to our future and to the Bohemian Crown, prompts us to betray Austria which is backed up by Germany. We are therefore determined faithfully to betray her whenever and wherever we can\_. I tell you further, gentlemen, that this state, this Austria which Seidler talks about, is not a state at all. \_It is a hideous, centuries-old dream, a nightmare, a beast, and nothing else\_. It is a state without a name, it is \_a constitutional monarchy without a crown and without a constitution\_. For what kind of a constitution is it if it has not the necessary confirmation by oath and won the general approval of nations because it was found to be untenable? \_It is a state without patriots and without patriotism\_, it is a state which arose by the amalgamation of eight irredents--the German one included--it is a state which had no future and in which the dynasty ... (suppressed) ... in a word, it is a state which is no state at all. \_As a matter of fact, Austria no longer exists\_, it is an absurdity and an impossibility. If I spoke about Czech regiments which went to embrace their 'enemies,' I must admit that personally I know nothing about them except what I heard from my German colleagues who persist in making complaints against us. We believe every word of what they say to be true, but ... (suppressed by censor). Did you ever hear that a husband conscious of his honour and respectability told the whole world about the infidelity of his wife who left him because he ill-treated her? No, because the husband knows that it is his shame and not hers. \_And if Czecho-Slovak brigades are to-day fighting against Austria-Hungary it is only a proof that there is something very wrong with Austria, that Austria is more rotten than Shakespeare's Denmark.\_ For what other state has soldiers who ran over voluntarily to the enemy? You keep on saying that England has the Irish problem. \_Did you ever hear of Irish brigades, did you ever hear that any French legions were fighting for the Central Powers against France\_, or Russian legions against Russia when we were at war with Russia? Indeed, gentlemen, not even Turkey has any legions fighting with the enemy against her. \_There must therefore be some deep reason for

Czecho-Slovak, Polish and Yugoslav legions fighting on the side of the Entente\_."

We think that any comments on this explicit declaration, in which a Czech deputy representing his whole nation openly expressed hope for the dismemberment of Austria and praised the Czecho-Slovak troops fighting for the Allies, are superfluous.

VIII

#### CZECHO-SLOVAK CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER NON-GERMAN NATIONS OF CENTRAL EUROPE

The Czechs have always clearly seen that one of the chief reasons which enable the German-Magyar minority to rule over the Slav majority is the lack of co-operation amongst the subject peoples. Already before the war the Czechs were pioneers of Slav solidarity and reciprocity, wrongly called Pan-Slavism. Thanks to their geographic position, they have no claims conflicting with any nations except the Germans and Magyars who are their only enemies.

In these efforts for promoting Slav solidarity the Czechs met serious obstacles. In the case of some of their Slav friends it was lack of internal unity which prevented co-operation. In other cases it was the quarrels artificially fomented by Austria between her subject nations, notably between the Poles and Ruthenes and between the Yugoslavs and Italians. Finally, the Poles lacked a definite international point of view. They were justly sceptical of Slav solidarity seeing that they were oppressed by a government which claimed to represent a great Slav nation.

All these obstacles, however, have one by one disappeared as the war has gone on. All the subject peoples of Central Europe saw that they were persecuted and driven to be slaughtered by the same enemies in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest. The oppressed races found at last that they have common aspirations and interests, and the collapse of Russia to-day makes even the Poles realise where their real enemies are. The Polish people may to-day have only one orientation: against the Central Powers. It is an inspiring sign that even some Polish "Realpoliticians" begin to realise that Austria is doomed and that it is bad politics to count upon Vienna, to say nothing of Berlin.

#### \_(a) The Congress of Rome\_

In order to give practical expression to the growing sense of co-operation amongst the oppressed nations of Austria-Hungary, their representatives assembled in Rome at the beginning of April, 1918. In those days the great spirit of Mazzini revived again in Rome, and from that moment Italy definitely became the champion of the movement of the oppressed nations of Austria-Hungary towards independence.

The congress was attended by numerous Italian senators, deputies, ministers and other leading men. The Yugoslav Committee was represented by its

president, Dr. Trumbic, the Dalmatian sculptor Mestrovic, the Bosnian deputy Stojanovic and others; the Czecho-Slovak Council by Dr. Benes and Colonel Stefanik; the Poles by the Galician deputy Mr. Zamorski, and by Messrs. Seyda, Skirmunt, Loret and others; the Rumanians by the senators Draghicescu and Minorescu, the deputy Lupu and the Transylvanians Mandrescu and De Luca. The Serbian Skupstina sent a deputation of twelve deputies and a delegation of officers from the Yugoslav division at Salonica. Among the foreign visitors invited to the congress were M. Franklin-Bouillon, President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber of Deputies, the ex-minister M. Albert Thomas, M. Fournol, M. Pierre de Quirielle, Mr. H.W. Steed, Mr. Seton-Watson, and Mr. Nelson Gay.

The congress unanimously adopted the following general resolutions agreed upon between the various nationalities and the special Italo-Yugoslav Convention concluded between Messrs. Torre and Trumbic:

"The representatives of the nationalities subjected in whole or in part to the rule of Austria-Hungary--the Italians, Poles, Rumanians, Czechs and Yugoslavs--join in affirming their principles of common action as follows:

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

"2. Each of these peoples recognises in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the instrument of German domination and the fundamental obstacle to the realisation of its aspirations and rights.

"3. The assembly recognises the necessity of a common struggle against the common oppressors, in order that each of these peoples may attain complete liberation and national unity within a free state.

"The representatives of the Italian people and of the Yugoslav people in particular agree as follows:

"1. In the relations between the Italian nation and the nation of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes--known also under the name of the Yugoslav nation--the representatives of the two peoples recognise that the unity and independence of the Yugoslav nation is of vital interest to Italy, just as the completion of Italian national unity is of vital interest to the Yugoslav nation, and therefore pledge themselves to employ every effort in order that at the moment of the peace these decisions \_(finalita)\_ of the two nations may be completely attained.

"2. They declare that the liberation of the Adriatic Sea and its defence against every present and future enemy is of vital interest to the two peoples.

"3. They pledge themselves also in the interest of good and sincere relations between the two peoples in the future, to solve amicably the various territorial controversies on the basis of the principles of nationality and of the right of peoples to decide their own fate, and



in such a way as not to injure the vital interests of the two nations, as they shall be defined at the moment of peace.

"4. To such racial groups \_(nuclei)\_ of one people as it may be found necessary to include within the frontiers of the other there shall be recognised and guaranteed the right of preserving their own language, culture, and moral and economic interests."

The Polish delegates laid before the congress a special memorandum of their own from which we quote the following:

"The Polish question admits of no cut-and-dried solution and of no compromise. Poland will either be saved by the Allies or she will become dependent upon Germany, whether the latter is associated with Austria or not; above all, upon all-powerful Prussia.

