

# Post-war Societies (Czechoslovakia)

By [Ota Konrád](#)

## Summary

Although the Czechoslovak Republic experienced social breakdown and a wave of violence in the immediate post-war years, as did other countries in the region, it managed to overcome the postwar shock successfully. This article explores the main features of postwar Czechoslovak social development and politics. It argues that the specific postwar setting shaped how Czechoslovak society evolved after the war. It further suggests that wartime suffering and postwar chaos do not inherently represent a direct threat to postwar democracy.

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## From the Dissolution of the Old Order to Rise of the New

The founding of the new Czechoslovak state on 28 October 1918 played a role only in the Czech parts of the Czech lands. In the German-speaking regions of the Czech lands, another national [revolution](#) occurred. German politicians declared the provinces of German Bohemia and Sudetenland to be part of the newly founded German-Austria on 29 October 1918, which also encompassed the southern parts of South Bohemia and South Moravia. In Slovakia, about 200 Slovak political representatives gathered in the Slovak town of Turčianský Svätý Martin on 30 October 1918 and – unaware of the developments in Prague – proclaimed the independence of Slovakia from [Hungary](#) and unification with the Czech lands in a new Czechoslovak state.<sup>1</sup>

The later official narrative which adopted the perspective of the Czech political elites spoke about the unified will of the “Czechoslovak” nation, which deliberately initiated the creation

of an independent Czechoslovak national state based on the democratic and humanistic ideals of [Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk \(1850-1937\)](#). However, the experience of the war deeply shook broad strata of society in the newly created [Czechoslovakia](#), regardless of ethnicity. In the immediate postwar weeks and months, similarly to other countries in the region, the Czechoslovak territory was afflicted by social breakdown and a wave of violence and criminality.<sup>2</sup>

Plundering and robberies struck vast regions of the Czech lands. In many cases, Jews became targets of looting and violence. At the turn of 1918 and 1919, a wave of anti-Jewish violence occurred mainly in Central Bohemia and rural regions of southwestern Moravia. In the Moravian town of Holešov, a pogrom occurred, resulting in two deaths at the beginning of December 1918.<sup>3</sup> In Slovakia, the so-called “*rabovačky*” (lootings) were aimed mainly at Jews and occurred immediately after the dissolution of the old order.<sup>4</sup>

This wave of violence continued in various forms which had already occurred in the last years of the war such as spontaneous [food](#) riots, looting, attacks on state authorities, etc. At the same time, however, it interacted with the new and serious social and economic problems of the Czechoslovak successor state. Even though Czechoslovakia emerged from the war with a comparatively balanced economic structure and its western part possessed robust industrial potential as well as natural [raw materials](#), it could not avoid the postwar economic and social crisis.<sup>5</sup>

The social breakdown and economic crisis also affected politics. Growing conflicts between the radical and moderate left culminated in autumn 1920. They led to the splintering of the Social Democratic Party and the creation of the radical opposition Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in May 1921. However, an attempt of the extreme left to provoke a coup d'état failed. In December 1920, the state was able to suppress a general strike despite violent conflicts between strikers and state authorities, mainly in the industrial Kladno region in Central Bohemia and the Oslavany mining district in South Moravia. The new state authorities did not hesitate to intervene: thirteen workers were shot to death by security forces, almost 4,000 strikers were arrested, and law courts sentenced about 500 rebellious workers.<sup>6</sup> After putting down the rebellion, the new state was ready to show a much more moderate face. In 1922, President Masaryk granted a pardon to the arrested workers. Masaryk announced many other amnesties in the immediate postwar period which pardoned otherwise criminal deeds, primarily if they occurred “under the duress of the war experience.”<sup>7</sup>

The state took steps to stabilize the economy. Already on 28 October, the Czechoslovak National Committee gained control over the Prague corn supply, the key institution in a time of breakdown and widespread hunger. The monetary reform of February 1919, implementation of an import duty, and later the so-called “nostrification” of companies separated the new state from the joined economic and financial system of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>8</sup> The disintegration of ties with the former k.u.k. monarchy and its heirs served to help stabilize and strengthen the identity of Czechoslovakia as a sovereign state.

