

THE CZECH-GERMAN COEXISTENCE AND THE “WILD EXPULSIONS” FROM  
ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM/AUSSIG, 1918-1945

A THESIS

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## DEDICATION

For my parents, Jan and Ťaťána Kvapilovi.

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## ABSTRACT

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### THE CZECH-GERMAN COEXISTENCE AND THE “WILD EXPULSIONS” FROM ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM/AUSSIG, 1918-1945

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This study, which spans from the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 to August 1945, examines the factors that played a role in the postwar violence against Sudeten Germans and their “wild expulsions” from the city of Ústí nad Labem while considering the deterioration of the local Czech-German relations prior to the expulsions as one of the possible factors. This thesis argues that while the Czech-German coexistence rapidly deteriorated in the late 1930s, this fact did not play a significant role in the violence against Germans in Ústí nad Labem during the period of the “wild expulsions.” Other factors such as the attitude of the Czechoslovak government, military leaders, and individuals within military and paramilitary formations proved to play a major role. A factor uniquely specific to Ústí nad Labem was, for example, the close proximity to Prague and easy access by railroads. While Ústí’s Czechs did not participate in violence against Germans, there does not seem to be any evidence that they opposed the expulsions.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION, TERMINOLOGY, HISTORIOGRAPHY

At the conclusion of World War II, a forceful removal of German-speaking minorities from Central and Eastern Europe began. As a prevention of future German expansionism and a form of punishment, at least twelve million German-speaking civilians were permanently displaced.<sup>1</sup> The urgency to settle the “German Problem” emerged in every country that either directly or indirectly had been a victim of Nazi aggression.<sup>2</sup> Czechoslovakia, occupied by Nazi Germany from 1938 to 1945, was among the countries that decided to deal with ethnic Germans most radically. Accomplished with great violence and under the presumption of collective guilt, approximately three million Sudeten Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia alone. These forced transfers symbolized a tragic end to a centuries-long Czech-German coexistence within the Bohemian lands.<sup>3</sup>

In the emotional postwar period, justification for this radical solution seemed to come from every corner of Czechoslovak society swept by the waves of radical nationalism. Indeed, one of the major arguments for the forced transfers, made by Czech

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<sup>1</sup> Ray M. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 1. According to Douglas, the number of displaced German civilians could be as high as fourteen million.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Alter, *The German Question and Europe – History* (London/New York: Arnold-Oxford University Press, 2000), 11. German Problem refers to the “fact that from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany was regarded as a difficult, uncontrollable, and even dangerous neighbor. The German Problem in the period up to 1945 has been seen in a historical perspective as a source of political instability in Central Europe [...]” Additionally, the notion refers to German minorities scattered across Central and Eastern Europe stirring up international conflicts.

<sup>3</sup> The term “Bohemian lands” stands for Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia.

political leaders, was the impossibility of any further Czech-German coexistence within the territory of Czechoslovakia.<sup>4</sup> Even before the war ended, the Czech president in exile, Edvard Beneš, argued: “The relations between Czechs and Germans after the war would be so bad that living together was no longer possible.”<sup>5</sup> Further, he argued, a constant civil war would be inevitable.<sup>6</sup>

The days, weeks, and months following the end of World War II proved that violence against Sudeten Germans, indeed, became widespread in multiple locations of re-established Czechoslovakia. The degree of violence, however, varied from place to place. While more severe cases of violence occurred, it was the Ústí Massacre on July 31, 1945, along with the Brno Death March, that became a symbol of Czech brutality against German minorities. This research examines violence and “wild expulsions” in a broader course of European and Czechoslovak history, but also in the context of the local Czech-German coexistence in order to avoid narrow interpretations within a topic that has been frequently generalized, stereotyped, and distorted for political purposes. More specifically, this study, which spans from the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 to August 1945, examines the factors that played a role in the postwar violence against Sudeten Germans and their “wild expulsions” from Ústí while considering

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<sup>4</sup> Karel Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu 1945-1948* [The Truth about Czechoslovakia 1945-1948] (Prague: Panorama, 1985), 86-129. Along with German minorities, Czechoslovak government aimed for an exchange and expulsions of Hungarian minorities. However, this goal had not been fully realized as it lacked support of the Allied Powers.

<sup>5</sup> Eagle Glassheim, “The Mechanics of Ethnic Cleansing,” In Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe 1944 – 1948* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2001), 201. Beneš also insisted on punishing Germans for their betrayal of Czechoslovakia and, by their transfer, ensuring postwar stability.

<sup>6</sup> Edvard Beneš in conversation with Compton Mackenzie, In Karel Novotný, *Edvard Beneš: Odsun Němců z Československa* [Edvard Benes: Transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia] (Prague: Dita Press, 1996), 107.

the deterioration of the local Czech-German relations prior to the expulsions as one of the possible factors. While not exclusively history from below, the significance of this research lies in the inclusion of the perception of common people, both Czechs and Sudeten Germans, with the intention to evaluate claims made by leading Czech politicians who argued that Czechs and Germans could not live together any longer.<sup>7</sup> This approach, along with the utilization of Western, Polish, Czech, and German sources, allows for interpretations not limited to the top-down perspective, but also not limited to the nationalistic understanding of the Czech-German relations and the expulsions.

### Terminology

The terminology itself often adds to the misconceptions and/or stereotypes of this topic. The “wild expulsion” is a modern term coined by historians of the Czech-German commission referring to the period following the end of the war until the Potsdam Conference held from July 17 to August 2, 1945. The most frequent term utilized during the postwar period was “evacuations.” The notion of the so-called “wild expulsions” implies disorganization, spontaneity, or even a popular uprising. However, this study confirms a tight military control. In case of Ústí the expulsions continued regardless of Potsdam’s decision to stop unauthorized forced transfers and to resume them in an “orderly and humane manner.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the term is also misleading in its timeframe. The “wild expulsions” had its own specifics distinguished from the Allied-sanctioned

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<sup>7</sup>*Práce* [Labor], No.37, June 1945.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas, *Orderly and Human*, 90-91. Article XIII of the Potsdam Agreement stipulated: “[...] any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and human manner.” Furthermore, a stop to illegal transfers was requested.



transfers that began in January 1946.<sup>9</sup> Having neither international nor state legal foundation was one of the major differences. If any legislation existed, it would be, according to the leading Czechoslovak politicians, the constitutional presidential decree No.33/1945 that stripped Germans (and Hungarians) of their citizenship. This decree, however, did not come into effect until August 10, 1945.<sup>10</sup>

The term “Sudeten Germans,” in Czech and Polish historical tradition, refers to the German population living in the Bohemian lands until the end of World War II. Not only is it highly politicized, but also it mistakenly assumes a common identity and political unity among German minorities in the Bohemian lands.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, not all Germans in Czechoslovakia lived in the Sudetenland, a broadly defined borderland territory predominantly occupied by German minorities (see Appendix A.1). If the notion Sudeten Germans is used in the following study, it is only to refer to German “old settlers” living in Czechoslovakia before the Munich Agreement distinguishing them from the Reich Germans. The term itself was rarely used during the researched period and was banned after the war. Germans in Czechoslovakia were referred to as Germans,

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<sup>9</sup> Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, *Vysídlení Němců a Proměny Českého Pohraničí 1945-1951, Duben-Srpen/Září 1945: Divoký Odsun a Počátky Osídlování II.1* [Transfer of Germans and Transformation of Czech Borderlands 1945-1951, April-August/September 1945 “Wild Expulsions” and Beginnings of Resettlement] (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2011), 118. Based on the available documentation, it is likely that the United States and Great Britain approved of the transfers only to prevent further chaos and tragedies. Additionally, Stalin forced them to agree. In January 1946, H.S. Truman stated: “In Potsdam, we were forced to agree. It was an act of violence.” However, historian Douglas argues that failing to set up any controlling mechanism while agreeing with the transfers “implied either cynicism or self-deception on a breathtaking scale,” In Douglas, *Orderly and Human*, 91.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 94-95.

<sup>11</sup> Piotr M. Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948: Historie Jednoho Nacionalismu* [Sudeten Germans 1848-1948: History of ‘a’ Nationalism] (Brno: Conditio Humana, 2014), 12.; For a detailed explanation of the term “Sudeten” and “Sudetenland” see Johann W. Brugel, *Češi a Němci: 1918-1938* [Czechs and Germans: 1918-1938] (Prague: Academia Prague, 2006), 178-183.

“Czech” Germans, “our” Germans, or “Austrian Germans.”

The city of Ústí nad Labem is situated on the Elbe River in the industrial Northern part of the former Sudetenland with a predominant chemical industry (see Appendix A.2). For a simplification, the Czech name - Ústí nad Labem (Ústí) - is used in the following study. Literally, it translates as “Mouth above the Elbe River.” Historically, however, it would be correct to use the German name - Aussig - as well. The city, from the thirteenth century to 1945, was predominantly German. The 1921 Czechoslovak census listed 30, 544 residents of a German nationality and 6,885 “Czechs.”<sup>12</sup> Ten years later, the ratio changed to 34,602 Germans and 8,798 Czechs.<sup>13</sup> In 1939, the census conducted by the Nazi administration did not include Czech or Slovak nationality, but the approximate ratio was 60,000 to 3,000.<sup>14</sup> The total number of residents was 67,053.<sup>15</sup>

## Introduction

The Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš is stereotypically perceived as a Machiavellian politician of the era solely responsible for the “evacuations.” While Beneš certainly played a crucial role in both the negotiations and the expulsions, other realities must be taken into consideration. First, the expulsions fitted into a broader course of

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<sup>12</sup> *Sčítání Lidu v Republice Československé ze Dne 15. Února, 1921*, Díl I., Svazek 9 [Census in Czechoslovakia from February 15, 1921, Part. I] (Prague: State Statistical Office, 1924), 44.

<sup>13</sup> *Sčítání Lidu v Republice Československé ze Dne 1. Prosince, 1930*, Díl I., Svazek 98 [Census in Czechoslovakia from December 1, 1930, Part. I, Vol. 98] (Prague: State Statistical Office, 1934), 75.

<sup>14</sup> Vladimír Kaiser, *Konec Války a Vyhnaní Němců z Ústecka*, In Detlef Brandes, Edita Ivaničková, and Jiří Pešek, eds. *Vynútený Rozchod: Vyhnanie a Vysídlenie z Československa 1938-1947 v Porovnaní s Poľskom, Maďarskom a Juhosláviou* (Bratislava: Veda, SAV, 1999), 157. However, Kaiser did not explain how he calculated these numbers.

<sup>15</sup> *Statistics of the German Reich Vol. 553: Official Community Register for the Greater German Reich Based on the 1939 Population Census* (Berlin: Publisher for Social Policy, Economy, and Statistics Paul Schmidt, Berlin SW 68, 1944), 60.; Under the Nazi administration on May 1, 1939, several surrounding villages became a part of Ústí (hence the increase in population).

radical political and social changes brought by the Second World War. The rise of the Communist Parties and their pivotal role in the expulsions reflected one of these changes.<sup>16</sup> However, not only Beneš, an anti-communist himself, but many Western politicians including Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Henry S. Truman, along with British, American, and Soviet scientists all considered the expulsions unavoidable.<sup>17</sup> As the Versailles system of minority protection failed, the idea of ethnically homogenous states that could guarantee lasting peace became increasingly popular.<sup>18</sup> In 1942, Herbert Hoover wrote:

Bitter experience for a hundred years shows that these European *irredentas* are a constant source of war. Consideration should be given even to the heroic remedy of transfer of population. The hardship of moving is great, but it is a less than the constant suffering of minorities and the constant recurrence of war.<sup>19</sup>

The European public opinion also shifted dramatically due to growing Nazi aggression widely supported by German minorities across Europe.<sup>20</sup> The Turkish-Greek population

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<sup>16</sup> Karel Kaplan, *The Short March: The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia 1945-1948* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 1. Communist Parties were brought into fourteen European governments; Bradley F. Abrams, "The Second World War and the East European Revolution," *East European Politics and Societies*, 16(3), 663. The Czechoslovak Communist Party grew from 28,000 members in May 1945 to over a million members by March 1946. According to Abrams, these numbers, however, do not reflect people's true belief in the Communist ideology.

<sup>17</sup> Detlef Brandes, *Cesta k Vyhnutí 1938-1945* [The Road to Expulsions 1938-1945] (Munich: Collegium Carolinum, 2000), 17, 101. As an example of how common was the idea of homogenous states, Brandes mentioned a memorandum (*The Future of Germany* published on July 1, 1941) discussed by hundreds of industrialists, labor activists, and governmental officials. The authors of this document recommended population transfers to reduce future conflicts.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>19</sup> Krystýna Kersten, "Forced Migration and the Transformation of Polish Society in the Postwar Period," In *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, eds. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 78.

<sup>20</sup> Jan Křen, "Odsun Němců ve Světě Nových Pramenů" [Transfer of Germans in the Light of New Sources], In Bohumil Černý et al., *Češi, Němci, Odsun: Diskuse Nezávislých Historiků* [Czechs, Germans, Transfer: Discussion of Independent Historians] (Prague: Prague Academia, 1990), 23.

exchange in 1923, especially emphasized by Winston Churchill, served as an example of successful “ethnic engineering.”<sup>21</sup> Ironically, though, it was Adolf Hitler’s ambition “to bring home” all German minorities, announced during his infamous speech on October 6, 1939, that served as precedence for the postwar expulsions.<sup>22</sup>

The road to the expulsions, however, was not straightforward. Neither the Allied Powers nor the individual members within each government agreed on crucial questions such as the number of the expellees from each country, the criteria for expulsions, or the timeframe of the “evacuations.” In 1942, Great Britain agreed with the transfers, but only in principle.<sup>23</sup> The United States and the Soviet Union followed with similar agreements in May and June of 1943 respectively. Nevertheless, disagreements continued. Not until the Potsdam Conference, did the “Big Three” officially approve of the transfers.<sup>24</sup> At the time of the conference, the expulsions from Czechoslovakia, in particular, were well underway. To understand this reality, it is important to look closer at the changing relation between the Soviet Union and reestablished Czechoslovakia.

The balance of power in postwar Europe shifted dramatically. With Germany being out of the picture, and Great Britain and France greatly weakened by the war, the Soviet Union emerged as the greatest European Power dictating conditions of both Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>25</sup> Beneš observed that “from the moment when Russia was on the other side of the Carpathians, there were no longer alternatives; it was the end of

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<sup>21</sup> Brandes, *The Road to the Expulsions 1938-1945*, 12.

<sup>22</sup> *V Boj* [In Fight], No.58, Spring 1940, In “Odsun Němců ve Světle Nových Pramenů,” Jan Křen, 21.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>24</sup> “The Big Three”- The Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill replaced by Clement Attlee on July 26, 1945, and the U.S. President Harry Truman.

<sup>25</sup> Kaplan, *The Short March*, 2-3.

plans for some sort of Central European federation.”<sup>26</sup> Beneš not only acknowledged this reality, he wished for it because of the bitter experience of the Munich Agreement. The alliance with the Soviet Union, he believed, would protect Czechoslovakia from any future German aggression. In Moscow, on December 12, 1943, the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance was signed. The alliance with the Soviets played a major role in the expulsions of Sudeten Germans. Stalin, out of the three Allied leaders, was most open to the idea of the forced transfers because of his own territorial claims and the prospect of de-Germanization. Most probably, he also used the expulsions as a political force towards Prague.<sup>27</sup> The single most important fact resulting from complicated negotiations between Beneš and Stalin pertinent to this study was the unofficial agreement to accept German expellees in the Soviet occupational zone before the Potsdam Conference.<sup>28</sup>

The “evacuations” were justified as a culmination of a centuries-long German usurpation of the Czech population within the Bohemian lands. The Nazi occupation served as the strongest argument.<sup>29</sup> In reality, Beneš mentioned this solution to the “German Problem” on March 15, 1938 at the height of the Sudeten crisis. The Nazi occupation only reinforced the idea.<sup>30</sup> Beneš offered several plans for resolving the Czech-German conflict; plans that included territorial concessions, a creation of three

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>27</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, *April-Srpen/Září* 1945, 98. According to the authors, unwillingness to provide any official guarantees could indicate Moscow’s intention to use the expulsions as a forceful political tool toward the Czechoslovak government.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>29</sup> *Práce* [Labor], No.37, June 1945.

<sup>30</sup> Brandes, *Cesta k Vyhnání: 1938-1945*, 368.

semi-autonomous German districts, a limited number of expellees, and a “guilt” criteria according to which only those who directly participated in the Nazi occupation would be expelled. As a result of several factors, his plans evolved into a much more radical form. For example, the British refused the “guilt criterion” as it would limit the number of expellees and potentially cause another conflict in the future.<sup>31</sup> The irreconcilable visions of the postwar Europe of Beneš and the leader of the Sudeten German social democrats, Wenzel Jaksch, also radicalized Beneš’s attitude toward the “German Problem.”<sup>32</sup> Most importantly, the initial plans took a different form due to the uncompromising attitude of the Czechoslovak army officials in exile and in the home resistance movement, all demanding full-scale expulsions. The Nazi terror following Reinhardt Heydrich’s assassination in Prague (May 1942) was among the major reasons behind the radical attitude.<sup>33</sup>

During the negotiations, Beneš proved to be an unscrupulous politician often falsely reporting on results of his meetings using the alliance with the Soviet Union against Great Britain and the United States.<sup>34</sup> He repeatedly stressed that if not removed, Sudeten Germans would be massacred by “angry masses” in an act of retaliation.<sup>35</sup> In August 1943, he issued secret directions to military personnel clearly in conflict with his public statements:

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>32</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1945*, 402. Jaksch insisted on the principle of self-determination of Sudeten Germans after the war. Furthermore, he envisioned Europe as a federation of multinational states.

<sup>33</sup> One of the most ruthless Nazis, Reinhard Heydrich, was appointed a “governor” of the Protectorate in 1941. Mortally wounded on May 27, 1942, Heydrich died a few days later on June 2, 1942.

<sup>34</sup> For a detailed account of these negotiations see Brandes, *Cesta k Vyhnání: 1938-1945*.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 74.

From the very beginning, it is important to control several crucial locations on German territory [Sudetenland]. We have to occupy these locations and use terror to force a maximum number of [Sudeten] Germans to flee. Furthermore, I want the possible transfer to be accomplished from a social standpoint. We would keep workers and farmers, but not the middle class, bourgeoisie, and capitalists. It is necessary to combine a national revolution with a socialist one.<sup>36</sup>

On the same note, a military attaché in London, lieutenant colonel Jan Kalla wrote in his Memorandum, “We need a massive bloodshed in the Sudetenland. The terror must be so horrific that it would scare Sudeten Germans for decades [...]”<sup>37</sup>

Regardless of the effort of the Czechoslovak government in exile, at the end of the Second World War, the Western Powers were no closer to an official agreement with the transfers. On the contrary, both Great Britain and the United States became more hesitant.<sup>38</sup> Paradoxically, this unwillingness to sanction the transfers worked for the Czechoslovak government as it allowed for a “flexible” approach towards German minorities during the key period after the liberation.<sup>39</sup> Czechoslovak leaders were presented, as they believed, with a historical opportunity to solve the “German Problem” permanently. Thus, they decided to begin with the expulsions regardless of the attitude of the Western Allies and begin with them quickly before they could be disapproved. Speed was one of the main features of these transfers. Carried out behind the scenes by the Czechoslovak military and semi-military forces with almost unlimited authority and

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<sup>36</sup> VÚA – VHA, f. MNO 1945, ŠVBM, k.3, sv. 104/43, In Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 404.; Brandes, *Cesta k Vyhnutí: 1938-1945*, 95. The use of “terror” was also suggested by the Minister of National Defense in the Czechoslovak government-in-exile S. Ingr.

<sup>37</sup> *Náš Boj* [Our Fight], January, 1940, In *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. července 1945* [It Happened in Usti nad Labem on July 31, 1945] (Ústí nad Labem: Ústí nad Labem Press, 2005), 5.

<sup>38</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 406. One of the major reasons for this hesitancy was the fact that Czechoslovakia (along with Poland and Hungary) belonged now to the Soviet sphere of influence.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

accompanied by hateful political anti-German speeches and anti-German legislation, violence against Sudeten Germans became an inevitable consequence. The latest scholarship of historians Tomáš Staněk and Adrian von Arburg estimates that at least 10,000 German civilians died due to physical attacks from May to December 1945, with approximately 5,600 suicides excluded from this number.<sup>40</sup> At least half of these deaths occurred in prisons and internment camps.<sup>41</sup> The forced marches accounted for the highest number of deaths (aside from prisons and internment camps).<sup>42</sup>

### Historiography

To aid in the general understanding of the expulsions, this study utilizes a number of secondary works on the broad history of Czechs and Sudeten Germans. Interestingly, the research topic of the expulsions holds a different place in Western, Czechoslovak, Czech, and German historiographies.<sup>43</sup> These differences, most evident in the period before the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989/91, are significant as they reflect the complex approach toward the expulsions by scholars and their respective societies. Surprisingly, an event of such magnitude and consequences remains relatively understudied among Western historians and is almost completely unknown to Western populations. Despite a dearth of studies, several Western scholars have contributed to our

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<sup>40</sup> Not all historians, however, agree with this number. The number of victims ranges from 10,000 to 30,000. See, for example, Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 239.