"There is only one way of avoiding this latter alternative, and that is by countering the plans of the Central Powers with regard to Poland by the proclamation of the Polish programme, which is that of the Allies. This programme is the restitution to Poland of the mouth of the Vistula, of Dantzic and of the Polish portion of the Baltic coastline. This programme will prevent Lithuania and the Ukraine from becoming instruments of Prusso-German oppression and Austrian intrigue. It is only such a Poland as this which will be able to fulfil its historic mission as a rampart against the Germans.

"Its resistance will be still more effectual when united with that of an independent Czecho-Slovak State, and of a strong Rumania, healed of all the wounds inflicted by the war, and if, at the same time, the Yugoslav peoples achieve their unity and independence. The Poles, in claiming the Polish districts of Austria, declare themselves categorically for the complete liberation of Bohemia, which would otherwise be left at the mercy of the German-Austrians. \_The independence of neighbouring Bohemia is as necessary to an independent Poland as a great independent Poland is necessary to the very existence of Bohemia.\_ The united forces of the Polish, Czecho-Slovak and Rumanian nations, forming a great belt from the Baltic to the Black Sea, will prove a barrier against the German 'Drang nach Osten.' For, since the collapse of Russia, these are the only real forces upon which the Allies can depend."

On the day following the congress its leaders were officially received by the Italian Premier, Signer Orlando, who conveyed to them the warm greetings of the government:

"We have seen with keen satisfaction this assembly here in Rome, where for centuries the representative spirits of all peoples and races have always found refuge, and where hard facts seem to assume a prophetic form and ideal meaning.

"These neighbouring nationalities are, in their turn, subjected to Austria, and it has only been the traditional astuteness of this state which has unchained the ethnic passions of the oppressed races,

inciting one against the other in order more easily to rule them. Hence, it seems natural and necessary to follow the opposite policy from that which has so greatly helped the enemy, \_and to establish a solidarity sprung from common suffering\_. There is no substantial reason for a quarrel, if we sincerely examine the conditions of mutual existence, remember the mutual sacrifices and agree in our determination to grant just guarantees to those racial minorities which necessity may assign to one or the other of the different state groups.

"Italy should be able to understand better than any other country the aspirations of the nationalities, since the history of Italy, now completed, is simply your history now awaiting completion.... No other people, before forming itself into a free and independent state, had to undergo so long an apprenticeship, so methodical an oppression, such varied forms of violence. Like generous Poland, Italy was shattered, partitioned by strangers, and treated for centuries as a \_res nullius. The firm resolve of the Bohemian people to revive the glorious kingdom which has so valiantly stemmed the onset of the Germans is the same resolve which moved our ancestors and our fathers to conspiracy and revolt, that Italy might become a united state\_. The impetuous and vigorous character of the Southern Slavs and the Rumanians of Transylvania already has led to the making of heroes and martyrs; and here they are met by the endless stream of our heroes and martyrs; who across time and space fraternise on the scaffold erected by their common enemy.

"For your nations 'To be or not to be' is the inexorable choice at this moment. Here cautious subtleties are of no avail, nor the adroit reservations borrowed from diplomacy, nor discussions more or less Byzantine, 'while the Turk is at the gates.' The necessities are Faith and Work; it is thus that nations are formed."

We have already mentioned that the U.S. Government identified themselves with the resolutions adopted by the Rome Conference. As regards Great Britain, Lord Robert Cecil made the following declaration on May 23, 1918:

"Above all \_I welcome especially the recent congress at Rome\_, which has done so much to strengthen the Alliance of which Italy is a part. I believe that the congress was valuable for its wisdom and its moderation. I believe that it was valuable for the spirit of brotherhood which it displayed. But above all I welcome it because it showed that the Italian Government, as expressed by the speech of the Italian Prime Minister (Signor Orlando), recognise to the full that the principles on which the kingdom of Italy was founded were not only of local application, but extend to international relations. (Cheers) \_Italy has shown herself ready to extend to the Poles, to those gallant Czecho-Slovaks, to the Rumanians, and last, but not least, to the Yugoslavs, the principles on which her own 'Risorgimento' was founded\_, and on which she may still go forward to a greater future than she has ever seen in the past. (Cheers.) \_That is a great work, and those who have borne any part in it may well be proud of their accomplishment\_.

"People talk sometimes about the dismemberment of Austria. I have no

weakness for Austria; but I venture to think that that is the wrong point of view. The way to regard this problem is not the dismemberment of Austria, but the liberation of the population subject to her rule. We are anxious to see all these peoples in the enjoyment of full liberty and independence; able by some great federation to hold up in Central Europe the principles upon which European policy must be founded, unless we are to face disasters too horrible to contemplate. The old days of arbitrary allotment of this population or that to this sovereignty or that are gone--and, I trust, gone forever. We must look for any future settlement, to a settlement not of courts or cabinets, but of nations and populations. On that alone depends the whole conception of the League of Nations, of which we have heard so much; and unless that can be secured as the foundation for that great idea, I myself despair of its successful establishment."

#### \_(b) The May Manifestations in Prague\_

A direct re-percussion of the Rome Conference was the great meeting which took place in Prague on May 16, on the occasion of the jubilee celebration of the foundation of the Czech National Theatre.

The manifestations took pre-eminently a political character, especially as they were attended by numerous distinguished foreign guests. These included delegates from all parts of the Southern Slav territories, Poles, Rumanians and Italians. The Russians, although invited, could not take part, because of the obstacles placed in the way by the Austrian Government. As regards the Yugoslavs, there were over 100 delegates from the Slovene districts alone, including Dr. Pogacnik, deputies Ravnica and Rybar, the Mayor of Lublanja, Dr. Tavcar, President of the Chamber of Commerce, J. Knez and others. The Yugoslavs were further represented by Count Vojnovitch and M. Hribar, by delegates of the Croatian Starcevic Party, the Serbian Dissidents, Dr. Budisavljevic, Mr. Val Pribicevic, Dr. Sunaric, Mr. Sola from Bosnia, representatives of the national, cultural, economic institutions, and representatives of the city of Zagreb, with the mayor, Dr. Srpulje, at the head.

There were seventeen Italians with deputies Conci and De Caspari at the head. The Rumanians from Hungary and Bukovina also arrived. The Slovaks of Hungary met with the most hearty welcome. They were led by the poet Hviezdoslav. An inspiring feature was the presence of the Poles, of whom about sixty took part in the manifestations, the majority of them from Galicia, three from Silesia and one from Posen.

The delegation from Galicia included prominent representatives of the Polish Democratic Party, Count Dr. A. Skarbek, deputy and ex-minister Glombinski and deputy Witos, the Socialist leader Moraczewski whose father took part in the Pan-Slav Congress of Prague in 1848, deputy Tetmajer, representatives of the cities of Lvoff and Cracow and of the University of Cracow, members of municipal and county councils, journalists, artists, painters, sculptors, authors and others.

At a meeting arranged in honour of the Slav guests, Dr. Kramar declared that "the Czech nation is stronger to-day than ever before. There is no

worse policy than that which gives in before danger. I am sure that our people will not give way. We have suffered so much that there is no horror which could divert us from the path we follow. Happily enough, we see that what we want is also desired by the whole world. We see that we are not alone. To-day the representatives of other nations, which have suffered in the same way as ourselves, have come to us. Of course, they did not come to us only to take part in our festivals, but also to express on the Bohemian soil their determination that their nations want to live freely. We are united by the same interests. Our victory is theirs and theirs is ours."