The same holds for its international position. The initial foreign policy of the new state avoided any official contacts and cooperation with other successor states, especially German-Austria and Hungary.<sup>9</sup> Instead it tried to embed the Czechoslovak state in a new international order. Its success in Paris stabilized the country and legitimized the new rule. When [Edvard Beneš \(1884-1948\)](#), the first minister of foreign affairs and Masaryk’s closest colleague, made a speech in the first Czechoslovak [parliament](#) after the signing of the [Saint-Germain treaty](#), the deputies responded with thunderous applause.<sup>10</sup>

Knowledge of crucial politicians and diplomats from the victorious powers helped to align the thoroughly prepared and well-founded arguments for Czechoslovak claims at the [peace conference](#) with security needs mainly of [France](#) in Central Europe. However, it would be far-reaching to attribute the stabilization of the new state only to the deliberate maneuvers of a couple of Czech politicians. In comparison with other successor states, Czechoslovakia also benefitted from more favorable general conditions. For example, even though it was assembled from different parts, as was [Poland](#), these regions had a shared history within the dual monarchy. While vast territories of Poland were damaged by intense fighting during the war, the frontline battles had mostly evaded Czechoslovak territory.

## Social Policy and Social Status of War Veterans

The outward presentation of Czechoslovakia as an island of stability and democracy pressured the Czechoslovak state to manage the situation at home and re-integrate a society shaken by a humiliating war experience as well as by the chaos of the immediate postwar period. In this effort, social policy played a crucial role. It followed up on measures already taken by the monarchy and developed and unified them.<sup>11</sup>

However, in the immediate postwar period, the state could only undertake initial measures and promise future reforms rather than implement a complex system of social policy all at once. In December 1918, the state implemented a provisional unemployment benefit in anticipation of the return of masses of demobilized soldiers, which was later replaced by

unemployment insurance according to the “Ghent system.” Named for the Belgian city where it was first introduced, this system placed the main responsibility for unemployment insurance with [trade unions](#) and not the state. Continuing [rationing](#), rent control, and flat assignment also helped to reduce turbulent social situations in the immediate postwar period. Later measures, such as the eight-hour workday and reform of accident and health insurance (in 1925, a new system of mandatory health, accident, and old-age insurance completed the reform) pointed to the new modernizing ethos of the state. The new constitution of 1920 even allowed for the nationalization of private property which complied with calls for radical policy in the first postwar years. However, the state never used it. On the contrary, an extensive land reform shaped the society, politics, and economy of interwar Czechoslovakia. By distributing land to medium and small farmers, the new republic followed social as well as ideological goals as the Catholic Church and a couple of aristocratic families, such as the Schwarzenbergs, Czernins, and Lichtensteins – which represented the antithesis of new republicanism – dominated among the largest landowners.<sup>12</sup>

There was one specific group that needed special attention by the state: war veterans, their families, and [bereaved](#) persons.<sup>13</sup> More than 1.4 million Czechs and Slovaks and some 100,000 Germans from the Czech lands had enlisted. The group of those who came back from the war was very different. Most had fought in the uniforms of Austria-Hungary. However, about 110,000 men had entered the [Czechoslovak Legion](#) which was formed mainly from the ranks of Czech [prisoners-of-war](#) in [Russia](#), [Italy](#), France, and [Serbia](#) and fought alongside the Entente against the Central Powers. Another 10,000 men took part in the [civil war](#) in Russia as members of the [Red Army](#).<sup>14</sup>

War veterans in Czechoslovakia experienced various approaches adopted by state authorities. For many, the law of April 1919 was crucial. It secured pensions for more than half a million of the “war-damaged,” disabled veterans and families of fallen soldiers, regardless of their ethnicity and for which army they had fought. Although these payments represented the most significant state expense in the social field for the the interwar republic, they were hardly sufficient. In 1920, for example, annual pensions for the most severely injured veterans still amounted to only a third of the average yearly salary in Czechoslovakia.<sup>15</sup>

Among war veterans, the members of the Czechoslovak Legion formed an exceptional group conferred with the most privileged status through a network of legal measures and a unique system of social care.<sup>16</sup> The state hired legionaries preferentially and under preferred conditions in its service. Land reform measures also favored legionnaires.

