FOR NATION AND GAIN: ECONOMY, ETHNICITY AND POLITICS IN THE CZECH BORDERLANDS, 1945-1948

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This dissertation investigates the post-World War II expulsion of approximately three million Sudeten Germans from the Czech borderlands and the settlement of nearly two million Czechs and others in their place. While studies of the Sudeten German expulsions and of ethnic cleansing generally focus on violent conflict, I argue that officials' and settlers' efforts to control confiscated German property and labor overwhelmingly shaped the economic, ethnic and political transformations of the borderlands. I examine the actions of and debates within local governments, called national committees, as well as their interaction with central government organs from 1945 to 1948.

Expulsion, confiscation and settlement created competing objectives in the borderlands. During the summer of 1945, military units and national committees began expelling Germans and seizing their property. While the army prosecuted expulsions, and plundered in the process, national committees strove to manage expulsions and settlement to benefit their communities, for example, attempting to retain German workers for local production. Despite these committees' efforts to stabilize the borderlands, widespread looting and the settlers' quest for social mobility precluded order. Material gain was often more the goal than the physical removal of Germans. Thus Czechs worked with Germans to find and seize property, and they fought with other Czechs over the spoils.

In addition to local conflicts, expulsion and settlement spurred disputes between Prague and borderland officials, and among political parties. The confiscation of Sudeten German property dovetailed with the Communist-dominated government's land reform and nationalization policies. The Communist Party utilized the distribution of confiscated German farms to win political support in the borderlands, and it allocated confiscated factories to nationalized enterprises. However, the Party's efforts to consolidate and liquidate borderland industries faced considerable resistance from national committees even after it took over the state in 1948. While this dissertation studies the economic motives and imperatives that drove ethnic cleansing in postwar Czechoslovakia, its significance extends to other cases of forced migration in which property confiscation and labor issues played central roles.

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PREFACE

Researching and writing this dissertation would have been far more difficult and lonely had it not been for the support of my dissertation committee, colleagues, friends and family. In the first place, I thank my advisor, Irina Livezeanu, whose insightful comments, constant encouragement and attention to detail ensured the successful completion of this achievement. Bill Chase also deserves special gratitude for his aid and advice throughout my graduate career, and his continuous support of my work. Nancy Wingfield and Christian Gerlach joined this project in its latter stages and selflessly offered their support and criticism, which improved this dissertation in innumerable ways. I would also like to thank Werner Troesken and Ilya Prizel; they not only provided their scholarly acumen for this dissertation, but shared their time and knowledge with me in years past.

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GLOSSARY

FNO, Fond národní obnovy (National Renewal Fund)

KSČ, Kommunistická strána Československu (Czechoslovak Communist Party)

MěNV, Městský národní výbor (Municipal National Committee)

MNV, Místní národní výbor (Local National Committee)

MOPSP, Ministerstvo ochraný práce a socialní pečé (Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare)

MP, Ministerstvo průmysl (Ministry of Industry)

MV, Ministerstvo vnitra (Ministry of Interior)

National administrator – State trustee of confiscated property

NPF, Národní pozemkový fond (National Land Fund)

OKD, Ostrava-Karviná doly (Ostrava-Karviná Mines)

ONV, Okresní národní výbor (District National Committee)

OÚ, Osidlovací úřad (Settlement Office)

Revise – Inspection, audit or official review

SdP, Sudetendeutsche Partei

SD, Social Democratic Party

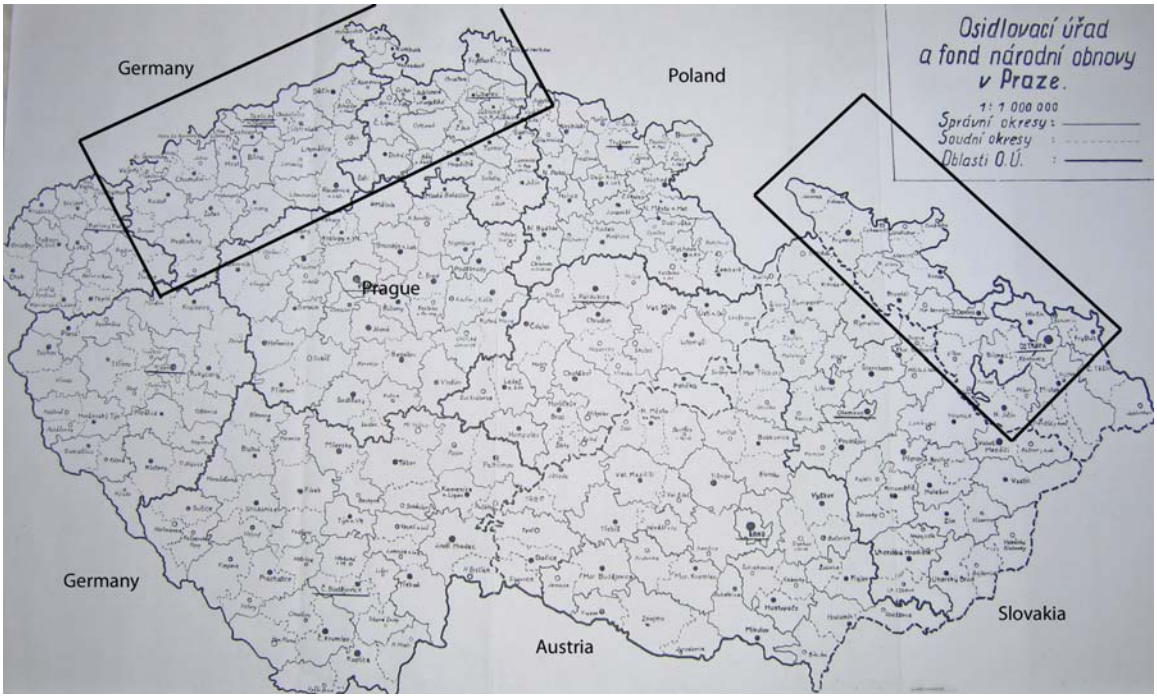
SHD, Severočeský hnutí dole (North Bohemian Brown Coal Mines)

SNB, Sbor národní bezpečnosti (National Security Corps)

ÚKVO, Ústřední komise vnitřího osidlování (Central Committee on Interior Settlement)

ZNV, Zemský národní výbor (Provincial National Committee)

MAP OF BOHEMIA, MORAVIA AND SILESIA (See insets below)



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North Bohemian borderlands (from box on left above)

Silesian borderlands
(from box on right above)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

> The years 1945 and 1946 will remain forever written in the history of our nation as a great turning point in its development. In the maelstrom of historic events, gradually will fade many of the constructive efforts—stimulated by our national and democratic revolution—which our nation is selflessly and heroically developing in these years. But the reality, that after this revolution our republic once and for all time truly became a national state of Czechs and Slovaks without minorities, will remain the unforgettable fruit of our revolution.[1]
>
> Miroslav Kreysa, Chairman of the Settlement Office

The liberation of the Czech lands in early May 1945 triggered what contemporary Czechoslovak leaders referred to as "the national and democratic revolution." By "democratic" they alluded to several postwar measures: the ban of political parties linked with the demise of the First Republic; the establishment of national committees as the direct representatives of the people; and the attempts to create social equality through economic policy. The term "national" conveyed the aim to create a state without national minorities. Between May 1945 and mid 1947, roughly three million Sudeten Germans were expelled from the country. During the same period, thousands of Magyars were forcibly removed from parts of southern Slovakia.[2] The Czechoslovak state, united again after six years, immediately embarked on a policy to ethnically cleanse groups deemed to be enemies of the state and of the Czech and Slovak nations.

In the western half of the country, known also as the Bohemian crown lands or the Historic Provinces of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and referred to here as the Czech lands, resolving

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[1] Miroslav Kreysa, "Osidlovací politika lidově demokratického státu," *Osidlování* 5 May 1946.
[2] Karel Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu, 1945-1948* (Prague, 1990), 80-90; Janics Kálmán, *Czechoslovak Policy and the Hungarian Minority, 1945-1948*, War and Society in East Central Europe: The Effects of World War II, Brooklyn College Studies of Societies in Change (New York, 1982).

the national question meant expelling the Germans.[3] Following the war, the Czechoslovak government expelled Germans through various means of force, intimidation and official fiat. Most historians and many contemporaries have made a distinction between the expulsions in the summer of 1945 and the Allied-supervised expulsions in 1946 by dubbing the first period, "the wild transfer" (*divoký odsun*). This distinction underscores the sense of chaos and uncontrolled violence against Germans as Czechs expelled them from their homes.[4] While the immediate postwar period witnessed the worst violence against Germans, the term "wild transfer" connotes an unorganized and popular uprising against the Germans, which the 1945 expulsions were not. Chapter one challenges the notion of the "wild transfer," by underscoring the involvement of military organs with clear objectives to remove Sudeten Germans. In all, somewhere between 650,000-800,000 Sudeten Germans were forced to leave the country in 1945. In 1946, during the Allied-sanctioned "transfer," over two million more joined them. Czech officials targeted Germans for expulsion and constantly portrayed them as the national enemy. Therefore, Sudeten Germans lived in constant uncertainty and often in fear, especially just after the war.

The expulsions also prompted a mass migration to the borderland areas, where the Germans had predominately lived. Approximately 1.8 million settlers, mostly Czechs from interior parts of the country, but also Slovaks, Roma, Magyars and Czech emigrants arrived to replace the expellees. Czechs moved voluntarily. Sudeten Germans, excluding a small minority, were forced

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[3] The Bohemian crown lands include Bohemia, Moravia and southern Silesia. Silesia was added to Bohemia and Moravia in 1335, but Prussia annexed the majority of the province following the Habsburg defeat in the War of Austrian Succession in 1742. The borders established at the Conference of Berlin (1745), with minor exceptions, remain the same for the present day Czech Republic. Referring to these territories as the Czech lands is not meant as a national designation, but rather comes from the Czech translation of *české zemí*. In Czech, *české zemí*, means both Bohemia (a distinct province) and the Bohemian crown lands including Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. In order to avoid confusion, Bohemia is used only in reference to the province, while "the Czech lands" refers to the three provinces as they have existed from the eighteenth century. For more on the origins of this problem, see Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics* (Princeton, 2002), 24.

[4] For a more nuanced understanding of the "wild transfer," see Tomáš Staněk and Adrian von Arburg, "Organizované divoký odsun? Úlohá z ústředních státních organů pří provádění 'evakuace' německého obyvatelstva (květín až září 1945)," *Soudobé dějiny* 12, no. 3-4 (2006): 465-533.

to leave. The difference in the character of these migrations is critical for understanding the expectations and experience of those involved. Czechs who arrived during the summer of 1945 had a good opportunity to acquire the best of the confiscated German property ahead of other settlers who arrived later. Even for workers, the availability of good housing and cheap belongings formerly owned by Germans offered a chance to improve their existence immediately following the war. As the following chapters make clear, these opportunities were not without their drawbacks and complications for the course of the expulsions and the future of the borderlands.

This dissertation analyzes the relationship between settlement and expulsion in order to provide a broader context for understanding the ethnic cleansing of the borderland areas, sometimes referred to as the Sudetenland.[5] It does not provide an account of how the expulsion policy originated during the war years, or of the Czech leaders' campaign to convince the Allied governments to accept it. That story has been covered elsewhere.[6] Instead, I examine how the expulsion and settlement intertwined with the social and economic transformations that occurred not only within Czechoslovakia, but across Eastern Europe between 1938 and 1948. In 1938, the Nazi government dismembered the First Czechoslovak Republic through the Munich Agreement, reached with Great Britain, France and Italy. The Nazi occupation and war in this region

[5] The borderlands (*pohraničí*) designate areas annexed by Germany and attached to Austria and Poland following the Munich Agreement. The Sudetenland geographically refers to areas along the northern border of the present-day Czech Republic where the Sudetes mountain range runs. Following World War I and even more so during the 1930s, the Sudetenland became a political designation, for some, and included all the border regions of Czechoslovakia along the borders of Austria and Germany where significant numbers of German speakers lived (i.e. roughly akin to the Czech meaning of borderlands). This dissertation primarily concerns border districts in the northern part of present day Czech Republic. For a specific list of the districts which officially comprised the borderlands, see 24.341/46 Vymezení pojmu pohraničí from Osidlovací úřad, 6 June 1946. *Předpisy z oboru působnosti OÚ a FNO: Zákony (dekrety), vládní nařízení, vyhlášky* (Prague, 1947), 2:488-489.

[6] Detlef Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung, 1938-1945: Pläne und Entscheidungen zum "Transfer"der Deutschen aus der Tschechislowakei und aus Polen* (Munich, 2001); Václav Kural, *Místo společenství – konflikt! Češi a Němci ve Velkoněmecké říši a cesta k odsunu. (1938-1945)* (Prague, 1994). Alfred de Zayas, *Nemesis at Potsdam: The Expulsion of the Germans from the East* 2nd ed. (Lincoln, NB, 1989); Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československu, 1945-1948* (Prague, 1991), 32-52.

unleashed several other ethnic conflicts as well as the Holocaust.[7] Concomitant with the loss of civilian life and the murder of Jews from 1939 to 1945, property changed hands and the state took increasing control of the economy. These changes continued into the early postwar years as countries in the region carried out retribution against Nazi collaborators and *Volksdeutsche*, and sought to rebuild economies damaged by the war. By 1948, states in Eastern Europe had made great strides toward a state-socialist system and the forced resettlement of ethnic minorities had slowed to a trickle. The expulsion of the Sudeten Germans fits into a larger pattern of ethnic cleansing and economic transformation across the region, all of which was tied to Nazi occupation policies and to Communist priorities.

Before exploring this transformation, I examine three perspectives from which the Sudeten German expulsions have been analyzed. First, I summarize the current research on "ethnic cleansing" and explore how recent authors have defined the concept. I offer a definition that underscores the role of land and property in these conflicts. The following section considers national and nationalist paradigms of Czech/German relations. It does so by reviewing how some historians have focused on the organic development of Czech national identity, while others have framed it as a process of conflict. Although this dissertation does not dismiss the importance of postwar Czech nationalism, it argues that the nationalist politics pushed by leading politicians was part of their effort to generate political support, rather than a primary motivation for the

[7] There is a vast literature on ethnic cleansing in the region, see for example Steven B. Várdy and T. Hunt Tooley eds., *Ethnic Cleansing in 20th Century Europe* (Boulder, CO, 2003); Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus* (New Haven, 2003); Alfred J. Rieber, ed., *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939-1950* (London, 2002); David T. Curp, "The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing: The PPR, the PZZ and Wielkopolska's Nationalist Revolution, 1944-1946," *Nationalities Papers* 29, no.4 (2001): 575-603; Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Lanham, MD, 2001); J. Otto. Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949* (Westport, CT, 1999), 27-52; Snyder, "To Resolve the Ukrainian Problem Once and for All: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943-1947," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1, no. 2 (1999): 86-120; Terry Martin "Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing" *Journal of Modern History* 70, no.4 (1998): 813-861; Joseph B. Schechtman, *Postwar Population Transfers in Europe, 1945-1955* (Philadelphia, 1962).

expulsions. In addition, this dissertation shows that inter-party politics are only one frame of reference for understanding postwar Czechoslovak politics. The Communist Party certainly shaped settlement and expulsion in critical ways. However, a broader examination of politics, which includes local, economic, institutional and other dynamics outside the traditional Cold War debates, yields new perspectives about the postwar Czech lands. Finally, I explore population restructuring in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1930s and 1940s as a pattern of state policy that included major economic, social and political upheavals. Not only Nazi Germany, but also the Soviet Union and other states across the region forcibly moved ethnic groups and confiscated their property in order to remake the character of the societies they governed. As I argue here, the expulsion of Sudeten Germans and the settlement of the borderlands fit squarely within these regional policies and practices.

1.1 ETHNIC CLEANSING

Ethnic cleansing has become the object of considerable scholarly analysis, propelled by its resurgence in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990s. Most recently the sociologist, Michael Mann, published a study about several cases of "murderous ethnic cleansing."[8] Among them are the Armenian and Nazi genocides as well as the politically driven killings carried out by Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, and Pol Pot. He argues: "*Murderous cleansing is modern, because it is the dark side of democracy* [his emphasis]." What he means is that murderous ethnic cleansing became possible as modern conceptions of democracy led to minority/majority politics based on ethnicity. This development, he argues, occurred first across Central and Eastern Europe during

[8] Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge, 2004).

the 19th and 20th centuries.[9] Andrew Bell-Fialkoff, an anthropologist, agrees, noting that in a world of nation-states every ethnic group seeks its own state in the fulfillment of democratic principles of freedom and self-determination. He considers ethnic cleansing as "a metonym of collective identity" for the modern period.[10] Historians likewise stress the modern aspects of ethnic cleansing. They argue that it served as a modern solution to the problems of ethnic minorities in the age of the nation-state.[11] Historian, Norman Naimark, for instance, argues that ethnic cleansing is a "profoundly modern experience." In addition to nationalism's role in fueling such events, he notes that the modern state's "impetus to homogenize" and its technological capabilities (i.e. mass communication, census figures, and internal passports) prepares the way for marginalizing certain parts of society.[12]

While scholars generally agree about the modern origins of ethnic cleansing, they differ on its definition and operation. The Soviet historian, Terry Martin, defines ethnic cleansing as "the forced removal of an ethnically defined population from a given territory."[13] As clear as this definition appears, it still fails to capture the logic behind such an action. Bell-Fialkoff goes one step further and suggests that ethnic cleansing occurs only if the group's ethnicity underlies the reason for its expulsion.[14] Although he strays from this definition, preferring instead to outline various "population cleansings," in which ethnicity was not involved, the ethnic aspect remains central to the meaning of ethnic cleansing. Only in the modern period has ethnicity become a key identity, around which polities have formed.

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[9] Ibid., 61-69.
[10] Andrei Bell-Fialkoff, *Ethnic Cleansing* (New York, 1996), 57-115.
[11] See for example, Phillip Ther, "A Century of Forced Migration: The Origins and Consequences of 'Ethnic Cleansing'," in *Redrawing Nations*, 43-74.
[12] Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 6-9.
[13] Martin, "Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," 817.
[14] Bell-Fialkoff, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 2.

Naimark adds another consideration for the definition of ethnic cleansing. He argues: "The intention of ethnic cleansing is to remove a people and often all traces of them from a concrete territory. The goal…is to get rid of the 'alien' nationality, ethnic or religious group and to seize control of the territory they had formerly inhabited."[15] Here, land becomes integral to ethnic cleansing, though Naimark only occasionally notes its importance. Territory helps clarify the purpose of ethnic cleansing not only in the physical sense of acquiring land and property, but also in the ideological sense of creating nation-states without minorities. Timothy Snyder demonstrates how ethnic cleansing became central to the nation-state projects of both Ukrainian and Polish nationalists during World War II. Ukrainian leaders believed that by removing Poles, they had a better chance of establishing an independent state. For Poles, making Poland ethnically homogeneous became a central goal of all their postwar leaders.[16]

Some scholars jettison the term "ethnic cleansing" altogether in an attempt to define more precisely the nature of various forced population movements. Alfred Rieber, for example, distinguishes among population transfer, expulsion, deportation and resettlement. He argues that the term ethnic cleansing lacks precision because it is used to characterize a variety of processes, and because it has become a political weapon.[17] While this may be true, the concept could be further clarified, rather than simply dismissed.

Others draw sharp distinctions between ethnic cleansing and population transfers, suggesting that violence and disorder accompany the one, but not the other.[18] For instance, Bell-Fialkoff

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[15] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 3.
[16] Snyder, *Reconstruction of Nations*, 165-168, 179-182, 193-201.
[17] Alfred Rieber, "Repressive Population Transfers in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe: A Historical Overview," in *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe*, 1-27.
[18] Eagle Glassheim, "National Mythologies and Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Czechoslovak Germans in 1945," *Central European History* 33, no. 4 (2000): 468.

even uses the Sudeten Germans as the model case for a successful population transfer.[19] However, ethnic cleansing should not be defined as a population transfer, simply because it may be less violently carried out. As Robert Hayden argues, such semantics can legitimate a population transfer although, "to its victims, [it is] surely a process of horror."[20] While there are degrees of violence, there are rarely degrees of ethnic cleansing.

Just as scholars disagree about the precise definition of ethnic cleansing, they have different conceptions about how it operates. Martin, for example, presents five variables:

> Ethnic cleansing may involve forcible removal with no intent to murder, or it may (more frequently) be accompanied by varying degrees of intentional mass murder. Ethnic cleansing may be carried out by trained professionals (usually the security police) or it may involve varying degrees of mass popular mobilization. Ethnic cleansing may be partial or total. The stigmatized ethnicity may be expelled abroad…or resettled internally. Finally, ethnic cleansing may occur during war and peace.[21]

Such a description takes into account several possible features of ethnic cleansing, but does little to make it a useful conceptual tool. Naimark, on the other hand, sees several absolutes. First, he observes that violence always accompanies ethnic cleansing and is often closely related to war: "War provides the opportunity to deal with a troublesome minority by suspending civil law in the name of military exigency."[22] He stresses the involvement of regular armies and paramilitaries in ethnic cleansing. He also argues that people cannot avoid modern ethnic cleansing campaigns as they had been able to in pre-modern expulsions.[23] The different perspectives about the defining features of ethnic cleansing offered by Naimark and Martin

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[19] Bell-Fialkoff, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 215-243. On page 238 he writes: "The transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia after World War II satisfies all our requirements: it was orderly, humane, fairly well organized, especially in the later stages, and it achieved a resounding success in solving a seemingly insolvable ethnic conflict."
[20] Robert Hayden, "Schindler's Fate: Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Population Transfers." *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (1996): 734.
[21] Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," 822.
[22] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 187.
[23] Ibid., 185-191.

indicate the broad range of experiences and contexts that the concept has been made to represent as well as its shortcomings.

In general, the study of ethnic cleansing has been focused on explaining violence. While Martin correctly notes that the term ethnic cleansing represents the perpetrators' perspective, understanding ethnic cleansing in this way establishes a dichotomous framework of perpetrators and victims.[24] Examining ethnic cleansing solely as repression overlooks important interactions between expellees and local inhabitants, both in their place of origin and at their destination. Many researchers concentrate on documenting and explaining physical violence against expellees, without considering other processes accompanying and affecting ethnic cleansing. In his study, Michael Mann focuses exclusively on murderous ethnic cleansing because, he argues, it is "the dark side of democracy." Yet, despite the book's title, he concentrates only peripherally on the failure of democracy.[25] Instead he offers a step-by-step account of how different regimes came to marginalize and kill minority groups. Other scholars have also sought to document such violence and thereby explain ethnic cleansing.[26]

Despite the disproportionate attention given to violence, recent research has expanded the scope of our understanding about the people and processes involved in ethnic cleansing. For instance, Christopher Browning usefully applies the term to help explain the stages leading to the Final Solution. He argues that before 1941, the Nazis sought to remove Jews from European areas they controlled as part of their goal to create a racially pure state. Only when several plans to expel the Jews had failed, he argues, did the Nazi leadership decide to pursue its goal through

[24] Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," 824.
[25] Only fourteen pages of the over five-hundred page study are devoted to the issue of democracy. In several of the case studies the connections to democracy are nearly absent.
[26] See, for example, Tomáš Staněk, *Perzekuce, 1945* (Prague, 1996).

outright murder.[27] Despite the utility of the concept of "ethnic cleansing" to capture the impetus for and modes of expulsion, conceptual difficulties remain. A broader understanding of ethnic cleansing might move beyond the violence in order to examine other pressures, motives and relationships involved forced population movements. A more complete definition of ethnic cleansing might read as follows: the forced removal of a group, because of its ethnicity, in order to seize the territory it inhabits. Here, Naimark's formulation— the goal of ethnic cleansing is to remove the ethnic group and to seize control of the territory it had inhabited —with added stress on the ethnic motive, has been altered slightly to make the process of seizing land simultaneous with expulsion. Such a perspective helps us understand ethnic cleansing as a more dynamic process that includes substantial restructuring of local populations, economies and social life within the given country. This approach also expands the notion of perpetrators, a category which has generally been limited to political elites and those directly implicated in committing violent acts against the targeted minorities. Chapter three of my thesis argues that Czechs moving to the borderlands in search of property became expellers as they seized Sudeten German homes and livelihoods.

The seizure of property and territory combined with the forced removal of an ethnic population, especially in places where that population predominates, highlights the final purpose of ethnic cleansing. Except in places where the cleansers employ a scorched earth policy, thereby making the land uninhabitable, others settle the land, homes and property left behind. Only then is ethnic cleansing final. During the expulsion of Sudeten Germans the importance of settling the borderlands was readily apparent to government leaders. An article published in the *Central European Observer*, a Czech-sponsored publication issued in Britain, backed by the government-

[27] Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, 180-317; Christopher Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge, 2000), 1-25.

in-exile and therefore cautious in its tone, noted the important connection between settlement and expulsion: "The evacuation of Germans and Hungarians and the colonization of our border region with Czech and Slovak inhabitants will fulfill the age-old dream of past generations, and future generations will praise what is now the present one for having solved this burning problem. A firm, secure national wall will thus be built for the Republic in the border region, which will prevent future waves of German aggression flowing into the native land of the Czechs and Slovaks."[28] Settlement comprised a central part of ethnic cleansing; by constructing this "national wall," Czech settlers fulfilled the nationalist goal of making national and state borders congruent, and created a permanent obstacle to the Sudeten Germans' return.

Examining the territorial aspects of ethnic cleansing reveals how external pressures complicated the otherwise straightforward aspect of forcing people from their homes. Concerns about property and land created additional imperatives which sometimes supported, but also conflicted with the policy of ethnic cleansing. For instance, refugees or settlers arriving in search of new abodes often accelerated the expulsion of minorities.[29] In postwar Poland, settlers arriving in the "Recovered Territories" had similar interests in property and keeping German laborers as the Czech settlers did in the borderlands. Likewise, the fighting across the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s combined territorial goals with the forced migration of ethnic communities. In a similar way, German-speaking settlers shaped the Nazi treatment of the Jews in occupied Poland. Browning demonstrates how *Volksdeutsche* arriving from the Baltics and the Soviet Union to settle lands in the Warthegau forced local Nazi officials to alter their plans to expel the Jews.[30] In the case of the Czech borderlands, the interest in restoring the region's once

[28] "Internal Colonisation in Czechoslovakia," *Central European Observer*, 5 October 1945.
[29] Mann points to this phenomenon in his analysis of the Armenian genocide. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, 71, 149, 157.
[30] Browning, *Nazi Policy*, 23.

vibrant economy hindered the transfer of Sudeten Germans, as chapter four makes clear. Although land was not always the primary motivation for ethnic cleansing, the quest for property influenced its operation. This dissertation advances our understanding of ethnic cleansing by highlighting the ways in which settling the borderlands shaped the process of expelling Sudeten Germans.

1.2 THE CZECH-GERMAN NATIONAL CONFLICT

Many historians of Central Europe stress a long-standing Czech-German conflict in the Czech lands, placing its roots in the nineteenth century when political parties in the Habsburg Monarchy began to push for national rights, in order to help explain the post-World War II expulsions.[31] Eagle Glassheim, for instance, states: "To understand the ultimate collapse of Czech-German relations in Czechoslovakia, it is necessary to look back to the late 19th century, a period of rapid and aggressive nation building in the Habsburg Empire."[32] Norman Naimark likewise stresses an ongoing struggle with origins in the past. He writes: "The ethnic cleansing of Bohemia and Moravia… represented the culmination of long standing rivalries and resentments, in this case against German domination of the Czechs going back to White Mountain [1620] and including ill-treatment at the hands of the Habsburgs."[33] Such observations present the expulsions as the conclusion of decades of ethnic animosity and national tensions. These historians establish a framework in which previous disputes between Czechs and Germans represented steps leading to a final confrontation beginning in the 1930s that first swung in the

[31] Ronald Smelser, "The Expulsion of the Sudeten Germans, 1945-1952," *Nationality Papers* 24, no. 1 (1996): 79-92; Radomir Luža, *Transfer of the Sudeten Germans: A Study of Czech-German Relations, 1933-1962* (New York, 1964).
[32] Glassheim, "National Mythologies and Ethnic Cleansing."
[33] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 122.

Germans' favor in 1938, but ultimately led to Czech victory in 1945-1946. This perspective presents a strong connection between nineteenth century national politics and expulsion policies and actions at the end of World War II.

Such an interpretation echoes nationalist understandings of Czech history, in which the history of the Czech lands is framed as a struggle between two national groups. Franitšek Palacky, one of the leading Czech historians and patriotic leaders of the nineteenth century, argued that the history of Czech nationalism was one of constant conflict with Germans.[34] To a certain extent, this was true. Czechs and Germans shared a linguistic and cultural border that brought them in continuous contact. This space of mutual exchange meant that Czechs did not develop their own literary language, educational programs and history in a vacuum, but rather in constant interaction with Germans pursuing similar goals. Despite the shared mechanisms of creating a specific national identity, the exchange between Czechs and Germans emphasized distinctions. These distinctions took various forms. Language served as one important marker of difference. Czech nationalists identified positive Czech character traits against negative German ones. This use of the "other" not only helped Czechs to identify themselves, but also created a negative image of Germans.[35] For example, one Czech historian recently argued that the distinction between Czechs and Germans was found in the Czechs' search for freedom and the Germans' pursuit of order.[36] While this is only one example, it reflects a dichotomous and static view of national relations that have dominated the interpretations of these peoples' and this

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[34] This interpretation became most noted in the work of František Palacky during the mid-nineteenth century and continues to be found in current Czech historiography. See, for instance, Jan Křen, *Konfliktní společenství* (Toronto, 1989). For an investigation of this historiography see Jiří Štaif, "The Image of the Other in the Nineteenth Century," in *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe* ed. Nancy Wingfield (New York, 2003), 81-102.

[35] This term is borrowed from Iver Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis, MN, 1999); See also Nancy Wingfield's introduction to *Creating the Other*, 1-16.

[36] Jiří Rak, "Obraz Němce v české historiografii 19. století," in *Obraz Němců, Rakouska a Německa v české společnosti 19. a 20. století*, ed. Jan Křen, 49-75 (Prague, 1999).

region's history since the 19th century. Nationalists' promotion of decisive markers between Czechs and Germans has supported the general idea of two ethnic groups in continuous conflict. Within this framework, the expulsions can be explained simply as the climax of this tumultuous past.

I suggest that the centrality of nationalism to the Sudeten German expulsions needs to be probed further. Historians of Czech nationalism have argued that during the nineteenth century the national movement developed slowly and sprang from several impulses.[37] Cultural endeavors supported the creation of a distinctive Czech identity, they argue, through the development of Czech-language literature, festivals, folklore, music, and so on. New organizations emerged, such as the Sokol gymnastics society in 1862, often with expressly nationalist purposes and often mimicking a similar German society. As Clair Nolte notes, gymnastics societies were common across Europe in the nineteenth century, but did not necessarily develop into national organizations for the masses. Only in the Central European context of romantic nationalism and the spread of mass politics did the Sokol movement become imbued with a nationalist mission to create a pure Czech nation.[38]

In politics, Czech nationalist goals involved gaining greater independence within the Habsburg system, particularly following the 1867 Compromise which gave autonomy to the Magyar half of the Monarchy. After the failed attempt at a similar compromise for Bohemia in 1871, the Czech National Liberal Party emerged as a new political voice demanding more rights for the Czech nation. Dubbed the Young Czechs in distinction to their former more conservative colleagues in the Czech National Party, they began to push more steadily for Czech national

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[37] See, for instance Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton, 1998); Hugh L. Agnew, *Origins of the Czech National Renascence* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1993); John F. Bradley, *Czech Nationalism in the 19th Century* (Boulder, CO, 1984).
[38] Clair Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation* (New York, 2002).

rights, though never for independence. In 1889, they defeated the Old Czechs in the Bohemian Diet elections and revealed the growing resonance of framing politics in national terms. Even so, as Jeremy King reminds us, "[o]nly recently had the institutional structures of either national movement begun to include the lower-middle class. Both movements continued almost to ignore families below the five-florin tax threshold—who made up an absolute majority of the population."[39] So, while Czech and German nationalist positions were becoming clearer and their proponents more outspoken by the end of the nineteenth century, the diffusion of a Czech national identity to the majority of the Czech-speaking population remained quite limited.

King's argument challenges much of the literature on the development of Czech nationalism, which generally fits distinctly into primordialist or modernist understandings of nations and nationalism.[40] Instead, he seeks to identify moments of "nationness" and the development of a strictly ethnic understanding of nationhood. His approach is influenced by the work of Rogers Brubaker, who questions the concept of nations as an outgrowth of ethnic groups or as the result of nation-building practices during the modern period. Rather than assume the existence of nations as fixed and enduring collectivities, Brubaker considers nation as "institutionalized form," "practical category," and "contingent event."[41] In this sense, nationalism should not be understood as a chronological and cumulative process, but rather as an event where the nation, as a notion rather than a stable community, becomes central to the historical dynamic. King's history of Budějovice/Budweis (present-day České Budějovice), located in southern Bohemia, demonstrates well how nation came to be an institutionalized form

[39] King, *Budweisers*, 76.
[40] See King's own discussion on the historiography of this issue for the Czech case. King, *Budweisers*, 6-13. For the traditional "primordialist" account see Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986). The best known modernist approaches are Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983).
[41] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, 1996), 16.

through local and statewide political practices.[42] As his title—*Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*—suggests, the Czech and German nations were not the only possible options for political allegiance in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Only under specific conditions did national politics, based on fixed notions of ethnicity, become the focus of politics in general.

Budweisers were not the only group that failed to conform to nationalist visions of identity. Several other groups did not fit into the dominant Czech or German categories such as Hlučínaks or Moravci, who lived in Silesia, and so-called "German Jews."[43] Others, so-called "renegades" or "amphibians," were able to move between national categories.[44] Recently, scholars have turned their attention to these national outcasts as a way to underscore the flexible rather than the fixed notion of nations. Thus, many authors have examined cases of individuals or entire social groups that switched from one nation to another.[45] These individuals and groups help to explain how and when nations emerged as the focal point for modern politics. Although authors differ about the exact timing, most agree that at a certain point national categories became decisive and even permanent, leaving little space for those outside the dominant categories of Czech and German. Chad Bryant and Benjamin Frommer agree that switching nationality became more difficult during the 1930s and 1940s, as Nazi and Czechoslovak authorities increasingly restricted individuals' ability to choose their own national identity.[46] Even King argues that "[b]y

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[42] Others offer similar arguments, see Hugh Agnew, "Czechs, Germans, Bohemians? Images of Self and Other in Bohemia to 1848," in *Creating the Other*, 56-77.
[43] Adrian von Arburg, "Nationalstaat zum abgewöhnen: Vilém Plačeks Hlučínsko," *Bohemia* 43, no.1 (2002): 130-141; Tomáš Staněk, "Němečtí židé v Československu 1945-1948," *Dějiny a současnost* 5 (1991): 42-46.
[44] Frommer, *National Cleansing*; Chad Bryant, "Either German or Czech: Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1946." *Slavic Review* 61, no.4 (2002): 683-706.
[45] See Claire Nolte, "Choosing Czech Identity in Nineteenth Century Prague: The Case of Jindřich Fügner," *Nationalities Papers* 24, no.1 (1996): 51-62; Eagle Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, MA, 2005); Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (Princeton, 1981).
[46] Bryant, "Either Czech or German," 700; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 200.

expelling the German population, Czech leaders rendered Bohemian politics completely Czech: not a Czech-Habsburg-German triad, and not a Czech-German line, but a Czech point."[47] These arguments erroneously suggest that national/ethnic politics largely disappeared after 1945. Not only did national amphibians continue to complicate questions about national loyalty, but so too did returning Czech emigrants, such as those from Volhynia, and even the remaining Sudeten Germans. The borderlands in particular did not simply become part of the Czech and Slovak nation-state, but were a space where several different ethnic, national, and religious groups intermingled.[48]

A Sudeten German ethnic/national identity developed, in part, as a response to the creation of Czechoslovakia, but did not grow in importance until the 1930s. Following World War I and the establishment of Czechoslovakia in the letter, if not the spirit, of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, Czech Germans gradually, although grudgingly, accepted their new minority status. While some staunch nationalists took action to establish separate German areas, they did not garner the support of the majority of German inhabitants. Throughout the 1920s, Germans in Czechoslovakia voted for a range of parties; strictly negativist parties, i.e. those opposed to the Czechoslovak state, never gained more than 25 percent of the German vote.[49] This voting pattern suggests that Germans in the Czech lands had divided interests that superceded "ethnic" issues. Indeed, several efforts at Czech-German cooperation emerged during the interwar years.[50]

However, a distinct Sudeten German identity gained strength during the Great Depression and in response to the rise of Nazi power across the border in Germany. The Great Depression

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[47] King, *Budweisers*, 190.
[48] Adrian von Arburg, "Tak či onak," *Soudobé Dějiny* 10 (2003): 281-282.
[49] Brugel, *Czechoslovakia before Munich*, 63; Carolyn Skalnik Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia* (Princeton, 1988), 51.
[50] Herman Kopecek, "*Zusammenarbeit* and *Spoluprace*: Sudeten German-Czech Cooperation in Interwar Czechoslovakia," *Nationalities Papers* 24, no. 1 (1996): 63-78; Karl F. Bahm, The Inconveniences of Nationality: German Bohemians, the Disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Attempt to Create a 'Sudeten German' Identity," *Nationalities Papers* 27, no .3 (1999): 375-405.

struck the Czech borderlands, where the vast majority of Germans lived and worked, with particular force. The borderlands relied heavily on export industries and unemployment reached 26 percent in some areas.[51] Economic problems gave rise to political conflict. The Nazi government practiced what Brubaker terms "homeland nationalism," which meant claiming the right to represent the interests of German ethnic groups living abroad, in part, to create domestic support for the annexation of these lands.[52] The Nazis' promotion of German groups in neighboring states both boosted the prestige of German nationalist parties and organizations in the Czech lands and increased the anxieties of the Prague government. By 1933, radical German nationalists had gained momentum in the Czech lands. Before Czechoslovak authorities could take action against them, the German nationalist parties disbanded and a new political organization emerged to represent German demands. The rise of the Konrad Henlein's *Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront* (Sudeten German Homeland Front) provided a mass organization to harness growing German interests, such as increased economic benefits in the form of jobs and government contracts. The party not only reflected Nazi ideals and propaganda methods—Henlein had been a gymnastics leader—but also received secret funding from the Nazis. In 1935, the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (Sudeten German Party, SdP), which replaced the *Heimatfront*, captured 62 percent of the Sudeten German vote in the Czech lands. After two more years of intense propaganda and witnessing the further economic and political success of Germany, German voters gave the SdP nearly 90 percent of their votes in the May 1938 communal elections. By this time, its program included complete autonomy for German-inhabited areas in

[51] Elizabeth Wiskemann, *The Czechs and the Germans*: *A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* 2nd ed. (New York, 1967) 191.
[52] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 55-67,134; King, *Budweisers*, 169-170.

Czechoslovakia.[53] Thus, with broad local support, in September 1938, Hitler demanded and gained the right to seize the Czech borderlands for Germany in the Munich Agreement. The First Republic did not survive to see its twentieth birthday.

How well the 1938 voting results represented the acceptance or predominance of a Sudeten German identity remains unclear. While Czechs considered the Germans' support for autonomy, which paved the way for Munich and Nazi occupation, as treacherous, few Germans had the foresight to envision that voting for the SdP in 1938 would lead to war and to their future expulsion. Nevertheless, the expulsions provided a further and better bulwark for Sudeten German identity, than any previous efforts of Sudeten German nationalists themselves. Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia continued efforts in the Federal Republic of Germany to strengthen and retain a "Sudeten" identity, going so far as to erect lookout-towers along the Bavarian border to gaze into Western Bohemia.[54] The efforts of the Sudeten German expellee organizations have been particularly important in sustaining this identity.

Considering the recent and constructed nature of Sudeten German identity raises questions about the wisdom of using the term "Sudeten Germans" to describe the German inhabitants of the postwar borderlands. National identity, by its very nature, is unstable. With such caveats in mind, I use "Sudeten German" and "German" interchangeably throughout the following pages. There are several reasons for this: first, Sudeten German is a widely accepted term, even among those who consider themselves German. Using German and Sudeten German alike also alleviates more cumbersome appellations like Czechoslovak Germans, German speakers, or the need to constantly denote them by locality, such as Prague Germans. Finally, Czechs never referred to

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[53] The SdP was not the only party pushing for separation or autonomy. See Jaroslav Krejčí and Pavel Machonin, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92: A Laboratory for Social Change* (New York, 1996), 32.

[54] Yuliya Komska, "Border Looking: The Cold War Visuality of the Sudeten German Expellees and Its Afterlife," *German Life and Letters* 57, no.4 (2004):401-426; Michael Campbell, "The Making of the 'March-Fallen': March 4, 1919 and the Subversive Potential of Occupation," *Central European History* 39, no.1 (2006): 27-28.

Sudeten Germans as such, but always as Germans. Postwar regulations used "German" as a national category that did not differentiate among Austrians, Reich Germans and Sudeten Germans, until this lack of specificity created difficulties, especially with foreign governments. Even then, Czechs saw all of these groups simply as Germans. Thus, while imperfect in some ways, alternating between "Sudeten German" and "German" reminds us that national categories do not remain fixed.

This dissertation also focuses on Czech national identity and Czech nationalism during the expulsions. More research has been carried out on the issue of expellee identity and on Sudeten Germans than on Czechs, who have been generally considered a more homogenous unit. Most historians argue that the experience of living under Nazi occupation united Czechs through their hatred of Germans.[55] They suggest that the postwar expulsions were an expression of Czech nationalism that meshed with Czech representations of Germans as the enemies. From this standpoint, the expulsions were not only a reaction to the experience of the occupation; they also reflected a deeply entrenched Czech national identity.

Although the idea of revenge makes a certain amount of sense, how nationalism fits into the postwar expulsions still remains unclear. Some historians argue that Czech leaders fanned nationalism in order to further enflame popular resentment toward Germans, which often led to violence. Naimark, for example, directly connects politicians' nationalist rhetoric with widespread violence:

> [w]ith this kind of [nationalist] propaganda in mind…the Czech militia (many recruited from Prague after the uprising), communist action groups, and the so-called Svoboda army moved into German areas and began attacking civilians in their homes and on the street… In a paroxysm of violence that shocked even

[55] Jürgen Tampke, *Czech-German Relations and the Politics of Central Europe: From Bohemia to the EU*. (New York, 2003), 65-70; Chad Bryant, "Making the Czechs German: Nationality and Nazi Rule in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1945" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkley, 2002), 349; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 38.

> experienced Soviet tank commanders and political officers, Czechs beat up Germans, shot at them, forced them to do humiliating and life-threatening tasks, and showed them no mercy. People were randomly killed, and villages were torched and burned to the ground.[56]

Although such events did occur, the connection between the nationalist "propaganda" and violence remains tenuous. Nationalist rhetoric was ubiquitous after the war and yet, as I argue in chapter one, popular violence remained somewhat circumscribed. A commission of Czech and German historians places the number of deaths resulting from these expulsions at 30,000. Of these, they argue, the number killed directly at the hands of Czechs was less than seven thousand.[57] Of course, many others experienced brutality and even sadism in the form of beatings, rape and public humiliation. In addition, not all historians agree with this commission's findings. While one cannot downplay the pain and suffering that Sudeten Germans experienced, the ample attention given to violence in the expulsions has suggested unified action by Czechs, while obscuring other key factors behind the forced migration of Germans.[58]

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[56] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 115.

[57] *Konfliktní společenství, katastrofa, uvolnění: Náčrt výkladu německo-českých dějin od 19. století* (Prague, 1996). The other estimated deaths occurred as a result of crowded camp conditions, disease and malnourishment.

[58] Many of the Sudeten Germans' published testimonies recall violent episodes. W.K. Turnwald ed., *Documents on the Expulsion of the Sudeten Germans* (Munich, 1953); See the related website: http://www.wintersonnenwende.com/scriptorium/english/archives/whitebook; Theodor Schieder ed., *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central Europe* vol. 4 *The Expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia*, trans. G.H. de Sausmarez (Bonn, 1960). The first source was published under the auspices of the Sudeten German Landsmanshaft. While some historians suggest the Schieder volume provides a reasonable overview of the expulsions, Schieder's past connection to Nazi planning raises some questions; not so much of the individual testimonies, but of the general picture they paint. See Eagle Glassheim, "The Mechanics of Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia, 1945-1947," in *Redrawing Nations*, 210. For more on Schieder, see Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown (London, 1999), 6-7; Fred Kautz, *The German Historians, Hitler's Willing Executioners and Daniel Goldhagen* (Montreal, 2003), 92-93.

1.3 THE COMMUNIST SEIZURE OF POWER

Although this dissertation studies politics, it is not a political history in the traditional sense. That history, told in the spirit of the Cold War, studies the postwar power struggle between the Communists (KSČ) and the so called "democratic" parties (i.e. Social Democrats, National Socialists, People's Party), which fought against the Communists' totalitarian politics.[59] Although recent historians have demonstrated that the Communist drive to power was much more complex than previously explained, the overarching narrative of an inter-party struggle remains.[60] The National Front government, which came into existence with the publication of the Košice Program on April 5, 1945, represented a coalition of six, and later eight, parties. The National Front had a socialist oriented majority, especially in the Czech lands, represented by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, President Beneš's former party, the National Socialists, and the Social Democratic Party. Together they formed, through a formal agreement signed in June 1945, "The National Bloc of the Working People in the Cities and Villages."[61] The other parties in the National Front included the comparatively weak People's Party in the Czech lands, and the Communist Party and the Democratic Party in Slovakia. It was a testament to the strength of the Communists to be the only party to have double representation through a separate Slovak party.

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[59] See, for instance: Jan Stransky *East Wind over Prague* 2nd ed. (Westport, CT, 1979); Josef Kalvoda *Czechoslovakia's Role in Soviet Strategy* (Washington, 1978); Radomír Luža, "Czechoslovakia Between Democracy and Communism, 1945-1948," in *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, eds. Victor S. Mamatey and Radomir Luža (Princeton, 1973), 386-423; Paul Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1948* (New York, 1963); Josef Korbel, *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia* (Princeton, 1959); Hubert Ripka, *Czechoslovakia Enslaved* (London, 1950).

[60] Bradley Abrams, *Struggle for the Soul of a Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism.* (Lanham, MD, 2004); Frommer, *National Cleansing*; Karel Kaplan, *Pět kapitol o Únoru* (Brno, 1994); Karel Kaplan, *The Short March: The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948* (London, 1987); Martin Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge, 1981); Jonathan Bloomfield, *The Passive Revolution: Politics and the Working Class 1945-1948* (New York, 1967).

[61] *Svobodné slovo*, 17 June 1945; *Rudé Pravo*, 17 June 1945.

The Communists enjoyed several advantages over their political opponents. They controlled the Ministries of Interior, Agriculture, and Information as well as other key organizations, such as the trade unions.[62] The KSČ capitalized on its connection with the Soviet Union, which had received great acclaim as the country's liberators. The Soviet Union proved popular as well because it had not participated in the Munich Agreement, as France and Great Britain had. Finally, Communists dominated military and security agencies which proved helpful, at times, to quell political opposition.[63] The May 1946 election results reflected this strength. The Communist Party secured a substantial victory over other parties collecting 40 percent of the vote in the Czech lands and 30 percent in Slovakia. By this time the Communist Party had swelled from 27,000 to over one million members.[64]

The 1946 elections revealed several fissures in the National Front. Political conflicts emerged at all government levels, though not always at the Communists' instigation. The most critical aspect of the May 1946 elections was that the national committees, the postwar name for local governments, were reorganized to distribute seats according to the election results. The "democratic" parties sometimes banded together in order to prevent Communist control. For instance, in the city of Frývaldov (Freiwaldau, and present-day Jeseník), where the Communists received just over 40 percent of the vote, the KSČ did not even receive a deputy chairperson position.[65] In 1947, inter-party conflicts reached a new pitch. Some historians place these conflicts in the growing Cold War division of Europe, especially following Czechoslovakia's

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[62] For more on the history of the Communist domination of trade unions, see Bloomfield, *The Passive Revolution*.
[63] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 124; Karel Kaplan, *Nekrvavá revoluce* (Prague, 1993); Franitšek Hanzlík, *Únor 1948: Výsledek nerovného zápasu: Tajné služby na cestě k moci* (Prague, 1997).
[64] Zinner, *Communist Tactics*, 124; See also Jiří Maňak, *Komunisté na pochodu k moci: Vývoj početnosti a strukury KSČ v období 1945-1948* (Prague, 1995).
[65] *Hraníčář Protifašistický list okresu Frývaldova*, 5 July 1946. The Communists won just over 50 percent of the district vote and retained the District National Committee chair's position by two votes. See Minutes from the plenum of the Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Frývaldov, 7 July 1946. Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Jeseník, f. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Jeseník, karton (k.)136 inventarní čislo (inv.č.)120.

decision to abandon the Marshall plan at Moscow's insistence.[66] Domestic reasons for political disputes emerged as well. For example, during the parliamentary debates about the retribution trials a People's Party deputy alleged that the Communist Party harbored collaborators.[67] While the opposition parties were willing to talk tough and used parliamentary means to isolate the Communist Party, they generally did not challenge the Communists with extra-legal practices. The KSČ, on the other hand, appeared ready to use more drastic means to gain power. For example, in the fall of 1947, it attempted to frame members of the Democratic Party in Slovakia and certain National Socialist leaders in two fabricated conspiracies, involving bomb plots and electoral fraud.[68] On February 20, 1948, the government entered a crisis when several ministers from the "democratic" parties resigned in protest over the KSČ's growing control of security organs. They hoped to force new elections and reduce Communist authority in the government. In the ensuing governmental crisis, the Communist Party mobilized its constituency and quickly reached agreement with President Beneš about reforming the government without these other parties. The Communist Party then began to purge the state of non-supporters and swiftly moved to solidify its position as the sole party in power.

The KSČ's control of several key ministries meant that it played a crucial role in the ethnic cleansing of the borderlands. The Interior Ministry, under the communist leadership of Václav Nosek, had formal oversight of the expulsions and led the Central Committee for Interior Settlement. This committee approved settlement policies and coordinated the migration of Czechs, Germans and others. The Settlement Office, which crafted settlement policies, was formally under the ministry's auspices as well. The Ministry of Agriculture, also under

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[66] Zinner, *Communist Tactics*, 122-123; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 32.
[67] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 320.
[68] Karel Kaplan, "Czechoslovakia's February 1948," in *Czechoslovakia: Crossroads and Crises, 1918-1988*, eds. Norman Stone and Eduard Strouhal (London, 1989), 157-159; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 323-324.

Communist leadership, controlled the redistribution of confiscated agricultural property. As chapter three demonstrates, the KSČ used this position prior to the 1946 elections to take credit for quickly distributing land to new settlers in the borderlands. Some historians have argued that Communist control of the key processes of expulsion and settlement helped to secure Communist support in the borderlands and paved the way for their takeover of the state.[69] This view was particularly influential during the Cold War, but oversimplifies the connection between these processes. Karel Kaplan suggests that Communist Party support would have been strong among those Czechs who benefited from the expulsions in any event, because they came from the "lowest social level."[70] While this may have been true to an extent, chapter one suggests that settlers constituted a more socially diverse group than Kaplan allows.

The Communist Party also became particularly strong within borderland administrative structures. Before the 1946 elections, when national committee representation was supposed to be based on parity among the four Czech coalition parties, the KSČ had a majority of members in well over a third of all national committees.[71] Communist success in the May 1946 elections increased their presence and power within borderland national committees. In all but eight of the thirty-four Bohemian districts where settlement had been carried out, the KSČ received an outright majority. In Moravia and Silesia, they reached a majority in nine out of twelve districts.[72] There were several reasons for its success. While Communist control over the distribution of property in the borderlands undoubtedly helped them gain support, so too did their extensive party structure. The KSČ had local organizations in many smaller towns and villages

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[69] For more on this, see Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 24-28; Bradley Abrams, "Morality, Wisdom and Revision: The Czech Opposition of the 1970's and the Expulsion of the Sudeten Germans." *East European Politics and Societies* 9 (1997): 234-255; Ther, "A Century of Forced Migration," 59.
[70] Kaplan, *Nekravá revoluce*, 37; Eagle Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989," *Journal of Modern History* 78 (March 2006): 80 n65.
[71] Kaplan, *Nekravá revoluce*, 50 n13; Karel Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů do ústavy 9. května* (Prague, 1964), 172.
[72] Lubomír Slezák, *Zemědělské osídlování pohraničí českých zemí po druhé světové válce* (Brno, 1978), 109-112.

where the other parties simply failed to penetrate.[73] This vast structure likely appealed to great numbers of settlers, because few stable organizations existed in the borderlands to bring Czech settlers together in the postwar period.

Although the Communist Party may have benefited most from the expulsion and settlement, other parties did not oppose these policies. Instead, the expulsion offered an opportunity to rally support both for individual parties and the government as a whole. The policy to expel the Germans linked the parties in the National Front together through a common rhetoric that stressed nationalist themes and radical politics. Leading Czech politicians utilized historical myths and symbols to frame the action as a just response to a longstanding conflict between two nations. Klement Gottwald, the Communist Party chairman and later Prime Minister, spoke of redressing the defeat at White Mountain (1620) and correcting the mistake of the Přemyslid kings who invited the Germans as settlers in the 12th century.[74] The Battle of White Mountain had served as the bedrock of Czech national history only since the nineteenth century, much like the Battle of Kosovo (1389) has for the Serbs; national connotations had been muted before then. Czech National Socialists also used such rhetoric as a call to arms. After citing similar historical myths two of its leaders wrote: "To every member of the nation here falls their historical responsibility. Each of us must help to clean the country."[75] In this sense nationalism became a lingua franca of the National Front parties and a common approach to populist politics.[76]

The expulsion of Sudeten Germans also served to legitimate the new government. Aside from President Beneš, many leaders of the National Front had not been part of the interwar

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[73] Bertelman suggests that the other three Czech parties had local organizations in less than half of all communities. Bertelman, *Národní výbory*, 108. See also Maňak, *Komunisté na pochodu*, 31; Kaplan, "Czechoslovakia's February 1948," 150.
[74] Staněk, *Odsun Nemců*, 60; Eagle Glassheim, "National Mythologies ," 478-480.
[75] Prokop Drtina and Pavel Svaty, "Nemůžeme žit s Němci v jednom státe," *Svobodné slovo*, 25 May 1945.
[76] Karel Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu, 1945-1948* (Prague, 1990), 136; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 56-60.

ruling circles. The expulsions offered Beneš and other exiles an opportunity to become the voices demanding justice in the nation's name after the war. Such a role was crucial for most of the postwar leaders who had lived abroad during the war and did not experience Nazi rule. Their flight to London or Moscow placed them in the position of being outsiders in their own country when they returned. Frommer captures the tenuous position that the former exiled leaders held when trying to prosecute the domestic government leaders under the Nazis. Rather than achieving a speedy and conclusive guilty verdict, as the National Front leaders had hoped, the trials revealed a more nuanced understanding of the occupation among Czechs, who could relate to the pressures facing Czech ministers during the war.[77] Unlike the trials of their co-nationals, however, the expulsions presented the returning leaders the opportunity to move past such complexities.

Czech politicians framed all of the postwar transformations in terms of "the national and democratic revolution." This revolution differed from that claimed by Communists after 1948 to refer to their seizure of power. It also differed from the larger revolutionary changes ushered in by the war, some of which will be discussed below. Instead, National Front politicians viewed this revolution as a radical break with the politics of the First Republic and as a powerful claim to authority. By removing political competition and troublesome minorities, however, the "democratic" parties tilted the ideological playing field in the Communists' favor and sowed the seeds for their own demise. While expulsion and settlement benefited the Communists' efforts to seize state power, their drive for hegemony provides only partial insights to the changes in the borderlands.

[77] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 280-284.

1.4 WAR AND FORCED MIGRATION, 1938-1948

World War II set in motion repressive policies regarding the treatment of minorities. In addition to the nearly six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust, millions of other ethnic minorities were expelled, relocated or interned during and after the war. Robert Magosci states that from 1944 to 1948, 31 million people were uprooted and forced to move in East Central Europe; going back to 1939, fifteen million more migrants can be added to that figure.[78] While distinctions between pre-war, wartime and postwar forced migrations existed, expulsions and resettlement in Eastern Europe followed the same patterns and aimed at the same ends. For example, the readjustment of the postwar Polish borders involved the consequent flight of roughly eight million people, both Germans and Poles, some out of fear of the Red Army and others from its later actions. The Polish government continued to implement repressive ethnic policies into 1947 when it carried out *Akcja Wisla* (Operation Vistula), which forcibly dispersed Lemkos and remaining Ukrainians throughout Poland. In addition, more than three million Poles from central Poland also relocated to the so-called "recovered territories" in the west.[79] World War II unleashed these mass expulsion and resettlement projects and dramatically reshaped postwar states and societies in Eastern Europe.

The transformation of the Czech borderlands occurred as part of this regional reconfiguration of states, economies and ethnic composition. Jan Gross argues that World War II created dramatic social and structural upheavals which helped Communist movements gain

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[78] Robert Magosci, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* (Seattle, 1993), 164; Schechtman, *Postwar Population Transfers*, 363.
[79] Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*, chapters 8 and 9; Curp, "The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing," 575-603; Snyder, "To Resolve the Ukrainian Problem." See also the chapters on Poland in the following: Várdy and Tooley eds., *Ethnic Cleansing in 20th Century Europe*; Ther and Siljak eds., *Redrawing Nations*.

power and support in Eastern Europe.[80] From the war experience itself to increased state control of the economy, the societies of Eastern Europe appeared radically different in 1948 than they had a decade earlier. These changes, he argues, were not yet completed by 1945. Thus, instead of seeing the immediate postwar years as a sharp break with the past, he suggests a new periodization for the region's history beginning with the outbreak of war and ending in 1948. He writes: "It was only then that the destruction *cum* transformation of institutions, political forms, and social strata constitutive of pre-war polities loses its impetus and a consolidation phase of a new kind of regime begins."[81] In Nazi Germany, one might argue this process had already begun in 1935 or 1938 as sanctions against the Jews and expropriation of their property became more systematically employed.

In the Czech case, these changes originated with the Munich Agreement of September 1938, which attached much of the Sudetenland directly to the Reich and initiated the disintegration of the country. When the Nazis rolled into what became the *Reichsgau Sudetenland*, many Czech inhabitants moved to the interior parts of the country. This migration has been labeled an expulsion in its own right by those Czechs who experienced it.[82] It was certainly influenced by the takeover of the Sudetenland and the reorganization of the region's population. However, many of the roughly 300,000 people who left did so by circumstance, rather than being forced to move by armed military units. Some had lost their jobs either as part of the change in state administration or because Germans demanded their positions. Others, such as Jews and Social Democrats, fled out of fear of persecution. Still others did not wish to live in a different country,

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[80] Jan Gross, "War as Revolution," in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath*, eds. Istvan Deak, Jan Gross, and Tony Judt (Princeton, 2000), 17-40; Bradley Abrams makes a similar argument. Bradley Abrams, "The Second World War and the East European Revolution," *East European Politics and Societies* 16, no. 3 (2002): 623-664.
[81] Gross, "War as Revolution," 24-25.
[82] Karel Zelený ed., *Vyhnání Čechů z pohraničí 1938: Vzpominky* (Prague, 1996).

especially under Nazi leadership.[83] But for many Sudeten Germans, the annexation came as a victory. They took up positions vacated by the departing Czechs and joined the Nazi party in ever increasing numbers. As Jürgen Tampke observes:

> the enthusiasm and jubilation that accompanied the *Anschluss* into the Reich was genuinely shared by the great majority of Sudeten Germans, which is not to say that most of them endorsed the xenophobic hardcore racialist—soon to be genocidal—and ultra-aggressive aspects of National Socialist ideology. Rather, the widely held belief that incorporation into the Nazis' *grossdeutsche* Reich would fulfill aspirations for national self-determination and would lead to substantial socio-economic improvement constitutes a more convincing reason for the general euphoria.[84]

Aside from gaining limited short-term economic benefits, however, Sudeten Germans relinquished their own future to the Reich. The Nazi regime installed a new system of local administration with combined powers of self-governance and state administrator. This system meshed with Nazi efforts to streamline the Reich's administration.[85] Likewise, the Sudetenland economy became subordinated to the Reich's needs.

In March 1939, the Nazis finished dismantling Czechoslovakia. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was created under the pretext of continuing Czech-German conflicts and after Slovakia seceded. Slovakia achieved its first taste of independence under Nazi tutelage. From a Czech nationalist perspective, Czechs became the subjects of their age-old enemy. Czech universities were closed and Czech professionals and intelligentsia were forced to work for the Nazi war economy. Plans were also made to "Germanize" the vast majority of Czechs, leaving the remainder to be deported or exterminated.[86] While these efforts were considered to be national attacks in their own right, repression was directed against certain segments of the

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[83] Václav Kural and Zdeněk Radvanovský et. al., "*Sudety" pod hákovým křížem* (Ústí nad Labem, 2002), 50-65. Included in this figure are several thousand Jews and German anti-fascists.
[84] Tämpke, *Czech German Relations*, 58.
[85] Kural and Radvanovský, "*Sudety" pod hákovým křížem*, 92-95.
[86] Bryant, "Making the Czechs German," 100-104; Aly, *Final Solution*, 118; Vojtech Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule: The Failure of National Resistance, 1939-1942* (New York, Columbia, 1977), 127.

population, but not against the Czechs as a whole. Vojtech Mastny notes that because of the initial smooth transition of power people's daily lives did not change much. He argues that Czech attitudes towards Germans "though certainly not friendly, at least encouraged accommodation to the new conditions."[87] Other historians also corroborate the general picture of Czechs' acceptance of the occupation, though they differ on the extent and type of resistance.[88] One measure of resistance all historians cite, however, was the increasing hatred for Germans and everything German toward the end of the war, outlined above.

Different conclusions about the expulsions and settlement are reached when the focus moves beyond Communist tactics and Czech/German hatred. First and foremost, across Central and Eastern Europe during the late 1930s and 1940s, governments and nationalist leaders sought to reconfigure the ethnic, economic and social composition of entire regions. While the impetus for these changes varied, governments took action against ethnic minorities considered disloyal, subversive, or productively useless. In addition, they sought to resettle areas where minorities lived with others whom leaders considered more reliable. For the Nazis, this meant clearing the east of Jews and Bolsheviks and collecting ethnic Germans into an integrated homeland or greater Reich.[89] These policies were often intertwined, but only clearly succeeded in the first of these objectives. The fight against the Bolsheviks was lost on the battlefield and the efforts to implement a *grossdeutsche* solution to meet Nazi goals of *Lebensraum* collapsed along with the retreating soldiers. However, the vast majority of the region's *Volksdeutsche* was forced to move to Germany after 1945. This migration came in different guises and at different times, but cumulatively represented over fifteen million persons by 1948. While millions of German speakers from Eastern Europe moved to German territory by the end of the war, Nazi planners

[87] Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rul*e, 57.
[88] Tampke, *Czech-German Relations*, 58-72; Luža, *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, 187-222.
[89] Aly, *Final Solution*, 19; Browning, *Nazi Policy*, 11.

had envisioned their migration as a form of promotion, not one of punishment. The Soviet Union had also carried out campaigns to ethnically cleanse certain border areas beginning in the early 1930s.[90] The 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact ensured that borders would be redrawn and populations moved. Indeed, the Soviet Union deported over 300,000 Poles after it took control of eastern Poland.[91] Prior to the war, the USSR sent Germans to Nazi territory, but after the 1941 invasion, it deported nearly 750,000 of them to parts of Central Asia. Hundreds of thousands of others followed, many of them after the war.[92] The ethnic cleansing campaigns surrounding World War II were not isolated events; they overlapped and influenced one another in several ways.

One accompanying feature of the migrations and changes in ethnic composition at this time was the simultaneous transformation of the Eastern European economy. In particular, the state increased its power over the economy by seizing property and controlling labor.[93] The shift in property ownership and economic control sometimes reinforced other goals. For instance, the expropriation of Jewish property helped the German economy and the Nazi war effort by placing a vast number of firms under direct state control, while simultaneously threatening Jews' existence and encouraging emigration.[94] Following the war, much of this property fell to the state, which then decided how to handle it. The Nazi war economy also shifted Eastern European economies toward heavy industry, particularly armament and energy production. These changes

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[90] Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, 2004); Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest, 2004), 59-114; Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing"; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 88. The 1930s campaigns against suspicious minorities had its roots in previous state policies. Peter Holquist, "To Count, to Extract and to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia," in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* eds. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford, 2001), 111-144.
[91] Ther, "A Century of Forced Migration," 51. Ther argues that this was an attempt at removing a class rather than an ethnic enemy.
[92] Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR*, 30-46.
[93] Gross, "War as Revolution," 21.
[94] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews* 3rd ed., 3 vols. (New Haven, CT, 2003), 1:120-132.

were not necessarily negative because they brought investment and construction in these sectors. Economic planning went hand in hand with these shifts, and made bureaucrats, rather than entrepreneurs, responsible for economic initiative. Workers experienced labor as a form of punishment, and productivity fell accordingly. As Gross poignantly states: "Work – one of the major means for socializing people by creating a basis for cooperation among them, providing links between the satisfaction of individual needs and the common effort, as well as a forum for status seeking and social mobility – suddenly lost its capacity to do so, and labor was used contrary to the interests of the group performing it.[95] One might even go further and argue that labor became punitive, not only for "working Jews," but also for the millions shipped to Germany, POWs, or others working for the Nazis.[96] Such a transformation in the meaning of work did not bode well for postwar reconstruction efforts in the region.

The Sudeten German expulsions and borderland settlement were, in effect, a continuation of these wartime policies and population movements. The expulsions, even though they were predicated upon the notion of collective guilt, represented one method of retributive justice to deal with Germans who had helped to undermine the interwar Czechoslovak state and advance Nazi aims in the region.[97] The military nature and control of the expulsions prolonged the repression unleashed by the war. Violence served both as a tool of revenge and compulsion immediately after the war. In conjunction with expulsions, settlement created a vehicle for Czech agricultural workers to become landowners and for others to take over Sudeten German businesses and homes. The widespread expropriation of Sudeten German property spurred other far-reaching economic measures, including land reform and the nationalization of industry.

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[95] Gross, "War as Revolution," 19-22.
[96] For more on Jewish labor see, Browning, *Nazi Policy*, 58-88.
[97] For more on the relationship between the expulsions and retribution in Czechoslovakia, see Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 228-266.

Although the military aspects of war ended in 1945, the social experience of war continued under the guise of expulsion and settlement.

Situating the Sudeten German expulsions and settlement within the social, economic and political upheavals of World War II offers a new context for studying the transformation of the postwar borderlands. Few historians underscore the connections among the various expulsions, deportations and resettlements that occurred between 1938 and 1948.[98] Rather than considering each country's war experience as unique, this dissertation argues that migration and population politics were defining features of Eastern European polities and societies at that time. Within this context, the remaking of the Czech borderlands from 1945 to 1948 provides a valuable case study of population politics. Examining expulsion and settlement politics requires not only the consideration of leaders' plans and the effects of their policies on the expellees, but an understanding of how these plans developed and how they worked in practice. In this case, specific attention is given to the way that economic prerogatives and needs shaped the course of migration to and from the borderlands. Focusing on economic factors provides critical insights into the connections among expulsion policies, personal motivations and settlement practices.

1.5 EXPULSION AND ECONOMY IN THE CZECH BORDERLANDS

This dissertation connects central government policies with local level actions in order to examine how settlers and officials negotiated the expulsion and settlement of the borderlands. It utilizes the approach of the local historian, but investigates several different locales in an effort to draw broader conclusions about the borderlands as a whole. Thus, towns like Jablonec nad Nisou (Gablonz), Krnov (Jägerndorf), Vejprty (Weipert), Jeseník, Ústí nad Labem (Aussig), and

[98] For an exception, see Arburg, "Tak či onak," 253-292.

Teplice-Šenov (Teplitz-Schönau), stretching across the northern part of the Czech lands, form the basis for this study. In addition to local records, my research includes the debates and decisions of several ministries and central government offices, most crucially, the Interior Ministry, but also the Settlement Office, the Ministries of Industry, Agriculture, and Labor (known officially as the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare). Their deliberations offer an excellent window into the decision-making process regarding expulsion and settlement policies.

Equally important for understanding the development of expulsion and settlement were the national committees that formed the basis of local postwar administration. National committees are considered here both as actors and as sources. These organs crucially affected the state's operation because they provided local information for decision makers in Prague and enforced central government policies. As sources of information, they often reflected the desires of settlers or demanded their own solutions to problems that beset the borderlands. As enforcers of central decisions, national committees often took into account the community's interests first, though at times they represented only a portion of the constituents. Because national committees functioned as one of the primary intermediaries between individuals and the central government, their records provide an excellent picture of people's actions and attitudes.

The policy to expel the Sudeten Germans triggered a dialectical process whereby new priorities and problems emerged as the result of particular developments on the ground, which, in turn, shaped future settlement and expulsion policies. These priorities and problems usually involved economic issues concerning labor, property distribution, and local economies. Czech settlers, for instance, scrambled to gain access to the best homes, businesses and farmland in the summer of 1945. Their actions increased pressure to expel Sudeten Germans from their property,

but made it difficult for state officials to control and equitably distribute confiscated assets. The property rush also cast a pall over the borderlands and the settlement process as some settlers appeared to be motivated solely by the prospect of material gain, while others attempted to establish viable communities. In addition, the search for property fostered relationships that challenged national allegiances. Czechs struggled with Czechs over confiscated German property and sometimes worked with Germans to further their own interests. Labor problems also rapidly emerged following liberation. Labor shortages endangered some key borderland industries and raised questions about the wisdom of expelling valuable German workers. While never threatening the expulsion policy, efforts to retain Sudeten German workers complicated local expulsions and created conflict between officials in Prague and those in the borderlands. The economy of ethnic cleansing exposed several tensions among Czechs and underscored how national priorities yielded to more practical and material concerns.

Chapter one examines the evolution of state authority within the borderlands from the first days of liberation until the establishment of the Settlement Office in late 1945. It addresses several important questions whose answers provide the framework for the chapters that follow: What was the nature of expulsion and settlement? Who was involved in these migrations? How were expulsion and settlement organized and carried out? What lines of authority developed to control these processes? In the first weeks following liberation, the state's efforts were geared toward establishing national committees and administrative order, rather than focused on expelling Germans. This objective, however, proved difficult to attain. Military and civilian lines of authority crossed, at times with serious consequences, as the example of one town's experience will demonstrate. Even after more stable lines of authority emerged, national committees continued to assert their right to self-governance over the heads of Prague settlement

officials. In addition, chapter one outlines the contours of migration to and from the borderlands. It revisits two violent incidents during the summer 1945 expulsions and places them in a broader context of settlement and expulsion processes and pressures, rather than the focusing on violence or the traditional national narratives.

Chapter two argues that the confiscation of Sudeten German property generated a powerful dynamic within the expulsion and settlement processes. Examining what I call "confiscation politics," I focus on the interaction among Czechs, Germans, officials, and politicians concerning the confiscation and redistribution of property. These interactions shaped the settlement and expulsion in crucial ways. The theme of property confiscation plays a central role in chapters three and five as well. Confiscation politics was not just about greed, although this motivation certainly played a role. More importantly, it fit into a complex ideology, which both demanded that Germans pay for the Nazi occupation and supported the state's power to plan and direct the economy.

