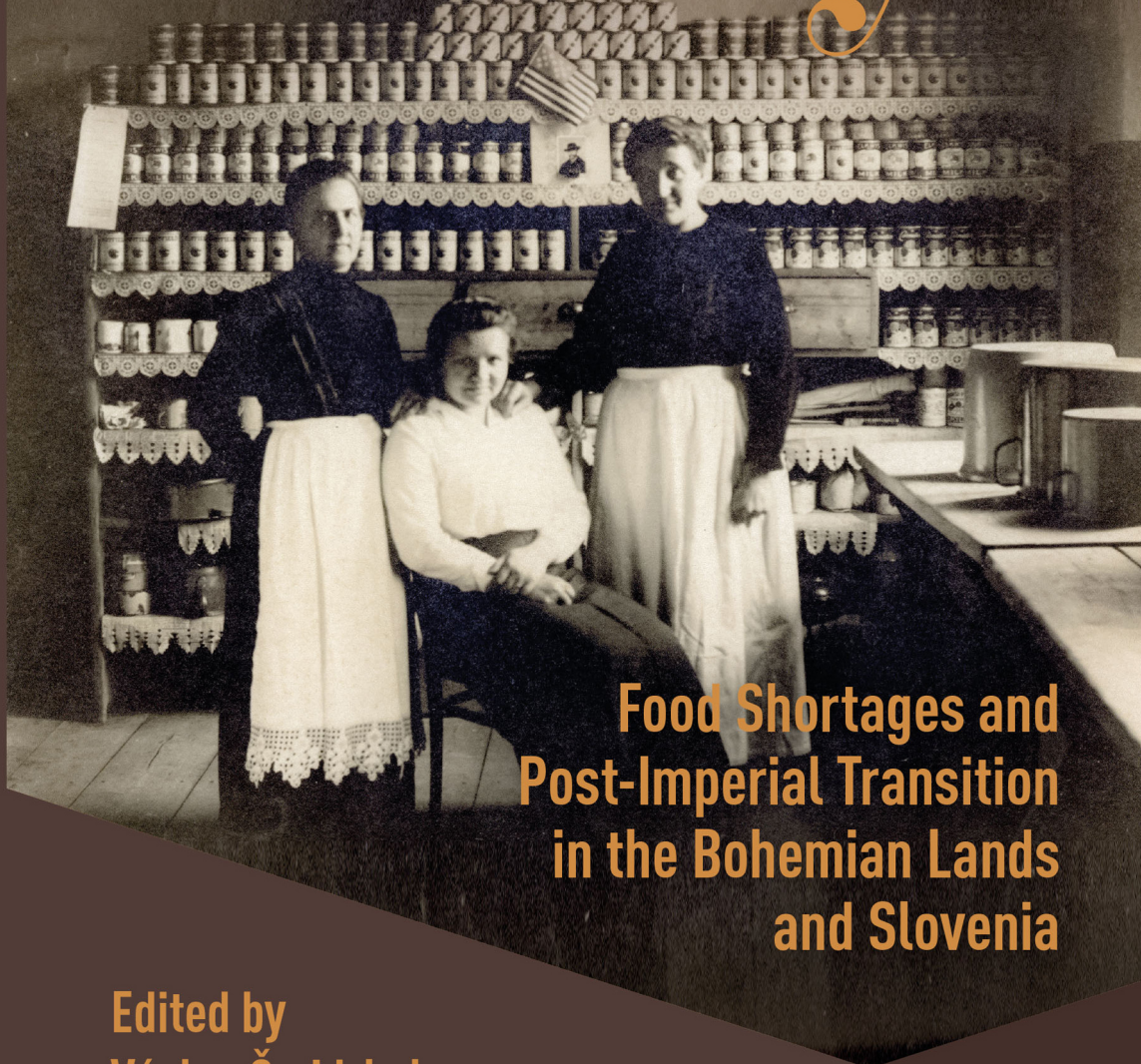


Nourishing Victory



Food Shortages and
Post-Imperial Transition
in the Bohemian Lands
and Slovenia

Edited by
Václav Šmidrkal
and Rok Stergar

 CEU PRESS

Nourishing Victory

Nourishing Victory

*Food Shortages and Post-Imperial Transition
in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia*

*Edited by
Václav Šmidrkal and
Rok Stergar*



Central European University Press
Budapest–Vienna–New York–Amsterdam

The publication of this book is made possible by the research grant “Nourishing Victory: Food Supply and Post-Imperial Transition in the Czech Lands and Slovenia, 1918–1923” funded by the Czech Science Foundation (GF21-30350K) and the Slovene Research Agency (N6-0190).

Cover illustration: Women in the kitchen of the Czechoslovak Child Care in Rokycany with cans of American food, c. 1920. Státní okresní archiv Rokycany

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 96 3386 918 5

e-ISBN 978 96 3386 919 2 (pdf)

e-ISBN 978 90 4857 565 7 (accessible ePub)

DOI 10.5117/9789633869185

NUR 686



Creative Commons License CC-BY NC ND (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>)

© The authors / Amsterdam University Press B.V. | Central European University Press, 2026

Some rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, any part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise).

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner for the purpose of training artificial intelligence technologies or systems.

Table of Contents

List of Maps, Figures, and Table	7
List of Abbreviations	9
Note on Place Names	11
Acknowledgments	13
Introduction: Food Shortages and Shifting Loyalties <i>Václav Šmidrkal and Rok Stergar</i>	19
1. Breaking the State: Food, Hunger, and Power in War <i>Maja Godina Golija and Václav Šmidrkal</i>	43
2. Building the State: Hunger, Anger, and Postwar Consolidation <i>Václav Šmidrkal and Maja Godina Golija</i>	103
3. Hopes, Promises, Realities: Food Scarcity and Foreign Aid <i>Dagmar Hájková and Rok Stergar</i>	165
4. Nourishing Contested Borderlands <i>Pavel Horák and Jernej Kosi</i>	221
Epilogue <i>Václav Šmidrkal, Rok Stergar, Maja Godina Golija, Dagmar Hájková, Pavel Horák, and Jernej Kosi</i>	277
Bibliography	291
Index	327

List of Maps, Figures, and Table

Maps

0.1	Habsburg Empire, 1914	15
0.2	Post-Habsburg Central Europe, 1923	15
0.3	Teschen Silesia	16
0.4	Prekmurje	17

Figures

1.1	Map of Bohemia showing the number of cases and deaths from hunger edema in May 1918.	68
1.2	A satirical cartoon titled "Food Assistance."	84
2.1	Czech postcard from post-1918 Bohemia revealing the reality of war-time Habsburg Austria.	130
3.1	Feeding children with US food aid in one of the kitchens run by Czechoslovak Child Care in Mendryka/Mändrik, East Bohemia, c. 1920.	196
3.2	American Relief Administration Warehouses postcard, sent from Czechoslovakia to relatives in the US to encourage food draft purchases.	202
4.1	"In Teschen Silesia: Take these things [terror, promises, violence, 10,000 crowns] and go turn people into Poles."	231

Table

1.1	Data collected on emergency areas in Bohemia for the purpose of the German-Bohemian Emergency Committee of the House of Lords (mid-1918).	67
-----	---	----

List of Abbreviations

ARA	American Relief Administration
ARAW	American Relief Administration Warehouses
CCC	Czechoslovak Child Care (<i>Československá péče o dítě</i>)
CCCA	Czechoslovak Commercial Corporation of America
CRB	Commission for Relief in Belgium
ECF	European Children's Fund
JDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
MP	member of parliament
UCR	United Czechoslovak Relief
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Note on Place Names

In their writings on places lacking a common English name, historians of Habsburg Central Europe have increasingly adopted the use of all official place names whenever a place is mentioned in the text. Although this approach is commendable for highlighting the multilingual realities of the past, we have chosen to deviate from this practice to some extent in the present volume. The rationale for this decision is that we are writing about a profoundly tumultuous period in which sovereignty changed, borders were shifting, and it was not always clear who was in a position of authority. Moreover, this era was marked by nationalist attempts to erase the heterogeneity of these territories. Consequently, names in minority languages often lost their previous status, while new official names were imposed. Therefore, we decided to use the most common names that were in official or unofficial use when we first mention a place and only use the current name afterwards. Of course, we use common English names where they are available.

Acknowledgments

The book is the result of collective work by an entire research team. However, each chapter has two principal authors, one from the Czech and one from the Slovene part of the team. The only exception is the Epilogue, which was drafted by Václav Šmidrkal, using additional materials prepared by Dagmar Hájková and Pavel Horák, and expanded and fine-tuned by Rok Stergar, who was assisted by Maja Godina Golija and Jernej Kosi. As such it is the work of the entire team.

The book is an outcome of the bi-national research project “Nourishing Victory: Food Supply and Post-Imperial Transition in the Czech Lands and Slovenia, 1918–1923” that was generously funded by the Czech Science Foundation (GF21-30350K) and the Slovene Research Agency (N6-0190). Institutionally, the project was anchored at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the University of Ljubljana. The work of Jernej Kosi and Rok Stergar was also financially supported by the research program “Slovene History” (P6-02345), funded by the Slovene Research Agency. In the final stages of the project, Rok Stergar also benefited from his time as Fernand Braudel Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence and visiting professor at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris.