[Demobilization](#) and integration of war veterans into the new society proceeded not only through social policies and health care. As stressed by Deborah Cohen, social acceptance of war veterans was similarly crucial to material care.<sup>17</sup> “Mental” demobilization and re-integration were also critical for the de-escalation of the dangerous potentialities of the postwar order. Again, legionnaires were in the most advantageous position. After they arrived in the “liberated” republic, they were celebrated as war [heroes](#).<sup>18</sup> Official Czechoslovak [history](#) also deliberately reinforced their heroic status. Regular state celebrations of the Battle of Zborov (the first significant appearance of Czechoslovak legionnaires on the [Eastern Front](#) in July 1917 in the course of the Kerensky offensive), a tomb of an unknown legionnaire at the old town city hall in Prague (1922), and later a monument on Vítkov Hill in Prague, together with so-called “legionnaire literature,” [film](#), and theater<sup>19</sup> helped to write the official heroic narrative of the republic and legionnaires into the public [memory](#).<sup>20</sup> Due to this incorporation of the victory and new republic, legionnaires formed a vital pressure group within Czechoslovak society and politics. Some continued their military service in the new Czechoslovak Army and formed the backbone of its new officer corps, mainly among the highest officers of the new republican army.

Apart from legionnaires, who enjoyed preferred social care, various benefits, and, most importantly, a specific social status as national heroes, there was, secondly, a large group (roughly estimated at more than one million) of men of Czech or Slovak origin who had fought for Austria-Hungary.<sup>21</sup> They were in a less favorable position in comparison to the legionnaires in terms of social care as well as their social status. In fact, among them, only disabled veterans, widows, orphans, and former professional soldiers received rather insufficient state payments. Although they represented most Czech and Slovak war returnees, they could hardly claim the position of deliberate fighters for state independence. The state was aware of the potential danger of these soldiers of the former k.u.k. monarchy for the new republic as the Habsburg monarchy officially represented its apparent contradiction. The state authorities carefully monitored meetings of numerous [veterans’ organizations](#) of the former imperial soldiers who, nevertheless, limited their activities mostly to the local level in the 1920s.<sup>22</sup>

However, many of these men tried also to integrate “mentally” into the new victorious narrative and turned the vanquished into victors. After the dissolution of the monarchy, mutinies and even everyday disobedience of ordinary Czech soldiers in the imperial army became a sign of their resistance against Austria-Hungary which contributed to its defeat. In this context, the well-known war novel about the “brave soldier Švejk” soon rose to fame as it seemingly described precisely this kind of Czech “resistance.” Nevertheless, the limits of this

kind of reinterpretation of the war experience soon became apparent. To be perceived as a shirker and even a coward did not fit in with how many war veterans remembered their military service; it also contradicted the gendered self-image of [masculinity](#) and military service.<sup>23</sup>

Even though many of these men had to “rewrite” their war memoirs to complement the new narrative, Czech and Slovak soldiers of the former k.u.k. army had the opportunity to be integrated into the new republican, anti-Austrian interpretation of the war. The last group of war veterans, the soldiers of the Habsburg army who did not belong to the “state nation” of Czechoslovaks, namely soldiers of Polish, Hungarian, and German origin, however, did not have this opportunity.<sup>24</sup> Although German, Polish, or Hungarian speaking invalids enjoyed the same social care as their Czech and Slovak disabled comrades in the Habsburg army, they could hardly transform themselves into fighters for an independent national state of Czechoslovaks. The state monitored their activities much more closely and controlled them. It was forbidden to dress in the uniforms of the k.u.k. army and wear its awards. The state further imposed a ban on some songs, flags, and other symbols of the former state and its army.

In general, the violent potential of the war returnees was deescalated or at least neutralized by a combination of social care, social and state acceptance, and state control which were, however, differentiated according to specific groups of war veterans. The vast majority of veterans did not receive any state payments and pensions for invalids could not replace a regular salary. That is why social and state acceptance appeared the most important measure as it helped to integrate a vital part of veterans into the new order. On the other hand, strict state control over potential rebellious groups of veterans and their organizations helped to neutralize those former imperial soldiers who could not be “mentally” integrated into the new republic.

## Uniformed Violence

The above does not mean that war veterans did not represent any threat to postwar society. Similarly to many veterans in Austria who came back from the war with anti-Slavonic stereotypes and hatred of the “left” and Bolsheviks, many Czech veterans returned full of anti-German resentment.<sup>25</sup> Their dreamt-of national state did not, however, correspond with the reality of a [multiethnic state](#). For many of them, mainly for the members of the legion, the national revolution needed to be completed. Former legionnaires, who formed the backbone of the new army, were not content with the mere control of German-speaking regions, which Czechoslovakia already had at the end of 1918. They and other soldiers of the