<sup>41</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 406.

<sup>42</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 100, 127. The Brno death march at the end of May 1945, during which approximately 1,700 Sudeten Germans lost their lives because of physical assaults, starvation, exhaustion, or epidemics, counts as the most tragic of these forms of forced transfers.

<sup>43</sup> By 'Western scholarship,' I refer to English-speaking scholars (particularly, British, American, and Canadian).



knowledge of the expulsions, their mechanisms, and consequences as well as to our understanding of the complexity of the joined Czech-German history within the Bohemian lands. The first attempt to explain these complicated relations was undertaken by British historian Elizabeth Wiskemann. Wiskemann's work *Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* was published in 1938, before the Munich Conference. The chapter on the world economic crisis and its consequences for the relationship between the working class of Sudeten Germans and Czechs is relevant to this research.<sup>44</sup> Wiskemann compares the effect of the Great Depression on various locations including Ústí.<sup>45</sup>

Among the Western scholars who have made significant contributions to the historiography of the expulsions is Alfred de Zayas, a Cuban-born American lawyer, historian, and advocate of human rights. In his work, first published in 1986, *The German Expellees: Victims in War and Peace*, de Zayas brought awareness to the human tragedy of the expulsions and its victims.<sup>46</sup> More recently (2009), in *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War*, American historian Ray M. Douglas examines the expulsions from their beginnings (with all countries involved) through the present "where it continues to cast a long shadow across European and world events."<sup>47</sup> Douglas wrote his book as a response to certain groups of political scientists who argued in favor of forced mass population transfers as a last resort solution to ethnic

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<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 189-196.

<sup>46</sup> Alfred de Zayas, *The German Expellees: Victims in War and Peace*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993).

<sup>47</sup> Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 4.

conflicts. In staunch opposition to this view, R.M. Douglas persuasively highlights not only the humanitarian tragedy of such forced transfers, but also the fact that these expulsions failed in every other objective they aspired to accomplish.<sup>48</sup> Due to the enormity of the subject, however, the author proved unable to avoid certain generalizations. For example, he does not mention the regional differentiations of the expulsions, a facet addressed in this thesis.

Although the political-moral perspective of de Zayas and Douglas is an essential part of Western historiography, recent scholarship emphasizes applied historical methods. The scholarship of American historians Chad Bryant, Jeremy King, and David W. Gerlach all represent this new historical approach characterized by less judgment and increased understanding.<sup>49</sup> The significant contribution of these historians lies in their critical approach to the national/ethnic framework of interpretation that is so common for Czechoslovak, Czech, and German historiographies. In *Prague in Black*, Chad Bryant, rejects this traditional approach based on national dichotomies and offers a fresh interpretation in which common people defined themselves and acted “nationally” during the Nazi occupation and the immediate postwar period. However, Bryant focuses on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Similarly, Jeremy King argues that seeing the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 5, 363-374.

<sup>49</sup> Chad Bryant, “The Complexities and Contradictions of Czech Nationalism under the Nazi Rule,” an interview in *Radio Prague* on 6-21-2014.; Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).; Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).; David W. Gerlach, “For Nation and Gain: Economy, Ethnicity and Politics in the Czech Borderlands, 1945-1948” (Dissertation, University of Pittsburg, 2007) and *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing – The Transformation of the German-Czech Borderlands after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Czech-German conflict through the nationalist/ethnic rhetoric leads to the wrong conclusions and advises that historians “must give up the mental habit of assuming ‘nations,’ and of ignoring non-national kinds of politics.”<sup>50</sup> While the expulsions are included, King’s scholarship predominantly focuses on the period before the creation of Czechoslovakia. Lastly, setting the national/ethnic perspective aside as well, David W. Gerlach asserts that while Czech nationalism cannot be completely disregarded, the nationalist rhetoric utilized by the Czechoslovak leaders, “was part of their effort to generate political support, rather than a primary motivation for the expulsions.”<sup>51</sup> Additionally, the author maintains that the expulsions fit into broader social, economic, and political trends of postwar Europe.<sup>52</sup> On the theme of violence, Gerlach argues that “Czechs most certainly beat, raped and killed Germans during the ethnic cleansing of the borderlands. Yet, there is little evidence to suggest that they did so because they were Czechs.”<sup>53</sup>

Unlike Western scholarship on the subject, Czechoslovak, Czech, and German historiography of the expulsions can be divided into two major periods that differ significantly. Scholarship from the period before the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe reveals two major tendencies. The Marxist-Leninist scholars of Czechoslovakia stressed the Nazi occupation and the Communist resistance and paid little attention to the expulsions and the gruesome treatment of the expellees. For example, *History of Socialist*

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<sup>50</sup> King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*, 211.

<sup>51</sup> Gerlach, “For Nation and Gain,” 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Gerlach, *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing*, 40.

*Czechoslovakia* addresses the expulsions in three sentences.<sup>54</sup> Even when mentioned, however, the expulsions are simply explained as a historically justified solution and as an important step toward creating a socialist society.<sup>55</sup> With the exception of underground and exile literature, scholarship of this period is one-sided. Needless to say, the political-moral stance of the underground and exile literature too has its weaknesses. While not biased by communist ideology, the political-moral stance becomes almost a methodology itself significantly limiting historical accuracy.

In contrast, German scholarship published before 1989 ignored the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia and portrayed the expulsions as if they happened in a vacuum.<sup>56</sup> Theodor Schieder's multiple volume *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central-Europe* became the main source from which German scholars drew their evidence of the postwar period. Volume IV, published in 1960, deals specifically with the expulsions from Czechoslovakia.<sup>57</sup> Primarily, the *Documents* consist of eyewitness accounts of German expellees themselves. The emphasis on first-person testimonies is significant for the German historiography in the period before 1989.

After 1989, historians of both countries began a gradual process of bridging the

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<sup>54</sup> Collective of authors, *Historie Socialistického Československa* [History of Socialist Czechoslovakia], Part II, Vol. 2 (Prague: Horizont, 1986), In Zdeněk Radvanovský, *Konec Česko-Německého Soužití na Ústecku: 1945-1947* [The End of the Czech-German Co-existence in Ustecko: 1945-1947] (Ústí nad Labem: UJEP Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>55</sup> Tomáš Staněk, *Perzekuce 1945: Perzekuce tzv. Státně Nespolehlivého Obyvatelstva v Českých Zemích (Mimo Tábory a Věznice) v Květnu-Srpnu 1945* [Persecutions 1945: Persecutions of So-called Enemies of the Czech Lands (Internment Camps and Prisons Excluded) in May-August 1945] (Prague: ISE, 1995), 13.

<sup>56</sup> There were a few exceptions to this approach. For example, the scholarship of Detlef Brandes did not follow this pattern.

<sup>57</sup> Theodor Schieder, *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central-Europe: The Expulsion of the German Population from Czechoslovakia*, Vol. IV (Bonn: The Federal Ministry of Expellees, Refugees, and War Victims, 1960).

gap between the two “national” interpretations of the expulsions and of the events that preceded them. The foundation of the Czech-German Commission of historians reflected the willingness to cooperate.<sup>58</sup> However, the Commission’s objective remains, to an extent unmet, as the historiographies still tend to “run” parallel to each other. The lack of translation of major scholarship into English, Czech, or German, along with a different focus of Western, Czech, and German scholars are among the major reasons.

In addition to these broader studies, narrow secondary scholarship is utilized to inform this master’s thesis. Polish historian Piotr Majewski in *Sudeten Germans 1848-1948: History of ‘a’ Nationalism*, among other themes, analyzed the most controversial areas between Czechs and Germans in Czechoslovakia.<sup>59</sup> His analysis brings a deeper understanding of the challenges to find a common ground between Czechs and Germans. Majewski’s scholarship offers an alternative to Václav Houžvička’s *Czechs and Germans 1848 – 2004* that utilizes nationalistic pro-Czech perspective.<sup>60</sup>

The most dramatic period in the relations between Czechs and Germans took place between the 1930s and 1945. Critical ruptures in the development of the relation in Ústí are examined. With a few exceptions, the city figures in broader studies of the Sudetenland in the pre-war period and in the studies of the regions annexed to the Third Reich following the Munich Conference. On October 1938, due to its location, Ústí became a part of the so-called “model” Sudetengau, the largest administrative region of

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<sup>58</sup> Several other commission and organizations were founded with the same cooperative intention.

<sup>59</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948.*; For a German perspective see, for example, Ferdinand Seibt, *Germany and Czechs: History of One’s Neighborhood in the Middle of Europe* (Prague: Academia Prague, 1996).

<sup>60</sup> Václav Houžvička, *Czechs and Germans 1848-2004: The Sudeten Question and the Transformation of Central Europe* (Charles University in Prague: Karolinum Press, 2015).

the annexed territory. The Sudetengau was divided into three governmental districts with Ústí as one of the three “capitals” (See Appendix/map).<sup>61</sup> In terms of a state and local administration, the Sudetengau became fully modeled on Nazi Germany.<sup>62</sup>

Among the broader studies are publications of German historians Detlef Brandes and Volker Zimmermann, both of whom include the history of everyday life. The major strength of these authors lies in their efforts to avoid one-sided and stereotypical interpretations. In *The Sudeten Germans during the Crisis of 1938*, Brandes explores why the relatively peaceful co-existence between Czechs and Germans in Sudeten villages and cities turned into passionate anti-Czech attitudes eventually aiding the destruction of Czechoslovakia.<sup>63</sup> According to Brandes, factors that contributed to these attitudes included the world economic crisis, the disparity between the concept of the national state versus actual ethnic structure, and the government’s support of “hraničářů,” a Czech minority group who aimed at “Czechization” of the Sudetenland.<sup>64</sup> Brandes suggests that between 1935 and 1938 a major breaking point occurred in Czech-German relations.

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<sup>61</sup> Václav Kural and Zdeněk Radvanovský, et al., *Sudety pod Hákovým Křížem* [‘Sudetenland’ under the Swastika] (Ústí nad Labem: Albis International Press, 2002), 71. The Sudetengau represented 78% (22 608 square kilometers) of the annexed regions with 2 947 187 people (in 1939). Geographically, historically, or even demographically, no foundation existed for the creation of this administrative unit. The only reasoning behind its establishment was to prepare it for the Nazi expansion.; Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem* [History of the City of Usti nad Labem] (Ústí nad Labem: Ústí nad Labem Press, 1995), 204. The Ústí’s government district within the Sudetengau consisted of 7 126 square km and 1 330 000 people (in 1939).

<sup>62</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 205. The SdP was incorporated into the NSDAP.

<sup>63</sup> Detlef Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roco 1938* [The Sudeten Germans during the Crisis of 1938] (Munich: Collegium Carolinum, 2008), 88.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 20, 26, 31, 283. There is no English equivalent of the Czech word “hraničáři/ů”. In simple terms, they represented Czech minority group in the Sudetenland, a group disproportionately supported by the Czechoslovak government.

Separatist ideals of the Sudeten German Party spread through Sudeten cities and villages convinced most of the Czech population that peaceful coexistence would be impossible.<sup>65</sup>

In *Sudeten Germans in the Nazi State: Politics and Moods of the Inhabitants of the Reichsgau Sudetenland (1938-1945)*, Volker Zimmermann, a student of Brandes, narrowed his focus to the Sudetengau.<sup>66</sup> Zimmermann's research reveals that the attitude of Sudeten Germans toward the Czech population was much more uncompromising than the attitude of the Nazi leaders coming from the Third Reich. While Brandes and Zimmermann focus predominantly on the perspective of Sudeten Germans, Czech historians Josef Bartoš and Jan Benda concentrate on the Czech population. Bartoš's work, even if influenced by Communist ideology, includes valuable demographic data and statistics essential for this study. Benda's *Flights and Expulsions from the Border Regions of Czech Lands 1938-1939* is thematically outside of the scope of this research as he follows the faith of the Czech refugees from the annexed regions into the Protectorate.<sup>67</sup> However, the first chapter of his book examines the discriminatory practices against the Czech population in the borderlands between 1938 and 1939.

In agreement with Zimmermann, Benda, too, finds evidence that the Sudeten Germans represented the most enthusiastic supporters of the borderlands' ethnic cleansing; a factor to consider in the deterioration of Czech-German coexistence. The

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>66</sup> Volker Zimmermann, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě: Politika a Nálada Obyvatelstva v Říšské Župě 1938-1945* [The Sudeten Germans in the Nazi State: Politics and Moods of the Inhabitants of the Reichsgau Sudetenland 1938-1945] (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1999).

<sup>67</sup> Josef Bartoš, *Okupované Pohraničí a České Obyvatelstvo 1938-1945* [Czech Population in Occupied Border Regions 1938-1945] (Prague: State Educational Press, 1978).; Jan Benda, *Útěky a Vyhánění z Pohraničí Českých Zemí* [Flights and Expulsions from the Border Regions of Czech Lands: 1938-1939] (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2013).

scholarship of Zdeněk Radvanovský *Sudetenland under Swastika* presents an in-depth understanding of how Germanization politics were carried out and precisely how these affected the Czech population in terms of economic stability, education, culture, censorship, and religious restrictions.<sup>68</sup>

As the war neared its end, the mood of the German-speaking population began to alter rapidly. It became increasingly clear that Germany would soon be defeated. Many feared that their “liberation” might be achieved not by the United States forces but by the Red Army known for its brutal attitudes toward German minorities. However, the first weeks and months following the war proved that the Red Army was not the only threat about which they should be concerned. The consensus of political parties in liberated Czechoslovakia, bolstered by public support, gave rise to legislation that led to crimes against ethnic Germans regardless of their participation in the Nazi occupation.<sup>69</sup> The Red Army, the 1st Czechoslovak army, semi-military forces, and individual citizens, all acted violently against German minorities.<sup>70</sup> These acts of violence stemmed from varying motives and took many different forms. The assumption is often made that violence occurred only in the course of the expulsions. While this was often the case, many Sudeten Germans, as the example of Ústí demonstrates, were also attacked in open public spaces, in the internment camps, or in their homes. This research examines both types of violence, but is limited to physical attacks outside of jurisdiction with the exceptions of the internment camps. The suicides committed by Sudeten Germans, often

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<sup>68</sup> Kural and Radvanovský, et al., ‘*Sudety*’ *pod Hákovým Křížem*.

<sup>69</sup> Staněk, *Perzekuce 1945*, 9-10.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.



out of fear of physical threats, are also examined. The scholarship of Swiss historian Adrian von Arburg, Czech historians Tomáš Staněk, Zdeněk Radvanovský, and Václav Kaiser is essential to the examination of this period.

Staněk is one of the most influential Czech historians relative to the expulsions from Czechoslovakia who encourages and initiates cooperation with German scholars. The theme of violence during the period of “wild expulsions” is central to four of his publications, three of which were co-authored by von Arburg. In *Persecutions 1945*, Staněk focuses on violent acts perpetrated against ethnic Germans outside prisons and internment camps between May and August of 1945. Through a detailed description of the most severe acts of violence, the author sheds light on so-called “revolutionary justice” and the manner in which it operated. *Acts of Violence in 1945 and their Investigation* is a collection of primary documents related to examples of retributions and their investigation in several cities, towns, and villages including Ústí.<sup>71</sup> In *April-August/September 1945: “Wild Expulsions” and Beginnings of Resettling*, the authors uncover the specific features of the expulsions in the borderlands during the spring and summer of 1945.<sup>72</sup> Lastly, in the article “Organized Wild Transfers?” the authors emphasize and detail the crucial role of the 1st Czechoslovak army in the “wild

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<sup>71</sup> Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, eds. *Vysídlení Němců a Proměny Českého Pohraničí 1945-1951 - Akty Hromadného Nasílí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování II.3* [Transfer of Germans and Transformation of Czech Border Regions: Acts of Mass Violence in 1945 and their Investigation] (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa Press, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds. *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 12x.

expulsions” in 1945.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, von Arburg argues that the expulsions became a part of a socialist revolution directed from above.<sup>74</sup>

Unlike Staněk and von Arburg’s scholarship not limited to any particular region, Radvanovský focuses on the *Ústecko*’s region.<sup>75</sup> In his work, *The End of Czech-German Coexistence in Ústecko’s Region 1945-1947*, the author includes several important topics related to this study: the creation of the revolutionary national committees, the variety of military and semi-military forces operating in the region, and the mechanics of the expulsions.<sup>76</sup> One of the most valuable secondary sources directly related to this research is *History of the City of Ústí nad Labem* written by a collective of historians and edited by archivists Kristína Kaiserová and Vladimír Kaiser.<sup>77</sup> Similarly valuable, is detailed research of the Ústí massacre, *It Happened in Usti nad Labem* written by historians Jan Havel and Otfried Pustějovský. The publication draws on primary documents, but also on thoroughly analyzed German and Czech eyewitness accounts.<sup>78</sup>

Together with the secondary sources, a variety of primary sources is utilized in this master’s thesis. However, the period of the “wild expulsions” unlike the period that

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<sup>73</sup> Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, “Organizované Divoké Odsuny? Úloha Ústředních Státních Orgánů při Provádění ‘Evakuace’ Německého Obyvatelstva - Květen až Září 1945)” [The Role of the Central State Administration in the ‘Evacuation’ of German Population - May – September 1945] (*Soudobé Dějiny* 12, no. 3-4/2006), 465-533.

<sup>74</sup> “Divoký Odsun” [“Wild Expulsions”], June 15, 2013, <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10150778447-historie-cs/dily/?filtr=odsun>.

<sup>75</sup> Zdeněk Radvanovský, *Konec Česko-Německého Soužití na Ústecku: 1945-1947* [The End of the Czech-German Co-existence in Ustecko: 1945-1947] (Ústí nad Labem: UJEP Press, 1997), 15-16. The Ústecko administrative region (from 1949 – Ústecko district) is a compact territory in which brown-coal mining and the related industries dominate this region’s economy.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>77</sup> Kristína Kaiserová and Vladimír Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem* [History of the City of Usti nad Labem] (Ústí nad Labem: Ústí nad Labem Press, 1995).

<sup>78</sup> Havel Jan, Vladimír Kaiser & Otfried Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945* [It Happened in Usti nad Labem on July 31, 1945] (Ústí nad Labem: Ústí nad Labem Press, 2005).

followed is significantly less documented because the state and local administrations were only coming into their existence, but also because the expulsions were carried out “behind the scenes” and not all decisions were in a written form. Fortunately, the secret orders, reports, and correspondence issued by the 1st Czechoslovak army that played a crucial role in the “wild expulsions,” have been declassified and are available to researchers at the Military Historical Archives in Prague. Other significant actors in the “wild expulsions” were the local national committees that especially during the immediate postwar period - characterized by a lack of communication between the central organs and the regions - made crucial decisions regarding expulsions.<sup>79</sup> For example, they had the power to decide who would be expelled based on the participation in the Nazi occupation, but also on the needs of the local economies and other factors such as the decision of one’s nationality. Furthermore, they had jurisdiction over the confiscated properties and other possessions of German expellees. Naturally, this kind of authority led, in many cases, to abuse of power.<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, historians agree that “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.”<sup>81</sup> The national committees’ orders, reports, circulars, meeting minutes,

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<sup>79</sup> Gerlach, “For the Nation and Gain,” 47. National committees, as a one of the embodiments of the so-called “national and democratic revolution” established by the presidential decree No.18/1944, exercised greater power over the conditions in the regions in all areas of life than in 1946. The Czechoslovak Communist Party, due to its growing power, enforced their establishment arguing 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.”

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>81</sup> Gerlach, “For the Nation and Gain,” In Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 58.

public notices, and periodicals are important part of evidence because each helps to reconstruct events in the immediate postwar period. These primary sources are archived in the Czech National Archive in Prague (NA) and the Archives of the City of Ústí nad Labem (AMÚ). The newspapers of the postwar period, both national and local, are part of the Northern-Czech Science Library's collection in Ústí.