The focus on property also serves as a way to study relations between people. This understanding of property was most poignantly noted by Karl Marx, but has emerged in more recent studies about property as well. For example, Katherine Verdery notes in her study of post-socialist de-collectivization in Romania that "all property-making, including our own, is not a natural but a historical and political process."[99] Such an understanding is employed here to

[99] Katherine Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania*. (Ithaca, NY, 2003). Some property theorists agree, see Carol Rose "Property as Storytelling: Perspectives from Game Theory, Narrative Theory, Feminist Theory," in *Property and Persuasion: Essays on the History, Theory and Rhetoric of Ownership*, Carol Rose (Boulder, CO, 1994), 25-45. Here she argues that "we may only be able to understand property arrangements through narrative discourses like literature and history, discourses that construct a story of how things got to be that way—a story in which there were genuine choices along the way and in which things were not really predictable in advance and did not have to wind up the way they did." While she uses this argument against those who use a rational choice model for explaining how property rights came to be established, it also applies to the analysis of property here.

examine how the transfer of property affected relations among Czechs and Germans in the borderlands, and what this signifies about the power of postwar Czech nationalism.

Labor problems and policies are covered in chapter four. The question of how to replace German workers dominated postwar debates about the borderlands' economic future. Borderland authorities often pursued different goals than those of the central government, particularly when it meant retaining thousands of valuable employees for the economy. Several studies have noted that the political will to "transfer" the German speakers from the country clashed with, but generally trumped economic concerns about the loss of their productive ability.[100] Framing the analysis in this way suggests that economic issues remained subordinate to expulsion plans and policies. Rather than consider political and economic objectives as separate and competing issues, examining borderland labor politics reveals the key connections between labor problems and the expulsion and settlement. Decisions concerning which Germans should be immediately expelled and which of them should be retained often hinged on their productivity. Czech attitudes toward work and their inability to replace German workers played an equally important role shaping borderland labor politics.

The final chapter connects confiscation politics to the industrial policies of the emerging socialist state. The confiscation of borderland industries supported the nationalization program and other aspects of Czechoslovakia's postwar economic program. Confiscation of industrial property gave the state increasing power to determine the fate of borderland factories and mines. This process was not as straightforward as some historians have suggested. For instance, Phillip Ther argues: "By first using confiscated property in the process of centralizing the economy, the

[100] Anna Beinhauerová and Karel Sommer, "K některým aspektům průmyslové zaměstnanosti v českých zemích od osvobození do zahájení dvouletky," *Československý časopis historický* 37 (1989): 321-346; Emilia Hrabovec, "Politisches Dogma kontra wirtschaftliches Kalkül," in *Heimat und Exil*, ed. Peter Heumos (Munich, 2001), 163-185; Zdeněk Jirásek, "Němečtí specialisté ve lnářském průmyslu severovýchodních Čech po roce 1945," *Acta historica et museologica* 1 (1994): 72-89; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 155-161, 290-318.

Communists in Eastern Europe were able to inoculate the population against resistance to this centralization."[101] However, as chapter five demonstrates, national committees and settlers fiercely resisted the efforts of Prague officials to liquidate and relocate borderland factories. Such resistance reflected the settlers' desires for a prosperous future as well as their support for greater workers' control. Borderland officials and others also opposed factory closures because they considered local factories as a defining trait of their community and as a way to attract settlers. In this sense, they demonstrated the ability to convert the identification of such industries as "German" into a platform for the settlement of Czechs. As central planners took over following the Communist seizure of power in 1948, they continued to erode national committees' authority and redefined the borderland economy and society one last time.

[101] Ther, "A Century of Forced Migration," 59.

2.0 AUTHORITY AND MIGRATION IN THE BORDERLANDS

2.1 ČESKÁ KAMENICE: SETTLERS, COMISSARS, AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE CONTROL

As wartime hostilities ended in May 1945, a handful of Czechs formed a so-called "revolutionary national committee" in Česká Kamenice (Böhmisch Kamnitz) in order to establish administrative control as Nazi authorities departed. This committee renamed itself the Local National Committee (Mistní národní výbor, MNV) on May 28th to mark President Edvard Beneš's birthday and to meet the state's new official nomenclature for local administrative organs.[1] Candidate lists for the national committee were distributed at a public gathering of the few hundred Czechs that lived in the town, including military personnel stationed there, and those gathered unanimously approved the list with a round of applause.[2] Karel Caidler, a 36 year-old reserve lieutenant who had recently arrived after participating in the so-called Prague Uprising, became the chairperson. Caidler was born and raised in Teplice-Šenov, another borderland town, but, like thousands of other so called "old settlers" (*starousedlíci*), he departed for the rump Czechoslovak interior after the Nazis annexed the region following the Munich Agreement.[3] The term "old settlers" marked a distinction in the postwar borderlands between

[1] I use national committees to cover local and district national committees, local and district revolutionary committees, and local and district administrative commissions. There were certainly some key differences among these different local government organs and these will be outlined in more detail below.
[2] Protocols of Karel Caidler, 15 March 1947 and Hynek Kašpar, 6 May 1946. Národní archiv, Prague (NA), f. Ministerstvo vnitra – nová registratura (MV-NR), k.1943 inv.č.1602 signatura (s.)B2111.
[3] Václav Kural and Zdeněk Radvanovský, eds. "*Sudety" pod hákovým křížem* (Ústí nad Labem, 2002), 45-69.

Czechs who had lived there before the war, and so-called "new settlers" (*novousedlící*), who arrived for the first time following the war. This distinction, which will be discussed more thoroughly below, proved to be one of many among Czechs in the borderlands. Even old settlers were a divided group; some had decided to remain in the borderlands during the war, while others had moved or were forced to move to the interior. Those old settlers who decided to stay often had personal reasons for doing so. Caidler's sister, for instance, married a German glass manufacturer from Česká Kamenice and joined one of the thousands of the ethnically mixed marriage couples in the country.[4]

Many of the Czech members of the first Local National Committee in Česká Kamenice had relatives or marriage partners who were Germans. Such relationships made many of the newly created national committees suspect in the eyes of Czechs who resided in the Protectorate. For instance, early reports from Czechoslovak military commanders in the borderlands demonstrated the high degree of mistrust they felt toward many local Czechs and borderland national committees. Not only old settlers, but Germans, and even some Sudeten Germans with a Nazi past, were able to position themselves on national committees.[5] Fears emerged that such national committees would protect local Germans from the so-called "transfer." In a general report about borderland conditions in June 1945 the entry for Česká Kamenice ominously read: "The national committee is bound by its familial relations to the civilian population, it works very slowly;

[4] For more on mixed marriages, see Benjamin Frommer, "Expulsion or Integration: Unmixing Interethnic Marriage in Postwar Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 381-410.

[5] In one unusual case, a Sudeten German became the chairman of the national committee in Krnov and his brother, reportedly a former SS member, declared that he had received authority from the Ministry of Interior to take control of the district security forces. It took the assistance of a partisan unit from nearby Olomouc to remove the two brothers from power. However, after the partisans moved them to Olomouc the brothers apparently returned briefly to Krnov. From there, they were escorted by the NKVD to Ostrava and then disappeared. Situation reports, Národní sbor bezpečnosti (SNB), 14 June, 8 and 11 July 1945; Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Bruntál, f. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Krnov I, dodatek, k. 11 inv.č. 92; Minutes from the Okresní správy komise (OSK), Krnov, 16 June 45. Ibid. k. 7 inv.č. 63; Report on Krnov affair, Velitelství VI sborů odd. Obrané zpravodajství (OBZ), Olomouc, 14 June 45. Vojenský historický archiv, Prague (VHA), f. Vojenská kancelář presidenta republiky (VKPR), č.j.1014.

preparation of a list of about 1000 Germans, who should be expatriated (*vysidlování*), took this national committee three weeks [to compile]."[6] Such reports were not uncommon, and demonstrated the impatience of military officials with deliberations that considered allowing any Germans to remain.

However, the disputes between military officials and national committees had little to do with finding enough Germans to expel. In June 1945, expulsions had only just begun; German inhabitants prevailed throughout the borderlands. Instead, military organs and borderland national committees disputed each others' authority, and went beyond old settlers' attempts to protect Germans with whom they had personal connections. More importantly, the conflict between old settlers and security units involved issues about control of national committees and access to confiscated property. The first new settlers, arriving in 1945, likewise sought immediate access to Sudeten German property. In Česká Kamenice, as elsewhere, the MNV immediately began drawing up lists of Germans to expel, confiscating their property and attending to other day-to-day matters of local administration. Caidler, like many national committee members elsewhere, took a practical approach to the problems facing the borderlands. For example, he distributed confiscated German clothing, shoes, and linens equally to all Czechs in the area, but ensured that valuables such as jewelry, furs, and Persian rugs were safe-guarded and sent to Prague. His actions, while in line with official regulations issued by the Provinicial National Committee in Prague, met the approbation of new settlers and others in search of Sudeten German property. As Caidler himself later recalled: "Considering that I openly declared my efforts to protect national property and enacted a whole series of provisions, which had

[6] Report on the difficulties of the evacuations of Germans, June-July 1945. VHA, f. Velitelství oblast 1 (VO1), k.49 inv.č.267.

protected it from theft, I was very unpopular among a definite part of the inhabitants."[7] Military personnel in the town looked upon such equanimity with even greater displeasure.

The military and security presence in the borderlands following the war was variegated and protean. In addition to Soviet forces that remained in all but the westernmost border region, the Czechoslovak army, which had been disbanded before the war, was reconstituted from forces that fought under the Red Army's command during the war.[8] In May 1945, Czechoslovak military authorities stationed several units in the borderlands in order to secure the borders. In addition to these troops, partisan units involved in the so-called Prague Uprising from May 5 to May 9 and the wartime resistance also came under the military's jurisdiction following Nazi Germany's capitulation. Several of these detachments were dispatched to the borderlands to help regular army units establish order there. Finally, so-called Revolutionary Guards, a catch-all term for the armed militias that emerged in the final days of the war and the early postwar period, played a similar role to that of the more established, but less prevalent partisan units.[9]

Many of these forces surfaced in Česká Kamenice. The army had established one garrison there and other military detachments came through to help carry out expulsions. In addition, a Defense Intelligence unit under the leadership of Vilem Dovara established operations there as well as a small partisan group of 35-50 members under Adolf Charous.[10] The relations between the local national committee and these security organs quickly deteriorated, but disputes about the progress of expulsions were not at the heart of the conflict. Despite the reports of the MNV's foot-dragging, Caidler helped "evacuate" or sent to the collection center nearly two-thirds of the

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[7] Protocol of Karel Caidler, 15 March 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111.
[8] These forces were also known as the Svoboda Army, after Ludvík Svoboda their commander and postwar Minister of National Defense.
[9] S. Biman and R. Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí: České pohraničí květen až srpen 1945* (Ústí nad Labem, 1989) 64-67; Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československu, 1945-1948* (Prague, 1991), 61-63.
[10] For more on the following events in Česká Kamenice, see Michal Mareš, "Opět propagujeme vlčí svobodu," *Dnešek* 6 March 1947; Petr Joza, *Rabštejnské údolí* (Děčín, 2002), 174 -190.

town's Germans during his short tenure as the chairperson.[11] It was Caidler's unwillingness to permit wide-scale looting that became the major point of contention between himself and Dovara. Dovara and his unit engaged in massive expropriation. They were particularly fond of collecting motor vehicles. They even broke into the national committee's garage and seized a Mercedes and one other car over the protests of Caidler's pregnant wife. The turning point, however, came following a house search of the local German doctor carried out by Dovara's men, during which countless valuables, including a Persian rug valued at more than 100,000 Kčs, were confiscated. The doctor had been slated for an upcoming expulsion, but because of the shortage of qualified medical personnel, he was temporarily allowed to remain. Caidler reported the incident to the local police, thus threatening to bring down Dovara's pillaging operation.[12]

However, Dovara found an ally in Charous, the partisan leader, and gained the upper hand. Together they had Caidler and several other members of the national committee arrested for connections to alleged German resistance groups called Werewolves. While efforts had in fact been made to establish such units, they existed more on paper than in reality.[13] Nonetheless, reports of their activities were enough to create the impression of a continuing German threat, which helped justify radical actions against them.[14] Such accusations sufficed to take Caidler into custody and keep him in the basement of the former district court, where he underwent torturous beatings and witnessed the sadistic behavior of Charous' and Dovara's personnel against Czechs and Germans alike. With the blessing of one member of the District Administrative Commission (OSK) in nearby Děčín (Tetschen), Charous became the town's commissar and declared with

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[11] Protokols of Karel Caidler, 15 March 1947 and Jaroslav Synek, 10 May 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111. There were 6,800 inhabitants in Česká Kamenice at the end of the war, see *Česká Kamenice* (Česká Lípa, 2002), 340.
[12] Protocol of Karel Caidler, 15 March 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111.
[13] For official reports on Werewolf organizations see: NA, f. Úřad předsednictva vlády-tajné (ÚPV-T), k.306 inv.č.1636 sign 127/13.
[14] Tomáš Staněk, *Perzekuce* (Prague, 1996), 138-142; Eagle Glassheim, "National Mythologies and Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Czechoslovak Germans in 1945," *Central European History* 33, no. 4 (2000): 488-489.

whip in hand: "Gentlemen, this is our new people's democracy and I will govern here by this."[15] Aside from their reign of terror in the town, Charous and Dovara also garnered support by handing out confiscated German businesses to their followers and encouraging even more looting. As one former policeman in the town reported, the looting got so out of control that the police did not have time to supervise Germans.[16] They were too busy trying to control the rapid influx of settlers.

The situation in Česká Kamenice in the immediate postwar period is just one example demonstrating how the chaos in the borderlands stemmed as much from the struggle over national committees and confiscated property as it did from the expulsions. As new lines of authority emerged and the National Front government reorganized the state's administration, opportunities abounded for people like Dovara and Charous to assume powerful positions in the borderlands. The expulsions provided excellent cover for their actions. On one level, the story of Česká Kamenice demonstrated peoples' motivation for personal gain. On another level, it showed the difficulty of creating democratic forms of governance during the transitional postwar period. For a partisan leader to become a local commissar made more sense under such circumstances than the emergence of democratic local rule. While Benjamin Frommer argues that national committees during the postwar period "helped to undermine Czechoslovak democracy," this appears to be an ex post facto judgment.[17] Communists certainly dominated national committees and, as Frommer argues, this domination likely helped them in their quest

[15] Various protocols. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111; Joza, *Rabštejnské údolí*, 180. Caidler remained in jail for several weeks in Česká Kamenice before being transfered to a prison in Děčín. He was finally released sometime in October 1945.
[16] Protocol of former SNB officer in Česká Kamenice, 7 September 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111. In his testimony the officer also reported that he replaced his predecessor because he suffered from bad nerves caused by conditions in the town.
[17] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 46.

for power. Yet, national committees were not per definition undemocratic; rather, individuals like Charous and Dovara and their supporters made them that way.

2.2 NATIONAL COMMITTEES

The idea of using national committees as the basis for postwar administration of Czechoslovakia emerged during President Beneš's visit to Moscow in December 1943. During the war, so-called "revolutionary national committees" had emerged in larger borderland towns, often within factories, but the Gestapo successfully infiltrated and disbanded them. The Communist underground had been instrumental in their organization and leaders in Moscow had generally supported them.[18] In their meetings with Beneš, Czechoslovak Communists proposed national committees as the basis for the postwar reorganization of state power. Beneš likewise sought to reform the state administration and considered national committees as possible institutions of democratic governance.[19] National committees were not entirely new to Czech leaders. During the 1848 Revolutions, political leaders established a National Committee in Prague, which pursued the unification of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.[20] During World War I, a National Committee was created in Prague to provide support to Czechs, and it formed the basis for an

[18] Jinřich Pecka, "Revoluční národní výbory jako prostor pro mistní elity," in *Politické elity v Československu 1918-1938* (Prague, 1994), 233-237; František Cvrk, "Vznik a vývoj národních výborů v letech 1945-1946 a přihlédnutím k vývoji na Děčínsku," in *6. vědecká archivní conference Revoluční národní vybory, osídlování pohraničí a význam národních vyborů pří zajišťování národně-democratického procesu v ČSR v letech 1944-1948* (Ústí nad Labem, 1990), 31-32; Karel Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů do ústavy 9. května.* (Prague, 1964), 23; Zdeněk Radvanovský, "Národní výbory ústecké průmyslové oblasti a jejich podíl na osídlování pohraničí v letech poválečného revolučního procesu," in *6. vědecká archivní conference*, 7; Zinner, *Communist Tactics*, 74.
[19] Eduard Beneš, *The Memoirs of Dr. Eduard Beneš: From Munich to New War and New Victory*, trans. Godfrey Lias (London, 1954), 270-271; Paul Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1948* (New York, 1963), 81.
[20] Stanley Pech, *The Czech Revolution of 1848* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1969), 119-122.

interim government after the fighting ended.[21] The post-World War II version, by contrast, became a permanent institution and had far-reaching powers to control everything from security to schools.

National committees eliminated the two-tiered system of public administration that had separated state and local power during the First Republic. From 1945 to 1949, local and district national committees implemented the central government's policies and managed local affairs.[22] The Communists argued that this system was more democratic than that of the prewar administrative structures because it placed greater power directly in the hands of the people. Article five of the National Front's April 1945 program underscored this perspective. It stated: "National committees will administer all public affairs in the area of their authority and along with central organs look after public security and through them support a democratic system. The government will realize its policies through the National Committees and fully base itself on them."[23] In a sense this proved to be true. The demands and actions of borderland national committees often propelled the central government to consider and debate new policies concerning expulsion and settlement.

An organized system of national committees developed through a series of setbacks, scandals, and readjustments in the borderlands. Decree 18, issued on December 4, 1944, formally established national committees as the organs of public administration in postwar Czechoslovakia. It presented only rough guidelines about the form and purpose of national committees and those guidelines reflected the wartime context and certain leaders' assumption

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[21] Radvanovský, "Národní výbory ústecké průmyslové oblasti," 3-5; Anthony Paleček, "Formative Years of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia. The Statesmanship of Antonín Švehla," in *Czechoslovakia Past and Present*, ed. Miroslav Rechcigl (The Hague, 1968), 1:30-34.
[22] At the beginning of 1949 provincial national committees were replaced with regional national committees based on new administrative borders.
[23] *Program první Československé vlády Národní fronty* (Prague, 1955), 11.

that they would remain merely temporary bodies. The decree called on people to create national committees in order to fight the Nazis and to provide the basis for transitional local government following the war.[24] These revolutionary national committees often evolved into more stable national committees, though, as in the case of Česká Kamenice, administrative commissions or individual commissars usually replaced them. The Ministry of Interior established administrative commissions to provide provisional authority in places where Czechs comprised less than a majority of the inhabitants. Despite the constant changes in form, some national committee members remained throughout these changes. In smaller towns and communities, individual "administrative commissars" were installed to govern until a significant Czech population arrived.[25] The Interior Ministry controlled the appointments to district level administrative commissions, which in turn appointed local administrative commissioners or commissars.[26]

Regardless of whether a commissar, administrative commission or national committee governed a given locality, they all carried out similar functions. In the borderlands where conditions remained in flux after the war, national committees helped to plan and execute the expulsion of Sudeten Germans and worked to establish security in their towns. They were responsible for arresting those guilty of collaboration and important Nazi functionaries. In addition, like the national committee in Česká Kamenice, they played a significant role in collecting, protecting and distributing confiscated Sudeten German property. This task not only meant seizing the movable possessions from Germans as they departed, but meant appointing national administrators to oversee their factories, farms and homes. National administrators were temporary trustees of confiscated Sudeten German property and many Czechs sought these

[24] Decree 18, 4 December 1944. Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940-1945: Dokumenty* 2 vols (Brno, 1995), 1:123-125.
[25] Decree 18, Article (Art.) 4. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:123.
[26] Směrnice Ministerstvo vnitra pro Národní výbory mistní a okresní, 19 May 1945. Úřední list č.7, 23 May 1945.

positions in the borderlands.[27] In addition to dealing with settlement and expulsion matters, national committees were responsible for a host of other functions. They looked after public health, developed cultural and recreation institutions, established new schools, and oversaw public works projects. Although their finances were linked to the central government, they had some control over their own budgets.[28]

The agenda facing national committees and administrative commissions in the borderlands was quite large and, in general, they were ill-equipped to handle it. Administrative commissions in nearly all borderland towns faced a shortage of personnel. According to official regulations, district level administrative commissions ranged from six to twelve members, while local administrative commissions had three to six members, depending on the size of the population. National committees, on the other hand, had much larger memberships. District national committees consisted of twenty to thirty-six members and local national committees had between nine and sixty members, again depending on population size.[29] Individual commissars generally existed only in smaller communities where almost no Czech inhabitants lived. While Interior Ministry officials who composed such rules appeared to be concerned that not enough "reliable inhabitants" existed to staff borderland national committees, by limiting the number of people appointed to administrative commissions they hindered them from completing their duties and concentrated power in the hands of a few. The results, as the example of Česká Kamenice illustrates, were often less than propitious.

National committees replaced administrative commissions and individual commissars as the number of Czechs in the borderlands grew in late 1945 and early 1946. There were forty-five

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[27] For more on national administrators see chapter 3.
[28] For the official regulations concerning national committees functions see: Směrnice Ministerstvo vnitra pro Národní výbory mistní a okresní, 19 May 1945. *Úřední list* č.7, 23 May 1945.
[29] Ibid; Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů*, 207-208; J. Fusek *Organisace a činnost okresních národních výborů* (Prague: 1946), 47; Cvrk, "Vznik a vývoj národních výborů," 33-34.

district administrative commissions in July 1945, which accounted for nearly all of the borderland districts.[30] During preparations for the Provisional National Assembly elections in September and October 1945, towns with enough Czechs elected national committees and eliminated administrative commissions. Likewise, in connection with the May 1946 elections to the Constituent National Assembly, further changes were made and nearly all of the administrative commissions disappeared. By 1947 in the borderlands 3,805 local national committees existed with over 50,000 members.[31]

National committees functioned primarily through four main components: the chairperson, the council, department heads (*referenti*), and the individual departments (*referáti*) or in some cases committees (*komise*). This structure allowed duties to be divided. A typical borderland national committee had the following departments and/or committees: business, housing, settlement, security, transfer of Germans, schools and culture, finance, construction, health, and agriculture. These departments drafted policies and made recommendations, which were then put to the council for approval. Under these conditions individual departments could become quite autonomous, permitting abuses of power. There were several cases, for example, when the industrial *referent* used his position to install people he knew as managers of confiscated factories or to steal from local firms himself. Although the plenum, which encompassed the full membership, was less involved in national committees' day-to-day operations, it approved major policies, such as the budget and elected the chairperson and department heads.

The chairperson usually exercised significant power within a national committee. This was especially the case at the local level. He or she set the agenda for council and plenum meetings

[30] Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů*, 209. Slezák reports that there were 34 districts fully settled in the Bohemian borderlands and 12 in Moravia and Silesia. In addition, there were fifty partly settled districts. Lubomír Slezák, *Zemědělské osídlování pohraničí českých zemí po druhé světové válce* (Brno, 1978), 44-46, 112.
[31] Ervín Polák, *Čísla mluví o voličích a o národních výborech* (Prague, 1947), Table IIa, 90.

and could even disband the plenum if deemed necessary.[32] The chairperson authorized repressive actions, such as house searches, expulsions and imprisonment, and also represented the town's interests to higher authorities. However, it was the council that had perhaps the most power within national committees.[33] Especially in larger towns and cities, the council met on a weekly basis to decide everything from expulsions to who received confiscated property. The various department heads comprised the council, which meant they could control the debates concerning topics that fell under their purview. Still, the amount of work facing borderland national committees required the attention of more than a single person, so that input into these policies represented a consensus of members' opinions. Housing committees, for instance, often forwarded lists of applicants that it had agreed should receive certain apartments to the council for approval. In general, such decisions did not occasion much debate.

District national committees (Okresní národní výbor, ONV) had a similar structure to local national committees (MNV) except that the former had a presidium, which included the chairperson and three deputies. The presidium supervised MNVs and maintained contact with higher officials, such as the government ministries and the provincial national committees.[34] In this sense, ONVs were critical intermediate bodies, linking the central government to local officials. At the same time, they held tremendous power to influence local events on their own. For instance, it may be recalled that a member of the District Administrative Commission in Děčín traveled to Česká Kamenice and played a major role in Caidler's arrest. He also installed Charous as the town's commissar.[35] While Dovara and Charous may have been able to find

[32] Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů*, 209-210.
[33] Fusek, *Organisace a činnost okresních národních výborů*, 63.
[34] Ibid, 67-70.
[35] Report on the activities of the National Committee in Česká Kamenice, 30 July 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111.

another way to remove Caidler, using a connection at the district level gave their actions an air of legitimacy.

In addition to directly controlling local national committees, ONVs independently set policies for their districts. In September 1945, the District Administrative Commission in Ústí nad Labem (Ústí n. L), for example, issued general instructions to local national committees concerning several obstacles that had arisen during the summer. It instructed them: to investigate everyone who had taken over German homes in their communities, to report the use of former German owners in factory and businesses, and threatened them with incarceration in cases where they certified the reliability of Germans or Czechs who did not deserve it.[36] None of these policies came from higher authorities. Instead, like other district national committees, it exercised its authority over local national committees and administrative commissions, which it believed had gone astray in their own efforts to manage the borderlands.

Three provincial national committees (ZNV), based in Prague, Brno and Ostrava, controlled district and local level national committees in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia respectively. Prior to the creation of other government organs with greater control over the expulsion and settlement, the ZNVs served as policy makers for borderland national committees. This was particularly important for matters of early settlement. The Settlement Office, which initiated settlement policies, did not begin its work in earnest until fall 1945 and, therefore, provincial national committees had to deal with the rapid changes there. For instance, one of the early circulars from the Provincial National Committee in Prague (ZNVP) directed borderland district national committees to create a settlement department, which would report the number of vacancies on local administrative commissions, and to oversee confiscated permanent property.

[36] Čis. 478/Dr.H/M-1945, Okresní správní komise (OSK) Ústí nad Labem (Ústí n. L.), 18 September 1945. Archiv města (AM) Ústí n. L., f. ONV Ústí n. L., k.24 inv.č.91. For similar instructions, see Pres. M/T čj. 62 obj.č.3, OSK Šluknov, 6 August 1945. SOkA Děčín, f. ONV Šluknov, k.1 inv.č.34.

The circular also noted the ZNVP's intention to develop a more general settlement plan.[37] However, the provincial national committees lost much of their influence on policies concerning settlement. Both the government ministries and the Settlement Office began issuing directives and implementing policies directly through district national committees by the fall of 1945.[38]

National committees' composition in the immediate postwar period reflected the unpredictable circumstances brought about by the war, expulsion and settlement. Many Czech partisans or Revolutionary Guard members remained in positions of authority, especially in local police forces or as commanders for camps holding Germans, but also as national committee members.[39] At times, this was a natural progression for those partisans who had been politically active prior to the war, went underground during it, and maintained a leading position following liberation. For example, the vice chairman of the Jablonec nad Nisou (Jablonec) MNV had been active in Czech nationalist circles before the war.[40] For others, national committee membership offered an option to maintain positions of authority, which they gained through the expulsions. Adolf Charous began his postwar career in the notoriously brutal camp for Germans in Kolín.[41] By the end of June 1945, he found himself on the edge of authority when such units were being disbanded. The Ministry of National Defense and the Interior Ministry took steps to dissolve or to merge these units with the regular army, so that by the beginning of July only a few such units remained.[42] Other military and security personnel involved in expulsions attempted the switch to

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[37] Osídlení pohraničního území. Zřízení osídlovácích referátů, Zemský národní výbor, Prague (ZNVP), 8 June 1945. SOkA Vejprty, f. ONV Vejprty, k.1 inv.č.52.
[38] Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů*, 125.
[39] Miroslav Kocích, *Boj KSČ za prosazení národních výborů jako lidových orgánů státní moci a správy* Ostrava: 1981); Cvrk, "Vznik a vývoj národních výborů," 32.
[40] On the day before the Local Administrative Commission in Jablonec became a local national committee, it awarded the vice chairman a large sum of money for having given books to the "minority library" in the town prior to the war. Minutes from the meeting of the Mistní správní komise (MSK), Jablonec nad Nisou (Jablonec), 11 April 1946. SOkA Jablonec, f. Městský národní výbor (MěNV) Jablonec, kniha (kn.) 1 inv.č.1.
[41] *Dnešek*, 15 May 1947.
[42] Staněk, *Odsun Nemců*, 62.

politics. The chairman of the District National Committee in Bruntál had been the head of district security just after the war. Captain Ctíbor Novák, a former partisan, was slated to be the security referent at the ONV in Frývaldov.[43] His checkered past and German wife, however, likely prevented him from consideration in early 1946.[44]

The wide-ranging authority given to administrative commissions, commissars and national committees often led to abuses of power. National committee members' transgressions most commonly involved using their positions to benefit, either personally or politically, from confiscated German property. For instance, in one farming community, members of the local administrative commission placed themselves as national administrators on confiscated farms and did not include in their inventories some of the livestock, which they then sold on the black market.[45] Incoming settlers often complained of local officials' petty abuses of power. That national committee members used confiscated automobiles and scarce fuel for personal trips irked settlers who had trouble just finding a place to live.[46] Other abuses were more serious. One police investigation in the outlying reaches of northern Silesia led to the arrest of several people, including two brothers, for, among other things, the rape of a fourteen year-old German girl and the attempted rape of another. The first offender was a 23 year-old commissar of two small towns near the Polish border, where few settlers ventured. Another one of the arrested individuals, a member of a local administrative commission, had been extorting sex from another

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[43] Security report, ONV Frývaldov, 15 November 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.
[44] Novák had spent some time as a camp commander in the Frývaldov district after the war. See Jana Hradilová, *Nucené společenství: Internace německého obyvatelstva v adolfovickém táboře 1945 (1946)* Diplomová práce (Olomouc, 2002); Jan Němeček, *Mašínové: Zpráva o dvou generacích* (Prague, 1998), 193-212.
[45] Punishment proceedings in the Settlement Committee, ONV Chomutov. February 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1446 inv.č.1646. For more general reports about such abuses of power see NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111.
[46] "Okénko z frývaldovská," *Hraníčář Protifašistický list okresu Frývaldova*, 25 August 1945; Monthly security report, OSK Frývaldov, 25 September 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.

Sudeten German by threatening to prevent her appeal for citizenship.[47] Such commissars had tremendous power to take advantage of Sudeten Germans' fears.

Many commissars and administrative commission members accused of wrongdoing belonged to the Communist Party (KSČ). This should not be surprising, given that Communists comprised nearly 40 percent of local national committee members and a near majority of the leadership positions in 1945.[48] They also seemed the least inhibited from aggressive behavior, and perhaps with good reason. As Tomáš Staněk has noted: "In a series of cases, these people's unlimited power was legalized or at least tolerated by higher authorities. They intervened against them only after a long interval or the perpetration of especially serious criminal acts. At the same time, the legitimacy of the Communist Party or the intercession of its functionaries gave many reliable cover."[49] Indeed, once the incidents in Česká Kamenice were brought to light in 1946 and early 1947, Dovara and Charous, both Communist Party members, received only light punishments. Following the Communist seizure of power in early 1948, Dovara became an undercover agent for the State security police.[50] In other instances, however, the Communists paid a price for such "adventurers." In the Frývaldov district, the disclosure of a series of disreputable Communists, including another whip-toting commissar like Charous, discredited the KSČ and forced it to carry out an internal purge.[51]

Despite the disgraceful acts of several of its functionaries, the Communist Party's influence within national committees has been portrayed as a critical ingredient to its postwar seizure of

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[47] Weekly criminal report, OSK Krnov-kriminální úřad, 26 January 1946. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.2 inv.č. 60.
[48] Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů*, 172; Karel Kaplan, *Nekrvavá revoluce* (Prague, 1993), 50 n. 13.
[49] Tomáš Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 63.
[50] Ibid, 62; Joza, *Rabštejnské údolí*, 188-189. Caidler spent several weeks in the Děčín district jail and then was released when neither Dovara nor Charous agreed to testify against him. He immediately pressed charges against them, but the investigation lagged. In early 1947, he gave his story to Michal Mareš who published it, upon further investigation. See Mareš, "Opět propagujeme."
[51] Monthly security report, OSK Frývaldov, 15 November 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.

power. The Communist Party proved more than able in placing their people on administrative commissions, especially just after the war. Soviet army intelligence and even NKVD officers had connections with the Defense Intelligence units of the new Czechoslovak army and sometimes helped ensure that communists moved into positions of authority.[52] The Interior Ministry, which oversaw the appointment of commissars and administrative commissioners also worked to create a strong Communist influence in these organs. However, the process was not as straightforward as Bradley Abrams has suggested occurred in other countries of Eastern Europe where the Red Army installed "whatever local Communists were at hand."[53] Instead, it seems that Czechs received spots on national committees as they became Communists, especially just after the war. For instance, in Česká Kamenice, the local KSČ organizer first offered Caidler a chance to take the chairperson position of the local Communist Party organization, which Caidler refused because he wished to remain above party politics.[54] The Communists' flexibility in admitting members not only opened the party's door to adventurers, but suggests that many of its local leaders were not hard core ideologues. The significance of Communist prevalence on borderland national committees must be judged accordingly.

In addition, the extent of Communist dominance must also be approached with caution. First, national committees were in constant flux. Aside from the changes in structure—from revolutionary national committees, to popularly supported national committees, to administrative commissions, to properly elected national committees—internal membership frequently varied. From July 1945 to the end of the year, over 20 percent of the district administrative commission

[52] Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 61-62.
[53] Bradley Abrams, "The Second World War and the East European Revolution," *East European Politics and Societies* 16, no. 3 (2002): 627.
[54] Protocol of Hynek Kašpar, 6 May 1946. NA, MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 sign.B2111.

members were recalled or resigned.[55] Local national committees also had high turnovers.[56] One reason for the changes within national committees resulted from non-Communist parties demanding their right to seats on national committees based on the parity agreement, though these changes were not as significant or rapid as these parties had hoped. High turnover rates also resulted from the removal of those caught for corruption or other offences. Despite the abuses committed by some national committee members, responsible leaders did emerge during the summer and fall of 1945. Among other things they worked to remove young commissars, who, like Charous, ruled as local dictators.[57] Although KSČ members were most often linked to scandals and misuse of official power, this image did not define the party or detract from its popularity. Following the May 1946 elections, Communist control of national committees in the borderlands actually increased well beyond that in 1945. In this sense, their control of borderland national committees was not simply a source of their popularity, but a reflection of it.

Some borderland national committees, like the one in Česká Kamenice, got off to a rocky start, while others developed with less conflict and more cohesion. Regardless, they all focused on expulsion and settlement. For them this meant drawing up lists of those to be expelled and collecting and recording the property seized from Germans. In addition to their municipal duties, borderland national committees, in effect, became landlords of apartments and houses, and the financial backers of local businesses. They oversaw rent collection and approved loans for national administrators. They likewise sought to restore order, even if only to consolidate certain

[55] Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů*, 109.
[56] One testament to the high turnover in local national committees comes from an archival inventory book for the Local National Committee in Brniště. It notes the peculiar situation that this national committee did not experience any membership changes from 1945 to 1948. *Inventář Mistní národní výbor Brniště*, 1. SOkA Česká Lípa.
[57] See for example, Minutes from the ONV Opava-venkov, 3 July and 7 September 1945. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.1, inv.č.111.

gains—either political or economic or both.[58] Therefore, while national committees struggled with internal differences at times, they developed a strong sense of autonomy that frequently diverged from outside authorities' wishes. National committees sought to accomplish expulsion and settlement in specific ways, some of which the central government adopted and others that led to direct and sometimes prolonged conflict. As will be shown here and in the following chapters, their goals for settlement often differed from those sought by several ministries, the Settlement Office, the military and even the central government. National committees quickly became a powerful political force, drawn together in many ways by the numerous obstacles and conflicts that they faced. While borderland national committees had different and sometimes conflicting agendas, as well as internal disputes, they were primarily concerned with maintaining their own authority and autonomy.

2.3 EXPULSIONS

The expulsion of Sudeten Germans was the most far reaching change in Czechoslovakia following the war. It has been estimated that between 650,000 and 800,000 Sudeten Germans were expelled from the country during the summer of 1945.[59] The August 1945 Potsdam Agreement, signed by Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, sanctioned "the orderly and humane transfer of Germans" for a later period and simultaneously requested

[58] Frommer agrees. He writes: "National committees, for all their faults, had a vested interest in establishing order within their jurisdictions and concentrating power in their own hands, not those of vigilantes and paramilitaries." Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 57.
[59] Vladimir Srb, *Populační, ekonomický a národnostní vývoj pohraničích okresů ČSR od roku 1930 do roku 2010* (Prague, 1989), 8; Theodor Schieder ed. *The Expulsion of the German Population from Czechoslovakia*, vol. 4, *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central Europe*, trans. G.H. de Sausmarez (Bonn, 1960), 105.

Czechoslovakia to stop unauthorized expulsions currently underway.[60] Expulsions continued, however, in August and September. Soviet military officials did not halt the forced migration of Sudeten Germans into Saxony until the end of the year.[61] From October 1945, expulsions slowed dramatically until January 1946, at which point they resumed, this time under Allied supervision. The official transfer then lasted until the end of October 1946, during which 2.1 million Germans were expelled. This left some 200,000-300,000 Germans in the country, some of whom were later transferred, others remained in their place, and still others were dispersed to interior parts of the country in 1947 and 1948.

Most historians use the term "wild transfer" (*divoký odsun*) to capture the nature of the immediate postwar expulsions. The "wild transfer," according to these accounts, lasted from the end of the war until the Potsdam Agreement, signed on August 2, 1945, in which the Allies formally sanctioned the "transfer of Germans." Historians and others evoke a scene of general lawlessness combined with widespread violence against German inhabitants during this time. Karel Kaplan, for instance, argues: "From the first May days in 1945 large-scale expulsions of German inhabitants began…In reality the Sudeten lands were without laws, as administrative powers were able to exercise their will without punishment."[62] Both historians and contemporaries made comparisons to the "Wild West," underscoring the widespread looting taking place. Others stress the uncontrolled violence against Germans.[63] These accounts depict

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[60] Article 13 of the Potsdam Agreement. Reprinted in Schieder, *The Expulsion of the German Population*, 108 n.53.
[61] The Soviet commander gave the order to halt the acceptance of expellees on 21 December 1945. He stated that by that time 773,840 Germans from Czechoslovakia had crossed the border. T.V. Volokitina, et. al., eds., *Vostochnaia Evropa: V Dokumentakh Rossiiskikh Arxikhov* vol.1 (Moscow, 1997), 388-389, n. 8. For reports on continued expulsions during these months, see Situation reports from September 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1 inv.č.175; U.S. Department of State. Historical Office, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [*FRUS*], *1945* vol. 2 (Washington, D.C., 1960), 1274-1275, 1280, 1315.
[62] Karel Kaplan, *Právda o Československu 1945-1948* (Prague: Panorama, 1990), 136.
[63] Staněk, *Perzekuce*; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 42-44, 49-51; Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 114-120; Chad Bryant, "Making the Czechs German: Nationality and Nazi Rule in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1945" (Ph.D. Dissertation,

various executions and physical violence against Germans with widespread public support and involvement, motivated primarily by a deep sense of national hatred. Some historians consider national committees as one of the primary perpetrators. Others suggest a range of security organs and Czech citizens that were responsible for the violence and disorder. While historians have had difficulty identifying the specific roles of various actors, the general picture they have painted has been one of extensive chaos, administrative confusion and unrelenting hatred.

The next pages examine the nature of the expulsions and two often-cited examples of large-scale violence against Sudeten Germans: one in Brno (Brünn) at the end of May 1945 and another in Ústí nad Labem at the end of July 1945. These two events often appear together in the literature as indicative of the mood, process and consequences of the 1945 summer expulsions.[64] This review highlights these two cases and the violence associated with the term "wild transfer," but simultaneously challenges its utility. By studying the way expulsions were organized and carried out, the military nature and control of this process becomes clearer. Such a perspective does not completely dismiss the violence, as some historians have done.[65] Rather, the fierce and cruel treatment of Germans and others must be seen both in its specific borderland context and as a tool of ethnic cleansing. Violence occurred as a regular feature of the expulsions, though not always with the reckless nationalist abandon connoted by the "wild transfer" image. Violence against Germans during the summer of 1945 often assumed routine forms under military or police leadership and remained contingent on local conditions.

University of California, Berkley, 2002), 345-346, 423-429; Eagle Glassheim, "Mechanics of Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia, 1945-1947," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, eds. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Lanham, MD, 2001), 205-208.

[64] Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 87-90, 131-137; Glassheim, "National Mythologies," 481-490; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 115-120, Ronald Smelser, "The Expulsion of the Sudeten Germans, 1945-1952, *Nationalities Papers* 24, no. 1 (1996): 87-88.

[65] Radomir Luža, for instance, describes violence against Germans only in his footnotes, thereby eliminating it from his narrative. Radomir Luža, *Transfer of the Sudeten Germans: A Study of Czech-German Relations, 1933-1962* (New York, 1964), 269-285; See also S. Biman and R. Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí: České pohraničí květen až srpen 1945* (Ústí nad Labem, 1989), 77-79.

One of the most widely cited local expulsions occurred on May 30, 1945 when some 20,000 Germans were forced to march from Brno to the Austrian border thirty kilometers to the south. What became known as "The Brno Death March" claimed the lives of hundreds, many in its aftermath.[66] The events in Brno that occasioned the expulsion involved a combination of popular anger, desire for German property, especially housing, and the radicalized political atmosphere in the country. President Beneš had delivered an invective speech against Germans in the city two weeks before the expulsion.[67] Tomáš Staněk argues that "[p]ressure for the expulsions connected with the incomparable conditions in the city, which led to increasing radical demands and exacerbated national passions."[68] The lack of housing was part of these difficult conditions and likely hastened calls for expulsion.[69] Practical demands and local pressure combined with leaders' calls to expel Germans pressured local officials to authorize the action. On May 30, 1945, armed factory workers and various security units forced more than twenty thousand Germans to march south from the city toward Austria. Along the way as many as ten thousand other Sudeten Germans were attached to the moving columns of humanity. The officials in charge of this expulsion had not secured permission from officials in Austria to accept these Germans or made provisions for them once they were refused entry. While difficult to assess, in addition to dozens of Germans who appear to have perished en route, hundreds more died in the makeshift camps in Pohořelice and across the border in Austria.[70]

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[66] Tomáš Staněk and Adrian von Arburg, "Organizované divoké odsuny? Úloha ústřední státních orgánů pří provádění ‚evakuace' německého obyvatelstvo (květen až zaří 1945)" *Soudobé Dějiny* 12, no. 3-4 (2006): 465-533; Hans Hertl et.al., *Němci ven! Brněnský pochod smrti 1945*, trans. Jana Šlajchrtová (Prague: Dauphin, 2001); Vojtěch Žampach, "The Expulsion of the Germans from Brno and the Immediate Consequences, 30 May to 7 July 1945." *The Prague Yearbook of Contemporary History* (Prague, 1999), 85-156; Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 87-90; Glassheim, "National Mythologies," 481-486.
[67] Glassheim, "National Mythologies," 481-482.
[68] Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 87.
[69] Glassheim, "National Mythologies," 482, 485; Staněk and Arburg, "Organizované divoké odsuny?" 524.
[70] Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 89-90; Staněk and Arburg, "Organizované divoké odsuny?" 525-533.

Popular pressure and the wider involvement of Czechs in this expulsion appear more pertinent in this case than in any other. That local factory workers played a large role in gathering and expelling Germans, for example, was exceptional compared to the general course of the expulsions. Another reason that popular resentment surfaced to the degree that it did in Brno is due to the fact that Germans were a minority in the city. Popular anger had a much better chance of surfacing there than in the borderlands where Sudeten Germans comprised the majority of inhabitants into 1946. Other historians note an important distinction between events in the borderlands and those in the interior. One pair of Czech historians considers the borderlands and the former Protectorate as "two separate worlds" at this time.[71] The domestic resistance's actions against Nazi units in Prague in early May, along with the severe treatment of Germans in the city, leads Tomáš Staněk to argue that Prague "had an undoubtedly exceptional position in comparison with the situation of Germans" elsewhere in May 1945.[72]

Although Germans in the country's interior faced greater incidents of popular violence, the ethnic cleansing of the borderlands occurred much more systematically than has been depicted thus far.[73] Even before the war had ended, exiled leaders planned to quickly expel as many Germans as possible. In November 1944, the exile government in London under Beneš sent a Memorandum to the British, Americans and Soviets that outlined its proposal for the reasons, nature and scope of the transfer. It spoke of the need for homogeneity as a prerequisite for the state's security. In an effort to reassure the Allies that the process could be orderly, point number ten of the Memorandum stated: "The Czechoslovak government envisages the process of transfer a gradual one." Allied governments worried about adding millions of Germans to the number of

[71] Biman and Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí*, 14.
[72] Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 66-73.
[73] For a new analysis, which is based on many of the same sources cited here, that also disputes the traditional account of the "wild transfer" see, Staněk and Arburg, "Organizované divoké odsuny?"

displaced persons because, as Churchill later put it, "they brought their mouths with them."[74] Yet the November 1944 Memorandum's summary raised a sense of urgency arguing that "the transfer must be carried out on organized lines, within the shortest possible period, i.e. about two years." It estimated the number of expellees to be 1.9 million, which translated to a rate of 18,000 expellees per week over two years.[75] From these figures it should have been clear that the transfer would not be gradual. Exiled Czech leaders also envisioned a large-scale assault against German inhabitants. During his December 1943 trip to Moscow, Beneš considered the expulsion as "a final anti-German revolution at home."[76] In July 1944, the London government recommended to the domestic resistance leaders "to create conditions so that even before an international correction of the problem, a radical reduction in the number of Germans occurs across the country, and especially in the borderlands."[77] The leaders continued to adhere to a similar line after the war.

Despite the government's desire for expulsions and its intolerant attitude toward Germans, few large-scale repressive actions occurred in May 1945. Standing orders were issued in mid-May to "deport all Germans from the historic borders."[78] In some places disagreements among Czechs slowed progress toward getting rid of the Germans. In Liberec (Reichenberg), for example, a series of different security organs came through the town and complicated the

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[74] Thompson minutes to discussions about the transfer of populations, 25 July 1945. U.S. Deptartment of State. Historical Office. *FRUS*, *The Conference of Berlin; The Potsdam Conference, 1945* (Washington D.C., 1960), 383.
[75] U.S. Department of State. Historical Office, *FRUS*, *1945*, 2:1227; Detlef Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung, 1938-1945: Pläne und Entscheidungen zum "Transfer"der Deutschen aus der Tschechislowakei und aus Polen* (Munich, 2001), 267-269.
[76] Eduard Beneš, *The Memoirs of Dr. Eduard Beneš: From Munich to New War and New Victory*, trans. Godfrey Lias (London, 1954), 269-270.
[77] Staněk, *Odsun němců*, 40; Staněk and Arburg, "Organizované divoké odsuny?" 488; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 40-41; Glassheim, "National Mythologies," 477.
[78] Dodatek to č.45/45 from Velitelství gen. Alex, 15 May 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.1 inv.č. 6; Biman and Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí*, 31; Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 23.

expulsions by looting and terrorizing both Czechs and Germans.[79] In late May, a frustrated military commander in the borderlands characterized the situation as follows:

> No cleansing (*čistka*) or expulsion to the Reich is being carried out. Germans everywhere remain in their places, and they even continue with their former pride, working publicly and threatening Czech people… Relevant sector commanders, when they are notified about the weakness towards Germans, blame it on national committees in the borderlands, which hinder the activities of units in the borderlands and directly prohibit severe policy towards Germans, with the claim, that only they are the responsible authority in this region.[80]

In May 1945, national committees and military organs had not yet established clear lines of authority. National committees were willing to expel Germans, but did not have the means to engineer any large operations.[81] At the same time, they proved reluctant to allow military forces to control expulsions from their towns.

Orders to deport Germans in the middle of May meant little given the few preparations for such expulsions. Many of the military's early instructions did not directly call for a general expulsion, but spoke of securing the borders and beginning operations against remaining Nazi formations and suspected Werewolf guerilla groups.[82] In addition to members of the reconstituted Czechoslovak Army, special armed detachments of partisans and others who had fought during the so-called Prague Uprising were dispatched to the borderlands. Their assignment involved securing the transportation network around the Most (Brüx) coal basin.[83] Once accomplished, these basic security measures allowed military officials to turn to the process of ethnic cleansing. On June 7, 1945, the commander of the northern Bohemia region issued some of the first concrete instructions regarding the expulsion procedures. The "transfer,"

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[79] Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 90-93.
[80] Situanční hlášení oper. skupiny (sic) za den 26 May 1945, Velitelství 3 Čs. divise. VHA, f. VO1, k.1 inv.č. 6.
[81] See for example Report from Fryváldov, 6 June 1945. NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra - Nosek (MV-N), k.227 inv.č.146.
[82] Postup při obsazení Sudet, Generál Novák, 20 May 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k. 1 inv.č. 6; Situační hlášení, Vel. 3 Čs. divise, 27 May 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k. 1 inv.č. 6.
[83] Biman and Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí*, 25-51.

as he called it, would be carried out by Czechoslovak units in agreement with national committees and, after reaching the border, Red Army units would take over. Transfers would start in the interior parts of the country, from areas where Germans comprised less than 60 percent of the inhabitants.[84] These and other plans prepared the way for military authorities to take greater control of the expulsions, which the government authorized on June 15, 1945.[85]

The military's first expulsions were often directed against Nazi party members and citizens of Nazi Germany who had moved to the Sudetenland or the Protectorate after the Munich Agreement. More extensive expulsions only began to take shape in June. Near the town of Děčín, 1,328 German inhabitants were expelled as a "test case" (*zkušební případ*) on June 4, 1945.[86] Reports from other places show how expulsions quickly took on routine forms. One report noted, for example: "In Teplice-Šenov Germans are being moved out systematically home by home and they are transported by trucks to Cinvald, where they undergo a thorough search by the border guards. After the search they are sent on foot across the border."[87] These actions, which took place just prior to June 15, presaged the move toward a general cleansing of Sudeten Germans. On June 19, the Headquarters of the First Army Corps issued a general "transfer" order to military units operating in the borderlands. First, non-productive Germans, business owners, and others, such as teachers, lawyers and office personnel were to be concentrated

[84] 0536/taj.1.odd.1945, VO1, 7 June 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.267.
[85] Meeting of the government, 15 June 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:372-373. For other plans see: Instructions from Ministry of National Defense, 12 June 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k. 2 inv.č. 21; Biman and Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí*, 31; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 64-65. This helps explain why the Provincial National Committee in Prague ordered national committees to stop further expulsions on their own as of June 14, 1945. See Glassheim, "National Mythologies," 478.
[86] Situace 9 June 1945 v prostoru Děcín-Podmokly-Teplice-Šenov, from VO1, 13 June 1945, VHA, f. VO1, k.48 inv.č.263; Report from VO1, 25 July 1945. VHA, f. Vojenská kancelář presidenta republiky (VKPR), č.j.1070.
[87] Situace 9 June 1945 v prostoru Děcín-Podmokly-Teplice-Šenov, from VO1, 13 June 1945, VHA, f. VO1, k.48 inv.č.263.

according to local conditions and made available for transfer. Important workers and farmers were kept until Czechs could replace them.[88]

The military's involvement and the clearer delineation of responsibility helped to accelerate expulsions in mid-June; they became increasingly intense in July. For instance, the Twelfth Division, operating in northern Bohemia, oversaw the expulsion of 70,727 Sudeten Germans before July, but in that month alone they forced more than twice that number of Germans across the border.[89] In some areas, the 1945 expulsions were restricted. On June 8, 1945, Polish forces closed the border between Czechoslovakia and newly demarcated Polish territory. They prevented Sudeten Germans from being placed into territory the Poles had just occupied because they too were forcibly moving Germans westward.[90] Polish forces cut off a direct northward route from borderland districts in eastern Bohemia and northern Moravia and Silesia. American military units likewise did what they could to prohibit expulsions from western Bohemia, much of which they occupied. In 1945, the majority of expellees were sent to Saxony with the consent of Soviet Army officials, though at times local Soviet commanders needed a bit of coaxing.[91] Some tens of thousands of Sudeten Germans living in the south, in addition to inhabitants from Brno, were pushed across the Austrian border.[92] However, expulsion across the border was not the only means of ethnic cleansing. Hundreds of thousands of other Sudeten Germans were forced from their homes and sent to holding camps or to work in the interior. Thus, while not all the Germans were shipped abroad in 1945, many were thrown out of their homes nonetheless. A

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[88] Čj.75 Taj.1.odděl.1945, Odsun německého obyvatelstva za hranice, from Velitelství I. sboru (VS1), 19 June 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.48 inv.č.263; Entry for 19 June 1945. VHA, f. Kronika velitelství 13 divise, k.1, kronika.
[89] Postup vysídlování obyvatelstva německé národnosti, 12 divise, from First Divisional Headquarters, 9 August 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.271.
[90] Report on the difficulties of the evacuations of Germans from late July 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.267; Biman and Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí*, 95.
[91] See for example Report from Štáb-2.oddělení VO1, 7 July 1945. VHA, f.VO1, k.48 inv.č.264; Report from Štáb-1.oddělení VO1, 16 July 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.67.
[92] Staněk gives the figure of 200,000. See *Odsun němců*, 73.

national committee report from one small town in the Česká Lípa (Böhmisch Leipa) district provided a typical breakdown of the summer expulsions' effects on borderland Germans. It noted that 75 local Germans had been sent to the interior parts of the country, 73 taken away by soldiers, and over one hundred others remained working in the town.[93] The individual paths to expulsion varied widely.

Certain army units specialized in ethnic cleansing. For example, the 28th Infantry Regiment moved among various divisions and carried out numerous cleansing operations, at times, without the knowledge of superior officers. Just as the general expulsions began in mid-June, it carried out the first extensive operations in and around Česká Lípa.[94] In one instance, local authorities complained that the regiment expelled protected German glass specialists and carried off truckloads of pilfered German property.[95] While investigations were held, the regiment's work had already been done and it moved on to other towns. When the 28th Infantry Regiment's second battalion arrived to carry out a planned expulsion of Germans from Děčín on July 12, 1945, its leaders surmised that preparations had not been made and that the district administrative commission wished to postpone the action several days. After being told that despite the lack of preparation "the evacuation" could take place as scheduled, district officials produced just over a thousand Germans for transfer. Displeased with the low turnout, one of the regiment's commanders and two officers demanded another expulsion, which they carried out the next day over the protests of district and local officials. Police units under the OSK's authority attempted to thwart the expulsion by occupying the train station, but to no avail. The infantry regiment successfully expelled an additional 3,000 Sudeten Germans on July 14, 1945.

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[93] Report from MNV Medonosy, 8 August 1945. SOkA Česká Lípa, f. ONV Duba, k.43, inv.č.98.
[94] Entries in June, Chronicle of Division 13. VHA, f. Kronika velitelství 13 divise, k.1, kronika; Report from Velitelství 13 pěší divise, 20 June 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.48 inv.č.264.
[95] For more on this incident see, chapter 4, 194-195.

While the dispute was later explained as a misunderstanding, local officials remained angered by the incident.[96] Despite such difficulties between the units of the 28th Infantry Regiment and national committees, military authorities continued to dispatch it for cleansing operations. According to incomplete records, this regiment expelled more than 90,000 Germans by the end of July.[97]

Throughout June and July 1945, the plans and policies regarding the expulsions were revised and refined. By late June, military officials had established twelve routes for expelling Germans into Saxony.[98] Further instructions directed national committees and military authorities to ensure that Germans were properly provisioned with clothing and food for at least three days and that exile columns did not exceed one thousand people. Military officials feared that if they were not so prepared, Red Army officers might refuse further transports.[99] Similar fears about losing the opportunity to transfer the Germans emerged just as the Big Three deliberated the question of population transfers from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and elsewhere at Potsdam. In late July, the Minister of Defense requested that military officials make plans to increase the number of expulsions. At a meeting of military officials on July 28, 1945, the record noted that the Allied powers did not take the transfer seriously enough and were overly concerned about the humane treatment of Sudeten Germans on both sides of the border. While military officials at the meeting suggested that the Czechoslovak government would respect these wishes, the report also stated that the government "does not wish to waste time and wants to place before the Allied leaders a fait accompli. Therefore, the expulsion (*vyhoštování*) must be

[96] Compare reports from Místní národní výbor Děčín, 15 July 1945. SOkA Děčín, f. MNV Děčín, k.1 inv.č.39 and Velitelství 13 divise, 23 July 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č. 269.
[97] Report from Velitelství 13 divise, 23 July 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č. 269. See also various figures for expulsions in: VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.271.
[98] Čj. 97/taj.1.odděl.1945, Velitelství I. sboru, 26 June 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.48 inv.č.263.
[99] Evakuace Němců-pokyny, Velitelství 13 divise, 12 July 1945. VHA. f. 13 Divise, k.13 inv.č.3.

carried out as fast as possible."[100] Just as the Allied powers prepared to sanction the expulsion of Germans from the country, Czechoslovak authorities sought to seize the moment and expedite the process, already under way.

Thus, on the eve of the Potsdam Agreement and the supposed conclusion of the "wild transfer," Czechoslovak authorities planned to expand the expulsions. While military forces were not responsible for all of the expulsions, their operations permitted a more massive and rapid process desired by central officials. Incomplete military records indicate that by the end of July 1945 at least 450,000 Germans had been expelled into Saxony.[101] Considering the extensive involvement of the Czechoslovak military and its routine methods, the term "wild transfer" appears ill-suited to describe the 1945 summer expulsions.

Nonetheless, it was precisely at this time that massive violence erupted in Ústí nad Labem. Historians use this incident in tandem with the Brno expulsion to characterize the "wild transfer." In the event, a munitions storage facility in Krasné Březno, a village just outside the city, exploded into flames on the afternoon of July 31, 1945.[102] Whether this was an act of sabotage, as high ranking officials claimed, or simply an accident remains unclear.[103] Soon afterward, various security units and some civilians took their revenge against local Germans in parts of the city center. These groups confronted Sudeten Germans in the town square, in front of the train station, and on one of the bridges crossing the Elbe. Local Germans were thrown from

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[100] Interior memo about the decisions, 29 July 1945 and Minutes from the meeting at the main headquarters, 28 July 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č. 267; Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 131.

[101] Unofficial report: Postup vysídlení něm. obyvatelstva 1.oblasti, Velitelství 1. oblast, 31 July 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.271. These figures do not include those expelled into Austria. In a government meeting on July 24, 1945 the Minister of National Defense reported that half a million Sudeten Germans had been expelled. He noted "that a more radical transfer will be possible after the harvest and when the necessary Czechs assume positions in factories." Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:865.

[102] For focused accounts of the events see Zděnek Radvanovský, "Události 31. července 1945 v Ústí nad Labem," *Studie o sudetoněmecké otázce*, ed. Vacláv Kural (Prague, 1996), 120-131; Tomáš Staněk, "Co se stalo v Ústí nad Labem 31. července 1945?" *Dějiny a současnost* 2 (1990): 48-51; Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 131-137.

[103] One military report in the aftermath argued that it was the work of two German pyrotechnics who had worked at the site. See Report from the Head of the Regional Defence Intelligence Service, 11 August 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.271.

the bridge into the river and shot at by soldiers. One particularly vivid memory shared by witnesses was that of a mother and her baby carriage being tossed from the bridge.[104]

Various security units in the area appear to have played a key role in the killings. These included members of the 28th Infantry Regiment, Red Army soldiers, other Czechoslovak army units and police forces from the area.[105] The district administrative commission primarily blamed soldiers for the incident. In the aftermath of the killings, it sent a letter to the Ministry of Defense about the "illegal actions of Russian soldiers" and requested that local soldiers receive instructions from their commanders about the need to respect national committee officials.[106] Another report noted that the local army garrison had several new recruits who were blamed for getting out of hand.[107] Witnesses mention that soldiers occupied key positions on the bridge. Civilians who took part were identified by others as being strangers; considering the influx of roughly 60,000 new settlers to the district by July, this should not be surprising.[108] As in Brno, a constant housing shortage likely contributed to tensions in the town.[109]

"The massacre," as some refer to it, has been characterized as exemplary of the violence that revealed the depths of the Czechs' hatred of Germans. For some perpetrators such feelings certainly played a role in their actions. However, portraying such events as typical of the summer

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[104] Testimony of a former member of the district administrative commission, 15 July 1948. Schieder, *The Expulsion of the German Population*, 431-432; See also the more recent testimonies in *Intolerance: Češi, Němci a Židé na ústecku 1938-1948* (Ústí nad Labem, 1998), 89, 91.

[105] Report on events in Ústí n.L., 1 August 1945. VHA Prague, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.269; Radvanovský, "Událostí," 122.

[106] Minutes from the meeting of the OSK Ústí n. L., 2 August 1945. AM Ústí n. L., f. ONV Ústí n. L., k.5 inv.č.407.

[107] Report from Ministry of Defense 1947. NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra – tajná (MV-T), k.12 inv.č.199 s.T-B 13; Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 135. Two days earlier there had been a gathering to celebrate the creation of a new department in the Ústí nad Labem police forces. Another police detachment from Prague attended and the Interior Minister delivered a speech demanding "the cleansing of the country from Fascist threat." See "V očistě našeho národního života budeme tvrdě pokračovat," *Rudé pravo* 31 July 1945.

[108] Zdeněk Radvanovský, "The Social and Economic Effects of Resettling Czechs into Northwestern Bohemia, 1945-1947," in *Redrawing Nations*, 246. There were also suggestions that as many as 300 Czechs arrived just before the explosion, which raised rumors that someone on the Czech side had orchestrated the event perhaps to raise support for the expulsion.

[109] See plans to move Germans to relieve housing problems, 1 September 1945. AM Ústí n. L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.5 inv.č.407.

expulsions downplays the state's role in these processes and suggests a high degree of popular violence from May through July 1945, which was generally not the case. The events in Ústí n.L. were all the more unique because they came at the end of July 1945. By then, the bulk of the summer expulsions had already taken place. That the main perpetrators appear to have been military personnel also raises questions about how ordinary Czechs participated in the violence. The involvement of the 28th Infantry Regiment, which had just been moved into the area, deserves special scrutiny considering its key role in cleansing the borderlands.[110] In addition, national committee members of both the local and district national committees tried to halt the killings. If only a handful of non-military personnel participated in the action, then does this event reflect the mood of a city's inhabitants (not to mention the nation's mood)? Furthermore, the total number of deaths from the violence, though still debated, has been cited by reliable sources at less than one hundred.[111] If the explosion permitted an opening for Czechs to express their hatred of Germans and if military and security forces led the charge, then why did the conflict not spread to include the tens of thousands of other Germans living in the city? While the events of July 31, 1945 belong to the story of Sudeten Germans' persecution, that story comprises only one aspect of the borderlands' ethnic cleansing.

The explosion and subsequent melee in Ústí n.L. certainly revealed a dark side of humanity, and they had reverberations elsewhere in the borderlands. In nearby Teplice-Šenov the security chairperson at the district administrative commission immediately issued some of the following restrictions:

> 1. Every German caught outside his/her apartment after curfew without written permission will be punished by death.
> 2. By punishment of death every German will be punished who is not properly registered in the community of his/her domicile.

[110] Zvlástní operační rozkaz 130, 26 July 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49 inv.č.268.
[111] Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 136; Radvanovský, "Události 31. července 1945," 126.

…
5. Contact by persons of Czech nationality with Germans is prohibited, as far as it does not happen in official or commercial circumstances. Disregard of this ordinance will be punished most severely.
6. Disregard of the order to evacuate will be punished.[112]

Such orders reflected apprehension as much as a desire to punish the Germans. Point number five demonstrates that lower-level officials perceived the threat of personal relations developing among Czechs and Germans. This provision later became part of a general decree on offences against national honor, also known as the small retribution decree, and indicated that some Czechs, at least, overlooked national boundaries in their personal relations.[113] As a matter of policy-making, such a directive reveals how lower level organs influenced the direction of the central government's policies.

The Czechoslovak government waited until the Allies agreed to the expulsions before it formally stripped the Sudeten Germans' of their citizenship. Decree 33, which President Beneš signed on August 2, 1945, declared: "Czechoslovak state citizens of German or Magyar nationality, who according to the regulations of the occupying powers acquired German or Magyar citizenship, lost Czechoslovak citizenship rights on the date of the acquisition of such citizenship."[114] The few Germans who happened to take residence in the Sudetenland after 1939 and a handful of others who would have still been able to claim Czechoslovak citizenship under such a provision lost their citizenship on the day this decree went into effect. The concern for the legality of such decrees, despite the attention given to them at the time, was a matter of formality. Subjective interpretations of these decrees were limited to special cases. For example,

[112] Order from OSK Teplice-Šenov, 2 August 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice-Šenov, k.238 inv.č. 943 241.
[113] Indeed there were many reports concerning Czechs and Germans socializing together. *Stráž severu* 15 June 1945. Weekly security report of ZNV Moravská Ostrava, 18 June 1946. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k. 2 inv.č. 60; Complaint from the KSČ chairman Šrámek, 19 November 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.19 inv.č.104.
[114] Decree 33, Part 1, Art. 1, 2 August 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:345.

Decree 33 allowed those Germans and Magyars who "remained true to the republic" or "suffered under Nazi or fascist terror" to apply to keep their Czechoslovak citizenship, though this happened only in small numbers.[115] Thus, government officials regarded an individual's innocence as subordinate to the importance of expelling the highest number of Germans.

The question of individual guilt or innocence, however, did not necessarily dictate the treatment that Germans received. In addition to anti-fascists, who did have the choice to stay or go other Sudeten Germans received special treatment. Factory owners, for instance, were sometimes protected in order to secure their cooperation to restart a company's production and operation. The Kunert Brothers in Varnsdorf who owned and operated women's stockings factories received special protection from the Interior Ministry. After workers at the factories threatened to strike if they were not expelled, the brothers fled to Germany and planned to restart production there.[116] The German-speaking owners of Chlupaček and Son likewise remained protected by higher authorities and were paid well in order to keep the firm running smoothly.[117] Several thousand skilled German workers also received exemption certificates that protected them from expulsion.[118]

In 1946, the official "transfer" began under Allied supervision. National committees brought Germans to "collection centers" or camps where they would be readied for transport out of the country. From here Czechoslovak army officials took over and managed the movement of expellees up to the state border where Allied troops assumed control. In many ways, the operation reflected the system established in 1945. The biggest problem facing officials carrying

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[115] Decree 33, Part 2, Art. 1. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:345.
[116] Osvědčení from Ministerstvo vnitra (MV), August 29, 1945. Státní oblastní archiv, Litoměřice, pobočka v Mostě (SOA, p. Most), f. J. Kunert a synové, Varnsdorf, k.2 inv.č. 8; See also Report 17, MV, 21 May 1946. Zemský Archive (ZA) Opava, f. Expozitura Moravskoslezského ZNV 1945-1949, k.140 inv.č.273.
[117] Explanation of national administrator Dedek, 23 November 1947. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k. 142 inv.č. 155.
[118] For more on these workers see chapter 4.

out expulsion and settlement in 1946 was the lack of replacement workers. In June 1946, the government's representative for the transfer, Antonín Kučera, reported that, since the beginning of the year, nearly half a million Germans had been transfered into the American zone of Germany.[119] He warned that the transfer would soon begin cutting into the number of workers in the borderlands. He blamed poor settlement of Czech workers as the primary reason for the labor shortage and warned that without a radical change, "carrying out the transfer will create a very serious crisis in the borderlands," which would "paralyze" economic life there.[120] Though little could be done to quickly alter settlement patterns, Kučera sought to portray the borderlands' labor woes as a problem caused by settlement, rather than by the transfer.

Václav Nosek, the Communist Interior Minister, gave his final report to the government about the official "transfer" as it was winding down in 1946. The Czechoslovak government wished to connect the transfer's end to the celebration of the Czechoslovak day of independence, October 28; this would give the country's leaders an opportunity to proclaim that they had successfully completed the work of the nation. Up to November 1, 1946, Nosek reported that 2,170,598 Germans had been transferred under Allied auspices. The total number of Germans who had been expelled or left voluntarily since the end of the war remained both unclear and unspoken. The Minister only noted that 224,000 Germans still lived in the country. In addition, he suggested that these figures were not entirely reliable and likely hid the existence of many more Germans.[121] Nonetheless, by the end of 1946, the government had nearly met its goal to remove all the Sudeten Germans from the country. From 1947 to the early 1950s, further

[119] Kučera reported that the Czechoslovak government had reached agreement with the Soviet Union to reopen its zone to transfers, which had been stopped since the end of 1945.
[120] Odsun Němců a situace ve výrobě průmyslové a zemědělské, Vládní zmocněnec pro provádění odsunu Němců, 9 June 1946. NA, f. Úřad předsednictva vlády – tajná (ÚPV-T), k.308 inv.č.1635.
[121] Souhrnná zpráva pro československou vládu o dosavadím průběhu odsunu Němců z Československé republiky, 29 November 1945. NA, f. Úřad předsednictva vlády – běžná spísovna (ÚPV-B), k.720, inv.č.2908 s.753/4.

transports occurred in order to connect family members who had been separated during earlier expulsions. In late 1947 and into 1948, the Czechoslovak government also began to deport the remaining Germans out of the borderlands and into the country's interior, in an effort both to alleviate agricultural labor shortages there and to reduce the concentration of Germans along the frontier.[122] Government officials, including national committee members, and security forces played the primary role during the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans. For the general Czech population, moving to the borderlands represented their most direct and pervasive influence on the expulsions.

2.4 SETTLEMENT

While the expulsions followed a more directed course than historians have previously thought, the settlement process was anything but orderly. The arrival of Czechs to the borderlands demanded more attention from national committees than did preparations for expulsions. The two processes, however, were closely linked. While military units often raised national committees' ire, the more pressing problems facing national committees involved managing the flow of incoming settlers. Some historians connect Czech pillaging throughout the borderlands to the so-called "wild transfer." "Wild" in this sense, refers not only to the violence and disorganization manifested during expulsions, but also to the uncontrolled arrival of settlers and to their destabilizing influence.[123] However, none of these analyses examines the deeper connection between expulsion and settlement. Karel Kaplan suggests a connection between those committing violent acts against Germans and the lowest social strata of new settlers, whom, he

[122] For more on these policies see chapter 4, 234-238.
[123] Eagle Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989," *Journal of Modern History* 78 (2006): 65-92.

argues, comprised the vast majority of early settlers.[124] In reality the social divisions were more complex, but perhaps less important, in the borderlands where opportunities depended largely on timing and connections. Few examinations of events in the borderlands underscore how early settlement affected the national committees' actions, the treatment of Germans, and the formation of expulsion and settlement policies. The rapid pace of settlers' arrival occurred simultaneously with the expulsion of Germans; together, these massive migrations helped to define the character of economic, political and social life in the borderlands.