newly created Czechoslovak Army tried to “nationalize” them and thus to make them an integral part of the new national state. From 1919 to 1920, there were many conflicts between Czechoslovak garrisons and local inhabitants. On 4 March 1919, more than fifty people were shot to death by Czechoslovak soldiers and police during demonstrations in German-speaking towns. The demonstrations in Kadaň (Kaaden) with twenty-five deaths and Šternberk (Sternberg) with sixteen casualties had the most severe implications. Tensions culminated in autumn 1920 when Czechoslovak soldiers tried to remove any signs of hated “Germandom” in the predominantly German-speaking areas of the Czech lands. Primarily this meant the destruction of statues of [Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor \(1741-1790\)](#). In return, German [nationalists](#) attacked Czech minority [schools](#) in the west-Bohemian Cheb (Eger). In November 1920, ethnic violence rocked Prague, where a mob led by legionnaires occupied the Estates Theatre which had been dedicated solely to the German ensemble since the 1860s.<sup>26</sup>

Territorial conflicts in the immediate aftermath represented situations in which experienced fighters, as well as recruits of the new Czechoslovak Army, could realize their nationalistic fantasies. Except for the already mentioned occupation of the predominantly German-speaking border regions of the Czech lands in November and December 1918, Czechoslovakia was involved in two other territorial conflicts which appeared to be even more severe. In January 1919, a short war against Poland in the bordering Těšín region broke out. Especially during [the war with communist Hungary](#) over Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia in the spring of 1919, a national “complementation” of the Czechoslovak state interconnected with anti-Bolshevik attitudes, which were widespread among former legionnaires, especially those who experienced brutal fighting with the Red Army during the Russian civil war. After returning home, they considered the radical left as a serious threat to the new state and order. As one Czech officer wrote: “It is not yet the end. Today the greedy Hungarian-German beast is rising against our freedom and our young state.”<sup>27</sup>

However, Czech war returnees and legionnaires, who represented the most severe violent potential, were not opposed to the new state in general. On the contrary, they wanted to finalize a national revolution. They did not create any [paramilitary](#), non-state violent groups, but rather formed the backbone of the new army and state authorities in general. At the same time, the elites of the new state and its highest representatives did not want to use the state’s power to unleash any kind of brutal violence as this would be opposed to the self-image of a “democratic and peaceful revolution” and would also undermine the position of Czechoslovakia in Paris and the “West” in general. The shooting on 4 March 1919 in Kadaň (Kaaden), for example, was an exception caused by undertrained and inexperienced soldiers. The pulling down of statues of Joseph II in autumn 1920 occurred against explicit

orders by superordinate officers. The mutiny in the Czech-German border town of Železná Ruda (Markt Eisenstein), the only serious attempt of a coup d'état by military force, on 21-22 July 1919, failed at the outset. The state authorities were able to persuade insurgents led by legionnaires to return to the barracks peacefully. After all, they did not want to radically overthrow the postwar regime. They aimed merely to establish a "military dictatorship under President Masaryk's leadership."<sup>28</sup>

Patriotic arguments, acknowledged military hierarchies, and disciplinary praxis thus enabled the de-escalation of the violent potential of young men and war veterans who joined the new republican army and directed it toward the objectives of the new state. There is a crucial difference between this kind of integration of war veterans in Czechoslovakia and the practice of various paramilitary groups and other non-state actors in other successor states, which often escalated the violent potential of their members.<sup>29</sup>

## Victorious Narrative and Its Limits

This victorious integrating narrative was decisive not only for returning soldiers. For an essential part of the society of the new state, people who could and wanted to identify themselves with the "Czechoslovak" nation, it offered a way out of the deep postwar crisis. As it seemed, the suffering at the battlefield and the home front was not without cause: the new state and hope for the future came into existence through it. Trust in a better future thus helped to manage and overcome the postwar crisis.