The partial objective of this thesis is not to portray the history of Ústí exclusively from the top-down perspective, but to include a perspective of the so called common people. The historiography of the coexistence and the expulsions often adopts the political language of the era, perceiving Czech and German relations in the Bohemian lands exclusively as a history of struggle between two ethnic groups. Historian Gustav Peters summoned up this nationalistic stereotypical perception:

The Sudeten German regards the Czech as a half educated...creature, to some extent saved by German influence, who is politically intolerable and unreliable, socially never satisfied and always pushing for his nation, while the Czech sees in the Sudeten German the invader, the remorseless conqueror, the apostle of German world hegemony, the economic tyrant who only lives in the land in order to subject the Czech people socially, politically and in every other way.<sup>82</sup>

Not only has this perspective narrowed the understanding of the period, for example, excluding German antifascists, German prisoners in the concentration camps, or executed German antifascists, but it also, indirectly, presumes collective guilt of entire Czechoslovakia for the postwar expulsions. The everyday life in Ústí offers more complexity. Several “voices” represent the Usti's common people in this study, but Sudeten German Gerda Eckelt and Czech Jiří Šosvald are cited frequently because of

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<sup>82</sup> Gustav Peters, *Der neue Herr von Böhmen*, In Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans*, 118.

their historically valuable memoirs speaking to the subject of the Czech-German relations in Ústí (see Appendix A.3, A.4). As a same generation, they offer the “Sudeten German” and the “Czech” perspective of the period.<sup>83</sup> In addition, other testimonies are gathered from published memoirs, interviews, and chronicles.<sup>84</sup> One of the most valuable primary sources is Dr. Alfred Piffle’s *The Chronicle of the City of Usti nad Labem: 1938-1945* written in 1947. This publication offers a detailed history of Ústí, especially during the immediate weeks following the liberation, but also personal testimonies of Ústí’s citizens.<sup>85</sup> However, because of the scope of this study no systematic analysis of the “common” perspective that would include, for instance, variations between a labor class or a middle class is provided.

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To determine the factors of the postwar violence against German minorities and their expulsions from Ústí this thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One includes introduction, terminology, and historiography. Additionally, the first chapter places the regional expulsions from Ústí within a broader international and Czechoslovak context. Chapter Two focuses on the regional history of Ústí prior to the expulsions examining the Czech-German local relation and its deterioration, but also placing it in a broader context. Major events such as the creation of Czechoslovakia, the Great

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<sup>83</sup> Gerda Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov?* [Where is My Home?] (Ústí nad Labem: Albis International Press, 1998).; Jiří Šosvald, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí* [Oh...Back then in Usti] (Ústí nad Labem: Albis International, 1999).

<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, the historiography of the expulsions irrevocably lost an opportunity to systematically gather oral testimonies of the Czech population (only a very few witnesses of the period are alive today).

<sup>85</sup> Alfred Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945* [The Chronicle of the City of Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945] (Ústí nad Labem, Handwritten, 1947).

Depression, and the rise of the SdP are examined to the extent to which they may offer greater clarity about the Czech-German coexistence. In Chapter Three violence against German minorities is discussed including violence in open public spaces, in the internment camps, and sexual violence against German females. Special attention is given to the Ústí Massacre that occurred on July 31, 1945. During the immediate postwar period, a number of Ústí's Germans committed suicides due to the direct or indirect threat to their lives. This postwar phenomenon will be also discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four examines the expulsions from Ústí and explains the role the military and semi-military forces and the national committees played in these forced "evacuations." It also describes the conflicts between the local administration and the Army as their objectives came into a conflict. This chapter also describes the attitudes toward German minorities in terms of regulations, but also in the way they were portrayed in the national and local periodicals and newspapers. In the conclusion (chapter five), the factors that played a role in the violent acts against Sudeten Germans in Ústí and their expulsions in 1945 are summarized including the Czech-German coexistence factor.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CZECH-GERMAN COEXISTENCE IN ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM PRIOR TO THE “WILD EXPULSIONS”

On July 31, 1945, between 3:30 and 3:40 p.m., a munitions warehouse in Ústí's suburb Krásné Březno exploded followed by a series of detonations so strong that they resembled air raids.<sup>86</sup> Thirty-three people died in the ruins along with immeasurable material losses.<sup>87</sup> For a moment, the city was thrown into panic. For those in the downtown, it was not clear what happened because the Mariánská's rock above the Elbe River prevented residents from seeing the site of the explosions. Within fifteen minutes, however, injured survivors, carrying children in their arms with whatever possessions they could carry, began to appear. Their presence further exacerbated the already heated atmosphere.<sup>88</sup> The word went out that German Werewolves, an underground guerilla group, were behind this terrorist attack. Within minutes of the explosion, Ústí's Germans were attacked simultaneously in different parts of the city. The worst attacks occurred in front of the train station, at the Beneš's bridge where German civilians were thrown into the river and shot, and at the Mírové Square (former Tržní Square) where they were drowned in the firewater tank. At the time, Czech politicians, military leaders, and the media interpreted this explosion as ultimate proof of German evilness

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<sup>86</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 228.

<sup>87</sup> Gerlach, *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing*, 47.

<sup>88</sup> Havel, Kaiser and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*, 20.

and solidified the impossibility of any further Czech-German coexistence, a coexistence that began as early as the thirteenth century during which King Otakar II of the Czech Royal Premyslid Dynasty invited Germans to settle the Bohemia lands.<sup>89</sup>

Chapter Two analyzes the complicated Czech-German relations in a broader context and in Ústí prior to the “wild expulsions.” It argues that while Czech-German relations in a political arena were not without serious controversies, the everyday life of the so-called common Ústí’s residents showed no major issues until the 1930s. Among other reasons, the Great Depression, Hitler’s seizure of power, and the terror of the Sudeten German Party (SdP) supported by a majority of Sudeten Germans, separated the two ethnic groups irrevocably. Nevertheless, even before the 1930s, Germans and Czechs in Ústí lived next to each other rather than together, the language barrier being one of the reasons.

The origins of Ústí reached as far back as the tenth century. The surviving evidence of the medieval period is fragmental, but with certainty, the early settlement gained the status of a royal city between 1233 and 1246.<sup>90</sup> The existence of two churches, one serving Germans and the other serving Czechs, proves the presence of both “ethnic” groups in the early thirteenth century.<sup>91</sup> Most likely, the German newcomers built and

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<sup>89</sup> Kural and Radvanovský, et al., *Sudety pod Hákovým Křížem*, 9-10. The reasons were many, but chiefly to strengthen the King’s political and economic position against growing power of nobility by founding royal cities. Among those other reasons were, for instance, cultural expansion and improvement of common law (by incorporating written law).; *Práce*, No. 74, August 3, 1945.; *Hlas Lidu* [The Voice of People], No. 16, August 14, 1945.; *Rudý Sever* [The Red North], August 1, 1945.

<sup>90</sup> Simultaneously, the Kingdom of Bohemia was integrated in the Holy Roman Empire. With the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, the territory became part of the Habsburg Austrian Empire. From 1867 until 1918, the Kingdom of Bohemia was a part of Austro-Hungarian Empire.

<sup>91</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 16-17.



occupied what became the center of the city, while the Czechs mostly lived in the suburbs, a pattern that remained until the twentieth century.<sup>92</sup> During the fourteenth century, though, the separate German and Czech parts of the city merged more closely than in other towns similar in size and demography. During that time, Czechs led the city's administration.<sup>93</sup> In the sixteenth century, the Habsburg dynasty ascended to the Czech throne (1526) and the German factor began to dominate the Bohemian lands. Resistance to this gradual process culminated at the Battle of White Mountain (1618) when the Protestant Bohemian nobility was brutally suppressed.<sup>94</sup> In 1945, the leading Czech politicians utilized this battle as a symbol of German usurpation and justified the expulsions a "redress" of 1618.<sup>95</sup> In a Czech historical narrative, the period after this battle has been perceived as a "time of darkness." The Czech language deteriorated and became a language of peasants. In Ústí, German replaced Czech as the "official language" during the last decade of the seventeenth century, but the city had already presented itself as German from 1597.<sup>96</sup> In terms of Ústí's significance, it was not until brown-coal mining, the expansion of the Elbe River, and railroad transportation in the second half of the nineteenth century that a small insignificant town of artisans and merchants, burnt out twice during its existence, turned into a prosperous and populous industrial city.<sup>97</sup> In the middle of the nineteenth century, the economic growth of the

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Twenty-seven of the Protestant Bohemian nobility leaders were executed.

<sup>95</sup> Eagle Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 45, 50.

<sup>96</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 41.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 69, 78, 79, 82. In 1750, only about 1,000 people lived in the city. In 1830, the number increased to 1,759. In 1857, there were 6,958 residents. The 1869 census revealed that the "old settlers" became a

Czech middle class combined with the spread of nationalism across Europe caused the Czechs, to once again, fight for their independence.<sup>98</sup> This effort, however, stood in the way of unification of Germany and did not meet with success until the end of World War I when Czechoslovakia, a national state of Czechs and Slovaks, was created. Germans, formerly dominating the Czechs, now became a minority representing approximately 23% percent of the Czechoslovak population.<sup>99</sup> The percentage was much higher in the borderland territories. In Ústí, Germans, now Czechoslovak citizens, represented 81% of the population.<sup>100</sup>

In his speech to the National Assembly on January 22, 1918, the future first Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garigue Masaryk summoned up the new position of Sudeten Germans:

[...] We created our state; therefore, we determine the state-legislative position of Germans who originally came here as immigrants and colonists [...]. No one can blame us that after so many bitter experiences, we try to be careful, but I promise to our minorities lawful and civil equality. American republic preferred a civil war to secession of the South. We will never allow our (ethnically) “mixed” North to secede.<sup>101</sup>

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minority. Out of 10,933 residents only 2,905 were the “locals;” 7, 557 of the new settlers were Czechs. In 1910, almost 40,000 residents lived in Ústí. Regardless to the influx of Czechs, the city remained predominantly German.

<sup>98</sup> For a focused account of the evolution of Czech nationalism see Miroslav Hroch, *In the National Interest: Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Comparative Perspective* (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2000). In historiography, the concept of the Czech national identity is often incorrectly reduced to a rivalry with Germany.

<sup>99</sup> Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik 1933-1938*, In Ronald M. Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem 1933-1938*, 262. Second to Czechoslovakia was Hungary with approximately 800,000 ethnic Germans.

<sup>100</sup> *Sčítání Lidu v Republice Československé ze Dne 15. Února, 1921*, 44.

<sup>101</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Cesta Demokracie. Díl I. Projevy – Články – Rozhovory 1918–1920* [Road to Democracy. Vol. I. Speeches – Articles – Interviews 1918-1920] (Prague: 2003), In Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 165-166.

The unfortunate phrase “immigrants and colonists,” was never forgotten. The leader of the Sudeten German nationalists, Rudolf Longman von Auen, not only left demonstratively during the inauguration of Masaryk, but also made a statement that “high treason was now a duty.”<sup>102</sup> German resistance culminated on March 4, 1919 when fifty-four Germans and two Czechs lost their lives during gunfights. Regardless of the resistance, the Czechoslovak government did not intend to give up its industrialized and strategic borderland territories. By the end of November, the Army was dispatched to the borderlands.<sup>103</sup>

In mid-October 1918, a rumor ran through Ústí that a national state of Czechs and Slovaks was soon to be created. The news caused a great tension among both Ústí’s German nationalists and social democrats. During an assembly on October 18, the main presenter, the previously mentioned R. L. von Auen, recalling the notion of self-determination, pronounced Czech-German coexistence impossible. Germans in Ústí and elsewhere in the North demanded legitimation of a province Deutschbohmen that would be politically independent of Czechoslovakia. While no demonstrations occurred on October 28, 1918 when Czechoslovakia was formally created, the city’s administration,

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<sup>102</sup> Johann Wolfgang Brugel, *Tsechen and Deutsche* (Munich: 1967), In Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem 1933-1938*, 8.

<sup>103</sup> Zimmermann, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 35.; Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 169. Edvard Beneš’s Memorandum III, in which he intentionally trivialized the Sudeten problem by, for instance, reducing the number of Sudeten Germans by one million, negatively influenced the Czech-German relation. The Saint-Germain Peace Treaty (Sep 10, 1919) sanctioned territorial claims made by the Czechoslovak government.; Adrian Von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, eds. *Vysídlení Němců a Proměny Českého Pohraničí 1945-1951, Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, I [Transfer of Germans and Transformation of Czech Border Regions 1945-1951, Czechs and Germans until 1945] (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa Press, 2010), 82. On September 1919, the Sudetenland formally became a part of Czechoslovakia. The Czech-German relations further damaged the absence (involuntary) of Germans in the creation and ratification of the new Constitution.

now functioning as a district national committee, did not fully accept this new status. During November and December 1918, Ústí suffered from the Spanish flu and a critical lack of food supplies. Widespread looting reached an uncontrollable level. In the middle of this crisis, on November 14, Ústí's Germans again demonstrated against their new status as a minority group. On December 11, the military leaders of the Army appeared in the office of Ústí's German mayor H. Bohmann. The very same day, a Czechoslovak flag was hung from the district administration building. A crowd of Ústí's Czechs along with soldiers gathered to sing the national anthem. A week later, on December 18, German representatives acknowledged Ústí as a Czechoslovak city.<sup>104</sup>

The Sudeten German Gerda Eckelt, recalling the creation of Czechoslovakia, wrote in her memoir that her parents, in their hearts and minds, remained Austrians (Austro-Hungarians), but they were willing to accept the new situation and, with time, adjusted to it. Not leaving what they considered their home was the most important factor.<sup>105</sup> A Czech, Josef Šosvald, perceived the fate of Germans in Ústí similarly in certain aspects:

Germans came to the Bohemian lands as colonists 700 hundred years ago. We could say that these Germans living in our borderlands did not associate themselves with Germany. They had their own culture and traditions connected to the development of the Czech state and later with Vienna [...]. On October 28, 1918, our Austrian Germans, intermixing with the "locals" for centuries, were confused. They did not like the idea of Czechoslovakia. Germany had enough of its own problems and did not want them. In desperation, they came up with this funny idea of

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<sup>104</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 160 -161. The German district representatives decided to assign twelve seats (out of sixty) to Czechs who demanded representation in the city's administration. Subsequently, three out of these twelve Czechs were elected into the city's council; something unimaginable during the existence of the Habsburg Monarchy.

<sup>105</sup> Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov?*, 51.

*Deutschböhmen* [...]. No one changed the borders, though, and so they became part of Czechoslovakia.<sup>106</sup>

In the new republic, Sudeten Germans believed they were discriminated against in a number of areas. The controversial legislation issued on February 27, 1920 establishing a “Czechoslovak” language as a state official language limited, for instance, German members of the House and Senate in parliamentary debates because of the language barrier.<sup>107</sup> The application of this law was less controversial in the regions. Historians agree that while this legislation provided advantages for Czechs and Slovaks, Germans were not seriously affected because most of them lived in the areas where they represented 20% or more of the population as, for instance, in Ústí. Thus, they could communicate with the city’s administration and the legislative bodies in German.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, the legislation did not interfere whatsoever with private lives. However, the psychological effect was often more damaging than the particular legislation. A Czech liberal journalist Hubert Ripka wrote that it had to be frustrating for Germans from whom a loyalty to the state was required, to see signs in trains and some other public places written first in Czech and last in German.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Šosvald, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí*, 39.

<sup>107</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 180, 182, 185. “Czechoslovak” language did not exist, but this term was used for political purposes to imply that Czechoslovakia was a state of Czechs and Slovaks. Germans harshly criticized this particular legislation because, they argued, it intended to humiliate, enslave, and destroy German nation within the boundaries of Czechoslovakia. It has been estimated that in 1920 only from 10 to 12 German members of Parliament spoke Czech and about 25% somewhat understood it.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 183. If the minorities consisted of 20% or more, they could speak their language when communicating with local administrators. If the minorities consisted of 50% or more, their language had to be used along with Czech or Slovak language. If a location consisted of 3000 or more inhabitants (regardless of ethnicity), than Czech or Slovak became one of the mandatory official languages. However, Czechs could communicate with the state and local organs regardless of their percentage in a particular location.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 186- 187.

The attitude of the common Germans tended to be practical. The experience of Eckelt, to an extent, reflected the experience of many Sudeten Germans. She recalled that her parents insisted on learning the state official language. Her older sister, before attending the Ústí's German Business Academy, attended a Czech monastery school for a year. The more frequent practice, however, was to learn the language, not only in Ústí, but across Czechoslovakia, through "exchange programs." Czech children stayed with German families, usually during summer breaks, and in exchange, German children spent a similar period in Czech families. She, herself, went to "Czechia" six times for four to six weeks.<sup>110</sup>

A state bureaucracy became another area of consistent frustration. During the twenties, especially in the cities, the number of Czech state officials doubled or tripled, while the number of Germans in the similar positions decreased by a half.<sup>111</sup> Many Germans lost these jobs because they did not meet language requirements. The preference of Czech bureaucrats in the "German" regions was often motivated by distrust. The higher the position the more likely Czechs would hold it. Germans themselves felt threatened and believed their communities had been purposefully denationalized.<sup>112</sup> In Ústí, between 1921 and 1930, the number of Germans employed at post offices decreased from 90, 5 % to 54 %, at railroads from 88 % to 56 %, in public administration and jurisdiction the number decreased from 86,5 % to 65 %.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov*, 50.

<sup>111</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 25.

<sup>112</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, I, 88.

<sup>113</sup> Majewski, 238.

Furthermore, in 1924, legislation intending to decrease state officials by 10 % affected Germans disproportionately because of the language requirements. In Ústí, out of 115 positions deemed unnecessary, 112 belonged to Germans.<sup>114</sup> Altogether, between 1919 and 1936, up to 60,000 thousand Germans lost their jobs as state employees due to the above-mentioned policies and legislation.<sup>115</sup>

In addition, Sudeten Germans frequently criticized the new platform of public education. Both ethnic groups viewed language as a crucial part of a national identity. Germans, further believing that their language was the reason for their cultural dominance, perceived any restrictions in this area as a threat to their national existence.<sup>116</sup> While they had not been prevented from gaining education in German and the mandatory proficiency in Czech did not apply to German teachers even as state employees, they objected to the liquidation of some of their schools and opening Czech schools in what they considered “their” borderlands.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, they harshly criticized the fact that public education fell under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Its competencies included approval of textbooks, syllabi, or teaching positions mainly to eliminate nationalistic influence on German youth.<sup>118</sup>

Before WWI, Ústí had only one Czech private school in Krásné Březno founded in 1897. Šosvald recalled that his father was one of the attendees. From the very beginning, the school became a target of Ústí’s German “chauvinists.” When physically

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 25-26.

<sup>116</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 94 - 95.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 243.

attacked, Šosvald's grandmother decided to send her son to the German school instead.<sup>119</sup>

With the creation of Czechoslovakia, particularly with the Decree No. 189/1919, the situation changed.<sup>120</sup> The first postwar Czech elementary school was founded in 1919; a middle school in Krásné Březno followed a year later. The first Czech high school opened in 1920. Regarding high schools, controversies arose around the mandatory language requirements. While Czech became a mandatory part of the German high school curriculum in 1923/24, it was not until 1926/27 when German became mandatory in Czech high schools.<sup>121</sup>

In September 1925, Ústí's German nationalists demonstrated at Mírové Square against unequal financial grants for the new minority schools.<sup>122</sup> Needless to say, German schools in Ústí reflected the overall high quality of German public education. Germans, even after 1918, kept their dominance in certain regions (even "Czech" regions) because of the excellent educational system developed in the pre-republic period.<sup>123</sup> For example, Ústí's Business Academy belonged among the best of its kind in Czechoslovakia. Not only Germans, Czechs, and Slovaks attended it, but also students from Syria, the Soviet Union, or even the United States.<sup>124</sup> Eckelt, attending this Academy, recalled mixed classes attended by Germans and a few Czechs. With some of the Czech students, she

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<sup>119</sup> Šosvald, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí*, 18-19.

<sup>120</sup> Karel Řeháček, *Školství v Říšské Župě Sudety* [Education in the Reich Sudetengau], In Václav Kural and Zdeněk Radvanovský, et al., *Sudety pod Hákovým Křížem*, 379. Based on this law, a state minority school could be open in the location with at least forty children that do not speak the language in which the existing local public school(s) is/are teaching.

<sup>121</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 25.

<sup>122</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 183.

<sup>123</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 221.

<sup>124</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 184.



became so close that these friendships survived both the annexation and the postwar expulsions. On the question of the coexistence, she insisted: “No matter how hard I try, I do not remember any animosity between us. I would say that both nations, after the initial heated resistance, more among politicians, learned to live peacefully next to each other, but the language barrier often prevented closer relations. We each had our circles of friends and participated in our social, physical, and cultural activities. It was only later when I, too, succumbed to nationalism.”<sup>125</sup> According to several other accounts of Ústí’s Czechs, gathered in a two-volume collection of memoirs, friendships between the two ethnic groups, especially among children, had not been unusual at all, but only until the late 1930s.<sup>126</sup>

One of the nicknames of Ústí was “Small Paris” referring to a vibrant cultural life originating during the industrial expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>127</sup> In comparison with other cities, similar in size, the music scene, especially, was so exceptional that Ústí also became known as a city of music.<sup>128</sup> Germans understood culture as a way of developing and sustaining a national identity, but it was also a competition with other cities that played its role. Furthermore, inflation in Germany (1923) and persecution of Jews beginning in 1933, forced many German world-class artists to immigrate. Several of them chose Ústí as either a temporary or a permanent

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<sup>125</sup> Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov?* 45, 55.