The authors would like to thank Gregor Antoličič, Jaka Bombač, Tamara Logar, Vita Zalar, and Vladimír Špína for helping us with research in the archives and libraries. Gábor Egry very generously shared his large treasure trove of scans from the ARA archives at the Hoover Institution with us, and we would like to thank him sincerely for that. Similarly, we would like to thank Doina Anca Cretu for sharing the scanned documents from the Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee with us. Kristýna Kaucká and Veronika Homolová also generously shared their archival materials as well as their knowledge. We want to thank both.

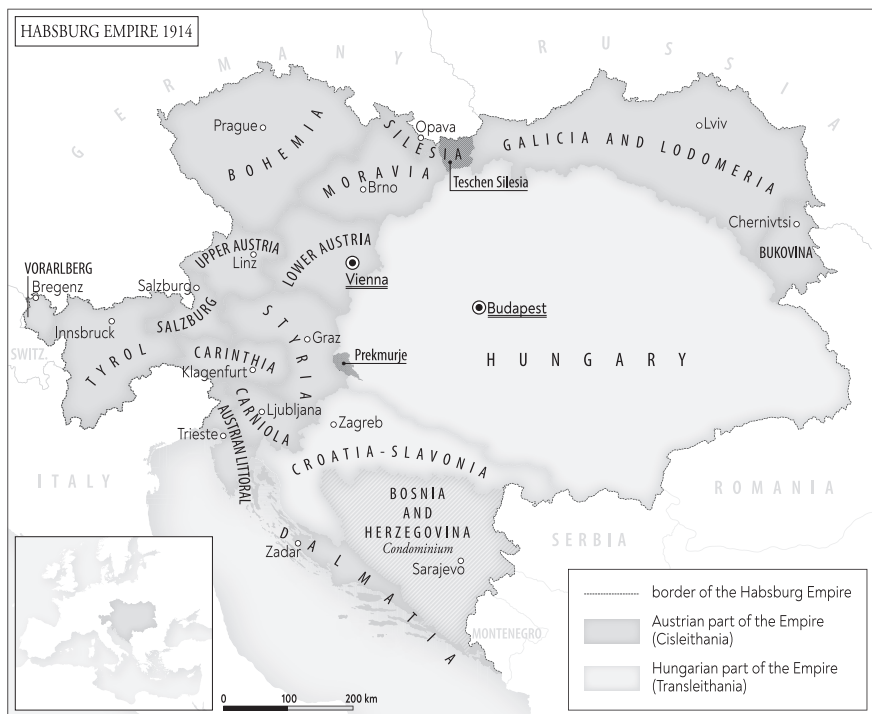
For providing the images and granting permission to use them in this book we would like to thank Hana Hrachová from the State District Archive in Rokycany, Markéta Hrdličková and Jindřich Hospaska from the State Regional Archive in Třeboň, and Josef Kopecký and Stanislav Konečný from the State District Archive in Svitavy, based in Litomyšl.

We would also like to thank our colleagues and friends Marco Bresciani, Jakub S. Beneš, Cathie Carmichael, Doina Anca Cretu, Gábor Egry, Francesco Frizzera, Ota Konrád, and Rudolf Kučera for all the comments, suggestions, and for generously sharing their forthcoming publications with us.

We would especially like to thank Ana Kladnik and Daša Ličen who were members of the team from 2021 to 2022 for their contributions to our debates. Finally, we would like to thank the participants in the various events at which we presented our work for their questions and comments. Two of these events we organized ourselves: the international workshop “Provisioning Crisis and Transformation of East-Central Europe, 1918–1923” in Prague in September 2022 and two panels at the 2023 annual convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) in Philadelphia, USA. We would like to thank all the participants and especially our chairs and discussants, Kathryn Densford, Aimee Genell, Friederike Kind-Kovács, and Nancy M. Wingfield.

We are also grateful to our translators and copy editors, Mark Worthington, Hynek Zlatník, and Cody J. Inglis, as well as to Oliver Pejić, who did additional editorial work.

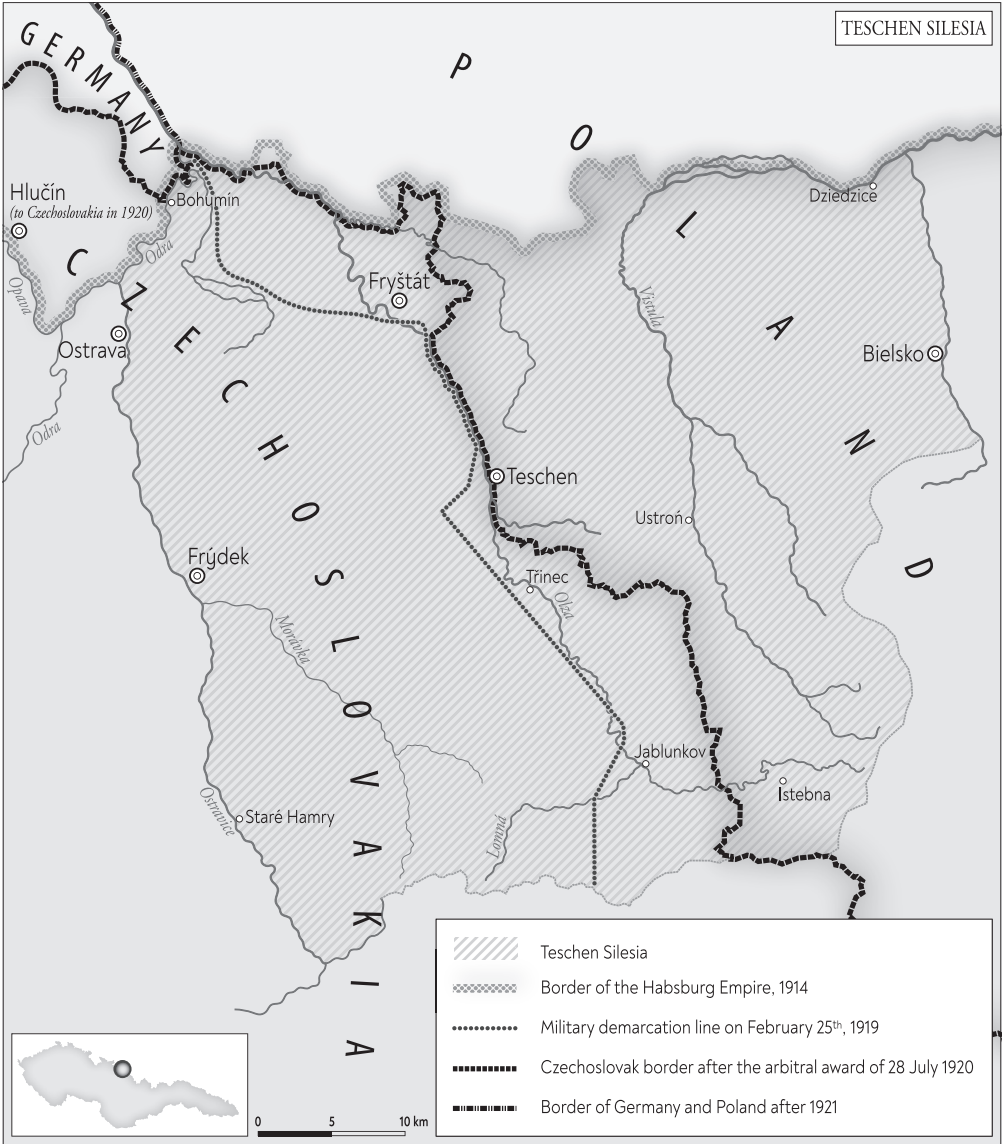
Finally, we want to thank our editor at CEU Press, Jen McCall, for her patience and support.



Map 0.1 Habsburg Empire, 1914. Created by Mateja Rihtaršič. Used with permission.



Map 0.2 Post-Habsburg Central Europe, 1923. Created by Mateja Rihtaršič. Used with permission.



Map 0.3 Teschen Silesia. Created by Mateja Rihtaršič. Used with permission.



Map 0.4 Prekmurje. Created by Mateja Rihtaršič. Used with permission.

Introduction: Food Shortages and Shifting Loyalties

Václav Šmidrkal and Rok Stergar

Abstract: The Introduction to *Nourishing Victory* pursues four main objectives. First, it situates the problem of food supply during the transitional period between the collapse of the Habsburg Empire and the consolidation of the post-imperial order within a broader historical and scholarly context. Second, it outlines the book's methodological approach, treating food supply as a lens for analyzing shifts in political legitimacy and in the meaning of victory and defeat. This section also explains the choice of the book's two comparative cases: the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia. Third, it reviews the existing literature in order to summarize the state of the art and to identify the research gap. Finally, the Introduction presents the overall structure of the book.

Keywords: food supply, historiography, First World War, Habsburg Empire

In mid-November 1918, the Directorate of People's Nutrition from Brno/Brünn, the provisional body overseeing food supply institutions in Moravia and Silesia, issued a circular.¹ It called on the members of the Czech economic councils in Moravia and Silesia to provide truthful reports to the Czechoslovak state authorities regarding the state of food and fodder stocks. This would allow the authorities to recalculate the size of state rations that had been chronically insufficient.² The circular also indicated that the state's existing food supply system, a despised legacy of the Habsburg wartime

¹ For more information on this body, see *Ranní Lidové noviny*, 27 October 1918, 1; Václav Peša, "Národní výbory v roce 1918 na Moravě a ve Slezsku," *Časopis Matice moravské* 77, no. 3–4 (1958): 262.