Although data concerning the migration of people to and around the borderlands during the summer of 1945 are not completely reliable, a general picture of settlers' arrival can be reconstructed. According to Vladimir Srb, 1.2 million Czechs lived in the borderlands by the middle of August 1945, of which between 400,000 and 500,000 were already there at the beginning of May.[125] Some of these Czechs had recently arrived during the war to work in the borderlands, but most were old settlers who had lived there prior to the war. Old settlers were a further divided group; some of them had remained in the borderlands during the war, while others had left for the country's interior. These latter, so-called "returnees" (*navrátlící*) were among the first to make it to the borderlands in May 1945. Together with a huge influx of newcomers they comprised the 500,000-650,000 Czechs who arrived between May and August 1945.[126] Miroslav Kreysa, the future chairperson of the Settlement Office, spoke about a settlement rate of over 200,000 per month during the summer of 1945. As he noted, "the original

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[124] Kaplan, *Právda o Československu,* 135.
[125] Vladimír Srb, *Materialy k problematice novoosídleneckého pohraničí* (Prague, 1984), 76-77; *Soupisy obyvatelstva v Československu v letech 1946-1947* (Prague, 1951), 528. This table gives 729,126 as the number of inhabitants in borderland communities on 1 May 1945, including Germans still present in May 1947. The number of Germans, according to Srb elsewhere, was 180,000, see Vladimír Srb, *Populační, ekonomický a národnostní vývoj*, 7. The Settlement Office gave 350,000 Czechs living in the borderlands at the beginning of May 1945. These figures do not include 100,000 workers, which Settlement officials argued returned to the interior of the country following the war. See for example, "Rok úsilovné práce," *Osidlování*, 25 September 1946; Report on settlement, Osidlovací úřad (OÚ), 28 January 1946. NA, f. Osídlovací komise při ÚV KSČ (f. 23), a.j.359.
[126] Vladimír Srb, *Materialy*, 76-77.

borderland settlement by Czechs occurred entirely spontaneously and without central direction."[127]

The rate of settlement began to slow in the fall of 1945, but still hundreds of thousands of Czechs and others arrived. Between September and the year's end, nearly 500,000 additional settlers moved into these areas, bringing the total borderland population to over three and a half million people, more than had been there since the beginning of the war.[128] The borderlands were also ethnically mixed for the first and last time. One set of data presented nearly equal figures (1.8 million) for the number of Germans and Czechs in the borderlands as of January 1, 1946.[129] By May 1947, Czech inhabitants in the borderlands numbered almost two and a quarter million. In 1950, according to official calculations, 87 percent of the borderlands inhabitants were Czech.[130] While on one level such figures speak to the success of the expulsion and settlement, they also imply a homogeneity that did not exist. Despite the claim that the expulsion and settlement were part of a national undertaking, cleavages among Czechs in the borderlands ran deep and divisions remained between the borderlands and interior parts of the country.

The Presidential Decrees that governed property confiscation in the borderlands provided the means to encourage Czechs and others to settle there. Decree 12, issued by the central government on June 21, 1945, spoke of the quick division of German, Magyar and enemy agricultural property as the first step in land reform.[131] The provisions of Decree 12 gave landless farm laborers priority for such holdings. By the end of August, the best farmland in the

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[127] Miroslav Kreysa, *České pohraničí* (Prague, 1947), 8.
[128] Population figures vary. See Ibid for continued settlement figures. Also see population data in NA, f. 23, a.j. 315. And report on settlement čj. 3421/46 Osidlovací úřad, Prague, February 1946. Ibid, a.j.359. For a broader analysis of population development in the borderlands, see Srb, *Populační, ekonomický a národnostní vývoj*.
[129] 1,827,000 Czechs and 1,884,000 Germans. NA, f. 23, a.j.315; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 170.
[130] Srb *Populační, ekonomický a národnostní vývoj*, 18. Arburg estimates that this figure should be more like 83 percent since most Germans did not register themselves as such, see Adrian von Arburg, "Tak či onak," *Soudobé dějiny* 10, no. 3 (2003): 281.
[131] Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:276-303.

borderlands had already been occupied, mainly by settlers from nearby interior districts.[132] The search for businesses and homes was equally rapid and shaped the manner of early migration to the borderlands. Decree 5 from May 19, 1945, invalidated property transactions after September 29, 1938 and placed national administrators in charge of Germans', Magyars', and collaborators' property until decisions could be made concerning their future status.[133] The decree not only coincided with the rush into the borderlands, it supported and authorized such an action. The official confiscation of non-agricultural property did not occur until October 1945, under Decree 108, and even then, the final transfer of seized homes and businesses remained a long way off.

The first settlers moved to the most desirable locations in search of the best opportunities. Most often this meant finding a former German home or business in a popular town and getting a national committee to appoint you as the national administrator—the state's trustee of confiscated permanent property. One newspaper article drew attention to this phenomenon arguing that too many settlers were heading to places like Karlový Vary (Karlsbad) and Liberec—two of the more picturesque borderland towns.[134] In Liberec, for instance, the OSK stopped accepting applications for the national administrator positions of former Sudeten German businesses already on June 8, 1945.[135] The chance to become an independent proprietor and perhaps future owner of a farm, a small shop or a pub, was certainly in the minds of some. They moved in and began working immediately, sometimes investing their own money for repairs or other needs. Other settlers occupied national administrator positions in more than one place, hoping to improve their chances of permanently obtaining choice property. Such actions

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[132] Jiří Koťátko, *Konfiskace, rozdělování a osidlování půdy* (Prague, 1946), 7; Slezák, *Zemědělské osídlování*, 59-60.
[133] The first part of the decree aimed to return property to those who had their property confiscated by the Nazis in the Czech lands or by the Slovak state, following its creation in March 1939. The Slovak National Council refused to accept the decree because of the problems it posed for the restoration of Jewish property. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:223-236.
[134] "V pohraničí nejsou jen K. Vary," *Svobodné slovo*, 7 July 1945.
[135] *Stráž severu*, 8 June 1945.

caused delays and confusion among national committees as they attempted to resolve who received which confiscated property. For instance, in Javorník (Jauernig) officials worried that first settlers would not return after they claimed farms, despite their promises to come back. The district administrative commission established an eight-day window for settlers to permanently inhabit farms and businesses before they revoked their appointment.[136]

The influx of settlers overwhelmed national committees in charge of managing these migrations. Local security forces were unable to prevent people from doing as they pleased. In Krnov, for instance, the local police report for early July noted: "security conditions remain insecure. Daily ransacking and robbing of apartments occurs, even of Czech inhabitants who recently moved here."[137] The police office in Liberec petitioned the Interior Ministry for a provision to limit the arrival of unwanted elements. Pointing out the raised expectations of new settlers, it argued: "Public calls in the daily press foster in the uninformed parts of the public an unwarranted optimism and completely downplay the images of the real conditions in the borderlands." The Ministry responded by instructing national committees to work against the arrival of "undesirable" individuals.[138] However, the problem was not simply that some early settlers helped themselves to confiscated German property or committed other transgressions. Even when outright disreputable acts were avoided, national committees experienced great difficulties attempting to meet new settlers' wishes. For instance, national committees hoped to placate settlers' housing demands by moving German families into less attractive homes. In Dubí (Dubi), even after one hundred German families had been moved into shabbier quarters, the housing department chairperson at the MNV noted that many settlers remained unsatisfied. He

[136] Minutes from the meeting of the OSK Council, Fryváldov, 21 August 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.135 inv.č.119.
[137] Situační zpáva, SNB, 8 July 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, dodatek, k. 11 inv.č. 92.
[138] Přiliv obyvatelstva z vnitrozemí do pohraničí from Zemský národní výbor Brno, 2 August 1945. (Originally issued as Z/II-2515/1945, MV, 6 July 1945). SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.3 inv.č.113.

could only promise to try to improve the quality of the housing, so that what appeared as luxurious by their standards would be available to the average worker.[139] While the number of early settlers largely compensated for the number of expelled Germans, their search for the most appealing property increased the challenges facing borderland national committees.

Some areas of the borderlands faced the opposite problem—under-settlement. While Czechs flocked to the borderlands, settlement patterns were uneven and tended to thin out towards the frontier. In less attractive places, often geographically isolated, underdeveloped or situated directly on the state border, the lack of settlers left Sudeten Germans in their homes and at their jobs. For instance, a late July business report from the towns of Černá Voda, Supíkovice, and Zighartice, which sit in the mountainous region of Silesia near present-day Poland, showed that the vast majority of local firms had yet to be taken over by national administrators.[140] In the district of Rumburk (Rumburg), located in a northern Bohemian promontory, German farmers remained on 80 percent of the farms and Germans comprised ninety percent of the industrial workers in mid-October 1945.[141] Prospective settlers remained wary of such towns' futures. Because these places were already off the beaten path, the continued presence of Sudeten Germans became a barrier to settlement. In some towns, local officials requested expulsions mainly in order to make towns more attractive to potential settlers, who did not wish to have German neighbors.[142] The pace of settlement shaped national committees' responses to housing issues, property confiscation and the expulsions.

1946 brought relief from the crowded conditions in many borderland towns and diminished large concentrations of Germans in outlying areas. The Allied-sponsored expulsion of Sudeten

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[139] Public meeting of MNV Dubí, 28 December 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. MěNV Dubí, k.12 inv.č.69.
[140] See reports from these towns in July 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.134 inv.č.117.
[141] See *Inventář ONV Rumburk*, 2. SOkA Děčín, f. ONV Rumburk.
[142] Situation report, Liptan, 9 September 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, dodatek, k.11, inv.č. 92. Monthly report, SNB Heřmanice, 30 August 1945. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.16 inv.č.117.

Germans accomplished much in this regard, but so too did a slowdown in the arrival of settlers. In fact, some of the first settlers began retuning to the interior, which partially offset the complications that their rapid and large-scale arrival brought in the summer of 1945. During 1946, the monthly increase in settlers' arrival, measured by the distribution of their ration cards, never neared one hundred thousand which it had for nearly every month in 1945. For instance, August 1946, one of the biggest months for expulsions, witnessed only a small increase in the number of settlers. Still, the expulsion of tens of thousands of Germans every week combined with continued arrivals, and steady departures, of Czechs, Slovaks and others meant that the previous year's fluctuating conditions persisted. There were different reactions to this. For instance, a reporter for *Stráž severu* (Sentinel of the North) worried about the ability to successfully "Czechify" the borderlands if settlers returned to the interior "at the first sign of frost."[143] Others welcomed the departures. The National Socialist Party's paper *Svobodné slovo* (Free Word) considered the departures as a sign that "the inhabitants of the borderlands themselves are beginning to defend against the theft of their regions by unwanted elements and to finally prosecute the post-revolutionary gold-diggers, who have already disappeared from the borderlands and now are likely hidden in the interior." It noted that, in June 1946, Czechs continued to return to the interior, but in decreasing numbers.[144] Departures from borderland agricultural holdings actually increased from 1946 through 1949.[145] Thus while the overall number of settlers continued to rise until early 1947, an undercurrent of people moving back to the interior meant that settlement of Czechs on German property remained incomplete into the 1950s.

[143] "Jak žije a pracuje naše pohraničí: Lidé se stěhují z pohraničí," *Stráž severu* 3 January 1946.
[144] "Nesnáze v osidlování pohraničí," *Svobodné slovo* 20 June 1946.
[145] Slezák, *Zemědělské osidlování*, 119-126.

One key difference in the operation of expulsion and settlement was the degree of control asserted by military officials during the 1945 summer expulsions. Their oversight ensured that local reticence or other obstacles would not interfere with the goal of removing Germans. National committees, on the other hand, were left largely on their own during the initial rush of settlers. At times they struggled to meet the demands of settlers and to contain the disorder surrounding the confiscation of Sudeten German property. They proposed different ways to better organize settlement. For example, in July 1945, a group of national committees wanted to pair national committees in the interior with borderland national committees in order to coordinate the hitherto unplanned migrations.[146] Through their initial control of the settlement agenda, national committees and administrative commissions developed the administrative autonomy promised to national committees as the people's representatives. This autonomy grew out of necessity in 1945 and became problematic only as central authorities later sought to claim control of these processes.

Centralized control over settlement processes and policies developed on two separate tracks. On July 17, 1945, Presidential Decree 27 formally established the Central Committee for Interior Settlement (ÚKVO) and two Settlement Offices, one in Prague and one in Bratislava, to separately administer settlement processes in both parts of the country. The ÚKVO—comprised of different ministries' representatives—helped to ensure that settlement policies were coordinated with other government offices and agencies. It also served as the unified oversight committee of both Settlement Offices, which was important, at times, to carry out settlement

[146] Letters from national committees in northeastern Bohemia, 12 July 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.7443 inv.č.4148 s.B300. This policy was used particularly in agricultural settlement plans.

actions involving both Slovakia and the Czech lands.[147] In general though, the ÚKVO allowed each Settlement Office to carry out their agendas with little interference.[148] The Settlement Office in Prague (OÚ), which did not begin its work until September 1945, planned and promoted borderland settlement. Miroslav Kreysa, the OÚ's chairman, once referred to its role as "our settlement's Čedok," which was the name for the country's largest travel bureau.[149] The OÚ established its own bi-monthly newspaper for this purpose and published several pamphlets to advertise the available settlement opportunities. In addition, it supported a large exhibition in Prague to promote the borderlands.[150]

The Settlement Office's main efforts, however, focused on planning and policy-making. It spent enormous time and made detailed plans for the reorganization of the borderlands. In this sense, settlement officials' thinking reflected the modernist belief in the ability to mold or control entire societies to meet broad ideological goals.[151] For example, in late 1945, the General Secretary of the ÚKVO reported that "it will be certainly necessary that the population question, which for us currently has acquired a very catastrophic taint, is properly solved by official action." He noted that one proposal for the population reorganization surrounding the transfer and settlement "offers a completely new and modern solution" to such a problem.[152] Such proposals included detailed timelines that coordinated settlement and expulsion processes, as well as the final distribution of all confiscated property. During 1946 and 1947, the Settlement

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[147] One case involved the forced relocation of Magyars from southern Slovakia to the Czech borderlands. See below, 93-94. For the official designation of these offices duties see Decree 27, 17 July 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:318-319.
[148] Arburg, "Tak či oňak," 265.
[149] Minutes from the meeting of the Settlement Commission of the Communist Party's Central Committee, 17 July 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j.14.
[150] Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism and Environmental Devastation," 74.
[151] James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998).
[152] Report of the General Secretary of the Central Committee for Interior Settlement (ÚKVO), 29 November 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k. 12145, s.1651/2.

Office issued hundreds, if not thousands, of instructions, directives and circulars in its efforts to control settlement. The belief that settlement could be directed from Prague, however, overlooked the need for borderland national committees' cooperation and compliance, which they often withheld.

In addition to the Settlement Office, the Ministry of Agriculture controlled confiscated German farmland and thereby the settlement of borderland farms as well. It established a separate department within the ministry to focus exclusively on the distribution of these farms to new settlers. This department worked closely with special local farming commissions that were formally attached to national committees, but had exclusive authority on matters related to land, livestock and settlement. Because the distribution of confiscated farms fell under the land reform provisions following the war, agricultural officials had an easier time allocating farmland than OÚ officials had finalizing procedures and policies regarding the remaining types of confiscated property.[153]

Even though different central authorities controlled settlement plans and policies, the overall goals among these agencies remained the same. The government called for a population of 2.5 million Czech and Slavic inhabitants to reside in the borderlands by 1949. This plan assumed that 1.4 million of the 2.5 million inhabitants would play an active role in the economy. Such a figure would have left population densities in the borderlands roughly thirty percent lower than in 1940.[154] Another settlement objective involved the attempt to erase distinctions between the borderlands and the interior parts of the country. On a practical level this meant raising the availability of food and other provisions in the borderlands, which the government's program for

[153] For more on this process see chapter 3.
[154] Kreysa, *České pohraničí*, 23; Miroslav Kreysa, *Budujeme pohraničí* (Prague, 1946), 8-9.

the Two-Year Plan formally stipulated.[155] Reconnecting the borderlands with the rest of the country also raised more general notions about unifying the nation-state. The Programmatic Declaration of the Settlement Office, for instance, proclaimed that settlement should support the efforts "to attach the borderlands to the entire structure of our republic as a state of Czechs and Slovaks." It further noted that this meant cultivating its economic potential for the benefit of the entire republic.[156]

While such goals appeared unambiguous, settlement officials and other leaders connected settlement to other ambitions that expanded its meaning and importance. For example, Miroslav Kreysa, the OÚ's chair and a Communist Party leader, placed settlement in the general framework of postwar economic restructuring. He declared that

> the directed and planned settlement can and must increase the well-being of the economic sectors of our state, to the marked improvement of productivity and a higher living standard of our people; that the confiscation of enemy property and its new division will partly help us solve the most pressing postwar social problems and partly establish an entirely new social structure for our nation, much healthier, than before now.[157]

Such aims dovetailed with the economic priorities of the National Front and suggested that the borderlands would lead the progress toward these ends. Eagle Glassheim agrees, noting that Communists, in particular, sought "to make the region both a model and a laboratory for the building of socialism."[158]

From a nationalist perspective, the meaning of settlement connected with security, territory, and culture. The first concern reflected the broader sense of ethnic cleansing, in which settlement served to prevent any undoing of the expulsions. One settlement official underscored settlers'

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[155] Kreysa, *Budujeme pohraničí*, 12.
[156] The Programmatic Declaration delivered at the third meeting of ÚKVO, 18 September 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k. 12145, s.1651/2; Arburg, "Tak či oňak," 266; Radvanovský, "Resettling Czechs," 243.
[157] Miroslav Kreysa, "Osidlovací politika lidově demokratického státu," *Osidlování*, 17 May 1946.
[158] Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing," 78.

importance in this regard: "these new settlers are used to create a stable barrier and secure defense against any kind of German danger." He argued that "[t]heir fate must also be our fate, because only if we have a secure border against the Germans, will we be able to feel secure."[159] Other leaders stretched settlement's meaning even further. "Czechification" (*počeštění*) of the borderlands meant, in part, ensuring that Czechs occupied the physical space in the borderlands, in order to align ethnic and state borders. It particularly surfaced in discussions concerning the confiscation and allocation of Sudeten German farmland. For example, during a debate about what to do with the farmland of German anti-fascists, Klement Gottwald, then Deputy Prime Minister, argued that "they could otherwise be compensated and that the state's endeavor must be that land is in the hands of Czech and Slovak farmers."[160] Jiří Koťátko, the Communist head of agricultural settlement, repeatedly emphasized the need for "the complete Czechification of our borderland countryside."[161] This notion connected with the idea of settlement as a security guarantee, as if by moving Czechs to the borderlands they would be forming an ethnic wall around the border. The goal of making the borderlands Czech likewise entailed removing physical signs that the Sudeten Germans had ever been there and drew on the national symbols familiar to Czech settlers in order to create a homogeneous Czech culture. Through holidays, public spaces and cultural events commemorating the nation a new Czech identity—increasingly infused with Communist overtones—emerged.[162]

Regardless of the specific objectives that Czech leaders pursued through settlement, their success depended on getting Czechs to move to and stay in the borderlands. This goal, in turn,

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[159] A. Vodička, "A už se nikdy nevracejte...," *Osidlování*, 10 November 1946.
[160] Minutes from the 30th government meeting, 21 June 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:338.
[161] Jiří Koťátko, *Zemědělská osidlovací politika v pohraničí* (Prague, 1946), 9; Koťátko, *Konfiskace, rozdělování a osidlování půdy*, 8.
[162] Nancy M. Wingfield, "The Politics of Memory: Constructing National Identity in the Czech Lands, 1945-1948," *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 246-267; Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing," 71-83.

hinged on the best use of confiscated property. What settlement officials referred to as "settlement politics" meant offering Czechs and other Slavs the most attractive living and working conditions in the borderlands as incentives to get them to settle there. In this sense, settlement officials took their cues from the first settlers. For instance, at a meeting of settlement officials in late 1945, Miroslav Kreysa noted that "settlement of agriculture and in businesses succeeded because it offered economic benefits to people."[163] Utilizing economic enticements as the basis for settlement policies meshed with settlement officials' desire to make migration to the borderlands voluntary. While they also helped carry out forced migration to and from the borderlands, they realized that confiscated property and other incentives served as the most effective way to get people to relocate and remain.[164] In addition, settlement leaders believed that by controlling the distribution of confiscated property, they could manage and control the flow of particular kinds of settlers to the borderlands. Indeed, the OÚ established several regulations to offer cheap housing and other advantages in order to attract much needed workers there.[165]

The Settlement Office did not begin to operate in earnest until the fall of 1945, however, and even then it spent time collecting data and constructing plans, so that its specific policies only emerged in 1946. By this time more than one million people had relocated to the borderlands, which in addition to the 400,000 to 500,000 Czechs already there, meant that two-thirds of settlement officials' intended 2.5 million Slavic settlers already inhabited the borderlands. This was part of the reason why the OÚ focused on bringing industrial and agricultural workers to the borderlands. The extensive and disorganized settlement in 1945 compelled these officials to attempt to correct what they considered to be the shortcomings of this period. In late 1945 and

[163] Meeting with regional representatives of OÚ, 7 December 1945. AM Ústí n.L., f. MNV Ústí n.L., k.2 inv.č. 24.
[164] For some examples of the OÚ's role in forced migration to and from the borderlands see Arburg, "Tak či oňak," 271-290.
[165] See text and references to key policies in Kreysa, *Budujeme pohraničí*, 11-13.

1946, Prague officials ordered large-scale investigations to remove unqualified or unreliable national administrators who had taken up positions just after the war.

Instead of unifying the nation, settlement and expulsion left deep divisions both within the borderlands and between them and the interior parts of the country. One major obstacle to successful settlement was the inability to remove all of the Sudeten Germans. Despite continuous attempts to cleanse the borderlands of Germans, many Czechs resisted these efforts. In part, this resistance stemmed from concerns about the future of local economies that depended on skilled German labor.[166] In other cases, personal relations between Czechs and Germans hampered efforts to expel every last German. Over ninety thousand mixed marriage couples existed after the war and as Czechs moved to the borderlands more cases of intimate relations developed.[167] Furthermore, as a spate of recent studies suggest, defining who was a Czech and who was a German became difficult concerning several groups of people with unclear national identity.[168] In the 1939 Nazi census of Czechoslovak districts attached to the Reich, some 15,000 Germans listed Czech as their mother tongue and another 13,000 were recorded as bilingual.[169] These figures indicate that even under Nazi rule thousands of people did not conform to well-defined national categories.

Germans who remained in the borderlands were not the only reason for discord among Czechs in the borderlands. Some of the sharpest conflicts emerged between "old" and "new settlers" who had completely different perspectives about the borderlands' past and its future. Early military reports provide a glimpse of specific suspicions against old settlers who had

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[166] See chapter 4.
[167] Frommer, "Expulsion or Integration," 382.
[168] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 18, 199-203; Chad Bryant, "Either German or Czech: Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1946." *Slavic Review* 61, no. 4 (2002): 683-706; King, *Budweisers*, 194-202; Tara Zahra, "Reclaiming Children for the Nation: Germanization, National Ascription, and Democracy in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1945," *Central European History* 37, no. 4 (2004): 501-543.
[169] Jaroslav Kučera, *Odsunové ztraty sudetoněmeckého obyvatelstva: Problémy jejich přesného vyčislení* (Prague, 1992), 10.

remained in the Sudetenland during the war. One report from Liberec, formerly the center of the *Sudetendeutche Partei*, noted: "In the area of Liberec there are no really true [*správných*] Czechs, because those who remained here during the German occupation (which is about 25 percent of the prewar state of the Czech population) out of property motives or other greedy reasons necessarily cooperated with Germans. The majority of the current Czech population here cannot be considered reliable."[170] Old settlers expressed similarly uncompromising feelings toward their Czech brethren from the interior of the country. They blamed new settlers for the chaos and rampant pillaging immediately following the war. One old settler newspaper claimed that many settlers who came during May were Nazi collaborators or simply sought to enrich themselves at the expense of the nation. It continued, "The size of these categories is quite large and from them comes much of the resistance which we encounter during the fulfillment of the historical work in the borderlands' construction."[171]

Divisions among new and old settlers emerged over questions about individuals' behavior during and immediately following the war. While each group's claim held some degree of veracity, harping on these differences often helped to further polarize these groups. One example of the rifts between old and new settlers involved decisions regarding the nationality and state citizenship of Germans and Czechs in Jablonec. In particular, a sharp dispute emerged in late 1946 concerning the nationality committee (*komise*) at the local national committee. This *komise* was established to help the district national committee make decisions about local individuals who appealed their loss of citizenship under Decree 33 and attempted to claim Czech nationality. Germans played particularly important roles in the local economy there and Czechs' attempts to protect them from expulsions for economic reasons added pressure to the conflict about the

[170] Situation report from Third Division Headquarters, 27 May 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.1 inv.č.6.
[171] Jan Harus, "Hraničář," *Hraničář-Ústřední orgán národní jednoty severočeské*, 27 September 1946.

nationality *komise*.[172] During a plenary meeting in August 1946, the security head of the MNV, Vladimír Škarvada, criticized a recent proposal to include old settlers on the MNV's nationality committee arguing that they often sympathized with Germans. The current chairman of the *komise*, an old settler himself, had requested the inclusion of old settlers because he believed only they understood local conditions and witnessed these people's behavior before and during the war, and therefore had better insight into the question of who should retain Czechoslovak citizenship. Indeed, the Interior Ministry had ruled that a person's behavior, not necessarily designated nationality, should determine citizenship.[173] However, Škarvada saw things differently. He noted, for example, that the first chairman of the nationality *komise* had a German wife whose brother had been in the SA. In addition, he complained that Germans who appealed for Czechoslovak citizenship and possessed local businesses hindered settlement by leaving the national administrators uncertain about their future. He even stated that the local schools were overfilled with children who could not understand Czech, threatening the education of true Czechs.[174]

Underlying the dispute over the nationality *komise* was a deeper division between old and new settlers. Škarvada complained that old settlers allowed unreliable people to take up leading positions in the town after the war and thereby compromised the reputation of Czechs who remained in the borderlands during the war. He also noted that old settlers occupied a priviledged position in the town's administrative and economic life. The current nationality committee chairman argued otherwise. He questioned Škarvada's portrayal of old settlers stating: "We suffered here far more than Czechs from the interior." He drew attention to the example of

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[172] For more on the situation with skilled German workers in Jablonec see chapter 4, 196-201.
[173] Jan Kuklík, *Mýty a realita takzvaných Benešových dekretů* (Prague, 2002), 287. For a similar connection with the Nazi designation of Jews in Germany, see Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, 1:72-4.
[174] Minutes from the plenum MNV Jablonec, 13 August 1946. SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn.17, inv.č.17.

working-class Czech women who came to the region for work during the interwar period and married Germans, when such relationships were unproblematic. Because their husbands often listed them as Germans during the 1930 census, he argued that they deserved a chance to retain Czech citizenship.[175] In the next meeting on the question, Škarvada resumed his attacks against old settlers, noting that while some had proven themselves to be worthy Czechs, they were the exceptions. He then reviewed 41 cases in which the nationality *komise* had approved the citizenship requests of people who had connections to Nazi organizations or questionable pasts. Other members of the MNV challenged Škarvada's presentation; the nationality *komise* chairperson noted that many of the cases he cited had already been overturned. Others defended old settlers' cautious approach to the nationality question. One member, for instance, argued that old settlers had worked to defend Jablonec from unreliable Czechs who moved to the borderlands to escape their collaborationist past.[176] Yet Škarvada's defense of "the National Revolution," as he termed it, and of new settlers' interests in gaining access to confiscated property and positions of authority was successful, and resulted in a less nuanced understanding of the nationality question in Jablonec.[177] As old settlers became a minority in their towns, they increasingly lost the ability to control such important debates.

In addition to divisions between old and new settlers, class and other group distinctions separated Czechs in the borderlands. The class background of settlers moving to the borderlands is difficult to substantiate, because so many settlers changed professions or became independent farmers through settlement itself. Organized data on settlers' social backgrounds are sorely lacking. While one can surmise that many settlers came from poorer backgrounds with little to

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[175] Ibid.
[176] Minutes from the plenum MěNV Jablonec, 17 October 1946. SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn.17, inv.č.17.
[177] See later judgments of the new committee in minutes from the Council of the MěNV Jablonece in 1947. SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn. 4, inv.č.4.

lose in relocating to the borderlands, stating that the vast majority of settlers came from the lowest social strata, as Karel Kaplan does, paints a somewhat distorted picture.[178] While factory owners and independent farmers were nearly absent from the settlement process, a variety of employment openings drew settlers with different backgrounds. Settlers with advanced technical degrees and/or experience came to help manage borderland industries. So, too, did skilled workers for much the same reasons. In addition, an array of state officials took up posts vacated by Nazi and Sudeten German administrators.[179] Even professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, accountants and teachers assumed positions in the borderlands, although they remained in high demand. One indication that not all settlers were from the lowest social strata was the observation by one reporter that one third of the settlers had blocked savings accounts from before or during the war, which they could put toward purchasing confiscated homes.[180] Thus, while members of the industrial and agricultural working class as well as those whom might be called service personnel—waiters, mechanics, tailors and others—made up the majority of those who moved to the borderlands, a broader range of social backgrounds existed in the borderlands than historians generally suggest.

By other measures, the overall portrait of new settlers' background appears more homogeneous. Settlers were generally young. By May 1947, those aged less than 34 years-old comprised nearly 63 percent of the population.[181] As Bradley Abrams points out, this was an important demographic trend that bolstered Communist movements throughout Eastern Europe after the war. He argues that, considering the experience of the youth during the Great

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[178] Karel Kaplan, *The Short March: The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948* (London, 1987), 28; Kaplan, *Právda o Československu*, 135.
[179] Wingfield, "The Politics of Memory," 254-255.
[180] "Dejte osídlencům, co jejich jest," *Stráz severu* 26 May 1945.
[181] *Soupisy obyvatelstva v Československu v letech 1946-1947*, Table 29, 540. The corresponding figure for the interior was nearly 50 percent.

Depression and war, "an urge for radical social change seems expected, not just excusable."[182] In this light, many young settlers may have set out to support the efforts to construct a model society in the borderlands and, thus, shared a similar mindset with each other and settlement officials. In addition, despite a variety of regional origins, agricultural settlers largely followed similar migratory paths to the borderlands, which meant that in some places new settlers already knew each other.[183] In late 1945, the Ministry of Agriculture sponsored the relocation of settler groups from specific interior districts to specific borderland districts.[184] While this policy had largely organizational and economic motives, in some places it likely eased settlers' transition.

Despite certain similarities among settlers, further obstacles to making the borderlands Czech appeared. Diversity among the borderland population grew after 1945 as Slovaks, Roma, returning Jews, Magyars and others made their way to the borderlands. Some of these migrations were the direct result of borderland labor shortages. For example, the ÚKVO began discussions to move Magyars from the border areas between Hungary and Slovakia to the Czech borderlands in late 1945 and early 1946 as labor shortages in agriculture began to surface.[185] Some forced deportations of Magyars occurred already in late 1945, though the main action took place in 1946. After negotiations between settlement officials, the government approved a formal measure to relocate Magyars to the Czech borderlands. Government officials hoped to gain 250,000 new permanent settlers through these campaigns, but only 45,000 Magyars were deported to the borderlands, most of whom later departed.[186] With the arrival of non-Czech settlers, new policies, prejudices, and practices emerged. Roma became perhaps the most

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[182] Abrams, "The Second World War," 658.
[183] Slezák, *Zemědělské osidlování*, 87-99.
[184] Zprávy o činnosti Osidlovací komise Ministerstva zemědělství, various. NA, f. Národní pozemkový fond (NPF), k.10-12 inv.č.16.
[185] Minutes from the 5th and 7th meetings of the ÚKVO, 29 November 1945, 8 March 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k. 12145, s.1651/2; Arburg, "Tak či oňak," 276-277; Kaplan, *Právda o Československu*, 118.
[186] Some Magyars escaped from the borderlands while others were permitted to return in 1948 and 1949. see Kaplan, *Právda o Československu*, 118-121; Arburg, "Tak či oňak," 278-281.

targeted group in the borderlands. Countless national committees requested provisions limiting their ability to settle in borderland towns or took independent measures to remove them.[187] This discrimination sometimes dovetailed with the expulsion of Sudeten Germans. For example, one borderland national committee circulated a resolution that demanded not only the final transfer of Germans, but the expulsion of all "unreliable inhabitants, hoodlums, gamblers, notorious alcoholics and gypsies."[188]

The divisions among borderland settlers emerged less from their social or ethnic backgrounds than through the process of expulsion and settlement themselves. When settlers arrived often became more important than where they came from. In addition, settlers' differing attitudes and actions toward Germans held repercussions for their individual futures as well as for the borderlands as a whole. Though both settlement officials and borderland national committees generally sought the same basic objectives—getting rid of the Germans and making the borderlands Czech—obstacles to these aspirations proved greater than these officials assumed. While Czechs became divided at times over the thorny issue of determining who was a Czech and who was a German, these debates did not significantly alter the scope of expulsions or dramatically change the settlement process. Instead, settlers' practical concerns about their living conditions and jobs created discord in many borderland towns and hindered the goals of settlement and expulsion.

The mass migrations that expulsion and settlement caused in combination with the reorganization of state power following the war created instability and opportunity in the borderlands. Instability flowed from the huge influx of Czechs in search of gain and the

[187] See for instance Minutes from ONV Jablonec, 9 September 1946, SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn.3, inv.č.3; Minutes from meeting of MSK Vejprty, 26 November 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Vejprty, k.2 inv.č 12-15; Minutes from MNV Ervěnice, 11 and 26 March 1947. SOkA Chomutov, f. MěNV Ervěnice, k.2 inv.č. 125.
[188] Resolution of MNV Rýmařov, 17 September 1946. SOkA Jeseník, f. MNV Zlatý hory, k.2 inv.č.51.

conflicting agendas of military units and national committees over local control. Opportunities emerged to acquire Sudeten German property, positions of power in national committees, and political support. The example of Česká Kamenice provides a window into how these processes overlapped. Dovara and Charous dissolved the first national committee and placed themselves and their followers in positions of authority. They gained support, in part, through the distribution of confiscated property. The Communist Party, which they represented, likewise gained supporters and also gave legitimacy to their actions. The combination of instability and opportunity proved particularly advantageous for the Communists as they attempted to increase party membership and take control of national committees.

In addition to highlighting the intersections between migration and state formation, this chapter demonstrated the systematic nature of the expulsions from the very beginning. The 1945 summer expulsions were not "wild," as has been previously portrayed, but were carried out under the military's auspices with the central government's backing. Settlement, on the other hand, was much more spontaneous and only in 1946 did the Settlement Office develop plans and policies to address earlier shortcomings. Understanding the pace and the nature of settlement and expulsion suggests that nationalist hatred did not play a significant role in these processes. Instead, the imperatives of power and property shaped relations between Germans and Czechs as well as between new and old settlers, and national committees and Prague officials. The following two chapters explain in greater detail how the confiscation and distribution of Sudeten German property affected these processes.

3.0 PROPERTY ON THE MOVE

3.1 CONFISCATION POLITICS

Confiscation politics emerged immediately following World War II as Czechs seized Sudeten German property on their own initiative, even before the central government had solidified plans for official expropriation and allocation. The actions of first settlers set the tone for these politics, which involved much more than an interest in material gain. State organs and political parties, individuals and groups, as well as various Czechs and Germans all attempted to control the possession and use of the seized property. Thus, confiscation politics was broader than "settlement politics," which remained a state-sponsored initiative to use seized assets in order to entice settlers to move to the borderlands. Confiscation politics included everything from state policies for reorganizing the economy and the punishment of Germans to individual desires for social mobility. The central government utilized Sudeten German farmland and industries in order to initiate massive restructuring projects for its socialist-oriented economic program. Czechs from the country's interior rushed to the borderlands during the expulsions and transported much movable property back to their homes. Proceeds from the sale of confiscated German property went to bolster the Czechoslovak currency as it underwent reform following the war. In these and other ways, confiscation politics affected the entire country.

The amount and value of this property was considerable, though impossible to calculate precisely. Much property was pilfered during the immediate postwar chaos. In addition,

estimates remain ambiguous because property had changed owners sometimes more than once after 1938.[1] Those in power following the war had little desire to return property to its prewar owners or heirs, in the case of Jews, and some confiscated property remained in limbo for a long time.[2] Once the Communists took control of the state in February 1948, they closed the Fund for National Renewal and allowed nationalized enterprises to take over confiscated firms at discount prices, thereby decreasing the value attached to industrial enterprises.[3] The lack of reliable figures for the value of property transferred during the expulsions has unsurprisingly supported a wide variety of estimates. Some Sudeten German groups and historians have argued that confiscated property was worth nearly 200 billion Reich marks (RM), or 2 trillion Czechoslovak crowns (Kčs), in May 1945.[4] Official Czechoslovak values for confiscated property varied. In 1946, one state official placed the value of Sudeten Germans' property at 300 billion crowns.[5] By October 1949, Czech settlers owed the National Land Fund over seven trillion crowns for former Sudeten German farms.[6] One government report noted that Sudeten German currency in blocked accounts totaled nearly 35 billion Kčs at the end of 1948.[7] While these figures begin to give some sense of the amount and value of seized property, they reveal little in personal terms about the meaning and impact of these property transfers.

The expropriation of private property was not a new phenomenon in modern Europe. For instance, the Bolsheviks altered property-owning structures in Russia soon after the revolution in

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[1] Jan Gross, "War as Revolution," in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath*, eds. Istvan Deak, Jan Gross, and Tony Judt (Princeton, 2000), 20.
[2] For more on the Czechoslovak government's treatment of Jewish property, see chapter 5, 257-265.
[3] Sekr. zn. 1540/taj.-1950. Problémy osídlení a hospodářské výsledky FNO v Praze a v Bratislavě. Národní archiv, Prague (NA), f. Mininsterstvo vnitra – Tajné (MV-T), k.196 s.280.
[4] Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československa 1945-1948* (Prague, 1991), 355-357.
[5] Pavel Sajal, *Za 300 miliard hodnot vrací se do rukou českého národa* (Prague, 1946), 3.
[6] Problémy zemědělství v pohraničí, Ministry of Agriculture (MZ), December 1949. NA, f. Ministerstvo zemědelství – Sekretariat (MZ-S), k.379 inv.č.191.
[7] Zpráva osidlovacího úřadu a fondu národní obnovy v Praze o hospodářských výsledcích činnosti – dodatečná zpráva, 10 February 1949. NA, f. Osídlovací komise při ÚV KSČ (f. 23), a.j. 329.

1917 by nationalizing factories, land, and later through the collectivization campaigns of the 1930s. These actions were directed primarily against so-called class enemies, though at times such actions overlapped with ethnic groups as well.[8] Following World War I, many states in Central and Eastern Europe attempted to implement far-reaching land reform, which they often aimed at internal ethnic enemies and carried through with only limited success.[9] While these previous property seizures had an important class component to them, during the World War II era, expropriation and redistribution policies dovetailed with attempts to expel unwanted minorities.

In recent years, scholarship on Nazi expropriation policies has significantly increased, offering a detailed picture of how property confiscation and redistribution fit into the broader scope of Nazi resettlement and extermination plans.[10] Aryanization, first understood as the forced sale of Jewish businesses to non-Jewish owners, was "a creeping process" in different parts of Germany beginning already in 1933.[11] German banks, businesses, and individuals lined up to take over Jewish commercial property, even before official regulations permitted it. They used informal measures and direct pressure to gain access to Jewish businesses.[12] In Austria, following the March 1938 *Anschluss* with the Reich, so-called "wild commissars" seized Jewish businesses at will. These were not authorized government caretakers of this property, as the later

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[8] Terry Martin, "Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing" *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998): 826-829.
[9] Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle, 1974), 12-13.
[10] For the most recent research available in English, see Gerald D. Feldman and Wolfgang Seibel eds., *Networks of Nazi Persecution: Bureaucracy, Business and the Organization of the Holocaust* (New York, 2005); Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler and Philipp Ther eds., *Robbery and Restitution: The Conflict over Jewish Property in Europe* (New York, 2006).
[11] Frank Bajohr, *'Aryanisation' in Hamburg: The Economic Exclusion of Jews and the Confiscation of Their Property in Nazi Germany*, trans. George Wilkes (New York, 2002), 76.
[12] Ibid; Hans Safrian, "Expediting Expropriation and Expulsion: The Impact of the 'Vienna Model' on Anti-Jewish Policies in Nazi Germany, 1938," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 14, no. 3 (2000): 398; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews* 3rd. ed. (New Haven, CT, 2003), 1:97-98.

Treuhänder became in Germany, but self-appointed managers out for personal gain.[13] Following *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, the government intensified and further codified Aryanization in the Reich. By the end of 1938, Jews were legally forced to relinquish their property. Although top Nazi officials wanted to ensure that the process remained orderly and that qualified businessmen took over Jewish firms a property rush ensued, which mainly benefited lower-level party members.[14] Denying Jews the right to existence in Germany and other occupied territories formed a core piece of Nazi ideology. By taking their property, Nazi leaders made plans and policies for the Jews' expulsion and destruction easier to implement. At the same time, through the redistribution of Jewish property the Nazis maintained the support of German citizens and party members.[15]

The Aryanization of Jewish property established an important precedent for the postwar reordering of property relations in Central and Eastern Europe. As Jan Gross notes: "Such actions conspicuously demonstrated that property rights were dependent on a state's good will and could be eliminated with the stroke of a pen."[16] Indeed, property confiscation often served as the first legal measures against German speakers and other minorities prior to their expulsion after the war. In addition, like the expropriation of the Jews, local officials and actors often did not wait for central permission to commence confiscation. In Poland, Poles from districts bordering on the so-called "recovered territories," which were taken from Germany and attached to Poland, began looting these areas in the spring and summer of 1945. Even after the Polish government established regulations governing property confiscation, local Polish officials acted

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[13] Safrian, "Expediting Expropriation and Expulsion," 395. Commissars of Jewish property were also used in the Sudetenland in 1938. Harold James, *The Deutsche Bank and the Nazi Economic War against the Jews* (Cambridge, 2001), 164.
[14] Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, 1: 122-127; Bajohr, *'Aryanisation' in Hamburg*, 231-257.
[15] Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Race War and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York, 2007).
[16] Gross, "War as Revolution," 22.

as they saw fit. In former East Prussia, Masurians, Polish speakers who generally considered themselves German, were counted as Poles after the war in order to bolster Polish claims to regions where they lived. However, Masurian property holders were deemed German when they owned particularly desirable property.[17] Local leaders and new inhabitants drove the course of property confiscation in postwar Poland.

In Czechoslovakia, a similar blend of local actions and state intervention shaped the process of property confiscation. Government leaders created decrees and regulations regarding German property that sought to maximize the gains from expropriation. The property seized by the Czechoslovak state did not form part of the reparations that it received from Germany. At the Paris Conference on Reparations in November and December 1945, Czechoslovak authorities successfully excluded from their reparation earnings the property of Germans who were not citizens of Germany "at the time of annexation, occupation or entrance to war."[18] This provision applied to all Germans who had been citizens of Czechoslovakia until the Nazis annexed borderland areas in 1938. The Nazis had given Reich citizenship to Sudeten Germans in November 1938, which the Czechoslovak government used as the basis to deny them citizenship after the war.[19] However, decrees that confiscated property did not use the Germans' prewar citizenship status as the basis for their expropriation. Instead, the government confiscated property based on people's nationality, which it defined in different ways. In the case of the

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[17] Claudia Kraft, "Who is a Pole, and Who is a German? The Province Olsztyn in 1945," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, eds. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Lanham, MD, 2001), 114; Richard Blanke, "Polish-speaking Germans and the Ethnic Cleansing of Germany East of Oder-Neisse," in *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe*, eds. Steven B. Várdy and T. Hunt Tooley (Boulder, CO, 2003), 286-290; Tomasz Kamusella, "Ethnic Cleansing in Upper Silesia, 1944-1951," in *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe*, 299-300.

[18] Yugoslav authorities also backed the measure. Jan Kuklík, *Mýty a realita takzvaných Benešových dekretů* (Prague, 2002), 322. See Paris Agreement on Reparations, Part I, Article 6, Section D. For an online copy see the website for the Czech Republic's Minister of Foreign Affairs. September 27, 2005. http://www.mzv.cz/wwwo/mzv/default.asp?id=26323&ido=14070&idj=1&amb=1

[19] The Agreement on Citizenship that made Sudeten Germans into Reich citizens came into effect on November 11, 1938. Other regulations followed. See Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:358-360.

decree on national administrators and Decree 12, which confiscated agricultural holdings, nationality was determined "by their choice for German nationality in any census since 1929" or by virtue of having joined any German group or organization.[20] Some ministers remained unsure about the effectiveness of such measures. In May 1945, Václav Nosek, the Interior Minister, noted that the previous census from December 1, 1930 did not request data about nationality, but was based on an individual's "mother tongue" (*mateřský jazyk*). Citing just one possible complication, he asked: "What will be the position of Austrian citizens?"[21]

Indeed, relying on the 1930 census as the main factor for determining a person's nationality proved problematic. During the 1930 census, officials regarded mother tongue as a sufficient indicator of a person's nationality and permitted exceptions only in rare cases. As Jeremy King argues, this interpretation likely downplayed the number of Czechs, if only because the stress on mother tongue "prevented some former Germans who voted Czech and sent their children to Czech schools from boosting still higher the Czech gains since 1921."[22] During the 1930s, the increase in the number of Czechs was even greater as Czech national activists worked to increase the number of Czechs, particularly by increasing the number of Czech schools and their pupils.[23] Postwar leaders became convinced that the 1930 census failed to adequately represent an individual's nationality. They not only realized that many former Germans had become Czech, but they faced pressure from Czechs in mixed marriages who were subjected to anti-German

[20] Compare Decree 5, sec. 6 with Decree 12, Art.2. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:216, 276.
[21] Excerpt from the minutes of the government meeting, 25 May 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:284.
[22] Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics* (Princeton, 2002), 167.
[23] Mark Cornwall, "The Struggle on the Czech-German Language Border, 1880-1940," *English Historical Review* 109, no. 433 (1994): 914-951; Tara Zahra, "Reclaiming Children for the Nation: Germanization, National Ascription, and Democracy in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1945," *Central European History* 37, no. 4 (2005): 501-543.

provisions and from foreign governments whose German citizens faced expropriation.[24] Thus, beginning with Decree 33 in August 1945, which revoked Sudeten Germans' Czechoslovak citizenship, the qualifications for Czech nationality began to broaden. Decree 33 permitted anyone who had claimed Czech or Slovak nationality after 1938 to retain citizenship. In May 1946, the government extended these provisions to include anyone who had attended Czech schools.[25] More lenient regulations regarding the treatment of mixed marriage couples soon followed.[26] Although this expanded conception of nationality favored thousands of people considered German according to previous regulations, they still faced retribution, loss of property, and even deportation from the borderlands.

While Decree 33 paved the way for the expulsions, the postwar confiscation decrees (i.e. Decrees 5, 12, and 108) explicitly penalized the Sudeten Germans for their prewar support of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (SdP). The confiscation decrees substantiated their guilt and demanded payment for their transgressions. For instance, the Justification Report attached to Decree 108, which confiscated German non-agricultural property in October 1945, stated: "[P]rimarily all Germans and Magyars, who identified with the program of Hitler and his willing accomplices in Hungary, accepted responsibility for all the crimes perpetrated by their regimes and as a member of an enemy state became liable for damages caused by them." The report noted that over 90 percent of Sudeten German voters had supported the SdP in 1938 local elections.[27] In other property debates, state leaders dismissed proposals to compensate Germans for their property by

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[24] Benjamin Frommer, "Expulsion or Integration: Unmixing Interethnic Marriage in Postwar Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 381-410; Separate regulations emerged regarding the assets of Austrian and other German citizens of Allied or neutral countries. See 1700-28/3-46-82-Vb/3 Directive for Sec.1 and 2 of 108 – foreign state members, 8 April 1946. *Předpisy z oboru působnosti OÚ a FNO: Zákony (dekrety), vládní nařízení, vyhlášky* (Prague, 1947), 2:238-241. Correspondence regarding this directive can be found in NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra-Nová registratura (MV-NR), k.1786 inv.č.1581 s.B1700.
[25] King, *Budweisers*, 196-201.
[26] Frommer, "Expulsion or Integration," 392; See chapter 5, 181-185.
[27] Důvodová zpráva k vládou schválenému znění dekretu o konfiskací nepřátelského majetku, 13 October 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:882.

arguing that aside from those Sudeten Germans who had actively opposed the Nazis, the rest "carry collective responsibility for all the crimes committed by Germans against the Czech nation and republic, and therefore compensation does not belong to them."[28] Other explanations for expropriation were more complex, but still rested on the idea of collective crime and punishment.[29]

The confiscation decrees bolstered the government's position as de facto owner and arbiter of former Sudeten German property. The National Front leaders confiscated German property in the name of the republic or the nation, but the decrees gave the state the power to expropriate and distribute these assets to others. The decrees also allowed the state to implement economic restructuring programs at little cost. Several costs for the settlement program came from the proceeds from confiscated property, including loans to settler-farmers and an incentive payment offered to other settlers.[30] Government leaders did not always agree about how to pursue these goals. For instance, The Košice Program, which outlined the National Front's agenda in April 1945, made land reform one of its economic program's cornerstones. Article XI of that program contained the broad outlines of Decree 12. It demanded the confiscation of German and Hungarian lands without compensation and promised to sell such property to Czechs and Slovaks at low prices.[31] In June 1945, however, President Beneš raised objections to confiscating Sudeten German land without counting it toward the reparations the country would receive from Germany. He had earlier promised Allied leaders that the property of transferred individuals

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[28] Proposed response to President Beneš' comments about confiscation Decree 12, 13 June 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:303.

[29] See for instance, Jan Procházka, *Konfiskace majětku nepřátel a zrádců v ČSR* (Praha, 1946); V. Řezníček, "Rozdělování konfiskovaného majetku, jeho předpoklady, přípravy a dosavadní průběh," *Osidlování*, 12 December 1946.

[30] The supplement was aimed primarily at state employees and industrial workers and amounted to only a small fraction of receipts from confiscated property. See Návrh vládního usnesení o jednorázovém platovém příspěku osídlovacím pro veřejně a některé jiné zaměstance v pohraničí, Osidlovácí úřad (OÚ), 14 May 1946. Archiv města (AM) Ústí n. L., f. Městský národní výbor (MěNV) Ústí n. L., k.2 inv.č.24.

[31] *Program první Československé vlády Národní fronty* (Prague, 1955), 20-21.

would not be confiscated without compensation.[32] He also worried about future claims that might arise if no compensation was made.

National Front ministers unanimously agreed that the state should not compensate Germans for their property, but the issue of how much settlers should pay for confiscated farmland created sharp debate. The Communists proposed that payments should be the equivalent of no more than two years' harvest. The Minister of Finance argued that this proposed payment grossly undervalued German farms and suggested that it be increased to three or more years. President Beneš and others supported this view, in part, because they sought a bigger return from confiscated property to help offset losses from the upcoming currency reform.[33] Communists managed to overcome these other leaders' resistance to these low terms of compensation by connecting them to more popular aspects of the program. During discussions among ministers about Decree 12, Communists placed land reform within the broader context of "the national and democratic revolution," thus helping to prevent other politicians from compromising the extent of its benefits for settlers. Party leader, Klement Gottwald, argued that "the confiscation of land should not lead to the enrichment of the state," but should be in the hands of the people.[34] Václav Kopecký, the outspoken Communist Minister of Information, attacked efforts to increase settlers' payments for farmland arguing that they came from "the propertied strata." Julius Ďuriš, the Minister of Agriculture, made cheap land reform a matter of the state's survival. He argued that "such proposals and suggestions against the text of the decree from the highest echelons

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[32] President Beneš' comments on the proposal for the decree on the confiscation of agricultural property (Decree 12), 12 June 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety* 1:295, 296 n.6; See also Jan Rychlík, "Pozemková reforma v českých zemích v letech 1945-1948," in *Zemědělství na rozcestí, 1945-1948.* Sborník příspěvků z mezinárodní konference konané ve dnech 22-23 September 1998 (Uherské Hradiště, 1998), 9.
[33] Excerpt from the minutes from the 29th meeting of the government, 13 June 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:296-303.
[34] Excerpt from the minutes from the 26th meeting of the government, 4 June 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:289-290.

destroy national unity and particularly the unity of the state and both of its nations."[35] In the end, the Communists successfully held the rest of the government to their terms. A mixture of national and populist arguments bolstered their case and demonstrated the power of such rhetoric to support settlers' claims to property. The central government's debate on land reform also indicated that the benefits of confiscation politics did not come in financial terms alone; the Communists sought to gain political support by offering former Sudeten German farmland at inexpensive prices.

Property politics did not originate in Prague. The initial borderland property rush in 1945 set the stage for the Czechoslovak government's intervention to halt the widespread looting and to better control the confiscation agenda. In this way, individuals shaped the state's initial approach to confiscation politics. Settlers' and others' immediate desires for property forced the state to take greater control over its confiscation and allocation. Once the central government established an official agenda regarding confiscated property, settlers and borderland national committees then had to negotiate these policies in order to hold onto their newly acquired gains. This dialectical interaction among settlers, national committees and the central government drove confiscation politics and revealed how broad segments of the Czech population participated in the ethnic and economic transformation of the borderlands.

Equally important, the actions of early settlers and looters set the tone for future relations among Czechs, Germans, Slovaks and others in the borderlands. A sense that everyone was making off with former German property shifted Czech settlers' attitudes toward the confiscation and settlement programs, and toward one another. Instead of seeing each other as members of the Czech nation united against a common German foe, settlers considered one another as

[35] Excerpt from the minutes from the 29th meeting of the government, 13 June 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:296-303.

competitors in search of the best property. Such an interpretation fits with the notion of property rights as a set of relations between people. As one scholar of property rights suggests:

> We often think of property as some version of entitlement to things: I have a right to thing or that. In a more sophisticated version of property, of course, we see property as a way of defining our relationships with other people. In such versions, my right to this thing or that isn't about controlling the 'thing' so much as it is about my relationship with *you*, and with everybody else in the world: if I have a property right to this thing or that, I can keep you from exercising any control over it or having any access to it at all.[36]

Property relations offer a useful lens through which we can examine the expulsion and settlement and the development of group and personal relationships. Attempts to control confiscated property divided settlers from one another and became one of the central aspects of Czech-German interaction. Property also affected Czechs' relations with Roma, Jews and other outsiders. As such, the story of confiscated property reveals a variety of tensions in the postwar borderlands.

It would be misleading to present settlers' motivations in terms of a static self-interest. Rather, settlers' desire for confiscated property reflected a transformation of attitudes caused by the war. Czechs, like other people throughout Central and Eastern Europe, witnessed and participated in the Holocaust, although to widely varying degrees. Seeking personal advantage through the expulsion of others did not seem to bother many people.[37] Eagle Glassheim argues that changes in peoples' attitudes toward property formed part of a materialist philosophy that developed through the ethnic cleansing of the borderlands and the imposition of communist-inspired policies.[38] While he links the effects of this philosophy to the environmental devastation

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[36] Carol M. Rose, *Property and Persuasion: Essays on the History, Theory and Rhetoric of Ownership* (Boulder, CO, 1994), 27-28.
[37] Jan Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (New York, 2006), 39-47; Richard Z. Chesnoff, *Pack of Thieves: How Hitler and Europe Plundered the Jews and Committed the Greatest Theft in History* (New York, 2001), 65-66.
[38] Eagle Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989," *Journal of Modern History* 78 (March 2006): 65-92.

of northern Bohemia up to 1989, the drive for property and social mobility also played a crucial role in the operation of the expulsion and settlement. The question of how to utilize seized assets became contentious and divisive among Czechs as soon as expulsions began. Settlers squabbled over the spoils, which hindered definitive resolutions regarding ownership. Some Czechs turned to former Sudeten German owners for help in finding and maintaining seized property, thereby challenging the notion that Germans were the Czechs' enemy who must be expelled at any cost. Germans buried their possessions or used personal relationships with Czechs in an effort to retain their belongings. The desire for property and national support for the expulsions were not mutually exclusive and together reinforced pressure to remove Sudeten Germans. Yet it was property, rather than nationality, that brought Czechs to the borderlands.

Examining confiscation politics highlights key intra-state relations as well as relationship among people. For instance, the central government authorized a series of *revise* (investigations) into the handling of Sudeten German property. These *revise* included background checks of national administrators and investigations into their management of former Sudeten German firms, as well as audits of national committees' financial records. Although calls for *revise* sometimes emanated from borderland national committees, they generally opposed attempts to account for the past, especially when Prague officials spearheaded such investigations. Without national committee support property revisions generally failed to change the status quo and strengthened early settlers' and national committees' hold on confiscated property.

Focusing on the politics of property confiscation recasts the dominant paradigm, based on stark national divisions and ethnic enmity, which is usually employed to examine the Sudeten German expulsions. Instead, I analyze people's actions and attitudes through struggles over property. The rest of this chapter investigates how Czechs, Germans and the government handled

confiscated movable goods. As Czechs rushed to the borderlands in search of quick gain, they helped to create a principle of "first come, first serve" that made it difficult for settlement authorities and national committees to manage the allocation of confiscated property. In addition, their actions added pressure and chaos to the expulsions and fostered the image of the borderlands as a corrupt and lawless region. Sudeten Germans became involved in confiscation politics in various ways, though generally they could do little to retain their property. Their interaction with Czechs nonetheless demonstrates how the desire to control property overcame ethnic boundaries and challenged the state's demands concerning the relations between these groups.[39] Finally, as local and central authorities attempted to gain control over the confiscation agenda, disputes arose concerning who was owed what from the sale of German belongings.

3.2 "GOLD DIGGERS"

Whatever the government's broader goals for encouraging settlement, protecting confiscated property became an important first step toward realizing those aims. The immediate postwar pilfering of Sudeten German property by military units and others thus represented a step in the wrong direction. The government was partly to blame. Its decision to carry out expulsions immediately after the war and officials' promotion of the borderlands as a place of opportunity fostered the widespread and uncontrolled seizure of property. It left ownership rights in limbo until it issued the general confiscation decree until October 1945 and enforced few rules concerning the use of Sudeten German property. Borderland national committees, overwhelmed

[39] On 26 November 1945 the Interior Ministry issued a directive in connection with the retribution decrees that punished professional or social relations with Germans, among other offences. For more on the directive, see Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge, 2005), 192-211.

by the migration of people in and out of their towns, had difficulty regulating the movement of former German property. The wartime scarcity of consumer goods likely added intensity to the looting. Those people who went to the borderlands with the sole intent of profiting from the expropriation of Sudeten Germans, commonly referred to as "gold diggers," added to the instability and disorder brought by expulsions and undermined the bases for successful settlement of the borderlands.

"Gold diggers" can be defined in a number of ways. In contemporary terms, the definition evolved from one that described Czechs who rushed to the borderlands in the summer of 1945 in search of quick gain, to those who generally engaged in what might best be considered corrupt practices with seized German assets over a longer period of time. Strictly speaking, gold diggers looted, but settlers that became caretakers of a Sudeten German farm, house or business in order to steal its property were gold-diggers of a slightly higher order. Other settlers who sold goods on the black market were called gold diggers, even though Czechs in the interior who engaged in similar practices avoided such a label. Despite the difficulty of drawing sharp distinctions between such practices, gold diggers is used here to describe those who sought to remove or misuse expropriated property solely for their personal benefit. In this sense, Czechs from the interior as much as those who settled in the borderlands comprised the pool of possible gold diggers.

Gold diggers were important for several reasons. First, they had a free-for-all attitude toward expropriated property, and they created an atmosphere in which people easily overlooked local and central government's warnings against the theft and false reporting of former German assets. Such actions and attitudes undermined settlement. Farms, homes and businesses that had been stripped of furniture and equipment offered little to those settlers who came to start a new life

without their own possessions. The borderlands came to be seen in the eyes of many Czechs as a land of gold diggers.[40] Image outstripped reality as newspaper reports, jokes, and official commentary painted a one-dimensional portrait of the borderlands, focused solely on shortcomings. Whatever the actual extent of gold-digging, the sense that property was disappearing or being misused became prevalent among national committee members and settlement officials. This notion, in turn, supported invasive government policies, such as house and luggage searches and other restrictions, which reinforced suspicion and corruption among Czechs and others in the borderlands.[41]

Documenting the extent of gold digging remains difficult. Some historians have recently questioned whether the image of rampant gold digging reflected the actual extent of the practice.[42] They suggest that the widespread discussions about gold diggers should not be taken as evidence of endemic corruption in connection with confiscated property. In addition, gold digging, because of its surreptitious nature, does not lend itself to empirical analysis. For every case that is documented, how many went unreported? Despite these reservations and obstacles, during much of the summer and fall of 1945, significant numbers of Czechs made off with Sudeten German property. Across the borderlands, national committees, security organs and military officials reported that "unwanted elements" came to the borderlands for their own enrichment. They posed a constant obstacle for those attempting to restore order. In addition, between 1945 and 1948, authorities apprehended hundreds, more likely thousands, of individuals

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[40] Gregor Thum suggests a similar image existed in cleansed areas of western Poland. Gregor Thum, "Cleansed Memory: The New Polish Wroclaw (Breslau) and the Expulsion of the Germans," in *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe*, 337-338.
[41] Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 72, 84. Lubomír Slezák, *Zemědělské osídlování pohraničí českých zemí po druhé světové válce* (Brno, 1978), 45-47, 54-55.
[42] Adrian von Arburg, "Tak či onak," *Soudobé dějiny* 10, no. 3 (2003), 262; Zdeněk Radvanovský, *Konec Česko.Německého soužití v ústecké oblastíi* (Ústí nad Labem, 1997), 99.

who mishandled confiscated German property. Sudeten German sources also corroborate the evidence of widespread gold digging.[43]

Military units were prevalent among the first pillagers of Sudeten German possessions. Soviet soldiers continually raided local Sudeten Germans' property and took what they wanted or needed. In addition, the Red Army seized many borderland factories, some of which they dismantled and loaded on eastward bound trains. As the Soviet army handed military operations over to Czechoslovak authorities during the summer, the Czechoslovak army took up where the Soviets had left off.[44] In one investigation, the Local National Committee (MNV) in Polevsko complained that two companies of the 28th Infantry Regiment drove off with two motorcycles, four bikes, a couple of typewriters, dozens of provisions and other odds and ends from local Sudeten Germans after threatening to shoot them.[45] Revolutionary Guard units often behaved much worse. Derisively known as the "Ransacking Guards,"[46] these paramilitary groups often plundered towns and were the source of constant complaints from civilians in the borderlands. Military authorities discovered a letter from a mother to a son in the army in which she pleaded: "Everyone already received full suitcases from the borderlands; only I still have nothing."[47] The ongoing pillaging by these groups prompted central authorities to attempt to bring them to bay.

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[43] See, for example, Theodor Schieder ed., *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central Europe* vol. 4 *The Expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia*, trans. G.H. de Sausmarez (Bonn, 1960), 359, 410, 415, 421, 453-454, 464, 468.

[44] Although the sources in Schieder stress that Czech soldiers plundered more extensively than the Soviets, Czech sources suggest that the Red Army was just as thorough.

[45] Zápis o stěhovací akci, Národní výbor Polevsko, 20 June 1945.Vojenský historický archiv, Prague (VHA), f. Velitelství první oblasti (VO1), k.49 inv.č.2763-2801.

[46] Cited in Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 50.

[47] Report from Hlávní velitelství Sbor národní bezpečnosti (SNB), Liberec, 28 May 1945. NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra – Nosek MV-N, k.227 inv.č.146. According to Zdeněk Radvanovský: "On May 18 and 19, 1945, Prague radio delivered an official report to the inhabitants, that family members of those who went to Ústí nad Labem and other cities go to the train station, because the guards would be returning and have heavy suitcases." See Zdeněk Radvanovský, "Nucené vysídlení a odsun Němců," in *Studie o sudetonemecké otazce* ed. Vacláv Kural et.al. (Prague, 1996), 137.

Still, even at the end of the summer, military personnel were being blamed for stealing Sudeten German property.

The looting reached its peak during the summer of 1945 as the expulsions were in full swing. Czechs found easy access to Sudeten German goods following local expulsions. For instance, in the Krnov district, Sudeten German inhabitants were rounded up on June 14, 1945 and sent to the local school following a reported shooting incident. This offered an excellent opportunity for local settlers to move from house to house and take what they wished, unhindered by the presence of former owners and uninhibited by local authorities who were occupied by other matters.[48] They looted radios, furniture, and other such items. Often these possessions moved within buildings and later became the source of disputes between new neighbors. Some settlers coming to the borderlands later in 1945 and 1946 reported that little furniture remained in vacant apartments. Many locals clearly took advantage of the uninhabited homes and weak state authority to make off with moveable Sudeten German property.

Of course, Czechs also seized property directly from Sudeten Germans' hands. At times, the former used violence to cow the latter into submission prior to stealing their goods, often their valuables. Those in positions of military authority had the easiest time seizing property. In one case, a camp guard found three watches in a Sudeten German woman's baby carriage during an entrance search at an internment camp. The guard, Anna Rumplíková, returned the watches to their place and instructed another guard to bring the woman to her cell. A few minutes later Rumplíková came to her cell and removed the watches from their hiding place along with a ring and slid them into her own pocket, refusing to respond to the woman's pleas for understanding. Such incidents were repeated countless times during the summer expulsions. However,

[48] See reports on Krnov expulsion. Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Bruntál, f. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Krnov I, k.17 inv. č.72; SOkA Bruntál , f. ONV Krnov I, dodatek, k.11 inv.č.92; Tomáš Staněk, *Perzekuce, 1945* (Prague, 1996), 126.

Rumplíková's case is somewhat unique because she was caught and had to answer to charges of theft. Though she worked at the camp for only two weeks, her brutality toward the Germans made her well-known there. In her own defense, she mentioned that she had joined up with the partisans at the end of the war to make the Germans pay for what they had done to her. Her defense for the theft of jewelry and other belongings was that "all the camp employees steal, so I was allowed to do this as well."[49] This comment led to a wider investigation, following which charges were brought against the commander of the camp and another guard. Rumplíková finally tried to fool local authorities with a letter allegedly from the Defense Ministry, which requested that she be allowed to retain possession of these goods as payment for her services as a partisan. When this plea failed, she broke down and admitted that she had stolen the items, but still she believed that they truly belonged to her.[50]

Becoming a national administrator—a designation for people who managed Sudeten German property for the state—also offered an excellent opportunity to make off with confiscated goods. On June 26, 1945, *Stráž severu* (Sentinel of the North) reported that gold digging had reached a feverous pitch: "Trains churn more of them out day after day." The reporter noted his conversation with one energetic gold digger who had traveled throughout the borderlands looking to take over a Sudeten German business. "In some places it won't come off, but I will hook something," he hoped.[51] Gold diggers sought positions as national administrators of businesses and farms because they offered multiple ways of embezzling confiscated property at the expense of the state. For instance, they reported lower earnings in their state accounting reports, sold merchandise on the black market, used unpaid German labor and also carted things away. Gold-digger national administrators engaged in many of these activities and will be

[49] Testimony of Anna Rumplíková, 31 October 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.1 inv.č.60.
[50] See reports and testimonies concerning her case. Ibid.
[51] "'Zlatokopové' na českém severu," *Stráž severu*, 26 June 1946.

discussed further in the following chapter, but here it is important to understand the variety of ways that property poured out of the borderlands. Items such as rugs, clothing and other valuables that could be easily transported often formed the bulk of outgoing goods. National administrators had easy access to such goods. In a typical example, authorities caught the national administrator of a German business in Vejprty attempting to send a Persian rug from the firm of Gammnitzer to his wife in Prague. When they searched his house, they found other items from the factory already packed, including several works of art.[52] Others attempted to smuggle goods by train. Prague was often the preferred destination, though gold diggers came from neighboring interior districts, as well.[53] More importantly, these practices continued into 1946 and sustained unrest in the borderlands.

Positions of authority in local governments or police units offered probably the easiest route to make off with confiscated German property. Corruption involving former Sudeten German assets ran rampant, especially during 1945 when individual commissars and local administrative commissions controlled many localities and had little effective supervision. Commissars often lived surrounded by Germans and had the opportunity to do as they pleased. For instance, the local commissar in Malkov and Zasada, Josef Kostka, had accumulated a cache of expropriated property in his nearby home. He had one radio, six lamps, a typewriter, one violin, four different cameras, two timers, a half a dozen sets of dinnerware, a cash register and a stove, in addition to 135 kilograms of seed and 43 kilos of grain.[54] In Rumburk, an investigation found that a number of district administrative commissioners had collected and sold confiscated valuables.[55] National

[52] SOkA Chomutov, f. Mistní národní výbor (MNV) Vejprty, k.16 inv.č.20.
[53] See for examples KNS-214/114 z r.1946, Zemský národní výbor (ZNV) Prague, 3 January 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2380, inv.č.2030, s.B2620/1; Rabování v pohraničí spojené s odsunem Němců, MV, 17 May 1946. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.3 inv.č113; Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague* trans. Franci and Helen Epstein (New York, 1989), 70.
[54] SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.47 inv.č.170.
[55] Report on the Wagner case, NA, f. MV-NR, k.1785 inv.č.1579.

committee members benefited not only through personal possession of such property, but through its allocation to others. Through such transactions, national committee members could build up personal and political support. For instance, Adolf Charous, the commissar in Česká Kamenice, went to great lengths to ensure that his people received desirable national administrator positions. After his misdeeds surfaced in March 1946, he lost his posts in the MNV and the KSČ, but through his remaining connections, he received a national administrator position of a local business. Despite such obvious patronage, or perhaps because of it, the Communist Party achieved a rousing electoral victory two months later in the town.[56]

Attempts to halt the influx of gold diggers and outflow of confiscated property from the borderlands met with little success. It did not help matters that members of local administrative commissions and security officials engaged in theft and corruption. Indeed, the very policies that they pursued in order to limit the loss of German property, such as house searches and storing confiscated property in warehouses, often led to further abuses of authority. Yet police officials as well as national committees, and even administrative commissions, wished to stem gold-digging. An early announcement from the security department at the Provincial National Committee in Prague (ZNVP) called on all citizens to respect the nation's property and warned that anyone caught taking it would not avoid punishment.[57] In late June 1945, shortly following the expulsion and concentration of Sudeten Germans in Krnov, the District National Committee (ONV) established a three member guard to check people's luggage at the train station. Police organs pushed for even stronger measures against gold diggers.[58] The Ministry of Interior responded to such demands by calling on national committees to carry out searches at train

[56] *Česká Kamenice* (Česká Lípa, 2002), 339, 346; Minutes from the meeting of the MNV Česká Kamenice, 9 April 1946. SOkA Děčín, f. MNV Česká Kamenice, k.1 inv.č.40.
[57] Výhláška, ONV Semily, 7 June 1945. SOkA Jablonec, f. ONV Jablonec, k.51 inv.č.63.
[58] Zapisy z schůzí Okresní správní komise (OSK) Krnov, 28 June 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.3 inv.č.63.

stations and to limit the stay of outsiders at borderland hotels.[59] In early July 1945, the Ministry of Interior warned more explicitly against the further theft of the republic's property. People were given three days to report possession of Sudeten German goods or they faced investigation.[60] The invasive tenor of such policies, however, did little to make settlers feel welcome. Officials in Vejprty posted a sign greeting passengers at the train station, which read: "Gold diggers go home."[61]

While many local and central officials sought the same end, few policies succeeded in isolating and dissuading gold diggers. In part, officials lacked the ability to enforce such policies. Many borderland regions were relatively isolated and the necessary personnel did not exist to implement these regulations. Therefore, ad hoc measures continued. For instance, in July 1946 during the height of the "organized transfer," the Settlement Commission for the Ministry of Agriculture in Chomutov proposed creating voluntary citizen guards to protect the movable property on farms until settlers came to occupy them, even though it blamed local inhabitants for the destructive looting.[62] Settlement officials also appealed to Czechs to protect expropriated property in the name of the nation. One official argued that everyone had suffered during the war and that confiscated property thus belonged to the nation. He continued: "The relation of every Czechoslovak citizen to that national property must therefore be most honorable, and only when we protect our international and national reputation from the rebuffs, that by confiscating property we are not going against traditional Czech honor, justice and humanity, then everyone of us will have an attitude toward confiscated valuables and property, purposefully dedicated to

[59] Výnos Z/II-2515/1945, MV, 6 July 1945, issued by ONV Opava-venkov as 138/pres from 10 August 1945. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.3 inv.č.113. See also 4279-II/5-45, ZNV Brno, 2 August 1945. Ibid.
[60] Oběžník č.j. 3250/45, ONV Jilemnice, 3 July 1945. VHA, f. Velitelství třetí oblasti (VO3), k.23 inv.č.7. See a similar proposal from the local police in Krnov, 6 July 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.17 inv. č.72.
[61] Minutes of the Místní správní komise (MSK) Vejprty, 14 August 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.2 inv.č.12-15.
[62] Krádeže zkonfiskovaného zemědělského majetku, Osídlovací komise Ministerstvo zemědělství, Chomutov, 22 July 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.21 inv.č.106.

the nation.[63] Yet even appeals to national honor came in a negative fashion and threatened more than they promised. A series of articles in *Osidlování* (Settlement), the Settlement Office's periodical, reminded readers of the steep penalties they faced if they were caught misusing national property.[64] Nonetheless appeals to the nation were not enough to prevent Czechs from making off with confiscated property.