The Yugoslav deputy Radic thanked the Czechs, in the name of the Yugoslavs, for unity and solidarity. The Polish deputy Moraczewski expressed his thanks not only for the welcome accorded to the Poles in Prague, but also for the proclamation of the watchword: "For your liberty and ours!"

The main celebrations took place in the Bohemian Museum on May 16. Since the speeches delivered on that occasion were of such significance and are sure to prove of great international importance in the near future, we propose to quote at least the chief passages from them.

The first speaker was Dr. Kramar who declared:

"You know that they are in vain trying to crush us. Every wrong will come back to the authors. That is our firm belief, and therefore you will find no despondency in Bohemia, but only \_firm determination not only to defend to the last the integrity of our kingdom, but also to accomplish the unity of the whole Czecho-Slovak nation. We firmly believe in the ultimate victory of the right of nations to liberty and self-determination.\_ And we therefore welcome you in our beautiful golden city of Prague, because we know that your presence here to-day is the best proof that our faith is the faith of all nations who have hitherto been clamouring in vain for right and justice.

"Allow me to make a personal remark. We were far away from public life, confined in prison, and only very little news reached us. Various events filled us with anxiety and despondency. Bohemia seemed to be like a large, silent and dead churchyard. And all of a sudden we heard that underneath the shroud with which they tried to cover our nation there still was some life. Czech books were read more than ever, and the life of the national soul expressed itself in the performances in the National Theatre. When we heard about the storm of enthusiasm which greeted the prophecy in Smetana's opera \_Libusha\_, we felt suddenly relieved, and we knew that our sufferings were not in vain.

"We placed everything that we want into the prophecy of Libusha--a new life, free, not constrained by disfavour or misunderstanding. \_We do not want to remain within the limits prescribed to us by Vienna\_ (applause), we want to be entire masters of our national life as a whole. We do not need foreign spirit and foreign advice; our best guide is our past, the great democratic traditions of our nation. We have enough strength and perseverance not to be afraid of anything that threatens us, because \_we want the full freedom for the whole nation, including the millions of our oppressed brothers beneath the Tatra

Mountains\_. (A stormy applause.)

"That does not depend on any circumstances outside our scope; it depends entirely upon ourselves, upon our will. \_We must show that we are worthy of liberty and of the great future which we are striving for\_. It must not be left to the generosity of individuals to support our peoples who under oppressive conditions are awakening national consciousness in their countrymen. \_We must mobilise our whole nation\_. All of us will be required to assist in the great tasks which are awaiting us.

"I think we may confidently look into the future. The war has united us internally, and it has taught us that all party politics which for a long time past have poisoned our life, are insignificant in view of the great issues of our national future which are at stake. We have lived long enough to see our whole people united in the demand for an independent Czecho-Slovak State, although the modern times have deepened class differences.

"We recollect our past to-day with a firm hope for a better future. The hearts of all are to-day filled with joyous confidence and expectation that we shall live to see the day when in our National Theatre we shall rejoice over the victory of liberty, justice and self-determination of nations. \_Our golden Slav Prague will again become a royal city, and our Czech nation will again be free, strong and glorious\_."

After Dr. Kramar had finished, the aged Czech author Jirasek described the history of the National Theatre during the past fifty years, and concluded:

"To-day as fifty years ago our nation is united without party distinction. \_We form a single front, and follow a single policy. We all demand our natural and historic rights, and strengthened by the co-operation of the Yugoslavs, we firmly believe that as we succeeded in erecting our National Theatre, so shall we also obtain our rights and be able to rejoice with a song of a full and free life\_."

When the enthusiasm which followed Jirasek's speech subsided, the great Slovak poet Hviezdoslav "conveyed the greeting from that branch of the Czecho-Slovak nation which lives in Hungary," and assured the assembly that after going back he would spread everywhere the news of the enthusiasm animating the Czechs so as to cheer up his sorely suffering fellow-countrymen, the Slovaks of Hungary.

Professor Kasprovicz from Lemberg, who followed, declared in the name of the Poles:

"We are united with you not only by blood affinity, but by our united will, and we can reach the goal only by co-operation and by joint efforts.

"This co-operation is perplexing to our enemies who, therefore, do all in their power to disrupt this union. Their endeavours are in vain. \_All of us believe that neither the Czech nor the Polish nation will

perish\_, that even a great war cannot bring about their extirpation; that besides the war there is something greater than all human efforts, that the day of justice will also come, and that the \_Czech and Polish nations not only must be but already are victorious\_."

A tremendous applause ensued, and the people sang "Jeszcze Polska niezginęła" ("Poland has not perished yet"). And when the chairman announced that the next speaker was to be the Italian Irredentist deputy, Signor Conci, another storm of applause and cries of "Eviva!" burst out. Signor Conci declared:

"I convey to you the expression of the heartiest greetings from all Italians who are participating in this brilliant manifestation, and from all those who, like myself, follow with great sympathy everything that concerns the fate of the noble Czech nation.

"An old verse speaks about 'Socii dolorum' ('Friends in suffering'), and I must say that this consolation for the different nations of this state has been amply provided for. \_But nothing helps the union and brotherhood better than the common misfortune and common persecutions\_ which strengthen the character of the nation. In defence against this menace, we and you have written on our shield: 'Fanger, non flector' ('I can be broken but not bent').

"When I saw with what indomitable firmness you withstood all unjust persecutions, and with what a fervent devotion and enthusiasm the whole nation supported your best and unjustly persecuted leaders, I realised that \_this nation cannot die\_, and that when the time comes its just cause will triumph. And I bring you our sincere wish that this may be as soon as possible. \_It is a wish from one oppressed nation to another\_, from a representative of an afflicted nation which has suffered and still is suffering intolerable oppression. May the roaring Bohemian lion soon be able to repose in peace and fully enjoy his own triumph."

Dr. Tavcar, representing the Slovenes, declared:

"We Yugoslavs are deeply feeling how much the Czech culture is helping us and how great is its influence upon us. \_We are the most faithful allies of our brother Czechs\_, and at the same time their assiduous and I dare say very gifted pupils. At a moment when our oppressors want to build a German bridge over our bodies to the Slav Adriatic, we come to you as your allies. We shall fall if you fall, but our victory is certain."

Two other Yugoslav leaders, Dr. Srpulje, Mayor of Zagreb, for the Croats, and V. Sola, President of the Bosnian Sabor, for the Serbs, expressed the same sentiments.

After the speech of the Czech author Krejci, M. Stanek, President of the Bohemian Parliamentary Union, concluded the meeting.

Stormy demonstrations then took place in the streets of Prague, where the

people loudly cheered Professor Masaryk and the Entente.

On the same day also the Socialists had a meeting in which prominent Czech, Polish and Yugoslav Socialists took part.