² Státní okresní archiv Prostějov, Národní výbor Prostějov (1918), 1918–20, k. 1, "Všem okresním hospodářským radám samosprávným" (15 November 1918).

era, needed to remain in force until the anticipated arrival of foreign aid: a minimum of three to six months. The text dramatically warned that in “these directly terrible, critical times” it was everyone’s patriotic duty to cooperate with the state authorities. Even a one- or two-day interruption in the supply of soldiers and workers could ignite a “fire” that would be difficult to extinguish.³

The addressees of this appeal, the Czech economic councils, were formed in late summer 1918 by Czech nationalists to sabotage the “totally unjust and dishonest” Austrian state supply system. Since only two and a half weeks had passed since the proclamation of Czechoslovakia, it was unclear to the new holders of power whether these economic councils were still sabotaging the food supply system or had already begun to support it. Accordingly, the circular reinterpreted the previous calls for the patriotic fulfillment of duties to the Austrian state in the field of food supply as a “plundering” of the Bohemian Lands. Under the previous conditions, the circular noted, it had been “meritorious and highly commendable” to “deliberately deceive the sub-commissioners, the political authorities, and ourselves.” It was also understandable and right “that the inventory commissioners deliberately entered lower false data in the inventory sheets, that the municipal councils, the economic councils, and all Czech officials in the districts worked by all means to export as little as possible from the districts.”⁴ Although the supply system—its regulations, institutions, and personnel—remained virtually unchanged when Czechoslovakia succeeded Austria-Hungary, new loyalty to the Czechoslovak state was now to prevail and secure sincere cooperation with the authorities. “Thus, what you had to fight against by all means before [28 October 1918], you must support today,” stressed the circular.⁵

As this document shows, the tantalizing promise of a better future in a victorious nation-state was, in the months after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, inextricably intertwined with a fear of unprecedented disorder. One of the determining factors between these two paths was the state management of food supply. Indeed, when the Habsburg Empire collapsed in October 1918, the legitimacy of the successor states, as well as their basic functioning, were closely tied to their ability to secure adequate food supplies for their already malnourished populations.⁶ Despite ending

3 “Všem okresním hospodářským radám samosprávným,” 3.

4 “Všem okresním hospodářským radám samosprávným,” 2.

5 “Všem okresním hospodářským radám samosprávným,” 1.

6 Rok Stergar, “Yugoslavia Is Worthless ... You Can Get Neither Sugar nor Kerosene.’ Food Supply and Political Legitimacy in the Slovene Part of Yugoslavia, 1918–1924,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 254–65.

up on the victorious side of the war, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were no exceptions. Victory still needed to be “nourished.” Literally, persistent food shortages still needed to be practically resolved; figuratively, loyalty to the new institutions, practices, values, and narratives likewise needed to be “nourished.” The above-mentioned distinction between the “patriotic sabotage” of food supply regulations in Habsburg Austria and the “patriotic compliance” with those same regulations in Czechoslovakia was one such narrative.

The existing historiography on food shortages in Central Europe after the First World War has largely focused on the so-called defeated states: Germany, Austria, and Hungary. There, severe subsistence crises were combined with pessimistic outlooks, economic downfall, and waves of revolutions and counterrevolutions. The situations in those countries had been catastrophic, and the danger of political instability had been immense. But it is important to note that conditions were not fundamentally different in Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, or Yugoslavia. Being categorized as “victorious” certainly created, at least initially, more favorable conditions for overcoming the postwar crisis and the possibility to shape one’s own future, something of which the vanquished were largely deprived.⁷ The signing of the armistice, for instance, did not automatically end the blockade; Hungary was under Allied blockade through the summer of 1919 and could not import food.⁸ Furthermore, the political elites in the defeated states were sometimes reluctant to ask for help, because they felt that “begging” would only further diminish the standing of their countries.⁹ On the other hand, being victorious guaranteed nothing; simply stated, victory itself could not put food on the table. All the successor states that emerged from the ruins of the Habsburg Empire in the fall of 1918 had to function in circumstances of post-imperial disorder. To various extents, they were all impacted by disrupted imperial flows of goods, the destruction of transport infrastructure, the absence of thousands of men, former prisoners of war that were still stuck somewhere in Russia, and an agriculture that was producing well below its potential.

Without implying that the widespread optimism in the so-called victorious states and the promises that the Entente made to their leaders

7 Jörn Leonhard, *Über Kriege und wie man sie beendet: Zehn Thesen* (C. H. Beck, 2023), 175–76.

8 N. P. Howard, “The Social and Political Consequences of the Allied Food Blockade of Germany, 1918–19,” *German History* 11, no. 2 (1993): 161–88; Friederike Kind-Kovács, *Budapest’s Children: Humanitarian Relief in the Aftermath of the Great War* (Indiana University Press, 2022), 66–68, 82.

9 Elisabeth Piller, “Despondence, Dependence and Dignity: On the Dilemmas of Being an Object of International Charity in Western Europe – a Weimar German Case Study,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 30, no. 5 (2023): 770–90.

were meaningless, it must be said that other factors and circumstances mattered too. The distinction between the victorious and the vanquished, for instance, was not the only one circulating. Deliberating about postwar Europe, some important protagonists employed racialized hierarchies, in which the newly established Slav states were seen as inferior and incapable of self-rule.¹⁰ Ultimately, racialized hierarchies did not determine how the victorious powers responded to food shortages, but they were not entirely irrelevant either. Their very presence shows that various classifications coexisted and that the lines between them were often blurred. Moreover, even when the distinction between the victorious and the vanquished was initially applied, it did not guarantee a lasting preferential treatment. Thus the leaders of the Entente states quickly abandoned the initial plan to supply only the “liberated” nations when they realized that this could lead to chaos and a slew of revolutions in the defeated states.¹¹ This is why it is not surprising that northwest Bohemia was actually one of the hotspots of famine in 1918.¹² The simple fact that Czechoslovakia received 11.9% (503,230 tons valued at \$105.5 million [\$1,672,369,785 in 2022]) of the total volume of American Relief Administration aid during the armistice period (November 1918–September 1919), ranking it fourth behind Germany, Austria, and France, is equally telling.¹³ In addition to statistical data, the ongoing subjective perception of food shortages as alarming was equally important. The people of Prague, who complained in early 1919 that there was not enough food and that the promised change had not come, certainly did not feel as if the supposed victory fulfilled its promises.¹⁴

10 James Mark, “Wilson’s White World: The Foundation of Central-Eastern European Nation-States after World War I,” in *Off White: Central and Eastern Europe and the Global History of Race*, ed. Catherine Baker et al. (Manchester University Press, 2024), 34.

11 Franz Adlgasser, “The Roots of Communist Containment: American Food Aid in Austria and Hungary after World War I,” in *Austria in the Nineteen Fifties*, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Rolf Steininger (Routledge, 1995), 171–88; Kimberly Lowe, “Better Fed than Red: International Famine Relief, 1921–22,” in *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, ed. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (Manchester University Press, 2023), 163–83.

12 Hans-Georg Hofer, “Ernährungskrise, Krankheit, Hungertod: Wien und Österreich-Ungarn im Ersten Weltkrieg,” *Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte* 31 (2013): 33–66; Václav Šmidrkál and Rok Stergar, “Food Shortages during the Post-Habsburg Transition in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 243–53.

13 Raymond Bland and Frank Macy, eds., *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period: Operations of the Organizations under the Direction of Herbert Hoover 1914 to 1924* (Stanford University Press, 1931), 36–37.

14 Claire Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution: Prague, 1914–1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 277.

Because of that, this book turns its attention to two nominally victorious successor states, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Going beyond the aforementioned dichotomy and the impact of victory and defeat on food supply, we aim to fill a gap in the existing historiography. By turning our analytical gaze to two successor states that emerged victorious out of the war—or so their leaders kept telling everyone—we hope to show the extent of postwar food shortages, its effects, and the ways in which the problems were eventually resolved. Doing this, we aim to contribute to a better understanding of the postwar years and add another piece to the Central European post-imperial puzzle.

Hunger, Power, Continuities and Discontinuities

In this book, we reconstruct the ways in which the affected populations reacted to scarcity, showing their collective and individual survival strategies. Additionally, we look at the policies and practices those various authorities and other protagonists employed to solve or at least mitigate the crisis. While we do work with some figures and statistics, we do not analyze the extent of these food shortages in primarily quantitative terms.¹⁵ We do not have access to sufficiently reliable anthropometric and economic data which could have allowed us to measure the impact of the food shortages on the population and evaluate these factors statistically. Rather, food scarcity is approached in this volume on a qualitative basis. The authors focus on observable signs and symptoms, such as coping strategies, food criminality, and state policies.¹⁶ In our interpretation, food shortage is a situation in which the food supply suddenly becomes insufficient to feed the population. People respond to this event in their own ways, both as individuals and as collective actors. It also forces the state to act. In researching this phenomenon, we have been inspired by cultural history, which is more interested in subjective reactions and reflections, individual and group behavior, mental patterns, and the attribution of meanings to food shortages.¹⁷

15 Cf. Mary E. Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace: Women and Children in Germany, 1914–1924* (Oxford University Press, 2019); on the Second World War, see, e.g., Ingrid de Zwart, *The Hunger Winter: Fighting Famine in the Occupied Netherlands, 1944–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

16 Majda Bne Saad, *The Global Hunger Crisis: Tackling Food Insecurity in Developing Countries* (Pluto Press, 2013), 43; Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco, “Famine in Spain During Franco’s Dictatorship, 1939–52,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 56, no. 1 (2021): 3–27.