The problems with the widespread misuse of property stemmed partly from the confiscation/expulsion policy itself. The state's expropriation of German property without plans for its final allocation placed its status in a temporary state of limbo, despite official claims to the contrary. This act opened the door for those who sought to take advantage of the chaos created by the expulsions and settlement, especially during the summer of 1945. As the government later began to restrict the future use of that property, possession became the best guarantee of ownership. In some ways, the government recognized and encouraged this policy. For instance, a 1946 Settlement Office (OÚ) pamphlet about the sale of movable property suggested that under normal circumstances, settlers would have been charged for the theft of German property. However, in reference to the postwar "national and democratic revolution," the authors argued: "in a revolution, direct law applies whose source is directly from the will of the people, and according to this law, property of the republic's enemies was confiscated immediately in the revolution and became national property… The confiscation decrees, which followed later, then recognized and confirmed these changes created from revolutionary law."[65] By legitimizing early settlers' expropriation of German property, this settlement official indirectly supported their

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[63] V. Řezníček, "Rozdělování konfiskovaného majetku, jeho předpoklady, přípravy a dosavadní průběh," *Osidlování*, 12 December 1946.
[64] Ibid.; Dr. Václav Voborník, "Trestní ustanovení konfiskačního dekretu č. 108," *Osidlování*, 10 June 1946; Otakar Benda, "Pomáhejte k zajištění státního a národního majetku," *Osidlování*, 10 July 1946; Dr. Václav Voborník, "Chraňte národní majetek," *Osidlování*, 25 August 1946; Dr. Václav Voborník, "Pletichy podle dekretu č 108/45," *Osidlování*, 10 September 1946.
[65] Čestmír Heller and Dr. Viktor Knapp, *Rozprodej Movitosti* (Prague, 1946), 1-2.

claims to remain owners of this property. As we shall see in chapter three, first settlers also argued that they had been acting in the nation's interest by moving to the borderlands and should be rewarded through confiscated property.

Although many first settlers moved to the borderlands simply to start a new life, a negative image became associated with national administrators, settlers and the borderlands already in 1945.[66] The borderlands became characterized as a land of gold diggers. Humor played an important role generating this image. For instance, a cartoon in one magazine depicted a man with a rucksack, a suitcase and some paintings under his arm speaking with a well-dressed settler. The settler asked if there were any vacant (*prázdné*) homes in town. He replied, "Well, really I live in Prague, but I can tell you. The third home on the right. I just cleared it out (*vyprázdnil*)."[67] More critical commentaries also appeared. Michal Mareš, a reporter for Franitšek Peroutka's *Dnešek* (Today) newspaper, focused much of his attention on the misdeeds involved in the expulsion and settlement. Originally a member of the Communist Party, he fell from grace and even faced physical threats for his reporting about corruption in the borderlands.[68] In a regular column entitled: "Coming from the Periphery of the Republic," Mareš often reported about gold digging. In one article, he described a "brigade" of women heading to the Krknoše mountains in northern Bohemia. As they traveled from Plzeň by train, they reportedly sang songs about their plans to expropriate German property.[69] The idea that "everybody is doing it," as Anna Rumplíková suggested, therefore, reinforced the picture that

[66] See also Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 84; Slezák, *Zemědělské osídlování*, 54-57.
[67] Stanislav Biman and R. Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí: České pohraničí květen až srpen 1945* (Ústí nad Labem, 1989), picture insets following page 70.
[68] In addition, it should be noted that just after the war Mareš's father had been mistakenly killed by Czechs, who thought he was German. See Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 43.
[69] Michal Mareš, "Přichazím z perferie republiky, II," *Dnešek*, 4 July 1946.

many people held of the borderlands, and this image helped to justify making off with expropriated German goods.

The number of Czechs punished for offences against expropriated Sudeten German property remains unclear. A separate decree, number 38, punished property misdeeds during wartime as well as the postwar period and was not limited to the borderlands. In fact, during discussions in early June 1945 about the decree, the Minister of Agriculture requested that a special provision be inserted to curtail the misuse of Sudeten German farmland in the borderlands.[70] Even without such a clause, in 1946 the Ministry of Interior reported more than 3,000 arrests had occurred for offences under the decree.[71] Decree 108 had its own provisions for the punishment through fines and jail time for mishandling former German property.[72] While the exact number of convictions according to article 19 of decree 108 is unknown, officials in Prague were unhappy with the inconsequential punishments that national committees handed out for property offences. In August 1948, the Settlement Office issued a directive requesting that national committees give greater attention to issuing harsher penalties under section 19.[73]

The importance of gold diggers, however, lay not in their numbers, but in the way that they and their image affected the actions of settlers, Germans, national committees and others both within the borderlands and without. Continued reports and discoveries of property-related machinations continued to cast a shadow over the settlement program. One borderland reporter complained in early 1946 that gold diggers hindered the consolidation of the borderlands and that they should be expelled.[74] The Provincial National Committee in Brno issued a sternly worded

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[70] Comments of the Ministry of Agriculture on proposed decree. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:343 n.1.
[71] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 59; Radomir Luža, *Transfer of the Sudeten Germans: A Study of Czech-German Relations, 1933-1962* (New York, 1964), 269, n.9.
[72] See Decree 108, Art. 19. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:858.
[73] Letter from OÚ, 28 June 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2380 inv.č.2030 s.B-2620/1.
[74] Rudolf Svoboda, "Očista životem, základem pořádku," *Hraničář: Protifašistický list okresu Frývaldova*, 4 January 1946.

directive in early 1946 to stem the continuing misuse of confiscated property.[75] In early 1947, the Communist Party in Jablonec proposed expelling from the borderlands all speculators and others who misused German property. While a statewide law that prosecuted speculators was already prepared, the Communists in Jablonec justified the need for stronger measures against gold diggers because, they argued, even if such unreliable people were forced out of one borderland town they would be able to continue their activities elsewhere. Their proposal sought to ban these people from the borderlands altogether.[76] The reflex to remove unwanted elements demonstrates how confiscation politics dovetailed with expulsion and settlement. Repressive policies did not only emerge against Germans, but grew from confiscation politics. Because government officials considered settlement socially progressive and in the nation's interest, people who stole confiscated property were also targeted for expulsion.

3.3 RESISTANCE

Although Sudeten Germans experienced tremendous hardships in 1945-1948, they also played an important role in confiscation politics. In particular, they witnessed many of the misdeeds of Czechs. Although Sudeten German testimony mattered little in the case of violence against Germans, in the case of property transgressions, their statements often proved essential to apprehending gold diggers. For example, in the case of the national administrator of Gammnitzer above, a Sudeten German employee who had worked at the firm for many years attested that the artwork and rugs belonged to the factory. Unlike incoming settlers, Germans often knew the background and location of individual pieces of property. Anna Rumplíková's fate was sealed by

[75] Postup vůči německému obyvatelstvu při osidlování německého majetku a při odsunu, 6 February 1946. Zemský archiv (ZA) Opava, f. Expozitura Moravskoslezského ZNV 1945-1949, k.294 inv.č.362.
[76] Zapisy ze schůzí MSK Jablonec, 14 February 1947. SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn.4, inv.č.4.

a German woman who spoke Czech and could make her case to authorities. In her testimony against Rumplíková, she stated that "I am in agreement with the fact that, as a German my property reverts to the state treasury; however, it is considerably worse for me, if our things would go to the possession of a person, who treated us so badly in the camp."[77] Local authorities took the charges seriously, despite the clear malice that the accuser directed toward Rumplíková. In other cases, Czechoslovak officials expressed regret at the need to rely on Germans' testimony, at a time when most authorities castigated them as treacherous.

Nonetheless, borderland authorities' use of Sudeten Germans as witnesses to the postwar transgressions involving property provides just one demonstration of how property confiscation not only polarized ethnic groups, but also sometimes obfuscated the divide between Czechs and Germans. Evidence of German/Czech cooperation and negotiation concerning the distribution of officially confiscated property was widespread. In some cases, there were contacts across ethnic boundaries between neighbors and relatives. Some Sudeten Germans, who left things with people they knew, could feel at least as though they controlled who received their property. For example, one German tried unsuccessfully to give most of his belongings to his Czech brother-in-law. Though the families appeared to have little contact in the past, the idea of leaving his things to his sister obviously appealed more to him than abandoning them to unknown settlers or looters.[78] In other instances, Czechs did what they could to help out Sudeten Germans. The police discovered one couple who protected several possessions for their Sudeten German neighbors. The Czech couple replied to the charges simply by saying that they had lived together

[77] Testimony of A. P, 30 October 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.1 inv.č.60. For more on the situation in the Krnov camp, see Schieder, *The Expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia*, 412-413, 454-456.
[78] Investigation report, OSK Krnov, 24 August 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, k.17 inv.č.72. This was also more likely for Germans in the interior or along the linguistic frontiers where contact with Czechs was higher.

in the same house for seventeen years and when the family asked them to store some valuables, they complied.[79]

Czechs needed to deal with Sudeten Germans in order to locate, use and profit from confiscated property. While police and local officials carried out house searches and used the threat of violence to force Sudeten Germans into relinquishing their property, others employed more refined methods. A lively exchange in confiscated valuables and money developed between Czechs and Germans. One popular case involved more than a dozen people in a black marketeering ring in the jewelry and glass making district of Jablonec. An underground trade in glass jewelry beads, which are still popular today in Jablonec, developed from late 1945 and throughout 1946.[80] Prior to their expulsions, Sudeten Germans sold their stones to others, both Czechs and Sudeten Germans who remained behind. In exchange, they often took money or provisions that met their immediate needs. These gold diggers worked with Sudeten Germans in order to make a profit and were portrayed as worse offenders than other plunderers. The regional paper, *Stráž severu*, saved its sharpest words for the national administrators who sold the semi-precious stones on the black market and made off with a sizeable profit, though only a few of them had participated in the Jablonec jewelry scandal.[81] Trading with Germans received greater condemnation because it involved benefits for them at the expense of fellow Czechs.

Sudeten Germans found additional ways to hinder the process of being stripped of their possessions, despite the actions of first settlers, gold diggers and the confiscation decrees. Hiding property was the most common form of resistance. Sudeten Germans tried, often with little success, to smuggle a few valuables or other important items out of the country during transfers.

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[79] AM, Ústí n. L., f. ONV Ústí n. L., k.485 inv.č.1413.
[80] For reports on this case, see SOkA Jablonec, f. ONV Jablonec, k.29 inv.č.52; Ibid, f. MěNV Jablonec, k.149 inv.č.1482; *Stráž severu* 9, 13, 16 February 1947.
[81] *Stráž severu*, 16 February 1947.

They also buried valuables in the yard or concealed them in their homes, prior to the arrival of Soviet armies. However, it often became impossible to reclaim such items. For example, Theodor Schieder writes:

> The German families tried, in order to remove at least some of their possessions from the grip of the National Administrators, to store the most essential things with neighbors and friends or even with indigenous Czechs. These arrangements mostly proved futile as either the other flats and homesteads were quickly occupied as well or the Czechs refused to return what had been entrusted to them. Better placed in this respect were the inhabitants of villages near the frontier who had the opportunity to move some of their possessions across the frontier into neighboring villages.[82]

While some Germans returned in order to retrieve goods they had stored somewhere prior to their expulsion, it is unlikely that much property left the country in this manner.[83]

Nonetheless, these and other Sudeten German attempts to protect their property, combined with gold-digger unrest, complicated the confiscation proceedings during 1945-48. National committees, which were responsible for enforcing the confiscation provisions, including the protection of Sudeten German property, had difficulty responding to such challenges. For instance, the District National Committee in Ústí nad Labem warned local national committees in September 1946 to watch out for Germans attempting to sell their possessions at low prices prior to their transfer. It advised the national committees "to quickly intervene, when many Czechs are allowed to be lured by a profitable purchase, such that they forget their national responsibility."[84] Few Czechs, however, saw the confiscation provisions as a national goal. Even settlement officials tacitly recognized this situation and formulated policies based on individuals'

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[82] Concerning Germans who lived along the border, Schieder remarks: "When the expulsion had become a certainty, they carried furniture and household goods as well as harvest stores and agricultural implements in risky frontier crossings into the territory of the *Reich*. If they were caught by Czech frontier guards, they had to reckon at least with a considerable fine." Schieder, *The Expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia*, 84.

[83] For reports of Germans crossing the border for property see: Letter from OSK Vejprty, 9 September 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. MěNV Vejprty, k.14 inv.č.20. Letter from Vrchní inspektorát finanční stráže, Most, 10 October 1946. AM Ústí n.L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.63 inv.č.344.

[84] Rozprodávání nepřatelského majetku odsunovanými Němci, ONV Ústí n.L, 23 October 1946. AM Ústí n.L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.9 inv.č.49.

desires for social mobility. Officials likewise could not stop gold diggers with national appeals and instead resorted to threats and intimidation. Even national committees considered confiscated property's value in local terms, rather than part of a national cause, as will be seen below. This helps explain, in part, why Czechs were willing to work with Germans, despite official efforts to prevent such relations. Once the official expulsions under Allied control began in 1946 and Sudeten Germans knew that they would lose their property, they too had reason to negotiate with Czechs. In Frývaldov, one official reported that Germans were selling valuable things still in their possession to Czechs for very low prices. At the same time, Germans were purchasing goods they were permitted to take with them or spent their money in local cafés.[85] The consequences of this temporary trade are not difficult to imagine. After the Germans departed, cafés and other businesses lost customers and some went out of business.[86] National committees could do little to actively dissuade such activity, and instead relied on informers to punish property crimes post facto. This pattern, however, prolonged suspicions among settlers—toward each other and the central government.

A final method that Sudeten Germans employed to keep their possessions involved appealing the confiscation decrees. Each decree had its own mechanism for exceptions and appeals. Decree 108, which covered almost all personal possessions, for instance, permitted appeals for those who "remained true to the Czechoslovak republic, never harmed the Czech and Slovak nations and actively participated in the struggle for its liberation or suffered under Nazi or fascist terror."[87] District national committees had to determine on a case by case basis whether individual Sudeten Germans met such criteria. This was no easy task. For instance, in the case of one Sudeten German, Herta Pražáková, conflicting stories dragged out her case for more than a

[85] Security reports, OSK Frývaldov, 14 April and 15 July 1946. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.
[86] Security reports, OSK Frývaldov, 12 December 1946. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.
[87] Decree 108, Part I, Art.1, Section (Sec.) 1, Paragraph (Para.) 2. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:848.

year. Originally married to a German textile owner, she was expelled from Vejprty in early 1946 and then married a Czech, who had followed her to the American zone in Germany. In late 1947, after returning to Vejprty with her new husband, she requested that her apartment furnishings be restored to her. The District National Committee in Vejprty denied her request citing evidence presented by the local police authority (*Sbor národní bezpečnosti*, SNB) that she had been a well-known Nazi supporter. In her appeal to the Provincial National Committee in Prague, she argued that she had spent time in a concentration camp for supporting French POWs and had been given anti-fascist status for her actions. In response, the SNB replied that she had no proof of ever being in a concentration camp and her anti-fascist status had been given to her immediately after the war, when such certificates were widely available. They noted that these certificates had been revoked and the person responsible for issuing them had been given life imprisonment. Nevertheless, Pražáková and her new husband continued to appeal the case, although seemingly to no avail.[88]

Thousands of Sudeten Germans appealed the confiscation proceedings against them. Most requests were disregarded because Germans had often been transferred before national committees reviewed their cases. Even the cases that national committees considered faced poor odds because they had to prove their "active participation" in the struggle against fascism.[89] Those Germans who had their requests denied reacted with surprise. For example, a 71 year-old Sudeten German argued that there was no possibility for him to fight with weapon in hand against the Nazis. Yet, he stated: "I hope that what is understood by active struggle is also a

[88] See case of Herta Pražková. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.21 inv.č.106. In September 1948 the ZNV in Prague was still requesting more information about the case, which was the last correspondence with district authorities.

[89] The concept of "active participation" as the sole means of exemption related to Decree 12, which confiscated German agricultural property. Decree 108, which confiscated other property, and Decree 33, which revoked Germans' citizenship, did not require "active participation" for exemption. Compare Decree 12, Art.1, Sec. 2, Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:276, with Decree 108, Part 1, Art.1, Sec.2, Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:848 and Decree 33, Art. 2, Sec. 1, Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:345.

struggle of reason and intellectual acts, in which case I am convinced that I meet the stated conditions."[90] Others also challenged the strict interpretation of "active participation."

However, the appeals against confiscation did little to halt the thoroughgoing nature of expropriation and illustrate its direct connection to the expulsions. In some ways, the appeals hardened the attitudes of Czechs against Germans even further. Large numbers of appeals appeared to undercut the premise of collective guilt, upon which confiscation policies were established, and therefore directly challenged the transfer and settlement agenda. In Frývaldov, for instance, 1,600 appeals against property provisions and loss of citizenship had been made by August 1945. By the time the official transfer concluded in late 1946, the number of these appeals reached over 6,000. In addition, several appeals were written in Czech, which suggested to officials that some Germans had been able to gain the support of at least some Czechs who wished to see them stay.[91] That Czechs helped Sudeten Germans make their appeals raised further questions about these Czechs' national reliability.

The appeal process had offered a chance for some Sudeten Germans to challenge the idea of collective punishment and demonstrate that they had not been Nazi supporters, at the very least. In the end, it mattered little. In Frývaldov, 5,645 appeals for state citizenship had been rendered void simply by transferring these Sudeten Germans out of the country.[92] Cases like Herta Pražáková's were easily dismissed. Many Germans argued that they had participated in the struggle for liberation by listening to foreign radio or by helping POWs. Others could claim to have suffered under the Nazi regime because they went to jail or lost their jobs. To those people

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[90] Appeal of K.R., Vitkov. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.557 inv.č.606.
[91] Compare Monthly Security Report, OSK Jeseník, 14 August 1945 and First Biannual Report, 22 April 1947. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.One security official remarked just as the official transfer began to pick up speed: "In the first instance, Czechs themselves are responsible for the growing courage of the Germans, partly those who in countless instances support them…and partly by not completely holding to the regulations for Germans." Monthly Security Report from OSK Jeseník, May, 1946. Ibid.
[92] Report of the Security Chairman, ONV Frývaldov, 22 April 1947. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63a.

who had not had any stake in Nazi victory, the idea of losing everything they owned seemed unreasonably harsh and worthy of appeal. However, the subtleties of the qualifications for exception, which may have offered hope to some Sudeten Germans, also allowed national committees to deny the vast majority of their requests. National committees, in fact, had little reason to support such requests. Expropriated property provided the basis for drawing settlers to the borderlands; thus, had national committees accepted the logic of the Sudeten Germans' appeals, the entire process of ethnic cleansing would have been challenged.

3.4 ACCOUNTING FOR THE PAST

In a 1950 report, Václav Nosek, the Interior Minister, reported a total gain of more than 81 billion Kčs from the sale of confiscated property in the Czech lands.[93] This sum, though only a fraction of the total value of confiscated property, had been extremely difficult for the Fund for National Renewal (FNO) to procure. The FNO was the state organ designed to collect the finances generated by the confiscation and sale of non-agricultural German property. The government planned to use the proceeds from confiscated property for a variety of purposes including the repair of war damages, the compensation of victims, the partial payment of official settlement expenses and the postwar currency reform.[94] This last-named became the primary function for profit from the sale of confiscated property and was one of the many ways that the expropriation of German assets benefited society at large and not just settlers in the borderlands.

[93] Sekr. zn. 1540/taj.-1950. "Problémy osídlení a hospodářské výsledky FNO v Praze a v Bratislavě." NA, f. MV-T, k.196 sign.280. This sum involves only the money under the FNO's jurisdiction, which one official estimated at one third of the total amount of all confiscated German property. The remaining parts were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture or became involved in nationalizied industry. There was a separate FNO office in Bratislava. Its gain from confiscated property was nearly 550 million crowns.
[94] See Důvodová zpráva for Decree 108. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:884.

While the state gained in various ways through the expropriation of Sudeten German property, it failed to control its distribution and sale through the FNO. Despite its important postwar tasks, the Fund for National Renewal ran counter to the interests of settlers and borderland national committees, and therefore drew criticism and protests. Settlers saw the FNO as an obstacle to the promises of cheap wares; for national committees, it became a constant intrusion into their affairs.

Presidential Decree 108, which officially confiscated Sudeten German property, also created the Fund for National Renewal on October 25, 1945. The FNO suffered from two administrative weaknesses that hindered its effective operation. First, the FNO was established as a branch of the Settlement Office. This meant that the Central Committee for Interior Settlement, the supervisory committee of the OÚ, controlled the policies regarding Sudeten German property.[95] In practice, this almost always meant that confiscated property was utilized to promote settlement by offering expropriated assets to settlers at low cost, rather than attempting to make large profits from the sale of this property. Settlement officials made this the basis of "settlement politics," and Communist leaders, in particular, sought political advantages through such policies. Secondly, the FNO had to work through national committees in order to accomplish its agenda. The process of confiscating and redistributing German property was, from a technical and legal standpoint, a long one; it would have required too many employees to establish a separate office. Therefore, the Fund had to rely on the ability and willingness of national committees to adhere to the state's wishes, which they often refused to do. Together the interests of settlement officials and national committees, both under Communist leadership, worked

[95] Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2: 850-1, 879. For more on the exact agenda of the FNO see: *Předpisy*, 1:37-39; For more on the Central Commission for Interior Settlement, see Arburg, "Tak či onak," 264-270.

against the idea of high state profits from confiscated property. Instead, this property served as an inducement to bring settlers to the borderlands and opened an avenue for political support.

One of the first central attempts to regulate the use of confiscated German personal property came in the summer of 1945. On June 22, 1945 the Provincial National Committee in Prague issued instructions regarding the sale of Germans' personal belongings. This was prior to the establishment of the OÚ and the FNO, when the three provincial national committees functioned primarily as policy makers for district and local national committees. These guidelines for selling movable property were straightforward and mentioned, among other things, that more valuable items should not be sold and that final accounting reports for all sales should be sent on to the district national committees in a timely fashion.[96] Such instructions allowed local national committees to meet the demands of settlers for ownership of things like furniture and clothing. From 1945 to 1948, settlers continually pressured national committees to make local Sudeten Germans' property cheaply available. The clamor for goods became particularly important in the context of ongoing looting and other property abuses. Those settlers who had come to the borderlands in order to find permanent accommodations and employment often felt robbed by the illegal actions of gold diggers.

Official permission to sell Germans' personal belongings in the fall of 1945, however, did little to unify national committees' approach to confiscated property. National committees sometimes sold outright or loaned much of the Germans' movable property, such as furniture, dishware, clothing, and other personal items, to settlers. In some cases, national administrators did not have to pay anything for the furnishings in confiscated apartments.[97] However, Prague

[96] Oběžník, III-3c-12/9-1945, ZNV Prague. SOkA Česká Lípa, f. MěNV Česká Lípa, k.105 evidenční čislo (ev.č.) 42.
[97] SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1274 inv.č. 1468; SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1288, i.1482; SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.560 inv.č.606.

officials wanted more accountability and more income. National committees were not necessarily acting in spite of higher officials, but felt obligated to act in the interests of early settlers. For instance, the District National Committee in Česká Lípa streamlined the procedures for the allocation of confiscated personal belongings in July 1945, and listed textile goods—in short supply among new arrivals—as one of the first items for distribution. Therefore, when the Local National Committee in Česká Lípa issued instructions for the collection of German clothing on October 10, 1945, which included instructions permitting settlers to keep necessary clothing or linens for household members, it seemed to meet with the spirit of the ONV's earlier ruling. In the interim, however, the Provincial National Committee in Prague changed the policy concerning the distribution of such items and despite several notices the local national committee appeared unaware of the new regulations and continued its old practices. Once the district national committee directly notified the MNV to rescind its instructions, it readily complied.[98]

The central government stepped up its efforts to control the sale of seized German assets as national committees continued their uneven practices. In October 1945, just prior to the creation of the FNO, the Finance Ministry ordered a freeze on the further sale of confiscated German property and condemned national committees' present practices. The order noted that most of the goods were sold "for disproportional, many even blatantly low prices [and] that the earnings from the sale of this property are treated in an uncontrolled or even uncontrollable manner."[99] This was, in fact, the case. National committees in the borderlands did little to ensure proper accounting of German property. For example, auditors for the FNO looking back through early records for the town of Cukmantl (present day Zlaté Hory) noted:

> The first entry about the sale of movable goods appears on September 14, [1945]… Records are illegible [or] without data, so that it is impossible to

[98] SOkA Česká Lípa, f. MNV Česká Lípa, k.105 ev.č.42 inv.č. 533.
[99] 48.988/45-IV/5, Ministry of Finance, 12 October 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.19 inv.č.104.

> distinguish earnings from 1945/46 and later. Entries in the treasury books are incomplete and much of the confiscated property is not likely assessed or reported. Entries were found for donations to schools, convents and even individuals… Today's MNV functionaries are unable to confirm whether movable confiscated property or valuables were correctly taken to the warehouse or carried off elsewhere. The sale of confiscated property from the warehouse was carried out like this. Personal belongings were given out to applicants along with an order to pay the amount at the bank. Therefore, up to the present a great part of the distributed goods is still not paid for.[100]

During 1945, many borderland national committees operated without a coherent set of instructions from higher authorities. The pace of the expulsion and settlement ensured that national committees largely ignored formalities concerning property transfers. Thus, much of the property that passed through the national committees' hands did not provide the income that the central government had expected.

Following the creation of the Fund for National Renewal in October 1945, the OÚ reinstituted the freeze on unsanctioned sales of confiscated property and called for its orderly registration as the first step in the confiscation and allocation proceedings.[101] It subsequently issued orders permitting the sale of certain Sudeten German possessions from national committees' warehouses. However, the official sale of confiscated personal goods to individuals in the borderlands, also known as Action A, began only in May 1947 and even then dragged on in many cases to the 1950s.[102] There were several reasons for the delays. The Settlement Office and the FNO spent much of their time and energy ensuring that national committees properly registered seized German assets prior to their sale. This process involved the cooperation of central and local officials as well as the willingness of individuals to report German property in

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[100] Audit of MNV Zlaté Hory (Cukmantl), 10 September 1949. SOkA Jeseník, f. MNV Zlaté Hory (Cukmantl), k.37 inv.č.155 II.
[101] 845/45, OÚ, 29 October 1945. *Předpisy*, 2:143-145.
[102] These regulations concern the general sale of movable goods by national committees to local individuals. The first, 1192-III from 9 July 1946, concerns the addendum to 1213 OÚ from 29 April 1946. See *Předpisy*, 1:75-79; Ibid, 2:279-280. The main selling action involved the announcements 2141/46 and 2142/46 OÚ, both from 3 December 1946. Ibid., 1:111-117.

their possession. Settlers had to fill out detailed forms about every object in their home. One settler, for instance, complained that he did not have the time for such work: "I work up to eighteen hours daily, I am unable to worry about [cataloging the 'junk' in the storage room] for the time being… I already worked three weeks on this list, so I am up to my ears in work."[103] National committees had to establish commissions to report on a house-by-house basis the status of confiscated belongings and then provide an estimate for its sale. Such tasks not only consumed much of the settlers' time, but also gave them the impression that they were working for Prague.

The official freeze on the sale of Germans' belongings from October 1945 until May 1947 did not prevent national committees from continuing to distribute their possessions. It took time for central directives to reach national committees and be enforced. For example, despite several directives and circulars from higher officials noting the freeze on personal property, the MNV in Jablonec continued to allocate German movable property. In early 1946, it even complained that it had contacted the FNO about the distribution of personal belongings, without success.[104] Such sentiment reflected impatience as well as confusion, rather than neglect. The OÚ and FNO produced a mountain of instructions, orders, directives and addendums covering the use and allocation of confiscated property that many national committees had difficulty navigating. For instance, after freezing the sale of movable goods in late 1945, the Settlement Office, in April 1946, permitted the sale of confiscated personal goods from national committees' warehouses, where some of the movable German property was stored, but only to local businesses for resale to the public. It changed this provision in July when an addendum to the April instructions noted that sales could be made directly to individuals, but that those with "priority" (i.e. returning

[103] Popis a soupis zařízení bytu, 6 August 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Vejprty, k.26 inv.č.25.
[104] Zapisy ze schůzí MSK, 11 April 1946. SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn.1, inv.č.1.

soldiers, those who suffered Nazi persecution, those with large families and others) should have first access to these goods. Such instructions made it difficult for national committees to maintain coherent policies, especially when local settlers pressured them to make available confiscated wares. While some national committees followed such procedures, others overlooked them and continued to operate by earlier provisions.

At the same time that central officials forbade the further sale of confiscated property and requested its proper registration, they also demanded that national committees account for their earnings from such sales. The Finance Ministry issued a circular in late 1945 that directed national committees to deposit their earnings from the sale of confiscated property into a central account.[105] Throughout 1946, the Settlement Office and FNO continued to press national committees to explain their disposition of German property and report the income they gained from it. Few national committees responded. The reports of those that did showed that national committees had used the money to cover a variety of expenses and that almost none had sent in their proceeds.[106] In reaction, the Settlement Office and Fund for National Renewal issued new accounting instructions requesting that deposits and forms be delivered by the end of January 1947.[107] In late 1946 meetings about the new accounting procedures, a central FNO official made it clear to regional OÚ officials that it would take great efforts to get national committees to comply. He urged them: "Remind national committees personally and by correspondence at every opportunity that their accounting will be reviewed and that silence or overlooking this accounting is in reality the concealment of other's entrusted money which remains at local or district committees and is defined for higher, [more] lawful purposes, than local budgetary

[105] 48.988/45-IV/5, Ministry of Finance, 12 October 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.19 inv.č.104.
[106] SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.22-23 inv.č.106.
[107] This concerns the Final accounting (*Celkové vyúčtování*) forms for 1945 and 1946 carried out in connection with Výhlaška 2145/46 (The delivery of money from the sale of confiscated goods) from the OÚ, 9 December 1946. *Předpisy*, 1:129-130.

needs." He also warned that audits would be carried out in cases where proceeds were low and expenditures were high. FNO officials hoped that accounting reports would provide a better picture of how national committees had previously handled expropriated assets.[108]

Despite the new regulations, the stonewalling continued. In May 1947, *Osidlování* noted that only 23 percent of borderland communities had sent in their accounting reports on the sales of Sudeten German assets, of which 12 percent claimed that they had no such property at all.[109] Just as with the previous attempt to have national committees supply information about the distribution of confiscated property, few complied. For those that did, their detailed accounting reports showed that national committees used the money from the sale of confiscated goods in order to meet local needs. Just as the FNO official had foreseen, many national committees reported that they had almost no profits from confiscation provisions; others had large expenditures. The MNV in Cukmantl, for instance, charged the FNO for the salaries of several employees who were not directly concerned with the management of movable property, so that wages were extremely disproportionate to earnings.[110] In other cases, national committees blamed the revolutionary period for the loss of movable German property. In the section requesting information about whom or which official body confiscated property from Germans, Red Army soldiers and Czech military officials topped many of the national committees' lists. Other national committees pointed to former members who had not kept proper records or who had made off with seized goods.[111] These claims were no doubt justified in certain cases and gained credence from the "gold digger" image associated with the borderlands. However, in

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[108] Meeting of regional settlement leaders, 22 November 1946. ZA Opava, f. Osidlovací úřad a FNO, oblastní úřadovna Opava 1945-51, k.12 s.I/1 inv.č.20.
[109] Karel Moudry, "Nejnaléhavější úkoly Fondu národní obnovy," *Osidlování*, 10 May 1947.
[110] Report to the MNV Council on accounting, 31 January 1949. SOkA Jeseník, f. MNV Zlaté Hory (Cukmantl), k.37 inv.č.155 II.
[111] See for example, Report from MNV Bečov, 16 January 1948. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1288 inv.č.1482.

many cases, national committees remained unresponsive to calls for accounting because they felt entitled to the gains made from early confiscation and distribution procedures. No matter how they responded, national committees continued to resist the FNO's effort to account for their division of Sudeten German property.

Accounting reports and revisions did provide some evidence of what happened to confiscated property, but they did not bring the FNO any closer to reaping monetary gains from it. Instead, local officials continued to defend themselves from the increasing demands of Prague officials. In late 1947, in response to national committees' continued failure to report, the OÚ and FNO threatened to cut off their budget distributions.[112] This threat did not produce a monetary windfall, but rather more excuses and further silence. For example, by July 1948, only 11 of 89 communities had submitted a final accounting report in the district of Chomutov.[113] Other forms of resistance were more overt. In late 1948, the ONV in Jablonec circulated a petition to liquidate the Settlement Office and Fund for National Renewal. It claimed that the Fund's purpose to collect all of the proceeds from confiscated property and to use them to support currency reform did not meet with the needs of borderland inhabitants. It also suggested that the FNO likely used a significant part of its income to pay for its own high expenses, "which are clear from a mere visit to its headquarters in Prague."[114]

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[112] VII-3-9000/11-1947, ZNV Prague, 15 December 1947. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1288 inv.č.1482. See also Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 354. In late 1947 accounting results remained disappointing: from 11,938 communities only 5,538 had even submitted their accounting reports.

[113] SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1288 i.1482. Only 40 percent had reported throughout the Czech lands. See also, Zpráva OÚ and FNO v Praze o dosavadních hospodářských výsledcích činnosti, 15 October 1948. NA, f. 23, a.j. 329. At the time of the report 43 percent of national committees had not responded and 19 percent denied having any proceeds to report.

[114] This proposal was widely distributed and can be found in many different collections. See for instance, SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.23 inv.č.108. According to an amended report of the FNO's finances to the end of 1948 its administrative expenses were less than two percent of its income. See Zpráva osidlovacího úřadu a fondu národní obnovy v Praze o hospodářských výsledcích činnosti fondu národní obnovy v Praze – dodatečná zpráva, 10 February 1948. NA, f. 23, a.j. 329.

While the Jablonec proposal did not lead to the FNO's immediate closure, attempts to collect money from national committees for property that had already been distributed began to wane. The Communist seizure of power in early 1948 altered the political landscape, but did little to bring dilatory national committees to account. Instead, the Communist state enacted legislation to forgive the debts of national committees to the FNO and began dismantling the office.[115] Although the Communists had at times been vocal critics of the FNO, the decision to forgive national committees' debts had little to do with political motives; national committees simply lacked the money to pay. They ran high budgetary deficits from day one and in the borderlands had heavy additional expenses related to the transfer and settlement.

The conflict over paying proceeds from the sale of confiscated property reflected several aspects of confiscation politics. First, this conflict revealed the extent of the disorganization in the borderlands immediately after war. National committees had little way of accounting for property taken away by gold diggers or military units. Equally important, national committees worked very reluctantly with the Settlement Office and the Fund for National Renewal to resolve the outstanding debts. They remained unwilling to cooperate with these central organs not only because they lacked the funds, but also because they feared the growing interference of central authorities in their affairs. Even though government leaders had proclaimed national committees to be the bearers of Czechoslovak democracy, the central government increasingly sought to take control of confiscated property away from national committees. The struggle between Prague officials and national committees demonstrated that control over confiscated property was also a means of asserting authority in the borderlands.

[115] In accordance with law 144/1949, Obežník 150.847/49-I/2 from Ministry of Finance, 17 August 1949 permitted national committees to request relief from debt obligations to the FNO resulting from the sale of movable property and rent. Law 18/1950 closed the offices of the OÚ and thereby the FNO. Some personnel remained to carry out further work.

The confiscation of Sudeten German property created a space for competing claims to property. While conflicts among settlers, national committees, and the central government did little to help Sudeten Germans keep their belongings, they reveal the importance of property in remaking the borderlands. Gold diggers challenged the government's efforts to use confiscated property as the basis for settlement, by simply taking what they pleased. The reticence of national committees to account for the past handling of confiscated property reflected their sense of entitlement to control local affairs, including the distribution of confiscated property. Early settlers likewise pushed for their right to confiscated property, as the next chapter outlines in greater detail. Even the central government claimed entitlement to confiscated German property. It set the terms and the scope of confiscation and after 1945 increasingly pressured national committees to abide by its rules. While confiscated property generated support for the expulsions and was the main attraction for settlers moving to the borderlands, it also gave rise to differences about which Czechs should control it, and who should benefit from the economic and ethnic transformation underway.

4.0 NATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS: EXPELLERS, OWNERS, AND RELIABLE CITIZENS

4.1 NATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR AS EXPELLER

The confiscation of enemy property, sanctioned by some of the postwar presidential decrees (known today as the Beneš Decrees), ensured that Sudeten Germans lost their means to remain in the country. The loss of personal belongings may have been a distressing process, but the seizure of homes and farmsteads became a key step in ethnic cleansing. Although the Czechoslovak military forces to a great extent controlled the expulsions, settlers too played a role in this process. Once stripped of their homes, Sudeten Germans began an uncertain journey that millions of other displaced and dispossessed people faced following the war. Czechs immediately moved into the borderlands and took over German property. In the short term, they increased pressure to expel Germans. In the long term, settlers provided an effective barrier against the Sudeten Germans' return. In this sense, settlers finalized the cleansing process. They not only took over the physical structures and land, but completely transformed the cultural, social, and economic fabric of the borderlands.

Decree 5, issued on May 19, 1945, placed "national administrators" in charge of the permanent property of "state/nationally unreliable (*státní nespolehlivé*)" people. It defined as unreliable ethnic Germans and Magyars, regardless of state citizenship, as well as those who

collaborated with the Nazis or fascists in Slovakia.[1] The Czechoslovak government established an extensive legal system to try those accused of collaboration. Popular people's courts, separate legal measures, and a National Court emerged in 1945-1946 to prosecute crimes specifically related to the war. In theory, this method of retribution did not differentiate between Czechs and Germans, though in practice Czech and German trials proceeded quite differently.[2] More importantly, Decree 5 and other decrees circumvented any possibility of ascertaining the level of individual guilt of Sudeten Germans and Magyars and instead declared them all unreliable. Even before the Allies officially sanctioned the "transfer" of Germans and before their Czechoslovak citizenship had been revoked, the Czechoslovak state began erecting a set of legal measures that punished Sudeten Germans on the basis of their nationality.

Decree 5 fulfilled several purposes. In addition to its punitive aspect, the decree allowed Sudeten German businesses, factories and farmsteads to remain in operation until the government worked out a more permanent solution concerning the distribution of confiscated property. The decree's temporary nature, however, did little to solidify property relations. Instead, it offered central officials a method to ensure some control over the designation of national administrators at a time when the extensive problems of looting and mismanagement already began to surface. The decree on national administrators also helped to attract Czechs to the borderlands. Becoming a national administrator did not guarantee future ownership of Sudeten Germans' permanent property, but many assumed that once they occupied a home, for example, they had the right to remain. Therefore, while Decree 5 helped evict Germans, it created intractable questions of ownership for the future.

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[1] Decree 5, May 19, 1945. Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, eds. *Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940-1945: Dokumenty* 2 vols (Brno, 1995), 1:216.
[2] For more on the legal prosecution of such crimes, see Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge, 2005).

On June 21, 1945, President Beneš signed into law Decree 12, which utilized the expropriated farms of Germans, Magyars and collaborators as the first stage of land reform. Unlike Decree 5, which covered all other confiscated property, the government pledged to quickly transfer ownership of seized farmland to qualified individuals. Part of the reason for the urgency involved immediate planting and harvest needs. For example, in July 1945, the Provincial National Committee in Prague promised settlers that they would receive ownership of German farms as long as they remained there and worked the fields.[3] Decree 28, from July 20, followed through on these promises and established concrete provisions for the distribution of agricultural holdings.[4] Agricultural officials sought to create borderland farms of 10-13 hectares, which they believed provided the optimum basis for small-scale production. In early 1946, the Ministry of Agriculture distributed ownership certificates to the national administrators of borderland farms, which, in theory, gave them property rights over their new holdings. Although these certificates did not finalize the transfer of property rights over this land, they temporarily appeased settlers' desires to become independent landholders. Unlike the question of ownership over other seized German assets, which remained unresolved beyond 1947, national administrators of agricultural property became quasi-owners already in early 1946.

National administrators represented a powerful voice in confiscation politics. Nearly eighty thousand national administrators occupied German farmsteads by the end of 1945.[5] By the beginning of 1946, national committees and settlement officials had distributed 60,000-90,000

[3] Přídělení půdy, Okresní správní komise (OSK) Jablonec, 25 July 1945. Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Jablonec, f. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Jablonec, k.50 inv.č.63.
[4] Decree 28, 20 July 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:331-335.
[5] Problémy zemědělství v pohraničí, Ministry of Agriculture, December 1949. Národní archiv (NA), f. Ministerstvo zemědelství – Sekretariat (MZ-S), k.379 inv.č.191. Jiří Koťátko gave 76,506 as the number of national administrators on farms by the end of 1945. Jiří Koťátko *Zemědělská osidlovací politika v pohraničí* (Prague, 1946), 38.

national administrator positions for expropriated businesses.[6] In addition, people who took over Germans' homes also became national administrators, though their numbers are more difficult to quantify. Individual apartments sometimes came under the management of a single national administrator, other times one individual managed an entire block of homes. One housing estimate put the number of apartments in the borderlands at 850,000.[7] In another measure of the number of confiscated individual dwellings, a 1949 report noted that just over 625,000 furniture sets had been allocated by the end of 1948.[8] On June 30, 1948, the Settlement Office reported 231,222 family homes, 97,962 businesses and 147,329 apartment buildings and other property had been registered as confiscated property.[9] Not all of these fell under the management of national administrators; some homes were uninhabitable, local offices and state officials seized other buildings, and some businesses existed only on paper. Nonetheless, at the outset of 1946, it would be safe to argue that roughly 400,000 settlers in the borderlands had become national administrators of the permanent property that had once belonged to Sudeten Germans.

Even before the war ended, Czechs had begun moving into the borderlands to occupy Sudeten German property. Many of the earliest Czechs to arrive from the interior were the so-called returnees (*navrátlící*), who were old settlers returning to the homes they abandoned after the annexation of the borderlands in 1938.[10] Many of the first so-called new settlers came from areas adjacent to the annexed areas or the large urban centers in the country's interior. They moved of their own accord and government leaders encouraged such actions. In a May 11, 1945

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[6] Compare Report č.j.3421/46 from Osídlovací úřad (OÚ), February 1946. NA, f. Osídlovací komise při ÚV KSČ (f. 23), a.j. 359; Minutes from Osídlovací komise při Ústřední komise KSČ, 15 December 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j. 15.
[7] Minutes from the meeting of the Advisory committee of the Settlement Office, 20 April 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j. 310.
[8] Zpráva osidlovacího úřadu a fondu národní obnovy v Praze o hospodářských výsledcích činnosti fondu národní obnovy, 10 February 1949. NA, f. 23, a.j. 329.
[9] Letter from OÚ, 30 June 1948. NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra – nová registratura (MV-NR), k.2381 inv.č.2030 s.2620/1.
[10] Zdeněk Radvanovský, "The Social and Economic Effects of Resettling Czechs into Northwestern Bohemia, 1945-1947," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, eds. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Lanham, MA, 2001), 241.

radio address, Klement Gottwald told small farmers and agricultural laborers to prepare for the confiscation of German land.[11] While some had ventured into the borderlands already, Czech settlers began confiscating permanent property in large numbers during June and July 1945. The arrival of these settlers corresponded with the rising pace of the summer expulsions, which made it easier for them to find available property. In Ústí nad Labem, for example, only 129 national administrators were established in May 1945, while from June 21 to the end of July 1945 nearly 1,500 national administrators were installed in local businesses.[12] Other reports also indicated that a majority of national administrators assumed their posts by the end of August 1945.[13]

The spontaneous move in search of property and the official support for such actions meant that Czechs had, by early August, already confiscated the most desirable property in the borderlands. Lubomír Slézak, a Czech historian, argues that, by the end of July 1945, much of the agricultural settlement was complete as Czechs surged into the borderlands in search of farmland. They sought positions in the most attractive agricultural areas between Žatec (Saaz) and Česká Lípa in Bohemia and in the wine growing areas of southern Moravia.[14] Similar processes occurred with Sudeten German businesses; the most sought-after spots quickly became occupied. Even in less desirable areas, the opportunity to run a small business drew immediate interest. In the northern Bohemian industrial town of Dubí, for instance, Czechs had seized roughly two thirds of the confiscated businesses by the end of July.[15] This trend troubled

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[11] Tomáš Grulich, "Problematika počatku osídlování pohraničí a plany na osídlení," in *Etnické procesy v novoosídleneckém pohraničí- dělnictvo v etnických procesech* (Prague, 1986), 1:15-16.
[12] Zdeněk Radvanovský, "Národní výbory ústecké průmyslové oblasti a jejich podíl na osídlování pohraničí v letech poválečného revolučního procesu," in *6. vědecká archivní conference Revoluční národní vybory, osídlování pohraničí a význam národních vyborů pří zajišťování národně-democratického procesu v ČSR v letech 1944-1948* (Ústí nad Labem, 1990), 11-12.
[13] See incomplete lists of national administrators by district. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1770-1771 inv.č.1576 s.B1470.
[14] Lubomír Slezák, *Zemědělské osídlování pohraničí českých zemí po druhé světové válce* (Brno, 1978), 59-60.
[15] Compare, Zápisy plenum, Městský národní výbor (MěNV) Dubí, 19 August 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. MěNV Dubí, k.12 inv.č.69; Reports on national administrators. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. MěNV Dubí, k.4 inv.č.67.

industrial officials and others because it indicated that settlers were primarily interested in managing a shop or farm, rather than working in borderland industries.

A similar rush developed in the search for Sudeten German homes. Because housing shortages already existed in some areas and because settlers tended to concentrate in some of the more appealing urban centers, demand often outpaced supply. For instance, in Děčín, located on the Elbe near the German border, finding a place to live—one of the most basic needs for settlers—became a stressful ordeal during 1945. People took over apartments as they pleased and local housing officials, often new to their jobs, could not keep pace with the changing conditions. Already in late May 1945, the revolutionary local national committee instructed people no longer to occupy apartments on their own, but to register with the national committee. On July 2, 1945, the housing department in Děčín requested permission from the national committee council to allot fifty apartments a day in order to keep pace with the growing number of settlers.[16] Yet the sheer volume of arriving settlers overwhelmed housing officials. It had an insufficient number of employees and they did not keep track of the requests for apartments or evidence about the homes they had allotted. The result, as a later reported noted, was that settlers continued to take over apartments as they wished and "in many cases enriched themselves at the state's expense."[17] Housing offices not only failed to control the distribution of apartments, but also the collection of rent.[18] Disorganization in the housing departments combined with the continuous circulation of settlers prevented an orderly approach to settlement.

[16] Minutes of the revolutionary MěNV Děčín, 25 May and 2 July 1945. SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Děčín, k.1 inv.č.39.
[17] Zpráva o výsledku revise činnosti bytového úřadu, Podmokly, January 1947. SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Děčín, k.254, inv.č.775.
[18] Dr. Kral from the OÚ reported that instead of the anticipated three billion crowns from rent of apartment houses over three years, only 200 million crowns had been collected. Minutes from the meeting at the OÚ, 28 November 1948. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2380 inv.č.2030 s.B-2620/1.

One result of the constant arrival of settlers and their demands for decent housing was a further degradation of Sudeten Germans' living standards. National committees solved the housing demands in numerous ways. In some instances, they forced Germans across the border to make room for incoming Czechs. When expulsions were impossible, national committees made other arrangements. They often moved Sudeten Germans into shared quarters, which meant placing two or more families into small apartments or decrepit homes. For instance, in late August 1945, the Local Administrative Commission (MSK) in Děčín searched for an additional 1,000 apartments necessary to settle Czechs. They planned to use 200 uninhabited apartments, 700 apartments inhabited by Germans and 200 others that they would make available by moving settlers around, following a city-wide housing assessment.[19] The assessment was an investigation to ensure that individual settlers were not occupying homes meant for larger families. National committees began moving Germans into smaller less desirable quarters from the outset of the expulsions and this practice became recognized policy during the summer.[20]

Borderland national committees faced pressure to find more than just any available housing for incoming settlers. Many settlers assumed that they could live for free in the borderlands and sought only the most desirable homes. As one housing official put it, however, if people realized that they would have to pay rent according to an apartment's size and a deposit for confiscated furnishings, "they would cease looking for luxurious housing and save much time and work."[21] Although housing data fluctuated and often remained incomplete, data from the available records indicate that settlers lived in better quarters as a result of the policy to move Germans into smaller apartments. In Česká Lípa, only twenty Germans remained living in their homes, while

[19] Zpráva bytového referenta pro Podmokly, 27 August 1945. SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Děčín, k.1 inv.č.40.
[20] See for example Oběžník 1680, Zemský národní výbor (ZNV) Prague, 19 July 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice, k.4 inv.č.211 042.3.
[21] "Žadátelům byty o Liberci," *Stráž severu* 8 August 1945.

national administrators occupied eight hundred other single-family homes in town.[22] In Jiřikov, for instance, 60 percent of German families lived in one-room dwellings by September 1946, whereas only 5 percent of Czechs shared similar conditions.[23] Thus, the idea that settlement should improve the settlers' standard of living meant that Sudeten Germans had to leave their homes and bear the brunt of crowded living conditions until their final transfer to Germany.

Settlers' desire for better property also led to requests for property exchanges. Certain national administrators, unhappy with their initial offering, pressed for better options or moved on to another town Such actions not only sustained pressure to expel Germans from their homes, but also complicated national committees' attempts to manage confiscated property.[24] Borderland national committees were well aware of the importance of meeting settlers' aspirations for better property. In the town of Dubí, for example, housing officials announced with pride that in 1945, they had moved one hundred German families into apartments that were "unsuitable" for Czech colonists.[25] The promise of a higher living standard had been part of settlement politics from the beginning and continued to be pushed by higher authorities. As late as December 1945, the Provincial National Committee in Brno announced the possibilities for obtaining spacious apartments in northern areas of Silesia. However, when settlers arrived they often found that living conditions were more difficult than what had been promised.[26]

In addition to forcing Germans into shared living quarters, national committees used internment camps to house them. While camps originally held those suspected of serious

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[22] Dotaznik K 1 pro evidenci postup konfiskace nepřátelského majetku, MěNV Česká Lípa, early 1946. SOkA Česká Lípa, f. MěNV Česká Lípa, k.105 inv.č.533.
[23] The average for the district of Šluknov was 56 percent and 24 percent respectively. SOkA Děčín, f. ONV Šluknov, k.1 inv.č.35.
[24] See for example, Minutes from the Council meeting, MěNV Jablonec, 4 October 1946. SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn.3 inv.č.3; Radvanovský, "Resettling Czechs," 245.
[25] Minutes from the meeting of MNV Dubí, 28 December 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. MNV Dubí, k.12 inv.č.69.
[26] Security report, Sbor národní bezpečnosti (SNB) Frývaldov, 15 January 1946. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.

offenses, they quickly became barracks for Germans who were forced from their permanent homes. During the summer of 1945, roughly five hundred camps were created for Sudeten Germans in the Czech lands.[27] Many camps were first referred to as concentration camps and later became known as collection centers, intern camps or labeled with other less evocative terminology. In some cases, these had been POW camps used by the Nazis for forced labor and simply changed hands after the war.[28] The central government had, in fact, discouraged putting Germans into camps. In its June 15, 1945 decision to give the army authority to carry out the expulsions, it stipulated that "German inhabitants will not be driven without difference into concentration camps, but rather in terms of technical possibilities they will be put into work groups and kept at work."[29] Rather than being centrally directed, the camp system emerged under local authority.

Sudeten Germans faced unsanitary and cramped conditions in camps during the summer of 1945. The camp system developed in tandem with expulsions and reflected both the use of wartime methods and ad hoc measures to meet immediate needs. The camp system in Krnov was established following a reported local German attack against Czech partisans who were departing the city in early June. The leader of the First Czechoslovak Tank Brigade, Major Šrámek, arrived the following day and helped carry out the concentration of over 7,000 Sudeten Germans from Krnov and 21 neighboring communities into three camps that had been used to house German soldiers during the war.[30] No preparations had been made for such an extensive and rapid action, however, which led to several problems in the camps. Conditions in the "concentration camp"

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[27] Tomás Staněk, *Tábory v českých zemích, 1945-1948* (Opava, 1996), 28.
[28] Petr Joza, *Rabštejnské údolí* (Děčín, 2002).
[29] Intimovany výnos, Ministerstvo vnitra (MV) 2118/45. NA, f. Ministerstvo ochrany práce a sociální péče, 1945-1951 (MOPSP), k.556 inv.č.1131 s.2246.
[30] Situation report, Sbor národní bezpečností (SNB) Krnov, 4 June 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, dodatek, k.11 inv.č.92.

Cvilin were the worst. Local officials reported: "Housing is completely improper, partly because it is very crowded, partly because there are no mattresses or linens. Nor from the perspective of hygiene are conditions proper, water must be brought from the town and the provisional toilets 'latrines' are insufficient. Children do not receive any milk [unlike the other camps]."[31] Contemporary German accounts underscored the violent atmosphere in such camps. One woman reported: "Continuous shooting went on in the camp day and night, whips were cracking, so that the inmates were naturally in a continuous state of worry." Another camp dweller in the nearby camp on Opava Street remarked: "It could not possibly have been worse in a concentration camp."[32] The camps became a site for the most brutal treatment of Germans following the war and their reputations as such preceded them. Tomáš Staněk notes how the treatment of Germans hinged on the background and personalities of individual camp personnel. He states that "[m]onstrous beatings, torture, killing as a result of cruelty and shootings, suicide, humiliation and various intrusions became part of the daily order."[33]

By September 1945, the camps in Krnov were among the largest in the borderlands. Fewer than a thousand Germans lived in most camps, many of which were attached to local factories and housed only a small number of workers. Other camps became prisons holding suspects of serious wartime crimes, including some Czechs. There were over three hundred camps housing some 100,000 inmates in the Czech lands by the end of August 1945.[34] The conditions in the camps worsened during the summer and, by the fall of 1945, forced officials to deal more closely with overcrowding and poor preparations. In September 1945, the Interior Ministry assumed

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[31] Koncentrační a jiné tabory – hlásený, SNB Krnov, 4 July 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, k.17 inv.č.72.
[32] Theodor Schieder ed., *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central Europe* vol. 4 *The Expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia*, trans. G.H. de Sausmarez (Bonn, 1960), 412, 455.
[33] Staněk, *Tábory*, 77. For more on the brutal treatment of Germans in camps, see Ibid., 76-87; Schieder, *The Expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia*, 87-8.
[34] Staněk, *Tábory*, 52.

oversight for the camp operations and issued a comprehensive set of instructions to alleviate the series of shortcomings that emerged during the summer.[35] Throughout the fall, the District Administrative Commission in Krnov, for instance, worried about the spread of disease within and outside the camps. Eventually, they began to release many Germans from the camps.[36] While this helped to alleviate problems inside the camps, most Sudeten Germans returned to their homes only to face a national administrator who had occupied their property in the interim. Such scenes raised the ire of national administrators who had not expected to see the former owners again. In one case, security officials, emphasizing the ominous nature of these returns, reported that "many of those transported away to the internment camp sang 'Wir komen wieder zurück' [We will return] and now this became a reality."[37] Because further expulsions to Germany had all but been halted by the fall of 1945, national administrators remained uneasy about their newly acquired homes. Until the official "transfer" began in early 1946, no one could guarantee their rights to this property, especially when former owners remained in the town.

Sudeten Germans who remained in their communities and, as Czech officials termed it, "lived freely," still faced discriminatory measures and poor living conditions. Czechoslovak officials often employed Nazi regulations against the Jews in their treatment of Sudeten Germans. They were forced to wear special armbands with a capital "N" for German [*Němec*]. Their rations were lowered to the levels of Jews during the war. Other restrictions, such as the use of public transportation, reduced shopping hours and curfews, applied. However, the similarity between Czechoslovak regulations and those of the Nazis does not mean that the

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[35] Ibid., 93-95.
[36] Report on the conditions in the camps in Krnov, OSK Krnov, 19 October 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, dodatek, k.7 inv.č.63.
[37] Monthly report, SNB Krnov, November 1945. Zemský archiv (ZA), Opava, f. Zemský národní výbor Expositura v Moravské Ostravě, k.142 inv.č.275; Monthly reports, SNB Stěborice, fall and winter 1945. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.16 inv.č.117.

experience of Sudeten Germans was the same as that of the Jews in occupied Europe. As others have pointed out, ethnic cleansing is not the same as genocide, despite some similarities.[38] In addition, the treatment of Sudeten Germans tended to gradually improve from the first months following the war until their expulsion. It should also be noted, in this regard, that camps in the Czech lands held "only" five percent of the Germans still in the country at the beginning of 1946.[39] While this should not imply that Sudeten Germans lived comfortably following the war, they were not routinely placed into ghettos or camps and killed.

By the fall of 1945, settlers' demands for expulsions increased as living conditions grew more cramped and expulsions to Germany nearly came to a halt. Following word that the Allies had temporarily stopped accepting expellees, settlers from three different communities sent demands to the District Administrative Commission in Frývaldov "partly for the removal of Germans from the borderlands, partly for their exclusion from lands managed by Czechs and partly to have a sharper watch over them."[40] Metalworkers in Česká Ves, for instance, complained that they could no longer tolerate living with Germans in the same households. They reported that Germans did everything from spreading propaganda of an American invasion to spending too much time in the bathroom. They demanded that Sudeten Germans must be expelled from twenty-eight homes or that strikes and bloodshed would result.[41] Settlers did not move to the borderlands expecting to live with Germans, but just the opposite. Living with Germans in the same household not only contradicted the promises of settlement and expulsion, but left future property ownership in limbo, raising tensions and fears on both sides. By

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[38] Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge, 2004), 17; Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2001), 3-4, 35-38.
[39] Staněk, *Tábory*, 129.
[40] Security report from SNB Frývaldov, 15 October 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č. 63.
[41] Resolution of workers from the iron and steel factories in Česká Ves, 9 October 1945. ZA, f. ZNV Expositura v Moravské Ostravě, k.294, inv.č.362.

connecting housing demands with calls for ethnic cleansing, the workers in Česká Ves challenged officials to follow through with the "national revolution."

4.2 PROCESSES AND PROBLEMS

Studying national administrators as expellers provides one important perspective for understanding their role in the expulsion and settlement process. They supported the expulsion process and helped to guarantee its permanence. The government's expectation that the distinctions between borderlands and interior would disappear as reliable Slavic, mainly Czechs, occupied the region became one indication of successful settlement. However, this goal meant different things to different people. Having a certain number of settlers in borderland regions proved in quantitative terms that the Settlement Office reached its targets. For borderland national committees, however, successful settlement was a qualitative rather than a quantitative measure. One group of district national committee chairmen in the western borderlands complained that settlers only came because they believed they would immediately receive a house or villa. They blamed such convictions on the poor promotion of settlement in the interior where central officials had promised settlers better living conditions.[42] As the best property disappeared during the summer of 1945, however, Czech unity also dissolved. In its place struggles over national administrator positions emerged.

National committees, administrative commissions and commissars oversaw the process of distributing positions as national administrators. Local national committees handled small firms, farms and houses, and ONVs dealt with businesses that had between 20 and 300 employees,

[42] Memorandum of five district national committee chairmen, Loket, 7 February 1946. NA, f. MOPSP, k.401 inv.č.841 s.2306.

farms from 50 to 100 hectares and houses and other property worth more than five million crowns. The three provincial national committees or a relevant ministry controlled larger firms and properties.[43] Those interested in obtaining a position as a national administrator of Sudeten German property had to apply to these officials and provide some basic background information to ensure that they were suited for the post. Decree 5 outlined only general parameters in this regard. It stated that national administrator positions should be given to those people "with relevant training and practical knowledge, [who were] morally irreproachable and politically reliable."[44] Such guidelines were followed by other instructions that stressed the need to find experienced and reliable people. For instance, on June 18, 1945, the Ministry of Industry issued a comprehensive directive to help national committees regulate seized Sudeten German firms. It reminded them that "the choice of national administrators deserves the greatest care and diligence, because the orderly and uninterrupted operation of the firm depends on them. Just as this [choice] is in the national interest, so it is in the general and local economic interest and also in the interest of employees."[45]

Appeals for the judicious selection of national administrators could not change the situation on the ground. During the summer of 1945, many settlers went to the borderlands and took what they wanted at a time when administrative commissions and national committees were still getting organized. The actions of these settlers and the government's reaction to them set the stage for divisive politics surrounding confiscated property. New settlers who moved to the borderlands for the first time after the war were a divided group and the fault line opened over the access to confiscated property. In particular, settlers who reached the borderlands by autumn

[43] Decree 5, Art. 7. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:217.
[44] Decree 5, Art. 16. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:219.
[45] Directive from Minister of Industry, č.j.II-129.782-1945. *Předpisy z oboru působnosti OÚ a FNO: Zákony (dekrety), vládní nařízení, vyhlášky* (Prague, 1946), 2:175.

1945, whom I call "first comers" or "early settlers," had a distinct advantage in acquiring and retaining former German-owned property. Those who arrived later had few auspicious choices, despite settlement officials' continued promises of cheap attractive property.[46] Determining who should receive the final allocation of this property became a contested process that the government did not easily resolve.

Not all first comers were gold diggers. They may have been motivated by the prospect of better property, rather than stealing and speculating, but they wished to start a new life in the borderlands and had a permanent stake in their community's future. Therefore, as national administrators, they fulfilled the responsibilities that the government established to regulate their management of expropriated assets. Such responsibilities included replacing German employees with Czechs, timely and accurate record-keeping, and payment of rents, taxes and wages in accordance with official regulations. Officials referred to this and other aspects of national administrators' duties as acting with "the care of a good manager."[47] Borderland officials drew sharp distinctions between those first comers out for quick gain and those interested in building stable communities. In Krnov, for instance, the local security chief reported that the majority of Czech inhabitants had come to begin a new existence and worked hard. Because of their concern for the economy, they opposed the continuous transfer of Germans and treated them well enough. The second group, he noted, came to find the best apartments and businesses. He continued: "They fill up the local bars, stroll about the town, never showing any interest in any kind of work. They like to criticize local conditions and disorder, they are exasperated by the peaceful treatment of Germans and like to spruce up their own apartments by moving furniture

[46] Adrian von Arburg and Eagle Glassheim also note these divisions. Eagle Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989," *Journal of Modern History* 78 (March 2006): 72 n.30.
[47] See the different directives and instructions issued to national administrators in *Předpisy*, 2:112-121, 155-203.

from other, thus far uninhabited, apartments."[48] The challenge for national committees and settlement officials was to find a way to curb the actions of gold diggers and provide support for those national administrators who fulfilled their obligations.

Gold-digging national administrators not only disrupted life in the borderlands, but they also threatened the success of settlement. Many gold diggers sought to occupy businesses and farms simply in order to live off the proceeds. Sometimes these national administrators used Germans to do the work for them. Michal Mareš, a reporter for *Dnešek* (Today), painted the most cutting portrait of one such national administrator who had taken over a German farm:

> Newly designated master with an allocation of about 30 hectares of land. Wife is lazy as a louse and has no children. Mr. "Farmer" has long polished boots and tucked away behind one of them is a beautiful gold cane. Perhaps he also rides a horse? With an officer's impeccable shiny nickel spurs. An inheritance from the Gestapo or Wehrmacht? Wearing a green hunter's cap with a *Gamsbart*. Perfect for a lazy stroll through the meadows. A dozen beef cattle, two pair of glistening well-kept horses, one looks with joy on such holdings. Naturally, this man is against any kind of transfer of the Germans working on his property. Since Mr. Landowner does not even know how to mend his fence, the answer is clear to the question, "What will happen when the Germans leave?" He casually responds: "That is the point, is it some sort of problem? I arrived with an empty bag, I will leave with a full one, I had a festive two years, the trip to the borderlands was rewarding for me, so it was so it will be."[49]

Such attitudes among some of the first Czech national administrators meant that Sudeten German property served only to enrich them during their stay in the borderlands and left little for others who followed in their wake. Indeed in early 1947, after the official transfer came to an end, the National Land Fund (NPF), which regulated confiscated farms and ensured that national administrators paid compensation for their use, issued a circular warning against the actions of

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[48] Report on the mood of local inhabitants from OSK Krnov, 27 July 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.1 inv.č.60.

[49] Michal Mareš, "Přicházím z periferie republiky, I." *Dnešek*, 27 June 1946. A later article noted that the green hunter's cap symbolized malicious excess, Josef Němeček, "Očistec a vykoupení štrálských Čechů," *Dnešek*, 25 July 1946.

national administrators leaving their farms. It noted that they not only failed to pay for the use of the land, but also tore out windows and floors and took equipment back to the interior.[50]

Many trustees of former Sudeten German businesses pursued a similar course. Corrupt national administrators sought to make the most of their new positions through a variety of means. They misreported inventories, sold goods on the black market or simply lived off the business, keeping Germans working there as long as possible. For instance, in his monthly report concerning the more important cases of theft and gold-digging, one security official reported the following cases: One national administrator of a restaurant had sold meat and wine without a license and for illegal prices; another sold a liter of cognac for 2000 Kčs and six pieces of bread for 300 Kčs; a dental technician requested gasoline and a Persian rug from a Russian soldier for some dental work.[51] Other national administrators simply did not show up to work. District officials in Vejprty reported that one national administrator had three businesses in the district and did not fulfill any of his duties. Another national administrator of a clothing store, they noted, often did not open the store because she spent the majority of her time in Prague. This had been unproblematic until the original owner, who had run the shop for the woman in her absence, was expelled.[52]

As such patterns emerged, officials in Prague concerned with the progress of settlement began to focus more and more on the problems that such gold diggers posed. Their image of the borderlands differed little from that popularized by certain publications. For example, in the second meeting of the Central Committee for Interior Settlement, which oversaw OÚ policy, a report on settlement's progress to the end of August 1945 noted the following: "The improvised

[50] NPF Circular č.22/47, 5 March 1947. NA, f. Národní pozemkový fond (NPF), k.3. See also "Proti krádežím a ničení majetku v pohrančí postupuje NPF s nejvetší přísností," *Osidlování*, 25 March 1947.
[51] Report from the police commissar in Jablonec, 9 October 1945. SOkA Jablonec, f. ONV Jablonec, k.18 inv.č.39.
[52] Report from the SNB in Přísečnice, 29 November 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.1 inv.č.52.

transfer of Czechs succeeding to the improvised transfer of German inhabitants (…) demonstrated the frequent poor decision making of people controlling the arrival of Czechs to the borderlands, which enabled the spread of very unwanted characters and many regrets." It further mentioned the extensive looting and the strong desire among settlers for the best housing and businesses.[53] These settlement officials blamed borderland national committees for installing unqualified national administrators. Unsurprisingly, when the Settlement Office began its work in late 1945, officials spoke about an organized settlement that would take into account the economic needs of the region. Their concerns focused on replacing German workers in the factories and the fields, and also making certain that reliable people filled positions as national administrators. However, because most national administrator positions had already been taken by that time, settlement officials realized that they could not restart the entire process in order to solve the problems that some national administrators had created. Reallocating confiscated properties not only would have required the acquiescence of national committees, but it would have caused a great uproar among those national administrators already in place.

National committees both blamed central authorities for problems with the confiscation and allocation policies and sought their help to resolve local difficulties. The same OÚ report that criticized national committees for allowing unwanted settlers to remain noted that district national committees worked very hard to resolve the housing problems and "would very much welcome a universal solution to this extremely pressing problem."[54] Local politicians saw an opportunity in the central government's attempts to control the settlement process. They utilized the growing unease among settlers about the permanence of their newly won gains to deflect criticism or create pressure on central officials. For example, one ONV member at a meeting of

[53] Minutes from the Central Committee for Interior Settlement (ÚKVO) meeting, 27-28 August 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.12145 s.1651/2.
[54] Ibid.

local national administrators attacked the Settlement Commission of the Ministry of Agriculture for its investigation of national administrators on farms. Those in the audience were apparently stirred into a frenzy and demanded that the Commission be sent away, even though, in reality, it had had little to do with carrying out these revisions.[55] As officials at the OÚ, the Ministries of Agriculture and Industry and other members of the central government became more involved in confiscation politics in late 1945 and 1946, they had difficulty working with borderland national committees to devise, coordinate, and implement coherent plans and policies regarding national administrators.

The lack of a clear plan about the final allocation of seized Sudeten German assets gave many new national administrators reason for concern. Prague officials did little to assuage their fears in the summer of 1945. For example, the Provincial National Committee in Prague warned national committees and the national administrators who had been installed that these remained only "temporary" positions, whose final status was yet to be determined.[56] Such provisions irked those first national administrators who attempted to fulfill their responsibilities. As these first comers dealt with some of the difficulties of living in the borderlands, it appeared that those in Prague had little interest in their plight. Although many reports concerning the work of national administrators presented a bleak picture of laziness and greed, there were other reasons for national administrators' poor performance. The uncertainty involved in the process of expropriation and expulsion, for example, did not provide incentive to work hard. Other national administrators simply struggled. It was widely recognized that settler-farmers did not possess the necessary skills or finances to successfully manage sizable holdings. At first, they relied on

[55] Letter from Ministerstvo zemědělství, 10 December 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1769 inv.č.1576 s.B1470.
[56] Circular 896-1945, ZNV Prague, 19 June 1945. SOkA Jablonec, f. ONV Jablonec, k.50 inv.č.63.

German labor and later were offered operational loans from the National Land Fund to supplement their sparse financial savings. Still, many could not succeed.

Adding to the problems surrounding national administrators was a policy that gave certain groups privileged access to confiscated property. The idea of "priority" meant to reward some for their service in the struggle for liberation and to help others who had suffered as a result of the war. The decree confiscating farmland first established the principle to grant partisans, soldiers and those who suffered from Nazi persecution, as well as their heirs, priority for German farmland.[57] Officials at the Ministry of Defense had pushed for such a provision just after the war. For instance, in late June 1945 they proposed that soldiers should receive priority for confiscated property. Their proposal pointed to the actions of both gold diggers and first comers as justification for such a policy. The report stated: "It is impossible not to mention that the conditions created partly by non-soldiers' gain from German movable property and the incomparably improved conditions of other non-soldiers, who seized permanent property, weigh heavily on the troops." Giving soldiers preferential access to Sudeten German property, it continued, would help boost their morale.[58]

In addition to soldiers and those persons who had been persecuted during the war, returning emigrants, "reemigrants" as they were called, received eligibility for priority access to German farmland and later other expropriated property.[59] Officials expected that roughly 700,000 Czechs and Slovaks would return from foreign countries, even outside of Europe.[60] As part of this process, settlement officials worked to ensure that reemigrants had access to decent housing and

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[57] Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety* 1:278.
[58] Letter from Velitelství 3 oblasti – hl. štab. 2. odd., 26 June 1945. Vojenský historický archiv (VHA), f. Vojenská kancelář presidenta republiky, č.j.1031.
[59] See Oběžník č.j.49843, OÚ, 4 October 1946 and Směrnice č.j.26473/47, OÚ, 10 February 1947 for more specifics about priority qualifications. *Předpisy*, 2:431-435.
[60] Helena Nosková, "Osídlovací komise ÚV KSČ a reemigrace v letech 1945-1948," *Historické studie* (1998): 118.

employment. Yet settlement politics could not be used to please everyone. The idea of setting aside property for returning emigrants and soldiers did not mesh well with the situation in the borderlands in the fall of 1945. For instance, one group of Czech emigrants who now lived in Vienna had specialized skills in cabinet making. These types of workers would have been quite valuable for the borderland economy. However, the lack of suitable businesses presented a major obstacle to their return. One local national administrator seeking such workers blamed the first-comers:

> [T]he stumbling block is that our people from the interior, especially those without any sort of credit for the liberation of the country, immediately after the revolution flooded the shops and businesses and do not have any business license or experience. In this way our countrymen from Vienna do not find anything for themselves and return disappointed to Vienna, because everyone who had a business license in Vienna did not want to give it up and so they returned to German Vienna.