The Polish Socialist deputy Moraczewski, from Cracow, declared that "the Poles, like the Czechs, are fighting for self-determination of nations." Comrade Kristan, speaking for the Slovene workers, emphasised the idea of Yugoslav unity. The spokesman of the Social Democrats from Bosnia, comrade Smitran, hailed the Czecho-Yugoslav understanding, and said that, although living under intolerable conditions, his nation hopes for deliverance, and like the Czecho-Slovak nation, demands liberty and independence. After the Polish comrade Stanczyk, the leaders of the two Czech Socialist parties, Dr. Soukup and Klofac, delivered long speeches in which they emphasised the solidarity of the three Western Slav nations, the Poles, Czecho-Slovaks and Yugoslavs, and their identical claims for liberty and independence. Dr. Soukup declared that "Socialism is to-day a great factor not only in Bohemia, but in the whole world." The manifestation was concluded by the Czech Socialist deputy Nemec, and by the singing of the Czech national anthem.

On the day following, fresh manifestations were held in Prague, and a meeting was arranged, described by the Czech press as the Congress of Oppressed Nations of Austria-Hungary. Among those who supported the resolutions were representatives of Czecho-Slovaks, Yugoslavs, Rumanians and Italians, as well as Poles. The resolution carried unanimously by the assembly reads as follows:

"The representatives of Slav and Latin nations who for centuries past have been suffering under foreign oppression, assembled in Prague this seventeenth day of May, 1918, have united in a common desire to do all in their power in order to assure full liberty and independence to their respective nations after this terrible war. They are agreed that a better future for their nations will be founded and assured by the world democracy, by a real and sovereign national people's government, and by a universal League of Nations, endowed with the necessary authorities.

"They reject emphatically all steps of the government taken without the consent of the people. They are convinced that the peace which they, together with all other democratic parties and nations, are striving for, will only be a just and lasting peace if it liberates the world from the predominance of one nation over another and thus enables all nations to defend themselves against aggressive imperialism by means of liberty and equality of nations. All nations represented are determined to help each other, since the victory of one is also the victory of the other, and is not only in the interests of the nations concerned, but in the interests of civilisation, of fraternity and equality of nations, as well as of true humanity."

## BOHEMIA AS A BULWARK AGAINST PAN-GERMANISM

From the foregoing chapters it is clear that:

\_(a)\_ The Austro-Hungarian Government represents only the Habsburgs, and the Austrian Germans and the Magyars, who form a minority of the total population of the monarchy. The majority, consisting of Slavs and Latins, is opposed to the further existence of Austria-Hungary.

\_(b)\_ The Austrian Germans and Magyars, who exercised their hegemony in Austria and Hungary respectively, will always be bound to look to Germany for the support of their predominance as long as Austria-Hungary in whatever form exists. The collapse of the Habsburg Empire in October, 1918, practically put an end to this possibility.

\_(c)\_ The Habsburgs, Austro-Germans and Magyars, just like the Bulgars, became the willing and wilful partners of Prussia in this war, while the Austrian Slavs, especially the Czecho-Slovaks, have done all in their power to assist the Allies at the price of tremendous sacrifices. Under these circumstances, the only possible policy for the Allies is to support the claims of those peoples who are heart and soul with them. Any policy which would not satisfy the just Slav aspirations would play into the hands of Germany.

\_(d)\_ The restoration of the *\_status quo ante bellum\_* of Austria or Hungary is out of the question. The Allies have pledged themselves to unite the Italian and Rumanian territories of Austria with Italy and Rumania respectively. The aim of Serbia is to unite all the Yugoslavs. Deprived of her Italian, Rumanian and Yugoslav provinces, Austria-Hungary would lose some twelve million Slavs and Latins. The problem of Poland also cannot be solved in a satisfactory way without the incorporation in Poland of the Polish territories of Galicia. If the *\_status quo\_* were re-established, the Czecho-Slovaks, whom Great Britain has recognised as an Allied nation, would be placed in a decisive minority and would be powerless in face of the German-Magyar majority. This the Allies in their own interests cannot allow. They must insist upon the restoration of Bohemia's full independence.

\_(e)\_ The disappearance of Austria-Hungary therefore appears to be the only solution if a permanent peace in Europe is to be achieved. Moreover, as we have already pointed out, her dissolution is a political necessity for Europe, and is to-day already an accomplished fact.

The dismemberment of Austria does not mean a destructive policy. On the contrary, it means only the destruction of oppression and racial tyranny. It is fundamentally different from the dismemberment of Poland, which was a living nation, while Austria is not. The dismemberment of Austria will, on the contrary, unite nations at present dismembered, and will reconstruct Europe so as to prevent further German aggressive attempts towards the East and South-East. A close alliance between Poland, Czecho-Slovak Bohemia, Greater Rumania, Greater Serbia (or Yugoslavia) and Italy would assure a stable peace in Central Europe.



The issue really at stake was: Central Europe either Pan-German or anti-German. If Germany succeeded in preserving Austria-Hungary, the Pan-German plans of Mitteleuropa would be a *\_fait accompli\_*, and Germany would have won the war: the Germans would, with the aid of the Magyars and Bulgars, directly and indirectly control and exploit over one hundred million Slavs in Central Europe. On the other hand, now that Austria has fallen to pieces the German plans have been frustrated. The Germans will not only be unable to use the Austrian Slavs again as cannon-fodder, but even the economic exploitation of Central Europe will be barred to them.

From the international point of view, Bohemia will form the very centre of the anti-German barrier, and with the assistance of a new Poland in the north, and Italy, Yugoslavia and Rumania in the south, she will successfully prevent German penetration to the East, Near East and the Adriatic.

Austria and Hungary, reduced to their proper racial boundaries, will be states of about eight million each. The Magyars, being situated in the Lowlands, which are mainly agricultural, hemmed in between Bohemia, Rumania and Yugoslavia, will be in a hopeless strategic and economic position. They will be unable to attack any of their neighbours, and they will be wholly dependent on them for industrial products. Hungary will thus be forced to come to an understanding with her neighbours. Austria will be in a similar position: deprived of her richest provinces, she will no longer be of any great economic or military value to Germany.

Let us now examine the probable future relations between Bohemia and her neighbours.

1. The formation of a strong *\_Polish-Czech block\_* is the only means of arresting the German expansion towards the East. To-day, when Russia has collapsed, the liberation of the non-Germans of Central Europe can alone save Europe from the hegemony of the German *Herrenvolk*. The creation of a strong and united Poland with access to the sea at Gdansk (Dantzig) and an independent Czecho-Slovak State has become a necessity for Europe.

The understanding between the Poles and Czechs is of vital interest to both peoples concerned, and to Europe as a whole. It is by no means hypothetical, considering that geographically the Poles and Czechs are neighbours, that they speak almost the same language, and that their national spirit, history and traditions bear a close resemblance. The history of Poland offers many strange parallels to that of Bohemia. It is specially interesting to note that in the fifteenth century, as to-day, the Poles and Czechs together resisted the German "Drang nach Osten." The Czech with their famous leader Zizka participated in the splendid Polish victory over the Teutonic knights at Gruenwald in 1410, while on the other hand, there were many Poles in the Hussite regiments who so gloriously defended the Czech religious and national liberties in the fifteenth century. Poland and Bohemia were also united several times under a common dynasty.