<sup>126</sup> Karel Zelený, ed., *Vyhnání Čechů z Pohraničí 1938: Vzpomínky I* [Expulsion of the Czechs from Borderlands 1938: Memories I] (Prague: Institute for International Relations, 1999), 109-110 and Karel Zelený, ed., *Vyhnání a Život Čechů v Pohraničí 1938-1945: Vzpomínky II* [Expulsion and Life of Czech Population in Borderlands 1938-1945: Memories II] (Prague: Institute for International Relations, 1999), 85.

<sup>127</sup> Šosvald, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí*, 7.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

destination.<sup>129</sup> Most importantly, two of Ústí's brown-coal tycoons, German Jews J. Petschka and Ed. J. Wienmann, not only belonged among the richest men in Czechoslovakia, but they were also generous philanthropists financially contributing to the city's prosperity and expansion in endless ways.<sup>130</sup>

Between 1918 and 1938, with a few rather insignificant exceptions, no major "national" disputes had taken place on the cultural scene. The City's Theatre, built in 1909 by renowned Viennese architect Alexander Graf, became the pride of the town. Interestingly, the first director was a famous Czech actress Marie Pospíšilová who was later replaced by Austrian Alfred Huttig. He served as the director until 1944 when the theatre closed due to its financial problems. Beginning in 1919, Czech plays and operas, first performed in German, became a part of the theatre's program. On May 18, 1919, the first play in Czech was shown. A second one followed two years later. The scheduling of Czech plays, operas, and concerts, mostly outside the main season, caused tensions. Eventually, though, both sides found a compromise.<sup>131</sup> Similarly, "Czech" days were held in the cinemas run by German management. This became a rather common practice in the period between the wars.<sup>132</sup>

In addition, countless associations, sports clubs, restaurants, and cafés presented another way for Ústí's residents to gather, but to gather mostly along ethnic lines. Czechs had their own cultural center, Česká Beseda in Krásné Březno. The German

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<sup>129</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 188-189.

<sup>130</sup> Šosvald, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí*, 93, 103.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 188-195.

<sup>132</sup> Šosvald, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí*, 64. Interestingly, Ústí, not Prague as commonly believed, had shown a first film with sound in Czechoslovakia.

Tennis Club or Czech Tourist Club represented two of the many popular sports associations at the time. In his memoir, Šosvald nostalgically recalled his youthful years filled with a variety of physical activities and the rivalry between Germans and Czechs in sports like soccer, volleyball, swimming, or cross-country skiing. He stressed, however, that it was all about competition not nationalism. Interestingly, even in September 1938, after the last race, Czech and German athletes gathered in the local pub, ignoring the national hysteria. On the international sports scene, he recalled, the Czechs would celebrate German successes as genuinely as Germans would celebrate Czech victories.<sup>133</sup>

Among all associations and clubs, two of them stand out more than others because of their nationalistic orientation that, in the late 1930s, took a radical form. It was the German Turnverein and its counterpart the Czech Sokol, both with a long tradition originating in the period of the Habsburg Monarchy. In its simplest form, these were gymnast clubs for the youth. Eckelt joined Turnverein in 1934 and, according to her, only because she wanted to improve at gymnastics and socialize with her friends. However, Turnverein, always, from its beginnings was the carrier of German nationalism and with the growing tension it became more and more radicalized. Eckelt believed that those in Germany knew Turnverein, with its physically and ideologically trained youth, would be the best “human material” for spreading the national socialist ideology “[...]. I see, we were nothing more for them than a material to be used, but I cannot imagine my youth without this organization. We were faithful idealists.”<sup>134</sup> Many members of the radical

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>134</sup> Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov?* 67, 93.

semi-military Freikorps that terrorized Czechs, Jews, and German antifascist in the period before the Munich Conference, were recruited from Turnverein. The Czech Sokol, more focused on social and communal unity, too, became increasingly understood as a pillar of Czech nationalism.

The Great Depression in the 1930s began to affect the Czech-German relations negatively, turning social and economic issues into political ones. The unemployment in the Sudetenland was twice as high as in the interior of the country, mainly because the borderland industries depended more on exported products.<sup>135</sup> Out of the twelve districts with highest unemployment, eleven were those with predominantly German populations.<sup>136</sup> While historians still argue about the extent of the economic disadvantages of Sudeten Germans during the 1930s, the latest findings do not confirm discrimination by law.<sup>137</sup> However, the crisis in the Sudetenland was both underestimated and addressed inadequately. Additionally, even if the Czechoslovak government tried to address this more effectively (in its latest phase) by, for example, employing Germans in the state sectors, the local “hraničáři,” Czech state employees, often boycotted it.<sup>138</sup>

The economic crisis did not avoid Ústí, an industrial city with glass, ceramics, food, textiles, heavy machines, and most importantly, a chemical industry. These industries relied heavily on exports and therefore underwent not one, but two economic

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<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, even before the Great Depression, the dominant industries in the Sudetenland, especially textile and consumer, suffered disproportionally due to the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy. Regardless of the causes, the Czechoslovak government was blamed for this situation.

<sup>136</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 31-32. In 1937, all twelve districts with the highest unemployment were “German” districts.

<sup>137</sup> Volker Zimmermann, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 38.

<sup>138</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 284. “Hraničáři” came to the Sudetenland after the creation of Czechoslovakia.

crises. The first one occurred between 1922 and 1923, mainly as a consequence of Austro-Hungary's dissolution and the subsequent shrinking market. The chemical Schicht factory, for instance, lost 75% of its market.<sup>139</sup> The major crisis, though, began in 1931 as a part of the worldwide Great Depression. In Ústí's region, it lasted until 1938 when both Germany and the rest of Czechoslovakia had already recovered.<sup>140</sup> The high unemployment among Ústí's Germans varied throughout the years. In 1932, 2335 people (3.2%) lost their jobs, which was the highest stage of unemployment. However, the family members of the unemployed had been affected as well. Between 1933-37, from 14.4% to 18.1 % of Ústí's citizens had been receiving free food stamps.<sup>141</sup> By 1937, the number of unemployed decreased by approximately 1,000 workers as compared to 1936. Many of them, though, worked on a part-time basis only.<sup>142</sup> In addition, a common pattern of genuine misunderstandings often occurred due to the growing tension between Germans and Czechs. Historian Elizabeth Wiskemann gives an example of a different "national" interpretation of the same event.

When the Ústí's (German) Chemical Company's resources dried up, its shares were accumulating in the hands of the (Czech) Živnostenská Bank. Through the influence of the bank, Dr. Bash, a Czech managing director was appointed in 1934; the head-quarters were removed to Prague, and the proportion of the employees were gradually adapted to the population ratio in the various factories of the company, including Ústí. This chiefly involved the dismissal of German technicians because economy measures were indispensable and that their ignorance of Czech was a too great practical disadvantage in what was, after all, a Czechoslovak concern. When economic recovery began, two out of these ten German engineers were successfully reinstated. It is characteristic of the Czech-German

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<sup>139</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 119.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 178-179.

<sup>142</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 32.

situation that while the Czechs believed that only these two applied to return, the Germans were convinced that the other eight were kept out because they had not learnt Czech in the meantime.<sup>143</sup>

Wiskemann also brought up the fact that the 1930s economic breakdown literally buried several Sudetenland villages. She mentioned, for example, Bílý Kostelec (Weisskirchen) with three textile factories employing eight hundred people. In 1931, they closed down and in 1937, these buildings were pulled down. “Perhaps no one but the working people whose lives depended upon those factories can altogether realize the psychological effect of the demolition. The village has become a cemetery.”<sup>144</sup>

Dissatisfied with minority politics of Czechoslovak politicians alongside desperate economic conditions, Sudeten Germans turned their hopes to Konrad Henlein, a leader of the national socialist Sudeten German Party (SdP), and a former leader of Turnverein.<sup>145</sup> Henlein, unlike the “activists,” promised a national unification while leaning on neighboring Germany’s growing power.<sup>146</sup> He himself greatly contributed to the SdP’s phenomenal success. While indecisive, soft-spoken, and a mediocre politician, he had the ability to attract common Sudeten Germans by expressing, in a “simple, sincere, and undramatic way, their fears and hopes.”<sup>147</sup> National euphoria spread

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<sup>143</sup> Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans*, 192.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>145</sup> Majewski, *Sudetští Němci 1848-1948*, 267. Some historians argue that even if the Czechoslovak government was more willing to negotiate with Sudeten Germans, it would not guarantee their loyalty because most of them never identified with Czechoslovakia and placed national interests above republican values. Therefore, their loyalty was only temporary and depended on outer conditions. The Czechoslovak politicians were aware of it, and it strengthened their unwillingness to compromise, which turned into a vicious cycle, because this uncompromising attitude strengthened German nationalism.

<sup>146</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 26. German “activist” political parties, most notably Social Democrats and Agrarians, willing to cooperate with the Czechoslovak government (unlike the “negativists”), failed to improve the status of German minorities.

<sup>147</sup> Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem 1933-1938*, 68.

quickly among the Sudeten German population. In 1935, two-thirds of them chose the SdP in parliamentary elections. In 1938, the SdP received votes from eight to nine (out of ten) Germans. A mass approval with the SdP politics stemmed from believing in national discrimination as well as economic and social inequality. Furthermore, the SdP not only utilized a modern election campaign partly funded by Nazi Germany, but it employed a variety of forceful practices. Also importantly, Sudeten Germans, more than any other German minority group across Central-Eastern Europe, became exposed to a massive propaganda from Nazi Germany. From 1937, the SdP fully supported Hitler's plan for Greater Germany, a plan that included destruction of Czechoslovakia.<sup>148</sup>

In Ústí, a city with predominantly labor class voters, German social democrats traditionally held a dominant position.<sup>149</sup> It changed in 1935 when the SdP received the majority of votes in both the communal and parliamentary elections.<sup>150</sup> The SdP benefited from a previous dissolution of German Nationalist Democrats (DNP) and German National-Socialist Labor Party (DNSAP). Furthermore, the workers who previously gave their votes to the Czechoslovak Communists (KSČ) or German Social Democrats now chose the SdP. However, an opposition to the SdP existed not only among Czechs, but among Sudeten Germans as well. Between 1936 and 1938, several demonstrations against the politics of the SdP took place. The sheer number of

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<sup>148</sup> Zimmermann, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 51.; Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem 1933-1938*, 11. Initially, Hitler's plans for Czechoslovakia were vague, but when the Sudeten crisis peaked it was used as "a new and quite novel foreign policy tool-exploiting an ethnic German population as a fifth column to undermine a country from within."

<sup>149</sup> Followed by German nationalists (DNP) and German National-Socialist Labor Party (DNSAP).

<sup>150</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 162.

the demonstrators, though, reflected the opinion of the majority. The antifascist demonstrations counted between twelve and fifteen thousand participants, while the SdP usually gathered between forty and seventy thousand.<sup>151</sup> In his memoir, Šosvald recalled solidarity between Czechs and German antifascists during these demonstrations, but also a sense of futility and despair hoping for a miracle.<sup>152</sup> In Ústí and elsewhere in the borderlands, the national, political, and racial intolerance intensified daily. On September 11, 1937, young members of the SdP, for example, destroyed an art exhibition of the local German Jew Ernst Neuschul, who then was forced to move out.<sup>153</sup> Along with physical threats and attacks, boycotting one's business was the most effective tactic. Ústí's Czech butcher Houdek, as one of the many examples, was threatened with a boycott if he did not place the SdP flags in the front of his shop. As 81% of the prewar Ústí's residents were Germans, his business would not survive.<sup>154</sup> The SdP also organized a pre-election "testing" by ordering all residents to show their support by hanging flags from their windows. Then, members of the SdP walked the city making notes of houses without flags. Into these houses, confidants were moved in to force the residents to support the SdP. As one observer noted, a previously socialist-democratic city, became overwhelmingly Heinlein's.<sup>155</sup> A number of testimonies collected by Zelený were similar in their content. The common Czechs and Germans in Ústí enjoyed friendly relations

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<sup>151</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 128.

<sup>152</sup> Šosvald, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí*, 102.

<sup>153</sup> Ústí had a small Jewish community that is not in any details discussed in this study. Majority of Ústí's Jews never returned from the concentration camps and suffered incomparably. For more details on Ústí's Jewish community see Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*.

<sup>154</sup> Brandes, *Sudetští Němci v Krizovém Roce 1938*, 90.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84.



that, however, dramatically changed with the terror of the SdP culminating in 1938.<sup>156</sup>

Also commonly mentioned in the testimonies was the fact that the radical Sudeten Germans, in their harsh treatment of Czechs, Jews, and German antifascists, surpassed in cruelty the harsh treatment rendered by the Reich Germans. The long-time mayor, German social democrat Leopold Polzel, for instance, was chained and carried in an open truck through the city while the young members of the SdP threw stones at him. One of the Reich Germans, a member of the Gestapo, purposefully saved his life by arresting him and later releasing.<sup>157</sup>

The violence in the Sudetenland worsened after the annexation of Austria on March 12, 1938, resulting in a flight of those attacked, threatened, or afraid, into the interior of the country. The breaking point occurred on September 29, 1938 when Great Britain, France, and Italy signed the Munich Agreement by which terms Czechoslovakia surrendered its border regions to Nazi Germany; a victory for the majority of Sudeten Germans and a tragedy and humiliation for the Czechs. A flight from the borderlands, now resembling a mass exodus, continued.<sup>158</sup> Until March 29, 1945, Czechs who remained in the borderlands could elect to have Czecho-Slovak citizenship with a possibility of moving out in the future. Those that did not choose this option gained,

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<sup>156</sup> Zelený, ed., *Vzpomínky I* and *Vzpomínky II*.

<sup>157</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 200.

<sup>158</sup> Detlef Brandes, *Germanizovat a Vysídlit: Nacistická Národnostní Politika v Českých Zemích* [To Germanize and Transfer: Nazi Nationalistic Politics in the Czech Lands] (Prague: Prostor, 2015), 127. Approximately, 379,000 people fled the borderlands. This number included at least 10,000 German antifascists and 18, 000 Jews. Almost 500,000 Czechs remained in the annexed regions.

automatically, a German citizenship (Staatsangehörigkeit), but they did not become citizens of Reich Germany (Reichsbürger) as the Nazi racial criteria restricted it.<sup>159</sup>

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On early Sunday afternoon, October 9, 1938, Wehrmacht units arrived in Ústí enthusiastically welcomed by thousands of Ustí's Germans (see Appendix B.1).<sup>160</sup> On the very same day, the Gestapo and the SA units began arresting politically active enemies of the Nazi regime according to the lists prepared by the members of the SdP ahead of time.<sup>161</sup> In her memoir, Eckelt vividly remembered this day. "Finally, Sunday! We could not wait any longer; after an early lunch we ran to find a good spot to await the German army. The air was full of excitement; houses adorned with German flags and swastikas; the crowds screaming and welcoming the soldiers. It was an unbelievably happy day."<sup>162</sup> A week later more than 100,000 Sudeten Germans assembled at the local stadium to celebrate the liberation with Henlein as one of the key speakers (see Appendix B.2).

On October 30, 1938, with Henlein as its leader, the Sudetengau was established. Fully modeled on Nazi Germany, the most significant feature was the interconnection of a state and local administration with the leading Nazi party (NSDAP) on all levels.<sup>163</sup> The president of Ústí's governmental district had been Ústí's resident since 1920, Hans Krebs. He was awarded this position for his active role in the destruction of

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<sup>159</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, 156.

<sup>160</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 203.

<sup>161</sup> Zimmermann, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 81.; Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 203.

<sup>162</sup> Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov?*, 92-93.

<sup>163</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 205. The SdP was incorporated into NSDAP.

Czechoslovakia and his uncompromising persecution of the opposition.<sup>164</sup> From the very beginning of the annexation, tensions existed between Sudeten German politicians and administrators and their counterparts from the Third Reich arriving in great numbers. The objectives of the local Germans, in all areas, became secondary to the goals of Nazi Germany. In terms of germanization, the Reich Germans adopted a rather practical approach, considering the needs of the economy even if the ultimate goal was to wipe out the Czech ethnic group entirely by either assimilation or liquidation. Sudeten Germans, to the contrary, aimed at cleansing the former Sudetenland of Czechs as quickly as possible regardless of the actual necessity for industrial workers.<sup>165</sup> To their great frustration, as the war progressed, more Czechs (among other nationalities) from the Protectorate kept replacing (in the workplace) Ústí's Germans mobilized for the war. In 1944, 84,351 Czechs from the Protectorate worked in the Sudetengau.<sup>166</sup>

One of the weakest segments in the historiography of the relation between Czechs and Germans in Ústí is the period of the Nazi occupation/liberation, especially in regards to everyday life. At the end of the war, the Nazis purposefully destroyed much of the documentation. Furthermore, the totalitarian regime, by its nature, did not allow for openly expressed opinions or behaviors. The oral histories collected after the war by

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 204-205.

<sup>165</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, 163.

<sup>166</sup> Volker Zimmermann, "Ríšska Župa Sudety v Poslednom Roku Vojny" [The Reichsgau Sudetenland in the Last Year of the War], In Detlef Brandes, Edita Ivaničková, and Jiří Pešek, eds. *Výnutený Rozchod: Vyhnanie a Vysídlenie z Československa 1938-1947 v Porovnaní s Poľskom, Maďarskom a Juhosláviou* [Forced Separation: Expulsions and Expropriation from Czechoslovakia 1938-1947 in Comparison with Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia] (Bratislava: Veda, SAV, 1999), 46.

Zelený, with one exception, included only Ústí's residents who fled the borderlands shortly before or after the annexation. Previously cited Šosvald, too, fled and returned in 1945. Eckelt, however, lived in Ústí's until 1944 working for the SdP. Because of the lack of sources, the picture of this particular period is less specific and includes suggestions or even speculations. Furthermore, it considers both ethnic groups rather separately than in interactions.

As noted in chapter one, the germanization process in the Sudetengau was more rapid than in the Protectorate. In Ústí, in particular, all Czech cinemas, theatres, associations, clubs and libraries closed; the Czech periodicals were banned.<sup>167</sup> During the fall of 1938, schools closed as well. Czech children could attend German elementary and middle schools, but not high schools and above. Businesses had been often officially closed as well. The Czech language could not be spoken in public places. To root out Czech historical traditions, national holidays were not permitted to be celebrated.<sup>168</sup> Regardless these serious restrictions, approximately three thousand Czechs remained in the annexed Ústí. Two thousand chose Czecho-Slovak citizenship; a choice that made them, automatically, suspicious to the Nazi Regime.<sup>169</sup> The remaining one thousand gained German citizenship.<sup>170</sup> Having a German spouse was one of the reasons for this.<sup>171</sup> Another reason for not leaving included a lack of connections in the Protectorate,

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<sup>167</sup> Brandes, *Germanizovat a Vysídlit*, 107.

<sup>168</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 210.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.; von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, 157.

<sup>170</sup> Brandes, *Germanizovat a Vysídlit*, 124. However, they had to meet two requirements: to live in the annexed regions before October 10, 1938 and to be born there before 1910. Their wives/husbands and children automatically received German citizenship as well.

<sup>171</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, 155.

but also because some had deep roots in the region. Those who did not have this connection such as younger people, singles, divorced, couples without children, widowers, and state employees who came after 1918, often decided to leave.<sup>172</sup>

As the war progressed and more Sudeten Germans had been mobilized for the war, those Czechs who remained in Ústí became subjected to *Totaleinsatz*, a mobilization of civilians for a war effort. Unlike the prisoners of war and prisoners from the concentration camps working in Usti's factories under brutal conditions, the local Czechs (and those Czechs from the Protectorate also subjected to *Totaleinsatz*) received a salary for their 12-hour working days.<sup>173</sup> Their treatment, most likely, differed depending on the workplace. In the glass factory, for example, they could not hold any supervising position that they might have held before the war.<sup>174</sup> It is only a speculation, but the local Czechs who worked in the Schicht's Chemical Factory might have been treated more humanely because the owners did not change with the annexation. The Schicht's Factory, throughout its existence, had a reputation of an excellent social policies. Also, interestingly, during the first republic, the owners required their German employees to speak Czech. Nationality played no role in the evaluation of the workers and their promotions.<sup>175</sup>

More research has been done on the Sudeten Germans during the annexation period, especially by German historian Volker Zimmermann in *The Sudeten Germans in the Nazi State* and in the "Sudetengau in the Last Year of the War." Because of the scarce

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<sup>172</sup> Kural and Radvanovský, et al., *Sudety pod Hákovým Křížem*, 68.

<sup>173</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 211.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 120-121.

evidence and the limited objectivity under the totalitarian regime, the author analyzed reactions of the Sudeten Germans to certain events to find out, for instance, to which extent they believed in the Nazi ideology; and thus, indirectly, where they stood in relation to their Czech neighbors.