He complained that the nation lost more than desperately needed skilled workers; many of these emigrants' children, he suggested, would become "German."[61]

That national administrators had been established for the majority of Sudeten German farms and homes by the end of the summer was not a problem for settlement officials. The quick settlement of the land had been the government's priority from the beginning. However, as other political and economic imperatives developed during the debates about confiscated property, settlement officials attempted to more closely control national administrators. At the same time, giving certain groups of people exclusive access to former German property, after hundreds of thousands of settlers had already arrived provided fertile ground for conflicts. As each group attempted to get its hands on the better portions of Sudeten German property political conflicts between these groups and between central and local officials deepened.

[61] Letter from národní správce Dietze a Müller, Trnovany, 4 October 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice, k.1 inv.č.1.

4.3 *REVISE*

National administrators' poor performance and dubious behavior brought immediate deliberations about how to correct the situation. Already on June 6, 1945, before the flood of settlers and expulsion of Germans even reached their peaks, the Ministry of Finance offered assistance to national committees to review the work of national administrators.[62] The *revise*, which meant anything from a formal audit of accounting records to a more general inspection of national administrators' actions and backgrounds, offered those who controlled these check-ups the opportunity to change the status quo. These *revise* occurred in other guises as well. The FNO audited national committees' accounting records from the sale of movable confiscated belongings and national committees checked and rechecked the occupants of confiscated apartments in larger borderland towns. Despite these efforts, most *revise* failed to change much. The investigations of national administrators, on average, replaced 10-15 percent of the early settlers who had taken up positions in confiscated property during the summer and fall of 1945. Revision commissions often had much local input and control over the investigations, which meant that the settlers were often policing themselves. While *revise* were not necessarily corrupt, the majority of early settlers—often also a majority of national administrators and national committee members—shared a similar stake and experience, and therefore sought to minimize their potential effects. Others, however, hoped these investigations would bring greater access to expropriated property. The *revise* fueled and was fueled by these groups' disputes over who should have the right to claim confiscated Sudeten German assets.

Central authorities struggled to devise formal investigation procedures. While the Ministry of Finance wished to use its tax auditors to carry out the work centrally, other central officials

[62] Letter from the Finance Ministry 6 June 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1769 inv.č.1576 sign.B1470.

wanted to use their own personnel to oversee inspections of firms that fell under their provenance. For instance the Ministry of Domestic Trade argued against using the tax auditors because they did not have the confidence of tradespersons and were not trained to evaluate companies' management.[63] The Finance Ministry argued in response that "there is simply no reason that a feeling of 'distrust' would be created for a responsible national administrator" toward the ministry's inspectors. "For the loyal citizen," it continued, "a feeling of duty exists before an organ, whose purpose is to defend the selfless interest of the state and—in a democratic state—also his own interest."[64] However, such arguments failed to convince other government ministries. The Ministries of Domestic Trade and Industry refused to give up control of inspections to a third ministry. Central ministries, like settlers and national committees, sought to control confiscated property.

The inspections of national administrators managing Sudeten German farms, on the other hand, progressed rapidly thanks, in part, to the separate administration of expropriated agricultural land. In the fall of 1945, the ZNV in Prague established local commissions to conduct agricultural inspections consisting of three members from the local peasant commission, including one qualified applicant for a national administrator position, plus a member of the local police appointed by district officials.[65] Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture kept a watch on their progress and supported the commissions' work. The investigative commissions confirmed that national administrators had sent in requested forms and kept up with accounting. They checked current inventories against those from the day national administrator had taken possession of the farm. In addition, they evaluated whether the trustee met the three qualities for

[63] Meetings about revision services for national administrators, 25 and 28 June 1945. Ibid.
[64] Revise národních správ, Minister of Finance, 4 December 1945. Ibid.
[65] Oběžník 2, Settlement Commission of the Ministry of Agriculture, Jablonec, 8 October 1945. NA, f. NPF k.11 inv.č.16; Přezkoušení všech národních správců, ONV Jablonec, 13 November 1945. SOkA Jablonec, f. ONV Jablonec, k.50 inv.č.63; Jiří Koťátko, *Konfiskace, rozdělování a osidlování půdy* (Prague, 1946), 10.

all national administrators: moral integrity, state/national reliability and economic capability.[66] The elastic measure of such traits left much decision making in local hands.

In the end, agricultural investigation commissions recalled less than 15 percent of the national administrators in Bohemia; later results from Moravia and Silesia were roughly the same.[67] Such an outcome appeared to contradict both the expectations of higher authorities and the reports of pervasive gold-digging. For instance, the agricultural referent at the Provincial National Committee in Moravská Ostrava had estimated that in Frývaldov, two thirds of the national administrators managed poorly and in nearby Bruntál over a third.[68] Several reasons explain why inspections failed to remove large numbers of national administrators. Most commissions had little time to closely investigate what national administrators had been doing. In the district of Dubá, a poor agricultural region near the interior, officials gave commissions only a week to make their decisions about national administrators.[69] The district of Chomutov began reviewing national administrators the first week of October and by the 13th had finished its audits in 52 communities.[70] In both of these districts, more than a thousand trustees managed seized farms. Agricultural *revise* were simply too perfunctory to have uncovered even significant transgressions.

More than a lack of time accounted for the low number of recalled national administrators. For instance, the Provincial National Committee in Brno chastised the behavior of certain investigative commissioners who "in the first place look after themselves, their relatives or

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[66] Přezkoušení všech národních správců zemědělského majetku č.j.9.256/45, OSK Dubá, 3 October 1945. SOkA Česká Lipa, f. ONV Dubá, k.63 inv.č.187.
[67] The average, according to a 26 November 1945 report, was 12 percent. NA, f. 23, a.j.15.
[68] Settlement report for the week of 19 October 1945, ZNV Moravská Ostrava. ZA Opava, f.ZNV Expositura v Moravské Ostravě, k.906, inv.č.932.
[69] č.j.9.256/45, OSK Dubá, 3 October 1945. SOkA Česká Lipa, f. ONV Dubá, k.63 inv.č.187.
[70] See situation reports from Osidlováci komise, Chomutov, 9 and 13 October 1945. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1446 inv.č.1646.

friends, etc."[71] In Česká Lípa and Liberec agricultural officials performed so-called "super-revisions" to check the results of the first *revise*, which one of the districts reported had not been done "objectively enough."[72] This meant that investigative commissions, in some cases, used their authority to eject national administrators from better holdings and placed themselves or someone they knew in charge of the land. Even such corrupt practices did not result in widespread recalls. As the Minister of Agriculture's regional representative in Litoměřice noted, those commission members carrying out such actions simply stopped working for the commissions once they had found themselves a spot. This was not the kind of practice that developed into vast networks of ongoing corruption, but one of immediate interest and opportunity.

More often than not, the commissions allowed national administrators to remain. Approving upwards of eighty-five percent of local national administrators offered national committees a way to challenge higher authorities' assumptions and popular opinion about the situation in the borderlands. The inspection results reflected the actions of the national committees and management commissions from the early days following the war. While many members of these bodies had already changed once by the end of 1945, they still seemed reluctant to, in effect, blame themselves for earlier decisions. As one member of a district farmer's commission noted, removing less than 10 percent of national administrators proved that settlement had been carried out well.[73] In addition, national committees did not want to give central authorities further reason to meddle in their affairs. The ongoing stream of settlers in search of desirable property

[71] Instructions 1410/VIII/28/46, ZNV Brno, 16 January 1946. Ibid. See also Zprávy o činnosti Osidlovací komise Ministerstva zemědělství, Litoměřice, 23 October and 8 November 1945. NA, f. NPF k.12 inv.č.16.
[72] Zprávy o činnosti Osidlovací komise Ministerstva zemědělství, Česká Lípa, 4 and 23 November 1945. NA, f. NPF, k.10 inv.č.16; Zprávy o činnosti Osidlovací komise Ministerstva zemědělství, Liberec, 31 October 1945. NA, f. NPF, k.12 inv.č.16.
[73] Minutes from the District Farmers' Commission, Opava-věnkov, 25 January 1945. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-věnkov, k.552 inv.č.590.

continued to apply pressure on national committees into the fall of 1945 and early 1946. Had they condemned a large percentage of those looking after confiscated farms, it would have brought further chaos and political problems to their districts.

Agricultural officials recognized this danger and did not press *revise* to their fullest extent. That the commissions revoked less than 20 percent of national administrator positions allowed officials to claim that gold diggers did not predominate and that they had largely been removed.[74] Agricultural officials then moved on to the process of permanently allocating farms to new settlers, which they wished to rapidly complete. OÚ officials likewise did not want to remove large numbers of national administrators. *Revise*, which they organized for confiscated businesses in early 1946, also ended quickly and did not drastically alter the situation, leaving 80-90 percent of first comers in charge of confiscated property. The 10-20 percent recall rate offered settlement officials enough openings to settle priority applicants without challenging the majority of national administrators. In November 1945, the general secretary of the Central Committee for Interior Settlement outlined such an approach to the revision of confiscated businesses. He argued: "For its political prominence it will be necessary to solve this problem very carefully and precisely, by throwing out morally unqualified national administrators and handing over this freed up permanent property to priority applicants." He went on to stress the importance of quickly giving legal assurance, through the final allocation of confiscated German property, to national administrators. He then concluded: "By the transfer of German inhabitants the borderlands' economic life will be protected to a certain extent, and only legal certainty through the acquisition of property will enable its quick renewal."[75] Settlement officials sought

[74] Zpráva o činnosti Osidlovací komise Ministerstva zemědělství, Litoměřice, 8 November 1945. NA, f. NPF k.12 inv.č.16; Koťátko, *Konfiskace, rozdělování a osidlování*, 9.
[75] Report of the General Secretary of the ÚKVO, 29 November 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.12145 s.1651/2.

to carry out revisions in such a way that met the expectations of both priority applicants and early settlers and to eliminate the interim use of national administrators.

Housing *revise* failed to alleviate many of the shortcomings that new settlers experienced in 1945-46. The intensive migration pressures created by incoming settlers and the expulsion of Sudeten Germans left national committees little control over the allocation of confiscated German homes and apartments. In Děčín, the number of settlers continued to rise after the 1945 summer rush and, because expulsions abroad had been cut off by the fall, the strain on the housing market continued to build. Those settlers still searching for better accommodations were frustrated not only by the lack of options, but by the process itself, as one report makes clear.

> Applicants' lack of confidence in the housing office grew from the reality that evidence of submitted requests was not properly catalogued and during their processing were even lost. Many requests were refused and filed even though the requester was not informed, or requests were denied without any reason and only with the remark 'refused' so that it was not possible to give an explanation for the judgment on a specific case. This all gave the applicant the impression of prejudice, disorder and even protectionism. Therefore, it is not surprising that at the housing department there were several undesirable scenes.[76]

Even if the housing office had been better organized, however, not everyone's demands could have been met. As of November 7, 1945, there were 50,000 inhabitants in the city, not including the military base, compared with 44,000 before the war.[77] Similar situations in many borderland towns forced Prague officials to take more direct action. In November 1945, the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare issued an emergency housing directive that applied to all of the borderlands and any interior town with over 3,000 people.[78] This directive established principles to ensure that single individuals and those just passing through did not end up in

[76] Zpráva o výsledku revise činnosti bytového úřadu, Podmokly, January 1947. SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Děčín, k.254, inv.č.775.
[77] Minutes from meeting of MSK on 7 November 1945. SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Děčín, k.1 inv.č.40.
[78] See directive for local national committees from Ministerstvo ochraný práce a socialní peče, 28 November 1945. SOkA Děčín, f. MNV Česká Kamenice, k.76 inv.č.128.

possession of large apartments at the expense of families and those with full-time employment seeking to permanently settle.

Carrying out housing *revise* proved to be a difficult matter. National committees did not have the personnel or the means to quickly and successfully check up on residents and their background. In early 1946, a second inspection that the Děčín housing office conducted after the Ministry's emergency directive was never completed. Only as conditions on the housing market worsened during the summer of 1946 did officials take more drastic measures. In July 1946, the district national committee issued new regulations to alleviate "the housing crisis" which was "reaching a climax." These regulations included forcing unemployed persons to move outside the city and placing individuals into so-called *garconkas*, or studio apartments. It justified these and other restrictive measures in the interest of the statewide economy and the extraordinary pressure on the housing market.[79] These provisions exceeded those approved in a new law concerning housing welfare. Its provisions for the borderlands gave national committees the right to intervene and to make housing available for settlers, but not with such blanket provisions as those in Děčín.[80] The third housing inspection in Děčín took place in the fall of 1946, following the new law and found only ten uninhabited apartments. The housing official noted the extreme difficulties of carrying out such *revise* in the borderlands, "where several places are only temporary stations."[81] This was especially true during the summer of 1946 when expulsions reached their highest rate and created new housing opportunities for settlers. Authorities in Děčín could not overcome the administrative complexities involved in the transfer of the town's entire

[79] Vyhláška č.29.902/46, ONV Děčín, 26 July 1946. Ibid.
[80] See Law 163/46, 18 July 1946. *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení Československu,* 1946.
[81] Zpráva o výsledku revise činnosti bytového úřadu, Podmokly, January 1947. SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Děčín, k.254, inv.č.775.

residential property or the whims of settlers who continued to seek out the best possible accommodations.

Revise compounded the anxieties of national administrators about their rights to the property that they occupied. Many assumed when they moved to the borderlands that they would become owners of the property they seized. Requests for houses reflected a sense of entitlement in exchange for past or present hardships. For instance, one miner in his request for an apartment in Ervěnice noted that he had been a miner for twenty-six years, had not missed a shift since liberation, and that his brother had been tortured to death at the camp in Terezín. Therefore, he reasoned, "according to current circumstances I have a right to a proper apartment with enough daily sunlight."[82] First comers also felt that they had a right to the property that they had taken over. One report from September 1945, for example, stated that the "majority of national administrators consider these homes as if they own them, invest money into the buildings without the approval of the MNV, make changes, etc." It noted that such national administrators assumed they would have priority for the final allocation of confiscated property.[83] Given these assumptions, it should come as no surprise that first comers reacted sharply against inspections, which they feared, would remove themselves as current national administrators in order to make space for soldiers and others with priority rights. First settlers' protests underscored their service during the early stages of the expulsion and settlement when they heeded the calls of the government and helped protect the borderlands just after liberation. For instance, one national administrator argued: "I listened to the calls that it is necessary for Czechs to occupy this land, and immediately I decided… not to wait like other people, who decided to see what would

[82] See request of V.T., SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.50 inv.č.173.
[83] OSK in Ústí n. L. to MNVs, 18 September 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1769 inv.č.1576 s.B1470.

happen with the remark 'We will wait [to see] that the Germans are not driven back to you.'"[84] Agricultural national administrators could argue that their demands for land followed from the government's land reform program. Such claims served to justify their right to remain as caretakers and eventually owners of seized farms. In one example, a delegation representing 1,626 national administrators in Litoměřice wrote: "Working people are widely convinced, that priority [access to confiscated property] does not exist, and if it will be enforced, it will create the impression of injustice and protectionism and will be regarded as a brake to the progressive attempts of the working people of the Czech borderlands."[85] Such demands had a sympathetic ear in the Communist-led Ministry of Agriculture.

Priority applicants, on the other hand, refused to recognize the legitimacy of current national administrators and pursued various means to claim expropriated German property. At times, they simply seized property and threw out the current national administrator. Such disruptive actions, however, did little to further the case for those with priority status. When local authorities did not support their claims over those already in place, priority applicants turned to their representative organizations in order to pursue their demands for confiscated property. For example, in early 1946, the Liberated Political Prisoners and Survivors of Facsist Victims' organization reminded national committees not only to check the background and performance of national administrators in upcoming business inspections, but also to find out whether they had a right to this position, in terms of participation in the struggle for liberation. It further requested officials to inform the organization of positions made available through *revise*.[86] Soldiers had an even

[84] Letter from national administrator, 26 May 1948. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.71 inv.č.109.
[85] Helena Nosková. *Návrat Čechů z Volyně: Naděje a skutečnost let 1945-1954* (Prague, 1999), 92.
[86] Letter from Osvobozených politických vězňů a pozůstalých po obětech Nacismu, 9 February 1946. SOkA Opava, f. Ústřední národní výbor Opava, k.163 inv.č.265.

more powerful ally in the Ministry of Defense.[87] Liaison officers worked directly with local settlement officials to ensure that the interests of military personnel, including partisans, were met.

By the time that the Settlement Office prepared to review the national administrators in businesses in 1946, the possibility for extensive recalls was remote. Like their counterparts in agriculture, business reviews remained cursory. The inspections began in March 1946 and were scheduled to last a month. National administrators had to produce a mountain of documents concerning their background and business activities to date.[88] Revision commissions were comprised of one current national administrator, a national committee member, an official from the economic group and, if possible, one unsatisfied applicant. These *revise*, however, accomplished little and raised settlement officials' fears that very few national administrators would be recalled. On March 25, 1946, the OÚ sent a notice to investigative commissions warning them about the effects of their complacency. It cautioned that such a stance: "1. would not lead to the cleansing of national administrators; 2. would not remove the excess number of firms in the borderlands; 3. would not create the necessary basis for final allotment."[89] It remains unclear just exactly how many national administrators were recalled through these first *revise*. One settlement official claimed that, of the 60,000 national administrators investigated, fifteen thousand were recalled and five thousand other confiscated businesses were closed.[90] However, these figures were only provisional and it seems that commissions recalled less than ten thousand national administrators. A June 1946 report showed that investigative commissions

[87] See for instance, Letter from Ministry of National Defense, 24 July 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1769 inv.č..1576 s.B1470.
[88] Revision of national administrators, Okresní revisní sbor při OSK, Chomutov, 19 February 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.45 inv.č.168.
[89] č.10105/46, OÚ, 25 March 1946. Archiv města (AM) Ústí n. L., f. MěNV Ústí n.L., k.2 inv.č.24.
[90] Meeting from the Oversight board of the Settlement Office, 20 April 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.310.

removed only 10 percent of national administrators in small businesses, of which 51,000 existed in the Czech lands.[91] Settlement officials also closed businesses in an effort to make their number correspond to a certain number of inhabitants in a given city, though this did not necessarily entail removing a national administrator since many businesses in the borderlands existed only in name by 1946.[92] Further *revise* were carried out in the fall of 1946 and national administrators faced additional audits in preparation for the transfer of ownership in 1947 and later. The seemingly unending inspections did little to reassure settlers about their right to former German property.

Revise raised questions about the borderlands' future as well as its immediate past and ensured, if nothing else, conflict among settlers. National administrators, a majority of whom were first comers, considered inspections not only a threat to their newly established livelihood in the borderlands, but also a rejection of the promise that settlement offered attractive benefits such as better housing and employment opportunities. Those settlers with priority rights likewise considered themselves entitled to expropriated property and pressed the government for their privileges. Settlement officials wished to please both groups, but struggled to maintain a coherent policy concerning *revise*. By 1946, officials in Prague and the borderlands wanted to make national administrators a thing of the past. However, the delicate question of how to allocate former German shops, companies and dwellings made it vulnerable to partisan politics. More than 300,000 current national administrators of permanent property had still not been given assurances about their legal claim to property that they managed and thousands of soldiers,

[91] Informace o živnostech a rodinných domcích pod národní správou, OÚ, 16 September 1946. NA, f. 100/34, a.j.1042. I would like to thank Adrian von Arburg for sharing a copy of this document.
[92] Dodátek k instrukci pro sestavení a činnost okresních revísních sborů, OÚ, 8 March 1946. SOkA Opava, f. Ústřední národní výbor Opava, k.163 inv.č.264; Meeting from the Oversight board of the Settlement Office, 20 April 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.310. How many of the 25,000-30,000 businesses were cancelled because they existed only on paper or because they may have been completely pillaged by 1946 remains unclear.

returning emigrants, and others with priority rights to confiscated property demanded their due. Who received ownership rights became a matter of politics.

4.4 THE QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP

Throughout 1946, a political tug of war occurred over the final allotment of small businesses and homes. However, this was not the case in agriculture. There were several reasons for this. First, Decree 28 from July 20, 1945, gave the Ministry of Agriculture the right to transfer ownership to national administrators of farmland. The most qualified applicants for land under the decree were agricultural workers and farmers owning fewer than thirteen hectares. Of course, they also had to be reliable to the state and the nation. In addition, Decree 28 gave priority to qualified applicants who had been soldiers, partisans or victims of Nazi persecution.[93] No such provisions were made in Decree 108, which covered all other confiscated property. Thus, various state organs that had oversight for certain types of businesses or other property had a direct interest in how this property was to be distributed. In turn, this led to lengthy bargaining and disputes about who should control what, and how ownership rights for confiscated German property would be finalized.[94]

More importantly, political tensions within the National Front government resulted in different approaches to the question of ownership of farms and small businesses. The Communist Party (KSČ) successfully pushed forward the allocation agenda for expropriated farmland and promised low payments for this property. While the other parties of the National Front in the Czech lands did not oppose this policy, they could not capitalize on the political advantages that

[93] Decree 28. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:331.
[94] See for example meeting at the OÚ, 8 November 1945. AM Ústí n. L., f. MěNV Ústí n. L., k.2 inv.č.24.

it offered. Instead, when the KSČ attempted to advance a similar policy for confiscated homes and small businesses, the other parties blocked its progress. They could not allow the Communists to solely claim to represent early settlers' interests in the distribution of confiscated property; the political cost was too steep.

By the end of 1945, roughly 80,000 national administrators occupied former Sudeten German farms in the borderlands.[95] Following inspections some of these were replaced by other, usually priority, applicants. Still, borderland agriculture faced significant shortcomings. At a meeting of regional representatives for the Ministry of Agriculture in early 1946, one district leader reported that the *revise* did little to resolve the problems with national administrators. He noted that many of them were on national committees and had little interest in handing over money to the National Land Fund (NPF), which regulated confiscated farms. Under the current conditions, he argued, not one district could be considered ready for the transfer of ownership. Nevertheless, the chairman of the NPF, Josef Smrkovský (later a well-known '68er) insisted that ownership decrees be distributed as quickly as possible in order to eliminate the interim position of national administrators. He argued: "When a farmer works on someone else's land, of course he does not work as he would for himself. He is unable to make plans, projects and cannot create a program. If he receives ownership of the land, he will know that now it is his, and will have greater interest in working."[96]

Communist leaders in charge of the settlement program had not always supported such a stance. For example, Jiří Koťatko, a Communist at the Ministry of Agriculture, whose department oversaw agricultural settlement planning, had previously condemned the unorganized process of settling the borderlands. In late August 1945, he argued that national administrators

[95] Koťátko, *Konfiskace, rozdělování a osidlování*, 7.
[96] Minutes from the meeting of the chiefs of the NPF branches, 22 February 1946. NA, f. NPF, k.6 inv.č.12.

would have to step aside to make room for those with priority and others, who had remained in the interior to finish that year's harvesting.[97] Soon after, however, Communist policy shifted to supporting early settlers' claims to confiscated farms over those of other priority applicants. In September 1945, at a meeting of the Communist Party's Settlement Committee, one member explained the reason for this shift: "Politically the party gains very much through this [policy], because according to information we received, in a majority of cases they are members or supporters of the party."[98] This stance likely contributed to the low number of national administrators that were recalled through *revise*. The same speaker noted that roughly 80 percent of the agricultural settlers would be verified and would keep their positions during the upcoming inspections.

In early 1946, the Ministry of Agriculture, under the Communist leadership of Julius Ďuriš, decided to issue formal ownership decrees to national administrators. Timed to precede the first postwar elections on May 26, 1946, these decrees became a political tool rather than an administrative one. In late March, the ministry issued orders to remove all obstacles slowing the distribution of ownership decrees. The orders permitted ownership decrees not only for those national administrators who had passed the inspection process, but even to those who had not carried out proper accounting procedures. These accounts involved the sale and purchase of confiscated livestock as well as harvest deliveries from 1945. The ministry warned officials to overcome all obstacles because distributing the decrees "held national importance which, according to the promise of the government, must be quickly fulfilled."[99] The Communists

[97] Všeodborový archiv ČMKOS, Prague, f. Ústřední rada odborů – Národohospodářská komise, k.22 inv.č.62. I would like to thank Adrian von Arburg for this document.
[98] Minutes from the meeting of the Settlement Committee of the Central Committee of the KSČ, 26 September 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j.15
[99] 48.745/46-IX/2, MZ, 27 March 1946. SOkA Česká Lípa, f. ONV Dubá, k.63 inv.č.187.

hoped quickly distributing seized land to national administrators would solidify its support among these new settlers.

Similarly, political calculations determined Communist policy toward national administrators of Sudeten German businesses. Leading Communist officials believed that national administrators in business did not support their party and, therefore, they wished to undermine, through *revise*, those already in place. One member of the Communist Party's Settlement Committee argued that because the party did not enjoy good standing among national administrators of former German shops "it was politically necessary to entrust this property into the hands of people who have the confidence of the party."[100] In the fall of 1945, Miroslav Kreysa, the OÚ chairperson, reported to fellow Communists that "we need to find out whether national administrators in businesses, shops and all small firms are with our party and are quality democrats." He doubted that most of the current national administrators fit these criteria and therefore supported the idea of installing priority applicants. However, he argued that "[t]his opinion must be modified when it would remove a certified democrat from such property and give it to someone who was not."[101] Communists continued to suspect the loyalty of business national administrators into 1948, and sought to install their "democrats" into these positions.[102]

Publicly, the party backed national administrators in business in no uncertain terms and pressed for the quick allocation of confiscated businesses and homes, as they had successfully done with confiscated farms. Communist support of national administrators emerged once the KSČ had guaranteed that the Settlement Office would control the final distribution of homes and

[100] Minutes from the meeting of the Settlement Committee of the Central Committee of the KSČ, 29 September 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j.15.
[101] Minutes from the meeting of the Settlement Committee of the Central Committee of the KSČ, November 30, 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j.15.
[102] See Zakročení proti národním správcům v pohraničí, KSČ, January 1948. NA, f. 23, a.j.19.

businesses.[103] In August 1946, Kreysa even backed the majority of national administrators in businesses, when others suggested that as many as 70 percent should be recalled, arguing that "only 5-10 percent were poor managers."[104] The Communists and the Settlement Office wished to circumvent procedures in Decree 108 that gave allocation commissions, comprised of local officials, the authority to distribute property to individual applicants. Instead, Communists proposed to hand over property to national administrators who had been certified through *revise*. The Communist proposal to alter the manner of final allocation coincided with upcoming elections and was accompanied by a campaign to place pressure on the government to accept it.[105] It is also important to note that, according to the confiscation decree, the allocation of small businesses and shops was tied to the final distribution of home ownership. The promise to quickly resolve the uncertainty surrounding national administrators, therefore, offered potentially significant rewards in terms of political patronage.[106]

The other Czech parties of the National Front refused to accept the KSČ's attempt to alter the distribution regulations for expropriated businesses and homes. They clearly saw the political danger of allowing Communists to take credit for solving one of the most pressing issues in the borderlands. Even before the election returns proved the benefits of the Communist initiative to quickly turn national administrators into owners of agricultural property, the other parties witnessed the KSČ's ability to tailor the property distribution process to its propaganda needs. One Social Democrat remarked, for instance, that during the celebrations, at which the decrees for farmsteads were distributed, only one party's [KSČ] representatives and highest officials

[103] Minutes from the meeting of the ÚKVO, 1 February and 4 April 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.16.
[104] Minutes from the meeting of the ÚKVO, 20-21 August 1946. NA, f. MV-NR k.12145 s.1651/2.
[105] Minutes from the meeting of the ÚKVO, 11 April 1946. NA, f. MV-NR k.12145 s.1651/2.The Communist Party issued a policy paper for circulation to lower officials. Referát pro veřejné schůze národních správců v pohraničí, 15 April 1946. NA, f. 100/24, a.j.1042. (I would like to thank Adrian von Arburg for this document); See resolutions and demands that followed. NA, f. MV-NR, k.480 inv.č.1028 s.A2826; NA, f. 23, a.j.314; *Hraníčář Protifašistický list okresu Frývaldova*, 3 May 1946.
[106] There were roughly 200,000 confiscated homes in the borderlands. NA, f. MV-NR k.2381 inv.č.2030 s.B2620/1.

were present.[107] Indeed, the Communists did all that they could to receive praise for quickly and cheaply distributing confiscated agricultural property. The party newspaper, for instance, ran several articles in early 1946 that highlighted their efforts to hand out ownership decrees.[108] Even the ownership decree itself reflected Communist control of confiscated land distribution; it included a line honoring the Red Army for its help in the country's liberation. While the actual extent to which the Communists benefited through the distribution of ownership decrees remains unclear, both the Communists and the other parties believed it had brought them much success in the borderlands during the May 1946 elections.

Interestingly, the ownership decrees issued in early 1946 did not legally transfer ownership title to those upon whom they were conferred. That process would have required land surveys and rewriting the land registrars because many farms had been parceled into smaller allotments in order to meet the land reform requirements. In fact, transferring ownership lasted several years and was not completed by the time that Czechoslovakia began collectivizing its farms in 1949. Nonetheless, the non-Communist parties immediately recognized the political rationale behind distributing ownership decrees. Thus, when the Communist Party presented a similar proposal to speed up the final allocation procedures for businesses and homes in February 1946, the other three parties were united in their opposition against it. The Communist proposal eliminated local authorities from the decision-making process about who received confiscated homes and businesses, and instead gave the Settlement Office the right to devise a general distribution plan according to its own priorities. Pavel Sajal, a Social Democratic member of the Provisional National Assembly's Settlement Committee, referred to the ownership decrees in agriculture to condemn the Communist proposal. He warned: "It is clear that such decrees only serve to create

[107] Pavel Sajal. *Za 300 miliard hodnot vrací se do rukou českého národa*. (Prague, 1946), 12.
[108] See for example, *Rudé právo*, 19, 24 February and 5 March 1946.

the impression of legal assurance for those awaiting allocation, [who are] ignorant of laws, which in reality they do not receive. It would be the same with the decision about the assignment of businesses, homes and other property according to general plans."[109] On May 25, 1946, the day before elections, an article entitled "Once More to the Allocation of Businesses," in the Social Democratic borderland newspaper *Stráž severu* (Sentinel of the North) referred to the Communist proposal to allocate businesses in similar terms. It stated: "Illegal allocation would not help in the first place to convince national administrators, for it would be possible to cancel their ownership at any time, even if they had as many as ten paper decrees for it."[110] The article argued that Communists should stick to the law and allow national committees and settlers to control the allocation process.

Throughout 1946, various proposals emerged to deal with the transfer of homes and businesses to final ownership. In the end, a compromise was reached whereby the Settlement Office gained the final say in which businesses remained in operation, but had to take into account the input of local authorities. Law 31, issued on February 14, 1947, was supposed to speed up the allocation provisions by removing the local ten member allocation commissions that were originally designated to choose which national administrators would remain. Instead, under the provisions of Law 31, the Settlement Office had the power to dismiss national administrators, close down businesses and oversee the entire allocation process. National administrators who had taken possession of property prior to May 1, 1946 were given the right to apply for ownership of the property they had managed over priority applicants.[111] Of course, all of the parties wanted to take credit for resolving the tension between priority applicants and

[109] Sajal, *Za 300 miliard hodnot*, 12.
[110] J. Veverka, "Jěstě přidělování živností," *Stráž severu*, 25 May 1946.
[111] See Karel Petrželka, *Příděl konfiskovaných drobných živností a rodinných domků* (Prague, 1947). For background to this legislation see NA, f. MV-NR, k.478-482, inv.č.1028 s.A2826.

current national administrators. Communists argued that, had the other parties been willing to go along with their original proposal, settlers would already be living under their own roof.[112] Social Democrats responded that they too had presented a proposal in May 1946, which protected the interests of national administrators already in place. Their representative, therefore, noted: "Consequently it was not our Communist colleagues, who were the first to recognize the merits of certified national administrators; on the contrary, it was Social Democrats, who prepared a proposed law for their defense and benefit."[113] Though the law had been passed, additional disputes, delays and investigations continued to hamper the final transfer of confiscated property. After the Communists took power in early 1948, another inspection of national administrators occurred and renewed questions about who would gain the right to own seized permanent property.

The Communists used politically expedient opportunities to press their agenda between 1945 and 1948. They did not create popular policies as much as they followed popular demands. This approach partially accounts for their success in amassing political support. The Communist approach to the question of national administrators, however, not only involved political calculations. They supported quickening the pace of property transfer, in part, because of problems in the borderlands. By late 1946, settlers began leaving the borderlands to return to the interior. Settlers, national committees and the central government felt uneasy about continued reports of property crimes. In addition, the program to bring back tens of thousands of Czech and Slovak emigrants was not reaching the projected targets. As the next chapter demonstrates, industrial officials and borderland national committees had serious concerns about borderland labor shortages and wanted to finalize the changes in property rights in order to get people back

[112] From a special section for the borderlands in *Rudé právo*, 14 February 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j. 345.
[113] J. Veverka, "Další krok k úspěšní konsolidaci pohraničí." *Stráž severu*, 16 Februarty 1947.

to work. Thus, who became and remained a national administrator depended on a combination of political pressures and economic concerns.

4.5 RELIABLE CZECHS

This final section explores the meaning behind the three characteristics that defined qualified national administrators: "professional ability," "moral integrity" and "state/national reliability (*statní spolěhlivost*)."[114] These categories were by no means clearly defined and absorbed new meaning as political conditions changed. The last category in particular is difficult to translate. In some instances a national administrator's reliability was measured solely by his or her ethnic background, however, reliability was also used to gauge a person's loyalty to the state. Together the three traits reflected leaders' assumptions about the general characteristics necessary to renew the borderlands. In the immediate postwar period, these designations generally meant that someone was either Czech or Slovak and was not a gold digger or a Nazi collaborator. As time went on, political parties, new settlers and officials gave new definitions to these traits by using them to discredit specific actions and groups in the borderlands. In the process, the measure of a national administrator's reliability—including their professional abilities and moral integrity—narrowed dramatically as the need for dependable workers continued to rise.

4.5.1 Professional Ability

By the fall of 1946, 118,000 families and individuals had been named owners of confiscated farms, of which some estimated 70,000 were national administrators who had moved there at

[114] See Decree 5, Art. 16, Sec. 1. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety* 1:219.

least a year earlier.[115] Only 5,000 returning emigrant families had resettled. Of the other priority applicants, 13,500 were listed as military personnel, including partisans.[116] Some of these settlers found their positions as a result of *revise*. Other priority settlers, especially returning emigrant farmers, who brought their own livestock and equipment, had not yet made it to the borderlands because of legal and technical difficulties involved in their return. The progress of settling priority applicants in the district of Chomutov in northern Bohemia reflected the pace of settlement after the first wave of settlers had arrived. At the end of September 1945, representatives from the partisan group "Ledeč" surveyed possible farmsteads for 38 members of their group. Local officials carried out inspections and removed some national administrators on whose farmsteads they then settled Ledeč members and created reserves for later "reemigrants." More than two hundred farms in the district had been allocated to priority groups from the beginning of 1946 to the middle of 1947.[117]

The continuing availability of space for priority applicants, in part, reflected the economic failures of agricultural settlement. It was clear that many inept farmers remained following revisions. In the district of Dubá, for example, the District Revision Commission changed the ruling on 385 unqualified applicants so that they could remain as national administrators and cancelled only 212 others. Many of those who were reinstated had worked in other professions during the war and the commission had considered them as non-agricultural workers. After the commission reversed this decision, Dubá's *revise* removed only 10 percent of the current national administrators, which fell just below the average for borderland *revise*.[118] While the

[115] Koťátko, *Konfiskace, rozdělování a osidlování*, 21.
[116] Report to Settlement Committee of the National Assembly, 10 October 1946. NA, f. Ministerstvo Zemědělstvo – Sekretariat (MZ-S), k.371 inv.č.191.
[117] Situation reports to Minister of Agriculture. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1446 inv.č.1646.
[118] Situation report to Minister of Agriculture, Dubá, 12 December 1945. NA, f. NPF, k.10 inv.č.16. See also the report about the verification of national administrators in the borderlands from 26 November 1945. Dubá is the only

Communists assumed that they benefited by leaving more national administrators in place, the performance of borderland agriculture clearly suffered through such policies. A report from late 1949, which indicated a host of problems plaguing borderland agriculture, cited settlers' lack of experience first.[119] Officials should have expected this. Land reform, under Communist aegis, generally allotted land to agricultural laborers, many of whom had sparse savings and young children, rather than to experienced farmers. A report from one borderland district touted this result. It argued that large families would help bring population levels closer to prewar levels, which signaled the "national" success of land reform. It also noted that "80 percent of the people are former farm hands and agricultural laborers, the poorest of the poor. Land reform made these people farmers and improved their existence…This is the social success of our land reform."[120] That these settlers were, for the most part, unqualified to manage independent farms in the borderlands, and therefore did not meet the criterion in Decree 5 of being professionally able, was beside the point. Land reform did not simply seek to improve agricultural production, but served as a popular program that both punished Sudeten Germans and rewarded landless laborers. However, agricultural production suffered and many farmer-settlers failed to make a successful living in the borderlands. From 1946 to October 1949, at least 34,000, out of roughly 120,000, holders of ownership decrees to confiscated farms had moved out of the borderlands. Some left because they had gone to the borderlands to enjoy living on someone else's farm, which ended once German workers had departed. Others left because they could not succeed.

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district over 20 percent, with 45 percent or 597 recalled, although the number 212 is hand written next to the original figure. NA, f. 23, a.j.15.

[119] The Problems of Agriculture in the Borderlands, MZ, December 1949. NA, MZ-S, k.371 inv.č.191.

[120] Výsledky osidlení zeměděské půdy na Českolipsku, Osídlovací komise ministerstva zemědělství, Česká Lípa, 19 January 1946. NA, f. NPF, k.10 inv.č.16.

The onset of collectivization in 1949 accelerated this process and only the NPF's refusal to accept the ownership decrees prevented more agricultural settlers from leaving.[121]

Many business national administrators also lacked experience, which raised doubts about their economic abilities. The rush to occupy these spots made it difficult to verify their experience. Even by the time of revisions in 1946, many had not bothered to collect the paperwork necessary to prove that they had the training and experience to successfully manage a business. The revisions themselves raised more questions about whether such national administrators lacked professional capabilities or were attempting to hide profits. In early 1947, the ZNV in Prague warned that many fourth quarter reports from national administrators indicated that they were operating at a loss and were simply living off of the property under their management.[122] As an article in *Dnešek* noted, struggling national administrators were not necessarily gold diggers and may have wanted the business to prosper. However, because they were unable to succeed to their satisfaction, they lived off the business's property until that ran out, at which time they asked the state to finance the struggling firm.[123] Such practices did little to improve the financial basis for settlement. In one case, the national administrator of a clothing store requested an operational loan of 100,000 Kčs from the local national committee because she claimed she could no longer purchase the necessary goods to keep the firm running. Nearly two years later, when she requested to close the store for an extended leave, the national committee decided to shut down the business, partly because the store had often been closed during normal business hours.[124] Such instances raised questions about a national administrator's "moral integrity" as much, if not more, than about their "professional abilities." National

[121] The Problems of Agriculture in the Borderlands, MZ, December 1949. NA, MZ-S, k.371 inv.č.191.
[122] Notice from ONV Chomutov, 10 April 1947. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.42 inv.č.164.
[123] Michal Mareš, "Přicházím z periferie republiky," *Dnešek*, 4 July 1946.
[124] Report on fy. Tutschka, Ervěnice. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.45 inv.č.168.

administrators' use of confiscated businesses solely for personal benefit could also be interpreted as a "national" offence.[125] Determining who was a reliable or unreliable national administrator had less to do with balance sheets than with political priorities and power.

4.5.2 Mixed Marriage

Crossing national lines in pursuit of property, protection and personal relationships, though different in nature from corrupt business practices, brought similar allegations against delinquent national administrators. Ethnically-mixed couples, in particular, raised questions about a person's "moral integrity" as well as their "national reliability." For example, the national administrator of one butcher shop had apparently taken over from the German owner after having been forced to work (*totalně nasazení*) there during the occupation. Following his first inspection, which demanded that he be replaced, he appealed for a second, "*superrevise*". This second investigation, in June 1946, noted that aside from some health problems in the shop, the only other problem was the national administrator's relationship with the former German owner's daughter. In a further appeal, the national administrator noted that they had been married and that the Minister of National Defense had sent a note to the MNV in Jeseník confirming that this woman would receive Czechoslovak citizenship. After considerable wrangling between the local, district and provincial national committees, the ZNV in Moravská Ostrava ruled against the recall and the newlyweds remained caretakers of the property, at least for a time.[126] This case suggests that property underpinned many inter-ethnic relationships that evolved after the war. Czech-German relationships in the borderlands were often marriages of convenience. In this case, the butcher's wife hoped that she would be allowed to remain in the country after her

[125] Dr. V. Řezníček, "Rozdělování konfiskovaného majetku, jeho předpoklady, přípravy a dosavadní průběh," *Osidlování*, 10 December 1946; Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 242.
[126] For this case, see SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.55 inv.č.109.

daughter married a Czech. Given the strength of anti-German feeling, it was surprising that men even attempted to marry German women, let alone sought to carry on as national administrators.[127]

New settlers in the borderlands opposed Czech-German personal relationships, though not always on national grounds. As one new settler argued about a national administrator with a German wife: "Even though I do not want to dispute the national/state reliability of J.H., still, according to my opinion, the fact that he is the husband of the sister of the former owner who was previously a member of the NSDAP, must be taken into consideration."[128] Indeed, settlers who expressed strong sentiments against Czechs married to Germans found such relationships morally or politically incorrect, rather than anti-state. New settlers who had spent the war in the Protectorate had little tolerance for Czechs who married Germans, especially when confiscated property was at stake.[129] Such feelings also developed as a result of old settlers' attempts to protect Germans from expulsion and property loss. In response to these and other cases of Czech-German intimacy, the Interior Ministry issued a directive on November 26, 1945 that punished Czechs for offences against national honor and social relations with Germans. As Benjamin Frommer argues, such punishments "created an entirely new form of treason – against the nation, not the state."[130] During ethnic cleansing, the betrayal of one was also seen as the betrayal of the other. By punishing ethnically mixed relationships, the state clarified its perceived role as the nation's protector.

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[127] These cases were almost always Czech men marrying German women and not the other way around. See for example: SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.71 inv.č.109; SOkA Děčín, f. ONV Šluknov, k.30 inv.č.84; SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.21 inv.č.106. See also Benjamin Frommer. "Expulsion or Integration: Unmixing Interethnic Marriage in Postwar Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 385.
[128] See the correspondence concerning this case. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice, k.115 inv.č.621.
[129] Frommer, "Expulsion or Integration," 397.
[130] Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 199. For more on the Decree on offenses against national honor, see Ibid., 186-227.

Relationships that developed at the end of the war, often in response to the loss of property and impending transfer, differed significantly from mixed marriages that had existed before the war. The latter were more deeply rooted and could not be forestalled by central decrees. Nonetheless, as Frommer observes, immediately after the war mixed marriage couples from the prewar era were often considered no different from those in marriages consummated during or after the war, much to the disfavor of the former.[131] Mixed marriage couples were sometimes expelled along with Sudeten Germans. The confiscation decrees made no provision for mixed marriage couples and expropriated property based on an owner's nationality. Thus, it was not uncommon for certain mixed marriage couples to have half of their property confiscated.[132] Only after considerable debate did mixed marriage couples receive the right to retain their property, though land was still confiscated under Decree 12. In May 1946, the government formally exempted German spouses from the transfer. National administrators were generally prevented from having German spouses and revision commissions could revoke their position.[133] Still, some mixed marriage couples managed to remain as national administrators. For example, one couple returning from Berlin after the war took over a hairdresser's salon in Frývaldov and successfully managed it from 1945 to 1948, when the Czech husband applied to receive ownership of the firm. Even then, his marriage to a Reich German appeared unproblematic, in part, because he had sent their daughter to a Czech school before the war ended.[134] Because officials exercised considerable leeway when determining a person's nationality, sending one's child to a certain school or specifying Czech as one's language of daily use in the 1930 census,

[131] Frommer, "Expulsion or Integration," 390.
[132] See for example some of the cases in SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-venkov, k.557 inv.č.606.
[133] See Instrukce pro sestavování a činnost revisních komisí 3584/46, OÚ. *Předpisy*, 2:210; Vyhláška o národní správě obytných domů, č. 2144/46, OÚ, 12 December 1946. Ibid, 1:125.
[134] See the case of J.V. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.55 inv.č.109.

often proved decisive for people trying to prove their reliability to the nation and state after the war.

While central officials eased the restrictions against mixed marriage couples and others after 1945, their status as reliable Czechs remained insecure. Following the Communist seizure of power in 1948, a new round of cleansing began in the borderlands. District and local "action committees," created during the February seizure of power, focused on rapidly advancing the Communist Party's political agenda. These committees included members of organizations outside of the government such as trade unions, youth organizations and factory committees. Soon, they appeared as sub-committees of virtually every organization in the country. Their first order of business was to remove important political and administrative organs of politically unreliable people.[135] Leading members of the Czech National Socialist party were often the first to go, but other parties' members also faced removal. While ostensibly directed against "enemies of the people's democracy," these purges widened to include national administrators who did not meet the new measure of state/national reliability. The Interior Ministry wrote to national committees in March 1948 that given "national administrators' importance and meaning there is no doubt that such people can no longer be national administrators."[136] Such directives opened the door to further uncertainty concerning property relations. Local borderland Communists and new settlers particularly targeted those who had intimate relations with Germans. For example, the Czech husband from the mixed marriage couple who ran the hairdresser's salon in Frývaldov (by 1948 renamed Jeseník) suddenly faced opposition to his request for ownership of the business. One of his employees had denounced him for being politically unreliable and for

[135] See for example Plán práce pro okresní komise lidové správy, KSČ Liberec, 12 April 1948. SOkA Děčín, f. ONV Šluknov, k.1 inv.č.34.
[136] B2610/1-15/3-1948-II/6, Odvolání národních správců, MV, 16 March 1948. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, k.113 inv.č.138.

speaking German with customers in the store.[137] Such denunciations not only improved the employee's own chance to obtain the firm, which he had simultaneously requested, but revealed how questions of national reliability remained potent in the borderlands even as the regime focused its attention on class and political enemies. Indeed, throughout the borderlands, those who had personal relationships with Germans became a primary focus of the post-February 1948 *revise* of national administrators.[138]

4.5.3 Volhynian Czechs

One final group that provides an interesting illustration of the protean nature of reliability is the Volhynian Czechs. These Czechs had emigrated primarily as agriculturalists to two spots in Volhynia during the late 19th century.[139] One group ended up in Poland following World War I and the other lived in Ukraine where it experienced Soviet collectivization. Following the Nazi-Soviet agreement to divide Poland in 1939, both groups faced Soviet rule, and during the war lived through battles on the front and the ethnic cleansing campaigns between Poles and Ukrainians.[140] Many of the Volhynian Czechs moved to Czechoslovakia following the war like thousands of other emigrants and immediately became involved in the search for suitable property. Because of their foreign background and efforts to secure some of the best farmland, their relationship with other Czechs became marked by conflict and mutual suspicion. Because many of them did not support the Communists, what privilege they possessed at the end of the

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[137] See the case of J. V. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.55 inv.č.109.
[138] See examples of such cases in the following: SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.71 inv.č.109; SOkA Ústí n.L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.79 inv.č.372.
[139] For recent histories about the return of Volhynian Czechs see Helena Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně: Naděje a skutečnost let 1945-1954* Studijní materialy (Prague, 1999); Slezák, *Zemědělské osidlování*, 128-140.
[140] In one indication of their experience, a 1943 Ukrainian guideline from the UPA ordered that, like Poles, Czechs and Jews should be shot on the spot. Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven, 2003), 169 n46.

war increasingly diminished. Their experience indicates that nationality was not the sole category that determined a person's reliability.

Volhynian Czechs fulfilled many of the requirements for priority access to national administrator positions. They were returning emigrants, or "reemigrants," and had participated in large numbers as soldiers in the First Army Corps (a.k.a. the Svoboda army, named after its commander Ludvik Svoboda) under the direction of the Red Army. Because Volhynian Czechs helped liberate Czechoslovakia, and thus served the country as only a handful of domestic partisans could match, they should have had received easy access to confiscated property. A host of decrees, laws and regulations extended privileged access to reemigrants as well as soldiers, partisans and others.[141] Nevertheless, from the outset, they faced opposition from first settlers in the borderlands that left them as outsiders in their home country.[142] The Volhynian Czechs wished to settle mainly in the world-renowned hop-growing region around Žatec (Saaz). In June 1945, they sent a delegation to secure a number of former Sudeten German farms, but met resistance from members of the district administrative commission. As elsewhere, the best farms had already been occupied and first comers realized the threat that these reemigrant soldiers posed to their newly won gains. Volhynian Czechs pressed hard for property they felt entitled to keep. They demanded the best property for themselves and their relatives and sometimes took matters into their own hands.[143] Since many of them were demobilized soldiers, they did not shy away from using force. As each group sought to protect their right to seized property, divisions between Volhynian Czechs and settlers in Žatec began to harden.[144]

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[141] Decree 108, part 2, sec. 7, para.3. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:853.
[142] Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 31.
[143] Letter from Office of the Cabinet of the Government, 20 December 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.7443 inv.č.4148 s.B300.
[144] Report on trip to the borderlands Velitelství první oblasti, 4-5 July 1945. VHA, f. Velitelství první oblasti, k.48, inv.č.264. Report from Headquarters of the First Corps, late July 1945. Ibid., k.49 inv.č.271.

The tensions that developed between reemigrants and early settlers in the borderlands also reflected the different attitudes of local and central officials toward settlement. The idea of giving priority rights to reemigrants, soldiers, and victims of Nazi persecution found wide support in Prague. The Volhynian Czechs had some powerful backers, among them the Minister of National Defence, who often wrote letters supporting Volhynian Czechs' property claims. A special committee at the Ministry of Agriculture was created to settle soldiers, including many Volhynian Czechs, on expropriated German farmland.[145] First settlers, on the other hand, turned to local authorities for help in securing their positions. National committees pursued a variety of methods to keep Volhynian Czechs out of their districts. First, they simply refused to meet their demands. Once it became apparent that some Volhynian Czechs would, despite their resistance, be settled in their area, local officials in Žatec helped to minimize their influence by suggesting that they receive a maximum quota of thirty percent of the farms in the district.[146] This figure guaranteed that the majority of current national administrators would not be displaced. Other national committees attempted to protect current national administrators by pointing to their diligence and service in the borderlands. The District National Committee in Teplice-Šenov argued that "countless national administrators, who did not come to the borderlands solely for profit, relatively quickly brought the entrusted property into order and with the utmost effort succeeded in securing the harvest in proper time for planting. It would be ungrateful if we throw them out now, simply because a foreign soldier likes the farm."[147] Finally, borderland national committees sought to use the problem of settling priority applicants to reassert their own authority. One local national committee complained that Volhynian Czechs carried out their

[145] Letter from Ministry of Agriculture, 9 October 1945. Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 100.
[146] Resoluce z Čeští zemědělci a národní správci zemědělských usedlosti, Žatec, 6 September 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.7443 inv.č.4148 s.B300.
[147] Opinion on settlement of foreign soldiers, 15 November 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice, kn.1 inv.č.1.

selection of farms with settlement officials, but not with the input of local authorities. They argued that this disrupted the work of already present national administrators, hurt the economy, and weakened the power of independent people's organs (i.e. national committees).[148]

More concerted action to resettle Volhynian Czechs occurred during 1946 after Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union arranged a formal agreement to repatriate several thousand of them.[149] Central settlement officials at the Ministry of Agriculture along with liaison officers representing Volhynian Czechs requested that agricultural commissions carry out another review of national administrators in order to reclassify them according to three levels. According to the plan, the second and third level national administrators would have been recalled to make space for Volhynian Czechs. In practice, all the agricultural commissions listed their national administrators at the first level.[150] At the beginning of 1947, the centrally directed resettlement of Volhynian Czechs began. Once again, despite prior planning, conflicts arose. In late 1946, agricultural officials planned to reserve two thousand farms for Volhynian Czechs coming from the USSR. They assumed that an additional five hundred farms would be available following the departure of national administrators, already in place, who did not meet the requirements to retain their position. The arrival of a thousand more families than expected delayed the settlement of Volhynian Czechs and prolonged the uncertainty of first comers.[151] In some areas, such as northern Moravia and Silesia, where the pressure from priority groups had been weaker during 1945 and 1946, the arrival of Volhynian Czechs offered another chance to remove unwanted national administrators. In Opava, for instance, the District Peasant Commission had

[148] Request of MěNV Pohořelice, 7 November 1945. Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 101-102.
[149] The agreement between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was signed on 10 July 1946. Slézak, 132.
[150] Report of liaison officer attached to Minister of Agriculture to Ministry of National Defense, 19 February 1946. Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 107.
[151] For a description of the official numbers and plans for Volhynian Czechs' return in 1947, see Slezák, *Zemědělské osidlování*, 134-138.

to make space for 61 families from Volhynia, but had only 29 farms available. Through *revise* and "long work" they produced more farms and were able to settle 114 Volhynian Czech families. In contrast to many of the national administrators that they removed the agricultural referent reported that because of the Volhynian Czechs' farming experience the district benefited from their settlement.[152] Despite the difficulties, more than 38,000 Volhynian Czechs settled in Czechoslovakia by the middle of 1947.[153]

Following the Communist seizure of power, action committee purges cut both ways for Volhynian Czechs. In many cases, they benefited from the removal of national administrators because they were first in line for confiscated property as priority applicants.[154] However, because of the altered political atmosphere, they also struggled to maintain their strong position in settlement proceedings. In general, Volhynian Czechs held antagonistic opinions toward communism and the Soviet system they had left behind.[155] When political control shifted in 1948, they too had to purge members from their own organization, the Union for Volhynian Czechs. For example, in Podbořany, which had been the site of ongoing conflicts between Volhynian Czechs and other settlers, the Action Committee of the Union for Volhynian Czechs expelled nine of its members for "consorting with Germans." It based its decision, in part, on the fact that "the irresponsible behavior of several individuals cast a poor light on Volhynian Czechs settled in the district." Indeed, with Communists in power, Volhynian Czechs could not afford to press their claims for privileged status as they had before. The 1949 program for the Union of Volhynian Czechs in Žatec gave priority to assimilating the Volhynian Czechs to their new

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[152] Half-year report of the Agricultural and Settlement chairperson at the ONV Opava-venkov, 1947. SOkA Opava, f. ONV Opava-věnkov, k.17 inv.č.118.
[153] Report on remigration, Osídlovací komise ÚV KSČ, 25 September 1948. Nosková, *Návrat Čechů*, 141-144.
[154] See for example Seznam změdělských přídělců, April 1948. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.1446 inv.č.1646.
[155] For some of the problems that Volhynian Czechs posed for communists see Nosková, "Osídlovací komise ÚV KSČ"; Nosková, *Návrat Čechů*, 52-57; Slezák, *Zemědělské osidlování*, 139; Karel Bertelman, *Vývoj národních vyborů do ústavy 9. května.* (Prague, 1964), 149.

homes and politically re-educating them before mentioning the still unresolved property situation.[156]

National administrators serve as a measure of reliable citizenship, because only a reliable citizen could be trusted to manage the nation-state's property. Being a Czech was clearly not enough. Czechs from the interior particularly targeted old settlers as unreliable during the summer of 1945. The state broadened the notion of unreliability to include personal Czech-German relationships in 1946. The government and new settlers treated these couples—who often came together through property—with contempt after the war. Mixed marriage couples from the prewar years managed to obtain national administrator positions until the Communists came to power. Then, when a new round of inspections began, these couples generally lost their right to property. Much of the pressure for this change came through the action committees, which represented the wishes of local Communists. In a similar way, the fate of Volhynian Czechs underscores how notions of reliability changed. Because of their service in the war and their farming abilities, the central government and settlement officials supported their return. However, their drive to secure good land created conflicts between new settlers and reemigrants over the final allocation of confiscated property. As the state became an instrument of the Communist Party, its accommodating attitude toward the Volhynian Czechs changed, again with broad support from below. Being a reliable national administrator was not only about getting property, it signaled that a person met with the approval of those in power.

National administrators represented several competing agendas for the borderlands. First and foremost, they supported expulsions by helping to evict Sudeten Germans from their homes, businesses, and farms. While on the surface, Czechs appeared unified in this goal, conflicts quickly emerged. First settlers appealed to local and to higher authorities for their right to keep

[156] Nosková, *Návrat Čechů*, 150-153.

the property they acquired in the first months after the war. Those with priority rights countered that they were entitled to have the best property according to the confiscation regulations. Early settlers, however, had the upper hand. They already lived in the buildings they wanted to keep and had better connections with local authorities. In addition, because the central government wished to conclude the transfer of property ownership quickly, it was more willing to recognize the rights of first settlers. The Communists, in particular, supported this policy because they believed that they had a strong base of support among farmer-settlers. Although they did not see many business national administrators as Communist Party supporters, they used *revise* and their control of the Settlement Office to shape the transfer of commercial and residential properties. Confiscation politics were not about using confiscated German property to create a homogenous Czech borderland, but about gaining the power to determine who remained as a reliable national administrator.

5.0 LABOR POLITICS

5.1 EXPULSION OR RETENTION?

In Česká Kamenice, where Adolf Charous and Vilem Dovara imprisoned the first national committee chairperson, Karel Caidler, reports that old settlers protected Germans from expulsions in 1945 because they had personal relationships with them were only half true. As Caidler later explained, during the first expulsions a whole series of local factory managers "emphatically protested against the transfer of their employee-specialists." In the case of the Česka Kamenice paper mill, the largest factory in town, the leader of Czechoslovakia's army headquarters General Boček authorized the local national committee (MNV) to exempt its workers from the transfers.[1] Throughout the borderlands requests and demands to retain German workers poured into national committees in the summer of 1945. This chapter examines how the critical issue of replacing Sudeten German workers entwined with settlement and expulsion priorities and policies. While the focus shifts to labor and industrial policy, property and the future of the borderlands remain central to the dynamic. For the most part national committees remained staunch in their support of local industries, because they wished to utilize existing factories to rebuild their economy. However, the state's industrial policy no longer looked favorably on local economies. Ministries and economic planners sought to control the rebuilding

[1] Protocol of Karel Caidler, 15 March 1947. Národní archiv, Prague (NA), f. Ministerstvo vnitra-Nová registratura (MV-NR) k.1943 inv.č.1602 s.B2111.

of borderland economy from Prague and harness its productive capacity to the needs of the entire country.

Amid the increasing tempo of expulsions during June and July 1945, military leaders in the borderlands had little concern for the economy's performance. Central directives issued in June ordered that economic interests should be respected during the expulsions, so that enough workers remained to continue production.[2] A directive from the Provincial National Committee in Prague offered detailed instructions about what kinds of workers should be kept. It gave preference to Germans over the age of thirty-five and without children, who looked after livestock or worked in specialized agricultural production, such as hop-growing and sugar-beet cultivation, and workers in public utilities and mining.[3] Such orders, however, proved less important than those that demanded expulsions. For example, on June 18, 1945, the commander of the 28th Infantry Regiment ordered the MNV in Polevsko to prepare for a transfer the following day. In his meeting with local officials, the commander referred to official policies that stated which Germans should be selected for expulsion, especially NSDAP members and those unfit for work. He also mentioned that under no circumstances should glass experts be removed, because they were needed for local industry. The local national committee responded by drawing up a list of roughly 140 people. Displeased with this low figure, the commander instructed the MNV to produce at least 50 percent of the local population for immediate transfer and consequently expelled nearly 220 people, including many glass workers. The MNV, which had

[2] Směrnice k nařízení zemského národního výboru o vystěhování Němců č.874, Zemský národní výbor (ZNV) Prague, 12 June 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.7443 inv.č.4148 s.B300; 75 Taj.1.odděl.1945, 19 June 1945, Vojenský historický archiv (VHA) Prague, f. Velitelství první oblasti (VO1), k.48 inv.č.263; Zásadení směrnice pro řízení a provádění akce k vyčištění Moravy a Slezska od Němců, Velitelství 3. oblastí (VO3), 25 June 1945. Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Bruntál, f. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Bruntál I, k.13 inv.č.81; S. Biman a R. Cílek, *Poslední mrtví, první živí: České pohraničí květen až srpen 1945* (Ústí nad Labem, 1989), 44-45; Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československu, 1945-1948* (Prague, 1991), 155.

[3] Směrnice k nařízení zemského národního výboru o vystěhování Němců č.874, ZNV Prague, 12 June 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.7443 inv.č.4148 s.B300.

already helped to force a majority of Sudeten Germans from the district, complained that such acts wreaked havoc in the town.[4]

Military officials saw little reason to allow Germans to remain. Their mission was to secure borders and cleanse the area of Germans. In the northern mining town of Most, for example, a local lieutenant warned mining officials that Sudeten German miners would not be exempt from "the transfer." The minister of industry, Bohumil Laušman, had expressly prohibited expulsions of miners from the North Bohemian Brown Coal Mines (Severočeský hnědouhelné doly, SHD), and threatened reproach for any violations. Mining officials invoked his authority when they voiced their complaints that expelling Germans from the mines disregarded official policy. The lieutenant replied simply that "indeed he had received such orders, but that each district should do things according to its own will."[5] The tensions between military and civilian authorities in the borderlands reflected the military's overall control of the expulsion process, as well as its strong position vis-à-vis local officials at a time when the state administration was still forming.[6] Such divisions over the manner of expulsions also raised doubts about borderland officials' national loyalty; by allowing Germans to stay, national committees undermined government plans and the authority of military officials at a time of national reckoning.

Within the context of ongoing expulsions borderland national committees faced difficult decisions concerning the fate of German workers. In some places, national committee members sought to protect Sudeten Germans from the expulsions because they had close personal relations with local Germans, or because they wished to take advantage of cheap labor to benefit

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[4] Zápis o stěhovací akcí za voj. součinnosti, Československý Národní výbor v Polevsku, 20 June 1945. VHA, f. VO1, k.49, inv.č.267.
[5] Pamětní záznam, 14 July 1945. Státní oblastní archiv, Litoměřice, pobočka v Mostě (SOA, p. Most), f. Severočeský hnědouhelné doly-generalní ředitelství (SHD-GŘ), s. 5-3-10 č. 279 01, 03.
[6] See meeting of various district officials about problems with expulsion of miners, 22 August 1945. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice, k.8 inv.č.239.

themselves and their friends who controlled local firms. For the most part however, national committees, pressed by factory managers, farmers, and others retained Sudeten Germans in order to support the economy. In many places in the borderlands Germans possessed critical skills and experience to sustain production in local factories. Many of textile manufacturing companies specialized in accessories or hand-made embellishments for garments. Producing these high-quality goods required years of experience. Likewise, the glass-making industry, often based on small-scale production, demanded craft skills and techniques not easily transferred to others. Accountants, office personnel and managers also remained in high demand in borderland firms. National committees' efforts to protect skilled German workers stemmed mainly from the wish to keep important local industries operating.

Prior to receiving central directives on the matter, individual national committees took the initiative to ensure that valuable Germans continued to work for local firms as early as May 1945.[7] In Jablonec, for instance, national administrators and local officials issued so many certificates to protect glass makers and their families from the expulsions that reportedly 80 percent of local Germans were exempt.[8] Such a state of affairs in the summer of 1945, however, was untenable and led to increasing tensions between those connected with the glass industry and others who wanted the Germans gone. In the middle of June, the local and district administrative commissions sided with the latter and organized their own expulsion after receiving assurances from a Soviet general that he would accept a contingent of Germans across the border. The transfer went poorly. The local administrative commissioners had only two days to prepare, and

[7] See examples in the following: Proposal for the organization of the local national committee, undated (likely early May 1945). SOkA Jablonec, f. Městský národní vybor (MěNV) Jablonec, k.123 inv.č.58; Minutes from meeting of the Revolutionary National Committee, Děčín, 20 May 1945. SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Děčín, k.1, inv.č.39; See lists for requests of exemption from local factories. SOkA Chomutov, f. MěNV Vejprty, k.16 inv.č.20.
[8] Report from Josef Gottwald to the Office of the Presidium of the Government, 11 August 1945. NA, f. Ministerstvo průmyslu, 1945-1950 (MP), k.1141, inv.č.3631.

they transported the Jablonec Germans into Polish controlled territory, where authorities refused to accept them. As a result, the Germans were forced back across the border, and many returned to Jablonec, where anxieties continued to run high about the German workers' fate.[9]

Jablonec and the glass-making industry became a focal point in discussions concerning the future of skilled German workers. This district specialized in the production of glass jewelry and other artifacts primarily for export, which brought in valuable foreign currency. The Jablonec industry, as it was commonly known, had become world renowned and had generated over 1 billion Czechoslovak Kčs in annual sales during the prewar years. At the time of the Nazi occupation, an estimated 120,000 workers were connected with the glass industry statewide, one third of whom lived in and around the district of Jablonec.[10] Production of these goods depended on the work of skilled laborers, the vast majority of whom were Germans. Central authorities had recognized the need to protect glass workers from indiscriminate expulsions, but as noted above, such strictures meant little to those expelling Germans from the country. Following the failed expulsion from Jablonec in June 1945, officials at the Ministry of Industry and local supporters in Jablonec finally compelled the central government to action. The Interior Ministry reissued the general order to leave enough German workers to maintain production, and the government named a special representative to the district to monitor the local authorities' actions concerning the expulsion of Germans.[11]

The steps taken to address the situation in Jablonec gave shape to more general concerns about which German workers should remain at their posts. Although instructions existed to leave

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[9] Ibid; Vystěhování Němců z Jablonec, Ministerstvo vnitra (MV), 24 July 1945. NA, f. Úřad předsednictva vlády-tajné (ÚPV-T), k.308 inv.č.1635 s.127/2.
[10] Report from Josef Gottwald, 11 August 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1141, inv.č.3631; Vl. Mikolášek, "Jak je postupováno v odsunu německých odborníků na jablonecku," *Stráž severu*, 8 December 1946.
[11] Interior memo from Department 13, MP, 5 September 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1140 inv.č.3631; Oběžník B-2111-11/7-45-II/1, MV, 10 July 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1948 inv.č.1602 s.B2111; Reports from Úrad národní bezpečnosti, Jablonec, 4 and 20 July, 1 August 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.7445 inv.č.4148 s.B300.

enough Germans behind to ensure production, central officials had accomplished little by July 1945 concerning the question of labor and the organization of the expulsions.[12] This allowed factory managers and national committees to work out their own solutions. National administrators of factories sometimes refused to accept Czech workers because they argued that the factory had enough workers.[13] In other instances, they refused Czechs in order to continue employing Germans, who they did not have to pay as much. In other cases, factory managers sought to keep Germans because they needed their skills and know-how to run these firms. For example, one national administrator for a firm which produced mechanical weavers explained that during the revolutionary period after the war ten of the firm's eleven technical and administrative personnel left. The remaining accountant provided a key link for maintaining production during the summer. The national administrator requested that the accountant be allowed to continue working for the firm because "in the nation's interest it is more beneficial, if in this case the German's knowledge is fully used for a definite period of time, than if the aforementioned employee became a cleaning woman in a local bar."[14] For farmers in the interior, a dearth of available workers raised serious labor concerns. During the summer and fall of 1945 borderland factory managers and farmers throughout the Czech lands increased pressure to keep German workers and complicated the expulsion and settlement.

Only in the fall of 1945 did concrete discussions about replacing German workers evolve among Prague officials who oversaw industry in the borderlands. Two considerations dominated these discussions. The first concerned the possible loss of highly skilled experts that would

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[12] Internal memo for minister from Department II, Ministerstvo hospodářství a práce, 25 July 1945. NA, f. Ministerstvo ochrany práce a sociální péče, 1945-1951 (MOPSP), k.556 inv.č.1131 s.2246.
[13] Odgermanisování podniků v pohraničí, Okresní úřad ochrany prace (OÚOP), Ústí n.L., 27 July 1945. Archiv města (AM) Ústí n.L., f. ONV Ústí n.L, k.9 inv.č.49.
[14] Žadost o přikázání a ponechání něm. stát. příslušnice. Národní správa fy. Carl Herliczka, 1 September 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1140 inv.č.3631.

severely threaten certain domestic industries and promote the construction of competitive industry abroad. The Interior Ministry, otherwise opposed to any talk of keeping Germans for economic reasons, appeared more committed to keep truly key industrial leaders and experts in the country.[15] Its officials wished to stop the possible transfer of production secrets and technical engineers, and in the fall of 1945, formally prevented German specialists' voluntary departure.[16]

The second consideration, which local officials promoted, involved safeguarding borderland industries so that productive capabilities could be returned to prewar levels. In order to make this vision a reality, the loss of the Sudeten Germans who had built these industries had to be stemmed. People who held these views might be considered similar to those whom Christopher Browning usefully calls "productionists" during the Nazi Holocaust.[17] Productionists were often German industrial leaders or bureaucrats who sought to make the best use of Jewish labor for the war economy, putting economic interests ahead of Nazi ideology. In the case of the Sudeten German expulsions certain departments in the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry for the Defense of Labor and Social Welfare, directors of nationalized firms, and The United Federation of Czechoslovak Industry and The Chamber of Business and Trade often supported the use of German labor, and supported "productionist" regulations, which sought to keep Germans working. Even more important for this case were the ways that local borderland officials and settlers too could adopt "productionist" perspectives to justify their efforts to retain Sudeten German workers. This outlook may appear to have been unlikely, considering that local officials could lose their posts and national administrators their newly acquired positions and property, had they appeared to be protecting Germans. Yet both settlers and national committee members strove to maintain the unique industrial character of their towns. Their efforts meshed with an

[15] Letter from MV, 19 August 1945. Ibid.; See also directive Z-1 11856/1945-9, MV, 13 September 1945. Ibid.
[16] B-300/951/45- Ref B, MV, 18 October 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1142, inv.č.3631.
[17] Christopher Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge, 2000), 65-68.

image of settlement based on upward mobility and a brighter future. Such a vision neither presupposed the retention of Germans, nor precluded support for the expulsions. Nevertheless, as local officials and managers attempted to put local economies back on track, this perspective propelled national administrators of farms and factories to retain much of the existing "enemy" workforce.