After Bohemia lost her independence at the battle of the White Mountain in 1620, she became the prey of Austrian barbarity. The Habsburgs have done

their best to extirpate the Czech heretics and abolish and destroy the Bohemian Constitution. With Bohemia's loss of independence her contact with Poland also ceased. And Poland herself became the prey of Prussia, Russia and Austria some 170 years later, notwithstanding the constitution of May 3 and the heroic resistance of Kosciuszko.

The regeneration of the Czechs at the end of the eighteenth century meant the resumption of friendly relations between Czechs and Poles. The Czechs desired to come to an agreement with the Poles because the latter are their nearest kinsmen in race and language, and like themselves have suffered terribly from alien oppression. There were many Polonophiles amongst the first Czech regenerators, and the Polish revolutions always evoked sincere sympathy in Bohemia. The modern Czech writers were all sincere friends of the Poles. Thanks to their efforts, Sienkiewicz and Mickiewicz are read in every household in Bohemia, and the dramas of Slowacki, Krasinski, Wyspianski and others are frequently played on the stage of our National Theatre in Prague.

The present interests and aspirations of Poles and Czechs are identical. Like the Czechs, the Poles are threatened by the Pan-German schemes of Mitteleuropa and "Drang nach Osten," to which they are bitterly opposed. These plans can be checked effectively only by the establishment of a strong and united Poland with access to the sea, a strong Czecho-Slovak State, and a united and independent Yugoslavia and Rumania.

It was proved by events that Russian imperialism and oppression was never so dangerous to Europe as Pan-Germanism, since the former was built upon sand and opposed by the Russian people themselves; while Pan-Germanism rests upon effective organisation, and its brutal principles of domination are supported by the bulk of the German people. The Central Powers are to-day Poland's only enemies, and are a danger to her as to all Europe. Poland's interests lie only in one orientation: in absolute opposition to Pan-Germany.

The alliance between Poland and Bohemia will provide the latter with an outlet to the sea (Gdansk). This will draw the two countries still closer together. Economically such an alliance would be to the mutual interests of both countries. Since Bohemia has not, like Poland, been devastated during this war, she could greatly assist Poland in rebuilding her trade and industries, and this would prevent German economic penetration to the East. On the other hand, Poland could supply her with oil and salt from Galicia.

The Czecho-Polish block would prevent German penetration in Russia, which would thus be able to set her own affairs in order. The Czecho-Polish block would also frustrate the German plans of creating a Polish-German-Magyar combination by means of a small Poland, completely dependent on the Central Powers, or by means of the so-called Austro-Polish solution. The Czecho-Slovaks, owing to their geographic position and past traditions, and owing to their advanced civilisation, may be fully relied upon as the pioneers of peace and stability in Central Europe.

2. The Czecho-Slovak State will probably have a common frontier with \_Rumania\_. The Rumanians-and Czecho-Slovaks will have common interests, and

their mutual political and economic relations will be of great importance. Economically, agricultural Rumania and industrial Bohemia will complete each other. Prague will have direct railway connection with Bukarest and Jassy, while the Danube will connect the Czecho-Slovaks both with the Yugoslavs and the Rumanians, under the protection of the League of Nations.

Politically the alliance between a united Poland, Bohemia and Greater Rumania is of paramount importance, because if Poland and Rumania remain as small as they are at present, and if the Czecho-Slovaks and Yugoslavs are left at the mercy of Vienna and Budapest, the Germans will be masters of Central Europe.

3. The relations between \_Czechs and Yugoslavs\_ have always been cordial, since both of them have always had the same anti-German and anti-Magyar orientation. By way of the Danube the Czecho-Slovaks would be in direct communication with Belgrade. The Czechs could further also be accorded an international railway connecting Pressburg with the Adriatic. The Czechs, being well developed industrially and commercially, could greatly assist the Yugoslavs in organising a state sufficiently strong to arrest German and Magyar penetration in the Balkans.

The Czechs, being good friends of the Yugoslavs and Italians, will at the same time exert their efforts to prevent all misunderstandings between these two Adriatic nations from which only the Germans would profit. A close alliance between Bohemia, Italy, Yugoslavia and Rumania will form an effective safeguard against German penetration in the Near East. Since Rumania will border both on Bohemia and Yugoslavia, the Germans will be completely encircled by a strong Latin-Slav barrier, of which Bohemia will form the centre, working for stability in Central Europe and safeguarding Europe from a repetition of the German attempts at world domination.

4. The Czecho-Slovak State itself will be strong both strategically and economically. It will number over twelve million, and its territory, comprising Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian-Silesia and Slovakia, will be about 50,000 square miles, that is a territory as large as England (without Scotland, Ireland and Wales).

Surrounded by high mountains, Bohemia forms a veritable fortress in the heart of Europe. Economically, too, she will be strong and self-supporting.

In the past Bohemia was the richest part of the Habsburg Empire, with well-developed agriculture and industries. Bohemia produced 829 lbs. of grain per inhabitant, the rest of Austria 277 lbs. The Bohemian lands are responsible for 93 per cent. of Austria's, production of sugar, most of which has been exported to England. Hops of remarkable quality are produced in Bohemia, and Pilsen beer is known all over the world. Bohemia manufactures over 50 per cent. of all the beer produced in Austria. Bohemia has also abundant wealth in minerals, the only mineral which is not found there being salt. Bohemia produces 60 per cent. of Austria's iron and 83 per cent. (26 million tons) of her coal. As regards trade, almost all the business between Bohemia and Western Europe has always passed through Vienna, which of course greatly profited thereby. This will cease when Bohemia becomes independent.

Two-thirds of the total Austrian exports, the value of which was over L63,000,000 in 1912, come from the Bohemian lands. To England alone Austria exported L9,000,000 worth of Bohemian sugar annually. Bohemian beer, malt and hops were exported especially to France, textiles and machines to Italy. On the other hand, Germany and German-Austria imported from the Bohemian lands especially agricultural products (butter, eggs, cheese, cereals, fruit), also coal and wood manufactures.

In 1905 Austria exported 425,000 metric tons of wheat and 186,000 metric tons of malt, which were mostly produced in Bohemia. The export of Bohemian beer brings Austria 15,000,000 kronen annually (L625,000), of malt 55,000,000 kronen (L2,290,000). The Bohemian lands further export 130,000,000 kronen (L5,430,000) worth of textiles annually.

The Austrian import trade is also largely dependent on Bohemia. All French articles bought by Bohemia come through Vienna, two-thirds of the whole French export being destined for that country.