One of these events was the Crystal Night, a pogrom against Jews (in some places also against Czechs) on November 8 and 9, 1938; an event officially interpreted as a spontaneous act of “angry masses.” In agreement with historian Benda, Zimmermann concluded that the perpetrators were members of the SS and SA units, not the common people as the officials reported.<sup>176</sup> With a few exceptions, the common Germans did not participate in violence against Jews or Czechs. According to the situational reports and several testimonies, the pogrom was criticized by German civilians at some places. Disillusionment or indifference to the pogrom was also reported.<sup>177</sup> Hesitancy was another description of the attitude to the persecutions and physical attacks of the political opponents, Czechs and German antifascists.<sup>178</sup> In Ústí, the Jewish synagogue was destroyed not during the Crystal Night, but on December 31, 1945. In reaction to violence, Eckelt maintained that only a very few heroes existed, but so many of those feared for their lives, something difficult to imagine during peacetime.<sup>179</sup>

Regardless of the violence, the elections to the Reich Parliament on December 4, 1938, proved their unaltered attitude as 98.9 % of Sudeten Germans said “yes” to the

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<sup>176</sup> Benda, *Útěk a Vyhánění z Pohraničí Českých Zemí*, 66.; Zimmermann, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 71, 92.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>179</sup> Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov*, 33-34.

Nazi regime. Both Czech and German historians stress that while the results had probably been falsified and the population pressured, it indicated, nevertheless, that the majority of Sudeten Germans said “yes” from a place of a conviction.<sup>180</sup> Ninety-three of votes against the Nazis belonged to Czechs.<sup>181</sup> Out of 27,427 votes “against,” only 2,169 came from the Ústí’s district.<sup>182</sup> Another indicator of the approval of the Nazi regime was the growth of the NSDAP members. Voluntarily, out of 3 million Sudeten Germans, 1.3 million sought their membership in the Nazi NSDAP.<sup>183</sup> The euphoria of the annexation, the military victories of the Wehrmacht, and especially the elimination of unemployment played an important role. From 250,000 unemployed Germans in October 1938, the number decreased to 45, 479 by the end of April 1939.<sup>184</sup> However, rather than glorification of National Socialism that the majority of Sudeten Germans perceived uncritically partly because of the heavy propaganda, it was the notion of self-determination that was actually central to them.<sup>185</sup> Their tragedy was that in the quest for self-determination, the SdP sought out help in Hitler’s NSDAP.<sup>186</sup> Eckelt admits that what attracted her to this was Greater Germany in which Sudeten Germans would not be second class citizens.<sup>187</sup> In her memoir, she does not reflect critically on her work for the

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<sup>180</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, 139.

<sup>181</sup> Václav Kural, “Smýšlení Obyvatelstva” [What Did the Population Thought], In Kural and Radvanovský, et al., *Sudety pod Hákovým Křížem* [‘Sudetenland ‘under the Swastika] (Ústí nad Labem: Albis International Press, 2002), 323.; Zimmerman, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 114-115.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>183</sup> Kural, “Smýšlení Obyvatelstva,” 317.

<sup>184</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, 145.

<sup>185</sup> Zimmerman, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 51, 99.

<sup>186</sup> Eckelt, *Kde je Můj Domov?*, 224.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 90.

SdP from October 1940 to 1944 a possible effort to downplay that aspect as inconsequential.<sup>188</sup>

In 1943, the mood of the Sudeten Germans began to change. With the military losses, especially with the defeat at Stalingrad (February 1943), Sudeten Germans started to question their future. As one of the situational reports mentioned, “German salutation lacked previous enthusiasm.” Heinlein urged them to be grateful and faithful to Hitler the “liberator,” but also threatened them with the supposed Beneš’s plan to kill one million Sudeten Germans and send the rest to Siberia. Sudeten Germans were in a different situation than the population in Germany. While they wished for the war to end, they also feared it because of the retaliation. That may partly explain why no resistance to the Nazi regime took place in the annexed regions even when Germany’s defeat became evident.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, with every other loss of the Wehrmacht and with the invasion of Normandy (June 1944), Czechs, especially those from the Protectorate working in the annexed regions, showed more confidence and a greater animosity toward Germans.<sup>190</sup>

Ústí, while spared of the last war atrocities, was bombarded by the Allies on April 17 and April 19, 1945, leaving behind more than 500 dead and a severely destroyed city (see Appendix B.3). The air raids only worsened the chaos caused by the fleeing SS Army units and the transports of prisoners passing through the city. Furthermore, alongside the approximately 60,000 local Germans and 3,000 local Czechs Ústí, was

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 122, 221.

<sup>189</sup> Zimmerman, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 47.

<sup>190</sup> Zimmermann, “Říšská Župa Sudety v Poslednom Roku Vojny,” In Brandes, Ivaničková, Pešek, eds. *Výnutený Rozchod*, 46.



overcrowded by French, Soviet, Polish, British, and Ukrainian prisoners of war, but also by Germans coming from bombarded German cities and thousands of other refugees fleeing the Eastern Front.<sup>191</sup> The infrastructure collapsed, the housing situation became critical, and stealing and looting occurred daily (see Appendix B.4). The fear of the German population further worsened with the realization that the city might be liberated by the Red Army known for its brutal attitude toward German civilians especially against women. These fears proved to be validated in the worst possible sense. It has not been completely understood by scholars, why, when there was a chance, they did not leave. Among the possible reasons were issues with transportation, the speed by which the Red Army was moving, and a disbelief in a hard punishment.<sup>192</sup> Historians von Arburg and Staněk suggest Sudeten Germans did not expect such extreme measures of punishment because there was no war in neither the Sudetenland nor the Protectorate and therefore the Nazi atrocities were somewhat hidden from a daily reality. Based on the testimonies, many of them hoped that only the radical Nazis would be persecuted and once the first wave of anti-German radicalism subsided, life would go back to normal. This logic, could at least partly explain why they did not flee before the borders closed by the end of May, 1945. Another reason had to be that Ústí was their home for generations.

### Conclusion/Summary

Czech-German coexistence in Ústí originated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when Germans, by the invitation of the Czech King Otakar II, settled the Bohemian lands. With the

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<sup>191</sup> Vladimír Kaiser, “Konec Války a Vyhnání Němců z Ústecka” [The End of the War and the Expulsion of Germans from Ustecko], In Brandes, Ivaničková, Pešek, eds. *Výnutený Rozchod*, 157.

<sup>192</sup> Staněk, *Perzekuce*, 19.

exception of a brief medieval period, Czechs tried to liberate themselves from German control. Their chance came at the end of WWI when, on October 28, 1918, Czechoslovakia, a national state of Czechs and Slovaks, declared its independence from Austria-Hungary. Germans, formerly belonging to the Habsburg Monarchy for over four hundred years, became an unwilling 23% minority of the state's population. In Ústí, however, Germans represented 81% percent. While the turbulent beginnings gradually turned to a more practical attitude, Germans felt discriminated against and were treated as second-class citizens in a number of areas, including formal education, language legislation, and bureaucracy. President Masaryk supposedly stated, "We gained too much; we only became a worse version of Austro-Hungary."<sup>193</sup> The common Ústí's Czechs and Germans, however, experienced almost harmonious relations until the Great Depression.

The protracted economic crisis affecting Sudeten Germans disproportionately contributed to the popularity of Heinlein's national socialist Sudeten German Party (SdP), a party that since 1937 openly supported Hitler in the destruction of Czechoslovakia. In the minds of Sudeten Germans, from this year on, the national, social, and economic issues merged together and turned into political issues.<sup>194</sup> The SdP, with a majority, won the communal and parliamentary elections in 1935 and 1938 in Ústí and elsewhere in the Sudetenland. The terror of the opponents (Czechs, Jews, and Germans antifascists), carried out by the young radical members of the SdP and the semi-military units (FS)

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<sup>193</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Češi a Němci do Roku 1945*, 83.

<sup>194</sup> Zimmerman, *Sudetští Němci v Nacistickém Státě*, 39.

created a gap between Czechs and Germans too wide to close. Despite the germanization of the Sudetenland, it is not completely understood, because of the lack of evidence, to what extent the Czech-German relations further worsened. While the common Germans did not participate in the violence against Czechs, there is little evidence that they disapproved of the Nazi regime. However, the notion of self-determination, not the Nazi ideology, based on Zimmermann's findings, was what they were actually seeking.

### CHAPTER III

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST SUDETEN GERMANS, THE ÚSTÍ MASSACRE, INTERMENT CAMPS

In contrast to Marxist historiography, which emphasizes the Red Army's role in the liberation of Czechoslovakia, the Nazi administration surrendered prior to the Soviet arrival on May 9, 1945. Soon after, the Czechoslovak military, semi-military, partisans, and revolutionary-volunteer units arrived in Ústí as well. In particular, Czechoslovak military units and Revolutionary Guards (GS), along with the local Revolutionary National Committees and police formations, formed the basis for the new administration even if not always authorized.<sup>195</sup> While some of these formations came to the borderlands in a genuine effort to establish order, a majority possessed highly questionable motives. Individuals within these units frequently abused their positions by attacking, raping, and stealing from local Germans. To understand the violence that occurred in Ústí, it is necessary, however, to explain both the attitude of Czechoslovak political and military leaders as well as the unique position of the Sudetenland in the immediate postwar period.

Chapter Three argues that, while the “wild expulsions” were organized from above and set the stage for the violence, as chapter four demonstrates, the attacks themselves prove more difficult to assign to specific directives from Czechoslovak

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<sup>195</sup> Zdeněk Radvanovský, “The Social and Economic Consequences of Resettling Czechs into Northwestern Bohemia 1945-1947,” In Ther and Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations*, 241.

political and military elites, a common pattern across Czechoslovakia.<sup>196</sup> Most of the perpetrators, including military personnel, given flexibility in their approach to German civilians, acted on their own prerogative.<sup>197</sup> The Ústí massacre may serve as an exception, but no primary sources confirm this. Local Czechs, with possible exceptions, did not participate in these attacks. In several proven cases, they protected the Germans.

It cannot be overstated, however, that the Czechoslovak political and military leaders encouraged and even legitimized violence through both legislation and anti-German public proclamations. Among other directives, Decree No. 5, issued on May 5, 1945, marked Germans, Hungarians, and other individuals suspected of collaboration as *state enemies*. This vague label, in addition to a lack of clear directives and communication, created conditions for arresting, interning, harassing, and expelling anyone regarded as suspicious.<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, state authorities encouraged violence through public anti-German proclamations. The following excerpt from an appeal made by the Czechoslovak government in exile in Košice to the Czech public on April 17, 1945 was not at all atypical.

Get even with Germans for their barbarities; do not feel sorry for German murderers; without mercy, get even with those who betrayed the nation and the republic.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 20.

<sup>197</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 20. This was rather a common pattern in postwar Czechoslovakia not exceptional to Ústí.

<sup>198</sup> Staněk, *Perzekuce 1945*, 9-10.

<sup>199</sup> "The Appeal of the Czechoslovak Government to Populations [...]," In von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 228.

The frequent expressions utilized by both political and military elites included *de-Germanization* of the republic, *cleansing* the territories of Germans, and *liquidation* of Germans or the “German Problem.”<sup>200</sup> Compared to those of a later period, these public appeals, lacked a distinction among Sudeten Germans.<sup>201</sup> Beneš himself publically pronounced all Germans responsible for the Nazi massacre in Lidice.<sup>202</sup> As a result, antifascists and Jews, for example, became targeted as well. Authorities made a few attempts to investigate these crimes, but their efforts met with little success. Decree No. 115 declared any act motivated by a “justified desire for retaliation” committed between September 30, 1938 and October 28, 1945 as legal.<sup>203</sup> Thus, those few convicted during the “wild” period had been mostly released. The identities and motives of the attackers varied. Often, the perpetrators focused their hostility on local elites and well-situated Germans, many of whom had cooperated with the Nazis. However, innocent people, including the elderly, women, and children, became victimized as well.<sup>204</sup>

While hatred toward Germans accounted for numerous attacks, it also served as a convenient cover for violence motivated by material gain and sexual attacks against women. The motives also included a last-minute effort “to catch one’s own Nazi” in order to demonstrate bravery or loyalty or to simply get ahead of others. In turn, former collaborators resorted to violence to silence those who could indict them. The widespread

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<sup>200</sup> *Práce* [Labor], Vol.1, No.37, June 19, 1945.

<sup>201</sup> *Práce* [Labor], Vol.1, No.31, June 12, 1945.

<sup>202</sup> *Svobodné Slovo* [Free Speech], No.27, June 12, 1945.; von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září*, 79. It remains unclear whether or not these anti-German public proclamations initiated attacks in particular cities as it appeared, for instance, in case of the cities of Brno and Jihlava.

<sup>203</sup> Staněk, *Perzekuce 1945*, 11. This Decree was issued on May 8, 1946.

<sup>204</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vystěhování*, 20.

misconception that people of lower classes and societal outcasts and deviants committed the bulk of these violent attacks is not supported by the latest findings.<sup>205</sup>

While radical anti-German nationalism became a strong unifying force within postwar Czechoslovakia, a force incomparable in its intensity with any previous period in the history of the Bohemian lands, discrepancies did exist. Political and military elites, along with much of the general population, particularly urban dwellers, demanded a radical solution to the “German Problem” (see Appendix C.1).<sup>206</sup> However, situational military reports and hundreds of written complaints addressed to political leaders indicate that not everyone agreed with the treatment of Sudeten Germans, a facet rarely mentioned in existing scholarship. Alongside humanitarian organizations and a few published periodicals, common people expressed opposition to acts of violence as well.<sup>207</sup> Most authors, however, either forged or withheld their signature. In turn, it can be surmised that openly empathizing with Germans was unpopular, and potentially dangerous. For instance, an author signed as an “old woman from Moravia” wrote:

It’s three in the morning, I have to write if I do not want to lose my mind or my life. What kind of a state are we...where such things could happen? I beg you to have mercy with women and children [...].<sup>208</sup>

Another person wrote ironically, “So we do have organizations to protect animals, but what about people? A person, for example a German, has less value than a swine.”

“Many Czechs that are reasonable and decent,” wrote another, “do not agree with what has been happening, but they are afraid to say it publicly.” These letters do not indicate a

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 82-83.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

specific proportion of the Czechoslovak society disagreeing with the mechanics of the expulsions due to the lack of any systematic analysis, but they do point out variations in attitudes regardless of the prevailing radical anti-German nationalism.<sup>209</sup>

The specifics of the Sudetenland in the postwar period affected the treatment of Sudeten Germans in Ústí as well. While both parts of the country experienced widespread chaos following the war, the situation proved significantly more intense in the borderlands. For the previous six years, the Nazi regime managed to cut ties with the rest of the country in terms of administration, culture, historical traditions, and human relations. Upon removal of the Nazi threat, the need to reestablish these connections became especially urgent. Furthermore, the enormous industrial potential of the North and Northwest, inhabited by large numbers of so-called *state enemies*, made this region a priority. Hence, swift eradication of the “German Problem” within this region became necessary. The first Minister of Defense, General Ludvík Svoboda, stated, “Before the war ended, we knew that borderlands would become one of the first battlefields of peacetime.”<sup>210</sup> The presence of military and semi-military units, and individuals often acting independently, coupled with scarce and often ambiguous directives, fostered anarchy and created a power vacuum that proved especially consequential for Sudeten Germans in the borderlands.<sup>211</sup> The Sudetenland also became a magnet for so-called gold-diggers, individuals only seeking material gain who were especially attracted to the borderlands during the period of the “wild expulsions” (see Appendix C.2).<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 109, 772.

<sup>210</sup> Biman and Cílek, *Poslední Mrtví, První Živí*, 14-16.

<sup>211</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Duben – Srpen/Září 1945*, 13.

<sup>212</sup> *Předvoj* [Advance Guard], p.4, July 14, 1945.



Before the 1st Czechoslovak army arrived on June 11, 1945, an assortment of military and semi-military units operated within Ústí with the supposed intent to secure the borders and “cleanse” the territories of Germans.<sup>213</sup> However, these formations often acted independently of each other and with contradicting objectives. On May 15, the Minister of Defense Ludvík Svoboda authorized military headquarters Alex to occupy the borderlands.<sup>214</sup> During conversation with the general of Alex, Zdeněk Novák, Svoboda emphasized that “whatever is necessary to secure the borderlands, you have my full support regardless of the consequences.”<sup>215</sup> Additionally, the Revolutionary Guards (RG), an armed militia, was dispatched to the borderlands along with partisan units that arrived after fighting in the Prague Uprising of May 5-9.<sup>216</sup> On May 13, unidentified revolutionary guards consisting of both men and women, described by Piffle as criminals and prostitutes, began to interrogate and steal from local Germans without any authorization.<sup>217</sup> Eventually, the Soviets intervened. On May 21, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment was dispatched to Ústí.<sup>218</sup> Finally, the Czechoslovak battalion Toledo, dispatched to the borderlands by the Ministry of Transportation to secure the railroads, appeared in the city. The members of Toledo consisted of young men previously involved in the resistance movement. Based on testimonies, members of Toledo arrived with

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<sup>213</sup> Biman and Cílek, *Poslední Mrtví, První Živí*, 31. The 1st Czechoslovak army, as a whole, had not yet been fully organized or more precisely reorganized. The core of the army became the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps fighting in the Soviet Union under general Ludvík Svoboda.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>216</sup> Gerlach, “For Nation and Gain,” 43.

<sup>217</sup> Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945*, 26.

<sup>218</sup> Havel, Kaiser, Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*, 9.

highly questionable motives of personal gain.<sup>219</sup> Piffle, in *The Chronicle*, described this period as a black mark on Ústí's history.<sup>220</sup> The situational report issued by the regional military headquarters in Kladno on May 28, 1945 provides a glimpse into the actions of some of these units.

[...] There are more and more complaints related to the irresponsible behavior of partisans and armed RG. They are confiscating radios and demanding inadequate supplies. According to the report of ONV in Ústí, they are on the border of criminals. They are looting, attacking farms, and threatening even the Czech population. They will not legitimize themselves, arguing that no one will command them. Today, they forcibly entered and looted food storage in Ústí.<sup>221</sup>

The arrival of hundreds of new settlers unfamiliar with the borderlands, many of them motivated by stealing from Germans, amplified chaos in the city. Ústí paid the price for being the first railroad station on the express train route behind former borders.<sup>222</sup> The situation seemed so bleak that the representatives of the first revolutionary national committee, Hájek, Jůza, and Rejzek, went to Prague to complain, but were unable to gain any support.<sup>223</sup> Looting, stealing, and attacking local Germans became a daily reality. Required to wear white armbands, Sudeten Germans became easily identifiable and, in turn, easily targeted. Many of them reacted in a manner common throughout regions liberated by the Red Army. They became depressed, hopeless, passive, and increasingly terrified of retaliation and of the possibility of expulsion.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 310.

<sup>220</sup> Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945*, 26.

<sup>221</sup> VÚH-VHA, f.VO1, k.1, č.j. 9/1945, In von Arburg and Staněk, *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 347.

<sup>222</sup> Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945*, 27.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>224</sup> To an extent, it differed in the regions liberated by the U.S. Army where Sudeten Germans showed more resistance and less apathy.

It is estimated that around 5,600 Sudeten Germans in postwar Czechoslovakia saw the only solution to this hopeless situation in taking their own lives.<sup>225</sup> In Ústí, approximately three hundred Germans killed themselves with the greatest number of suicides reported during the “operations” of the revolutionary guards in May 1945.<sup>226</sup> Within the first days of the liberation, the head of the Revolutionary National Committee, František Hájek, estimated at least ten suicides per day. During this time, the local police shut off gas for the whole city to prevent more Germans from killing themselves. The last words of Garms, the owner of *Savoj Café*, alluded to the profound sense of hopelessness felt by many Germans: “I am going home to get a cigarette and a glass of wine, and then to poison myself.”<sup>227</sup> The case of Sudeten German F. Schmitzecka puts into question the categorization of one’s death caused by a perpetrator and a death caused by one’s own hand. At the end of June, members of the revolutionary guard interrogated Schmitzecka, releasing him only after his Czech employer intervened on his behalf, citing Schmitzecka’s loyalty to Czechs during the Nazi occupation. The following day, Schmitzecka hanged himself.<sup>228</sup> In several other cases, adults killed their children before killing themselves. NSSK Standartenführer Richter killed himself along with his seven children. The head of the Employment Department, Simon, turned on the gas then sat with his family at the table as noxious fumes filled the home.<sup>229</sup> Marie Kopetschova hanged her four-year old son before killing herself. She reportedly suffered a nervous

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<sup>225</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 29.

<sup>226</sup> Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945*, 26.; Kaiser, *Konec Války a Vyhnání Němců z Ústecka*, 160.

<sup>227</sup> Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945*, 26.

<sup>228</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 222.