17 Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture* (De Gruyter, 2016); Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Polity, 2019).

Finally, we also address the question of what food scarcity—which at the individual level manifested itself as hunger—tells us about political legitimacy, authority, and power in the post-imperial era. During the First World War, people's nutrition, which was mostly a private responsibility in the pre-war liberal era, became an utmost public concern and remained so during the early postwar years.¹⁸ Because the wartime state assumed more responsibility for individual food supply, something so mundane but also so personal as nutrition became very much political. All the more so when the state, both before and after the fall of 1918, failed to provide its citizens with the promised food rations. Food shortages then became widespread phenomena, with all their consequences. This was brought into sharp relief during the last year of the war and immediately thereafter, when social unrest threatened to turn into full-scale revolution.¹⁹ The real and imagined Bolshevik threat was something that everyone involved in food supply had to think about, because it was abundantly clear that feeding the people was one of the preconditions for stability. Explicit and implicit nationalist promises that the new nation-states would do just that, end the food scarcity and even bring abundance, only raised the stakes. This allows us to use food supply as a lens through which we can make more general observations about political legitimacy and the often-posed deep discontinuity between the imperial era and the tumultuous postwar period in particular.

Even before the successor states proclaimed their independence, nationalists announced that the new states would mark a decisive break with the supposedly undemocratic and oppressive Habsburg Empire. Independence was the way to break “out of the black and yellow cage into golden freedom,” a Slovene MP told the parliament in Vienna in one of its last sittings, on 10 October 1918.²⁰ Similar representations of the events of the fall of 1918 retained their currency in the interwar period and beyond. These were not restricted to parliamentary speeches; even many historians subscribed to such black-and-white interpretations.

18 Jiří Hutečka, “Wartime Provisioning, the People, and the State in Habsburg Central Europe during World War I,” *Střed/Centre* 16, no. 1 (2024): 80–97.

19 For a recent overview, see Ibolya Murber, “Österreich und Ungarn in der bolschewistischen Sogwirkung Russlands 1917–1920,” in *Das Erbe der Habsburgermonarchie in den Nachfolgestaaten: Brüche und Kontinuitäten*, ed. Ulrike Harmat (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2025), 1009–43.

20 *Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrates. XXII. Session, 90. Sitzung am 10. Oktober 1918* (K. k. Hof- und Staats-Druckerei), 4566.

In fact, the debate over the character, depth, and finality of changes in and after 1918 echoes the disputes started already by the period's contemporaries about whether it was merely a coup d'état or part of a more profound revolution.²¹ In other words, this can be translated as a debate over whether there had been a "political top-down technocratic" transition or a "more radical, large-scale and long-term" transformation.²² However, we suggest that explaining the postwar developments using Weberian ideal types makes little sense. As Ulrike von Hirschhausen and Jörn Leonhard argue, nation-states and empires of the late nineteenth century were not polar opposites but rather sat along a spectrum of "nationalizing empires" and "imperializing nation-states."²³ Furthermore, the Habsburg Monarchy's successor states, such as Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia, can be seen as "small empires" because of their composite character and the many legal, political, and cultural continuities with their imperial predecessor(s).²⁴ It can also be questioned whether there was a wave of democratization after 1918.²⁵ While the pre-war political development towards democratic mass politics certainly continued and Czechoslovakia was a prime example of it, this was only a part of the story.²⁶ Thus, female suffrage, a rare exception before 1918, was introduced in some of the successor states but entirely

21 Lucie Kostřbová et al., 1918: *Model komplexního transformačního procesu?* (Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2010).

22 Florian Kühner-Wielach and Sarah Lemmen, "Transformation in East Central Europe: 1918 and 1989: A Comparative Approach," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 23, no. 4 (2016): 573–79; Katharina Hölscher, Julia M. Wittmayer, and Derk Loorbach, "Transition versus Transformation: What's the Difference?" *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 27 (2018): 1–3.

23 Ulrike von Hirschhausen and Jörn Leonhard, *Empires: Eine globale Geschichte, 1780–1920* (C. H. Beck, 2023), 14.

24 Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 448. See also Pieter M. Judson, "L'Autriche-Hongrie était-elle un empire?," *Annales: histoire, sciences sociales* 63, no. 3 (2008): 563–96.

25 Cf. Heidi Hein-Kircher and Steffen Kailitz, "'Double Transformations: Nation Formation and Democratization in Interwar East Central Europe,'" *Nationalities Papers* 46, no. 5 (2018): 745–58.

26 Muriel Blaive, "Democracy for the Czechs: Political Legitimacy and a Collective Identity," *Revue d'études comparatives est-ouest* 34, no. 1 (2003): 59–82; Melissa Feinberg, *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1950* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006); Peter Bugge, "Czech Democracy 1918–1938 – Paragon or Parody?," *Bohemia* 47, no. 1 (2007): 3–28; Michal Kopeček, "Czechoslovak Interwar Democracy and its Critical Introspections," *Journal of Modern European History* 17, no. 1 (2019): 7–15. For a detailed overview of continuities and ruptures regarding suffrage, see Birgitta Bader-Zaar, "Democratization in Europe after World War I: (Dis-)Continuities in Electoral Reform, 1917–1921," in *Vermessung einer Zeitschwelle: Die Bedeutung des Jahres 1918 in österreichischer, europäischer und globaler Perspektive / Surveying a Time Threshold: The Importance of 1918 in an Austrian, European and Global*

eliminated in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, some members of the so-called national minorities were not allowed to vote in the first Yugoslav national elections.²⁷ Throughout the region, at the local level, coopted councilors occasionally replaced elected members, local elections were postponed for extended periods, suffrage remained constrained, and gerrymandering was employed to prevent or minimize the representation of minority groups.²⁸ Moreover, authoritarian rule and radical renunciations of parliamentary democracy such as Bolshevism and fascism spread through the region from the onset of the interwar period, gaining the upper hand from the latter part of the 1920s.²⁹

Finally, although there is no dispute that the armistice between Austria-Hungary and the Entente was signed on 3 November 1918, officially ending the fighting on all the fronts, the transition from war to peace was a process that in some regions took almost as long as the war itself. New states quickly embroiled themselves in wars over their borders and imperfectly demobilized “uniformed violence” sometimes spilled from the fronts onto the streets.³⁰ Likewise, the former home front went through a *sortie de guerre* with both

Perspective, ed. Brigitte Mazohl et al. (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2024), 141–54.

27 Vasilij Melik, *Volitve na Slovenskem: 1861–1918* (Slovenska matica, 1965), 4; Irena Selišnik, “Female Suffrage in Slovenia,” in *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe: Voting to Become Citizens*, ed. Blanca Rodríguez Ruiz and Ruth Rubio Marín (Brill, 2012), 340–41. On female suffrage in imperial Austria, see Birgitta Bader-Zaar, “Democratization and the Practices of Voting in Habsburg Austria, 1896–1914: New Directions in Research,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 53 (2022): 107–20.

28 Gábor Egry, “Petit Bourgeois Local Revolutions? Post-Habsburg Transitions, Democratization, Local Elites, and the Place of Western Hungary/Burgenland,” in *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border*, ed. Hannes Grandits, Ibolya Murber, and Katharina Tyran (Berghahn, 2025), 142–43.

29 Eliza Ablovatski, *Revolution and Political Violence in Central Europe: The Deluge of 1919* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); Lukáš Fasora et al., eds., *Demokratische Monarchie, undemokratische Republik? Kontinuitäten und Brüche zwischen Monarchie und Republik in Mitteleuropa* (Lit, 2022); Steffen Kailitz, Sebastian Ramisch-Paul, and Tim Buchen, “Zeiten der Unsicherheiten: Demokratisierung und Nationalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa auf regionaler und lokaler Ebene (1918–1923),” *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 73, no. 1 (2024): 1–15.

30 Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman, “Introduction: Aftershocks. Violence in Dissolving Empires after the First World War,” *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 3 (2010): 183–94; Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford University Press, 2012); Rudolf Kučera, “Exploiting Victory, Sinking into Defeat: Uniformed Violence in the Creation of the New Order in Czechoslovakia and Austria, 1918–1922,” *The Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 4 (2016): 827–55; Jochen Böhrer, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918–1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford University Press, 2018); Borut Klabjan, “Borders in Arms: Political Violence in the North-Eastern Adriatic after the Great War,” *Acta Histriae* 26, no. 4 (2018): 985–1002; Marco Bresciani, “Una rivoluzione ‘antiasburgica’: Caos postbellico, violenza e ascesa fascista nell’Istria post-asburgica (1918–1923),” *Studi storici*, no. 4 (2022): 931–60; Nancy

expected and surprising twists and turns until it ceased to be a “front” where people “fought” for food and a new order prevailed.³¹

All of this suggests that on several levels a radical break did not occur all of a sudden in the fall of 1918 and that continuities were just as present as ruptures.³² While there were undoubtedly changes, they were often slow and not all of them were necessarily positive. If we only limit ourselves to the topic at hand, the disruption of transport links and trade flows was certainly not a change for the better as it impeded the transport of foodstuffs.³³ In this book, we observe the changes or their absence at the level of food supply, which might seem trivial at first. Yet, because people simply must eat to survive, food is ubiquitous and permeates almost every level of individual and group existence. The lack of food necessitates survival strategies, it requires political decisions and administrative interventions, it involves the entire society. In an era when states came and went, food supply became a marker of the state and a measure of its functioning.