This optimistic, victorious perspective spread through a broad stratum of society. It aided the success of the "government bond of national freedom" from November 1918.<sup>30</sup> Czechoslovakia also succeeded in attaining a state monopoly on violence. During the last days of the war and in the immediate postwar period, Czechoslovakia was able to form an army of Czech-speaking volunteers with an estimated force of more than 10,000 troops.<sup>31</sup>

According to the census of 1921, there were about 3.3 million Germans in Czechoslovakia. They thus represented more than 23 percent of the population. Germans could hardly take part in the victorious, optimistic narrative of a "national" Czechoslovak state. Contemporaries puzzled over the attitude of German-speaking inhabitants of the Czech lands to the new order. When the Czechoslovak Army occupied German-speaking regions in November and December 1918, almost no violence broke out between local inhabitants and units of the army. While politicians in Vienna expected a fierce resistance to "Czech imperialism," mayors of many German cities handed control over their cities to the Czechoslovak military peacefully. For example, the mayor of the north Bohemian town of Žatec (Saaz) claimed that

“no further drop of blood” had to be spilled after the terrible war.<sup>32</sup> In the parliament in Vienna, some politicians tried to blame Germans in the Czech lands for national treason, and others accused rival political parties of leaving Germans in the Czech lands without any help.<sup>33</sup>

Despite a tremendous amount of literature about Czech-German relations in Czechoslovakia, the question of the feelings of “ordinary” Germans in the immediate postwar period remains unanswered. As it seems, the vision of a German national state in Austria was not attractive enough to mobilize Germans for renewed fighting immediately at the end of the war. In light of rising social and economic problems and instability in Austria as well as in [Germany](#) on the one hand and Czechoslovak stabilization on the other hand, an attempt to return to prewar peaceful normalcy might have been attractive. [Mark Cornwall](#) convincingly showed in his biography of [Heinz Rutha \(1897-1937\)](#) that even for a young radical nationalist no other option remained in the immediate postwar period than turning to nationalistic “grassroots” initiatives with a limited local focus.<sup>34</sup>

The situation began to change when some members of Czechoslovak garrisons, as already mentioned, tried to fully integrate German-speaking regions into their dreamt-of national state. Violent attempts to enforce a new national order in ethnically alien areas led to the resistance based on national background. The manifold tradition of German *völkisch* movements and organizations which had gained momentum in the German regions of the Czech lands since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at least, reinforced the development of a specific national identity which started to lay claim to the whole life of every person. Deaths in March 1919 became a reference point for the new Sudeten German identity that arose in the 1920s and 1930s. It was able to fill the “identity” vacuum after the dissolution of the k.u.k. monarchy with a new convincing offer of collective identification.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

Czechs, Germans, and Slovaks did not enter the postwar period with any widespread explicit national persuasion. Wartime suffering similarly affected every inhabitant of the Habsburg Empire regardless of their ethnicity, especially if they were members of the lower classes. The enemies of “ordinary people” at the home front were “war profiteers,” wealthy people, and representatives of the state in general, not people who spoke a different language. Only the specific framework of the immediate postwar period decided the way out of the war catastrophe. Czechs and, to a lesser degree, Slovaks profited from the victorious, optimistic narrative of the new national Czechoslovak state. National revolution not only destroyed the “old” Austria-Hungary, which lost its legitimacy in the eyes of many during the last years of

the war, but also opened new horizons to which many could pin their hopes in the chaos of the immediate postwar period.

The Czechoslovak case demonstrated that, under specific circumstances and advantages of the international situation, a newly founded successor state was able to overcome postwar chaos and crisis. This grim postwar situation did not become a direct threat to democracy and stability to the country. The war and its chaotic, violent aftermath did not lead automatically to a crisis of the postwar democratic and international order.<sup>36</sup>

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## Notes

1. Kárník, Zdeněk: České země v éře první republiky [Czech lands in the era of the First Republic], volume 1, Prague 2017, pp. 33-49. For an overview of ongoing research about interwar Czechoslovakia cf. Koeltzsch, Ines / Konrád, Ota: From "Islands of Democracy" to "Transnational Border Spaces." State of the Art and Perspectives of the Historiography on the First Czechoslovak Republic since 1989, in: Bohemia. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der böhmischen Länder 56/2 (2016), pp. 285-327. ↑
2. Cf. the findings of Konrád, Ota / Kučera, Rudolf: Cesty z apokalypsy: fyzické násilí v pádu a obnově střední Evropy 1914-1922 [Paths from the Apocalypse: Physical Violence in the Fall and Reconstruction of Central Europe 1914-1922.], Prague 2018. ↑
3. Frankl, Michal / Szabó, Miloslav: Budování státu bez antisemitismu. Násilí, diskurz, loajality a vznik Československa [Building a state without anti-Semitism. Violence, discourse, loyalties and the emergence of Czechoslovakia], Prague 2015, pp. 63-67. ↑
4. Szabó, Miloslav: "Rabovačky" v závere prvej svetovej vojny a ich ohlas na medzivojnovom Slovensku ["Looting" at the end of the First World War and its resonance in interwar Slovakia], in: Forum historiae 9/2 (2015), pp. 35-55. ↑
5. For the Czechoslovak economy during the interwar period see: Jančík, Drahomír: Mýtus a realita hospodářské vyspělosti Československa mezi světovými válkami [Myth and the reality of Czechoslovakia's economic maturity between the World Wars], Prague 2000. ↑
6. Hájková, Dagmar / Horák, Pavel (eds.): Republika československá: 1918-1939 [The Czechoslovak Republic: 1918-1939], Prague 2018, pp. 137-139. ↑
7. Šmidrkal, Václav: Fyzické násilí, státní autorita a trestní právo v českých zemích 1918-1923 [Physical violence, state authority and criminal law in the Czech lands 1918-1923], in: Český časopis historický 114/1 (2016), pp. 89-115. ↑
8. The 1920 law authorized state institutions to order companies which produced on the