<sup>229</sup> Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945*, 26.

breakdown after settlers took over her home and forced her and her child to share a single room while her husband was interned at Skřivánčí Pole.<sup>230</sup> Another German, Gertruda Hiersch, whose husband served with the SS, poisoned herself and her four children out of fear of violent retaliation against her family.<sup>231</sup> Rape, and the ever-present fear of rape, served as a common motive for suicide among women. Rape occurred frequently, carried out primarily by Red Army forces, but by some Czechs as well, and impacted women and girls of all ages.<sup>232</sup> While the exact number of attacked women is not known, Marie Vobecká's formal concern leads to the conclusion that those types of attacks were not unusual in the postwar city.<sup>233</sup> Vobecká, a chief of the OSK (District Administrative Commission) in Ústí requested abortions for women who became pregnant after being raped. Minister of Interior Nosek denied her request.<sup>234</sup> Sexual attacks against German women, in a few cases against women of different nationalities, became a widespread phenomenon across the territories liberated by the Red Army leaving victims with lifelong trauma.

The Red Army's official role after liberating any given territory was to ensure order and to support "cleansing" the territories while cooperating with the 1st Czechoslovak army.<sup>235</sup> While the Soviets did occasionally intervene on behalf of the public order, as mentioned above, the presence of Red Army troops often exacerbated the

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<sup>230</sup> *Intolerance - Češi, Němci s Židé na Ústecku 1938-1948* [Intolerance – Czechs, Germans, and Jews in Ustecko 1938 – 1948] (Ústí nad Labem: Albis International, 1998), 109.

<sup>231</sup> *Intolerance*, 107.

<sup>232</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 63.

<sup>233</sup> Marie Vobecká is discussed in chapter four.

<sup>234</sup> *Intolerance*, 112.

<sup>235</sup> VÚH-VHA, f.VO1, k.2, č.j. 0511/ taj. 1. odd/1945 (related to the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Front).; VÚH-VHA, f.VO1, k.6, č.j.3830-IV/2.1945.; VÚH-VHA, f.VO1, č.j. 1249/ Dův. hl. št.1. odděl.-1945.

postwar chaos. Both soldiers and their superiors not only attacked local Germans for their material possessions, but committed more serious crimes such as rape and murder as well. These crimes went largely unreported or reported too late to be investigated adequately. However, situational reports from local police stations depict a few exceptions. Fifty-four offences had been reported from June 2 to December 16, 1945 committed by Soviet soldiers and officers in Ústí and its surrounding areas. These offences included forty-seven armed robberies, six sexual attacks, and two murders. On two occasions, Czechs joined the Soviets in attacking the German civilians.<sup>236</sup>

On June 11, the 1st Czechoslovak army was dispatched to Ústí. Its arrival did not improve the situation of the Sudeten Germans as they had hoped.<sup>237</sup> Not only did the expulsions increase in frequency, but also members of the army contributed significantly to violence against Germans. Considering the factors that led to violence in Ústí, it is important to emphasize that a substantial portion of the army consisted of Volhynian Czechs who experienced the worst battles of the Eastern Front. Almost twelve thousand volunteered to serve in the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps (Svoboda's Army) in exile that fought alongside the Red Army in WWII and then became the bulk of the postwar 1st Czechoslovak army.<sup>238</sup> Many of the Volhynian Czechs sought retaliation for the Nazi massacre at Volhynian village Český Malín on July 13, 1943.<sup>239</sup> Moreover, during their march from the Eastern Front, they witnessed countless Nazi barbarities committed on

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<sup>236</sup> AMÚ, Okresní soud v Ústí nad Labem 1945-1949, In *Intolerance*, 64-65.

<sup>237</sup> Staněk, *Perzekuce 1945*, 50-51.

<sup>238</sup> Gerlach, *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing*, 46.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 46,53.

local populations.<sup>240</sup> In addition to these factors, commanding officers encouraged soldiers to treat Germans mercilessly. Issued by the headquarters of the first military region (VO1), “*Ten Commandments for Czechoslovak Soldiers in the Borderlands*” for example stated: “Germany surrendered, but Germans remain our inexorable enemies. Do not stop hating Germans.” Other commandment urged: “German women and youth are also responsible for crimes committed by Germans. Do not feel sorry for them [...]”.<sup>241</sup>

The 28th Infantry Regiment of Svoboda’s Army deserves special attention due to its undeniable role in the Ústí massacre. The brutality and arbitrary violence of this group became so notorious that even the NKVD took notice and informed Moscow.<sup>242</sup> The 28th Infantry unit moved among divisions and carried out expulsions, often on their own accord and without the approval or hindrance of their superior officers.<sup>243</sup> The members of this division often came into direct conflict with local authorities. In one location, for example, soldiers threatened administrators with a “second Lidice” if the local personnel did not act more radically toward Germans.<sup>244</sup> In Českolipsko, twelve Germans committed suicide to escape the expulsions, and in Podmokly soldiers carried out a public execution of a German found in possession of a firearm.<sup>245</sup> Following the expulsion of several thousand Germans from Děčín-Podmokly, the 28th Infantry was moved to Ústí

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<sup>240</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 21.

<sup>241</sup> Radvanovský, *Konec Česko-Německého Soužití v Ústecké Oblasti 1945-1948*, 55-56.

<sup>242</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 106.

<sup>243</sup> Gerlach, “For Nation and Gain,” 67.

<sup>244</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 106.

<sup>245</sup> Havel and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*, 14.

the night before the massacre. According to Commander František Vovsa, two months into the operation, the 28th Infantry Regiment had expelled 90,000 Germans.<sup>246</sup> Vovsa himself was removed as a commander. However, a newspaper article places Vovsa in Ústí at the time of the explosion in Krásné Březno.<sup>247</sup> While some criticized this unit for its radical and “undiplomatic behavior,” many praised its righteous mission to expel as many Germans and as quickly as possible.<sup>248</sup>

### The Ústí Massacre

The Ústí massacre, a mass lynching of German civilians that occurred on July 31, 1945 following an explosion at a munitions warehouse in Krásné Březno, as discussed in chapter one, quickly became a symbol of Czech brutality in the form of a popular uprising against German minorities in the period of the “wild expulsions.” Before 1989, German historian Bohmann reported more than 2,700 dead while Marxist-Leninist historians of Czechoslovakia denied the massacre completely.<sup>249</sup> According to the latest thorough research conducted by Czech historians, at least 43, but most likely between 80 and 100, German civilians had been murdered, including a woman and her infant child who were thrown into the river. After 1989, numerous eyewitnesses of the tragedy came forward. Among the most noteworthy sources is an anonymous letter addressed to the Ministry of Interior. Although written in German, the letter’s composition indicates that the writer was most likely Czech. The letter reads:

I witnessed the explosion in Krásné Březno. While the causes of the explosion had not yet been determined, the event had tragic consequences

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<sup>246</sup> Biman and Cílek, *Poslední Mrtví, První Živí*, 121-128.

<sup>247</sup> Havel and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*, 15.

<sup>248</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 106.

<sup>249</sup> Shieder, *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central-Europe*, 431.

for the Schicht's factory workers and other people of German nationality. While I am a true Czech patriot, I cannot be silent about the madness that is beyond human dignity and trample the authority of our democratic republic underfoot. I saw these old tired workers who do not speak Czech attacked by the N.S.B. and Sv., but also women and girls were beaten on the streets. The Germans were thrown from the bridge and shot. Is this acceptable behavior? Should not we be better than our enemy? Will do this any good to the state consolidation? ... Please send older and more experienced people to our borderlands; people with a little bit of human dignity and just behavior.<sup>250</sup>

Marie B., another Czech who was near the Beneš's bridge during the explosions, recalled:

Closed to the bridge, I was approached by a middle-aged civilian with a stick asking me whether I was Czech or German. I told him to get away from me. As I continued walking, I saw a German woman in a grey suit wearing a white armband. I wanted to tell her to take it off, but when I looked over my shoulder, the man was following me. I did not tell her anything, because I was afraid. When I looked back, he was pulling her by leg into the air-raid shelter. Then he threw two stones at her of a size of one's head.

Marie B. also witnessed attacks at the Mírové Square where Germans were drowned in the fire water tank. She recalls that a tiny little man got up on the railing and yelled for the perpetrators to stop, but the crowd responded by threatening to throw him in as well.

She adds:

I had not seen if they did it or not. Shortly after that, the crowd started again: 'all Germans out within twenty-four hours along with the Czechs who stayed here.' Because I was local, I was afraid and went home to Předlice.<sup>251</sup>

An anonymous Czech witness, a member of the OSK in Ústí, whose testimony was published in *London Papers*, insisted that it was necessary to speak out about what

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<sup>250</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 228.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.



happened so that not everyone would be considered collectively guilty as the Germans had been. Below is a short excerpt from his testimony:

The death of German antifascist Brainl will stay with me my whole life. Brainl came back to Ústí after four years in a concentration camp; he was employed in Bronner's company. Brainl was attacked (on July 31), his hair ripped off, then shot into stomach. He died immediately [...].<sup>252</sup>

An eyewitness from Prague, J.H., remembered:

When leaving the train station, I had to pass several young men who asked me if I was Czech or German. They grabbed two older men and kept beating them. I could not understand what was happening. All around were sticks, crutches, bags, bloody clothes, hats, cut ears, and lots blood [...]. When I got closer to the bridge, I saw a pile of female bodies. One of the tortured women looked at me puzzled. She was probably in agony. I could not help her. I asked a man with a gun to end her suffering. It took three shots before she was dead; she looked at me one last time before she died. I will never forget that look. I had no idea how I got to my aunt. She was afraid, because her daughter in law did not come home from work. I did not know her, but in the picture on the wall, I recognized that young woman by the bridge. I said nothing.<sup>253</sup>

After 1989, official reports and personal testimonies, both Czech and German, revealed that the perpetrators were not local Ústí Czechs, but members of military and non-military forces, including the 1st Czechoslovak Army and its 28th Infantry Regiment, Revolutionary Guards (RG), members of the Red Army, civilians recalled as “strangers,” SNB units, guards from the internment camps, and an unidentified large group of civilians arriving shortly before the massacre.<sup>254</sup> The members of the 28th Infantry Regiment initiated the physical attacks of Ústí German civilians the morning of

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<sup>252</sup> Quoted from *London Papers*, In *Intolerance*, 86-87.

<sup>253</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 228-229.

<sup>254</sup> Kaiser, “Konec Války a Vyhnání Němců z Ústecka,” 165.; Havel, Kaiser, and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*, 28-29.

the explosion. The Ústí archivist Kaiser finds it “interesting” that the attacks against randomly targeted Germans started long before anyone could clearly indicate the origins of the explosion. However, in the latest publication of historians Havel, Kaiser, and Pustějovský, the authors maintain that blaming Germans for such occurrences was common in the postwar period.<sup>255</sup> They do believe, though, that the 28th Infantry Regiment was in Ústí to fight and that both the explosion and the massacre were deliberately planned. Other historians argue that this kind of explosion occurred frequently in the postwar period due to negligence. Interestingly, though, a fact only mentioned by Havel and Pustějovský, even among the members of this infamous formation were officers who tried to protect Germans by, for example, tearing off their white armbands.<sup>256</sup>

Some of Ústí’s Czechs, according to testimonies, tried on several occasions to stop the killings and hide or warn the attacked civilians. Several Czech employers, for example, allowed Germans to remain in their workplace to keep them away from danger.<sup>257</sup> Furthermore, the members of the city’s national committees tried to halt the attacks. Josef Vondra, the head of the MNV, was reportedly attacked while defending victims at the Mírové Square’s water fire tank.<sup>258</sup>

The explosion was immediately and widely medialized across the country as an

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<sup>255</sup> Havel, Kaiser, and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*, 28. Kaiser only provided photos for this publication.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

act of the evil (German) Werewolves terrorist groups.<sup>259</sup> The Ústí massacre that followed the explosion, if mentioned at all, was described as a popular uprising, a perception still common today, while the army tried to ensure public order. Similarly, political and military elites explained the explosion as a work of the German underground, even as investigators claimed that no real cause could be determined.<sup>260</sup> Although they complained to the Ministry of Defense about the behavior of military forces in the city, the heads of Ústí's national committees Marie Vobecká and Josef Vondra also publicly offered official thanks to the army for its selfless help in Krásné Březno.<sup>261</sup>

Regardless of lingering questions, the timing of the explosion and the subsequent attacks against Sudeten Germans in Ústí served as a proof that Czechs and Germans could no longer live together. While negotiating conditions of the expulsions in Potsdam at the time of the massacre, Czechoslovak politicians could take advantage of the killings, using them to advocate the need to separate Czechs and Germans.<sup>262</sup> Despite a provision of the Potsdam Conference that called for a halt to illegal expulsions until operations could be better organized, forced transfers from Ústí and the surrounding areas accelerated.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> *Práce* [Labor], No.74, August 2-3, 1945.; *Hlas Lidu* [The Voice of People], No.16, August 14, 1945.; *Rudý Sever* [The Red North], August 1, 1945.

<sup>260</sup> Havel, Kaiser, and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*, 37.

<sup>261</sup> *Předvoj* [Advanced Guard], No. 24, August 3, 1945.

<sup>262</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 229.

<sup>263</sup> However, they did not accelerate because of the Ústí massacre, but because the Czechoslovak political and military elites were afraid of the United States and Great Britain disapproval at Potsdam. Thus, they strove to expel as many Germans as possible before any decision was made.

## Internment Camps in Ústí

Violence against Ústí's German population not only erupted in public spaces on July 31, 1945, but within internment camps and prisons as well. Some prisoners had simply been expelled from their homes and sent to prison while many others were charged with a variety of law violations and placed in one of the two internment camps in Ústí - Všebořice and Skřivánčí Pole. The accusations and charges ranged from collaboration with the Nazis to minor offences such as visiting a local cinema or dance hall—seven German girls were interned for this reason—talking or providing water or food to German prisoners of the war as they passed through the city. Although contact between Czechs and Germans was unavoidable, a German could be interned for hosting a Czech visitor and a Czech could face imprisonment for collaborating with a German.<sup>264</sup> The internees were mostly older men, women, and children. Most Nazi officials who held high positions during the occupation fled before they could be arrested. Other German adult males either died during the war or became prisoners of the war in various locations. Arrests based on anonymous accusations became especially common during the period of the “wild expulsions.”<sup>265</sup> Most arrests took place between May and September of 1945. Throughout their existence, the internment camps housed 5,532 people, primarily Germans, but Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, Romas, Polish, and Jews as well. Those arrested were interrogated and held in underground prison cells at Mírové Square and then, within one to three weeks, moved to Všebořice or Skřivánčí

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<sup>264</sup> *Intolerance*, 97.

<sup>265</sup> *Jihočeská Pravda* [Southern-Czech Truth], No. 25, June 9, 1945.; Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 231.

Pole to await court trials. If acquitted, internees became prioritized for “evacuations.”<sup>266</sup>

Surviving evidence regarding the internment camps is fragmental and consists mostly of general directives issued by the Ministry of Interior and the National Committees and testimonies of individual eyewitnesses. One of the major reasons for the lack of primary sources related to the camps is that they were purposefully hermetically closed from the public. Even the Ministry of Interior had little control over these institutions as demonstrated by correspondence between the Ministry and the Provincial and National Committees. For example, the directives issued by the Minister of Interior on October 2, 1945 addressed to MNV, ZNV, and SNB showed how inadequately was the government informed about the internment camps in regards to their locations, number of internees, nationality of the internees, or a number of interned minors under the age of fifteen. The OSK (later the ONV) established the internment camps in Ústí. However, the members of the National Committees did not know who worked as guards in these camps.<sup>267</sup> This is significant considering that most of the guards were recruited from volunteers motivated by retaliation. The youngest guard was only sixteen years old. One of the very few known guards in Ústí was Josef Duda, a head of the security department of the early revolutionary national committee. On May 15, 1945, members of the Ústí delegation complained about Duda to authorities in Prague for killing German internees at Skřivánčí Pole and bragging about it in public.<sup>268</sup> Eventually, Duda was removed from the internment camp. A former prisoner of the concentration camps in

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<sup>266</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 231.

<sup>267</sup> AMÚ, MěNV ÚL, k.1, 1945. 150 unidentified guards worked at Skřivánčí Pole.

<sup>268</sup> Kaiser, *Konec Války a Vyhnaní Němců z Ústecka*, 162.; Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem: 1938-1945*, 25,27.

Orangeburg and Oswiecim held one of the leading positions in this internment camp and, according to regional newspapers, guaranteed that internees would not be spoiled. The following excerpt from an August 2, 1945 article in *Práce*, a local Ústí newspaper, demonstrates how Skřivánčí Pole was presented to the public:

The alarm rings at 5 a.m. At 7 a.m. the prisoners start working. In the meantime (between 5 and 7) they cleaned themselves and put on clothes with numbers on it; clothes previously belonging to the German Army. The camp is guarded by volunteers, but this system will be soon changed. The prisoners are healthy. No one is sick, and no person has died so far [...].<sup>269</sup>

Actual conditions within the camps did not reflect this depiction, however. The internees--mostly older men, women, and children, as previously mentioned--were beaten, tortured, and murdered and the women frequently raped by the guards. From May to December 1945, at least 286 internees died in the camps. The reported causes include exhaustion, malnutrition, shot during attempting escape, beaten to death, and epidemic. Conditions within these places did not differ significantly from those of Nazi concentration camps. In fact, authorities used Nazi camps as blueprints for those established in Ústí.<sup>270</sup> Funding the camps also proved to be a significant challenge. From May to December 1945, the internees at Ústí had to finance the camps themselves due to insufficient funding from the national committees.<sup>271</sup> Not until complaints from abroad, specifically from humanitarian organizations, but also from the Czechoslovak government intensified did the agenda of Ústí's internment camps become slightly more

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<sup>269</sup> *Práce* [Labor], No.74, August 2-3, 1945.

<sup>270</sup> Kaiser, *Konec Války a Vyhnaní Němců z Ústecka*, 162.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

open for official control. One such complaint, for example, revealed that some adult internees weighed as little as sixty-six pounds. Voicing a complaint, however, could prove dangerous, as demonstrated by the case of German Adolf Kunert. Kunert was beaten to death after complaining to a member of the Red Cross Commission and urging an investigation into conditions in the camp. Heart attack is cited as Kunert's official cause of death.<sup>272</sup> In 1945, approximately 160 internees died of typhus due to insufficient health care. The Ústí hospital established a pavilion for internees without enough beds. As a result, three internees shared one bed, making the spread of illness and disease nearly inevitable. At the end of 1945, Všebořice became a gathering place for Germans destined for expulsion from Ústí and its surrounding areas. Skřivánčí Pole served as an internment camp until the beginning of 1947. During their existence, approximately 527 internees died in both camps.<sup>273</sup>

### Conclusion/Summary

With the surrender of Nazi Germany the war did not end for Sudeten Germans, but signaled a new brutal experience. The borderlands, occupied primarily by Germans, became what General Ludvík Svoboda called the “first battlefields of peacetime.” In addition, Ústí's proximity to Prague and to railroad transportation made it easily accessible for a variety of semi-military, volunteer units, and individuals coming to Ústí not to establish order but to take advantage of the Sudeten Germans and their material possessions. The Red Army, operating in the city from May 9 to mid-November 1945,

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 162, 163.

also contributed to the chaos and violence by stealing, sexually assaulting women, or even murdering. However, unlike the expulsions, these attacks were not coordinated from above by either politicians or military leaders. The Ústí massacre may have been an exception, but no current evidence supports such a theory. Approximately three hundred Ústí's Germans responded to their desperate situation by taking their own lives. Within the first few postwar weeks, the local administration, represented by national committees and local police, proved unable to establish order. This lack of official oversight extended into Ústí's internment camps where Germans were temporarily held before trials and/or expulsions.

The arrival of the 1st Czechoslovak army, formed at the beginning of June 1945, worsened the situation for Sudeten Germans. Not only did the expulsions increase in frequency and become more brutal, but also members of the army, particularly the 28th Infantry Regiment, participated in the violence against Germans during the Ústí massacre; a mass lynching that followed an explosion of a munitions warehouse in Krásné Březno. The numerous civilians that participated in the lynching were not local Czechs, but rather new settlers. Locals, in some cases, along with Ústí's administration attempted to prevent violence, but these efforts met with little success.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE “WILD EXPULSIONS” OF GERMANS FROM ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM

By the end of the war, Ústí's Germans had not only been exposed to violence from military and semi-military forces that arrived in Ústí shortly after the war, but the threat of expulsion from a place they had lived for generations became very real. The Red Army, the revolutionary guards, and “angry masses” have traditionally been given full credit for the “wild expulsions.” Chapter Four argues, however, that it was rarely the case. Only the 1st Czechoslovak army (its various units) possessed the authority and means to carry out such immense operations. Specifically to the “wild expulsions,” the Army played a much more decisive role than in 1946. Military leaders, particularly general Ludvík Svoboda who became a Minister of Defense after the war and Karel Klapálek, general of the first military region (VO1) to which Ústí belonged, made crucial decisions regarding the forced transfers.”<sup>274</sup> Significantly, these leaders launched the expulsions before receiving any written order from the government.<sup>275</sup> To their great dismay, the power of military forces subsided beginning in 1946, as their role transformed from decisive to primarily technical. The local national committees in Ústí, discussed in this chapter, also played an important role in the expulsions, as they possessed, for instance, the crucial authority to compile lists of the expellees.