Comparing the Comparable: The Bohemian Lands and Slovenia

Our approach to the research topic is based on a historical comparison. To do that in a meaningful way we compare two structurally similar regions and localities in two successor states that emerged as victorious from the First World War: Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, colloquially called Yugoslavia even before it was officially renamed as such in 1929. To focus on substantially comparable units, however, the book is not about Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as a whole, but it rather focuses on the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia.

Historically, the term “the lands of the Bohemian crown” was used to describe a larger region but within the late Austria-Hungary it comprised

M. Wingfield, “Democracy’s Violent Birth: The Czech Legionnaires and Statue Wars in the First Czechoslovak Republic,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 53 (2022): 1–17.

31 Cosima Flateau, “Les sorties de guerre : Une introduction,” *Les Cahiers Sirice* 17, no. 3 (2016): 5–14. See also Bruno Cabanes, *La victoire endeuillée: La sortie de guerre des soldats français (1918–1920)* (Seuil, 2004); Romain Fathi and Bart Ziino, “Coming Home: Australians’ sorties de guerre after the First World War,” *History Australia* 16, no. 1 (2019): 5–19.

32 Kühner-Wielach and Lemmen, “Transformation in East Central Europe”; Darius Staliūnas, “Introduction: 1918, A Sharp Rupture or a Period of Transition?,” *Slavic Review* 78, no. 3 (2019): 637–39.

33 For an overview of the economic consequences of the imperial collapse, see Eduard Kubů et al., “Der Zerfall des einheitlichen Wirtschaftsraumes und die Folgen: Tschechoslowakei, Ungarn, Jugoslawien,” in *Das Erbe der Habsburgermonarchie in den Nachfolgestaaten*, 639–89.

the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Margraviate of Moravia, and Austrian Silesia.³⁴ Before the 1918 rupture, these lands were separate crownlands of the Habsburg Empire, each with its own provincial government and a diet and an ethnically mixed population. Despite various attempts at national compromise before the war, in 1918, Bohemian-German nationalists saw a solution in the division of the Bohemian Lands along ethnic lines, while the Czech nationalists saw them as a distinct entity, an inseparable group grounded in historical rights that could turn them from “Bohemian” into “Czech.”³⁵ Although the geographic term *Česko* (Czechia) was recorded as early as the eighteenth century, it gained wider currency only recently—not so much for political reasons, but because many Czechs themselves “did not like” the term and preferred the full political name *Česká republika* (Czech Republic).³⁶

The term Slovenia, or Slovene Lands, on the other hand, had a much shorter history. Slovene nationalists only coined it after the turn of the nineteenth century to describe the lands inhabited by the newly imagined Slovene nation, defined by the use of a distinct language. Geographically, this imagined land comprised the Austrian crownland Carniola, the southern part of Styria (the so-called Lower Styria), parts of southern Carinthia, and most of the Austrian Littoral. Usually, it also included a small region in the western part of the Kingdom of Hungary called Prekmurje/Muravidék.³⁷ The so-called Slovene Lands had a linguistically mixed population—in some regions German- and Italian-speakers were a majority—yet this was a fact that Slovene nationalists conveniently ignored. Whereas the Bohemian Lands had an—albeit disputed—legal existence, Slovenia was a purely descriptive term and had no grounding in the administrative and legal structures before 1918. To a degree, this changed after the establishment of Yugoslavia. While a province with the name Slovenia was never officially set up, the territory that was first administered by the National Government in Ljubljana/Laibach and then by its successor, the Provincial Government,

34 Jaroslav Pánek et al., *A History of the Czech Lands* (Karolinum Press, 2018), 30.

35 See e.g., Jan Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft: Tschechen und Deutsche 1780–1918* (Oldenbourg, 2000).

36 For the history of the problem of appropriately naming the Czech-speaking territory, see Libuše Čižmárová, “History of and Popular Attitudes towards Names for the Czech-Speaking Territory,” *Acta Universitatis Carolinae: Geographica* 50, no. 1 (2015): 7–22.

37 Jernej Kosi, *Kako je nastal slovenski narod: Začetki slovenskega nacionalnega gibanja v prvi polovici 19. stoletja* (Sophia, 2013); Ivan Kordiš, “Peter Kozler and his Map of the Slovenian Land and its Provinces (1849–1871),” *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography* 68, no. 2 (2016): 212–31.

was regularly referred to as Slovenia by the public and in official documents. Of course, compared to today's Slovenia, the Slovenia of the postwar era had a different geographical scope. According to the Treaty of London, Italy occupied and then annexed the western part of present-day Slovenia. Its easternmost part, Prekmurje, was only occupied by the Yugoslav army in 1919, and until the 1920 Carinthian Plebiscite, the government in Ljubljana also administered extensive territories that were subsequently included in the present-day Austrian province of Carinthia. For the sake of brevity and clarity, we use the term Slovenia to refer to the so-called Slovene Lands before independence and the territories administered by the government in Ljubljana thereafter.

Apart from Prekmurje, which belonged to Hungary before 1919, and Hlučínsko/Hultschiner Ländchen, which was transferred to Czechoslovakia from Germany in 1920, all these lands were a part of "Cisleithania"—the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire—before the empire broke apart in the fall of 1918. Because of that, their administrative structures, legal frameworks, as well as political and economic systems were largely the same—or, at least, very similar. After the 1918 break, when the nation-states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were established, these regions became parts of the new states. In this situation, their position in relation to the new center shifted and their paths diverged. The Bohemian Lands became the political and economic center of Czechoslovakia; the Bohemian capital Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia. The territories administered by the government in Ljubljana remained a peripheral part of the new state that, however, gained in relative economic importance since Slovenia was the most industrially developed part of Yugoslavia.

Despite this divergence, similarities remained. At least for a time, the legal systems and administrative structures in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia continued to be similar, because the break with the imperial past was in fact marked by legal and administrative continuity. To ensure stability in tumultuous times, most Austrian laws remained in force, and the old Austrian administrative structure was largely retained. In fact, the Slovene government even extended those laws and institutional structures to the formerly Hungarian Prekmurje, and the Czechoslovak government did the same in Hlučínsko.³⁸ Most officials also remained in their posts and several war-time organizations tasked with ensuring the adequate

38 Helmut Slapnicka, *Österreichs Recht ausserhalb Österreichs: Der Untergang des österreichischen Rechtsraums* (Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1973); Marko Brus, "Veljava ODZ po prvi svetovni vojni do danes," *Pravnik* 67, no. 5/6 (2012): 457–82, 491–92.

supply of food and other necessities continued to operate.³⁹ Rationing also continued.⁴⁰

However, one feature needs to be pointed out. After the end of the war and the establishment of new states, Slovenia existed as an administrative unit for some time within Yugoslavia. Janko Brejc, who led the Provincial Government in Ljubljana from 1919 to 1920, even compared the position of Slovenia in relation to the rest of Yugoslavia to that of Austria and Hungary during the war, implying that there was a common overarching framework but that most matters were dealt with separately.⁴¹ By contrast, the Bohemian Lands or “historical lands” were not a unit as such but rather a description for the former Cisleithanian territories in centralized Czechoslovakia. Since this was a project in the making and the Bohemian Lands retained a substantial part of the existing legal and administrative system originating in Austria (and Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia their previously Hungarian systems), this continuity also had an impact on the food supply system. This is of crucial importance because it made these two regions

39 For Czechoslovakia, see e.g., Ivan Šedivý, “K otázce kontinuity nositelů státní moci: jmenování vedoucích úředníků v kompetenci ministerstva vnitra v letech 1918–1921,” in *Moc, vliv a autorita v procesu vzniku a utváření meziválečné ČSR (1918–1921)*, ed. Jan Hájek et al. (Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2008), 184–96; Martin Klečáček, “Převzetí moci: Státní správa v počátcích Československé republiky 1918–1920 na příkladu Čech,” *Český časopis historický* 116, no. 3 (2018): 693–944; Martin Klečáček, “Im Dienste des neuen Staates? Beamtenkarriere im Prozess des Aufbaus der tschechoslowakischen Staatsverwaltung 1918–1920,” in *Hofratsdämmerung? Verwaltung und ihr Personal in den Nachfolgestaaten der Habsburgermonarchie 1918 bis 1920*, ed. Peter Becker et al. (Böhlau, 2020), 137–53. For Yugoslavia, see Rok Stergar, “Continuity, Pragmatism, and Ethnolinguistic Nationalism: Public Administration in Slovenia during the Early Years of Yugoslavia,” in *Hofratsdämmerung?*, 179–92; Stipica Grgić and Ivan Hrštic, “The Creation of the State: The Fate of Old Institutions of Political Power and the Creation of New Ones in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes from 1918–1923,” *Historyka Studia Metodologiczne* 52 (2022): 185–203. See also Gábor Egry, *The Empire's New Clothes: How Austria-Hungary's Legacy Kept the Successor States Running* (Foundation for Austrian Studies, 2020); Gábor Egry, “The Leftover Empire? Imperial Legacies and Statehood in the Successor States of Austria-Hungary,” in *Postwar Continuity and New Challenges in Central Europe, 1918–1923: The War That Never Ended*, ed. Tomasz Pudłocki and Kamil Ruszała (Routledge, 2022), 81–102; Pieter M. Judson, “Endet das Imperium nach seinem Ende?,” in *Kakanien revisited – Rückblick und Ausblick: 2000–2024*, ed. Marijan Bobinac, Wolfgang Müller-Funk, and Clemens Ruthner (Narr Francke Attempto, 2024), 29–44.