As regards England, in 1914 L2,676,000 worth of goods were exported to Austria-Hungary, the greater part of which again was destined for Bohemia, the chief articles being printing and agricultural machines and textile manufactures. England will after the war find a good market in Bohemia, and valuable assistants in Czech banks and business men in the economic competition against the Germans in the Near East, since the Czechs boycotted German goods even before the war. Prague is a railway centre of European importance, being situated just midway between the Adriatic and the Baltic Sea. An agreement with her neighbours (Poland, Yugoslavia and Rumania) and the League of Nations arrangement would secure her an outlet to the sea by means of international railways, while the Elbe and Danube would also form important trade routes. Bohemia would become an intermediary between the Baltic and Adriatic as well as between East and West.

Also the future relations of Bohemia with the British colonies are not without importance. More than half the trade of Austria with the British colonies was transacted by the Czechs, and Austria-Hungary exported to British colonies L3,500,000 and imported from them L10,500,000 worth of goods annually.

5. One of the most important reasons why the Czecho-Slovaks, when independent, will be able to render such valuable services to the Allies, is the high degree of their civilisation. Despite all efforts of the Austrian Government to the contrary, the Czechs have nevertheless been able to attain a high standard of education, and they also excel in literature, music and the arts.

The Czechs are not only the most advanced of all Slavs, but they are even the most advanced of all nations of Austria-Hungary. In Austria as a whole 6.7 per cent. of the children do not attend school; in Bohemia only 1-1/2 per cent. The standard of education of the Czechs compares with that of the Austrian-Germans and Magyars, according to the Monatschrift fuer Statistik of 1913, as follows:

	Czechs.	Austrian Germans.	Magyars.
Persons knowing how to write and read	95-1/2%	92%	40%
Persons knowing how to read only	3%	1%	4%
Illiterates	1-1/2%	7%	56%

The Czechs have accomplished this by their own efforts, as is shown by the fact that 151 Czech schools are kept up by a private Czech society. These 151 schools have altogether 287 classes and 522 teachers, and are attended by more than 15,000 children. The unjust treatment of the Czechs in regard to schools is further shown by the fact that 9,000,000 Germans in Austria had five universities, 5,000,000 Poles two universities, while 7,000,000 Czechs had only one. The German University in Prague had 878 students in 1912, the Czech University 4713. The Germans in Prague number some 10,000 (i.e. 1-1/2 per cent.), yet they have their public schools and even a university; while the Czechs in Vienna, numbering at least some 300,000 (i.e. over 15 per cent.), are deprived even of elementary schools, to say nothing of secondary schools and universities.

The Slovaks of Hungary were, of course, in an absolutely hopeless position in view of the terrible system of Magyar oppression. The Magyars consider the schools as the most effective means for magyarisation. In the 16 counties inhabited by the Slovaks there are only 240 Slovak schools, and even in those schools Magyar is taught sometimes fully 18 hours a week. The number of Slovak schools has been systematically reduced from 1921 in 1869 to 440 in 1911, and 240 in 1912, and these are attended by some 18,000 children out of 246,000, i.e. 8 per cent. The Slovaks opened three secondary schools in the early seventies, but all three were arbitrarily closed in 1874. They have, of course, no university. Thus they were deprived of intellectual leaders and are doomed to complete denationalisation, unless liberated and united with the Czechs in an independent Bohemia.

In literature the Czechs may rightly range themselves side by side with the great nations of Western Europe. Practically all the most important works of foreign literature have been translated into Czech. The Czechs have many good dramas, novels, and much excellent poetry which can be fully appreciated only by those knowing their language. They are also very musical, and their composers such as Dvorak, Smetana, Novak or Suk, singers such as Emmy Destinn, and violinists such as Kubelik, are known all over the world. They are also developed in all other arts, and their folk-songs, peasant arts and industries, especially those of the Slovaks, bear ample testimony to their natural talents and sense for beauty and art.

6. It is obvious that the cause of Bohemia is of very great importance to the very existence of the British Empire. If Germany succeeded in preserving her grip on Austria-Hungary, the Balkans and Turkey, she would soon strike at Egypt and India, and thus endanger the safety of the British Empire. Germany would control vast resources in man-power and material which would enable her to plunge into another attempt at world-domination

in a very short time. On the other hand, when the non-German nations of Central Europe are liberated, Germany will be absolutely prevented from repeating her present exploits, Great Britain will be no more menaced by her, and a permanent peace in Europe will be assured. Thus with the cause of Bohemia the cause of Great Britain will either triumph or fall. Bismarck truly said that the master of Bohemia would be the master of Europe.

Bohemia has many traditions in common with England, and she will become her natural ally and friend. In the Czecho-Slovaks, the most democratic, homogeneous and advanced nation of Central Europe, Great Britain will find a true ally and fellow-pioneer in the cause of justice, freedom and democracy.

#### APPENDIX OF SOME RECENT DOCUMENTS

##### THE CZECHO-SLOVAK RESOLUTION OF SEPTEMBER 29, 1918

The following is the text of the resolution passed by the Czecho-Slovak National Council in Prague, in conjunction with the Union of Czech Deputies, on September 29, 1918, and suppressed by the Austrian censor:

"Our nation once more and with all possible emphasis lays stress on the fact that it firmly and unswervingly stands by the historical manifestations of its freely elected representatives, firmly convinced of the ultimate success of its highest ideals of full independence and liberty. \_Our silenced and oppressed nation has no other answer to all attempts at a change of the constitution than a cool and categorical refusal\_, because we know that these attempts are nothing except products of an ever-increasing strain, helplessness and ruin. \_We do not believe to-day in any more promises given and not kept\_, for experience has taught us to judge them on their merits. The most far-reaching promises cannot blind us and turn us away from our aims. The hard experiences of our nation order us imperatively to hold firm in matters where reality is stronger than all promises. \_The Vienna Government is unable to give us anything we ask for\_. Our nation can never expect to get its liberty from those who at all times regarded it only as a subject of ruthless exploitations; and who even in the last moment do not shrink from any means to humiliate, starve and wipe out our nation and by cruel oppression to hurt us in our most sacred feelings. \_Our nation has nothing in common with those who are responsible for the horrors of this war\_. Therefore there will not be a single person who would, contrary to the unanimous wish of the nation, deal with those who have not justice for the Czech nation at heart and who have also no sympathy with the Polish and Yugoslav nations, but who are only striving for the salvation of their present privileged position of misrule and injustice. \_The Czech nation will follow its anti-German policy, whatever may happen, assured that its just cause will finally triumph, especially to-day when it becomes a part of the great ideals of the Entente, whose victory will be the only good produced by this terrible war\_."

## CZECH LEADERS REFER THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE CZECHO-SLOVAK GOVERNMENT AS THEIR AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVES

Speaking in the Reichsrat, deputy Stanek declared in the name of the Union of Czech Deputies on October 2, 1918:

"This terrible war, started against the will and despite the warnings of the Czecho-Slovaks, has now reached the culminating point. Two worlds have been struggling in this war. One of them stood for the Middle Ages and has with daring impudence inscribed upon its banner 'Might is Right.' Inspired by this watchword, the spirit of German Imperialism believed it had a mission to rule the whole world, and it was voluntarily joined by the rulers of Austria-Hungary in the mad desire of enslaving the whole world.