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<sup>274</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben – Srpen/Září* 1945, 103.

<sup>275</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, “Organizované Divoké Odsuny? Úloha Ústředních Státních Orgánů při Provádění ‘Evakuace’ Německého Obyvatelstva (Květen až Září 1945)” [The Role of the Central State Administration in the ‘Evacuation’ of German Population (May – September 1945)] (*Soudobé Dějiny* 8, no. 1-2/2006), 13.

The first transfers of Ústí's Germans occurred between May 10 and May 20, 1945 (see Appendix D.1). These, however, were not forced transfers, but rather so-called "voluntary departures." Based on scarce evidence, it appears that the hundreds-perhaps thousands of Germans leaving during this early period consisted primarily of refugees from Eastern Germany fleeing the Eastern Front. The Red Cross assisted in these departures and, based on photographs taken at the train station by local photographer J. Friedrich, refugees were permitted to carry unlimited material possessions.<sup>276</sup> No written documentation exists regarding these initial voluntary departures.

One of the earliest forced expulsions, witnessed by Ústí Czech Soňa Čvančarová, occurred before the arrival of the 1st Czechoslovak army.<sup>277</sup> According to her testimony, the revolutionary guards randomly entered German homes and forced residents into trucks. Then, the guards transported the expellees to the borders and ordered them to march to Germany, without any food or additional clothing. On one occasion, guards mistakenly took a Czech child into their truck. It is highly likely that these expellers were the younger members of the Revolutionary Guards (RG).<sup>278</sup>

On May 20, 1945, the military headquarters Alex closed the Czechoslovak borders to restrict uncontrolled movement in both directions. The primary goal, however, was preventing Germans from leaving Czechoslovakia with their possessions.<sup>279</sup> The Minister of Defense, Svoboda, authorized military headquarters Alex to occupy the

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<sup>276</sup> Kaiser, "Konec Války a Vyhnaní Němců z Ústecka," 163.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> VÚH-VHA, f.VO1, k.1., unreadable number.

borderlands before the main convoy of the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Army arrived.<sup>280</sup> Military orders for the headquarters Alex included “cleansing” the territories of Sudeten Germans.<sup>281</sup> This specific task had been assigned to partisans (volunteer revolutionaries) within Alex.<sup>282</sup> On June 1, 1945, Klapálek ordered dissolution of the partisan units and other formations due to the dissatisfaction with their performance.<sup>283</sup> However, many members of these early formations became part of the regular army. On June 5, Klapálek issued another order to secure fourteen passages suitable for the transport of German expellees.<sup>284</sup> On June 7, he detailed his plans to the Red Army officials.<sup>285</sup> The identity of the first Red Army commander of Ústí remains unknown; the second commander was I. N. Šilov.<sup>286</sup>

As previously noted, expulsions during the “wild” period did not have official approval from the Allies. However, Stalin’s vague agreement to accept German expellees in the Soviet occupational zones within Germany and Austria made them possible.<sup>287</sup> Although no records of written or oral contracts exist, Soviet army officials in the regions often initiated transfers on an individual, case-by-case basis.<sup>288</sup> Not until the beginning of July 1945, did the Soviets begin to accept expellees more regularly.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Biman and Cílek, *Poslední Mrtví, První Živí*, 31.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 45-46.

<sup>283</sup> VÚH-VHA, f. VO1, k. 2, č.j. 0519.

<sup>284</sup> VÚH-VHA, f. VO1, k. 2, č.j.18.

<sup>285</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 232.

<sup>286</sup> Martin Veselý, *Vojenské Dějiny Ústecka* [Military History of Ustecko] (Město Ústí nad Labem, 2003), 189.

<sup>287</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 97.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 98-99,716. The Red Army often approved “evacuations” if bribed (often with alcohol). The report issued by the Central Headquarter of Ministry of Defense on July 28, 1945 recommended generosity when dealing with Soviet army officials to gain their support for accelerated “evacuations.”

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.,98.

Records indicate, however, that the Soviets remained resistant to “evacuations,” often acting to deliberately obstruct or slow operations frequently returning convoys of expellees from the borders, denying them entry into Soviet-controlled zones.”<sup>290</sup> In 1947, Vladimír Clementis, the Czechoslovak State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, recalled “Until Potsdam, we did it illegally and struggled with military commanders of all the [occupational] zones.”<sup>291</sup> The city of Ústí belonged to the 1st Military Region led by Klapálek (VO1), a region from which a majority of Germans were expelled during the “wild” period. They had been expelled into the Soviet occupational zone in German Saxony with which Czechoslovakia shared the longest border. Although these expulsions required Soviet approval, some Red Army officials complicated the process by accepting payment from expellees in return for moving several of Ústí’s German families, along with all of their material possessions, across the borders, to the great dismay of both local and the military authorities.<sup>292</sup>

The expulsions, carried out by the 1st Czechoslovak army from Ústí, in particular, started on June 11, 1945.<sup>293</sup> At this point, local officials made an effort to document the operations. On this day, a former employee of the Czech Administrative Commission in Ústí provided an account of the “evacuations:”<sup>294</sup>

The Local National Committees were given the task to compile a register of all persons of German nationality who were members of the Nazi Party [...]. In the early hours of the morning, military units made up of the Revolutionary Guard and of so-called guerillas, arrived in the affected districts. When members of the local National Committees asked them to

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>292</sup> *Intolerance*, 73.

<sup>293</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben – Srpen/Září 1945*, 129.

<sup>294</sup> Based on the date - June 11, 1945 - it was the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Army that carried out this expulsion.

evacuate the Germans in accordance with the compiled lists, they received very rude answers from the generally drunk „officers“ – „You can put these lists up to...“ They went into action. They entered flats and every family was told to report within half an hour at the assembly point of the district. Jewelry was confiscated, and to make sure that nothing was hidden there, females had even their genitals searched. Then the “transports” were loaded into tram cars and taken to Tellnitz (Teplice) from where they had to walk over to Erzgebirge (Krušné hory) to Germany. Even people aged 78 and 81 were not spared this cavalry.<sup>295</sup>

Due to fragmental evidence, it is impossible to give any precise number of expellees in these first transfers. It has been estimated that 22,000 Germans were expelled from Ústí by mid-August.<sup>296</sup> By the end of November, the number of “evacuated” Ústí’s Germans reached 28,000.<sup>297</sup> The chairperson of the OSK, Vobecká, cited 20,000 expellees by August 3, 1945.<sup>298</sup> Directives for the expulsion of German civilians, issued by the 1st Military Corps, outlined three major groups. The first group included replaceable intelligence such as professors, teachers, and doctors along with clergy who collaborated with the Nazi regime, elderly persons (regardless of gender), and replaceable administrators. The second group included all “business” people except those from sectors dealing with necessary supplies. Bakers, butchers, and food store workers were excluded, but only in necessary numbers. The final group consisted of all the replaceable employees in the industrial and economic sectors. All those who applied, but could not had been “evacuated” immediately, were scheduled to be interned.

The second phase involved gathering the remainder of the German population,

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<sup>295</sup> Schieder, *The Expulsion of the German Population from Czechoslovakia*, 430.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 445.

<sup>297</sup> Radvanovský, *Konec Česko-Německého Soužití na Ústecku: 1945-1947*, 74;

<sup>298</sup> ABS-P, f. 2M, č.11873, In von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 215.

excluding agricultural workers, in the internment camps until expelled. The last phase included agricultural workers, but only if they could be adequately replaced by Czechs. Additionally, the directives stated that Germans unable to walk - such as elderly, sick, and children under the age of ten - should be carried by trains or trucks. Moreover, these directives stipulated that mothers, children, husbands, and wives should not be separated from one other.<sup>299</sup> These directives, however, went largely unmet.

Despite calls for just treatment in the military directives, expulsions during the “wild” period involved widespread brutality toward expellees. Family members were forcibly separated, and German antifascists and intermarried couples were expelled. The expellees either were forced to march or were carried by trucks, boats, and, most commonly, by open coal trains. As a general policy, those destined for expulsion had fifteen minutes to leave their homes. Officially, the expellees were permitted to carry up to thirty kilos of luggage, food for three to seven days, and up to three hundred German marks. Officials confiscated any possessions that exceeded this amount.<sup>300</sup> This however, allowed for widespread theft of expellee possessions, even those within the allowable limits. Female expellees of all ages frequently underwent humiliating search procedures.

Given such short evacuation notices, expellees did not have enough time to adequately prepare for the arduous journey or for the harsh conditions within the camps in Germany. Along with the widespread epidemics in these camps, approximately two thousand Germans from Ústí died in German Ruana during the winter of 1945/46.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> VÚA-VHU, fond MNO 1945-1, VO1, č.j. 01602/taj., 1 odd.; In Radvanovský, *Konec Česko-Německého Soužití na Ústecku: 1945-1947*, 59.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 70-71.; *Intolerance*, 115-116.

<sup>301</sup> *Intolerance*, 115.

Many more committed suicide upon their arrival in Saxony. Others illegally returned to Czechoslovakia, preferring incarceration to life in the camps. Furthermore, the local German population in Saxony did not welcome the expellees. Despite the Potsdam Conference agreement, expulsions from Ústí and the entire VO1, accelerated, only slowing by the end of August due to conditions in the Soviet occupation zone in Saxony.<sup>302</sup> Had the Red Army General Georgije Žukov not halted the expulsions because expellees were dying by the thousands, operations would most likely have continued to increase in frequency.<sup>303</sup>

Along with Svoboda's Army, the local national committees proved central to the expulsions. In Ústí, the first national committee, originally the Revolutionary National Committee, was established on May 5, 1945. In some locations, German antifascists became members of these early committees, particularly in areas dominated by Germans. This pattern did not apply in Ústí where Czechs rushed to establish a committee before Ústí's German antifascists had a chance to do the same.<sup>304</sup> The national committees were organized hierarchically, led by chairpersons, followed the councils, then the department heads, and finally the individual departments and/or commissions.<sup>305</sup> In general, the members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party played a crucial role in the national committees. Ústí's first Revolutionary National Committee faced a series of

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<sup>302</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 210.

<sup>303</sup> Petr Karlíček, "Hranice Přátelství? Český Pohled na Společnou Hranici v Letech 1945-1948" [Friendly Borders? Czech Perspective on the Common Border between 1945 and 1948], In Kristina Kaiserová and Walter Schmitz eds., *Česko-Saské Vztahy v Proměnách Času* [Czech-Saxon Relations in Changing Times] (Dresden: Eckard Richter & Co.OHG, 2013), 309.

<sup>304</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 215.

<sup>305</sup> Gerlach, "For the Nation and Gain", 50.

challenges—thousands of refugees, damaged infrastructure, widespread looting, a critical housing shortage, and an influx of new settlers and so-called gold diggers—and proved incapable of managing the city’s postwar chaos. It was not until the old Czech settlers, experienced in the prewar administration of Ústí, returned that the situation began to improve. Josef Vondra, who returned to Ústí from exile, became one of the most respected of these old settlers (see Appendix D.2). Vondra was elected chairperson of the Local National Committee (MNV), founded on May 16, 1945.<sup>306</sup> The agenda of the former Revolutionary National Committee was delegated to the District National Committee (ONV) that oversaw MNV. On June 21, ONV became the District Settlement Commission (OSK), because the city’s Czech population amounted to less than 25% of the total. The OSK became chiefly responsible for the expulsions. Marie Vobecká, who returned to Ústí on May 25, was elected chairperson (see Appendix D.3).<sup>307</sup>

Vondra and Vobecká became the most significant local personalities in both the political and administrative arenas. Vondra actively participated in the political and administrative life of the prewar Ústí. Although Vondra was not a member of the Communist Party, his active role in the resistance movement during the Nazi occupation made him an obvious choice for local leadership. He served as chairperson of the MNV until March 3, 1946 and, during his tenure, became recognized for his attempt to prevent the killings of Ústí’s Germans on July 31, 1945.<sup>308</sup> Around the end of May and the beginning of June, a political rivalry developed as more communists demanded positions

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<sup>306</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 230.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 236.



in both the MNV and ONV. In contrast to the period that followed, the nomination of social democrat Vondra proved that a strong personality could, in the early postwar period, win over political affiliation.<sup>309</sup>

Vobecká was born into a family whose social status did not allow her to pursue a teaching career. In prewar Ústí, she became a social worker, focusing on children of lower social statuses. With the rise of fascism, she organized aid for German immigrants. Influenced by her father, she joined the Communist Party in 1921. Throughout her adult life, she occupied significant positions in the Communist Party, including membership in the Central Communist Committee. As an active member of the resistance movement, she was sentenced to three and half years in prison during the Nazi occupation but received an early release due to her incurable health conditions. While a true advocate of the Czech borderlands and Czech Ústí, she was an outspoken opponent of the “wild expulsions.” Moreover, she personally corrected certain injustices committed against German minorities.<sup>310</sup> Nonetheless, she argued in favor of the expulsion of German Jews, including Jews prosecuted by the Nazis. She maintained that, “Racial prosecutions is not solely the legal condition, since the law requires that such a person ‘remained true to the democratic republican state idea of the Czechoslovak Republic.’” For many Jews, this second condition went unfulfilled.”<sup>311</sup> Later, Vobecká added further justification for her stance, stating: “The majority [of Jews] do not know the state

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>310</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 226.

<sup>311</sup> Gerlach, *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing*, 216.

language and go around Ústí speaking German, which upsets the Czech inhabitants who desire de-germanization of the borderlands.”<sup>312</sup>

The “German Problem” in Ústí quickly became one of the main priorities of the national committees. Most of their initial public notices, orders, and directives related to Ústí’s Germans. The air raids of April 17 and 19, 1945 destroying part of the city, the presence of the military and semi-military forces, and the influx of the new settlers, resulted in a critical lack of housing. Hence, the removal of Ústí’s Germans freed up houses for new arrivals. If not expelled or interned, German families had to move together. By September 1945, approximately 30,000 new settlers had arrived in the city.<sup>313</sup> While the resettling of the borderlands is not a focus of this research, it is important to stress that the influx of the new settlers intensified the rate of the expulsions as it created a greater demand for German homes and possessions. Gerlach, in turn, considers the new settlers as participants in the expulsions, even if they did not actively and directly contribute. Interestingly, a significant number of the new settlers advocated the exclusion of Ústí’s Germans from “evacuations.” These requests, however, were limited to German women who were sought as potential spouses.<sup>314</sup>

Restrictions issued by the national committees included the requirement that all Germans wear a white armband with a letter “N” to make them easily identifiable (See Appendix D.4).<sup>315</sup> Germans could not move or travel from place to place if the distance exceeded four kilometers. Furthermore, the committees prohibited Ústí’s Germans from

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>313</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 222.

<sup>314</sup> Piffle, *Kronika Města Ústí nad Labem*, 31.

<sup>315</sup> “German” translates into Czech as “Němec” (hence the letter “N”).

appearing in public places such as restaurants, theatres, parks, or cinemas, and they could shop only during certain hours.<sup>316</sup> Because these restrictions were not issued from a central authority, they differed from region to region. For example, when the Ministry of Interior discovered that, in some locations, German Jews and German political prisoners returning from the concentration camps were being forced to wear these armbands, the Ministry attempted to prevent this practice. This example illustrates the autonomy of the national committees in their treatment of the German population.<sup>317</sup> Germans also faced discrimination in public transportation. In most regions, they were prohibited from using it altogether, but this practice did not apply in Ústí. Despite opposition from the national committees, however, military personnel tried repeatedly to impose this restriction. The national committees also attempted to establish order within the expulsion operations. In mid-June, the Commission for Evacuation, formed by the national committee, created lists of Germans based on their addresses. They also kept short descriptions of the expellees collected through interviews. Perhaps most significantly, the expulsion of German antifascists, intermarried couples, and German specialists considered vital to postwar industry became forbidden.<sup>318</sup>

Attempts by the National Committees to organize the expulsions more efficiently came into direct conflict with the military and their agenda as the objectives of these two main actors differed significantly. While local authorities tried to sustain communities and their economies-often depending on German workers, specialists, or administrators-

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<sup>316</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 232.

<sup>317</sup> Circular of the Ministry of Interior, Presidiální Spisy ONV v ČB, Č.Z/1-38222-5-4.

<sup>318</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 231.

the army, on the other hand, sought simply to expel as many Germans as quickly as possible. In mid-June, representatives of Ústí's national committee, along with a Red Army officer, arrived at the Ministry of Interior to complain about these fundamental disputes. The delegation asserted that the major problem lay in contradictory directions and orders received by the military and local administration. Historians Staněk and von Arburg speculate that the delegation had a hand in the new directives issued by the Czechoslovak government on June 15, 1945.<sup>319</sup> However, even the new directives proved unclear and allowed for flexibility.<sup>320</sup> Evidence of the dispute between the national committees and the military is present in reports of the national committees meeting minutes and is further confirmed by a meeting held after the Ústí massacre on August 1, 1945.<sup>321</sup> During the meeting, local authorities were scolded for hindering the "evacuations." While stressing that all Germans must be expelled, Vobecká insisted that expulsions should be executed in line with directives issued by the Czechoslovak government, which, among other things, forbade the expulsion of German antifascists who fought against the Nazi regime.<sup>322</sup>

A German historian of the Ústecko region, A. Bohmann, notes that, despite the overwhelming inhumanity of the transfers, local people did attempt to aid the expellees, particularly those that they knew personally. This often involved placing themselves in high-risk situations.<sup>323</sup> Unfortunately, the author did not elaborate on this statement any

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<sup>319</sup> von Arburg and Staněk, "Organizovaný Divoký Odsun?," 331.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 331.

<sup>321</sup> AMU, f. ONV – Schůze ONV ÚL, 8.6. 1945 – 26.10.1945, k.1, inv. č.6.

<sup>322</sup> ABS-P, f. 2M, č.11873, In von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 215.

<sup>323</sup> Radvanovský, *Konec Česko-Německého Soužití na Ústecku: 1945-1947*, 72.

further. Certain oral testimonies of Sudeten Germans also indicate that the local Czechs were “reasonable.”<sup>324</sup> However, while records indicate that local Czechs did not take part in violence against their German neighbors, there is no clear indication or evidence depicting their outright disapproval of the expulsions. On countless occasions, though, as the agenda of the national committees demonstrates, Ústí’s Czechs supported many local Germans in their effort to be exempted from the expulsions based on their self-proclaimed anti-Nazi activism or their necessity to the Ústí economy. Furthermore, when valuable German specialists were expelled by the military personnel, their former employers prodded the national committees for their return.<sup>325</sup> During the meeting with military representatives mentioned above, Vobecká argued that expelling German specialists before finding adequate replacements disadvantaged the city and allowed foreign competitors the upper hand, giving them the opportunity to take in specialists and utilize their expertise. In the long run, she argued, the expulsion of German specialists would work against the Czechoslovak economy.<sup>326</sup> One of the military leaders, however, argued that expulsions were a priority, regardless of their potential consequences for the national economy. Reluctance to replace Ústí’s Germans in the workplace became such a troublesome issue that the OSK issued an order that all German workers, regardless of their necessity, had to be replaced by non-Germans by August 15, 1945. Similarly, OSK dealt with an overwhelming number of requests for an exclusion from “evacuations”

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<sup>324</sup> Černý and Dědinová, *Slyšme i Druhou Stranu*, 81.

<sup>325</sup> AMÚ, f. ONV 1945-1986, Commission of Evacuations, k.4.; AMÚ MěNV ÚL, Inv. č. 328. Examples of such requests/letters.