The move to protect specialists in Jablonec raised the possibility that several thousand Germans would remain following the transfer. Indeed, by September 1945, the district administrative commission had distributed 30,000 registration forms to protect workers in the district from expulsion. This possibility created a delicate political situation for local and district administrative commission members. The news of industrial accidents throughout the borderlands, often blamed on German sabotage, undermined the idea of indefinitely keeping German workers. In Jablonec, despite the efforts of the central government's representative, local expulsions continued. On September 8, 1945 the Local National Committee in Kokonín, a town that specialized in jewelry production, sent twenty families to the camp in Rychnov with permission from the District Administrative Commission (OSK) in Jablonec.[18] Later that month, the OSK issued orders restricting the freedom of Germans. In response, they began voluntarily leaving the area. One case involved two factory owners who attempted to escape with some of their equipment through the aid of Soviet soldiers. On October 6, a sixty-four year old Sudeten German murdered the Czech national administrator of a glass factory and then turned the gun on himself. In retaliation, six hundred Germans were expelled to a nearby camp. Despite the tensions, or possibly because of them, the OSK had registered 9,816 skilled workers and 11,229

[18] Report from Josef Gottwald, 18 September 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1141, inv.č.3631; Report from Josef Gottwald, 13 September 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 s.B2111.

of their family members by October 24, 1945.[19] While registering these German workers required the intercession of the central government, local managers, national committee members and borderland factory councils cooperated as well.

5.2 EARLY SETTLERS AND LABOR SHORTAGES

The strains between Czechs and Germans in Jablonec and elsewhere in the borderlands involved more than the retention of German workers. On the surface, the antagonism between these different ethnic groups seems explicable simply in terms of ethnic hostility mixed, most certainly in some cases, with desire for revenge. Yet the flood of settlers to the borderlands created more subtle pressures, which fed decisions about expulsions and the use of German labor that had little to do with national conflict. Settlers' demand for better housing was one key element that sustained pressure to expel Germans. The security representative on the OSK made it clear, for example, that the need to free up housing had sparked the transfer of families from Kokonín in September.[20] Still, the housing shortage, which plagued certain areas of the borderlands more than others, did not produce a singular approach to the remaining German workers. Some local officials pushed for their removal, while others pursued retention policies. Which policy they chose had much to do with the pace and nature of settlement.

Settlers arriving in the borderlands during the summer and fall of 1945 did not show much interest in filling industrial positions. Instead, as chapter three outlined, early settlers sought to obtain positions as national administrators of confiscated businesses and farms. Indeed, by

[19] Reports from Josef Gottwald, 10 and 24 October 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 s.B2111; Report from Zemský odbor bezpečnosti odd. II., ZNV Prague, 18 October 1945. Ibid.
[20] Report from Zemský odbor bezpečnosti odd. II., ZNV Prague, 18 October 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1943 inv.č.1602 s.B2111.

September 1945, Czechs working in borderland industries numbered just over 10 percent (122,000) of the total number of Czech inhabitants there.[21] The rush to occupy borderland farms helped to ease officials' fears that crops and livestock would go untended, but had the corollary effect of leaving many farmers in the interior without the labor necessary to collect that year's harvest. To compensate for the shortage of agricultural workers, the Interior Ministry issued a directive to use Germans from the borderlands, especially professionals, such as lawyers or office personnel, who would not be missed in local industry.[22]

Incoming settlers and labor shortages in the interior worked in tandem to make thousands of Sudeten Germans into internal forced migrants. By September 1945, for instance, nearly two thousand German workers were sent from the Krnov district to work in the interior. As the fall planting needs increased, district officials dispatched more Germans, so that by the end of October, more than 6,500 of those able to work had been transported from the district. During the same period, the city of Krnov experienced a sharp increase in the number of Czech residents, from 480 to 8,598.[23] The rapid pace of settlement put a premium on decent housing, especially since only limited numbers of Sudeten Germans had been expelled from the district during 1945. Therefore, forcing the remaining Germans into local camps or transferring them to work in the interior offered alternatives to expulsion abroad and appeased incoming settlers' housing demands.

Much as with agriculture, mining faced severe labor shortages in 1945. In July 1945, mining officials estimated that, to reach production goals after the expulsions, nearly 50,000 more

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[21] L. Ruman, "Vývoj průmyslové zaměstnanosti od března do července 1946," *Statistický zpravodaj* 9, no. 10 (1946), 315; Karel Janů, "Pohraničí, průmysl a dvouletý plan," *Osidlování*, 10 December 1946. This article gives 122,000 as the number of Czechs in industry to 31 July 1945, though this does not correspond with other labor figures.

[22] Z-3751/1945/II, MV, 10 July 1945. NA, f. MOPSP, k.556 inv.č.1131 s.2246.

[23] Report on population and workforce, OÚOP Krnov, 1 November 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. OÚOP Krnov, k.6 inv.č.21; For Krnov's population growth compare reports: Situační zpráva – úřad Národní bezpečností (SNB) Krnov, 11 July and 15 October 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, dodatek, k.11 inv.č.92.

workers were needed—a 75 percent increase in the total number of miners.[24] Although the expulsion of Sudeten Germans from areas like Most had already hurt mining production, the loss of Czech miners was just as critical. Czechs, rather than Germans, had comprised the majority of miners before and during the war, and liberation offered them a chance to escape from the harsh working conditions. Many Czechs took the opportunity to move to the borderlands, while others found positions in the expanding state administration of the economy.[25] The departure of Czech workers came at a critical time, when mining output had fallen dramatically and the military was expelling skilled German miners.

Prague officials, however, offered few solutions to the labor problems facing the mines. In August 1945, the Ostrava-Karviná mines (OKD) needed an additional 15,000 miners to meet their production requirements and planned on using Germans to reach half of this figure. In a letter to the Ministry of Industry, the directors complained that all attempts carried out centrally from Prague had failed to produce even one worker. Thus it was clear, the letter continued, "that OKD must help itself."[26] Together with the district labor office, they organized a campaign to round up Germans from neighboring districts in Silesia. While the campaign successfully gathered over 5,500 Sudeten Germans for work in the mines, reliance on these workers did not provide a sound basis for future labor policy.[27] Indeed, officials later condemned a similar campaign to collect Germans for the North Bohemian Brown Coal Mines from surrounding districts. They argued that many local Germans escaped abroad in fear of being sent to the mines,

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[24] Stav osazenstva dolů dle revírů v červenci, MOPSP. NA f. MOPSP, k.477 inv.č.1068 s.2140.
[25] Zpráva na schůzi na Ministerstvo prumysl, 29-30 October 1945. NA, f. Osídlovací komise při ÚV KSČ (f. 23), a.j.349/1; *Dnešek*, 2 May 1945; Beinhauerová and Sommer, "K některým aspektům," 325-6, 330-333; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 156.
[26] Letter from Ústředí ostravsko-karvinského kamenouhelného revíru, 16 August 1945. NA, f. MOPSP, k.477 inv.č.1068 s.2140.
[27] Německé pracovní síly v hornictví-návrh, OÚOP Mor. Ostrava, 5 November 1945. Ibid; Zpráva o politického a hospodářského situace, SNB Krnov, 15 October 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, dodatek, k.11 inv.č.92.

which in turn hurt local industry.[28] However, the critical labor shortage in 1945 left mining officials with few options except to pursue Sudeten German workers. Such ad hoc measures reflected the lack of central coordination and set the stage for future problems regarding the retention of German labor during the "transfers" in 1946 and 1947.

When Czechs left their posts as agricultural laborers and miners for other positions, often in the borderlands, it created acute shortages that were only partly remedied by the import of German workers. In the summer of 1945, few settlers moved to the borderlands to obtain factory jobs, which gave added impetus to leave Germans working in local factories. Figures from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare indicate that, of the roughly 763,000 Germans working in October 1945, 663,000 remained in their own districts.[29] They worked primarily as agricultural workers and unskilled labor. Thus, despite the pressures on the housing market and the need for workers in the interior, borderland national committees kept the majority of Sudeten Germans in their districts. There were several reasons for this. Officials in the interior of the country wanted only able-bodied (*práce schopných*) Germans. For borderland national committees, this meant deporting useful workers for the benefit of interior districts, while increasing the already difficult burden of supporting those who could not work. In addition, Czechs did not seek low paying jobs in the borderlands and this work was readily performed by Germans, regardless of their abilities. Finally, by October 1945, both the pace of settlement and the need for agricultural workers following the fall planting began to dissipate. Because regulations for the "transfer" required that people be transferred from their own districts, it made little sense to send them away a few months before the Allied-sponsored expulsions were set to begin in 1946. Therefore, settlers'

[28] Interior memo for minister, 22 December 1945. NA, f. MOPSP, k.477 inv.č.1068 s.2142. For other measures carried out at Severočeský hnědouhelné doly (SHD), see Zdeněk Radvanovský, "The Social and Economic Effects of Resettling Czechs into Northwestern Bohemia, 1945-1947," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, eds. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Lanham, MD, 2001), 247-248.
[29] Reports from district labor offices, MOPSP, 10 November 1945. NA, f. MOPSP, k.556 inv.č.1131 s.2246.

search for better employment left manual labor jobs vacant in the interior and kept Germans working in the borderlands.

The migration of settlers in search of a new home or farm aggravated many of the labor problems initially caused by expelling Sudeten Germans. Nonetheless, the opportunity to acquire property at little cost motivated people to relocate to the borderlands and became a focal point for the official settlement program. For settlement officials, the challenge of "settlement politics" became to connect settlers' desire for cheap property with the responsibility to work. Both borderland and Prague officials felt that grave problems faced borderland industries. By the end of 1945, one settlement official estimated the occupational structure of settlers as 30 percent in agriculture, 25 percent in industry, 25 percent in business and trade and 20 percent in remaining occupations.[30] This estimate indicated the large extent to which settlers avoided industrial work during 1945. Comparable figures for employment in the Sudetengau prior to the war were 28 percent in agriculture, 48 percent in industry, 14 percent in commerce and trade and 10 percent in other professions.[31]

Settlement officials quickly realized the need for a concerted effort to find replacement workers in borderland industry. In the second meeting of the Central Committee for Interior Settlement, one official reported that they needed to encourage factory national administrators to accept Czech workers, so that they would be able to gain experience and be ready to continue production after the Germans were gone.[32] Yet national administrators were not solely responsible for the lack of new workers. Settlement officials sought ways to encourage Czechs, Slovaks, reemigrants and others to take up industrial positions. They planned to solve the

[30] Settlement report, č.3421/46, Osidlováci úřad (OÚ), March 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.359.
[31] Table on inhabitants from 17 May 1939. NA, f. UPV-T, k.308, inv.č.1635.
[32] Report on current settlement activities, Central Committee for Interior Settlement (ÚKVO), 27-28 August 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.12145 s.1651/2.

pressing labor shortages by offering attractive incentives to settlers who moved there. These policies formed the basis for "settlement politics," a term which officials employed to encourage people to voluntarily relocate to the borderlands. For instance, in September 1945, the Settlement Office declared as part of its mission: "we must offer to hesitant colonists a better living standard than they have in the interior. For our workers this means that order must be brought to the housing market and that nervousness surrounding prices must be removed." It continued, "the Settlement Office will even try to propose the correction of wages in those categories in which there is little interest and great demand."[33] Planning continued throughout 1945. In November, Miroslav Kreysa, the OÚ chair, reported that the planning department had been busy studying the needs of individual economic sectors and ways to bring necessary workers to the borderlands. In addition to improving wages and living conditions, the department considered other incentives such as offering small plots of land to workers who also wished to do some planting.[34] A few weeks later at a meeting with regional OÚ officials Kreysa stressed the importance of finding permanent homes for workers. He noted that while agricultural and business settlement was largely complete, the settlement of workers was not. He gave regional officials two months to work with national committees and create lists of homes earmarked for workers. He declared: "Then the allocation of homes for textile, glass workers and miners would begin, and for individual regions will be stated which homes they can receive. This will build the interest of people about entering certain production branches"[35] OÚ officials believed they could successfully direct the flow of settlers into industries facing labor shortages in 1945-46, by offering better wages and cheap property.

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[33] Mission statement, OÚ, 18 September 1945. Ibid.
[34] Zpráva o činnosti, OÚ, 29 November 1945. Ibid.
[35] Meeting with Regional representatives of the OÚ, 7 December 1945. AM Ústí n.L. f. MěNV Ústí n.L., k.2 inv.č.24.

However, "settlement politics" also offered a way for those pursuing "productionist" policies to bolster their arguments for keeping German workers. Because settlement officials considered property confiscation the key to bringing Czechs to the borderlands, they generally did not support the retention of Germans. Nonetheless, national administrators, workers and national committees feared that industrial production and harvests would be lost without necessary replacement workers. Not until March 1946, just as the "transfer" got underway, did the number of Czech workers exceed that of Germans in borderland industry.[36] Since the fall of 1945, national administrators, workers and industrial officials feared that the borderlands would suffer great production decreases during the expulsions.[37] They utilized the image of an opportunity-filled borderland, created in part by settlement officials, to substantiate their need to keep German workers. One group of local leaders, for instance, argued that the labor question "concerns all Czech people, who listened to the calls of government functionaries and went to build the foundations of a stable borderland. What happens with those people after the transfer of Germans?"[38] Such questions linked productive concerns with property gains and revealed a broader conceptualization of settlement than one predicated solely on the quick and cheap transfer of property.

5.3 LABOR RELATIONS

Putting Germans to work served as punishment, as well as a means to fill labor shortages. A general directive concerning Germans in May 1945, for example, ordered that males from ages fourteen to sixty should be collected into work camps "in order to use them for the most

[36] Minutes from the meeting of the Oversight council for the FNO, 25 April 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.310.
[37] Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 290.
[38] Resoluce národní správy podníků průmyslových, exportních obchodních a řemeslných, 17 October 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1141, inv.č.3631.

strenuous work, so that they repay the war damage created by the German armies." It suggested using former concentration camps, POW camps, empty factories and other suitable venues to house Germans.[39] Early labor regulations followed a similar pattern, whether issued by local or higher authorities. For example, instructions issued in June 1945 by officials in Šumperk sanctioned what amounted to the forced labor of Sudeten Germans.[40] On the day after the Allies formally endorsed the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia, August 2, 1945, the interior minister noted the need to legalize the labor responsibilities of those who lost their citizenship. He received support for the idea from the prime minister, a Social Democrat, and a leading member of the National Socialists, who mentioned only that he wished to enact such provisions without the publicity of a decree.[41] Nonetheless, Decree 71, issued in September 1945, forced all males from ages fourteen to sixty and all females from ages fifteen to fifty to work "toward the removal and repayment of damages caused by the war and bombardment and also toward the renewal of economic life disrupted by the war."[42] The idea that Sudeten Germans should pay for the war and occupation through their labor and property was a common theme in the decrees and regulations established against them and stemmed from the notion of collective responsibility that underpinned the expulsion policy.

The impetus to punish and subdue Germans was strong, especially among local security forces. At a meeting of local officials in Liberec, for instance, security officers agreed to create an atmosphere of fear among Germans in the town.[43] Expulsion into camps provided immediate reprisal for actions that threatened or harmed Czechs. For example, the District National

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[39] Prozatimní všeobečné směrnice o Němcích, SNB Brno, 20 May 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, k.217 inv.č.262.
[40] Announcement, OÚOP Šumperk, 27 June 1945. NA, f.MOPSP, k.120 inv.č.3611. Reprinted in Scheider, *Expulsion of the German Population*, 306-307.
[41] Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, eds. *Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940-1945: Dokumenty* (Brno, 1995), 1: 383-384.
[42] Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:454.
[43] Tomás Staněk, *Tábory v českých zemích, 1945-1948* (Opava, 1996), 29.

Committee in Ústí n.L. imprisoned fifty local Germans in late June 1945 in response to the shooting of a Czechoslovak soldier.[44] Camps also became a collection point for transfer out of the area. This, too, could be effective as a form of punishment and intimidation. Following purported attacks on two internment camps in Fryváldov, which resulted in several executions, men between the ages of fifteen and sixty were given to the district labor office for transfer to the Ostrava mines.[45] The recently organized August campaign for German miners facilitated such actions. A month later, security officials reported that the continuing campaign for the work columns attached to the mines "likely contributes" to the lack of "any special optimism" on the part of the Germans.[46]

Labor camps emerged along with other camps as a solution to housing, labor and punishment demands. The general directive that suggested placing all males into work camps in May 1945 reflected these different goals. For example, it stated: "In these camps Germans will be treated harshly, in order to guarantee discipline, but also humanely and justly." It noted that decent quarters will be found to house them and sufficient provisions will be supplied, "since we want productivity from them."[47] Even though by the middle of June 1945 the government ruled against such a general policy, many labor camps had already been established. Some of them began as outgrowths of general internment camps or later became attached to the larger camps. At least seventy-three independent labor camps existed by September 1945 and another forty-

[44] Minutes from the meeting of the Okresní spravní komise (OSK) Ústí n.L., 26 June 1945. AM Ústí n.L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.407 inv.č.5; Staněk, *Tábory*, 45.
[45] Mesíční zpráva o politické situace, OSK Frývaldov, 20 August 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63. The shooting was reportedly carried out by a small group on 14 and 17 August. See Staněk, *Tábory*, 48-49; Jana Hradilová, "Internace německého obyvatelstva v adolfovickém táboře 1945-1946," *Jesenicko* 2 (2001): 28.
[46] Mesíční zpráva o politické situace, OSK Frývaldov, 20 September 1945. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63.
[47] Prozatimní všeobečné směrnice o Němcích, SNB Brno, 20 May 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, k.217 inv.č.262.

seven served both labor and internment purposes.[48] Sudeten Germans living in other collection centers or internment camps also worked in factories or farms, though in fewer numbers. In addition, dozens of factories had their own camps, not included in these figures. The experience within such company camps varied widely. For instance, in the Chlupaček textile factory in Krnov, two young Czechs were assigned to guard 430 Germans. As one of the guards reported: "For this many Germans the number of guards is inadequate, so that as if intentionally this gives Germans various possibilities to move about and conduct meetings." He further commented that Germans did not work in the factory, but often read German books. The other guard recalled that Germans from the factory were given permission to go collect mushrooms in the nearby forest.[49]

In other camps, especially camps attached to mines, conditions were unfavorable and managers forced Germans to work from dawn until dusk. The retributive aspect of camps facilitated the use of Germans for manual labor without pay. With the exception of mining districts, most Germans living in camps during the fall of 1945 performed agricultural or other non-skilled labor. In November 1945 district national committees took financial control of the camps, but their administration remained in the hands of military or police authorities and local national committees.[50] Accounting for confiscated property and German labor did not figure high in these officials' priorities. During 1945, camps calculated wage rates according to their own needs, often directly with individual firms. In one case, a sugar refinery complained that the Germans' wages together with payment for room and board made them more expensive than the wages paid to Czech women.[51] These wages rarely went to the Germans living in camps, who often received nothing more than a few crowns for their work. Instead, it appears that camp

[48] Staněk, *Tábory*, 37, 45, 52.
[49] Protocols of two guards, September 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.18 inv.č.72.
[50] Staněk, *Tábory*, 111.
[51] Letter from Česka spol. pro průmysl cukerni, Mělnik, 27 October 1945. NA, f. MPSP, k.556 inv.č.1131 s.2246.

officials directly benefited from a system with little effective oversight. The report for the work camp in Krnov, for instance, noted that no accounting records had been kept until August and that the camp used German money and property to pay for bills and wages of camp employees.[52] Camp administrators were unconcerned by Germans' productivity and thus did little to improve their living conditions. Germans showed up to work without any provisions of their own, having been stripped of their possessions by national committees or camp officials.[53] Higher authorities did not fully grasp extent of camp officials' mismanagement until the camps were shut down at the end of 1946.[54]

Despite the problems associated with the camps, labor officials at the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare planned to use them to help direct labor to farms and factories. In September 1945, following a government order about quickly getting Germans to fulfill work obligations, labor officials met with Interior Ministry officials about placing work camps under their authority.[55] Yet even though it had the Ministry of Interior's support, the Ministry for the Defense of Labor and Social Welfare never established a separate administration for work camps.[56] Instead, district ministry officials only supervised the use of camp labor and helped organize special transfers of Germans for work outside the camp. For instance, the Krnov District Office for the Defense of Labor in 1945 helped to organize the relocation of nearly 6,000 Germans for work. It sent some of them to the mines and steelworks in Ostrava and organized

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[52] Zpráva o provedené revisi, OSK Krnov, 5 September 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.217 inv.č.261. See also the reports in September and October for other camps in Krnov with similar problems. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.7 inv.č.63.
[53] Report from work camp Hustopeči, 15 October 1945. NA f. MOPSP, k.556 inv.č.1133 s.2303; B300/1264, MV, 19 November 1945. Ibid.
[54] See for example notice by MV, 30 August 1946. NA, f. MOPSP k.398 inv.č.835 s.2246; *Stráž severu*, 22 May 1947; Staněk, *Tábory*, 136, 156.
[55] Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1: 384.
[56] Directive č. II 5310-8/9, MOPSP, 8 September 1945. NA, f. MOPSP, k.556 inv.č.1131 s.2246. See also background discussion to this directive. NA, f. MOPSP, k.556 inv.č.1156 s.5310; Staněk, *Tábory*, 65.

others into transports for the sugar-beet harvest.[57] Labor officials had little authority to compel camps into relinquishing Germans. In June 1946 borderland camps indicated that they had few Germans available for agriculture work outside the district. The district of Česká Lípa, for example, reported that it could not release any Germans for transport to the interior. They were either being prepared for expulsion or were used to work on local farms.[58] As the "transfer" unfolded during 1946, central labor officials had to look elsewhere to find new workers.

The story of the Peschke family's experience presents a good example of the range of possible treatment facing Sudeten Germans. The mother, Elisabeth, recounted her family's experience from the arrival of Soviet soldiers in May 1945 until their expulsion just over a year later.[59] Immediately after the war, as soldiers, both Czechoslovak and Soviet, looted their farm, Elisabeth resigned herself to the situation, noting that "we had to accept the fact that we lost the war, that sacrifices had to be made, and that one simply had to hope to make up for the loss by hard work during the coming years." The immediate future, however, proved more difficult. The Peschkes were rounded up during the expulsions from the Krnov district in mid June 1945 and brought to the local school, which served as a makeshift camp. After spending a short time in the camp the women and children were released, but Elisabeth's husband remained in custody. Soon after their return home, a Czech father and son arrived to claim the Peschke's farm as their own. The Peschkes gathered their belongings and moved into the annex where her mother-in-law lived. Two days later, other Czechs arrived and expelled them from the annex. Despite their constant moves, the Peschkes continued to work the fields that they had planted, but which now belonged to someone else. Later, the local commissar put Elisabeth and other Sudeten Germans

[57] Transporty, odesláný ze sberného tábora ve Krnově, OÚOP, Krnov. SOkA Bruntál, f. OÚOP, Krnov, k.6 inv.č.21. For more on the collection of workers for the sugar-beet harvest, see NA f. MOPSP, k.556 inv.č.1133 s.2303.
[58] See this report and others from June 1946. NA, f. MOPSP, k.398 inv.č.835 s.2246.
[59] Her story and the quotations for the next two paragraphs can be found in Schieder, *Expulsion of the German Population*, 415-420.

to work for several weeks repairing the roadways. Her husband had already been sent to Ostrava to work on construction projects, and the August campaign to recruit Germans for the OKD mines took her fourteen-year-old son.

At the end of September 1945, Elisabeth and her remaining three children were sent to the interior for agricultural work. The trip lasted several days, and they were only allowed to bring a few of their remaining possessions. They lived in an old farm building previously inhabited by rabbits, chicken and geese and now infested with mice. Elisabeth recalled their meager rations: "In the morning we had coffee with two slices of bread, for lunch potatoes with horrible gravy, in the evening potatoes in a watery soup and no bread." The work routine reflected forced labor conditions. The farm was behind schedule, and much of the fall harvest had yet to be collected. In fact, they continued to work in the fields through December picking potatoes, even in the snow. Elisabeth and her children remained on the farm until February, when they received notice to return to their district in preparation for transfer. Despite regulations that stated that families had to be transferred as a single unit, it took the Peschkes several months, a trip to Ostrava, and the help of someone who knew Czech to obtain the release of their son from the mining camp. Finally, in June they were expelled. For most Sudeten Germans, as for the Peschkes, a combination of labor needs and repression made life arduous and uncertain.

Germans who worked in local industry had better wages and living conditions than those who worked in agriculture, though much depended on local attitudes and practices. Prior to Decree 71, local officials and factory management decided for themselves how much—or how little—to pay German employees. Some Sudeten Germans, such as office personnel, received wages above 10,000 Kčs a month, while those who lived in camps and worked on local farms

received 30 Kčs a day, not including deductions.[60] Industrial officials clamored for some guidance on how much to pay Germans. National committees created their own rules to make certain that Germans did not receive exorbitant wages.[61] In September 1945, officials at the Ministry for the Defense of Labor and Social Welfare responded by saying that they were still working on the problem. The Finance Ministry had already limited Germans from receiving more than 2,000 Kčs in cash monthly; wages exceeding this sum were to be placed in blocked accounts.[62] Financial considerations influenced such decisions as much as the desire to punish Germans did.

Decree 71 provided general instructions about German wage rates, but in practice wages continued to vary. According to a directive for Decree 71 from November 1945, Germans' wages were not supposed to differ from those of Czechs, except for a 20 percent tax.[63] The directive also allowed other deductions for room and board, unproductive family members and poor production. Such stipulations gave space for national administrators and others who wished to use Germans as cheap labor or profit for themselves. Nevertheless, many national administrators ignored official regulations and paid highly-valued and productive employees more than was technically allowed. Even factory councils approved wage hikes for German workers. For instance, the factory council of one textile firm praised the production of German

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[60] Compare, for example, Letter from Hospodářská skupina oděvního průmyslu, 22 June 1945 and Letter from Pracovní tábor, Opavaská ulice, Krnov, 26 August 1945. NA, f. MOPSP k.489 inv.č.1085 s.2160/25.
[61] Directive on wages from OSK Teplice-Šenov, 15 August 1945. Ibid.
[62] Proclamation č.461/45, Ministry of Finance, 22 June 1945. Reprinted in Schieder as Annex 6, 219-222. It incorrectly lists the amount at 200 Kčs. As the transfer came to a close in late 1946, the Ministry of Finance realized that many Germans were owed money in wages that they earned while awaiting transfer. Because they earned this money after their property had been confiscated, the ministry feared that it would create a future debt against the country. Considering that many workers were held for the final transports at the end of 1946 and early 1947, this debt must have been considerable. See Záznam o poradě konané v Hospodařské radě, 5 November 1946. NA f. MV-NR, k.1787, i.1581, s.B-1700.
[63] II-1620-3/11-45-V/4, MV, 2 November 1945. NA f. MOPSP k.489 inv.č.1085 s.2160/25; Reprinted in Schieder, *Expulsion of the German Population*, 268-272.

workers and requested significant pay increases for them.[64] From the fall of 1945, factory managers and factory councils in the borderlands pressured higher authorities to improve the living conditions of their German employees. German skilled workers were often excused from extra weekend labor, such as cleaning up the town or other public work often required of Sudeten Germans.

Not all such requests were motivated by good will. Germans with enough productive power were able to pressure borderland managers and even fellow workers into supporting such demands. A letter from one factory council indicated that the leading German workers produced only as much as was necessary to ensure that they received the 2,000 Kčs maximum wage after the 20 percent deduction. It requested relief from subtracting 20 percent of their wages.[65] Many ministry officials felt the same way. Labor officials reported that the German wage regulations "brought about several undesired phenomena, such as a drop in worker morale and the escape of Germans from their jobs."[66] They feared the productive consequences of paying well-qualified Germans less than Czechs. Officials at the Ministry of Industry even supported national administrators' requests to allow German specialists to remain in their apartments. The Interior Ministry responded negatively to one such request by arguing that "if so the settlement of the borderlands would be severely hampered by a housing problem."[67] Despite the Interior Ministry's position against extending benefits to Germans, however, following their formal exemption from the transfer in early 1946, German specialists received the right to retain their property and were released from the 20 percent tax.[68] While these benefits placated those who

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[64] Letter from factory council Optimit, Odry, 20 November 1945. NA, f. MP k.1142 inv.č.3631.
[65] Letter from factory council Ditmar, March 1946. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice, kn.1 inv.č.1. See also Letter from Kovodělné zavody Rachmann, Česká Lípa, 2 August 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1140 inv.č.3631.
[66] Internal memorandum, odd. 2 MOPSP, 7 February 1946. NA, f. MOPSP, k.489 inv.č.1085 s.2160/25.
[67] Letter from MV, 29 September 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1141 inv.č.363.
[68] B-300/3825-46, MV, Směrnice o úlevách pro některé osoby německé národnosti, 27 May 1946. *Předpisy z oboru působnosti OÚ a FNO: Zákony (dekrety), vládní nařízení, vyhlášky* (Prague, 1947), 2:305-312.

depended on German labor for their livelihood, specialists' protected status raised apprehensions among those who did not share "productionist" concerns.

5.4 ORGANIZING LABOR AND EXPULSIONS

During 1945, central officials had done little to coordinate settlement, expulsions and labor needs. Instead, they had simply reacted to situations as they developed. The shortage of miners in Ostrava and Most, for example, became so acute that plans to import Reich Germans from elsewhere to help alleviate the shortage were considered. One official at the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare immediately recognized the problems with such a plan and further noted that such ideas underscored "the illogical process, that in the period when we are expelling experienced miners from Most and Duchcov districts, we want to bring unqualified Reich Germans here."[69] This was the legacy of a policy that prioritized expulsions and rapid settlement over labor needs. This policy had given military officials in the borderlands carte blanche to expel whomever, whenever, as long as they could move them across the border. Likewise, the opportunity that settlement had offered to thousands of Czechs to become independent property owners skewed the balance of labor in many borderland communities. Another labor official complained that, of the Czech settlers heading to Liberec, twelve thousand had applied for national administrator positions and only seventy-two for positions in industry.[70] Although these officials blamed poor planning, the pressures of settlers in search of property and social mobility helped to starve the labor market of new recruits.

[69] Použití německých pracovních sil v průmyslů, MOPSP, 25 July 1945. NA, f. MOPSP, k.561 inv.č.1152 s.5200.
[70] Summary of meeting at MOPSP, 13 July 1945. Ibid. Others also commented on the overwhelming interest in national administrator positions. See for instance, *Stráž severu*, 8 and 26 June 1945.

Settlement officials continued to make plans and offered incentives to try to lure workers to the borderlands. The OÚ along with the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare issued regulations which reduced rent in the borderlands by 25 percent. In addition, the law of extraordinary provisions for housing welfare from July 1946 capped the rent of large working families at 15-18 percent of their incomes.[71] Kreysa argued that this provision supported the OÚ's efforts to create a "biologically healthy generation" in the borderlands.[72] In early 1946, OÚ officials also proposed that qualified settlers should receive a supplement or allowance (*přispevek*) for moving to the borderlands. Again, they used such directives to encourage industrial workers in certain sectors to relocate. The justification report for the proposed allowance noted two interrelated goals for the allowance: to bring more workers to the borderlands and to ensure the full financial revenue from confiscated enemy property.[73] This latter goal, rarely a priority for the OÚ, simply meant trying to make sure that the state was not left carrying the maintenance costs for property confiscated, but not yet claimed by settlers.

Along with the allowance for moving to the borderlands and the lowering of rents, the OÚ propagated the advantages that "settlement politics" provided, in order to generate more interest in the program. The Settlement Office instructed industrial officials not to speak of the general need for workers when trying to raise interest in borderland industries, but to indicate:

> there are homes and apartments, provisions, and rents for such and such a cost. They receive the settlement allowance. Wages are at such and such a rate, you have the opportunity for such and such benefits, advancement, and recreation. [Tell them] what is there in the surroundings and countryside, etc. Do not only speak about fantastic 'valiant work' and Stakhanovites, but also how much is earned as a good worker.[74]

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[71] Miroslav Kreysa, *Budujeme pohraničí* (Prague, 1946), 12.
[72] Čestmír Heller, *Volné byty, levnější nájemné* (Prague, 1946), 7.
[73] Návrh vládního usnesení o jednorázovém prlatovém příspěvku osidlovacím pro veřejné a některé jiné zaměstnance v pohraničí č.19702/46, OÚ, 14 May 1946. AM Ústí n.L., f. MěNV Ústí n.L., k.2 inv.č.24.
[74] Doplnění pracovníků průmyslových jako základní úkol pro dokončování osídlení našeho pohraničí, OÚ, 17 June 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.349/1.

The Settlement Office's information department helped to publish materials supporting the idea that the borderlands had a lot to offer workers. One article in *Osidlování*, for example, argued that it was hard to find a reason why more Czechs had not come to get a job at the Kunert stockings company in Varnsdorf. Not only were workers' wages and living conditions looked after, but it also had a nursery and gave maternity leave.[75]

Despite the Settlement Office's efforts and plans, the fact that by early 1946 Czechs occupied fewer than half of the jobs in borderland industries did not reassure those who depended on these firms. In addition, the deep-rooted sense that in certain industrial branches some German workers were simply indispensable gave additional weight to national administrators' and national committees' calls to protect some German workers. In January 1946 under this pressure, the government decided to exempt a limited number of German miners from the transfer. This decision was expanded in February to include nearly fifty thousand industrial specialists, and again in March to cover specialists in industry and agriculture up to 60,000 in each sector, not including family members.[76] In addition, the government established more concrete plans to ensure that qualified workers remained until the final transports in order to maximize the labor power of remaining Germans.

The Ministry of Interior official who oversaw the transfer process, Antonín Kučera, immediately challenged such "productionist" policies. In an April 9, 1946 bulletin sent to provincial national committees' security officials, he raised the specter that the exemption of specialists with their family members, together with those in mixed marriages, would leave between 700,000 and 750,000 Germans in the country. He then warned: "it is extremely

[75] "Kunertova punčochárna ve Varnsdorfu," *Osidlování*, 27 September 1946.
[76] Usnesení, Úrad předsednictva vlády, 19 March 1946. NA, f. Úřad předsednictva vláda-běžná spisovna (ÚPV-B) k.720 inv.č.2908 s.753/1; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 305.

imprudent to sidestep an acute or drastic solution to this problem, which keeps a strong fifth column in the republic."[77] Subsequent directives dealing with the certification of specialists ensured that Interior Ministry and security officials were in a powerful position to decrease the number of exempted Germans. In June 1946, as the "transfer" gained momentum, the ministry sent a report to the government, in which it complained about efforts to retain German workers and reiterated the central government's commitment to the expulsions. It noted that cuts in production were to be expected soon.[78] For Communist leaders the retention of German workers threatened the expulsions, which they not only championed, but for which they held primary responsibility through their control of the Interior Ministry. While the specialist program proved an easy target for security officials, for national committee members, including Communists, the issue was much more complex. Borderland labor politics entailed more than inter-party disputes and anti-German campaigns; it revealed competing visions of the borderlands' future and produced disagreements about who had the authority to bring such visions to life.

For those controlling mining production at the North Bohemian Brown Coal Mines the loss of German workers presented bleak options in 1946. If they transferred all of the Germans, officials estimated that output would drop to May 1945 levels, or less than half of current production. Even a partial expulsion would have reduced production by 15 percent.[79] SHD officials met with representatives of workers' councils in early June 1946 to agree on how many Germans could be transferred and still reach recently raised production goals. While a representative from the Czechoslovak National Assembly spoke in inspiring terms about the

[77] Zpráva z MV odbor pro celostátní politické zpravodajství, 9 April 1946. Zemský Archive (ZA) Opava, f. Expozitura Moravskoslezského ZNV 1945-1949, k.140 inv.č.273 s.Taj. This report was earlier sent as a letter to the Presidium with additional comments. See NA, f. ÚPV-T, k.308 inv.1635 s.127/2.
[78] Odsun Němců a situace ve výrobě průmyslové a zemědělské, Vládní zmocněnec pro provádění odsunu Němců, 9 June 1946. NA, f. ÚPV-T, k.308 inv.č.1635 s.127/2.
[79] Záznam o vývoj těžby při odsunu, SHD, 25 July 1946. SOA, p. Most, f. SHD-GŘ, s. 5-3-10 č. 279 01, 03.

need for fewer absences and higher individual output, workers voiced rather different concerns. The factory council chairman for mines Quido I and III, where nearly 75 percent of the workers were Germans asked: "What happens with our mine after the transfer? It would have to be completely shut down." The representative requested replacement workers prior to expulsions.[80] Although the majority of miners expressed the desire to rid the country of Germans, they likewise demanded compensation workers on a one-to-one basis. Their meetings concluded with the decision to keep 4,500 German miners and to find 10,000 replacements. Where those replacements would be found remained unclear.

Even keeping 4,500 Germans, less than a third of the number working at SHD, proved difficult. For example, Ervěnice, a town in the middle of the northern Bohemian mining strip, resisted mining officials' attempts to determine which Germans would remain. In August 1946, defying a ban on the expulsion of miners, the Local National Committee in Ervěnice transferred several miners and their families. When questioned about this violation, the MNV responded that it had only expelled those physically unfit for mining, even though records indicated that almost all the town's remaining Germans had recently received specialist status.[81] On September 25, 1946 the MNV sent the following appeal to the Interior Ministry: "in the interest of guaranteeing the national identity, the inviolability of state sovereignty and the security of the social achievements of the memorable May 1945 revolution, we request, that [the transfer of Germans] be carried out consistently and without regard to the temporary economic losses, which by our own persistence we can surmount."[82] Such requests were followed by more direct action. In early November, the chairman of the MNV pressured the workers' councils at local mines to release

[80] Jednání na dole Masaryk, 15 June 1946. Ibid.
[81] Minutes from the meeting of the Místní národní výbor (MNV) Ervěnice, 25 September 1946. f. MNV Ervěnice, k. 2 inv.č.125, SOkA Chomutov.
[82] Letter from MNV Ervěnice, 25 June 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.101 inv.č.237.

more Germans. After reminding them about "the great struggles in the past for a Czech school and Czech language" in the region, he asked that they cut the number of German specialists in half.[83] Heeding these calls, the workers' councils made several Sudeten Germans available for the transfer, though not the number requested by the MNV.

The national committee's reference to past national disputes may have given more substance to calls for expulsions. Ervěnice, like dozens of other towns in the border regions of the Czech lands, had large numbers of Czechs living alongside Germans prior to the war. Nationalist politics in such settings had often reached a sharp pitch and revolved around issues such as language use for administration and education.[84] During the war, Czech and German identities had gained further prominence in towns that had previously experienced nationalist conflict. Even so, people continued to remain outside fixed national categories, and familial ties often superceded national ones. In 1946, national committee members in Ervěnice demonstrated through words and actions that they remained displeased with the slow pace of the transfer. Yet even with the support of several central agencies, they still had to find ways around labor regulations that allowed others to decide which Germans would remain. After learning of the MNV's efforts to expel local Germans, mining officials successfully intervened to stop the transfer in late 1946.[85] They requested an investigation into the matter, which the Interior Ministry and the district national committee subsequently carried out. The Local National Committee in Ervěnice defended its actions by arguing that it had not violated the provisions regarding the transfer of miners, but rather had allowed the workers' council to determine the

[83] Letter from MNV Ervěnice, 1 November 1946. Ibid.
[84] Mark Cornwall, "The Struggle on the Czech-German Language Border, 1880-1940," *English Historical Review* 109, no. 433 (1994): 914-951; Tara Zahra "Reclaiming Children for the Nation: Germanization, National Ascription, and Democracy in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1945," *Central European History* 37, no. 4 (2004): 501-543.
[85] Letter from SHD, 6 November 1946. SOA, p. Most, f. SHD-GŘ, s. 5-3-10 č. 279 01, 03.

needs of the firm.[86] Considering the Interior Ministry's support for the official transfer, members of the MNV in Ervěnice had little to fear in the way of reprimands.

Elsewhere in the borderlands, national committees allowed firms to retain large numbers of Germans, especially where settlement had been weak. Large textile firms in the borderlands became particularly dependent on German labor. For instance, the textile firm Ed. Grohmann in Vrbno near Bruntál, supplied a list of 138 Germans for specialist legitimacy certificates. In August 1946, the chairman of the ONV reported to textile industry leaders that many of those selected were not really specialists, some having only worked one year at the factory. According to him, because of insufficient Czech workers, "the management did not see any easier way than to propose almost all of the workers for specialist status." He recommended in turn that no more than fifty Germans remain, "so that there would not be a significant German work group at the factory."[87] In the nearby town of Lichtvard, the linen factory G.A. Buhl, which lost 38 percent of its employees between February and October 1946, requested that over half of its German employees be given specialist certification.[88] While the district's textile industry suffered only a 17 percent decline in overall employment during the year, this figure disguised the fact that several factories had shut down or relocated to Slovakia, and that employee fluctuation rates had remained high.[89] Under such conditions, many textile factory managers did their best to retain whomever they could, whether German or Czech.

Female German workers proved more important to borderland production than simply as able-bodied laborers. Even in places where settlement was strong, economic concerns put a

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[86] Letter from MNV Ervěnice, 19 August 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.101 inv.č.237.
[87] Letter from ONV Bruntál, 16 August 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Bruntál, k.145 inv.č.126.
[88] Potvrzené legitimace něm. specialistů o vynětí z odsunu, MV, 1 October 1946. Ibid.
[89] Compare labor reports from OÚOP, Opava, February and October 1946. NA, f. MOPSP, k.401 inv.č. 841 s.2306; Otákar Kaňá, *Historkické proměny pohraničí* (Ostrava, 1976), 66-67. For more on continued fluctuation during the Two-Year Plan, see Anna Beinhauerová, "Pracovní moralka a vykonnost v průmyslové výrobě v českých zemích v období dvouletky," *Slezský sborník* 88, no.2 (1990): 131-136.

brake on a complete expulsion. In Liberec, one of the most desirable cities in the borderlands, more than 750 textile specialists remained at the end of 1946.[90] That the majority of textile specialists were female challenges some historians' assumption that the large numbers of women and children among Germans only represented an economic burden on the postwar government.[91] In the Buhl plant, district officials surprisingly supported the idea of repatriating fourteen Sudeten German husbands of local textile workers. The chairman of the ONV argued that the women would be restive if they were not reunited with their husbands and supported the national administrator's extraordinary request. An Interior Ministry official refused to be swayed by "productionist" arguments and replied simply that such an action would be "undesirable."[92] In other cases, managers employed women already expelled and who illegally re-crossed the border to work.[93] The great demand for labor in certain sectors of the economy forced mangers and officials to take radical steps to make the use of any available labor. Mrs. Peschke and her children, after all, were assigned not to daily work on a local farm, but transported over 200 km away and then back again after fewer than two seasons of work. Sudeten German women were not only mouths to feed, but helped several sectors of the borderland economy regain their footing following the war.

National committees and others who supported the retention of Germans for industrial production did not necessarily oppose the expulsion. The government's representative for mining, who spearheaded many efforts to retain Germans for SHD, called the continued use of

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[90] Lists of specialists. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1949 inv.č.1602 s.B2111.
[91] Václav Průcha and Karel Jech, "First Steps in Post War Economic Reconstruction (1945-1946)," in *The Czechoslovak Economy 1945-1948*, ed. Karel Jech (Prague, 1968), 42; Beinhauerová and Sommer, "K některým aspektům," 336. The number of certified female textile specialists was 3,966 as opposed to 2,977 males. See Výkazy německých specialistů v průmyslu a hornictví, November 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.378.
[92] Letter to Minister of Interior, ONV Bruntál, 29 April 1947 and Minister of Interior response, 11 August 1947. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Bruntál, k.145 inv.č.126; Protocol from revision at Moravolen, Lichtvard, 12 February 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1153 inv.č.3631.
[93] See for example, Odsunutí Němci-illegální přechody státních hranic, MV, 22 January 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1152 inv.č.3631.

Germans for mining production a "national disgrace," for which he did not want to be blamed.[94] In that sector and in textile production, the problem remained one of numbers: not enough settlers could replace the expellees. Why then did some national committees, such as the MNV in Ervěnice, take such a strong stance against the remaining German miners, while others supported the idea of keeping German workers? In the former case, the particularly strong tradition of nationalist politics there certainly played a role. So, too, did the evolving roles of national committees within the state. While national committees had been promised great power to control local communities, they continually struggled against central agencies to implement their own agendas. The official provisions for protecting miners and specialists excluded the participation of local national committees from the selection process. Thus, those who most closely controlled other aspects of the transfer and settlement had little say in the matter of which Germans would remain in their communities after the expulsions ended. In Ervěnice's case, German miners were forced upon it by mining directors and the economic demands of the state.

5.5 "LITTLE BERLINS"

Despite several shortcomings, most officials in Prague had reason to be happy with the overall results of both expulsion and settlement. During 1946, 2,170,598 Sudeten Germans had been "officially" transferred, which left approximately 200,000 to 300,000 in the country, mainly in the borderlands. Roughly 500,000 new settlers had moved to the borderlands during the year,

[94] Dr. Vlk, the government representative for the mines called for the creation of an office with dictatorial powers that would resolve problems with the lack of Czech miners. See Zápis ze schůze ve Svazu průmyslu, 22 November 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.349/1.

which brought the non-German population there to nearly 2 million.[95] Czechs had replaced a substantial number of the expellees, and agricultural settlement appeared more or less complete. In his official report to the government about the transfer, the Communist Minister of Interior, Václav Nosek, noted that the ministry was able to press on with the transfer, despite American concerns about its effects in their occupation zone in Germany and the fears of "productive circles" within Czechoslovakia.[96] Linking the Americans to a putative reactionary class within the country served Communist propaganda purposes, but it failed to represent broad strata of settlers and officials who put the borderlands' future first.

Despite the government's achievement of expelling over 90 percent of the Sudeten Germans, some settlers remained dissatisfied that any of them remained. In late 1946, the Czechoslovak government decided that rather than increasing the number of transports to meet expulsion targets, they would postpone them until the spring of 1947.[97] However, the general transfers never restarted in 1947 and Czechs in some borderland towns grew uneasy at the idea that Germans would remain. In March 1947, 50,000 German workers in large and small scale industry still remained at their posts; roughly half of them had official specialist protection.[98] In one textile mill, Germans maintained such a noticeable presence that the local Czechs referred to it as a "little Berlin."[99] High concentrations of Sudeten Germans evoked protests and demands for their removal, if not from the country, then at least from borderland areas, where they were

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[95] For the number of expelled Sudeten Germans in 1946 see: Souhrnná zpráva pro československou vládu o dosavadím průběhu odsunu Němců z Československé republiky (hereafter cited as Souhrnná zpráva), MV, 29 November 1946. NA, f. ÚPV-B, k.720, inv.č.2908 s.753/4; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 230. For slightly different figures of expellees see: Reports from Ministerstvo národní obrana hl. štab 7 odd. NA, f. ÚPV-T, k.308 inv.č.1635 s.127/2; For figures on settlers, see Vladimír Srb, *Materialy k problematice novoosídleneckého pohraničí* (Prague, 1984) 76-77.
[96] Souhrnná zpráva, MV, 29 November 1946. NA, f. ÚPV-B, k.720, inv.č.2908 s.753/4.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Karel Janů, "NPF žádá o spolupráci místní národní výbory," *Osidlování*, 10 November 1946; Slezák, *Zemědelské osídlování*, 54; Průmyslová statistika, 3 April 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.360.
[99] Report from Ministry of Defense, 30 September 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1157 inv.č.3631.

considered unwelcome by settlers and raised security concerns. In an attempt to gain political capital, the Communist Party also condemned the use of German specialists and insinuated that reactionary forces were behind their protection. However, Communists could distance themselves from the specialist program only to a limited degree, because they simultaneously controlled the Settlement Office and were the backers of the Two-Year Plan (1947-48), known also as the Rebuilding Program. These initiatives and offices prompted local officials and leaders of nationalized industry to retain German workers. Even after the Communist Party's February 1948 seizure of power, which initiated a one-party state, efforts to remove every last German from the borderlands remained difficult to achieve.

Productionists' efforts to keep German labor developed immediately after the war and grew during 1945. In 1946, Czechs began working in borderland industries in greater numbers, but still did not reach the figures that settlement and industrial officials had hoped to achieve. By the end of the transfer, settlement officials still hoped that 80,000 more Czech industrial workers would move to the borderlands.[100] Despite their best efforts and plans, however, these workers failed to materialize. Attempts to attract Czech workers from abroad generally fell short; the chance to acquire land appeared to be a better draw for most emigrants. Slovaks played a productive role across all economic branches in the borderlands already in 1945-1946, though many industrial workers had only temporary work assignments. The Bratislava Settlement Office wished to keep Slovak workers to settle its southern border regions, from where it planned to expel Magyars.[101] By 1947, the prospect of locating new labor power for borderland industry looked bleak and thus increased firms' tendency to hold onto German workers.

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[100] Karel Janů, "Pohraničí, průmysl a dvouletý plan," *Osidlováni*, 10 December 1946.
[101] Oľga Šrajerová and Karel Sommer, "Migrace Slovaků do českých zemí v letech 1945-1948," *Slezský sborník* 98, no. 1 (1998): 25.

Other pressures worked in the opposite direction. The politics of permanently keeping Germans remained divisive at both the local and national levels. In late 1946, the Ministry of Interior authorized a *revise* of current specialists. Investigative commissions were established to check on the credentials of those Sudeten Germans who had received permission to remain. These investigations involved the same group of officials—district national committee members, district security officials, and regional representatives from the relevant ministries, as well as the factory management and workers' representatives—who had, in most cases, comprised the original committee to select German specialists.[102] Unsurprisingly, these investigative commissions failed to cancel many specialist certificates. The government's representative for the transfer, Kučera, reported in April 1947 that, of the 37,613 industrial specialists (not including miners) given specialist protection, central officials had already cancelled 21,728 certificates outside of the district revision process. The revisions themselves reduced the number of specialists by only 2,867. In the end, Kučera expected that 13,000 German specialists in industry and 10,000 in mining would remain.[103] Although he was largely correct, perceptions about a lingering problem continued to exist. The fear expressed by the Regional Settlement Office in Opava that the 194 German specialists in the district of Bruntál and the 130 in the Frývaldov district would hinder settlement was much overstated.[104] Elsewhere, however, real concentrations of Germans persisted, often in connection with large borderland firms. These "little Berlins" sustained the tensions created by the permanent retention of German workers. Because district authorities had been given responsibility for the *revise*, the pressure to resolve this question once and for all continued to mount.

[102] Odsun Němců, revise německých specialistů vynatých z odsunu, MV, 11 December 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j. 378.
[103] Letter from Vládní zmocněnec pro odsun Němců, MV, 18 April 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.378.
[104] Letter from OÚ, Oblastní úřadovná, Opava, 7 April 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1153 inv.č.3631.

The *revise* in the Šluknov district, in the northernmost part of Bohemia, began in early February 1947. This district had traditionally been a center of artificial flower production, which brought in over 80 million Kčs in direct export and employed 18,540 Sudeten German workers in 1938.[105] The 1945 expulsions had drastically reduced the number of these workers, despite protests about their consequences for local industry. At the outset of the revision process, the chairman of the ONV, Mikovec, urged the commission to reach a compromise between the political viewpoint of cleansing the borderlands and the economic position of protecting against the rise of foreign competition.[106] During the investigation, the commission found problems with certain firms' retention of unqualified workers or office personnel and cancelled 13 percent of the legitimacy certificates.

In his late February report about the revisions, the district representative for the Ministry of Industry suggested that the main reason for the relatively high number of remaining specialists was "poor settlement," due, in part, to the isolation of many communities. About the settlers who had already arrived, he reported that "the quality of their labor was comparatively poor, so that even when firms hired a greater percentage of Czech employees, they were forced because of the insufficient and low value of production to release them."[107] In order to address this problem, they divided the specialists into two groups. The first group consisted of younger German specialists who spoke Czech. These workers would be sent to the interior of the republic to teach their skills to Czechs and create a new center of artificial flower production. The remaining Sudeten Germans, mainly older workers, would stay in the Šluknov district and gradually be replaced.

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[105] Letter from Ústřední kancelář továren na umělé květiny, Dolní Poustevna, 31 October 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1141 inv.č.3631.
[106] Zpráva o revisi německých specialistů, Oblastní referent minsterstva průmyslu, 5 February 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1152 inv.č.3631.
[107] Zpráva o revisi německých specialistů, Oblastní referent minsterstva průmyslu, 20 February 1947. Ibid.

Some members of the ONV, however, saw the problem differently. Mikovec argued that the representative for the Ministry of Industry had been too lenient during the revision process, and the ONV Council agreed to appeal the results.[108] Apparently, these appeals failed. Thereafter, Mikovec, along with the security official of the ONV and a few other local officials, took it upon themselves to carry out a *superrevise* of specialists at the end of March. They focused on the artificial flower firms in Horní Poustevna, where high numbers of specialists remained. As various letters from these factories indicate, Mikovec and others used intimidation to force members of the factory council and managers to release more specialists for the transfer.[109] After getting word of these additional revisions, the minister of industry requested a halt to all transports of Germans from the area and sent an investigative team to the district. While this commission heaped blame on Mikovec, pressure to expel more specialists came from the Regional Representative for the Transfer of Germans under the Interior Ministry, who had earlier made the point that Šluknov was the one district in the region that had failed to meet fully its quota for the "transfer."[110]

The "super-revision" carried out in Horní Poustevna was not unique. That Czechs were able to separate their opinions about the exemption of specialists and the expulsion of Sudeten Germans only hindered a definitive resolution to the issue. Mikovec described well the intractable situation:

> At public meetings people radically demand that officials indiscriminately transfer Germans, but immediately the next day, those in industrial firms who supported their transfer repudiate it with the reason that the transfer of German specialists threatens production, or that Czech and Slovak workers are leaving their jobs, or that without the German specialists they cannot go on.[111]

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[108] Minutes from the ONV Council meeting, ONV Šluknov, 20 February 1947. SOkA Děčín, ONV Šluknov, k.3 inv.č.46.
[109] See various letters. NA. f. MP, k.1152 inv.č.3631.
[110] Zápis o pracovní poradě členů rady, ONV Šluknov, 2 April 1947. SOkA Děčín, ONV Šluknov, k.3 inv.č.46.
[111] Ibid.

Such attitudes highlighted the protean nature of "productionist" and nationalist stances and the lack of simple solutions to the borderlands' labor problems.

The *revise* process in Jablonec had been particularly tumultuous. On October 1, 1946 the Czech workers at one factory threatened a strike to protest the continued presence of Germans, specialists or otherwise, who got drunk and threatened Czechs on the streets at night.[112] Following the results of a special *revise* established for the district at the end of 1946, the minister of interior requested that the Ministry of Industry carry out an additional inspection that would, above all else, reduce the number of Germans in the district.[113] Even after this *superrevise*, 186 small firms still had more than a majority of German employees. The ONV remained displeased and divided, and the issue of German specialists dominated the district's political life. In August of 1947, the District National Committee Council discussed how to resolve the retention of German specialists. C. Mrazek, a Social Democrat, blamed the security department head, a Communist, for not following regulations concerning the retention of specialists. The Communist security chief had released several protected specialists without the consent of factory managers.[114] Although he was careful to mention that he did not support Germans, Mrazek argued that the legal order must be upheld. After further finger pointing, the Council reissued its original directive concerning the retention of specialists. This order declared that specialists chosen by a firm's management, usually a national administrator, should not be transferred. However, it also permitted the security official to expel or retain Germans "who

[112] Situation report on conditions in Jablonec, SNB Jablonec., 24 October 1946. SOkA Jablonec, f. ONV Jablonec., k.29 inv.č.52.
[113] Legitimace německých specialistů na jablonecku; revise, MV, 16 December 1946. NA. f. MP, k.1147 inv.č.3631.
[114] See his comments in the meetings of the District Presidium of the KSČ, Jablonec, 19 and 26 June 1947. SOkA Jablonec, f. Presednictvo Okresní výbor KSČ Jablonec, L-I 204/3.

were originally defined for transfer out of Czechoslovakia."[115] Such an order merely prolonged the stalemate within the ONV about how to resolve the situation. As one member of the council put it, "the Germans were breaking up the National Front."[116]

The dispute between the Communists and the other parties of the ONV came to a head at the following meeting. Although the specialist issue did not directly precipitate the walkout of the non-Communist parties from the Council, it remained the major dispute dividing them.[117] After a month's impasse the Social Democrats came back to the meetings and changed their tactics regarding the specialist question. They proposed a plan to transfer Germans to the interior and simultaneously attacked the security chairperson for allowing politically unreliable Germans to remain.[118] By proposing to send Germans to the interior, the Social Democrats shifted their position on the retention of German specialists. They now supported removing German specialists from Jablonec, which the Communists also favored.[119] Yet by attacking the Communist security department head, the Social Democrats indicated that they too were willing to use the German question for political ends.

Communists were well aware of the political dangers that the retention of specialists brought. As the leaders of the National Front government from May 1946, the Communist Party held responsibility for fulfilling the promise of a complete transfer. In Nejdek, for instance, local Communist authorities reported that local textile workers planned to go on strike if the remaining Germans were not transferred. They further reported that the district party leaders could not prevent this because their "actions regarding specialists compromised our comrades and the

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[115] Minutes from the ONV Council meeting, 6 August 1947. SOkA Jablonec, f. ONV Jablonec, k.1 inv.č.3.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Letter from Československá socialní demokracie, Okresní sekretariat, Jablonec, 17 September 1947. Ibid. See also minutes from meeting of the ONV Jablonec., 1 October 1947. Ibid.
[119] Meetings between Social Democratic and Communist leaders in Prague sought to find a common approach to the question of German labor during this same period. NA, f. 23, a.j.375.

workforce here no longer believes in them."[120] In Jablonec the security official defended his record of expelling Germans arguing that expulsions should not be carried out on a massive scale, but considered individually.[121] He later lost his job in 1947, in part, for his cautious approach to Jablonec specialists. He was replaced by a fellow Communist from outside the district, who had few qualms about expelling Germans.

While the issue of protected specialists threatened local Communist functionaries, their leaders in Prague wished to use the impression that the borderlands were filled with "little Berlins" for political goals. In July 1947, Dr. Bedřich Steiner, a leading party spokesperson on borderland issues, led several other parliamentary deputies in criticizing key aspects of the specialist program. They argued that the government had meant to give legitimacy "only to a narrow circle of people with entirely extraordinary qualifications, which are entirely irreplaceable, possessors of different production secrets or those having knowledge, which requires a long training period to acquire."[122] Steiner also argued that the existence of German groups in the borderlands threatened the settlement of Czech inhabitants. He noted that specialists received exemption from the confiscation of property, which served as the basis for bringing settlers to the borderlands. He also suggested that Germans had "an entirely different position towards the state and Czech inhabitants" in places where they lived in large numbers, compared to places where they were an insignificant minority. He argued that Germans already demanded cultural rights, such as schools, newspapers and cinemas.[123] Steiner hoped that attacking the specialists would win the party political support by tapping into settlers' resentment

[120] Letter from District Secretariat KSČ, Nejdek, 24 March 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.378.
[121] Minutes from the meeting of the Presidium of the District Committee KSČ, Jablonec, 25 October 1946. SOkA Jablonec, f. Presednictvo Okresní výbor KSČ Jablonec, L-I 204/3.
[122] Interpelace 736, Ústavodárné Národní shromáždění republiky Československé 1947, 7 July 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1154 inv.č.3631. Steiner had earlier begun attacks against the idea of keeping German workers. See Slezák, *Zemědělské osidlování*, 36.
[123] Interpelace 736, Ústavodárné Národní shromáždění republiky Československé 1947, 7 July 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1154 inv.č.3631.

at Germans, who enjoyed the right to retain their property and their jobs. The KSČ distributed a copy of Steiner's attack on the specialists to its party branches. It recommended providing "guidance, which would clarify that it was really the Communist Party, which ensured cleansing the borderlands of unwanted elements."[124]

In response to the Communist attack on specialists, the Ministry of Industry, under Social Democratic control, argued that the concept of expertise could not be interpreted as narrowly as Dr. Steiner suggested. Aside from specific branches of the economy where larger contingents of Germans remained, as for example in Jablonec goods, the official noted that Germans were necessary to train Czechs otherwise the number of specialists would have been considerably fewer. The letter continued: "it was necessary not only to keep real specialists in the narrow sense of the word, but also a cadre of expert employees, if these firms were to be brought into operation and provide a livelihood to Czech settlers."[125] This ministerial official echoed earlier arguments about successful settlement hinging on German labor. Communists' uncompromising stance toward German specialists reflected their use of nationalist politics to seek power. They opposed any measure that appeared to benefit Germans from fear of voter backlash.[126] As scheduled 1948 elections approached, borderland labor politics took on new meaning as Communists renewed old messages of national intolerance.

5.6 DISPERSAL: GERMAN ASSIMILATION AND ECONOMIC NECESSITIES

In certain ways, the politics surrounding the remaining Sudeten Germans grew more critical when fewer of them remained. In October 1947, the MNV Ervěnice appealed to district

[124] Letter from Komise pro otázky osidlení při UV KSČ, 18 July 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.378.
[125] Partial response to the questionnaire of Dr. Steiner, MP, 30 August 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1154 inv.č.3631.
[126] See, for example, comments made on provisions to return citizenship to Germans in late 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.375.

authorities to transfer Germans to the interior and "to the delivery of this land from wicked elements." It blamed recent borderland fires on Germans. In early 1948, the District National Committee in Chomutov replied that based on similar concerns and interventions the Ministry of Interior had decided to relocate Germans to the interior and disperse them into different communities.[127]

The need for agricultural labor in the interior, just as in 1945, reinforced demands to deport Germans from the borderlands after the "transfer" had ended. Once it became clear early in 1947 that further Allied-sponsored transports would not continue the government planned to move all Germans slated for the "transfer" to interior parts of the country. The central government authorized this relocation (*přesun*) of Germans mainly to help alleviate the dire labor shortage facing interior farms. Kučera warned district national committees that they should realize the importance of this provision and release the greatest number of Germans. He argued that this action had various advantages. For interior districts, it was supposed to relieve serious labor strains. For the borderlands, the transfer of Germans to the interior would meet security concerns and give settlers assurances about their jobs and property.[128]

Satisfying borderland settlement and security concerns by transferring Germans to the interior, however, ran into resistance. Local management and factory councils attempted to retain their German workers, either because of production concerns, poor settlement or both. Vejprty, a town located in a mountainous region in northwest Bohemia directly on Germany's border, was a perfect example of how the lack of settlers affected the labor market. By October 1947, Germans comprised over a quarter of the town's 5,834 inhabitants. The district percentage was

[127] Letter from MNV Ervěnice, 2 October 1947 and response from ONV Chomutov, 5 February 1948. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Ervěnice, k.101 inv.č.237.
[128] B300/11949-47-ref. B, MV, 21 May 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1155 inv.č.3631.

roughly the same.[129] In connection with the 1947 relocation to the interior, one district national committee member proposed to transfer 1,500 Germans.[130] As the action began, however, local textile firms raised a series of obstacles and pressured the Ministry of Industry to request a halt to further transfers. They did so because they lacked Czechs to replace these Germans. In one factory, for instance, over half of the Czech employees hired in 1945 had left less than two years later.[131] Problems with wages, housing, and provisions, not to mention the presence of many Germans, made Vejprty less than hospitable to new settlers. In such places, using German labor was often a factory's only hope for continued production. In August 1947, the Interior Ministry reported that the campaign to relocate the remaining Germans had been unsatisfactory. Of the estimated 70,000 Germans eligible for relocation—many of whom had been kept because of their economic value until the final transports—only 2,550 families were actually transferred.[132]

Despite the shortcomings of the campaign, in October 1947, the government authorized the Ministry of Interior to carry out the dispersal (*rozptyl*) of the remaining Germans into the interior. As minister Nosek noted in a speech to lower officials, the final purpose of the action was the assimilation of the Germans, so that they would no longer present a security threat to the state.[133] At the same time, labor needs continued to fuel plans to deport Germans to the interior. At a February 4, 1948 meeting in Prague to organize the dispersal, for instance, the representative for The United Federation of Czech Farmers requested 7,830 agricultural workers for transfer to the interior.[134] Following the meeting, an internal memo to department heads at the Ministry of Industry urged its officials to quickly propose their own requests for German workers

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[129] *Soupisy obyvatelstva v Československu v letech 1946-1947* (Prague, 1951), 547.
[130] Němci-odsun do vnitrozemí na zemědělské práce, ONV Vejprty, 23 May 1947. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.25 inv.č.108.
[131] Odsun německých zaměstnanců z továren, Raimund Bittner, 5 August 1947. Ibid.
[132] Minutes of a meeting at MOPSP, 11 August 1947. NA, f. MP, k.1155 inv.č.3631.
[133] Přesun a rozptyl Němců z pohraničních krajů, MV, 1948. NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra-Nosek (MV-N), k.254 inv.č.160.
[134] Záznam o poradě ve věci přesunu a rozptylu, MV, 2 April 1948. NA, f. MOPSP, k.378 inv.č.805 s.2119.

"because otherwise, it creates the danger that agricultural demands will be satisfied before the demands of industry will be met."[135] However, the race between ministries to collect German workers from the borderlands proved pointless. By the end of May, the Interior Ministry reported that nearly 9,000 Germans had been dispersed throughout the interior. This time Communist officials—now in control of the state—painted the campaign as a success. However, its economic benefits were minimal because many of those transferred were unproductive family members.[136]

Just as in previous campaigns to relocate Germans to the interior, Czechoslovak officials had to reconcile labor and settlement pressures with the needs of the borderland economy and the state's security demands. Throughout the dispersal action, the general directors of nationalized industries, district industrial officials, factory managers and workers complained of the dispersal's effects and warned that the economic objectives of the Two-Year Plan would not be met. For instance, the directors of the Czechoslovak Textile Factories national enterprise argued that the plans to transfer Germans to the interior would bring considerable losses to the firm, since most of its plants were in the borderlands. They further noted that "any attempts to obtain new Slavic workers for the borderlands have come to naught recently." As a result of this pressure, the Ministry of Industry received the right to retain German workers in the interests of borderland industrial production.[137] Rather than eliminating productionist concerns and reliance on German workers, Communist control permitted such practices to continue.

Communist control in 1948 remained tentative, at least in the borderlands. Germans themselves found ways to escape deportation to the interior. For instance, in early 1948, the

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[135] Letter from MP, 9 February 1948. NA, f. MP, k.1156 inv. č.3631. According to incomplete lists the Ministry of Industry requested 3,502 Germans.
[136] D-300/9299/1948-DN, Odsun a přesun Němců, MV, 8 June 1948. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.25 inv.č.108.
[137] Letter from Československé textilní závody, 13 April 1948. NA, f. MP, k.1156 inv.č.3631.

district of Vejprty sent roughly one hundred families and dozens of individual Sudeten Germans to the interior district of Louny for agricultural work.[138] The district labor office later accused the district national committee of covering up the return of some of these workers. In response, the ONV in Vejprty claimed that some of the Germans had received permission to return from the labor office itself, while others had been exempted from the transfer; still others had not returned to Vejprty, but had left for Germany instead. Although the ONV may not have actively encouraged the Germans to return, it clearly did not want more of them to leave. In August, the ONV decided to keep all Germans without specialist legitimacy in the district for road work. In November 1948, it challenged the Interior Ministry's dispersal order on the grounds that the campaign to gather Germans for the nearby uranium mines at Jachymov signaled that they should no longer be liable for transfer based on security concerns.[139] Despite Communist Party control, borderland national committees continued to demand their say when it came to questions about the economic future of their towns.

The transfer of state power into Communist hands during February 1948 did little to alter the fate of the remaining Sudeten Germans. In some cases, the political cleansing of local non-Communist officials also renewed anti-German measures in borderland towns, especially where there had been strong moves to support their retention.[140] However, as the state borders became better controlled and other enemies, both within the country and abroad, better served the Communist leaders' political and ideological goals, Communist officials sought to ameliorate the condition of the remaining Germans. This volte face came just as the first dispersal action had

[138] Report from Oblastní zmocněnec Ministerstva vnitra pro Odsun Němců, Litoměříce, 20 February 1948. SOkA Teplice-Šenov, f. ONV Teplice, k.225 inv.č.280.
[139] Inquiry by the ONV Vejprty, 11 November 1948. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.25 inv.č.108.
[140] For example, see Vyhláška č. 3763, Omezení pro osoby německé národnosti, ONV Vejprty 2 March 1948. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.25 inv.č.108; č.j. 30 předs./48, ONV Šluknov, 10 March 1948. SOkA Děčín, f. ONV Šluknov, k.1 inv.č.34.

come to a close and involved much back peddling. The government rescinded labor regulations from Decree 71 in mid-1948, which ended the 20 percent deduction from Germans' wages. Giving Germans citizenship, considered politically inexpedient several months earlier, began with German miners in early 1948 and was permitted for all Germans in 1950. Later, Sudeten Germans were granted permission to own their homes again. The Communist Party even promoted German cultural events in the early 1950s, even though its officials like Steiner had feared such a possibility in 1947.[141] Thus, the Communist leadership made the necessary accommodations for Germans to remain in the country by the early 1950s. They began to pursue the principle of "proletarian internationalism," which included discarding their past negative attitudes toward Germans.[142]

Yet central decisions did not always mesh with local practices. National committees, as one 1950 circular noted, did not always treat Germans "politically correctly," even though, "they actively participate in constructive work."[143] Many German specialists were unable to reclaim their property and pressure to move Germans in order to make space for settlers continued in some areas. As a result, some Germans sought a way out, though with little success. For example, an instrument maker's wife requested permission to move to Germany in order to care for her sick mother and brother in 1950. The woman and her husband remained without Czechoslovak citizenship, even though they had the option to apply for it. The representative from Czechoslovak Woodworking Factories argued that it would be unwise to approve her request because a similar factory was being built in Germany and only awaited skilled workers.

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[141] See Letter concerning discrimination practices against Germans by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, 29 July 1950. NA, f. MOPSP, k.339 inv.č.747 s.2800; Tomáš Staněk, *Německá menšina v českých zěmích, 1948-1989* (Prague, 1993), 77-83; For cultural events, see Report on state citizenship, ONV Chomutov, 10 November 1951. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Chomutov, k.347 inv.č.525; Report on the nationality question, Jednotný národní výbor Ústí n.L., 15 October 1951. AM Ústí n.L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.737 inv.č.1155.
[142] Staněk, *Německá menšina*, 80.
[143] Sbírka oběžníků pro KNV Roč. II /1950/ č. 28, 31 March 1950. AM Ústí n. L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.9 inv.č.39.

The official feared that it would have to release eighty other Germans who also wanted to leave because they faced continuing discrimination.[144] Even though local authorities supported their departure, the Ministry of Interior had already issued instructions forbidding the loss of skilled workers, even for the purpose of reuniting families. That the Ministry of Interior supported "productionist" policies by the early 1950s indicated that the regime had entered a new phase of consolidation, in which it no longer needed nationalist rhetoric to pursue its economic and political goals.

The labor politics concerning German workers highlight several overlapping agendas related to settlement and expulsion. The slow pace of settlers' entry into industrial jobs reflected the borderlands' draw as a place of rapid social mobility based on confiscated property; this hindered the region's economic recovery. The rush to grab agricultural land and the labor shortages in the mines made borderland Germans into a mobile labor force. Such movements often did not make economic sense, but reflected the disorganized manner in which the state approached labor problems. Many national committees and local factory managers worked to retain Sudeten German labor, even in the face of pressure from military commanders and the Interior Ministry. While concerns about the local economy generally resulted in keeping German workers in place, such decisions were a political matter. The MNV's stand against keeping German miners in Ervěnice raised issues of power, as did theVejprty Local National Committee's challenge to the Ministry of Interior about retaining German workers for borderland industries. Each national committee felt entitled to decide how many Germans should stay to work, regardless of central authorities' wishes. Inter-party disputes also played a role. The debates in the Jablonec national committee demonstrated that nationalist and economic imperatives were often less important than politicians' efforts to gain political support. Therefore, exploring labor politics explains

[144] See the case of P.R. from Kraslice. NA, f. MV-NR, k.10311 inv.č.6013 s.573.

more than the relative importance of economic issues during the Sudeten German expulsions. The political disputes about German workers and labor shortages provide a window into the broader goals of political parties, government organs and settlers.