40 Aleksandar R. Miletić, “From Disorder to ‘the Normality’: Food Provisioning in Western, Central, and Southeast Europe, 1914–1924,” *Hiperboreea* 8, no. 1 (2021): 59–80; Francesco Frizzera, “The Politics of Food: State Reactions,” in *Hunger Redraws the Map: Food, State, and Society in the Era of the First World War*, ed. Mary E. Cox and Claire Morelon (Cambridge University Press, 2025): 74–114.

41 Andrej Rahten, *Pozabljeni slovenski premier: Politična biografija dr. Janka Brejca (1869–1934)* (Mohorjeva založba, 2002), 207.

distinct in very concrete ways. Without that, they would have remained primarily a discursive construct, irrelevant outside of political discussions and nationalist fantasies.

Moreover, there were rich political, cultural, and economic contacts between the Czechs and the South Slavs that had a long tradition and continued to matter during the war and in the immediate postwar era. Czechs and Slovenes cooperated in their attempts to bring down the Habsburg Empire during the war.⁴² After the war, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia traded food, and food was also imported to Czechoslovakia through Yugoslav territory from the port of Trieste/Trst, controlled by Italy. Despite the existence of such proposals, landlocked Czechoslovakia was not eventually connected to Yugoslavia by a territorial corridor between Austria and Hungary.⁴³ However, the Czechs continued to see the Yugoslav Adriatic Sea as “theirs.”⁴⁴ While we do not aim to write a history of mutual relations, we add these relational aspects in a few places in the book to show the dynamics between these two cases. In addition to this binational dimension, transnational entanglements come to the fore in the chapters on international food aid and territorial disputes, where Czechoslovak and Yugoslav locals interacted with actors from countries near and far, as well as from new international bodies.

Furthermore, the two regions had two additional important characteristics in common after 1918. First, as mentioned above, they both became parts of nation-states that perceived themselves as victorious and were mostly perceived as such by the allies as well. In addition to their claim to their national character and subscription to a “culture of victory,”⁴⁵ they were, secondly, both included in successor states that were a patchwork of

42 Milada Paulová, *Tajný výbor (Maffie) a spolupráce s Jihoslovany v letech 1916–1918* (Academia, 1968). On Paulová and her work, see Daniela Brádlarová, *Milada Paulová: První česká profesorka: mezi soudobými dějinami a byzantologií* (Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2021). For a short history of Slovene-Czech relations, see Ladislav Hladký, “Czech-Slovenian Relations,” in *Czech Relations with the Nations and Countries of Southeastern Europe*, ed. Ladislav Hladký (Srednja Europa, 2019), 19–48.

43 Filip Čuček, “K zgodovini češkoslovaško-jugoslovanskega koridorja (češko-slovenski zorni kot),” *Zgodovinski časopis* 70 (2016): 206–25.

44 Borut Klabjan, *Češkoslovaška na Jadranu: Čehi in Slovaki ter njihove povezave s Trstom in Primorsko od začetka 20. stoletja do druge svetovne vojne* (Annales, 2007); Igor Tchoukarine, “‘The Sea Connects; It Does Not Divide’: Czech Tourism on the Interwar Adriatic,” *Journal of Tourism History* 6, no. 2–3 (2014): 139–57; Felix Jeschke, “A Shakespearean Prophecy Fulfilled? Slav Solidarity and the Colonial Gaze in Czech Tourism on the Eastern Adriatic (1890s–1930s),” *Austrian History Yearbook* 54 (2023): 47–60.

45 Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman, “Introduction: The Great War and Veterans’ Internationalism,” in *The Great War and Veterans’ Internationalism*, ed. Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 11–13; John Horne, “Beyond Cultures of Victory

territories that previously belonged to different states and were inhabited by linguistically and religiously diverse populations. The composite nature of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia posed various challenges, and, among other things, it also affected the food supply. While at the state level both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were counted among the victorious states, a noticeable part of their populations did not subscribe to the victorious state narrative and felt indifferent or even opposed it.⁴⁶ It is precisely due to the shared imperial legacy and the composite characters of both successor states, built on war victory, that a comparison makes so much sense.

Historiography

Food became a “weapon” in the First World War.⁴⁷ It was not only used by the belligerent coalitions in blockades and counter-blockades, but the national management of food became a challenge also in the neutral countries.⁴⁸ However, the problem of food shortages became especially acute in the case of the Central Powers and thus this issue belongs to the standard topics of nearly every historical overview of Austria-Hungary and its regions in the First World War both in English and in other languages.⁴⁹ Additionally, scholars have produced several publications that focus precisely on food and its scarcity during the war.⁵⁰ Out of those, Maureen Healy’s book on everyday life in Vienna, including a chapter on food supply, is particularly relevant for our own research. Much like Belinda Davies’s everyday history of food and

and Cultures of Defeat? Inter-war Veterans’ Internationalism,” in *The Great War and Veterans’ Internationalism*, 213–316.

46 John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building, 1903–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Václav Šmidrkal et al., *Vanquished and Victorious: World War I Veterans in Austria and Czechoslovakia, 1918–1938* (Berghahn, 2024)

47 Alice Weinreb, *Modern Hungers: Food and Power in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 15.

48 Maria Meier, *Von Notstand und Wohlstand: Die Basler Lebensmittelversorgung im Krieg, 1914–1918* (Chronos, 2020).

49 Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká Válka 1914–1918* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001); Manfred Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914–1918* (Böhlau, 2013); Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I* (Basic Books, 2014); Étienne Boissérie, *Les Tchèques dans l’Autriche-Hongrie en guerre (1914–1918): “Nous ne croyons plus aucune promesse”* (Eur’Orbem Éditions, 2017); Petra Svoljšak and Gregor Antoličič, *Leta strahote: Slovenci in prva svetovna vojna* (Cankarjeva založba, 2018).

50 Ernst Langthaler, “Dissolution before Dissolution: The Crisis of the Wartime Food Regime in Austria-Hungary,” in *Environmental Histories of the First World War*, ed. Richard P. Tucker et al. (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 38–61.

politics in Berlin, which was published a few years before, Healy's study is especially relevant because it shows that food queues and food riots were multifaceted phenomena that, among others, had a political dimension.⁵¹

While the immediate postwar years are often missing from the accounts of food shortages in the First World War, even though in some regions it was after the war that the situation became critical, there are notable exceptions that foreground the continuities. The forthcoming volume *Hunger Redraws the Map: Food, State, and Society in the Era of the First World War*, edited by Mary E. Cox and Claire Morelon, promises to bring continuities between the First World War and the immediate post war years to the fore.⁵² Food shortages are also featured prominently in Claire Morelon's recent book on everyday life in Prague between 1914 and 1920. The book has a special chapter on food supply, the black market, and growing tensions between social classes as well as between rural and urban areas.⁵³ Several other recent publications also look at the longer timeframe and food shortages even if they play a less prominent role in them. The chapters in the volume *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24* are not only about food shortages and the attempts to solve them, but their authors are inspired by the Greater War paradigm and look at the longer timeframe.⁵⁴ As a trigger of conflict, food shortages play a role in Ota Konrád and Rudolf Kučera's book on physical violence during the transformation of Central Europe from 1914 to 1922 because "food riots" enabled the unprivileged masses to take part in political life.⁵⁵ Jakub Beneš's new book *The Last Peasant War: Violence and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* looks at an even longer period and food scarcity features prominently in the author's analysis of peasant unrest.⁵⁶

51 Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). On Vienna during the war, see also Alfred Pfoser and Andreas Weigl, eds., *Im Epizentrum des Zusammenbruchs: Wien im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Metroverlag, 2013). Also see Thierry Bonzon and Belinda Davis, "Feeding the Cities," in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919*, ed. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 305–41.

52 Cox and Morelon, eds., *Hunger Redraws the Map*.

53 Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution*.

54 Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie, eds., *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24* (Manchester University Press, 2023).

55 Ota Konrád and Rudolf Kučera, *Paths Out of the Apocalypse: Physical Violence in the Fall and Renewal of Central Europe, 1914–1922* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

56 Jakub S. Beneš, *The Last Peasant War: Violence and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2025).

Of course, historians of the interwar era did not overlook the ensuing postwar humanitarian crisis in post-Habsburg Central Europe. As we have already indicated, however, they paid more attention to the countries or regions that came out of the war as defeated and where the food supply crisis was perceived as more pressing than in the victorious states. Their approach brought together the grassroots level and high politics, individual actors and their experience and expert knowledge, and the regional and the transnational. Several historians looked at (German-) Austria and its efforts to bring the situation under control.⁵⁷ Currently, Mary E. Cox is among those who, using quantitative methods, continue researching this topic and after a complex treatise of this problem in the case of Germany her forthcoming book will undoubtedly be an important addition to the literature on Austria. Also noteworthy are older as well as newer regional histories of food shortages in the post-1918 transition in former Austrian crownlands which were being turned into federal states such as Vorarlberg, Tirol, Salzburg, and others.⁵⁸ When it comes to Hungary, Friederike Kind-Kovács's recent book on the plight of Budapest's children and international relief certainly stands out for its wider relevance. There is, however, more research in Hungarian and other languages.⁵⁹ Several valuable publications deal with food shortages and international relief in other Habsburg successor

57 Franz Adlgasser, *American Individualism Abroad: Herbert Hoover, die American Relief Administration und Österreich, 1919–1923* (VWGÖ, 1993); Adlgasser, "The Roots of Communist Containment," 39–71; Patricia Clavin, "The Austrian Hunger Crisis and the Genesis of International Organization after the First World War," *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 265–78; Andreas Weigl, "The Winter of Misery: Demographic Indicators of the Austrian Republic in the Postwar-Period 1918/19," in *Vermessung einer Zeitschwelle*, 283–98.