<sup>326</sup> ABS-P, f. 2M, č.11873, In von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Akty Hromadného Násilí v Roce 1945 a jejich Vyšetřování*, 217.

based on one's loyalty to Czechoslovakia during the Nazi occupation. The Czechs often provided a proof of such activities. This loyalty, though, was often questioned. It was during this time that a great number of Sudeten Germans, former SdP members, applied to join the Communist Party. Countless caricatures portray them as turncoats.<sup>327</sup>

Relations between local common Germans and Czechs in Ústí during the immediate postwar period are difficult to adequately describe for several reasons. First, Czechs and Germans were prohibited from mingling with one another. A Czech person could be prosecuted for visiting or helping a German neighbor. Furthermore, most Sudeten Germans not immediately expelled became isolated from the rest of the city's population; most commonly through interment in one of the two camps, but also through the myriad of restrictions placed upon them. Second, as anti-German radicalism gained greater prominence throughout Czech society, it became increasingly dangerous to express opposition to mainstream attitudes. Additionally, because nearly all residents owned a firearm, consumption of alcohol was widespread, and the sense of lawlessness prevailed, few local Czechs, already harshly scrutinized by new settlers and the military, felt secure in freely expressing any opinion of the expulsions that differed from that of the majority. However, public attitudes and official regulations failed to completely eradicate longstanding relations between Germans and Czechs in Ústí. For instance, many Czechs and Germans continued to trade with one another. The ONV in Ústí ordered the subordinate national committees "to quickly intervene" because "when many Czechs are allowed to be lured by a profitable purchase, such as they forget their national

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<sup>327</sup>*Práce*, No. 52, July 7-8, 1945.; *Jihočeská Pravda*, No. 3, June 13, 1945.

responsibility.”<sup>328</sup> As historian Gerlach stated: “few Czechs considered such transactions in national terms.”<sup>329</sup>

By 1947, the ethnic structure of Ústí had been drastically altered, as reflected in the first postwar Czechoslovak census. Before the war, Germans represented approximately 81% of the city’s population and 78.3% of the suburbs. By 1947, the number had decreased to 3.8%.<sup>330</sup> Meanwhile, the influx of new settlers, many of whom arrived with base motives and no roots in the region, brought with them a myriad of national, cultural, religious, and social customs. These factors became a great challenge for postwar Ústí; a challenge that has yet to be overcome. Leading politicians during the “wild” period denied expulsions except those carried out by common people. For example, in a July 25, 1945 interview for *Reuters*, published in Ústí’s *Předvoj*, Beneš stated that very few Germans had been deported so far and only as a result of uncontrollable, but justified anger of those Czechs who lived in the borderlands under the Nazi occupation. Furthermore, he added that approximately 200,000 of the region’s most active Nazis had already left on their own free will.<sup>331</sup> While it is true that most “true” Nazis fled before they could face prosecution, the first statement was problematic as both political and military leaders prepared directives for the expulsions.<sup>332</sup> On June 6, 1945, military officials personally informed the political elite, including Beneš, about the

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<sup>328</sup> Gerlach, *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing*, 134.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 234.

<sup>331</sup> *Předvoj* [Advance Guard], July 25, 1945.

<sup>332</sup> VÚA-VHU, f. MNO 1945, k.1, In Zdeněk Radvanovský, *Konec Česko- Německého Soužití v Ústecké Oblasti 1945-1948* (Ústí nad Labem, UJEP, 1997), 30.

first forced “evacuations.” The president strongly supported their proceedings.<sup>333</sup> Thus, his argument of popular uprisings against Sudeten Germans leading to the expulsions in the borderlands was clearly misleading.<sup>334</sup> Between 600,000 and 820,000 Germans had been forcibly expelled, and 100,000 Germans were “evacuated” between the Potsdam Conference and December 1945.<sup>335</sup> Due to limited records, the number of German expellees is only approximate, and it is difficult to adequately gauge the German population of Czechoslovakia immediately after the war. Furthermore, military personnel maintained records of the expulsions and had their reasons to manipulate the numbers. Ústí’s administrators served as one of the very few groups to keep records of the expellees.<sup>336</sup> Exceptions to the radical approach of expulsion existed. For example, the first postwar Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Zdeněk Fierlinger, called this solution to the “German Problem” a Gestapo practice. His stance, however, represented a minority within the government.<sup>337</sup>

Based on national periodicals, along with additional primary sources from mid-1945, the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia was considered a logical solution to the “German Problem,” a strategy further strengthened by the general consent of the Allied Powers. Newspapers reflected widespread acceptance of the expulsions, regardless of participation in Nazi crimes. The most frequent picture of a Sudeten German was one

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<sup>333</sup> VÚA-VHU, f. VKPR, k.1, č.j. 1007, In von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 426-428.

<sup>334</sup> For a detailed account of a decision-making process and specific orders issued by the Czechoslovak government and military officials, see von Arburg and Staněk, “Organizované Divoké Odsuny?,” *Soudobé Dějiny 12*, no. 3-4, 465-533.

<sup>335</sup> Brandes, *Cesta k Vyhnutí 1938-1945*, 333.

<sup>336</sup> von Arburg and Staněk eds., *Duben –Srpen/Září 1945*, 103.

<sup>337</sup> “Divoký Odsun” [“Wild Expulsions”], June 15, 2013, <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10150778447-historie-cs/dily/?filtr=odsun>.



of a traitor and a turncoat. Statements such as “the only good German is a dead German,” too, appeared in the newspapers. In this regard, Ústí’s local periodicals did not differ in tone from that of national papers, regardless of the political affiliation of publishers. The most common themes included the Nazi plan to Germanize the borderlands, public trials of Nazi criminals, reports of uncovering mass graves, and first-person testimonies of former prisoners of Nazi concentration camps.<sup>338</sup> Justification of the expulsions based on longstanding usurpation of Slavic people by Germans also appeared frequently. A quote from Czech historical figure Pavel Stránský (1672) was representative for the period:

“Germans prefer power over justice, it is ambitious and hateful nation that always looked down on everyone, but especially on Slavic people.” Put simply, Czech lands had always belonged to Slavic people, and Germans, as foreigners and colonizers, took advantage of Czech friendliness.”<sup>339</sup>

#### Summary/ Conclusion

First and foremost, the “wild expulsions” only became possible following the agreement, although unofficial, between the Czechoslovak government and Soviet leader Stalin who agreed to accept German expellees in Soviet occupational zone. Most of the expellees during this period were expelled from the first military region to German Saxony with which Czechoslovakia shared the longest border. The first expulsions of Ústí’s Germans, carried by Svoboda’s Army, occurred on June 11, 1945. These initial forced “regular” transfers were accomplished in brutal form. For example, authorities gave expellees short notice and little time to prepare for transfer. The role of the Army, although still questioned today despite evidence, proved pivotal. In later periods, the

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<sup>338</sup> *Předvoj*, June 30, July 4, July 11, 1945.

<sup>339</sup> *Rudý Sever*, No.8, July7, 1945.

Czechoslovak government justified the expulsions in terms of the agreement reached at Potsdam to halt expulsions. However, the government never honored this provision, as expulsions from the entire VO1, including Ústí, only accelerated.

Local authorities, represented by the national committees, particularly the OSK led by Vobecká, also played a significant role in the forced removal of Ústí's Germans by compiling lists of those selected for transfer. While they tried to maintain order and look after the needs of the community, especially in economic areas by keeping German workers and specialists until replaced, there exist no indications that local authorities offered even the slightest disapproval of the concept of *cleansing* the city of Germans and making it a wholly Czech city.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Although in recent decades there has been an attempt to bridge the gap between national historiographies of the expulsions, especially after the opening of the archives in 1989, the topic remains largely understood within the context of the centuries-long Czech-German “history of conflict,” particularly among Czech and German historians. This study has aimed to avoid such a narrow perception by not only utilizing Western, Czech, German, and Polish scholarship, but also by placing the Ústí expulsions within a broader context. Furthermore, including the perception of common Sudeten Germans and Czechs provides a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. More specifically, this study has examined the factors that contributed to violence against Sudeten Germans and their expulsions from Ústí. In addition, this research has analyzed the deteriorating coexistence between Czechs and Germans prior to the expulsions and the extent to which it influenced both the violence and the “evacuations” during the so-called “wild” period.

The most significant factor in both violence toward Sudeten Germans and their expulsions from Ústí proved to be the liberating Armies. Unlike the Red Army, the U.S. Army did not allow expulsions from its liberated territories and, for the most part, managed to prevent widespread violence. The willingness of the Soviets to accept Sudeten Germans into their occupational zones in Germany and Austria played a central role in the expulsions. Radical anti-German nationalism, encouraged by politicians and

military authorities, contributed to violence and discrimination against Germans, although it is not clear to what extent.

Several additional factors unique to Ústí contributed to violence there. The Sudetenland, occupied predominantly by *enemies of state*, became a priority in terms of solving the “German Problem.” Furthermore, the borderlands suffered a disconnection from central orders more intensely than did the rest of the country. The power vacuum created conditions that allowed several different military and paramilitary formations to act on their own accord and to take advantage of the hopeless situation in which Germans found themselves. Furthermore, with its proximity to Prague and accessibility by railroads, Ústí became one of the easiest targets of these formations. The composition of the 1st Czechoslovak army also must be considered. Many members dispatched to the borderlands were Volhynian Czechs. They were unfamiliar with the local population and personal retaliation may well have been their primary motivation. The presence of the notorious 28th Infantry Regiment, which arrived in Ústí the night before the massacre, is one of the most obvious factors. Members of the Red Army, including soldiers and their superiors, also attacked local Germans. While they undeniably played a role in the Ústí massacre, they were primarily motivated by material gains and sexual attacks against German females.

Finally, it is important to stress that the Czechoslovak government set the stage for violence by passing vague legislation that allowed for the mistreatment of German civilians, and by condoning and legitimizing the actions of the military. The local population, with possible exceptions, did not participate in violence against Ústí’s

Germans. Thus, although relations between Ústí's Czech and German populations deteriorated, this did not contribute to the postwar violence. The "wild expulsions" from Ústí, despite being represented as a popular uprising, were directed by the 1st Czechoslovak army. However, the local administration in the form of national committees also played an integral part of the process even as their objectives often came into direct conflict with the Army. While Ústí's Czechs did not participate in violence against Germans, there does not seem to be any evidence that they, in principle, opposed the expulsions. There are also indicators, however, that many local Czechs did not feel as negatively toward Germans as was presented by the government and media. These include, for instance, a great number of Czechs willing to confirm German loyalty to Czechoslovakia or their necessity in the work sector. Continued trade among Czechs and Germans also indicates a lesser degree of radical national animosity.

Today, a memorial plaque on Beneš's bridge from which German civilians were thrown into the Elbe River, reflects the hesitancy to fully acknowledge injustice against German civilians. The plaque is dedicated "to innocent victims of violence on July 31, 1945" and does not specifically mention the German people. In terms of further research, historian Gerlach raises an interesting question:

If only a handful of non-military personnel participated in the [Ústí Massacre], then does this event reflect the mood of a city's inhabitants not to mention the mood of the nation? And 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? <sup>340</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Gerlach, "For Nation and Gain," 71.

Relations between Czechs and Germans during the annexation of Ústí also deserve additional research. The influx of new settlers, along with military and semi-military personnel, looked upon those Czechs who remained in Ústí under the Nazi regime-especially those who chose German nationality-with disdain and suspicion. To what extent this contributed to postwar Czech-German local relations and encouraged closer relations between these two ethnic groups remains to be determined.

In summary, this research offers a deeper understanding of the local factors contributing to violence against Sudeten Germans and their expulsion from Ústí during the “wild” period. It also demonstrates that both objectives fit within a broader context. Understanding, however, does not imply justifying. To conclude with words of Czech scholar Erazim Kohák, “forcible transfer of one fourth of the German population from the historical lands, regardless their historical necessity or even inevitability, represents a denial of basic human rights for one’s homeland. We cannot argue for our rights and deny others the same.”<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Erazim Kohák, In Černý, Křen, Kural, and Otáhal eds., *Češi, Němci, Odsun*, 324.

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Archive of the City of Ústí nad Labem (AMÚ)

Czech State District Archives in České Budějovice (SOkA ČB)

The Northern-Czech Science Library in Ústí nad Labem

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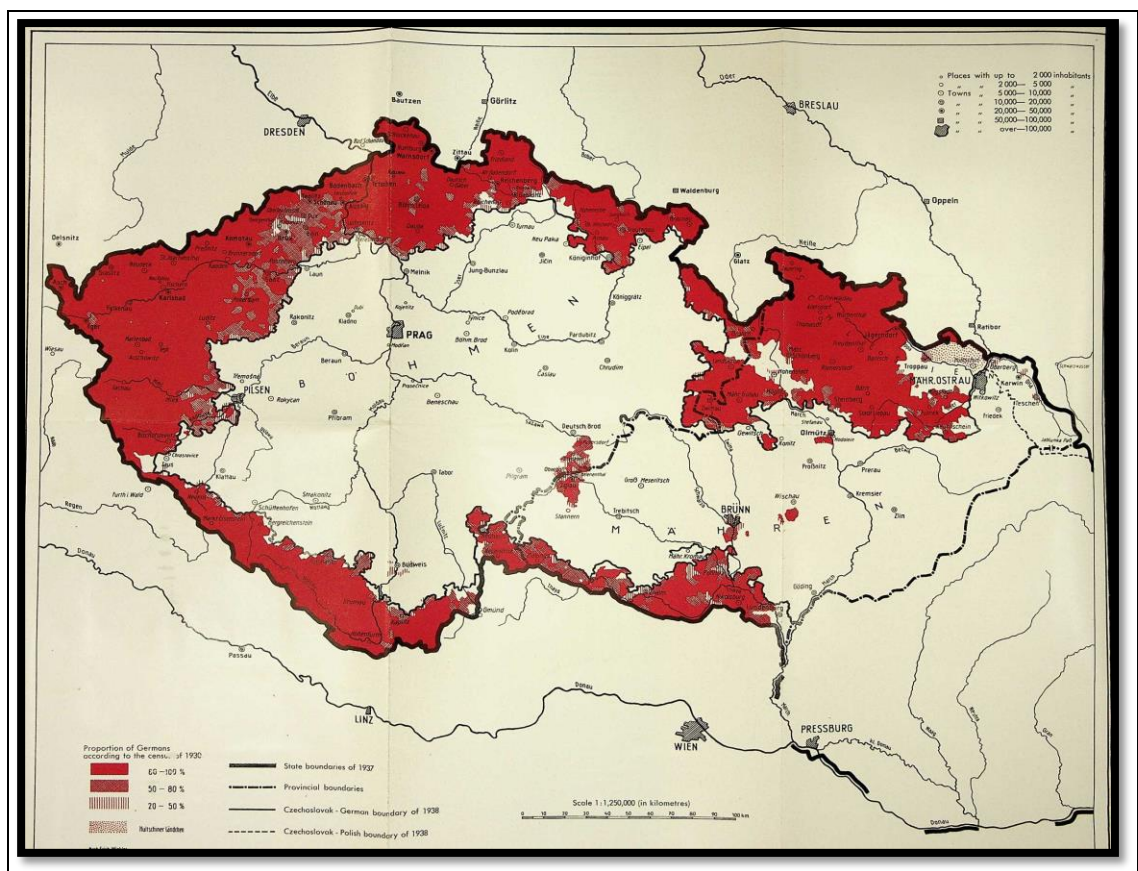
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<https://geology.com/world/czech-republic-satellite-image.shtml>.

## Appendix A

### Images Related to Chapter I

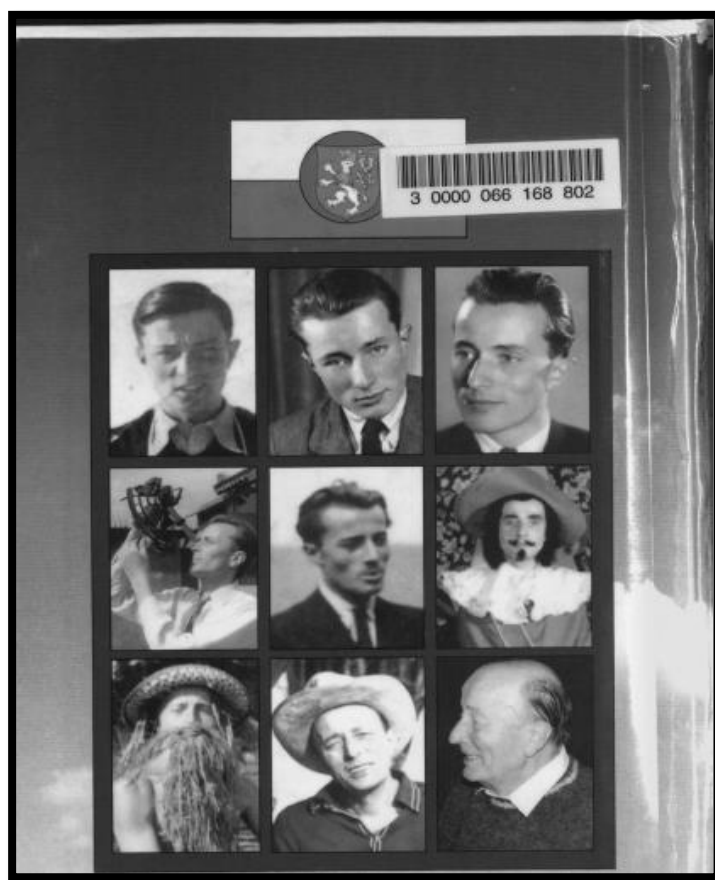


A.1: German Settlement in Bohemia and Moravia.  
Source: Schieder, *Documents*, 1960.



A.2: Ústí nad Labem on the map of the Czech Republic  
Source: Geology.com





A.3: Jiří Šosvald

Source: Šosvald, Jiří, *JÓ...Tenkrát v Ústí*, 1999.



A.4: Gerda Eckelt  
Source:Eckelt, Gerda, *Kde je Můj Domov?*, 1998.



Appendix B

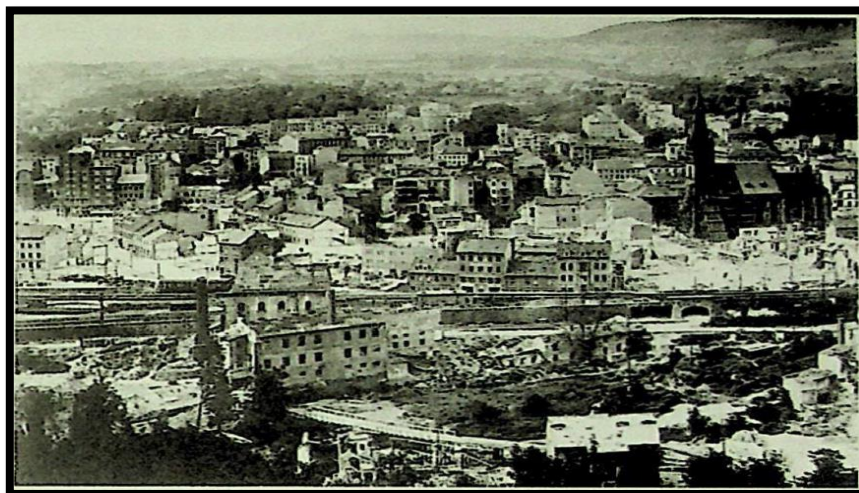
Images Related to Chapter II



B.1: The Wehrmacht units welcomed by Ústí's Germans  
 Source: Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 1995.



B.2: On October 16, 1938, more than 100,000 Sudeten Germans assembled at the Ústí's stadium to celebrate the liberation with Konrad Henlein as one of the key speakers.  
 Source: Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 1995.



B.3: The Allied air raids on April 17 and 19, 1945 severely destroyed Ústí.  
Source: Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 1995.



B.4: Ústí at the end of the war, May 1945.  
Source: Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 1995.



## Appendix C

### Images Related to Chapter III





C.1: “Oh, it’s raining; they can’t go.”

This caricature captures frustrated Czechoslovak society with the prolonged expulsions.  
Source: Magazine *Dikobraz*, 6.2.1946, In Karlíček, *Thrilling Times*, 2018.



C.2: “Man 1: Sir, could you please tell me where I can find any empty apartment here?  
Man 2: Sure! I am from Prague, but I can tell you; it is the third on the left. I just emptied it.”

Gold-diggers became a phenomenon of the immediate postwar period.  
Source: Magazine *Dikobraz*, October 10, 1945, In Karlíček, *Thrilling Times*, 2018.



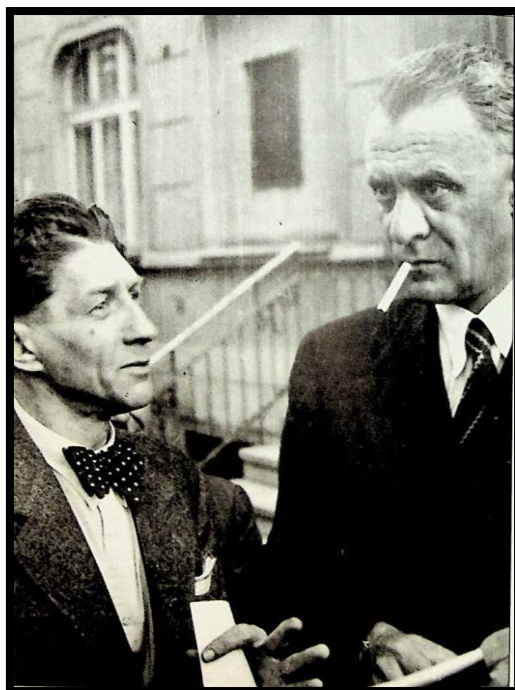
## Appendix D

### Images Related to Chapter IV



D.1: The so-called “voluntary departures” of Germans from Ústí occurred between May 10 and May 20, 1945.

Source: Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 1995.



D.2: Josef Vondra, a chief of MNV and a man who tried to prevent violence against  
Ústí's Germans during the Ústí massacre.  
Source: Havel, Kaiser and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31. Července 1945*,  
2005.



D3: Marie Vobecká, a chief of OSK.

Source: Source: Havel, Kaiser and Pustějovský, *Stalo se v Ústí nad Labem 31.Července 1945*, 2005.



D.4: Two Ústí's Germans wearing a white armband.  
Source: Kaiserová and Kaiser et al., *Dějiny Města Ústí nad Labem*, 1995.