territory of the new state, but whose main office was registered abroad (typically in Vienna) to move to Czechoslovakia. Lacina, Vlastislav: Wirtschaftsnationalistische Aspekte der Nostrifikation von Industrieunternehmen in Mitteleuropa nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Änderungen in der ökonomischen Stellung mitteleuropäischer Eliten, in Skřivan, Aleš ml. (ed.): Wirtschaftsnationalismus als Entwicklungsstrategie ostmitteleuropäischer Eliten. Die böhmischen Länder und die Tschechoslowakei in vergleichender Perspektive, Prague et al. 2004, pp. 241-250. ↑

9. Konrád, Ota: Nevyvážené vztahy. Československo a Rakousko 1918-1933 [Unbalanced relations. Czechoslovakia and Austria 1918-1933], Prague 2012. ↑
10. Speech by Edvard Beneš at a meeting of the Revolutionary National Assembly concerning the Peace Conference, 30 August 1919, in: Hajdinová, Eva / Konrád, Ota / Malínská, Jana (eds.): Edvard Beneš, Němci a Německo. Edice dokumentů [Edvard Beneš, Germans and Germany. Edition of Documents], volume 2/1, Prague 2015, document number 1. ↑
11. Rákosník, Jakub / Tomeš, Igor: Sociální stát v Československu. Právně-institucionální vývoj v letech 1918-1992 [The Welfare State in Czechoslovakia: legal-institutional development 1918-1992], Prague 2012. An important figure for Czechoslovak social policy was the first minister of social care and former deputy of the Imperial Council in Vienna, Lev Winter (1876-1935). ↑
12. Jančík, Drahomír: Pozemková reforma – nástroj nacionálního přerozdělení půdního fondu [Land reform – an instrument of national land redistribution], in: Jančík, Drahomír / Kubů, Eduard (eds.): Nacionalismus zvaný hospodářský. Střety a zápasy o nacionální emancipaci / převahu v českých zemích (1859-1945) [Nationalism called economic. Clashes and struggles for national emancipation/domination in the Czech lands (1859-1945)], Prague 2011, pp. 275-337. ↑
13. Cf. most recently Hutečka, Jiří: Completely Forgotten and Totally Ignored. Czechoslovak Veterans of the Austro-Hungarian Army and the Transitions of 1918-1919, in: Nationalities Papers (2020), pp. 1-17. ↑
14. For Czechs in the war see Šedivý, Ivan: Češi, české země a velká válka, 1914-1918 [Czechs, Czech lands and the Great War, 1914-1918], Prague 2014; Lein, Richard: Pflichterfüllung oder Hochverrat? Die tschechischen Soldaten Österreich-Ungarns im Ersten Weltkrieg, Vienna 2011. For an overview of Czech historiography of World War I see: Konrád, Ota: Von der Kulisse der Nationalstaatsgründung zur Europäisierung der Forschung, in: Rumpler, Helmut / Harmat, Ulrike (eds.): Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, volume 12, Vienna 2018, pp. 201-226. ↑
15. Šustrová, Radka: The Struggle for Respect: The State, World War One Veterans, and Social Welfare Policy in Interwar Czechoslovakia, in: Zeitgeschichte 47/1 (2020), pp. 107-134. ↑