"It was not difficult to guess which side would win unless civilisation were to be thrown back for centuries. On one side stood the mediaeval spirit of autocracy; on the other, pure love of liberty and democracy. And we who have been oppressed by Austria for centuries and who have tasted Austrian 'education' have naturally not formed voluntary legions on the side of Austria. In fact \_the Czecho-Slovaks have not voluntarily shed a single drop of blood for the Central Powers\_. But our compatriots abroad, remembering the centuries-old Austrian oppression, have \_formed voluntary legions in all the Allied armies\_. They are shedding their blood for the most sacred rights of humanity and at a moment of the greatest danger for the Allies they saved the situation. In Russia, too, they are fighting for democracy. Nobody will succeed in arresting the triumphant progress of true democracy, not even the Austrian and German Governments, nor any diplomacy, nor any peace notes or crown councils. The world will not be deceived again and nobody takes the Central Powers and their governments seriously any more.

"Your peace offensives will avail nothing to you, nobody will speak with you again. \_Even the Austrian peoples refuse to negotiate with you, knowing the value of your words. We have no intention of saving you from destruction\_. Your aim is still the German-Magyar hegemony and the oppression of Slavs and Latins. You must look elsewhere for support. The fateful hour for you and the Magyars has come sooner than we expected.

"And the dynasty? Look at the electoral reform in Hungary sanctioned by the emperor! This reform is intended to destroy completely the political and national existence of the non-Magyars in Hungary. This is how the emperor keeps his word.

"In view of these events we must ask ourselves: Are there any moral guarantees in this empire? We do not see them and therefore we declare that we \_reject all community with the political system of this empire. We want a single front of three Slav States extending from Gdansk (Dantzig) via Prague to the Adriatic.\_ We protest against any partial solution of the Czecho-Slovak question. The Czecho-Slovak State which must also include the Slovaks of Hungary is our minimum programme. We

again emphasise our solidarity with our Yugoslav brethren, whether they live in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Mostar or Ljubljana, and we ask for the removal of those statesmen who wish to subjugate the remainder of the Bosnian population. \_A free Yugoslavia, an independent Greater Poland and the Czecho-Slovak State\_ are already in process of formation, closely allied to each other, not only by the knowledge of common economic interests, but also on the ground of the moral prerogatives of international right.

"Peace is in sight. We wanted to be admitted to peace negotiations with representatives of other nations. The Germans refused and replied: 'If you insist you will be hanged.' Of course the Germans never kept their word except when they promised to hang some one! But the Entente replied by deeds recognising the Czecho-Slovak army as an Allied and belligerent army. Thereupon \_the Austrian Government asked us, Czech leaders in Austria, to protest against it. But of course we refused.\_ I said so openly to the Premier, and if you like, I will tell it to the Austrian Emperor himself. \_You would not admit us to the peace negotiations with Russia, and now you will have to negotiate with Czech leaders after all\_, whether you like it or not. \_These leaders will be representatives of the same Czecho-Slovak brigades which Count Hertling called rascals\_ ('\_Gesindel\_'). \_You will have to negotiate with them, and not with us\_, and therefore we will not speak with you. Our question will not be solved in Vienna. If you accept President Wilson's terms, if the German people, and not the German bureaucrats, accept them, then you can have peace at once and save humanity from further bloodshed. There is no other way out, and \_we therefore advise you honestly and frankly to surrender to the Allies unconditionally\_, because in the end nothing else will be left to you.

"In agreement with the whole Yugoslav nation, in agreement with Polish representatives, voicing the will of the Polish people, the Czecho-Slovaks declare before the whole world:

'Forward in our struggle for liberty and for a new life in our own liberated, restored state!'"

#### PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY TO THE AUSTRIAN PEACE OFFER

In reply to the Austro-Hungarian proposal for an armistice of October 7, 1918, Mr. Robert Lansing addressed the following communication from President Wilson to the Austrian Government through the medium of the Swedish Legation in Washington on October 18, 1918:

"The President deems it his duty to say to the Austro-Hungarian Government that he cannot entertain the present suggestion of that government because of certain events of the utmost importance which, occurring since the delivery of his address of January 8 last, have necessarily altered the attitude and responsibility of the Government of the United States.

"Among the fourteen terms of peace which the President formulated at that time occurred the following:



"The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.'

"Since that sentence was written and uttered to the Congress of the United States, the Government of the United States has recognised that a state of belligerency exists between the Czecho-Slovaks and the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and that the Czecho-Slovak National Council is a de facto belligerent government, clothed with proper authority to direct the military and political affairs of the Czecho-Slovaks.

"It has also recognised in the fullest manner the justice of the nationalistic aspirations of the Yugo-Slavs for freedom.

"The President therefore is no longer at liberty to accept a mere 'autonomy' of these peoples as a basis of peace, but is obliged to insist that they, and not he, shall be the judges of what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations and their conception of their rights and destiny as members of the family of nations."

#### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CZECHO-SLOVAK PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

On October 14, Dr. E. Benes addressed the following letter to all the Allied Governments:

"By the declaration of the Government of the United States of September 3, 1918, the Czecho-Slovak National Council, whose seat is in Paris, has been recognised as a de facto Czecho-Slovak Government. This recognition has been confirmed by the following Allied Governments: by Great Britain in her agreement with the National Council of September 3, 1918; by France in her agreement of September 28, 1918, and by Italy in the declaration of her Premier on October 3, 1918. I have the honour to inform you that in view of these successive recognitions a Provisional Czecho-Slovak Government has been constituted by the decision of September 26, 1918, with its provisional seat in Paris and consisting of the following members:

"\_Professor Thomas G. Masaryk\_, President of the Provisional Government and of the Cabinet of Ministers, and Minister of Finance.

"\_Dr. Edward Benes\_, Minister for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior.

"General Milan R. Stefanik, Minister of War.

"The undersigned ministry has subsequently decided to accredit the following representatives with the Allied Powers:

"\_Dr. Stephan Osusky\_. Charge d'Affaires of the Czecho-Slovak

Legation in London, accredited with His Majesty's Government in Great Britain.

"\_Dr. Leo Sychrava\_, Charge d'Affaires of the Czecho-Slovak Legation in Paris, accredited with the French Government.

"\_Dr. Leo Borsky\_, Charge d'Affaires of the Czecho-Slovak Legation in Rome, accredited with the Royal Government of Italy.

"\_Dr. Charles Pergler\_, Charge d'Affaires of the Czecho-Slovak Legation in Washington, accredited with the Government of the United States.

"\_Bohdan Pavlu\_, at present at Omsk, is to represent our Government in Russia.

"Our representatives in Japan and Serbia will be appointed later.