58 E.g., Gottfried Köfner, *Hunger, Not und Korruption: Der Übergang Österreichs von der Monarchie zur Republik am Beispiel Salzburgs* (Neugebauer, 1980); Gerhard Prassnigger, "Hunger in Tirol," in *Tirol und der Erste Weltkrieg*, ed. Klaus Eisterer (Studien-Verlag, 1995); Ingrid Böhler and Norbert Schnetzer, "Hunger im Ländle: Das lange Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges in Vorarlberg 1918–1920/21," *Zeitgeschichte* 26, no. 2 (1999): 71–89; Ernst Langthaler, "Hungerne Stadt, sattes Land? 'Volksernährung' in Wien und Niederösterreich nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Wien und Niederösterreich – eine untrennbare Beziehung? Festschrift für Willibald Rosner zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Elisabeth Rosner et al. (Verlag NÖ Institut für Landeskunde, 2017), 281–87.

59 Kind-Kovács, *Budapest's Children*. See also Friederike Kind-Kovács, "The Great War, the Child's Body and the American Red Cross," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 23, no. 1–2 (2016): 33–62. Further see Károly Ignác, "The Emergence of the Outskirts of Budapest as a New Administrative District through the Organisation of the Food Supply, 1917–1919," *Südost-Forschungen* 79, no. 1 (2020): 71–95; Zsombor Bódy, "A World Lifted off Its Hinges: The Social Impact of World War I on Hungary," *Hungarian Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (2022): 702–32. For an overview of the post-imperial transition in Hungary, see Zsombor Bódy, ed., *Háborúból békébe: a magyar társadalom 1918 után: Konfliktusok, kihívások, változások a háború és az összeomlás nyomán* (MTA BTK Történettudományi Intézet, 2018).

states. Among them, Doina Anca Cretu's recent book on Romania deserves a special mention.⁶⁰

Finally, for the two regions at the center of our attention, Czech and Slovene scholarship on the First World War and the postwar years are especially relevant. In Czech historiography, we can identify two major streams of scholarship, both of which see the food supply crisis as an ingredient in their teleological narratives. Communist historiography saw this period as a chance for a "revolutionary wave" to spill over to Central Europe and make Czechoslovakia a "Soviet Republic." The impoverishment of the masses, most clearly manifested in food poverty, was understood as both a consequence of capitalism and an intensifier of revolutionary fervor. Meticulous research on the various "echoes" of the Bolshevik Revolution among workers, peasants, and Social Democratic politicians in the Bohemian Lands was conducted especially in the 1950s and 1960s and besides much more or less ideologized scholarship it produced valuable source editions.⁶¹ The non-communist national historiography that has developed with interruptions since 1918 was dominated by the narrative of anti-Habsburg resistance in the First World War but also by the fight against the spread of Bolshevism. Czechoslovakia was celebrated as an island of democracy, prosperity, and stability in the stormy sea of Central Europe, which was certainly also a reaction to various negative counternarratives of Czechoslovakia as a "malformation" and eventually a "failure."⁶² Both these streams, however, were often oblivious

60 Matthew Lloyd Adams, "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland (1919–1923)," *European Journal of American Studies* 4, no. 2 (2009): 1–16; Christopher Blackburn, "The Rebirth of Poland: American Humanitarianism After the Great War," *Studia Historyczne* 57, no. 4 (2014): 521–39; Davide Rodogno, Francesca Piana, and Shaloma Gauthier, "Shaping Poland: Relief and Rehabilitation Programmes Undertaken by Foreign Organizations, 1918–1922," in *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, ed. Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jakob Vogel (Berghahn, 2014), 259–78; Doina Anca Cretu, *Foreign Aid and State Building in Interwar Romania: In Quest of an Ideal* (Stanford University Press, 2024).

61 E.g., Alois Kocman, ed., *Boj o směr vývoje československého státu*, 2 vols. (Academia, 1965–1969).

62 Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed* (Yale University Press, 2009). For an in-depth analysis of narratives of Czechoslovakia's foundation, see Ota Konrád and Ines Koeltzsch, "From 'Islands of Democracy' to 'Transnational Border Spaces': State of the Art and Perspectives of the Historiography on the First Czechoslovak Republic since 1989," *Bohemia* 56, no. 2 (2016): 285–327; Ota Konrád, "Von der Kulisse der Nationalstaatsgründung zur Europäisierung der Forschung: Die tschechische Historiographie zum Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Bewältigte Vergangenheit? Die nationale und internationale Historiographie zum Untergang der Habsburgermonarchie als ideelle Grundlage für die Neuordnung Europas*, ed. Helmut Rumpler and Ulrike Harmat (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2018), 201–26; Jan Hálek et al., *Nekončící příběh: (Historiografické) narativy vzniku Československa v proměnách času a prostoru (1918–1992/1993)* (Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR; Academia, 2023).

to the agency of individuals and their perception of reality that may have been disconnected from the master narratives of historical materialism or national liberation. Therefore, it is no surprise that the problem of food supply after 1918 has received very little attention and only in some regional studies.⁶³ The articles in our 2024 *Austrian History Yearbook* forum “Food Shortages during the Post-Habsburg Transition in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia” are a recent exception.⁶⁴

More attention has been paid to the food supply of the Bohemian Lands during the First World War because it could be interpreted as a war-induced problem. There are a number of studies on various aspects of people's nutrition, agricultural production, rationing systems, or social conflicts for the whole of the Bohemian Lands,⁶⁵ as well as for its various regions and localities.⁶⁶ There are also publications that deal with the role of science and scientific expertise in tackling various aspects of food shortages, ranging from food surrogates to health issues and even eugenics.⁶⁷ In a book

63 E.g., Daniel Štěpánek, “Zásobovací situace v benešovském okrese po první světové válce,” *Sborník vlastivědných prací z Podblanicka* 38 (1998): 319–32; Karel Řeháček, “Zásobovací poměry v Plzni na přelomu let 1918–1919,” *Západočeský historický sborník* 7 (2001): 297–329; Barbora Jakobyová, “Americká potravinová pomoc pre deti po prvej svetovej vojne,” in *Dlhá cesta od monarchie k republike: zmeny režimov, myslenia a životného štýlu na Slovensku a v strednej Európe od polovice 19. do polovice 20. storočia*, ed. Matej Hanula et al. (Veda, 2021), 177–92.

64 “Forum: Food Shortages during the Post-Habsburg Transition in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 243–340.

65 E.g., Peter Heumos, “Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution.: Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massenproteste in den böhmischen Ländern 1914–1918,” in *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen, Slowaken und Deutschen*, ed. Hans Mommsen et al. (Klartext, 2001), 255–86; Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life: Science, Everyday Life and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914–1918* (Berghahn, 2016); Eduard Kubů and Jiří Šouša, “Z časů, kdy nebylo co jíst... Český sedlák/rolník za Velké války,” in *Venkov, rolník a válka v českých zemích a na Slovensku v moderní době*, ed. Jitka Balcarová, Eduard Kubů, and Jiří Šouša (Národní zemědělské muzeum, 2017), 51–69; Kučera and Konrád, *Paths Out of the Apocalypse*.

66 E.g., Pavel Scheufler, “Zásobování v Praze v letech 1. světové války,” in *Etnografie dělnictva* 9 (Ústav pro etnografii a folkloristiku ČSAV, 1977), 143–97; Petr Karlíček, “Vdolky z dřevěných pilin a chleba z jehličí: zásobování Šluknovska potravinami v době světové války,” in *První světová válka a role Němců v českých zemích*, ed. Marcela Zemanová and Václav Zeman (Muzeum města Ústí nad Labem; Univerzita J.E. Purkyně, 2015): 102–24; Vojtěch Pojar, “Prague's Urban Elites and the Problem of Spreading Hunger, 1914–1918,” *Prager wirtschafts- und sozialhistorische Mitteilungen/Prague Economic and Social History Papers* 22, no. 2 (2015): 55–68; Markéta Slabová, “Kdo si v létě nesusil ovoce a houby, bude v zimě sušit hubu.” Strava a stravování ve válečných letech 1914–1918,” in *Krajiny prostřených i prázdných stolů. I., Evropská gastronomie v proměňách staletí*, ed. Blanka Jedličková et al. (Univerzita Pardubice, 2016): 207–26.