6.0 CONSOLIDATING BORDERLAND INDUSTRIES

6.1 CONFISCATION AND NATIONALIZATION

The labor problems associated with the expulsion and settlement in 1945 played a central role in shaping official plans for the future of borderland factories. Without workers to staff these companies, confiscated factories would have been worthless. National committees and the central government shared this concern, but they envisioned resolving this dilemma in radically different ways. National committees wanted to keep enterprises operating locally in order to improve their town's economy and to attract additional settlers. Officials at the OÚ and Ministry of Industry, on the other hand, sought to curtail the number of borderland firms, to reduce the demand for workers and to use confiscated equipment and factories to strengthen industry in Slovakia and elsewhere. While central government officials accused borderland national committees of failing to see the broader economic implications of permitting local decisions about factory closures, the central government's settlement and economic policies appeared extremely detrimental to local economies. Equally important, settlers' and national committees' "localism," as central officials termed it, revealed their conviction that confiscated property belonged to the workers and the nation. Both national committees and workers felt entitled to claim authority to oversee borderland factories. They also sought to retain factories from liquidation in order to support settlement and the reconstruction of the borderland economy. Thus, they pushed for nationalization of factories as a way to protect them from the encroaching

plans and power of Prague. At times, national committee pressure for nationalization dovetailed neatly with Communist Party priorities. Yet national committee resistance aimed at Prague was often also directed at Communist-backed industrial policies. Thus, examining the reorganization of the economy during and after the expulsions provides another example of how confiscation politics shaped the postwar transformation of the borderlands.

The number of confiscated industrial firms in the borderlands and their subsequent history are difficult to trace. By 1945, some firms existed only on paper; they had closed before or during the war, but were still counted in industrial statistics. Confiscated firms also changed classifications as they were liquidated, temporarily closed, or permitted to operate. Category A firms were those of statewide importance that received priority for materials and workers. Category C firms were slated for liquidation, and category B enterprises were temporarily closed. However, these categories became points of contention, rather than final decisions. Figures concerning the number of firms in these categories changed accordingly. For instance at the end of 1946, 1,790 borderland enterprises existed in category A.[1] By April 1947, the number of seized A-level firms jumped to 4,569 in the borderlands as national committees, national administrators and others continued to request that local factories remain open. Another difficulty in counting confiscated factories involved their relationship to nationalized enterprises. These government-directed enterprises, discussed in greater detail below, had been permitted to take over nearly one thousand confiscated companies by early 1947. This does not include many other firms that were simply liquidated and their machine equipment bought at bargain prices by

[1] Růžena Hlušičková, *Boj o průmyslové konfiskáty v letech 1945-1948* (Prague, 1983), 47-48; Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československu, 1945-1948* (Prague, 1991), 349.

nationalized firms.[2] After the Communist Party came to power further nationalizations occurred and by 1949 covered nearly every enterprise. In one of its final reports, the Fund for National Renewal (FNO) stated that 6,900 confiscated factories had been allocated to nationalized firms and roughly 2,500 more would be by 1950.[3] The various figures and fates of confiscated factories make it difficult to determine the exact number of confiscated companies.

The confiscation of industrial firms in the borderlands went hand in hand with the nationalization program. Confiscation applied only to firms owned by Germans, Magyars or collaborators, for which compensation would not be made. By nationalizing a company, the government seized possession of it and placed its management under a general director or directorship, but unlike confiscation, made compensation available to its owner. Nationalized enterprises were a conglomeration of individual factories and companies. They were grouped together by sector and controlled by a central headquarters in Prague. Unlike national administrators of individual confiscated firms, whom national committees appointed, nationalized enterprises had a central coordinating body. While coordination among the chemical goods branch, for example, was necessary to reach the government's economic targets during the Two-Year Plan (1947-1948), the general directors possessed considerable authority to manage the firms under their control. As the nationalized sector grew in numbers it also grew in its power to claim other firms. Because confiscated firms remained under national administrators and owned by the state, they provided easy targets for expanding nationalized enterprises. The combination of nationalized enterprises and confiscated companies placed the state in firm control of the country's industrial economy. By the end of 1946, nationalized and confiscated

[2] There were 670 confiscated category A firms in the interior of the country as well. Zapis o poradě at Osidlováci úřad (OÚ), 11 April 1947. Národní archiv, Prague (NA), f. Ministerstvo vnitra – nová registura (MV-NR), k.2487 inv.č.2053 s.B2653/1.
[3] Popis a rozbor agend Osidlovacího úřadu a FNO, 1949. NA, f.MV-NR, k.10328 inv.č.6058.

firms together accounted for roughly 75 percent of industrial firms, based on employees and production.[4]

The postwar Czechoslovak leaders had decided to pursue nationalization even before the war had ended. As in other European countries, the depression of the 1930s led many people to see capitalism's failure as the catalyst for fascism. In response, many postwar politicians shunned the principles of capitalism. Jaromir Nečas, a minister in Czechoslovakia's London-based exile government characterized this opinion in a speech before the State Council: "enterprise must take account of the interests of the whole and not private profits. This brings to an end the old theory that private profits through 'the free play of economic forces' are simply the best and most effective stimulus of initiative and enterprise."[5] President Beneš had likewise spoken of "a national and social revolution" and "the fulfillment of democratic principles in economic and social spheres" during the war.[6] The nationalization program, like land reform, emerged in part from the postwar government's attempts to enact socially progressive policies that would improve workers' living conditions and remove power from large landowners and capitalists.

Still disputes emerged about how far to carry these ideas. Most of the government's parties agreed that mines, banks and other financial institutions should come under state control. The Social Democrats and the Communist Party sought widespread nationalization in industry as

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[4] Karel Kaplan argues that confiscated, nationalized, cooperative and public enterprises accounted for 70-73 percent of production in 1946. Karel Kaplan, *Znárodnění a socialismus* (Prague, 1968), 100; By the end of 1946 there were nearly 3,000 technical units (i.e. independent factories) nationalized, representing nearly 64 percent of the industrial workforce. Václav Lhota, *Znárodnění v Československu, 1945-1948* (Prague, 1987), 207; 3,391 medium and larger confiscated, non-nationalized, firms represented 13 percent of industrial employees. Anna Beinhauerová and Karel Sommer, "Mocenské pozice ve znárodněném průmylsu (1945-1948)," in *Stránkamí soudobých dějin: Sborník statí k pětašedesátinám historika Karla Kaplana*, ed. Karel Jech (Prague, 1993), 61; Hlušičková, *Boj o průmyslové konfiskáty*, 38-41.

[5] Speech of J. Nečas, 16 February 1942. Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, eds. *Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940-1945: Dokumenty* 2 vols. (Brno, 1995), 1:497.

[6] Karel Kaplan, *Nekravá revoluce* (Prague, 1993), 21; Eduard Beneš, "Czechoslovakia Plans for Peace," *Foreign Affairs* no.1 (October, 1944): 37; Jan Kuklík, *Mýty a realita takzvaných Benešových dekretů* (Prague, 2002), 329.

well. Social Democrats had outlined various nationalization plans before and during the war, and Bohumil Laušman, one of the party's leaders, became the postwar minister of industry.[7] A special committee under his purview drafted the first nationalization proposal for industry, energy and mining, which was presented to the government on August 25, 1945. Although the proposed decree remained generally limited to key industries, the Democratic Party of Slovakia and the People's Party in the Czech lands considered the list of firms too extensive. They also complained that they had not been consulted during the preliminary drafting of the decree and were now being placed before a fait accompli. The Social Democrats and Communists pressured these and the other parties to accept the decree by arguing that after September 20, 1945, President Beneš said he would no longer sign decrees. This deadline preceded the convocation of the Provisional National Assembly, which Laušman and others feared would become a forum more debate about nationalization.[8] However, the September 20 deadline passed without occasion and gave proponents of nationalization a chance to expand its scope even further.

In its final form, the decree on the nationalization of key enterprises designated twenty-seven different industrial categories—fifteen more than in the original draft. For most branches of industry the average number of employees determined if it was eligible for nationalization. For instance, metal works, electro-technical, optics and light mechanical firms that averaged more than 500 employees from 1942 to 1944 were nationalized. For wood mills, the government set the employment figure at 150 from 1938 to 1940. At the insistence of the outspoken Communist Minister of Information, Vladimír Kopecký, all record album factories were

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[7] Stanislav Šaroch, "Názory na hospodářskou politiku v Československé sociálně demokratické straně v letech 1945-1948." *Acta Oeconomica Pragensia* 4, no. 3 (1996): 37-66; Nina Pavelčíková, "Znárodnění průmyslu v české a zahraniční literatuře," *Slezský sborník* 91 (1993): 73; Kuklík, *Mýty a realita*, 326.

[8] Karel Kaplan argues that as early as July 1945 there had been a shift away from the idea of presenting the nationalization decree to parliament. Kaplan *Znárodnění a socialismus*, 22; See Laušman and other ministers' comments concerning the need to quickly finalize the decree. Minutes from the 53rd meeting of the government, 13 September 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:532-547.

nationalized.[9] The government worked out these details through intense negotiations throughout September and October 1945. The most important of these meetings involved debates about extending nationalization beyond the scope of "key industries." Communists justified their demands for greater nationalization in the name of the working class. For instance, Kopecký claimed that "[o]rganized workers expect that nationalization will be carried out in the shortest time span."[10]

Not only Communists wished to be seen as looking out for working class interests. Hubert Ripka, a National Socialist, considered nationalization a key part of refiguring Czechoslovakia's postwar economy and society and supported Communist proposals to extend nationalization. Speaking to the other ministers, he considered the question of "how far we go in nationalization and which sectors of industry we nationalize, of the same importance as the basic question, of whether we carry out nationalization at all."[11] Support for nationalization ran deep among socialist leaders, who saw it not only in terms of social justice, but in terms of national justice as well. For instance, the first postwar Prime Minister and leader of the Social Democrats, Zděnek Fierlinger, argued that "the word 'nationalization' acquires a really complete meaning under the circumstances. What is happening is the return to the nation of enterprises stolen by the Germans or placed at the service of the Reich. The industrial sector, which will be nationalized, was in the hands of the enemy or of his agents. It is therefore an act of justice."[12] The Justification of the nationalization decree likewise emphasized its national meaning: "nationalization is prompted by the calls of the entire nation. It is the pillar, on which the national whole establishes its new state

[9] Decree 100, Part 1, Art. 1, Sec. 6, 18, and 27. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:481-483.
[10] Part of the 53rd meeting of the government, 13 September 1945. Ibid., 537.
[11] Ibid., 541-542.
[12] Jean Danes, "Z. Fierlinger on Nationalization," *The Central European Observer* 22, no. 21 (1945): 333.

organization…"[13] Such arguments meshed with the "national and democratic revolution," and were another way that leaders invoked the nation to pursue the expropriation of property.

The nationalization program intersected with the confiscation policy not only in the way that politicians framed it, but in the policies and practices of seizing property. The government sought to take over these firms at no cost or risk to the state. National Front leaders decided to insulate the state from the possible debts accrued by nationalized firms as well as from the cost of compensating former owners. They employed the concept of nationalization, rather than state ownership (*zestátnění*), as the legal basis for this argument.[14] In order to carry this policy out, the government established nationalized enterprises as independent bodies that would be financially self-sufficient. At the same time, the government claimed ownership over these firms.[15] While the state's status as an owner without financial obligations appeared advantageous from the perspective of future claims against the state, in practice it gave nationalized firms a tremendous amount of independence. As one Slovak minister argued: "A 'national enterprise' no longer belongs to the state, it does not turn over its profits to anyone and the enterprise is not in any way nationalized, because the nation-state does not have in any form influence over its management."[16] Indeed, nationalized firms became powerful institutions in their own right, and played a central role shaping the borderland's economy.

The disputes and uncertainties associated with the nationalization decree delayed the passage of the confiscation decree, which had been prepared for the President's signature already on August 14, 1945. There had been several different proposed drafts for the decree confiscating

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[13] Důvodová zpráva k upravené osnově dekretu o znárodnění dolů a podniků energetického, zbrojního, klíčového a velkého průmyslu, 10 September 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:522.
[14] See comments by the Minster of Finance on the proposed nationalization decree, 5-6 September 1945. Ibid., 516; Důvodová zpráva for the proposed nationalization decree, 10 September 1945. Ibid., 522.
[15] Decree 100, Part 1, Art. 4, Sec. 1 and Art. 5, Sec. 4. Ibid., 484-485; Part 3, Art. 13, Sec. 1 and Art. 18, Sec. 1. Ibid., 488-489.
[16] Excerpt of minutes from the extraordinary meeting of the government, 13 September 1945. Ibid., 536.

non-agricultural property. The first working proposal, from May 24, 1945, for the protection (*zajištění*) of enemy property gave national committees and the state administration office authority to manage seized firms.[17] However, this arrangement contradicted the central government's intentions, since it had requested the draft as a result of local national committees' inconsistent treatment of this property.[18] A new draft emerged as the decree for the protection and confiscation of enemy property. Officials' shift from calling solely for the "protection" of German property to its "confiscation" (*konfiskace*) reflected new opinions and conditions concerning the control of former German property. When exile leaders had considered previous drafts of the decree, they had to take into account the attitudes of international leaders, especially the British; therefore, they had promised not to confiscate Sudeten German property without indemnity.[19] With the expulsions successfully underway and Allied leaders' attention elsewhere, Czechoslovak officials pursued more thorough-going policies against Germans.

Just as the confiscation decree was set for publication in August 1945, minister of industry Laušman requested that it not be printed because of its conflicts with the nationalization decree, which the government continued to debate. He worried that many confiscated firms would also be liable to the nationalization provisions, which would complicate matters of compensation, especially concerning non-German capital in German-owned firms.[20] In particular, Laušman sought to coordinate the date that determined whether such capital would be eligible for compensation under both decrees. Unlike the draft of the confiscation decree, which confiscated wartime investment in German firms, with the nationalization decree Laušman wished to

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[17] Earlier drafts of this decree had been proposed while still in exile. See London proposal from 24 May 1944. Ibid., 2:862.
[18] A2826-30/5-1945, Ministerstvo vnitra (MV), 30 May 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.477 inv.č.1028 s.A2826. See also the correspondence and other proposed drafts of the confiscation decree in NA, f. Úřad předsednictva vláda-běžná spisovna (ÚPV-B), k.708 inv.č.2866 s.741/4.
[19] U.S. Deptartment of State. Historical Office, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [*FRUS*], *Europe 1945*, vol.2 *General Economic and Political Matters* (Washington, 1960), 1234.
[20] Letter from Minister Laušman, 23 August 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.477 inv.č.1028 s.A2826.

withhold compensation for any capital investment in German firms dating back to 1918, the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic.[21] Such a policy would have considerably increased the amount of property formally exempted from compensation. However, as an Interior Ministry official noted, this provision would involve foreign investors, including current allies, who should not face the "police character" of the confiscation decree. The official argued instead, that if the Ministry of Industry wanted to take over foreign capital it should do so through the nationalization decree which it could "justify by the new economic and social character of the state."[22] Taking over foreign capital jibed with the state's general interests, but the government still needed to handle certain political boundaries with care.

The nationalization and confiscation decrees differed in form, but not in substance. While political parties and ministerial officials held different conceptions of how far these provisions should go, they agreed with the general need to restructure property relations and the economy. The impetus for this decision involved more than ideology and past experience. World War II had created a unique opportunity for states in Central and Eastern Europe to redefine their economic priorities. Nazi Aryanization policies along with state control over other industries left property ownership open to debate at the end of the war. Because the state de facto controlled these properties, it was easy for central leaders to pursue an ever-expanding nationalization program. The expulsions provided even more justification for increased state intervention in the borderland economy, where former owners were not simply powerless to prevent the takeovers, but were absent altogether. Together the confiscation and nationalization decrees dramatically changed the borderland economy and property rights for the next fifty years.

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[21] See Proposal for the decree on the nationalization of mines, energy firms, defense and key industries, Part 2, Art. 7, Sec. 1c, 25 August 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:503.
[22] Interior memo of MV, 23 August 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k. 477 inv.č.1028 s.A2826.

6.2 FACTORY CONTROL

While the country's leaders debated policies and expropriated industrial property in 1945, national administrators, German technical experts and factory owners attempted to restart production in borderland firms. The borderland industries faced several general problems: a lack of raw materials, lack of coal, transportation difficulties and a population—both Czech and German—that was not amenable to work. Czechs sought to get away from arduous work and improve their social status by moving to the borderlands. Germans likewise avoided work when possible. Poor working and living conditions and the ongoing expulsions kept their productivity and morale low. Direct damage to factories and equipment from the war appeared of less consequence for industrial reconstruction. For instance, the Provincial National Committee in Ostrava reported in August that two-thirds of Silesian industry survived the war unscathed.[23] Bombing in certain areas of industrial northern Bohemia, on the other hand, had damaged housing and hindered the ability to restart production. Although the economic effects of German occupation robbed the country of its liquid assets, there had been some machinery investment and production improvements during the war. For example, the large mines of northern Bohemia had been rationalized and mechanized, which helped the Nazis meet their military needs.[24] While the Czechoslovak economy had suffered overall losses during the war, the structural changes brought by the Nazis provided the basis for a rapid state-led recovery.

Nonetheless, several obstacles prevented a simple shift back to pre-war production. One national administrator's report captures the rather natural way that factories renewed production.

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[23] Economic report, Zemský národní výbor (ZNV) Moravská Ostrava, 12-19 August 1945. Zemský archiv (ZA) Opava, f. Expozitura Moravskoslezského ZNV 1945-1949, k.906, inv.č.932.

[24] See comments during 15 June 1946 meeting at the Masaryk mine. Státní oblastní archiv, Litoměřice, pobočka v Mostě (SOA, p. Most), f. Severočeský hnědouhelné doly-generalní ředitelství (SHD-GŘ), s. 5-3-10 č. 279 01, 03; J Hoffman, "Hospodářství sudetské župy pod tlakem prohrávané války," in *"Sudety" pod hákovým křížem*, eds. Václav Kural and Zdeněk Radvanovský (Ústí nad Labem, 2002), 222, 235.

This national administrator first recounted the sorry state of the electrical supply factory that faced him: "The factory and machine equipment were almost completely destroyed, the supplies were stolen and were spread around the entire region… all the windows and doors are broken or without locks…" He set about moving the remaining goods into one warehouse and secured the labor of twenty German passersby through verbal agreements. Some state railway workers soon came by and requested several items, and with that production began again. The national administrator describes the scene well: "Bakers, butchers and cobblers come to us; we fix their lighting, and sell them lamps, switches, fuses and different small, but important things." Situated in predominately German Krnov, just up the road from the more ethnically mixed district of Opava, the factory attracted rapid interest from electronics workers. So much so, the national administrator reported that he decided "to give the former German firm a Czech name. And so with the agreement of the employees, I christened the firm First Czech Electrical Factory, which we really are."[25] Despite some difficulties connected with running the firm, this first-comer offered an upbeat assessment of the town's future.

Appointing national administrators presented a particularly thorny problem for industrial officials and national committees. By August 1945, more than 9,000 national administrators of industrial firms had been established throughout the Czech lands. While local national committees named nearly half of these, the firms they represented had less than two percent of the total employees in confiscated firms. The Ministry of Industry, on the other hand, assigned national administrators in the 450 largest firms representing 664,556 workers.[26] Yet such statistics mask the inherent conflicts in this process. Immediately following liberation, disputes concerning factory control emerged. On May 17, during deliberations about Decree 5, Laušman

[25] Report for three months of activity as the national administrator of the former firm Klien, Krnov, August 1945. Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Bruntál, f. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Krnov, k.17 inv.č.72.
[26] *Československý průmysl* no. 4 (Oct. 1945).

declared there was already chaos in several factories. He argued that the decree on national administrators needed to be approved immediately in order to have any effect.[27] Even after Decree 5 was passed, administrative conflict continued to disrupt the process of appointing national administrators. Furthermore, factory councils heavily influenced who became and remained their firm's national administrator. The state opened up factory control to several competing actors by dispossessing German factory owners and attempting to transform the borderland economy. Ministerial officials, national committees, political parties and workers all played an active role determining who became a national administrator.

As early as May 25, 1945, officials at the Ministry of Industry began to worry about the system of assigning national administrators. They argued that people who came to the ministry in search of positions in key firms "were proposed for interim management by the factory council or a representative of the workers, who are not able to judge their personal quality and expertise."[28] Indeed, the ministry itself often did not take the time to investigate national administrators' backgrounds and simply confirmed those recommended by employees or local officials. To add to the difficulties, national committees simultaneously appointed national administrators to companies that the Ministry of Industry or the provincial national committees had the right to name.[29] This situation led to struggles between national administrators appointed by different official organs and often slowed efforts to restart production. The Ministry of Industry admonished one local administrative commission by arguing that through "its illegal actions the MSK permitted several national administrators to be named to these properties whose authority is not and cannot be clearly delimited so that not only is there no cooperation among

[27] Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 1:231.
[28] Postup při dosazování správců prozatímních. Záznam from odbor II, 25 May 1945. NA, f. Ministerstvo průmyslu, 1945-1950 (MP), k.1163 inv.č.3633.
[29] See for example Letter from Správa severočeského uhelného syndikatu, Ústí n. L., 22 June 1945 NA, f. MP, k.1163 inv.č.3633.

national administrators during the management of the firm, but the managers negate each other's work, because each of them controls their affairs from different perspectives."[30]

Difficulties installing national administrators were not the fault of national committees alone. In mid-June 1945, the Ministry of Industry issued instructions for the installation of national administrators which permitted the appeal of provincial national committee appointments to the Ministry of Industry.[31] Such a stance contradicted the policies outlined in Decree 5 on national administrators, which the Provincial National Committee in Prague was quick to point out, and reflected the desire of ministerial officials to more closely control borderland factories.[32] Even after the ZNV in Prague complained about the Ministry of Industry's directive, the ministry began installing national administrators in small and medium firms technically outside its jurisdiction. In the middle of July 1945, the ZNV issued its own directive concerning national administrators and appealed to the ministers to avoid overstepping their authority. National committees, it wrote, "are and should be the carriers of the peoples' just democracy and their competence cannot be disregarded by central offices, because this would destroy their activity and initiative still in its nucleus."[33] Despite the provincial national committee's pleas, however, the Ministry of Interior sided with the Ministry of Industry and permitted it to recall national administrators installed by the ZNV.[34]

The Ministry of Industry's decision to intervene in the control of national administrators reflected concerns about present practices and future returns. Its June 1945 directive outlined the responsibilities of national administrators and delimited national committees' roles as

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[30] Letter from MP, 2 November 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1778 inv.č.1577 s.B1471.
[31] Směrnice národním výborům pro národní správu průmyslových a řemeslných podniků, Sec. 12, Art. 3, 18 June 1945. *Předpisy z oboru působnosti OÚ a FNO: Zákony (dekrety), vládní nařízení, vyhlášky* (Prague, 1947), 2:180.
[32] Response to ZNV Prague letter concerning the directive on national administrators, 31 July 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1168 inv.č.3633. See also the correspondence about this issue in NA, f. MV-NR, k. 1769 inv.č.1576 s.B1470.
[33] See Directive from ZNV Prague, 16 July 1945. *Předpisy*, 2:155-170; Memorandum o dosazování národních správ, ZNV Prague, 21 August 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1274 inv.č. 3633.
[34] Čis.163.750/II/45, MP, 30 July 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1168 inv.č. 3633.

supervisors. It instructed national committees to "continually watch the activities of national administrators and carefully examine their management."[35] Industrial officials felt that there was a complete lack of oversight of borderland firms. By June 1945 other ministries also expressed unease about factory management in the borderlands. The Ministry of Finance recommended the services of its financial investigators to national committees in order to help them control the actions of national administrators.[36] Both ministries had good reason for concern; industrial national administrators took advantage of their positions to reap gains in ways similar to their counterparts in business and farming.

The preponderance of small and medium-sized firms in the borderlands meant that individual national administrators often had powerful control within the factory. In large firms collegial national administrators were often appointed, ensuring that each national administrator kept an eye on the others. The small and medium industries reflected all types of specialized production based on craft skills, including: glass-beaded jewelry, pistols, artificial flowers and pianos. In the summer of 1945, these firms gave plenty of opportunity for gold diggers to make off with seized wares. On the other hand, it also offered positions for those beginning a new career as an industrial manager. Such possibilities brought professionals and skilled workers to the borderlands, suggesting a more diverse social structure than one which portrays all settlers as opportunists from the lowest classes.[37] Many new managers of borderland industrial firms had education or some experience, though rarely both.[38]

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[35] Směrnice národním výborům pro národní správu průmyslových a řemeslných podniků, 18 June 1945. *Předpisy*, 2:177.
[36] Letter from Ministry of Finance, 6 June 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1769 inv.č.1576 s.B1470.
[37] Karel Kaplan stresses that settlers came from the lowest strata. See Kaplan, *Znárodnění*, 75; Karel Kaplan, *The Short March: The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948* (London, 1987), 27; Kaplan, *Nekravá revoluce*, 37.
[38] See NA, f. MP, k.1163-1171 inv.č.3633.

National administrators' reliance on former owners or other key employees partly revealed the lack of qualified personnel to run borderland firms. German owners, managers and experienced office personnel played a crucial role during the confiscation process and the transition from war to peace production. In some instances, they obstructed these changes. For example, in one leather goods factory in northern Bohemia, the national administrator was unable to assume his post because Red Army representatives controlled the factory and had reportedly reached agreement with the former German owner to deliver a supply of black leather hides.[39] German owners negotiated various deals whereby they retained their control of the factory, received special permission to remain in the country or made off with funds. Such instances had a deleterious effect on labor morale and production. In Varnsdorf, for example, members of one textile family received special protection from the Ministry of Interior to remain in the country. However, after prolonged and pitched protests by the workers, leading to the threat of strikes, the Kunert brothers were forced to abandon the firm, though not before cashing in several of the firm's accounts.[40] Elsewhere, former owners helped to organize inventories and continued working for the company. While their intentions were not always clear, former owners' technical skills and professional contacts often proved valuable for the incoming national administrator. In the small-scale production of Jablonec goods, which heavily relied on skilled workers, more than seventy German owners were proposed for exemption from the expulsions.[41]

In firms with at least twenty employees, factory councils were established and played an important role in limiting the role of the national administrators. The Decree on Factory Councils

[39] Letter from národní správce fm. Ludvík Strobach, Kamenický Šenov, 6 July 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1171 inv.č.3633.
[40] According to one report they had over ten million crowns transferred to their personal accounts during late April and early May 1945. Report on the firm Kunert and sons, undated. SOA, p. Most, f. J. Kunert a synové, Varnsdorf, 256, k.2 inv.č.8.
[41] NA, f. MP, k.1148 inv.č.3631.

(Decree 104) gave workers formal input into the treatment of employees as well as the operation of the company. From the government's perspective, clarifying the role of factory councils through legislative means offered a corrective to the practices during the First Republic, when the employer had had unlimited decision making power.[42] However, extending so much authority to workers had its drawbacks. Jonathan Bloomfield argues that Communists took advantage of the power given to workers by usurping control of the trade union movement, which it then used to further their political ambitions.[43] While this was true to a certain extent, workers did possess significant power within factories and as a political force in the country as a whole. Nonetheless, increased worker control created its own set of problems. Production declined as workers missed shifts to attend meetings. Furthermore, decisions regarding everything from firing employees to production plans became a matter of debate between managers and workers.

In borderland firms, where Czech employees remained in the minority, factory councils developed slowly. Once they emerged, however, they proved adept at pressuring officials to consider their input when installing or removing national administrators. For example, in one textile firm the factory council argued that the national administrator was not an expert and made several poor decisions. In addition, they noted that he had not entered into the accounting books several stores of cloth, which they argued were being used for his personal gain.[44] The district administrative commission recalled the national administrator and allowed the factory council to

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[42] See Justification Report for Decree on Factory Councils, 24 October 1945. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:815; See also comments from Jan Šrámek, minister for the People's Party: "In the new social order we must deal with the upheaval of revolutionary extent. It is necessary to look after the wishes and opinions of workers and miners and the position, which they received in this revolutionary period." Minutes from the 38th meeting of the government, 10 July 1945. Ibid., 2:823.

[43] Jonathan Bloomfield, *Passive Revolution: Politics and the Czechoslovak Working Class, 1945-1948* (New York, 1979).

[44] Letter from the Factory Council, fy. Fr. Czerný, Krnov, 4 February 1946. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.142, inv.č.155.

nominate his successor. Factory councils initiated proposals to get rid of a national administrator for a variety of reasons. They stressed his or her lack of qualifications or antagonistic position toward the workers. Other times they pointed to specific problems such as preventing factory council from checking the books to making hiring and firing decisions without its input.[45] Often a series of problems led the factory council to request a change. The factory council of W. Krusche and company, for instance, argued that the current national administrator did not possess the proper abilities from the perspective of "planning, organization, construction, [and] craftsmanship…as is necessary to run the firm." It further noted that the national administrator did not cooperate with the factory council and did not leave instructions for production in his absence. On the basis of these complaints the ZNV removed him from the position and named another national administrator in his place.[46] While ministries used legal maneuvers and central authority to ensure their control of factory management, factory councils used the workers' voice and the political leverage that it carried to influence national administrators. Determining who became a national administrator involved a variety of actors and organs, many of which did not share the same concerns for borderland industries.

6.3 ON THE EDGES OF THE BORDERLANDS

Companies and property under national administration, which were neither confiscated nor nationalized, still became entangled in confiscation politics. Some cases involved Czechs who

[45] See for example letters in NA, f. MP, k.1274 inv.č.3633.
[46] Letter from ZNV Moravská Ostrava, 16 June 1946. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.109 inv.č.56.

were forced to leave their homes to make space for Nazi military purposes.[47] Jewish owners who survived the war and returned to claim their property, or their heirs, ran into several obstacles preventing the swift return of their assets. Pressure against Jews reclaiming their property surfaced elsewhere in East Central Europe, particularly in Poland.[48] When Jews returned from abroad or from concentration camps to their former towns and homes they often faced hostile occupants and national committees. Roughly 20,000 Jews remained in the Czech lands or returned after the war.[49] Of their 16,000 individual requests for restitution only 3,000 were granted by the end of 1947.[50] In part, the resistance to returning Jewish property was due to discrimination and opportunism. But, it also fit with the government's objectives—both local and central—to keep property under its control.

One of the most prominent restitution cases involved a textile mill in the northern borderland town of Varnsdorf. Emil Beer, the pre-1939 owner of the firm, came from a Jewish family that had owned the company for many years. Beer and his family had fled Czechoslovakia after selling the company to a Reich German named Eichler for a nominal sum.[51] Following the war Beer returned to Varnsdorf and was reportedly welcomed with music and a celebration; his former chauffeur, and the firm's current national administrator, greeted him warmly.[52] In November 1945, Beer requested the cancellation of the national administrator

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[47] Some 46,000 inhabitants moved to make space for military training grounds. Problémy osídlení a hospodářské výsledky FNO v Praze a v Bratislavě, MV, late 1950. NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra – tajná (MV-T), k.196 inv.č.3582 s.280.
[48] Jan Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (New York, 2006), 39-51.
[49] Helena Krejčová gives 18,970 Jewish survivors in 1945. See Helena Krejčová, "Židovská očekávání a zklamání po roce 1945," in *Češi a Němci: ztracené dějiny?* (Prague, 1995), 245-246; Tomáš Staněk lists over 22,000 Jews in 1946. Tomás Staněk, "Němečtí židé v Československu v letech 1945-1948," *Dějiny a současnost* 5 (1991): 42. There were nearly 120,000 Jews in the Czech lands prior to the war.
[50] Krejčová, "Židovská očekávání a zklamání," 247.
[51] Hlušičková, *Boj o průmyslové konfiskáty*, 54.
[52] "Dozvuky k varnsdorfské stavce," *Stráž severu* 8 March 1947.

and the return of his property. The OSK, after checking with the employees, approved the idea of returning the firm to him.[53] From this point forward, however, the situation deteriorated.

The Jewish community of Czechoslovakia was like that of other ones throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Some of its members had assimilated; others remained in more endogamous settings, and there was a range in between. In the Czech lands, most assimilated Jews had turned to a more "German" culture in terms of language use, education and associations. In 1930, these so-called "German Jews" numbered roughly 35,000 out of 117,000 Jews in the Czech lands.[54] In addition to sending their children to German schools and participating in German social organizations Czech Jews often chose German nationality in the 1930 census. While such figures may not provide a perfectly reliable picture, they do suggest that a significant portion of Jews preferred German assimilation.

For Beer, however, the situation was somewhat different. He appears to have been one of the Jews in Czechoslovakia whom Helena Krejčová would consider "a sort of connector between Czechs and Germans. Their bilingualism became a natural and not insignificant intermediary between us."[55] Beer spoke Czech and German and apparently moved in social milieus that were, at times, distinctly Czech or distinctly German. Most importantly, as far as his restitution case was concerned, he had chosen Jewish nationality in the 1930 census. This decision often played the key role determining the course of the confiscation proceedings against an individual. When people had listed their nationality as German in 1930 it became difficult to defend this choice in 1945, although the Ministry of Interior gave "German Jews" a chance to do so.[56] Regardless,

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[53] Hlušičková, *Boj o průmyslové konfiskáty*, 55.
[54] Staněk, "Němčti židé," 42.
[55] Krejčová, "Židovská očekávání a zklamání," 245; Herman Kopecek, "*Zusammenarbeit* and *Spoluprace*: Sudeten German-Czech Cooperation in Interwar Czechoslovakia," *Nationalities Papers* 24, no. 1 (1996), 68.
[56] Z/S-3559/89-17/9-46, Instructions on determining the establishment of Czechoslovak state citizenship for people who were listed as "people of Jewish origin" by the occupiers and permission for expatriation, if it relates to people of German or Magyar nationality, MV, 13 September 1946. *Předpisy*, 2:315; Staněk, "Němečtí židé," 44.

Beer's choice of Jewish nationality in 1930 gave reason enough for the Provincial National Committee in Prague to overturn the OSK's decision to proceed with his factory's confiscation in the fall of 1946.

During 1946, the factory committee pressured the OSK to sustain its original confiscation ruling after a series of disagreements between Beer and some of the employees. It likewise demanded that the factory be nationalized through attachment to a local nationalized enterprise.[57] Following the early 1947 ZNV decision to cancel the confiscation proceedings against Beer, the factory council with support of the district trade union, which local Communists controlled, protested the ruling. They threatened to organize a strike if the confiscation process was not restarted. The Prague government sent an official committee to help prevent unrest and resolve the case. It met with the ONV in Varnsdorf on February 27, 1947. The representative from the Ministry of Interior reported that new evidence about Emil Beer's past behavior emerged at the meeting concerning his "Germanization activities." Therefore, he recommended "that the district national committee debate the entire case again and consider whether or not the activities of Emil Beer are based on realities, for which it is possible to order confiscation without regard to nationality."[58] The Communist members of the ONV all voted in favor of confiscation, which, thanks to their majority, was enough to carry the motion despite the other parties' opposition. A representative for the Social Democrats on the ONV stated that they abstained from voting because "the entire meeting was forced by terror and that even though they otherwise agreed with the proposed confiscation, they did not participate in the voting." The National Socialists, in a sign of their protest, did not even show up to the meeting.[59]

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[57] Hlušičková, *Boj o průmyslové konfiskáty*, 56.
[58] Zpráva o jednání ve Varnsdorfu. Konfiskace firmy Beer, MV, 28 February 1947. NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra – Nosek (MV-N), k.227 inv.č.146.
[59] Ibid.

Accusing someone of "Germanizing activities" opened an alternative path to confiscation that involved subjective judgments similar to decisions made about an individual's nationality. In addition to Germans and Magyars, Decree 108 confiscated the property of those "supporting Germanization" during "the period of heightened danger" to the republic (from May 21, 1938).[60] Germanization was described in broad terms as extraordinary support for German schools or organizations, pressuring Slavic employees to send their children to Germans schools and national hiring preferences.[61] However, Prague officials urged national committees not to apply this provision against Jews. In a pamphlet for national committees concerning the confiscation program, a Ministry of Interior official warned that simply speaking German and attending German cultural events did not constitute grounds for confiscation. It suggested that national committees consider the individual's surroundings.[62] Emil Beer, for instance, lived in Varnsdorf where 88 percent of the inhabitants spoke German in 1930.[63] Such environs made it difficult not to participate in "Germanization activities" as outlined by the government. However, the district officials in his case refused to take such factors into account.

Instead of continued appeals to the district and provincial national committees, Beer turned to the courts for support in his quest for restitution. In early March 1947, a district court restored ownership of the factory to Beer. This event finally touched off strikes in Varnsdorf, which quickly got out of hand. Various reports point to a Communist-led event. Representatives of the three other Czech parties requested that an independent central committee come to Varnsdorf to investigate the events "considering the destructive activities by members of the KSČ."[64] *Stráž*

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[60] Decree 108, Part 1, Art. 1, Sec. 1, Paragraph 3. Jech and Kaplan, *Dekrety*, 2:848.
[61] Z/S-3559/89-17/9-46, Instructions on determining the establishment of Czechoslovak state citizenship for people who were listed as "people of Jewish origin" by the occupiers and permission for expatriation, if it relates to people of German or Magyar nationality, MV, 13 September 1946. *Předpisy*, 2:315.
[62] D. Palečková, *Konfiskace nepřátelského majetku* (Prague, 1946), 43.
[63] *Statistický lexikon obcí v Republice československé*, vol. 1 *Čechy* (Prague, 1934), 391.
[64] Letter from NA, f. MV-NR, k.2625 inv.č.2051 s.B2624.

severu, the regional Social Democratic paper, also placed the blame quite squarely on local Communist officials.[65] While lower Communist functionaries may have been acting alone, Prague Communists had also recently made plans to challenge the restitution provisions in an effort to strengthen the nationalized sector.[66] Certain reports noted that similar events had occurred elsewhere, suggesting some coordinated initiative.[67] Both Beer and his lawyer were physically threatened by the strikers.[68] In addition, *Stráž severů* reported that the police often exacerbated problems of public disorder during the strikes. Amid such scenes, a Communist member of the ONV allegedly proclaimed: "they give laws in Prague and we change them here according to our needs. Nothing will help; our party [KSČ] will not stand for any private firm."[69] Whether the initiative against Beer came from local Communists or the central committee was less important than the indication that the Communist Party was willing to work around the law to achieve their goals.

In one sense, the conflict over the Beer factory foreshadowed the government crisis of February 1948. In Varnsdorf, as in Prague during the February events leading to its seizure of power, the KSČ got people out to the streets and forced their agenda through. Over 10,000 people reportedly turned out for the strikes against Beer on March 5, 1947, some under apparent pressure from Communist supporters. In addition, the lack of participation by the other parties appeared counterproductive. The strikers had their demands met and the very next day the Communist Party felt emboldened enough to demand that all confiscated factories should be

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[65] *Stráž severu*, 8 and 15 March 1947.
[66] See minutes from the meeting of the Narodohospodářská komise (NHK) KSČ, 16 January 1947. NA, f. NHK KSČ, a.j. 11.
[67] *Stráž severu* 14 March 1947.
[68] *Svobodné Varnsdorf* 14 March 1947; Official report on Karel Křídlo, MV, 6 March 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2465 inv.č.2051 s.B2624.
[69] *Svobodné slovo* 22 March 1947.

attached to nationalized firms.[70] The actions against Beer not only served the Communists' goal of strengthening nationalized firms, but meshed with Communist officials' increasing refusal to consider Jewish demands for restitution.[71]

Jewish property owners were not the only Jews in Czechoslovakia to face discrimination after the war. In the coverage about the Varnsdorf strikes, only one paper mentioned the anti-Semitic overtones surrounding events there.[72] Officials in Ústí nad Labem took a harsh approach toward Jews who had earlier chosen German nationality. In a general directive to local national committees the OSK outlined detailed provisions for determining who should lose citizenship. It noted that anyone who had registered themselves as German in the 1930 census, including Jews who had been persecuted during the war, should be considered as German.[73] Such interpretations forced central officials to define more clearly who should be considered German and what constituted "Germanization activities." So too did pressure from The Council of Jewish Religious Communities (RŽNO), which often presented Jewish property claims to central officials.[74] Even though central officials issued clear directives and instructions about confiscated Jewish property, borderland national committees continued to make judgments against Jews.[75] In late 1946, the RŽNO reported one case where a father had declared his twelve year-old son

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[70] Hlušičková, *Boj o průmyslové konfiskáty*, 61.
[71] For instance, in response to the Council of Jewish Religous Communities' complaints of improper confiscation, the Ministry of Agriculture referred to the Ministry of Interior's earlier ruling, that because of heavy Germanization, Jews would not be held liable for choosing German nationality in the 1930 census. 463.155/46-IX/A-2, Ministry of Agriculture (MZ), 21 November 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1788 inv.č.1581 s.B1700. Krejčová states that in the beginning of 1947 even central offices and ministries began to rule against Jews. Krejčová, "Židovská očekávání a zklamání," 246.
[72] *Svobodné slovo* 22 March 1947.
[73] Čis. 476/Dr.H/M-1945 from Okresní správní komise (OSK) Usti n.L., 18 September 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1769, inv.č.1576.
[74] See Letter from Council of Jewish Religious Communities (RŽNO), 12 October 1945, protesting the OSK Ústí n. L. ruling. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1806 inv.č.1602 s.B2111. The RŽNO also defended Beer. See its letter, 7 March 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.344.
[75] See for example, Decision 30, Minutes from meeting of the Městský národní výbor (MěNV) Council Jablonec, 8 September 1947. SOkA Jablonec, f. MěNV Jablonec, kn.4 inv.č.4; Report on Restitution law 128/46, MV, 2 October 1946. NA, f. ÚPV-B, k.999 inv.č.4671 s.1341/10.

German in the 1930 census. After his father's death, the boy's mother sent him to Great Britain in 1939. In 1943, he died at Dunkirk as a member of the Czechoslovak foreign army. His mother, who spent time in various concentration camps during the war, wanted to receive rights to the home which was in his name. The ONV in Ústí n.L., however, refused to overturn the confiscation ruling because of the son's nationality according to the 1930 census.[76] The ONV's chairwoman had previously made clear her position about the Jews. She declared that "the majority do not know the state language and go around Ústí speaking German, which upsets the Czech inhabitants who desire the 'de-Germanization' [*odgermanizace*] of the borderlands."[77] Therefore, Jews who spoke German, often their native language, were an unwelcome reminder of the borderlands' past and conflicted with the current goal of making the borderlands Czech.

The actions in Varnsdorf and elsewhere against Jews were completely in tune with confiscation politics. Legal provisions could easily be overlooked at a time when property rights and ownership were in flux. Factory councils and national committees pushed through their own agenda, albeit with strong support from the Communist Party. Thanks to the outcome in Varnsdorf, the Communist Party claimed victory in their goal to attach confiscated firms to the nationalized sector, which is outlined in greater detail below. Rudolf Slansky, at a meeting of Communist Party leaders, declared shortly afterward: "In the question of confiscated firms we achieved great success…what is already in the state's hands (confiscated firms under national administration) must not be returned back to private hands."[78] In the wake of the Varnsdorf strike, the government established official commissions to resolve disputes about restitution and national administrators. In order to prevent further strikes and unrest, the government

[76] Letter from RŽNO, 23 September 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.478, inv.č.1028 s.A2826.
[77] Letter from Chairperson of ONV Ústí n. L., 2 November 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1807 inv.č.1602 s.B2111. See also her comments on another restitution case in Věra Hladíková and Vladimír Kaiser, "Resituce majetku ústecké židovské rodiny Pisků, 1945-1961," *Ústecký sborník historický* no .27 (2000): 197.
[78] Minutes from the meeting of the NHK KSČ, 27 March 1947. NA, f. NHK KSČ, a.j. 11.

underscored the importance of obtaining the workers' input for these meetings.[79] Retaining, rather than returning, Jewish factories met the interests of national committees, workers, and the state. The combination of official and unofficial pressure prevented Jews from restarting their lives in many places. Even though this policy was less direct than the expulsion of Germans, it effectively forced many Jews to emigrate.[80]

6.4 LIQUIDATION, AFFILIATION, AND RELOCATION

Prague officials began concrete planning for the borderland economy in the fall of 1945 as drastic changes were still unfolding and as problems brought by the initial expulsions and settlement emerged. At the first meeting of the Central Committee for Interior Settlement, the Ministry of Industry representative noted that they had begun "to make up lists of firms where production should be continued, and lists of firms that would be temporarily closed or liquidated."[81] By the end of August 1945, officials at the Ministry of Industry began to distinguish between confiscated industrial concerns that did not fall under nationalization provisions, but which were nonetheless of key importance in the borderlands.[82] This process evolved into the classification of confiscated firms, according to three categories: those of statewide importance where production would continue (category A), those which would be temporarily closed (category B) and those set for liquidation (category C). Such a policy allowed for short term planning to direct labor, both Czech and German, into the most important firms.

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[79] See 12218-II-3681/47 from ÚPV, 25 March 1947, which became B-2610/1-26/3-47-R-II/1, MV, 1 April 1947. Also see follow up instructions from the ÚPV on 13 May 1947. NA, f. ÚPV-B, k.2348 inv.č.2004 s.B2610/1.
[80] Staněk writes that of roughly 50,000 Jews in Czechoslovakia more than 17,000 left, many for Israel. Staněk, "Němečtí žide," 45-46; Krejčová, "Židovská očekávání a zklamání," 247.
[81] Minutes from the first meeting of ÚVKO, 30 July 1945. NA. f. MV-NR, k.12145 s.1651/1.
[82] See čj. I/2 179.682/1945 outlining the early part of this procedure. MP, Department 1, 28 August 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1140 inv.č.3631.

For the long term, this policy provided a basis to begin the consolidation of borderland industries. The Settlement Office, which considered the reduction of industrial firms as part of the basis for its work, pressed for the quick categorization of borderland firms in order to permit a more organized settlement. Through this system the OÚ and the Ministry of Industry hoped to prioritize which factories would receive raw materials, energy and available workers.[83]

Preliminary lists of A-level firms appeared within the Ministry of Industry during September and October 1945.[84] At a three day meeting in late October, various government officials began to separate the most important firms and those easily defined for liquidation. However, the lists already prepared by the Ministry of Industry proved incomplete and prevented a comprehensive approach to liquidation. Even after these lists were finalized in late November, they continued to change and remained, in many cases, incomplete.[85] In addition, different government organs had their own conception about which firms should be designated as A, B or C. In a sign of further problems to come, a Ministry of Industry official rebuked representatives of the Provincial National Committee in Brno for requesting that printing firms in their region remain open by arguing that "people's organs, or no people's organs, to us all that matters is industry."[86] Technical and political problems would continue to hinder the process of reorganizing the borderland economy.

By early 1946, the Settlement Office along with the Ministry of Industry and other officials had decided which borderland firms to liquidate and which would continue production. Miroslav

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[83] See the Settlement Office's Program Statement and minutes from the 3rd meeting of ÚKVO, 18 September 1945. NA. f. MV-NR, k.12145 s.1651/1; See also letter from MP about the categorization provisions, 16 October 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1140 inv.č.3631.
[84] NA, f. MP, k.1140-1141 inv.č.3631.
[85] Dr. Piskač from the Ministry of Industry stated that the ABC lists were prepared by the 5th meeting of ÚKVO, 29 November 1945. NA, f. MV-NR, k.12145 s.1651/1. For different complaints about the lists from central government officials, see Letter from MV, 14 December 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1142 inv.č.3631; Letter from Okresní úřad ochraný práce (OÚOP) Karlový Vary, 8 October 1946. NA. f. Ministerstvo ochrany práce a sociální péče, 1945-1951 (MOPSP), k.406 inv.č.842 s.2307.
[86] Minutes from the meeting at the MP, 29-31 October 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j.349/1.

Kreysa, the OÚ's chairman, reported that in the first group (A level) were 2,260 firms with 286,000 employees, of which 142,000 were Germans. In the remaining categories there were 1,528 (B) and 1,910 (C) enterprises.[87] While the plans to redirect resources to A-level factories and to liquidate many others made practical sense and allowed officials to immediately begin consolidating borderland firms, carrying out this process proved lengthy and painstaking. First, central plans developed slowly and permitted firms slated for liquidation to continue hiring settlers and planning for future production. Lines of authority among ministries and other central offices continued to get crossed and slowed the process of liquidating and moving equipment. Most importantly, national committees and settlers sought to protect local firms. At times they did so by making claims to these industries in the name of nationalization or settlement. In other cases they simply ignored central orders to stop operating. Settlers' strategies and efforts to sustain borderland firms reveal the continuing encroachment of outside officials and their inability to prevent the state from determining the fate of confiscated firms.

At the beginning of 1946, the Czechoslovak government created twelve Regional Industrial Reconstruction Commissions to streamline the liquidation of borderland firms. These commissions comprised representatives from the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare, among others. They had the task of organizing the closure of factories so that raw materials, machinery and labor could be best utilized for the remaining companies.[88] Despite hopes that the liquidation process would begin in early 1946, reconstruction commissions faced numerous obstacles. One official complained that the commission spent much of its time collecting information by personally visiting each firm. In many instances the trips were pointless, because the firm was in shambles or no longer existed.

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[87] *Stráž severu*, 5 April 1946.
[88] Směrnice pro obnovovací komise, OÚ, 11 February 1946. *Předpisy*, 2:449; Martin Rais, "Naše osidlovací politika," *Osidlování*, 25 June 1946.

He reported that he "did not receive the impression of timely and directed planning from the Ministry of Industry, at least not from the perspective of economy."[89] Indeed, the Ministry of Industry decided to scrap B-level factories already in April 1946. This created further delays because commissions had to revisit firms and create new inventories before the entire process could move forward.[90]

The slow pace of liquidation involved more than technical delays. As with other forms of confiscated property, the fate of borderland factories involved inter-party and intra-state politics. During the debates about the nationalization decree the Communist Party pledged no further nationalizations. The other parties believed this pledge applied to former German firms as well.[91] However, the Communist Party saw confiscated factories as an excellent way to strengthen the nationalized sector's size and power. The attachment or the affiliation (*afiliace*), as Communists called it, of confiscated firms to nationalized enterprises theoretically provided an easy, low-cost way to build up the nationalized sector's capacity. As nationalized enterprises grew, they demanded more. In April 1946, the KSČ's National Economic Committee discussed ways that nationalized enterprises' "general directors could have influence over chosen confiscated firms until the time that their closure and attachment will be decided."[92] National Socialists, on the other hand, sought to use confiscated firms to develop an independent business class, and wished to prevent confiscated industries from being subsumed by the nationalized sector.[93] The fate of

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[89] Report on activities of industrial reconstruction commission in Opava, 7 August 1946. NA, f. MOPSP, k.401 inv.č.841 s.2306.
[90] Minutes from the sixth meeting of Industrial Renewal Commission in Liberec, 29 April 1946. NA, f. MOPSP, k.401 inv.č.841 s.2306. See other commissions' complaints about further changes in the ministry's decisions. NA, f. MOPSP, k.406 inv.č.842 s.2307.
[91] Lhota, *Znárodnění v Československu*, 245.
[92] Agenda for future NHK KSČ meeting, 13 April 1946. NA, f. NHK KSČ, a.j.19 sv.2.
[93] For support of entrepreneurs see "Nerozdávejte velké konfiskaty," *Svobodné slovo*, 23 November 1946. (Found in NA, f. 23, a.j.349/1.); See Kreysa's comments that National Socialists did not want to attach medium and large confiscated firms to nationalized ones. Minutes of the Osidlovácí komise při Ústřední výbor KSČ, 13 September 1946. NA, f. 23, a.j.14.

many confiscated factories, which had either been listed at the B-level, or which were actively operating C-level firms, therefore remained in contested limbo.

Although party leaders differed on the final provisions for confiscated firms, they agreed that these assets should remain under centralized control. This policy developed in response to various demands for confiscated property made by ministries, state offices and other officials. At one meeting in late 1945, an auction-like atmosphere emerged as different ministries demanded control of this or that property. For instance, the Ministry of Education recommended that church and school property be excluded from allocation provisions. The Minister of Foreign Trade recommended that things of cultural value were retained by the Cultural Fund under its jurisdiction. The representative from the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare requested control over all housing, or at least housing under rental contracts.[94] The extent of such demands forced Prague officials to search for alternative ways to distribute this property, to the allocation provisions outlined in the confiscation decree. Decree 108 provided for allocation commissions, established at the local district and provincial levels, to decide on a case by case basis the fate of permanent confiscated property. Central government officials considered such a process too slow and unwieldy. In a meeting of the Central Committee for Internal Settlement, Miroslav Kreysa offered a new proposal to allocate homes and small businesses on the basis of general plans. National Front parties, other than the Communists, had previously resisted plans for the allocation of private homes and businesses.[95] Once elections had passed, however, central officials appeared more willing to entertain such proposals to expand and ease the distribution of confiscated properties. The representative for the Ministry of Industry supported the Settlement Office's proposal for general plans, and added that they should prepare general plans and

[94] Minutes from a meeting at OÚ, 8 November 1945. AM Ústí n. L., f. MNV Ústí n. L., k.2 inv.č.24.
[95] See chapter three, 170-178.

allocation directives for all types of property. The record then noted: "the representatives of nearly all the organs agree with this proposal."[96]

The central government's attempt to circumvent the distribution provisions in Decree 108 stemmed from a common interest among the political parties to control confiscated property. In July 1946, the OÚ published two key directives concerning the fate of borderland firms. The first, number 1586, outlined more precisely the process for liquidating C-level firms, while the second, 1587, involved plans to use confiscated property "in the interest of public work or for the economic construction of the state."[97] Directive 1587 allowed various state organs, cultural organizations as well as nationalized enterprises to request the allocation of confiscated buildings and equipment for their use. This aspect of the expropriation and distribution of seized Sudeten German assets appeared to most directly fulfill the promise of using confiscated property for the nation's benefit, because it provided schools, nurseries and recreation centers for local communities and organizations. The Settlement Office touted this aspect of Directive 1587 as fulfilling the cultural and social demands of the people.[98]

While various ministries and national committees acquired confiscated homes and other buildings for their own use, Directive 1587 offered a way for nationalized enterprises to expand their scope. The Communists, in particular, sought to utilize this aspect of the directive to attach confiscated industrial firms to nationalized enterprises. They began making plans for this in April 1946 and immediately after Directive 1587 came into effect, national enterprises began requesting confiscated firms in large numbers.[99] The National Socialist daily *Svobodné slovo*

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[96] Minutes from the ninth meeting of the ÚKVO, 26 June 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.12145 s.1651/2.
[97] *Předpisy*, 1:86-89.
[98] Eduard Tomáš, "Konfiskáty do služeb lidu," *Osidlování*, 25 April 1947. See also more detailed lists of property and their purposes, 25 October 1948-31 March 1950. AM Ústí n.L., f. ONV Ústí n.L., k.38 inv.č.202.
[99] Agenda for upcoming NHK KSČ meeting, 13 April 1946. NA, f. NHK KSČ, a.j.19 sv.2; Staněk, *Odsun Němců*, 349; Hlušičková, *Boj o průmyslové konfiskáty*, 48-49.

reacted with surprise that nationalized enterprises had requested 686 confiscated firms by September 1946, some with as few as six employees.[100] The Settlement Office, under Kreysa's authority, often pressed Communist themes in its efforts to connect confiscated firms to the nationalized sector. For example, at a meeting of regional settlement officials in late 1946 a Prague official from the OÚ argued: "The state's economic construction closely connects with nationalized industry, with the undisputed need to productively and organically expand it, so that it really uses these confiscated factories for the complete improvement of our economy." He added that nationalized enterprises will receive priority during the allocation of firms that complement their production.[101] In early 1947, the Communist Party pressed the directors of nationalized enterprises to increase their demands for the allocation of expropriated German companies.[102] With the support of the Communist Party and prodding by settlement officials the momentum behind affiliating confiscated firms with nationalized enterprises continued to grow in 1947.

In addition to liquidating and affiliating confiscated firms, the central government sought to use confiscated borderland firms to bolster the industrial base of Slovakia and underdeveloped regions in the Czech lands. Increased industrialization was a basic tenet of Czechoslovakia's postwar ideology and the lack of workers in the borderlands meant fewer posts could be filled and therefore, the excess machine capacity could meet needs elsewhere.[103] Relocating confiscated borderland firms to Slovakia also served as a way to bridge the prewar and wartime divisions between Prague and Bratislava. Indeed, Communist leaders promoted the program as a

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[100] "Co se stane s prumyslovými konfiskáty," *Svobodné slovo* 21 September 1946.
[101] Referát o výhlášce 1587 pro schůzí přednostů obl. úřad, 21 November 1946. ZA Opava, f. Oblastní Osidlovací úřad, Opava, k.12 inv.č.20.
[102] Meeting of the NHK KSČ, 19 January 1947. NA, f. NHK KSČ, a.j. 4 sv. 1; Internal report of the Settlement Committee of the KSČ, 17 March 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j. 349/1. Communists held the most directorships within nationalized industry. See Beinhauerová and Sommer, "Mocenské pozice," 71-72.
[103] E. Kafka. "Industrialisace Slovenska a přemisťování průmyslových podniků z pohraničí." *Osidlování*, 10 July 1946.

way to satisfy Slovak demands for immediate industrialization.[104] While they clearly understood that borderland national committees would resist such a policy, leading Communist officials believed they could get borderland comrades on national committees to accept their decision.[105] Beneš likewise supported the idea. In a speech to the Slovak National Council in August 1945 he connected the loss of German workers to the possibility of bringing borderland factories to Slovakia. He argued that the transfer of factories "will be by itself a certain kind of political and economic revolution."[106] During the Communist-initiated Two-Year Plan (1947-1948) the government pledged to create 26,000 jobs by moving confiscated factories to Slovakia.[107]

Taken together, the plans and policies to liquidate, affiliate, and relocate confiscated firms represented a powerful attack on the borderland economy. National committees and settlers reacted immediately and sought to protect their town's firms. In Krnov, during the first attempt to designate which factories would be moved to Slovakia, the district national committee's industrial representative remained adamant about protecting the district's leading firms. After protracted negotiations the Slovak delegation had to settle for some of the weaker factories. The Krnov ONV chairman congratulated the industrial department head upon his return from Prague for the "tireless and efficient work in the protection of Krnov's textile industry, and through it also the possibility for the livelihood and employment for relocated Czech workers.[108] Such a

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[104] See Klement Gottwald's remarks cited in Anna Beinhauerová, "Problémy likvidace a přemist´ování průmyslu z pohraničí v letech 1945-1948." *Slezký sborník* 83, no. 1 (1985), 27-28.

[105] Minutes from the NHK KSČ meeting 9 October 1945. NA, f. NHK KSČ, a.j.4 sv.1. At this meeting Slovak communists mention their difficulties securing a decision on several textile firms in Krnov for relocation. Before encountering the stiff resistance of the district officials, the Slovak Communists had hoped to use the relocation of the Krnov firms as a publicity campaign for a larger program on relocation. The other members of the KSČ's National Economic Committee agreed to support it.

[106] Eduard Beneš to Slovak National Council, August 1945. Eduard Beneš, *Edvard Beneš: Odsun němců z Československa*, ed. Karel Novotný (Prague, 1996), 152.

[107] Law for the Two-Year Economic Plan, part 4 sec.7 par.3, 25 October 1946. *První československý plán* (Prague, 1946), 117. According to projections from the Ministry of Industry the figure was 24,000. See I/2-230498/46, MP, 15 August 1946. NA, f. MP, k.1788 inv.č.1581 s.B1700.

[108] Report on meetings with representatives from Slovakia and Brno, MP, 23-24 September 1945. SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov I, k.7 inv.č.63.

reaction did not bode well for the central government's plans for the consolidation of borderland firms. National committees' responses to such pressures revealed a deep concern for local industry as the key to successful settlement.

The district of Frývaldov, renamed Jeseník in 1947, faced external and internal pressures concerning the future of its two strongest industries: quarry stone and a thriving tourist industry connected with local spas. The stone industry had been progressively growing since the mid-nineteenth century thanks in part to the natural surroundings with significant supplies of high quality granite. Likewise the world-famous Gräfenberg (Jeseník) spa, established in the foothills of the Rychlebský Mountains just outside of Frývaldov, attracted thousands of patients and visitors to relax in its tranquil setting. This spa alone attracted more than 10,000 annual visitors in 1936 and 1937.[109]

Following the war these industries faced uncertain futures. The OSK in Frývaldov decided that it would be in the best interests of the district to combine all of the confiscated stone works into a single whole. Only gradually did this desire become voiced in terms of nationalization.[110] The Ministry of Industry had slightly different plans for the stone firms in and around Frývaldov. In early 1946, it named Jaroslav Michl the ministry's representative for the region. He was the national administrator of Albert Förster, the largest quarry works in the district, and one other firm. In conjunction with this appointment, the ministry began to consolidate all of the confiscated quarry works into a single enterprise under the leadership of Förster and Michl.[111] Michl proved to be a bad choice. While a thorough revision did not clearly answer the question of whether Michl was a gold digger or simply a bad manager, by the middle of 1946 Förster was

[109] Report of the Confiscation, National Administrator and Settlement Chairman given at the First Bi-Annual Meeting of the ONV Frývaldov, 22 April 1947. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63a.
[110] Proposal of the ONV Frývaldov Council, 28 November 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2532 inv.č.2021 s.B2612/7.
[111] Ibid.

in such poor financial condition that the employees demanded that Michl's recall and the firm's immediate nationalization.[112] The Ministry of Industry officials sent mixed signals about plans for these firms. After agreeing to nationalize the district's stone works, a commission representing central offices and the nationalized enterprise Konstructiva visited the district in late August 1946 to choose which firms Konstructiva would take over. Rather than trying to rebuild the district's leading industry, these officials intended to liquidate many of its quarries. Only after heated debate did they agree, instead, to establish a regional directorship and to keep most of the district's quarries working under Konstructiva's leadership. The ministry also promised to recall Michl and install a government commissar for the Silesian stone industry.[113] However, the situation dragged on until the workers finally ran out of patience and threatened to strike because Michl remained in the firm and the ministry failed to follow through on its promise to nationalize it.[114] On December 3, 1946, the Fryváldov District National Committee's plenum overwhelmingly voted to support nationalization.[115]

The district national committee faced similar threats to its second leading industry as well. At the December 1946 meeting the ONV decided to merge spas from three different communities into a single enterprise. These spas, which provided accommodation and various health treatments, had been taken over for the most part by individual national administrators during the first months after the war. The ONV used their poor performance, in part, to argue for the creation of a single management for the neighboring communities' spas. It argued: "The current results of their leadership from the revolutionary period, which led to scandals and

[112] Ibid.; Letter from the factory council A. Förster, 9 August 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1791 inv.č.1587 s.B1720. See also the 86-page audit of Förster under Michl's authority. It found him responsible for 4,258,892 Kčs in losses. NA, f. MP, k.1298 inv.č.3645.
[113] Proposal of the ONV Frývaldov Council, 28 November 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2532 inv.č.2021 s.B2612/7.
[114] Letter from enterprise council A. Förster, Cukmantl, 19 November 1946. Ibid; Report of the Confiscation, National Administrator and Settlement Chairman given at the First Bi-Annual Meeting of the ONV Frývaldov, 22 April 1947. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63a.
[115] Minutes from the plenum ONV Frývaldov, 3 December 1946. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.136 inv.č.120.

irreparable economic losses, supports the proposal that a single united leadership, as suggested by the law on nationalized firms, guarantees the prosperity of the entire spa and the tourist trade in Frývaldov."[116] Thus, national administrators' shoddy performance and the suspicions surrounding their 1945 activities reinforced plans to consolidate seized firms.

Central ministries also considered spas of special interest. Prior to the war they had been an attraction for foreign tourists and generated significant foreign currency. Following the war, the government planned on using spas for workers' recreation and rehabilitation. In the case of the Frývaldov district spas, the Ministry of Health, which along with the Ministry of Domestic Trade had jurisdiction over the fate of these firms, continued to change its stance on the future of the spas. In late January 1947, these organs met in Frývaldov to discuss the fate of the proposed union. At that time they agreed to unite only the firms in Dolní Lipov and to attach the remaining hotels and spas in other towns later. However, the Ministry of Health soon changed its position and refused to recall the national administrators in Dolní Lipov, reportedly because the ONV had stirred up unease in their campaign to unite these firms.[117] The local national committee and settlers in Dolní Lipov also protested the decision to consolidate all the firms under a unified management. In one protest the MNV argued that the town had a distinguished tradition in a particular spa treatment that deserved to remain separate from the proposed merger.[118] National administrators in the town drafted a resolution protesting the proposed union on the grounds that they had fulfilled their duties and deserved the right to own these properties. They argued that as national administrators "realizing their national responsibility, they gave up their safe existence in the interior and assumed the management of property left by Germans with the hope that they

[116] Letter from ONV Frývaldov, 3 December 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k. 2486 inv.č.2053 s. B2653/1.
[117] Report on spa firms, ONV Frývaldov, 18 April 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2350 inv.č.2004 s.B2612/1.
[118] Letter from Dolní Lipov. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2486 inv.č.2053 s.B2653/1.

would find a new existence in the borderlands."[119] Although the local national committee supported these national administrators, the ONV, which sought to place spas under their control, believed that these national administrators were only out to protect their own interests. Interestingly, the head of the district national committee's confiscation department likewise condemned central offices for becoming overly involved in the management of local spas.[120] The efforts to control these confiscated spas divided the state administration at every level.

District officials in Frývaldov pushed to nationalize confiscated spas and quarries as a means to protect them both from unreliable national administrators and from central plans to liquidate large numbers of firms. Faced with unreliable national administrators who often managed companies in their own interests, district officials considered consolidating them under single management as a better option. They assumed and made provisions to ensure that they would retain control of these firms, which would permit these industries to continue providing for local settlers. However, the ONV misunderstood the meaning of nationalization. In early 1947, just after the deal with Konstruktiva had been reached, the Minister of Industry began to siphon off machine equipment from the confiscated stone works in the district, setting off another round of protests and negotiations. The Ministry of Industry accused the ONV of "local patriotism" while the ONV retorted that the ministry was undermining settlement.[121]

The district national committee chairman, Slezák and the head of the confiscation department, both Communists, led the appeals for nationalization without liquidation. At a public meeting in April 1947, the ONV's representative for confiscation reported that the final decision regarding Konstruktiva's control of the district's quarry firms remained in doubt, though

[119] Resolution from twenty-two national administrators in Dolní Lipov, 1 August, 1947. Ibid.
[120] Report of the Confiscation, National Administrator and Settlement Chairman given at the First Bi-Annual Meeting of the ONV Frývaldov, 22 April 1947. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63a.
[121] See folder on Kamenoprůmysl v Fryvaldově, Konstruktiva. Ibid.; Minutes from the meeting of the ONV Council, 26 March 1947. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.135 inv.č.119.

significant progress had been made. He stated: "The final solution still requires very much work and pressure, since the private capitalist opponents of nationalizing the stone industry have not capitulated. This will be one of our department's most important aims in cooperation with the industrial department for the near future."[122] Local Communists framed their struggle to control local confiscated companies as an anti-capitalist, pro-worker policy. Such a position not only indicated their support of local quarry workers, but also connected with the Communist Party's efforts to extend nationalization.

Nevertheless, vast differences remained between local and central Communists' visions of how such processes should develop and who should control them. Party leaders, who sought to quickly resolve the liquidation of borderland firms in order to transfer machine equipment, supplies, and, in some cases, their workers to nationalized firms became frustrated at the slow pace of liquidation. In an October 1947 report about the liquidation process, of 8,667 craft and industrial operations chosen for liquidation 90 percent had received their closing order and 61 percent had sent in inventory lists.[123] However, progress beyond this point stalled. The Fund for National Renewal had provided cost estimates only for about a quarter of the equipment and only 20 percent had begun dismantling their equipment. An internal report noted that there had been little interest in the equipment or in the FNO's work. The report also blamed national administrators and national committees for "local patriotism," which they argued slowed the implementation of central plans.[124] In Frývaldov, the ONV disputed plans to move confiscated machine equipment out of the district on several grounds. It argued that much of the machinery was needed to replace equipment that had fallen into disrepair during the war. Slezák noted in a

[122] Report of the confiscation, national administrator and settlement chairman given at the First Bi-Annual Meeting of the ONV Frývaldov, 22 April 1947. SOkA Jeseník, f. ONV Jeseník, k.2 inv.č.63a.
[123] Report on the state of confiscated C closures, Ústřední výbor KSČ, likely 9 September 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j. 349/1.
[124] Report on liquidation of confiscated C factories, 9 October 1947. Ibid.

1947 letter that Konstruktiva, which had recently taken over the quarries, did not have a proper overview of such equipment. He argued that because borderland firm faced several obstacles not present in the interior that they should be compensated by other means. He also countered ministerial officials' claims that the district was only looking out for itself, by arguing that "[t]he satisfactory economic development of the borderlands is surely in agreement with statewide interests."[125] Slezák, who remained the ONV's chairperson throughout this period, had continually pressed for advantages for borderland communities in line with the National Front's economic and settlement politics.

Moving factories to Slovakia raised even bigger headaches and protests. As local resistance to relocating borderland factories grew in 1946, officials at the Ministry of Industry decided to use individual machines, in addition to entire factories, to supplement the creation of job opportunities in Slovakia. For instance, in the department of metallurgy and metal works the government ordered 12,605 jobs to be created from borderland firms. Of these positions, 7,200 would be made up from sixty-eight complete firms and the rest from individual machines.[126] Slovak representatives expressed concern over the effectiveness of this and other aspects of the relocation program. They claimed that they had initiated all of the efforts to implement the policy. They also complained about the slow progress of relocating factories. As part of their pressure on the central government to speed the relocations, the Slovak representatives connected their requests for factories with the impending expulsion of German industrial workers from the borderlands. They noted that as of March 1, 1946 all that was needed to meet the relocation goals was 15 percent of the nearly 200,000 positions presently occupied by Germans.

[125] Letter from ONV Frývaldov, 7 May 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k. 2486 inv.č.2053 s. B2653/1.
[126] The same letter stated that it was unknown how the number of textile jobs would be filled. I/2-239.287/46, MP, 30 August 1946. NA, f. MV-NR, k.1778 s.B1700 According to the Ministry of Industry's metal works department 2,500 of these jobs would become piecework, thus lowering the total number of jobs to create. See VIII/2-213.906/D/46, 11 August 1946. Ibid.

From their vantage, the retention of German workers to run borderland industries countered the efforts to boost Slovakia's industrial capacity and benefited Germans more than Slovaks. By that time only 1,345 jobs had been created by moving borderland factories to Slovakia.[127]

In 1947, as Communist officials at the OÚ and elsewhere focused on accelerating the liquidation, affiliation and relocation programs protests against the movement of confiscated factories reached a new pitch. *Stráž severu*, by this time a Social Democratic publication, published a protest from six factory councils in Liberec under the title "They Defend the Borderlands." These workers complained that Prague officials decided to move the factories without the input of the factory councils. While they sympathized with the need to industrialize Slovakia, they did not see the reason to close profitable factories and move them to places where reportedly few skilled workers lived. They also saw the relocation program in terms of a larger threat to the borderlands:

> We believe that we are fighting for a just cause, for the continuation of industry in this region is not only in the interest of employees, but of all inhabitants…We request nothing other than the right to work in factories which we entered immediately following the liberation of the borderlands and which by our own work we built up, so that today they represent well run operations and a prosperous whole.[128]

Such protests revealed how Czech workers combined "settlement politics" and its promise of a prosperous future, with workers' rights to influence industrial policies. While Communist leaders frequently promoted this view, borderland interpretations of this perspective conflicted with the central government's policy ends.