"We have the honour to inform you that we have taken these decisions in agreement with the political leaders at home. During the past three years our whole political and military action has been conducted in complete agreement with them. Finally, on October 2, 1918, the Czecho-Slovak deputy Stanek, President of the Union of Czech Deputies to the Parliament in Vienna, solemnly announced that the Czecho-Slovak National Council in Paris is to be considered as the supreme organ of the Czecho-Slovak armies and that it is entitled to represent the Czecho-Slovak nation in the Allied countries and at the Peace Conference. On October 9, his colleague, deputy Zahradnik, speaking in the name of the same union, declared that the Czecho-Slovaks are definitely leaving the Parliament in Vienna, thereby breaking for ever all their ties with Austria-Hungary.

"Following the decision of our nation and of our armies, we are henceforth taking charge as a Provisional National Government for the direction of the political destinies of the Czecho-Slovak State, and as such we are entering officially into relations with the Allied Governments, relying both upon our mutual agreement with them and upon their solemn declarations.

"We make this declaration in a specially solemn manner at a moment when great political events call upon all the nations to take part in decisions which will perhaps give Europe a new political regime for centuries to come.

"Assuring you of my devoted sentiments, believe me to remain, in the name of the Czecho-Slovak Government,

\_(Signed)\_ "DR. EDWARD BENES,

Minister for Foreign Affairs."

CZECHO-SLOVAK DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

"At this grave moment when the Hohenzollerns are offering peace in order to stop the victorious advance of the Allied armies and to prevent the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary and Turkey, and when the Habsburgs are promising the federalisation of the empire and autonomy to the dissatisfied nationalities committed to their rule, we, the Czecho-Slovak National Council, recognised by the Allied and American Governments as the Provisional Government of the Czecho-Slovak State and nation, in complete accord with the declaration of the Czech deputies in Prague on January 6, 1918, and realising that federalisation and, still more, autonomy mean nothing under a Habsburg dynasty, do hereby make and declare this our Declaration of Independence:

"Because of our belief that no people should be forced to live under a sovereignty they do not recognise and because of our knowledge and firm conviction that our nation cannot freely develop in a Habsburg confederation which is only a new form of the denationalising oppression which we have suffered for the past three centuries, we consider freedom to be the first pre-requisite for federalisation and believe that the free nations of Central and Eastern Europe may easily federate should they find it necessary.

"We make this declaration on the basis of our historic and natural right: we have been an independent state since the seventh century, and in 1526 as an independent state, consisting of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, we joined with Austria and Hungary in a defensive union against the Turkish danger. We have never voluntarily surrendered our rights as an independent state in this confederation. The Habsburgs broke their compact with our nation by illegally transgressing our rights and violating the constitution of our state, which they had pledged themselves to uphold, and we therefore refuse any longer to remain a part of Austria-Hungary in any form.

"We claim the right of Bohemia to be reunited with her Slovak brethren of Slovakia, which once formed part of our national state, but later was torn from our national body and fifty years ago was incorporated in the Hungarian State of the Magyars, who by their unspeakable violence and ruthless oppression of their subject races have lost all moral and human right to rule anybody but themselves.

"The world knows the history of our struggle against the Habsburg oppression, intensified and systematised by the Austro-Hungarian dualistic compromise of 1867. This dualism is only a shameless organisation of brute force and exploitation of the majority by the minority. It is a political conspiracy of the Germans and Magyars against our own as well as the other Slav and Latin nations of the monarchy.

"The world knows the justice of our claims, which the Habsburgs themselves dare not deny. Francis Joseph in the most solemn manner repeatedly recognised the sovereign rights of our nation. The Germans and Magyars opposed this recognition, and Austria-Hungary, bowing before the Pan-Germans, became a colony of Germany and as her vanguard

to the East provoked the last Balkan conflict as well as the present world war, which was begun by the Habsburgs alone without the consent of the representatives of the people.

"We cannot and will not continue to live under the direct or indirect rule of the violators of Belgium, France and Serbia, the would-be murderers of Russia and Rumania, the murderers of tens of thousands of civilians and soldiers of our blood, and the accomplices in numberless unspeakable crimes committed in this war against humanity by the two degenerate and irresponsible dynasties of Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns. We will not remain a part of a state which has no justification for existence and which, refusing to accept the fundamental principles of modern world organisation, remains only an artificial and immoral political structure, hindering every movement towards democratic and social progress. The Habsburg dynasty, weighed down by a huge inheritance of error and crime, is a perpetual menace to the peace of the world, and we deem it our duty towards humanity and civilisation to aid in bringing about its downfall and destruction.

"We reject the sacrilegious assertion that the power of the Habsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties is of divine origin. We refuse to recognise the divine right of kings. Our nation elected the Habsburgs to the throne of Bohemia of its own free will and by the same right deposes them. We hereby declare the Habsburg dynasty unworthy of leading our nation and deny all their claims to rule in the Czecho-Slovak land, which we here and now declare shall henceforth be a free and independent people and nation.

"We accept and shall adhere to the ideals of modern democracy as they have been ideals of our nation for centuries. We accept the American principles as laid down by President Wilson, the principles of liberated mankind of the actual equality of nations and of governments, deriving all their just power from the consent of the governed. We, the nation of Comenius, cannot but accept those principles expressed in the American Declaration of Independence, the principles of Lincoln and of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. For these principles our nation shed its blood in the memorable Hussite wars five hundred years ago. For these same principles beside her Allies our nation is shedding its blood to-day in Russia, Italy and France.

"We shall outline only the main principles of the constitution of the Czecho-Slovak nation. The final decision as to the constitution itself falls to the legally chosen representatives of the liberated and united people. The Czecho-Slovak State shall be a republic in constant endeavour for progress. It will guarantee complete freedom of conscience, religion and science, literature and art, speech, the press and the right of assembly and petition. The Church shall be separated from the State. Our democracy shall rest on universal suffrage; women shall be placed on an equal footing with men politically, socially and culturally, while the right of the minority shall be safeguarded by proportional representation. National minorities shall enjoy equal rights. The government shall be parliamentary in form and shall recognise the principles of initiative and referendum. The standing

army will be replaced by militia. The Czecho-Slovak nation will carry out far-reaching social and economic reforms. The large estates will be redeemed for home colonisation, and patents of nobility will be abolished. Our nation will assume responsibility for its part of the Austro-Hungarian pre-war public debt. The debts for this war we leave to those who incurred them.

"In its foreign policy the Czecho-Slovak nation will accept its full share of responsibility in the reorganisation of Eastern Europe. It accepts fully the democratic and social principle of nationality and subscribes to the doctrine that all covenants and treaties shall be entered into openly and frankly without secret diplomacy. Our constitution shall provide an efficient, national and just government which will exclude all special privileges and prohibit class legislation.

"Democracy has defeated theocratic autocracy, militarism is overcome, democracy is victorious. On the basis of democracy mankind will be reorganised. The forces of darkness have served the victory of light, the longed-for age of humanity is dawning. We believe in democracy, we believe in liberty and liberty for evermore.

"Given in Paris on the 18th October, 1918.

\_(Signed)\_ "PROFESSOR THOMAS G. MASARYK,

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

GENERAL DR. MILAN STEFANIK,

Minister of National Defence.

DR. EDWARD BENES,

Minister for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior."

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