

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN FORTIFICATION SYSTEM AND SUDETEN GERMANS

When Czechoslovakia started building permanent fortifications in the middle of 1930s, a number of pitfalls and complications soon appeared, which the Directorate of Fortification Works had to deal with. One of the many areas was the issue of national minorities in relation to secrecy during implementation. With the construction of the first permanent fortifications in the borderlands, the military administration was forced to begin regulating both the movement of people within the fortified zone and the selection of employees, construction companies and other contractors for state military contracts. After the Great depression, unemployment in the Republic was still relatively high, and it was therefore expected that the military state contracts, together with the construction of permanent fortifications, would help, especially in the border regions, to reduce the frustration of the local population with the poor social situation and offer new job opportunities to entrepreneurs and workers. The requirement of state reliability and moral qualification logically reflected in the already complicated Czech-German coexistence in political and everyday life, as it determined the possibility and degree of involvement of each citizen in the fortification work.

The possible disadvantage of the unemployed German workers at the expense of the Czech workers in the border areas was abundantly exploited, especially by the Sudeten German Party, to whose accusations and interpellations on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies the government had to respond regularly. The state administration thus had to deal with a difficult task: how, on the one hand, to allow equal and fair access to state military contracts across the republic and society, and, on the other hand, to define the part of the population that was to be excluded from these contracts for security reasons, or involved in less secret projects.

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Overpowering a Maritime Fear: Habsburg Monarchy, Sea Raiding, and the Securitization of the Mediterranean during the Balkan Revolutionary Age (1815-1832)

After 1815, the Habsburg Monarchy had to manage its maritime domains across nearly the entire Adriatic region. This area spanned not only various coastlines from the Po River, on the western shore, to Budva, the southernmost port on the eastern Adriatic, but also included numerous islands and vast, fluid maritime spaces. Viewing the Adriatic as a vital economic and geopolitical hub in an increasingly globalized world, Vienna sought to assert dominance over the sea while undermining alternative networks that did not align with its interests. Challenges to this vision of a colonial, Habsburg-controlled Adriatic came from Ottoman actors from North Africa and Albania and anti-Ottoman Greek rebels from the Peloponnese and the Aegean. While the Ottoman actors engaged in illicit trade, sea raiding, and the defense of Ottoman maritime borderlands along both coasts, the Greek rebels attacked the Habsburg trans-Mediterranean trade ships. In response to these challenges, Vienna and its powerful Adriatic merchants took steps to assert control over the sea. This article demonstrates how the Habsburgs transformed the Adriatic by eliminating these alternative networks. It argues that the Habsburg Monarchy shifted from being a limited thalassocratic power—a feature of the previous centuries—to becoming a fully-fledged maritime empire after by the late 1830s. This change was propelled by various diplomatic and military efforts, such as promoting a “piracy” narrative, as well as deploying war vessels to secure maritime routes. Drawing on transimperial history and a range of archival sources from Italy and Austria, Croatia and Turkey, this paper examines the successes and failures of Habsburg maritime policies, as well as the resilience and adaptations of those who resisted them. Ultimately, it argues that these Habsburg strategies gradually reshaped the Adriatic from a bridge between various communities and powers into a bordered space, where an empire dominated on sea.

A Bone of Contention.

Ukrainophiles' and Russophiles' Attempts to Gain Autonomy for Podkarpatska Rus'.

1919–1938

The Czecho-Slovak state took on the responsibility of establishing the autonomy of Podkarpatska Rus' at the international level right after the WWI. However, until the very end of its existence, such autonomy was not granted. There was a whole tangle of intertwined reasons for this. But what remained constant was that Czecho-Slovakia officials' considerations regarding Podkarpatska Rus' weren't related to this region itself. Whereas the central issue for Prague Castle was to maintain its own influence and control over the region in the face of the German, Hungarian and also Soviet threat to the Czecho-Slovak state.

In my presentation, I'm going to tell about the limits of interwar Czecho-Slovak democracy; about creating different national projects on a common ground of local identity through participation in mass politics; about the vertical and horizontal interaction of ethnic and national minorities in a nationalizing state; about cross-border influences of other Central and Eastern European states (like Hungary, Poland, Germany, and the USSR) on the local situation in Podkarpatska Rus'; about Ruthenian/Ukrainian migrant communities in the USA as a tool of political influence in their home country; about a transnational dimension of an imagined community (in this case, the Ukrainian) which could be an additional challenge but, at the same time, enhance its chances for sustaining development.