Continued resistance to the liquidation and relocation of confiscated firms slowed the government's plans for the consolidation of the borderland economy. The government originally

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[127] Comments of slov. oddělení MP k akci přemíštování strojního zařízení z pohraničí na Slovensko, MP, 2 May 1946. NA, f. MP, k.1266 inv.č.3642.

[128] "Pohraničí se brání." *Stráž severu*, 12 February 1947. See other examples of protests in Beinhauerová, "Problémy likvidace a přemist´ování průmyslu," 33-36.

planned to finish physically moving factories to Slovakia by March 1947.[129] However, in a report from April 24, 1947, the Ministry of Industry reported that so far, fewer than half of the pledged job openings had been established through relocation. In addition, it noted that they overestimated by 25 percent the number of jobs created through individual machine transfers.[130] The dates for completing the liquidation of C level firms also continued to be pushed back. For Communist leaders, delays in liquidating and relocating factories posed political dangers because the industrialization of Slovakia had become a component part of their Two-Year Plan. Even though the relocation of confiscated borderland firms played a minor role in the overall industrialization policy, the resistance it generated threatened the Communists' strong position in the borderlands. In the political summary of a report on liquidated factories, the Communist author argued that "[t]he industrialization of Slovakia means many severe cuts to local regional interests in Bohemia and Moravia. In many districts the relations between Czechs and Slovaks are worsening, [because] they are taking machines from active firms." This Communist official saw the delays in terms of the personnel and technical problems associated with estimating the equipment and preparing final audits. He also noted: "It is in the interests of borderland politics that liquidated C firms were liquidated and forgotten as soon as possible."[131] Communist officials in charge of these unpopular programs wished to overcome local interests and quickly reorganize the country's economy. Despite pressure from their borderlands constituents, Communist leaders continued to press forward with the liquidation and relocation policies.

While the Communist seizure of power in February 1948 eliminated inter-party disputes concerning confiscated factories, it did little to resolve the obstacles facing these programs. The new government ordered that machine equipment from the liquidated firms should be moved by

[129] Internal correspondence, MP, 17 July 1946. NA, f. MP, k.1266 inv.č.3642.
[130] I/8-135.327/47, MP, 24 April 1947. NA, MV-NR, k.2472 inv.č.2074 s.B2633/5.
[131] Report on Liquidation C, 9 October 1947. NA, f. 23, a.j.349/1.

the end of September 1948. However, the political changes also brought administrative shifts which, in turn, slowed progress. One report noted that many liquidators were recalled and that new ones did not have a good overview or knowledge of the firms.[132] Even under the new regime, protests about the liquidation and relocation of seized German companies continued.[133] Resistance toward factory affiliation and liquidation, however, soon became a non-factor in the new regime's economy. The Communist government expanded the nationalization laws to include nearly every firm with more than fifty employees. While setting the new system in motion still took time in practice, the economy's reorganization on the basis of nationalized firms ended any hopes for local economic control.

6.5 *BRATŘÍ KANNEBERGEROVÉ/BRÜDER KANNEBERGER* (KANNEBERGER BROTHERS)

Examining the fate of one particular company will illustrate the complexities involved in the consolidation of borderland industries, as well as the emerging direction of the state's industrial policies. From the first nationalization proposal in 1945, nationalized enterprises became the focal point for the reorganization of the industrialized sector. By the end of 1947, over three hundred national enterprises existed, representing over three thousand firms and 60 percent of the workforce.[134] The Communist Party wished to increase the scope of nationalized enterprises and it received support from workers and national committees for this plan. Workers and national committees in the borderlands considered nationalization as the best method to prevent confiscated factories from being sold to private owners or restituted to former owners. They did

[132] Report on the current state of liquidated "C" confiscated firms, 30 June 1948. NA, f. MP, k.1160 inv.č.3632.
[133] See for example: NA, f. MP, k.1267 inv.č.3642; SOkA Děčín, f. MěNV Krásná Lípa, k.63 inv.č.99; Minutes from the ONV Šluknov, 15 September 1948. SOkA Děčín, f. ONV Šluknov, k.3 inv.č.47.
[134] Lhota, *Znárodnění v Československu*, 210-215.

not equate nationalization with centralized control, but quite the opposite; they believed that by nationalizing a company they would retain control over it. The fate of Kanneberger Brothers shows both how local forces attempted to keep a firm operating independently, and how industrial officials overcame their resistance.

Kanneberger Brothers' textile company produced textile embellishments for women's clothing and hats. It was the largest firm in Vejprty, a small town located across a small river from Germany. During the late nineteenth century it became a leading producer of its type of goods and helped to support the growth of further textile operations in the town. After the brothers who founded the company had passed away, ownership of the firm went to six share holders, who held a total of one hundred shares. Two of the shareholders were granddaughters of the original owners. Three of the other shareholders held managerial positions in the firm, but only a minor financial interest in it.

Following the war, two national administrators were named by the Provincial National Committee in Prague. At times, national committees assigned more than one national administrator to a company if they believed that it would be better served by having a collegial management. In other cases, more than one national administrator was appointed in error. While it remains unclear why the ZNV in Prague assigned two national administrators to run Kanneberger Brothers, the two men did not get along. The first national administrator, Franitšek Kříž, was unpleasantly surprised when a second national administrator, Josef Poslední, arrived just days later to share the managerial duties. Kříž assumed there had been some mistake.[135] Relations between the two were never auspicious. In an early letter to the ZNV in Prague, Poslední reported that he was busy getting the firm organized and taking inventory, and only wished that Kříž was no longer slowing him down. Eventually Kříž left the firm to take over

[135] Letter from Kříž, 17 June 1945. NA, f. MP, k.1166 inv.č.3633.

another confiscated textile company in town, though even this did not improve relations between the two.[136]

Poslední sought to put the firm on a profitable track and rebuild its connections to customers in the West. He intended, it appears, on utilizing Kanneberger's past reputation to build up a prosperous firm for the future. In an early report he noted that in order to secure the company's export market they needed to find company representatives that could speak foreign languages and had personal contacts with exporters. The factory itself appeared to be in good condition. He noted that, "The majority of the equipment was older, but basically in good working order, so that no requests for investments were currently necessary." He also made efforts to ensure that the experienced workers were not expelled. He contacted the local Communist Party and Social Democratic Party branches in Vejprty to find out who of their German members would remain in the country and worked in this sector.[137] He and the factory council requested that more than one hundred Sudeten Germans working at Kanneberger Brothers be protected from expulsions.[138] These workers became the key to restarting production. In an effort to ensure that production continued Poslední also suggested that smaller firms in the area should be closed and their raw materials handed over to Kanneberger Brothers.[139] The impulse of larger confiscated firms to take over smaller ones partly emerged from the need to address shortages in workers, machinery and raw materials. It also reflected the logic of postwar industrial reorganization, in which state officials and factory directors considered bigger enterprises as better suited for planning and production.

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[136] In 1947 there were continued disagreements between the two. See letter about a German representing Kříž at another firm, from Brothers Kanneberger, 6 January 1947. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k.21 inv.č.106.
[137] Report from Josef Poslední, late June/early July 1945. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.19 inv.č.12.
[138] SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Vejprty, k.16 inv.č.20.
[139] Report from Josef Poslední, late June/early July 1945. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.12 inv.č.19.

Kanneberger Brothers performed well, though not outstandingly. The final balances for 1945 showed a profit of one million crowns (Kčs), after gross sales of around five million Kčs.[140] By the middle of 1946, total sales had jumped to over 18 million Kčs, though profits remained low.[141] In the first quarter of 1947, the company showed signs of better profits, and sales had increased as well. Even export figures crept higher, but they still remained well below their prewar levels.[142] Part of the reason for the overall decline in exports was due to the loss of business connections that had been created prior to the war. In addition, the loss of many skilled workers hampered the quality of production. The factory council and national administrator tried their best to overcome these losses, but to no avail. By 1947, one of the remaining German managers remarked that because of their poor quality many of the goods were not fit for export.[143] Returning Kanneberger Brothers to its prewar preeminence was unlikely under the best of circumstances.

What success the company did enjoy resulted primarily from the Sudeten Germans it managed to retain. During the 1946 efforts to protect specialists, the firm nominated forty of its employees for exception from the expulsions. The factory council appealed to higher officials to respect their selections: "For such a large firm as this…the requested number of specialists is truly minimal and we emphatically warn you that we will not be able to take the responsibility, which falls to the factory council, for the further economic development of the firm, if it is not possible to positively solve this well substantiated concern."[144] Its request, however, failed to halt cuts in specialists, and they ended up with nearly two dozen. During the later *revise* of specialists

[140] Financial report for 1946. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.19 inv.č.95.
[141] Financial report for the first half of 1946. Ibid. Part of the reason for the flat earnings during this period was an adjustment for previous accounting errors and the need to build up some reserves.
[142] Financial report for the first quarter 1947. Ibid. Compare these with the monthly reports in SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.13 inv.30-31.
[143] Zpráva o revisi fy. Kannebergerové, 12-22 May 1947. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.13 inv.č.28.
[144] Letter from factory council, 14 September 1946. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.27 inv.č.143.

the district revision commission took note of the difficult labor situation facing the firm, but still forced them to release an additional four Germans for the "transfer."[145]

Even without specialist protection, the firm managed to keep most of its German employees after the final transports. Until May 1947, Kanneberger Brothers held onto 140 permanent German workers who, along with home workers and other personnel, brought the number of Sudeten Germans working at the firm to 245, or 60 percent of the total number of employees.[146] This figure fell during later campaigns to disperse the remaining borderland Germans in the interior and to fill labor gaps in other economic sectors. Still, the firm still had eighty-six full time German employees in September 1947.[147] Many of these had familial connections to other specialists and were thus protected from expulsion as well. Just as important to the firm's future was the company's management that remained in place. In the summer of 1945, Kanneberger Brothers employed 20 Sudeten Germans as office personnel.[148] While the firm's reliance on German office personnel declined more rapidly than its dependence on German workers, some key personnel remained. One was the company's director and two others were top managers. A textile official sent from Prague noted in a May 1947 report that "although Czechs do occupy the leading positions, they are not completely trained and as a result the German experts really hold the leadership of the firm in their hands." One of them even earned more than the average Czech employee in a similar position.[149]

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[145] Protocols from the revision of specialists, 20.1.47. NA, f. MP, k.1152 inv.č.3631.
[146] Zpráva o revisi fy. Kannebergerové, 12-22 May 1947, SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.13 inv.č.28.
[147] List of employees, 1 September 1947. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.14 inv.č.48.
[148] Report from 7 August 1945. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.12. inv.č.18.
[149] The German head of production made 5,500 and two other Germans made just under the average for office personnel. This does not include Poslední's salary of over 9,000 Kčs and other Czechs who earned more in the firm. See Zpráva o revisi fy. Kannebergerové, 12-22 May 1947, SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.13 inv.č.28. The average earning in 1947 for salaried employees in textile firms was 4,515 Kčs a month. *Průmyslové zprávy* no. 7-8 (1948), 47.

Attracting suitable replacements for the departed German employees proved problematic. Hiring practices were questionable from the outset as settlers did not flock to Vejprty as they did to other towns. Not only did Vejprty directly border on Germany, but it also sat on the German side of the Krušné Hory mountain range, isolated from the Bohemian interior. Even so, Vejprty's location did not completely hinder the influx of replacement textile workers. As of January 1, 1946, over 2,500 settlers worked for the textile industries in the district of Vejprty.[150] But keeping settlers proved to be a problem. As a result of its location, procuring provisions remained difficult and during the winter months the situation grew worse causing some settlers to flee. Not only was it sometimes difficult to find goods, but because textile wages remained low, living expenses for these workers were relatively higher than for others. Likewise, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the textile firms did not encourage people to stay. Finally, some of Poslední's hiring practices were questionable. He actively sought to retain Germans and he hired his brother and his uncle, both of whom he overpaid. Such nepotism fueled the sense of corruption surrounding national administrators and the borderlands.[151] Together these factors account for the high turnover at Kanneberger Brothers. In 1946, just when the firm was getting back on its feet, ninety-one new Czechs came to work there, though forty-four left. During 1947, the same number of settlers found employment in the factory, but because of continued doubts about the textile industry's future sixty-five Czechs departed.[152] Difficult living conditions and economic uncertainty offered settlers little reason to remain in the town.

Nevertheless, Kanneberger Brothers, classified as an A-level confiscated factory, remained a valuable asset. The national enterprise, Továrny stuh a prymků (STAP) took an interest in

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[150] *Průmyslové zprávy* no. 8-11 (1946), 75.
[151] This point is dealt with more thoroughly in chapter 3, 151-154. It was also against regulations to hire relatives who did not possess proper qualifications. See letter from MP, 21 November 1947. NA, f. MV-NR, k.2348 inv.č. 2004 s.B2610/1.
[152] Report on the fluctuation of employees at Brothers Kanneberger, 1 September 1948. NA, f. 23 a.j. 349/2.

Kanneberger Brothers and moved to acquire it in 1946. STAP, an enterprise based on confiscated firms in the borderland district of Krnov, worked through the central organization of nationalized textile enterprises in Prague to pursue its claim to Kanneberger Brothers. In July 1946, one of STAP's directors became the second national administrator of the firm. Although STAP promised the factory council and Josef Poslední a measured amount of independence to continue its specialized production, problems quickly beset relations between STAP and Kanneberger Brothers. First, Kanneberger Brothers had to deal with STAP in order to gain access to raw materials and to confirm its production plans. In addition, they became embroiled in misunderstandings about the future of other confiscated companies in Vejprty. The national administrator and factory council continued their efforts to acquire local firms, both to amass raw materials and machinery and to increase the company's leverage. STAP also sought to expand its holdings in the district and raised the hostility of many locals as it took control of additional firms.[153] For instance, Poslední was irked by STAP's requests to resubmit inventories not only of their firm, but at other nearby companies not under STAP's control. By September 1946, local control of the factory appeared jeopardized to the extent that Poslední wrote to the STAP director and demanded, in what became a common refrain, that as "the most important company in the production of special modern goods," Kanneberger Brothers should remain independent even after its affiliation with the nationalized enterprise. He even claimed that STAP's factories undercut Kanneberger Brothers' deals abroad by selling cheap wares.[154]

The District National Committee in Vejprty backed Poslední as part of a general campaign to halt the industrial exodus from the town. In a protest to higher authorities, the ONV chairman,

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[153] Kateřina Mertová, "Vejprtská průmyslová oblast 1945-1948," in *6. vědecká archivní conference Revoluční národní vybory, osídlování pohraničí a význam národních vyborů pří zajišťování národně-democratického procesu v ČSR v letech 1944-1948* (Ústí nad Labem, 1990), 70-2.
[154] Letter from national administrator and factory council, Brothers Kanneberger, 27 September 1945. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.27 inv.č.143.

on behalf of the Council, wrote that he did not believe the promises of government officials that companies would remain in place after they were attached to national enterprises. In order to substantiate its claims for independent operation he stated: "Since long ago the district of Vejprty has been known in this land and abroad by its specific industry and the production of textiles." The ONV chairman also stated that 90 percent of the Germans had been expelled and that the number of Czechs had increased from 280 to over 4,000 by late 1946. In a final appeal, he argued that settlers "who obeyed the government's pleas [to move to the borderlands] a year ago … will be embittered and will not believe that all that has happened was done for the nation; rather, like us, they will suspect that it involves the interests of the few, of individuals whose interests damage the republic."[155] National committee members in Vejprty characterized the pursuits of nationalized enterprises as having limited interests of their own. They worried that the increasing economic power of nationalized enterprises would begin to strip national committees of their local authority.

The nearly silent death knell for Kanneberger Brothers came in a letter from the general director of STAP to the central director of the nationalized textile firms. He wrote, "[f]rom the beginning of our interaction with them it is clear that they do not judge things from a statewide perspective, but solely from the view of Vejprty." By the end of 1946, the reference to "local interests" already had a well-established meaning for Prague officials. In addition, the director drew attention to Kanneberger Brothers' labor problems noting that "in Krnov we work exclusively with Czech employees and we already have enough of them, whereas Brothers Kanneberger continuously struggles with insufficient Czech employees."[156] Such "little Berlins" remained targets for those who sought to extend their power and became liabilities for places and

[155] Proposals by ONV Vejprty, 27 September 1946. SOkA Chomutov, f. ONV Vejprty, k. 2 inv.č.53.
[156] Letter from General Director of STAP, 2 December 1946. SOA Litoměřice p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.27 inv.č.143.

industries that relied on German workers. Because STAP had become recognized as the nationalized firm for specialized textile goods its directors could make a strong case to overcome localized interests and put the firm to its best use.

In an effort to forestall STAP's takeover of Kanneberger Brothers, the national administrator, the factory council and the national committee renewed attempts to have Kanneberger Brothers nationalized. Their previous requests for nationalization had been overlooked, even though the firm technically qualified for it. They hoped that with Kanneberger Brothers nationalized, they could build a thriving textile center, which would remain local and independent. In early 1947, the factory council and the national administrator began negotiating with Prague officials to find out if nationalization would be possible. In a meeting with an official at the Ministry of Industry's Nationalization Department, Kanneberger Brothers' factory trade union representative received hints that naming a STAP director as a second national administrator represented a first step toward affiliation. More ominously, after citing Kanneberger Brothers' reliance on German workers, he suggested that places which had a difficult time reaching settlement goals might lose more factories.[157] Thus, it should be no surprise that in preparation for follow-up meetings Poslední pressed hard for nationalization independent of STAP. He noted that, "because we have undergone so many bad experiences with the people from Krnov, more evidence of the failure of this union is unnecessary. We will not allow further delays and appeasements, unless we refuse further responsibility for the operation of the firm. All the promises, which Krnov gave, were not fulfilled and our needs were not

[157] Report from meetings with Economic Group and Ministry of Industry officials, 2 January 1947. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.13 inv.č.23.

respected." They even planned to demand that the central director of nationalized textile firms investigate whether STAP purposely took some of their raw material allotments.[158]

On February 5, 1947, much to their satisfaction, representatives from Bratří Kannebergerové received word in Prague that their firm would be nationalized. However, in early May the tide shifted once again against Kanneberger Brothers and the firm was officially allocated to STAP. In the notice to the factory council a representative from the Central Trade Union Council wrote: "It is the attempt of our officials, who organize nationalized firms, to see that all of our firms are profitable and that more factories join together always to form individual national enterprises, which should mutually support each other and which should work to the benefit of the entire nation."[159] Such sentiments doubtlessly irked many at Kanneberger Brothers. Settlers who had made the trek to Vejprty to work fulfilled settlement goals and made confiscated factories potentially profitable. Yet central planners and nationalized enterprises saw opportunities in confiscated companies like Kanneberger Brothers to concentrate what had been a disparate and diverse industry. The prewar status of a firm meant little to them. Instead, they pursued new goals to bring industrial production firmly under the state's control.

Following the Communist takeover, the transfer of Kanneberger Brothers to STAP's control slowly proceeded. In September 1948, the highly paid German office personnel were fired, and Poslední's brother was next in line for removal.[160] The factory council, which remained under the same leadership throughout this period, now backed plans to move the firm to Jindřichův Hradec in the interior. Only the district national committee withheld its support, because they

[158] Proposals for meetings with officials in Prague, February 1947. Ibid.
[159] Letter from Ústřední rada odborů, 9 May 1947. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.14 inv.č.57.
[160] Protokol from meeting at Brothers Kanneberger, 24 September 1948. SOA p. Most, f. Bratří Kannebergerové, k.13 inv.č.43.

realized what losing Kanneberger Brothers meant.[161] Kateřina Mertová argues that less than 30 percent of Vejprty's original industrial capacity remained in the district at the end of 1948.[162] This loss had nothing to do with wartime destruction, but stemmed directly from the expulsion of the Germans and the conflicts between the central government and local authorities. Its effects were clear. In the first four months of 1950, just as Kanneberger Brothers was being moved, 264 Czechs left Vejprty in search of better prospects elsewhere.[163]

The saga of Kanneberger Brothers embodies many of the changes occurring within postwar borderland industries. The national administrator needed Germans—managers, skilled workers and seamstresses—to restart and continue production because Czech workers were unwilling and unable to fulfill the firm's production needs. Retaining Germans, however, raised questions about the company's ability to continue without them. STAP, the nationalized enterprise, used this reason, among others, to substantiate its claim to Kanneberger Brothers. Although Germans represented the core of Kanneberger Brothers' labor force, the national administrator and Czech employees, as well as other settlers in Vejprty, all struggled to retain the company in the town. Settlers saw the formerly German-owned firm as a central feature of the town and its economy. Without it Vejprty's economic importance and attractiveness to settlers would substantially decrease. This perspective explains, in part, why settlers, workers and the national committee supported nationalization, independent of STAP. They believed that Kanneberger Brothers would serve as hub to reorganize and strengthen the town's textile-based economy. That STAP overcame their resistance, however, pointed to the growing strength of state-run enterprises and the weakening of national committee's power.

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[161] Letter from national administrator and factory council Brothers Kanneberger, 5 August 1948. Ibid.
[162] Mertová, "Vejprtská průmyslová oblast," 72.
[163] Report from MNV Vejprty, 21 April 1950. SOkA Chomutov, f. MNV Vejprty, k.15 inv.č. 20.

By the end of 1948, Czechoslovakia concluded its transition from a war economy to a state-socialist economy. In many respects, the state's continued control of economic decision-making eased the transition. In addition, the National Front, especially the Czech parties, generally supported a widespread program of nationalization in 1945. However, the economic implications of "the national and democratic revolution," which promised the confiscation of Germans' property and benefits to the working class, created conflicts, particularly in the borderlands. Workers and settlers felt entitled to control confiscated factories themselves, and they often voiced these attitudes by demanding nationalization. But nationalization meant something completely different to central officials. The Communist Party, in particular, envisioned nationalization as a means to advance economic centralization. After February 1948, the Communist Party extended the nationalization program and ended the debates surrounding confiscated companies. The Communist state attached the remaining borderland firms to nationalized enterprises or liquidated them entirely, shipping their equipment to Slovakia or even selling it abroad. At the beginning of 1949, it reorganized national committees and diminished their power. The expulsion and settlement necessitated the complete transformation of the borderland economy. While settlers and national committees played an active role in this process, their support for factory nationalization furthered the very program of centralization that they were attempting to prevent.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has argued that economic motives and pressures affected the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans and the postwar transformation of Czechoslovakia's borderlands in several key ways. First, I argued that the ethnic cleansing campaign carried out against Germans in the borderlands cannot be properly understood without considering the role of settlers. New settlers moved primarily to gain property. Their agenda supported expulsions and caused confusion and conflict in the borderlands. Even after the Sudeten Germans had been expelled, deep divisions remained in new borderland communities. Second, I explored how the process of state re-formation influenced, and was itself affected by, expulsion and settlement. Material gain not only motivated settlers and gold-diggers to move to the borderlands and to seize Germans' property, but it also underlay the government's confiscation policies. Labor policies that forced Germans to work, to move to the interior, or to remain in the country following the expulsions had their own clear economic objectives. Borderland national committees refused to cooperate with the government's efforts to consolidate the borderland economy and to pay Prague the proceeds from the sale of confiscated property, because they felt entitled to make their own decisions. Third, I explained how inter-party conflicts intertwined with the economic aspects of expulsion and settlement. The confiscation and distribution of property opened several avenues to build political support, which the Communist Party accomplished best. Rather than explaining the expulsions and settlement through the abstract notion of national hatred, an economic analysis

reveals the concrete ways that Czechs and the postwar government participated in these processes. I explore these themes in greater detail below, but first, I consider the consequences of the Sudeten Germans expulsions on the Czechoslovak economy.

7.1 ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE SUDETEN GERMAN EXPULSIONS

The changes created by the war and the shift toward Soviet-style planning and increased trade with the USSR significantly altered the diverse economy that had existed in Czechoslovakia prior to the war. Expulsion and settlement, in general, supported these changes. The government directed the economy from the time of Nazi occupation and remained in charge after 1945. It had considerable authority to determine economic policies, especially in the borderlands where it became the owner of nearly all of the property there. The confiscation of German-owned factories dovetailed nicely with the government's industrial plans. Confiscated factories were often subsumed by nationalized firms. Relocating confiscated borderland factories to Slovakia allowed government leaders to make good on promises to industrialize that part of the country. After the war, Prague officials ignored pressing labor shortages in the consumer goods industries, much of which stood in the borderlands, as they turned their attention to the development of heavy industry, first during the Two-Year Plan for 1947-1948, and later during subsequent five-year plans.[1] Postwar economic policies in the borderlands overlapped with expulsion and settlement priorities and the transition to state-socialist economic goals. Separating the economic consequences of the Sudeten German expulsions from these broader changes is difficult. Nevertheless, the removal of 300,000 industrial workers and their replacement by

[1] United Nations, *Economic Survey of Europe* 3, no. 1 (1950), 25; Derek Aldcroft and Steven Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe since 1918* (Brookfield, VT, 1995), 134.

others, as well as the retention of a significant cadre of skilled Germans, certainly had some tangible effects on the borderland economy.

Czechoslovakia emerged from the war with much of its industrial base intact and relatively better poised to recover more quickly than most of its neighbors. While the Nazis had profited both financially and militarily from their control of the Czech lands' banking and industrial enterprises, large-scale destruction and dismantling of machinery, witnessed elsewhere from 1939-1945, was kept to a minimum. While machinery had been overworked and poorly maintained, and supplies had run low, the absence of any physical assault on buildings and equipment placed the Czech lands in a unique position among Central and Eastern European producers. In addition, the Czechoslovak economy had already industrialized to a degree far above other countries in Eastern Europe. From 1913 to 1929, Czechoslovakia had among the highest growth rate of any economy in Europe, and, in 1930, was among its top eleven industrial producers.[2] Thus, Czechoslovakia's poor performance from 1945-1948 relative to other countries in the region seems surprising. Labor problems and shortages connected to expulsion and settlement seriously weakened its productivity.

Labor problems after the war had much to do with the wartime experience. The war and occupation took its toll on Czech workers and altered the structure of the labor force. Women and young adults accounted for much of the 30 percent increase in industrial employment from 1938 to 1945. Immediately after the war, these new workers left the economy for a short time, only to be called on again to take up the jobs of departing Sudeten Germans. Many other Czechs who worked for the Nazi war economy moved into administrative and managerial positions

[2] Charles Feinstein, Peter Temin and Gianni Toniolo, *The European Economy between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), 55.

following the war.[3] In addition to workers leaving their posts, postwar labor productivity lagged considerably behind rates in 1937. Worker morale was low and, especially in the borderlands, fluctuation rates remained high. During the Two-Year Plan (1947-48), industries in the Czech lands lost an average of 12-14 percent of scheduled shifts due to absenteeism, fluctuation, illness and other reasons.[4] In August 1948, the Ministry of Labor and the Defense of Social Welfare limited the number of times someone could switch employment in a two-year period. During the expulsions, the economy required the greatest input of Czech workers, but some of them wished to escape manual and factory labor, while others wished to stop working altogether. These postwar attitudes toward work had negative effects for the productivity and profitability of the Czechoslovak economy.

The expulsions in 1946 removed nearly three-quarters of the 225,000 German workers from Czechoslovak industries. Over the course of the year, however, as countless observers pointed out, 210,000 Czechs entered—or in many cases re-entered—the industrial workforce, nearly covering the loss.[5] These figures, however, do not accurately describe the changes in the borderland workforce. First, Sudeten Germans remained an important core group in several branches of the borderland economy. As of March 1, 1947, they represented 20 percent of the workforce in mining, 23 percent in the stone and ceramics industry, 28 percent of all borderland glassworkers and 16 percent of textile workers.[6] While the additional transfers in 1947 and the dispersal measures uprooted some of these workers, many Germans remained at their posts. In addition, almost equal numbers of Czechs took jobs in borderland factories as they did at

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[3] Anna Beinhauerová and Karel Sommer, "K některým aspektům průmyslové zaměstnanosti v českých zemích od osvobození do zahájení dvouletky," *Československý časopis historický* 37, no. 3 (1989): 322.
[4] Anna Beinhauerová, "Pracovní moralka a vykonnost v průmyslové výrobě v českých zemích v období dvouletky," *Slezský sborník* 88, no. 2 (1990): 133-134.
[5] L. Ruman, "Pracovní silý začetkem r.1945: Odsun Němců a vývoj celkové zaměstnanosti v r.1946," *Statistický zpravodaj* 10, no. 3 (March 1947): 90-3; V.O. Nimmerfoth, "Několik pohledů do vývoje našeho průmyslu," *Československý průmysl* 2, no. 11 (Nov. 1946): 410.
[6] *Průmyslová statistika*, no. 8 (April 1947). For a copy, see NA, f. 23, a.j.360.

companies in the interior. In 1947, almost two thirds of the labor force's growth occurred in the interior Czech lands.[7] Just as the need for labor in the borderlands reached its peak, the arrival of workers began to slow.

Not only borderland industries suffered as a result of the expulsions. Agricultural production plunged following the war. There were several reasons behind the decline. The expulsion and settlement processes themselves disrupted not only the agricultural labor market, but also the ability to meet harvest and planting deadlines. As in Poland, expulsions from Czechoslovakia were timed to minimize the loss of available harvest hands.[8] However, after the Germans had been expelled, other methods were used to meet seasonal labor needs. For example, the government enlisted worker brigades comprised of seventeen and eighteen year-olds for mandatory labor periods, though this was still not enough to lift the demand for low-paid agricultural workers. Although borderland farming was not extensive and focused on specialized production, like hops and wine, the general loss of experienced farmers lowered agricultural output. The shift away from agriculture was a postwar trend across most of Eastern Europe because of modern conceptions of development, Cold War economic priorities and socialist planning and investment.[9] The decline in Czechoslovakia's agricultural output must also be considered as a part of this broader trend.

In export industries, important to many borderland towns, the loss of experienced workers coupled with the shifting priorities of the central government seriously weakened their ability to perform. Some contemporaries praised the seeming lack of concern for these industries, arguing

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[7] Generální sekretariát Hospodářské rady, *Průběh plnění hospodářského plánu rok 1947* (Prague, 1948), 244.
[8] Stanislaw Jankowiak, "Cleansing' Poland of Germans: The Province of Pomerania, 1945-49," in Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak eds. *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*. (Lanham, MD, 2001), 100-101; Claudia Kraft, "Who is a Pole, and Who is a German? The Province of Olsztyn in 1945," in *Redrawing Nations*, 111-113.
[9] Aldcroft and Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe*, 100-111.

that reliance on the export markets had helped to fuel the depression there in the 1930s.[10] There was plenty of demand for export commodities in the world market following the war. While textile, glass-making and other specialized branches faced increasing competition, the advantage of equipment, supplies, and skills offered borderland industries the possibility of making a substantial contribution to postwar recovery. Indeed, according to the State Office for Statistics, the price index for many textile products was more than seven times their value in 1937. For Jablonec goods prices were nearly ten times higher.[11] Production of these goods, however, lagged far behind 1937 levels, because so many experienced workers from these branches had been expelled. In addition, settlers who came to replace these workers lacked the necessary skills to make compensation equal and effective.[12] Quality no doubt suffered, evidence of which appeared in 1947, as many western countries began returning such goods. While the total value of this loss was insignificant, the amount of returned goods was on the rise during 1947 and did not show signs of abating.[13]

Mining, another important part of the borderland economy, suffered as well, at least in the short term. Mining production struggled to reach planned targets, even though the number of workers in mining continued to rise. Throughout 1947, productivity rates remained at three quarters of prewar rates. Labor problems, concerning absenteeism, poor qualification and fluctuation plagued both the Ostrava-Karviná mines and the North Bohemian Brown Coal Mines during these years. For instance, one Czech historian found that despite a 40 percent increase in the number of workers between 1937 and 1948, mining productivity remained at 81 percent of

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[10] Jiří Hejda, "Odsun Němců a naše výroba," *Dnešek*, 18 April 1946.
[11] "Srovnání dnešního čsl. zahraničního obchodu s dobou předválečnou (1937)," *Statistický zpravodaj* 10, no. 2 (Feb. 1947): 49. The general figure for calculating the increase in the value of export goods was three times their 1937 value.
[12] Anna Beinhauerová and Karel Sommer, "K některým aspektům průmyslové zaměstnanosti," 333-341.
[13] *Statistický zpravodaj* 11, no. 2 (Feb. 1948): 62-3.

1937 levels at the end of this period.[14] However, as the state's economic priorities shifted to meet the Communist planned economy's needs, mining production superceded other economic priorities and guaranteed output increases, whatever the cost. By 1956, a decade after the "transfer" ended, brown coal production had doubled.[15] German miners contributed to this feat and were recognized for their accomplishments. The long-term advantage of the rise in coal output, of course, must be considered against other factors as well.[16]

The Sudeten German expulsions supported the shift toward a socialist economy based on the Soviet model and on Soviet patronage. The shortage of agricultural laborers and drop in overall production fed into a reliance on the Soviet Union and other countries for food imports. While in the immediate postwar years these deliveries remained largely unfulfilled, they later became important in the socialist bloc economy. By the middle of the 1950s, agricultural production represented 12-15 percent of the Czechoslovak national product while industry represented three quarters. Prior to the war, the figures had been 24 and 35 percent respectively.[17] The focus on heavy industry increased metal and armament production, a sector whose factories existed mainly in the interior parts of the country. As trade with western European countries declined, so too did the need to rebuild the export sectors, like glass and textiles. Thus, the distinctive nature of borderland industry, with its emphasis on the production of these goods, largely disappeared.

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[14] Anna Beinhauerová, "Pracovní moralka a vykonnost," 132; Generální sekretariát Hospodářské rady, *Průběh plnění hospodářského plánu rok 1947*, 86-87; Generální sekretariát Hospodářské rady, *Průběh plnění hospodářského plánu III čtvrtletí 1948* (Prague, 1949), 33-34.
[15] B.R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-1988* 3rd ed. (New York, 1992), 416.
[16] For more on German miners, see Elisabeth Wiskemann, *Germany's Eastern Neighbours: Problems Relating to the Oder-Neisse Line and the Czech Frontier Regions* (London, 1956), 283-285. For more on the environmental costs of increased coal output, see Eagle Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989," *Journal of Modern History* 78 (March 2006): 65-92.
[17] Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics*, 912.

That these special exports survived at all was thanks in large part to the Sudeten Germans who remained behind and to those Czechs in the borderlands who supported them.[18]

7.2 CONTEXTS: ETHNIC CLEANSING, NATIONALISM, AND COMMUNISM

7.2.1 Ethnic Cleansing

Although the wars in the former Yugoslavia brought ethnic cleansing to the forefront of popular consciousness, Czechs and Poles first used the term 'cleansing' to describe what they were doing to ethnic minorities after the war.[19] Violence was and remains a key component of ethnic cleansing. However, it does not encompass the entire range of experiences and influences that shaped the Sudeten German expulsions. Take for instance, the June 26, 1945 directive from the third regional army command about the "Evacuation from Moravia and Silesia." It began: "Moravia and Silesia will be cleansed of Germans. The main and general principle is that it is necessary to carry out quickly and completely the cleansing of Germans, with tough perseverance until the end." Although the meaning of such statements could not be clearer, the rest of the directive focused on the protection of enemy property, ensuring, among other things, that enough housing would be reserved for soldiers who were currently expelling Germans.[20] Violence was only one element involved in ethnically cleansing the borderlands. Expanding the lens to incorporate settlers' actions and attitudes, and debates among state administrators and

[18] Tampke argues that expellees made significant contributions to the German postwar economic recovery. "By the mid 1980s expellee initiatives had led to the establishment of over 4,000 new enterprises in Bavaria, mainly in the glass, furniture, jewelry, clothing and textile industries, as well as in metal processing and the production of musical instruments." Jürgen Tampke, *Czech-German Relations and the Politics of Central Europe: From Bohemia to the EU*. (New York, 2003), 140.
[19] Mark Kramer, "Introduction," to *Redrawing Nations*, 1.
[20] SOkA Bruntál, f. ONV Krnov, k.217 inv.č.262.

officials captures how material and economic interests fueled the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans.

The ethnic cleansing of the borderlands necessitated massive state intervention and coordination. Government leaders organized and authorized military forces to expel Germans beginning in June 1945. They carried out the bulk of the 1945 expulsions with the help of Soviet commanders in Saxony, who permitted Czechoslovak units to force Sudeten Germans across the border. These summer expulsions developed not according to well-laid plans, but through a process of trial and error. The military's role was crucial. Military authorities issued regulations for provisioning expellees and allowing them to bring domestic necessities. They established specific routes out of the country. Security forces used violence and intimidation to keep Sudeten Germans in submission and to force them from their homes. Among the horrors that Germans expressed in their testimonies about the expulsions, one can discern regularized practices: short notice prior to expulsion actions, beatings in order to locate valuables, the use of public buildings or former POW camps to concentrate German inhabitants, and widespread plunder. Local national committees drew up lists of expellees, they catalogued and confiscated their possessions and protected those Sudeten Germans needed for local production. These processes seldom ran smoothly and they opened the door to little dictators, like Adolf Charous and Vilem Dovara. But the summer expulsions rarely occasioned the explosion of uncontrolled mass violence connoted by the term "wild transfer."

Settlers played a central role in the ethnic cleansing process by dispossessing Sudeten Germans of their homes, land, and businesses. In 1945, the migration of Czechs to the borderlands matched the pace and extent of the expulsions. First settlers' actions presaged

Presidential Decree 5, which authorized the seizure of German property.[21] German farmers soon lost their land and livestock under land reform provisions issued in June 1945. While many members of the National Front government pointed out the social and political benefits of land reform, its initial stage involved only the confiscation of Germans' and other enemies' land. Government officials needed Czechs to move to borderland farms for both political and economic reasons. Farms needed attention during the summer and workers for the harvest. But settlement was also part of a nationalist vision that guaranteed the success of the nation-state principle. Having sufficient numbers of settlers in the borderlands also fit with the idea of securing the borders. In a meeting with workers from the Office of the Authority for the Transfer of Germans, President Beneš argued that the settlement question needs much care not only for economic reasons, but also "to ensure that the Germans will never be able to return."[22] This was not simply rhetoric. Even after the Allied-sponsored expulsions began in 1946, rumors of an impending American/Soviet conflict had Sudeten Germans claiming that they would soon return to take over their homes.[23] Settling the borderlands with "reliable" Czechs became an important deterrent in the minds of Prague officials to any possibility of revising the Potsdam decision.

Czechs targeted Sudeten Germans as German, rather than as Nazi supporters. Following the Potsdam Agreement in August 1945, the government issued decrees that dispossessed Sudeten Germans of their citizenship and property. Decree 33, issued the day the Potsdam Agreement was signed, revoked their citizenship and Decree 108 confiscated all German property from wristwatches to textile firms. Yet the definition of a German remained protean. Some decrees judged national identity by the 1930 census records and participation in German organizations,

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[21] Decree 5, May 19, 1945. Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, eds. *Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940-1945: Dokumenty* 2 vols (Brno, 1995), 1:216.
[22] Eduard Beneš, *Edvard Beneš: Odsun němců z Československa*, ed. Karel Novotný (Prague, 1996), 192.
[23] Similar rumors circulated in Poland. See Krystyna Kersten, "Forced Migration and the Transformation of Polish Society in the Postwar Period," in *Redrawing Nations*, 81.

while other regulations deferred to people's behavior during the war and other subjective factors. These different standards became particularly critical for people who did not clearly fit into a single obvious national category or who could switch between different national identities.[24] The overarching framework of the expulsions nonetheless stressed an ethnic understanding of national identity. Therefore, those who had appeared to have been German at one time or those who had familial relations with Germans had a difficult time proving themselves to be reliable Czechs.

Many Czechs participated in the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans by helping to seize the land and property where they lived. More than 300,000 Czechs and other settlers had moved to the borderlands in the summer of 1945 to take over homes, farms, and businesses. National administrators sometimes met and worked with the former German owners. During the fall and winter of 1945-1946, Czechs and Germans sometimes even shared quarters because of overcrowding. The lack of housing fed into expulsion pressures, personalized ethnic animosities and sometimes forced national committees to carry out their own repressive measures. Czechs' migration to seize confiscated property in the borderlands outpaced their replacement of German workers in borderland industries and created labor shortages on interior farms. These labor problems affected the treatment of Germans raised additional obstacles to their expulsion. Ethnically cleansing the borderlands of Germans thus comprised a host of challenges, motivations, and processes interlinked with the settlement program and economic transformation.

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[24] Benjamin Frommer *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge, 2005), 199-206; Chad Bryant, "Either German or Czech: Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1946," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 4 (2002): 683-706; Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics* (Princeton, 2002); 194-202.

7.2.2 Nationalism

Making nation and state congruent served as the key ideological basis for the expulsion policy, whether dressed in terms of historical justice, security concerns, or social revolution. Government leaders, like Beneš, Gottwald, Fierlinger, and others across the rather narrow official postwar political spectrum spoke in nationalist terms not only about the "transfer," but about settlement, national administrators, nationalization, and land reform. Settlers, workers, national committee members, and others, in turn, picked up on these themes and utilized the rhetoric of nation to call for the total expulsion or the permanent transfer of confiscated property. In the context of the time, Czech leaders and citizens accepted and promoted democracy in national or ethnic terms.[25] Certain political parties also infused economic justice for workers as part of this democratic transformation. "The national and democratic revolution" served not only as the ideological slogan, but was the platform from which political parties and protesting citizens made their claims against Germans and in favor of economic reform.

Although the expulsion and settlement became national goals through such ideological arguments, Czech nationalist ideology does not necessarily account for government leaders', settlers', or national administrators' actions and decisions. From the foregoing narrative it is clear that nationalism did not serve as the source of the conflict and its violent nature, but rather provided the justification for remaking the borderlands. Certainly, some of the military and partisan members sent to the borderlands were motivated by nationalist resentment. But plunder proved equally important to their mission, whether for personal or official use remains unclear. One of the more active ethnic cleansing units, the 28th Infantry Regiment, which was implicated

[25] For more on how democracy and nation-state intertwine in ethnic cleansing, see Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge, 2004).

in Ústí nad Labem massacre, plundered its way through the borderlands. Even during the violent actions against Sudeten Germans, the interest in material gain remained pertinent and prevalent.

While national and ethnic categories became generally important for defining who was a German or a Czech, using 'nation' as a way to analyze the people and processes involved in these borderland transformations proves only somewhat useful. In the first place, ethnicity was not always the ultimate factor for an individual's fate. If a German demonstrated "active participation" against the Nazis or possessed particularly worthwhile labor skills he/she had a chance to stay. Likewise, certain categories of non-Germans also served as targets for expulsion from the borderlands including gold diggers, mixed marriage couples, Roma, and Jews. These groups did not fit into the picture of reliable Czechs painted by new settlers and government leaders. Politicians, reporters, and officials continued to speak of cleansing the borderlands of these groups and the remaining Sudeten Germans long after the official expulsions had ended. State and local repression, initially based on ethnicity, expanded to include other unwanted inhabitants in the reconstructed Czech borderlands.

Examining "Czechs" in terms of the singular category of nation also fails to capture the nuances among Czechs in the borderlands. "Old setters," "new settlers," reemigrants from Volhynia and elsewhere all came from different backgrounds and had different expectations about living in the borderlands. While most of them would likely have had some sense of Czech nationalism and supported the expulsions, sharp divisions distinguished them. Czechs arriving from the interior, especially those in the military, quickly marginalized old settlers for their connections with local German inhabitants. Czech identity likewise mattered little when property disputes arose. For instance, district officials in Žatec protected early settlers' claims to seized German farmland from the encroachments of Volhynian Czechs. Mixed marriage couples came

under increasing attack in 1947 and 1948 as they were lumped in with Germans as unwanted and unreliable inhabitants. Following the Communist seizure of power, additional *revise* removed those national administrators who did not support the new political leadership. What mattered most for expulsion and settlement was not one's Czech national identity or ethnicity, but rather settlers' relationships and state politics.

7.2.3 Communist Power

The Czechoslovak Communists, like Communists elsewhere in postwar Central and Eastern Europe, promoted nationalist sentiment after the war as a populist strategy to help generate political support. While the general antipathy toward Germans did not need much encouragement, to have fostered an atmosphere of tolerance, forgiveness, and understanding toward Sudeten German would have required a concerted effort. More importantly, such a position would have opened the Communists to attack as pro-German, especially from the National Socialist Party. The Communist Party had been one of the only interwar parties in Czechoslovakia for which national identity was important, and a sizeable contingent of German anti-fascists had worked in the Communist underground during the war. Nevertheless, the Moscow party leadership decided to pursue a nationalist course after the war. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia sent its German members packing, literally, over the border into Germany, though on more favorable terms than other expelled Germans.[26] The KSČ also utilized its official government posts to promote a nationalist political line. The Communist heads of the Prague Settlement Office, Miroslav Kreysa, and at the Ministry of Agriculture, Jiří Koťátko and Julius Ďuriš spoke in equal measures of nationalist and communist terms.

[26] Tomáš Stanek, *Odsun Němců z Československa, 1945-1947* (Prague, 1991), 146, 276, 288.

The expulsion and settlement provided the Communists with certain advantages for building support in the borderlands. Communists took control of national committees first through the military and security apparatus. Later the Minister of Interior's oversight of the appointment of commissars and administrative commissioners served the same purpose. The Communist Party's ability to select these officials shaped the course of borderland authority. Nevertheless, administrative commissions and commissars developed extemporaneously and did not follow plans from Prague. Party membership was fluid during the postwar period and open to almost anyone. Chapter one showed how the expulsion and settlement offered opportunities for political power in national committees that people like Adolf Charous readily exploited. National committees' high turnover rate, partly a reflection of the vast migrations in and out of borderland towns, also reflected the removal of members caught for corruption or the misuse of confiscated property. The Communist Party had more than its share of "adventurers" or gold diggers, though this rarely seemed to have dampened the party's appeal. The Communist Party portrayed itself and was often seen as the party most interested in meeting settlers' demands for property.

It would be wrong to suggest that Communist leaders in Prague imposed their authority over the borderlands. True, the party leadership declared that "The north must be red" in late 1945 and borderland party members largely delivered on this request.[27] Nevertheless, there was nothing necessarily predetermined about this process. Communist leaders used nationalism no differently than the other National Front parties. The Communist Party encouraged nationalist sentiment with public speeches and propaganda, which supported the expulsion policy and called for harsh retribution. Its policy toward Sudeten German labor in the borderlands was consistent with its position on expulsion and settlement, but did not always find favor among borderland Communists. Likewise, the Communist Party's Two-Year Plan (1947-1948), which proposed the

[27] As reported in the minutes of the settlement committee of the KSČ, 15 September 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j.15.

relocation and consolidation of borderland factories, met with outright resistance even by Communist national committee members. Prague Communist leaders and Communists in the borderlands disagreed on some key economic policies.

Despite such resistance from its own ranks, the KSČ found some direct ways to gain settlers' support. Chapter three examined how the Communist Party leaders consistently pressed for the lowest price for confiscated farmland and positioned themselves as the champions of this cause. They worried less about recouping losses accrued during the summer of 1945 and wished to redistribute the state's wealth in a variety of ways. Some accounts have drawn a direct causal link between a general moral lapse that permitted widespread confiscation and the Communist Party's ability to take over the government in 1948.[28] While the Communist Party's seizure of power was based on much more than handouts and broken morals, confiscated property served as an important medium of exchange for political support.

Notwithstanding the impact of expulsion and settlement on the events in February 1948, they provided a gateway for non-Communists to join the party. For some, access to confiscated property likely hinged on joining the party, though this is difficult to document. Even so, confiscated property does not appear to have been the only draw. The KSČ had a popular appeal for many Czechs after the war. Communists promised national justice, economic and social benefits, and a break from prewar politics. The nationalization policy, as chapter five explained, gained support of the workers who believed that they would gain control of the factories. Settler-farmers felt the same way about land reform and overwhelmingly supported the Communists during the 1946 elections. The expulsion and settlement fit squarely with these Communist priorities. The combination of nationalist and socialist policies created a strong base of support for the Communist Party. Its membership growth from 1945 to 1948 reflected its appeal. In the

[28] Jan Stransky *East Wind over Prague* (London, 1956), 161-184.

Czech lands, with a non-German population of roughly eight million, the Communists gathered one million members by early 1946 and an additional 400,000 by early 1948. The Communist Party witnessed another dramatic increase in the number of members following the seizure of power. By the end of August 1948, more than 800,000 new members had signed up, over a quarter of whom came from the "democratic" parties, mainly the National Socialists.[29] The Communist success in postwar Czechoslovakia grew from an expanding party base as well as bold promises about the country's future. That the KSČ would ultimately fail to deliver on these promises was not at all clear in 1948.

7.3 POPULATION POLITICS AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, 1938-1948

Government policies and individual actions in the postwar Czech borderlands reflected several continuities with other cases of forced migration at the time. Across Central and Eastern Europe from 1938 to 1948 governments and armies practiced ethnic cleansing in similar ways and with similar objectives. States sought to move people and borders as a means to achieve greater perceived security, to implement economic goals and to meet central ideological imperatives. The war had escalated these processes, particularly, though not exclusively, under Nazi and Soviet auspices. Nazi population policies, labor needs, and shifts in the battle front forced more than fifty million people into the status of migrants, forced laborers, and displaced persons. Others states, not least the Soviet Union, had likewise carried out various forced migration campaigns during the 1930s and 1940s. Following the war, German speakers across the region left homes that their ancestors had occupied, sometimes centuries earlier. In Poland, the

[29] Srovnání sociálního rozvrstvení stavu členů ku konci února a ku konci srpna 1948. Jiří Maňak, *Komunisté na pochodu k moci: Vývoj početnosti a strukury KSČ v období 1945-1948* (Prague, 1995).

movement of displaced persons, expellees, repatriates, settlers, and Jews reached 15 million in 1945-1947 alone.[30] Ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust ended the rich mixture of cultures, languages, and peoples that had hitherto distinguished many Central and Eastern European countries.

Forced migrations were one of the many ways that European states attempted to control and to shape their populations.[31] The Nazi regime carried its attempts to construct a racially superior population furthest using euthanasia, sterilization, expulsion, and finally mass extermination as methods against those deemed racially inferior. Other regimes had other motives for moving people. By 1936, the Soviet Union had already carried out deportation actions against its borderland residents. In the beginning, these campaigns focused on elites, removing so-called kulaks and cultural leaders. Increasingly, however, these deportations took on an ethnic character, with Poles and Germans facing particularly increased attention. They were deported in large numbers to the untilled steppes of Kazakhstan where they established collective farms.[32] During the war, ethnic cleansing emerged elsewhere, between Poles and Ukrainians and between Serbs and Croats, for example, as secondary conflicts in the shadows of the war. With the disappearance of interwar states and the uncertainty about the political outcomes following the war, nationalist and underground groups sought to create homogeneous ethnic space as a precondition to demands for independent statehood. These projects continued into the postwar period and reflected Central and East European political leaders' assumptions about the close

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[30] United Nations, *Economic Survey of Europe* 1, no. 1 (1949): 16; See also the chapters on Poland in the following: Steven B. Várdy and T. Hunt Tooley eds. *Ethnic Cleansing in 20th Century Europe* (Boulder, CO, 2003); Ther and Siljak, eds. *Redrawing Nations*.

[31] Amir Weiner, ed. *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford, 2003); Maria Sophia Quine, *Population Politics in Twentieth Century Europe* (London, 1996).

[32] Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Hinterland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, 2004), 173-191; Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*, trans. Anna Yastrzhembska (Budapest, 2004), 95-96, 126-139, 243-249, 277-303.

connection between national loyalty and state formation. The postwar Polish government's efforts to create a unified and ethnically Polish state involved not only the expulsion of Germans, but the dispersal of the mainly Lemko population, who had remained loyal to the Polish state, through *Akcja Wisla* in 1947. Nothing better exemplifies the willingness among states in the region to support ethnic cleansing, than the participation of Czechoslovak and Soviet troops in this action.[33]

State policies and power formed only one aspect of population politics' dynamic. Local initiative often played a critical role in the development of ethnic cleansing. Influential actors, from military commanders to local civilian officials, possessed unusual authority to exercise their will. In part, the autonomy of local actors arose from the weakness of central authority. Kate Brown argues that repressive violence in the Soviet borderlands reflected the state's weak position in such outlying areas.[34] As chapter one made clear, however, the extreme upheavals generated by ethnic cleansing created space for local officials or others to shape central policies in the Czech borderlands. For example, settlers' movement and demands for proper land and housing influenced not only the nature of resettlement, but the speed and selection of expellees. Rather than existing as a separate process, the settlement process allowed settlers to directly influence the expulsions. This was the case not only in the Czech borderlands, but in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere after the war.

The thorough transformation of economic and social life in ethnically cleansed areas was a consequence of expulsion and resettlement, but it also critically shaped the course of repressive population politics and actions. The exchange of property and of the workforce satisfied individuals' greed and supported development programs. The interest in material gain was more

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[33] Orest Subetlny, "Expulsion, Resettlement, Civil Strife: The Fate of Poland's Ukrainians," in *Redrawing Nations*, 167-168.
[34] Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 12-13, 228-231.

than personal in nature; it also offered political support. Jan Gross underscores Poles' common interest in holding onto Jewish property after the Holocaust and how Communists state officials used the property issue to build support among Poles.[35] The Communists' backing of the expulsion of Germans and others from postwar Poland and Hungary also helped them cement ties among inhabitants there.[36] In other cases, state leaders considered ethnic cleansing and economic modernization as component parts of transforming entire regions. Nazi plans for German expansion into the East combined the creation of a Greater German Reich with strategies for improving the productivity of the land in former Poland and Ukraine.[37] Nazi resettlement programs that brought *Volksdeutsche* from all over Eastern Europe into occupied Poland, likewise offered solutions for the growing labor shortages in the Reich. Poles who were dispossessed of their farms to make room for German-speaking farmers were sent to the Reich as forced laborers.[38] Soviet population policies not only involved efforts to secure different border regions, but connected with broader economic development priorities as well. The Soviet Gulag's origins were quite distinct from the World War II era, but the camp system became reinvigorated by the war and harnessed to the processes of ethnic cleansing. From the mid-1930s ethnic groups, in addition to class enemies, were sent to the Gulag. They became an available source of mobile labor for development projects in remote parts of the country.[39] Ethnic cleansing connected with states' efforts to control labor, land, and industrial production and with personal interest in social mobility and material gain.

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[35] Jan Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (New York, 2006), 51.
[36] Kersten, "Forced Migration and the Transformation of Polish Society," 80-81; János Angi, "The Expulsion of the Germans from Hungary after World War II," in *Redrawing Nations*, 378.
[37] Götz Aly and Susan Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction*, trans. A.G. Blunden (Princeton, 2002).
[38] Ibid., 73-88; Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of European Jews*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown (London, 1999), 43.
[39] J. Otto. Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949* (Westport, CT, 1999), 46; Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 173-191; Polian, *Against Their Will*, 243-249, 277-303.

Although economic plans, the drive for political support, and personal interest in property fueled ethnic cleansing campaigns, economic factors also presented obstacles to forced migration. Labor needs often conflicted with expulsion plans. During the expulsion of Germans from Poland's newly-annexed western borderlands, settler-farmers' demands for German workers coincided with the harvest and planting seasons. In Czechoslovakia, labor issues involved solving immediate needs as well as the permanent retention of specialists. More general economic and social problems also hindered expulsion and resettlement operations. From 1939 to 1941, the Nazi expulsion of Jews and Poles from occupied Poland to make room for the resettlement of *Volksdeutsche* failed to unfold according to ideological priorities or central plans. Instead, its objective to restructure regions in the East preceded any extensive preparations and proceeded according to opportunity. The lack of planning created a host of problems: thousands more settlers arrived than expected, housing often proved inadequate or unavailable, and necessary provisions were missing. Grandiose development schemes, an ideology based on racial hierarchies, and economic realities merged and defined the Nazi-engineered forced migrations of Poles, Jews and others in occupied Eastern Europe.[40] Similar combinations of ideology and economic transformations influenced population politics across Central and Eastern Europe at the time.

The Sudeten German expulsions reflected the broad scale and common links among states' efforts to reengineer regional population and economic structures through massive migration policies. Economic considerations were often at the center of settlement and expulsion pressures, as property transfers and economic transformations failed to match central authorities' intentions or peoples' needs on the ground. Settlers in the Czech borderlands struggled against each other as they sought to gain access to confiscated property. At times, Czechs used Sudeten Germans to

[40] Aly, *Final Solution*; Christopher Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge, 2000).

find property or to help manage farms or business firms. In other cases, controlling property meant becoming a Communist. Labor concerns likewise became crucial for determining which Germans would remain and where expellees would be sent before they left the country. In late 1945 and 1946, industrial officials made plans for the borderlands based on the impending labor shortage. Factory managers and others with a productionist perspective sought to keep skilled German workers and maintain valuable borderland industries. By examining the intersecting interests over state power, property, and labor my analysis of ethnic cleansing moves beyond ethnicity and nationalism to capture other key forces that shaped the expulsions and settlement.

7.4 THE POLITICS OF EXPULSION AND SETTLEMENT

7.4.1 State Power and Migration

In the postwar Czech borderlands, state power developed from the ground up within the context of settlement and expulsion. As we saw in chapter one, old settlers established a national committee in Česká Kamenice before the arrival of other outside officials. When Czechoslovak military forces arrived with the objective of cleansing the region of Germans they labeled these Czechs "unreliable" because they hindered expulsions. In addition, new settlers considered old settlers as possible obstacles in their own efforts to speed the cleansing of the borderlands and to seize German property. As Czechs from the interior began to arrive in greater numbers, they exerted pressure to install new local authority. Commissars and administrative commissions came to power in an uneven manner to say the least, but often in favor of Communists and against old settlers. Even after the more egregious little dictators and gold diggers were removed

from positions of authority, borderland national committees continued to undergo several metamorphoses from 1945 to 1948.

Despite these changes, national committees consistently sought to maintain their autonomy and authority in the face of increasing centralization. National committees solved problems as they saw fit, in part, because the National Front government had granted them wide powers of self-government. They took a practical approach to resolving labor shortages and, for example, did not bother with precise accounting or the registration of confiscated goods. Poor administrative practices later caused difficulties for national committees when the central government demanded its share of confiscated wealth. National committees, like settlers and Prague officials, were interested in controlling all that the borderlands had to offer. In terms of setting borderland policies from 1945 to 1948, national committees operated as equal brokers with authorities in Prague. Only as plans for factory relocation and liquidation moved forward and as nationalized enterprises' appetite for confiscated firms continued to grow did centralized authority over the economy increase beyond national committees' individual power. By the 1950s, the central government had dramatically shifted the economy's footing and, thereby, sealed the borderlands' fate.

The Settlement Office (OÚ) felt just as empowered as national committees to reshape the borderlands and believed that they could minimize the disruptive aspects of the Germans' departure and promote the successful settlement of the borderlands. Many of these officials clearly operated under the modernist notion of being able to "landscape the human garden."[41] Settlement officials calculated optimum population levels and made decisions about the local economy accordingly. The general plans for business allocation, for instance, calculated the

[41] Amir Weiner, "*Introduction: Landscaping the Human Garden*," in Amir Weiner ed., *Landscaping the Human Garden*, 1-17.

number of cobblers necessary for a given town, based on population size. The Settlement Office's planning department developed timelines for the arrival and relocation of reemigrants and made efforts to soften the economic effects by coordinating the "transfer" in 1946. While settlement officials prided themselves on the voluntary character of settlement, they found considerable opportunity to influence the process themselves. This meant usurping control for the distribution of confiscated property from national committees in order to redistribute it to certain settlers. The OÚ also planned the expulsion of Sudeten Germans, Magyars, Roma, and others from the borderlands in pursuit of the larger goal of creating an ethnically pure nation-state.[42]

While the central government, through its use of the military, was generally effective at expelling Germans, it had to struggle to assert its authority over the borderlands. Constant inspections and countless directives from officials in Prague suggested not oversight, but its absence. *Revise* themselves were marred by inconsistencies and were surrounded by an air of corruption. In 1948, the borderlands still contained "little Berlins" and thousands of unreliable old settlers, not to mention the presence of large numbers of Roma for the first time. Gold diggers had rampaged and industries disappeared. Cleansing the borderlands of Germans did not automatically make them Czech. Instead, they became a space where Czechs, Germans, gold diggers, Jews, new settlers, productionists, and others converged and dispersed. The Prague government had little chance to control such movement.

This lack of control not only existed at the center. In the fall of 1945, borderland national committees faced labor shortages, overcrowded and disease-ridden camps, and incessant looting, as a result of the Czechoslovak government's expulsion and resettlement programs. They possessed only limited control over the flow of people and goods through their towns. Military

[42] Adrian von Arburg, "Tak či onak," *Soudobé dějiny* 10, no. 3 (2003): 253-292.

units appeared and demanded expulsions, and gold diggers moved through and pillaged at will. Settlers occupied formerly German homes without notifying local officials, while other settlers applied for apartments, but never heard back from housing departments. Settlement and expulsion were rapid, reciprocal, and massive movements of people, with all of the dislocation that they entail. National committees had difficulty confronting the obstacles created by these migrations. They resorted to repressive measures, in part, because they had so few constructive means to contain the rapid social and economic changes in 1945-1946.

State power remained fleeting and unstable in the immediate postwar years. The Czechoslovak government authorized expulsion and settlement even though it had made little in the way of concrete plans for them. National committees had to resolve the ensuing conflicts with little initial input from Prague. In some places, they themselves were the source of corruption and/or resorted to the harsh treatment of Germans. Elsewhere, national committees tried to combat these destructive forces. Collectively, regardless of their other actions, national committees stood against the encroachments on their own power by Prague officials. Despite their resistance, borderland national committees by themselves could not overcome the obstacles unleashed by expulsion and settlement. The problems created by settlers, military units, and national committees gave ministries and other central officials reason to become more involved in local affairs. So too did the creation of the Settlement Office in late 1945. As Communists made their bid for power, centralization increased as well. The Settlement Office's ability to circumvent the measures of Decree 108, which permitted national committees to allocate confiscated property, was just one indication of this trend. The increasing scope of nationalization and the power of nationalized firms likewise reflected this change. The history of national committees between 1945 and 1948 reflected the transition from local autonomy,

created by the state's re-formation and ethnic cleansing, to the unified control of the state and the Communist Party.

7.4.2 Property

The confiscation of property played a central role in the expulsion of Sudeten Germans. Settlers' impulse to move to the borderlands and seize property preceded and propelled the 1945 summer expulsions. Housing pressures added urgency to expulsions and heightened local tensions between Sudeten Germans and Czech settlers. National committees demanded and helped to organize expulsions in order to make the best property available to settlers. They moved Germans into cramped quarters, camps, or out of the district into the interior, but retained skilled workers for local production. The expropriation of land and factories created a reservoir of wealth, which the central government used to pursue land reform, nationalization and the consolidation of borderland industries. The expulsion of Germans provided enormous and varied opportunities for gain.

Examining confiscation politics poignantly reveals how the cleansing of the borderlands did not simply involve national hatred and violence. The pursuit of material gain proved to be a common bond between state and society in the borderlands. The Czechoslovak state, at all levels, attempted to control the fate of confiscated property. The state became the de facto owner not only of confiscated German property, but also of former Jewish property and of domestic industry which had been taken over by the Nazis. The National Front leaders wrote the decrees in such a way to insulate the state from any debt or compensation claims. The government, led by the Communists, pushed these policies further and subsumed many more industries through nationalization. While the confiscation decrees placed a shroud of legality over the process, they

did not ensure their uniform implementation. National committees divided property as they saw fit and hindered central directives that did not match their goals, even after 1948. For instance, factories set for liquidation continued to operate into the early 1950s, even though industrial officials had originally planned to complete the process by 1946. Even if the central government had wished to use borderland restructuring as a means to create a productive and progressive society, it had only limited authority to impose such plans.

The state did not act alone to confiscate Sudeten German property. Settlement officials took their cues from the first settlers who streamed into the borderlands in the summer of 1945 before the Settlement Office existed. Settlers and gold diggers rushed to the borderlands and took what they could get their hands on. As Anna Rumpliková, the camp guard who got caught stealing confiscated property, suggested, "everybody was doing it." Indeed, this was the popular image associated with the borderlands. Accordingly, settlement officials promised low prices for confiscated farmland and apartments and easy access to confiscated property for qualified settlers. These priorities became the cornerstones of the official settlement program. Settlement officials were well aware that these principles also supported ethnic cleansing. However, not all settlers were satisfied with conditions in the borderlands. Priority applicants generally received their property only after long waits and appeals. Even then, they did not receive what settlement and higher-level officials had promised. Czech emigrants did not return as expected and thousands of settlers left the borderlands in step with the official "transfer" of Germans in 1946. Examining the interaction between settlers, borderland officials, and authorities in Prague reveals how competing attitudes and agendas concerning confiscated property intersected and shaped the borderland economy and society from 1945-1948.

7.4.3 Labor and Nationalization

Labor issues became central features not only of postwar Central and Eastern European society and economy, but also of politics. The industrial working class grew in size during the war and enjoyed a privileged political position immediately afterward.[43] The postwar states of Eastern Europe, premised in many ways on workers' authority, utilized this power to nationalize factories and to increase workers' wages and living standards. In Czechoslovakia, labor issues and workers' welfare were central to the National Front's policies and "the national and democratic revolution." "National" and "democratic" held particular economic meaning. The state confiscated the possessions and property of national enemies and distributed them to Czechs from the lower social strata as a form of economic justice. The nationalization and land reform programs, other key elements of this "revolution" were likewise premised on penalizing German owners in particular. However, through the nationalization program it was the state, rather than the working class that grew more powerful. As Padraic Kenney argues about the postwar experience of the Polish working class, "[t]he social revolution, so evident and probable an outcome of the war, had by 1948 become something quite different; and the components of a state socialist—or stalinist—revolution began to fall into place."[44] In Czechoslovakia by the early 1950s workers lost their ability to influence the state, and in 1953, the Communist government was putting down workers' strikes in Plzeň.

Labor politics were not simply directed by Communist or state officials. The migration of Czech settlers to the borderlands and out of certain professions played a key role in creating demand for laborers. As Czech farmhands from the interior moved to the borderlands to take

[43] Jan Gross, "War as Revolution," in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath*, eds. Istvan Deak, Jan Gross, and Tony Judt (Princeton, 2000), 21-23; Bradley Abrams, "The Second World War and the East European Revolution," *East European Politics and Societies* 16, no. 3 (2002): 654-655.
[44] Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Ithaca, NY, 1997), 190.

over confiscated farms, labor authorities moved Sudeten Germans into the Czech interior to work as agricultural laborers. The story of the Peschke family, in chapter four, which was sent to work on an interior Czech farm, demonstrated how such policies added to their tribulations in postwar Czechoslovakia. Although such reciprocal resettlements were not economically advantageous, they possessed a clear logic. Faced with a labor shortage in the interior, Ministry of Agriculture officials sought to move people who were most readily available. As it turned out, however, moving Germans proved difficult. Borderland national committees did not wish to relinquish able-bodied workers, especially when such workers were hard to come by in late 1945 and 1946. As this example demonstrates, attempts to reach certain goals—ethnic cleansing—influenced policies in another, seemingly distinct, arena—the economy—and vice versa. The extensive transfers of property and people in the borderlands caused economic and demographic objectives to constantly collide.

Economic and expulsion considerations converged during officials' deliberations about the reconfiguration of the borderland economy. In late October 1945, just after President Beneš signed the confiscation decree, industrial officials met to discuss the future of borderland production. Armed with statistics on employment levels from the prewar and wartime years, these officials sought to devise a strategy for reducing the number of factories and firms. They demanded synchronization between the liquidation process, which they hoped to finish by year's end, and the movement of equipment, supplies, and workers. However, they possessed little sense of current employment levels or the overall direction of future production. Instead, each industrial branch devised a temporary solution that suited its current needs.[45] Temporary decision-making was typical regarding postwar industrial policies for the borderlands and demonstrates the degree to which the expulsion and settlement drove economic planning.

[45] Minutes from the meeting at the MP, 29-31 October 1945. NA, f. 23, a.j. 349/1.

Although, industrial officials and economic planners in Prague sought to rationalize and reorganize borderland production in line with the broader political and economic objectives of a burgeoning socialist state, the final decisions were by necessity determined according to local conditions. The labor supply determined by expulsion and settlement played a central role in this process.

The plans, programs, and policies of Prague officials did condition the actions of local officials. Under the consolidation plans, each firm became a possible target for liquidation and relocation. National committees wished to protect nearly every firm, believing that fewer firms would diminish the local economy's strength and prestige. Keeping German workers became one way to sustain borderland industries, favored by local factory managers and to some degree by national committees and workers. National administrators and factory councils of firms scheduled for closure often cited increased production in their appeals to remain open, though they never explicitly mentioned German workers' contribution to higher output levels. Nationalization served as another way to argue for a firm's survival. Whether such claims were based on the nationalization decrees, as in Brothers Kanneberger's case, or as efforts to unite similar firms under a single management, as in the case of the Jeseník spas, the underlying logic remained the same; become nationalized and maintain local control.

The belief in nationalization both as a panacea for prewar economic difficulties, and as a means to control confiscated German firms, had powerful economic and political consequences. The confiscation of borderland factories increased the state's presence in economic decision making. Considering the tendency among leading political forces towards state planning, this meant that local control over factories was out of the question. Still, local leaders fought fiercely to encourage economic development in order to attract and keep Czech settlers. When central

leaders demanded the closure or transfer of factories, settlers protested; after the factories closed, settlers sometimes departed. For many borderland towns and cities keeping industry was a matter of survival. The expulsion of the Germans, in tandem with settlement processes and broader government plans, completely disfigured the borderland economy.

Understanding the interplay of settlement and expulsion requires a comparison of events in the borderlands with the plans and policies made in Prague. At times central authorities took the initiative. Indeed, the pattern of expulsions and the Czechoslovak army's central role indicated that the central government, rather than a popular uprising, was behind the majority of the 1945 expulsions. At the same time, the events, like those in Česká Kamenice, where Czechs struggled against each other, fit into a complex set of priorities unleashed by the expulsions, the transition of state power, and the confiscation of property. The experience of Julius Beer, the former owner of a textile factory in Varnsdorf, fits into the same mix of settlement and expulsion politics, manifesting itself in an expression of anti-Jewish attitudes. Even the 28th Infantry Regiment's rampaging and killing flowed from central government decisions and popular attitudes toward material gain. Local actors and Prague officials had similar priorities regarding settlement and expulsion, but they differed about who should control and benefit from them. Settlers, government leaders, and national committees wanted to get rid of Germans, as well as Jews, Roma, and other undesirable elements, to seize their property, and to ensure that those expelled never returned. While new settlers and national committee members often determined the pace of expulsions and the distribution of property, the central government attempted to place expulsion and settlement under its own control. Each side claimed authority and entitlement to make such decisions in the nation's name.

A multitude of actors—Czechs, Germans, settlers, workers, national administrators, Prague officials, and others—drove the economy of ethnic cleansing in the Czech borderlands. Their relations reveal a much more complex picture of experience and motive than an analysis based strictly on national groups. Property and labor issues were central aspects of both the economic and ethnic transformations that occurred between 1945 and 1948. As in any political or economic transition, but particularly following World War II, the state played a key role as an arbiter of economic life. Still, in many instances, government policies followed from the actions of those in the borderlands. New settlers and leaders in Prague operated under a set of principles and circumstances common across Central and Eastern Europe. Property rights had largely been discredited through multiple forced migrations. The Communist regimes altered the meaning of property rights further and placed workers' rights on a new foundation, even if the some party members did so only for their own advancement. Many settlers benefited personally from the "national and democratic revolution" and supported the Communist Party in return. The expulsion of Sudeten Germans offered opportunities for national retribution as well as material gain; together, these factors shaped the postwar borderland transformations.

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