16. The state officially acknowledged about 88,000 Czechoslovak legionnaires. Šedivý, Ivan: Legionářská republika? K systému legionářského zákonodárství a sociální péče v meziválečné ČSR, in: Historie a vojenství [Legionary Republic? On the system of legionary legislation and social welfare in interwar Czechoslovakia] 51/1 (2002), pp. 158-184, 161. [↑](#)
17. Cohen, Deborah: The War Come Home. Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939, Berkeley et al. 2001. [↑](#)
18. The return lasted until 1921 and thus further reduced potential threat of legionnaires to the postwar order. [↑](#)
19. One of the most famous writers of this genre and author of many novels was a former member of the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia, General Rudolf Medek (1890-1940). His drama "Plukovník Švec" [Colonel Švec] (1928) was made into a film in 1929. [↑](#)
20. Galandauer, Jan: Chrám bez boha nad Prahou. Památník na Vítkově [Temple without God over Prague: the memorial at Vítkov], Prague 2014; Wingfield, Nancy M.: The Battle of Zborov and the Politics of Commemoration in Czechoslovakia, in: East European Politics and Societies 17/4 (2003), pp. 654-681; Kessler, Vojtěch: Vzpomínkové oslavy bitvy u Zborova [Commemorative celebrations of the Battle of Zborov], in: Hájková, Dagmar et al. (eds.): Sláva republice! Oficiální svátky a oslavy v meziválečném Československu [Hail to the Republic! Official holidays and celebrations in interwar Czechoslovakia], Prague 2018, pp. 181-217. [↑](#)
21. It is almost impossible to get a precise number of World War I casualties. For an overview of the demographic effects of the war on the Czech lands' society, see Fialová, Ludmila: První světová válka a obyvatelstvo českých zemí [World War I and the population of the Czech lands], in: Historická sociologie 2 (2014), pp. 115-125. [↑](#)
22. Šmidrkal, Václav: The Defeated in a Victorious State. Veterans of the Austro-Hungarian Army in the Bohemian Lands and Their (Re)mobilization in the 1930s, in: Zeitgeschichte 47/1 (2020), pp. 81-105. [↑](#)
23. Hutečka, Jiří: Kamarádi frontovníci. Maskulinita a paměť první světové války v textech československých c. a k. veteránů [Comrades of the Front. Masculinity and the memory of the First World War in the texts of Czechoslovak c. and k. veterans], in: Dějiny – teorie – kritika 11/2 (2014), pp. 231-265. [↑](#)
24. It is not possible to state an exact number of men of German origin from the Czech lands fighting in the uniforms of the k. u. k. army. In 1938, after the foundation of a Sudeten-German Alliance of Soldiers (Sudetendeutscher Soldatenbund), 180,000 men became members of this general veterans' organization for Germans in Czechoslovakia. Zückert, Martin: Memory of War and National State Integration. Czech and German Veterans in Czechoslovakia after 1918, in: Central Europe 4 (2006), pp. 111-121, 115. [↑](#)
25. Kučera, Rudolf: Entbehrung und Nationalismus. Die Erfahrung der tschechischen

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36. This article was supported by the University Center of Excellence (grant number

UNCE/HUM/009) and by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. I would like also to thank my colleagues Francis Raška and Václav Šmidrkal for their helpful comments as well as many colleagues who commented on the first version of the article in the discussion on academia.edu. ↑

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## Citation

Ota Konrád: Post-war Societies (Czechoslovakia), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer D. Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2021-06-15. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.11534](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.11534)

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[of the New Order in Czechoslovakia and Austria 1918-1922 in: Journal of Modern History 18/4 2016, pp. 827-855 \(Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies\) \(Article\)](#)

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### Author Keywords

postwar Czechoslovakia; society; integration; veterans; democracy

### GND Subject Headings

[Tschechoslowakei ; Geschichte 1918-1939](#)

### LC Subject Headings

[Czechoslovakia--History--1918-1938](#)

### Rameau Subject Headings

[Tchécoslovaquie -- 1918-1938](#)

### Key Person(s)

[Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor](#); [Rutha, Heinz](#); [Masaryk, Tomáš Garrigue](#); [Beneš, Edvard](#)

### Key Location(s)

[Cheb](#); [Holešov](#); [Kadaň](#); [Paris](#); [Prague](#); [Šternberk](#); [Martin](#); [Vienna](#); [Žatec](#); [Železná Ruda](#)

### Title

Post-war Societies (Czechoslovakia)

**Author(s)**

[Ota Konrád](#)

**Article Type**

Handbook Article

**Classification Group**

Regional Thematic Article