67 E.g., Martin Franc, “Bread from Wood: Natural Food Substitutes in the Czech Lands during the First World War,” in *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*, ed. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska,

published in Czech and in an English translation, Rudolf Kučera devoted one chapter to the impact of food shortages on the Czech working class in Bohemia during the war showing how the wartime diet changed pre-war class differences and the self-understanding of the working class as such.⁶⁸

In Slovene historiography, food has rarely been the focus of research despite its essential importance. In this regard, the period of the First World War represents a partial exception as historians and ethnographers have published rather extensively on the nourishment of soldiers and especially civilians. While the war-time shortages in urban settlements received most attention, the situation in the countryside was not entirely neglected either.⁶⁹ Some of this research included brief looks at the immediate postwar era. The scarcity of food was also thematized within research on soldiers' and sailors' mutinies in the last years of the war and on the so-called Green Cadres, which shows that the political dimension of the scarcity was not overlooked. All the while, historians have primarily focused on nationalism and/or Bolshevism as the main causes of unrest or settled for a description of these events.⁷⁰

Rachel Duffett, and Alain Drouard (Ashgate, 2011), 73–83; Hofer, "Ernährungskrise, Krankheit, Hungertod," 33–66; Vojtěch Pojar, "Feeding Experts: Hunger Crisis and the Discourses of Eugenics in the Habsburg Empire, 1916–1918," *Střed/Centre* 16, no. 1 (2024): 7–34.

68 Kučera, *Rationed Life*.

69 Vilma Brodnik, "Preskrba Ljubljane med 1. svetovno vojno," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 29, no. 2 (1989): 281–323; Bojan Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh: Organizacija preskrbe z živili v Celju v času obeh svetovnih vojn* (Zgodovinski arhiv Celje, 2001); Maja Godina Golija, "Hunger and Misery: The Influence of the First World War on the Diet of Slovenian Civilians," in *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*, 85–97; Maja Godina Golija, "Pa smo stali v procesijah pred pekarnami...": O lakoti in pomanjkanju v Mariboru med prvo svetovno vojno," in *Vojne na Slovenskem: Pričevanja, spomini, podobe*, ed. Maja Godina Golija (Založba ZRC, 2012), 47–61; Maja Godina Golija, "Recepti in napotki za krizne čase: Primer slovenskega ozemlja med prvo svetovno vojno," *Etnolog* 22 (2012): 65–80; Rok Stergar, "Hrana na bojiščih 1. svetovne vojne: Izkušnje slovenskih vojakov," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 55, no. 2 (2015): 22–53; Petra Svoljšak, ed., *Istra u velikom ratu: glad, bolesti, smrt = L'Istria nella grande guerra: fame, malattie, morte = Istra v veliki vojni: glad, bolezni, smrt* (Histria Editiones, 2017); Bojan Himmelreich, "Pomanjkanje prehrane med 1. svetovno vojno v Celju," in *Lakote in pomanjkanje*, ed. Mojca Šorn (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2018), 147–65; Jernej Komac, "Pošteni možje, ali vam prinesemo čompe ali polento?: O preskrbi v vsakdanjem življenju prebivalcev Bovškega v zaledju frontne linije v letih 1915–1917," *Zgodovina za vse* 25, no. 2 (2018): 51–61; Jernej Kosi, "Med državno zapovedanimi vojnimi napori in preživetvenimi strategijami podeželskega prebivalstva v času prve svetovne vojne: primer sester Divjak," *Zgodovinski časopis* 73, no. 1–2 (2019): 118–37; Mojca Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno* (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2020).

70 Lojze Ude, "Upori slovenskega vojaštva v avstro-ogrske armadi," *Zgodovinski časopis* 22, no. 3–4 (1968): 185–205; Rafael Perhauc, *Upor mornarjev v Boki Kotorski* (Partizanska knjiga, 1976); Damijan Guštin, "'Zeleni kader' in vojaški upori v slovenskih enotah spomladi 1918," in *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: Od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja*

The continuation of the crisis in the postwar years received less attention. Recent histories of the early Yugoslav era have occasionally devoted some attention to the politics of food supply, but mostly only tangentially.⁷¹ In the historiography of the workers' movement and in economic history, scarcity, rising prices, and their destabilizing influence were given more space even if they were never in the focus. The same can be said for research on public health. Nevertheless, these publications remain highly relevant for anyone interested in the topics related to the supply of food and its scarcity.⁷² Additionally, several scholars have put food—but not always food shortages—in the immediate postwar period at the center of their research. Their publications invariably look at the local or regional level but provide a wealth of information and valuable insights which are relevant beyond the spaces analyzed.⁷³

Republike Slovenije, 1848–1992, vol. 1, ed. Jasna Fischer (Mladinska knjiga, 2005), 142–44; Miha Šimac, "Upor 2. gorskega strelskega polka v Codroipu 1918," *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 88, no. 4 (2017): 5–20.

71 Jurij Perovšek, "Die Slovenen in der Umbruchszeit und im neuen jugoslawischen Staat (1918–1929)," in *Region und Umbruch 1918: Zur Geschichte alternativer Ordnungsversuche*, ed. Harald Heppner and Eduard Staudinger (Peter Lang, 2001), 69–85; Jurij Perovšek, *Slovenski prevrat 1918: Položaj Slovencev v Državi Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov* (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2018); Aleš Gabrič, ed., *Slovenski prelom 1918* (Slovenska matica, 2019).

72 Franček Saje, "Revolucionarno gibanje kmečkega ljudstva v Sloveniji 1917–1919," *Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja* 7, no. 1–2 (1967): 141–50; Miroslav Stiplovšek, *Razmah strokovnega-sindikalnega gibanja na Slovenskem 1918–1922: Pregled razvoja in delovanja strokovnih organizacij v jugoslovanskem delu Slovenije od prevrata 1918 do ponovne utrditve revolucionarnih strokovnih organizacij konec 1922* (Partizanska knjiga; Delavska enotnost, 1979); Jože Šorn, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih 1919–1924* (Cankarjeva založba, 1997); Katarina Keber, "Post-World War I Children's Healthcare in Slovenia as Experienced by Angela Boškin, the First Slovenian Nurse," *Virus: Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte der Medizin* 17 (2018): 295–303; Lev Centrih, "'Govorile so celo strojnice!' Boljševizem v prevratni dobi na Slovenskem: Med preprostim ljudskim uporništvom in vplivi ruske revolucije," in *Slovenski prelom 1918*, ed. Aleš Gabrič, 311–27.

73 Maja Godina Golija, *Prehrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih 20. stoletja* (Obzorja, 1996); Himmelreich, "Preskrbljenost Celja z živili v kriznih časih"; Miran Aplinc, "Morda bodo prišli še taki časi, ko boste morali jesti tak kruh, kjer bodo špice ven gledale": Odmev velike vojne skozi organizacijo preskrbe v Šoštanju v času prve svetovne vojne in prevratne dobe (Muzej Velenje; Muzej usnjarstva na Slovenskem, 2019); Maja Godina Golija, "'Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?': Food Supply and Nutrition of the Civilian Population in Maribor at the End of and after World War I," *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 298–311; Jernej Kosi, "'Yugoslavia Has Nothing. Yugoslavia Has No Bread. But Hungary Gives Us Bread': Access to Food and (Dis)Loyalty in a 'Redeemed' Yugoslav Borderland," *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 283–97. See also Marjan Linasi, *Jugovzhodna Koroška 1918–1920: Poskus sinteze burnih dogajanj od prevrata do plebiscita na območju nekdanjih političnih okrajev Velikovec/Völkermarkt, Wolfsberg (Volšperk) in Slovenj Gradec (Windischgraz)* (Mohorjeva založba, 2024).

Sources

Our research is based on a variety of primary sources. The largest group comprised unpublished archival documents that include documents from various levels and branches of state, provincial, and local administration but in some cases also municipal, school, and parish chronicles, as well as unpublished personal accounts (diaries, memoirs, personal correspondence) kept in archival collections. Most unpublished documents came from archives in Czechia and Slovenia, but for certain aspects of our research we have also consulted archival collections and libraries in Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

We also used various printed primary sources such as newspapers and magazines in Czech, Slovene, and German (and occasionally in other languages, too), official gazettes and public proclamations, expert journals, pamphlets, and booklets. Published personal narratives in the form of memoirs or diaries were as important as the unpublished ones mentioned above. The same is true of various editions of archival documents. The fact that an important part of these sources has been digitized and is available in various repositories was certainly extremely helpful.

Archives, of course, are not neutral collections of documents, as historians often assume, and therefore archival and other collections never tell the entire story or the “truth.” Even the most cursory look at the documents on the topic of food supply reveals that they only bring a certain perspective on the topic. On the other hand, personal narratives such as memoirs or diaries are sometimes underestimated by historians as subjective and “untrustworthy.” But such accounts provided us with individual perspectives on the events and allowed us to complete what was lacking in the other archival documents and to reconstruct at least partially how contemporaries experienced food scarcity and the states’ attempts to solve this problem.

Chapters

Besides this introduction, this book comprises four chapters that look at food scarcity in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia from various perspectives. The chapters form an arch that starts with scarcity itself, its causes and its extent, to then focus on the survival strategies employed by their inhabitants and the impact the food supply crisis had on the political legitimacy of the Habsburg Empire, its successor states, and their composite parts. The book then looks at the attempts to solve or at least mitigate the crisis and, finally,

at the long-term consequences of the food supply crisis for Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

The chapter “Breaking the State: Food, Hunger and Power in War” focuses on the war-time failure of the food rationing system, the resulting scarcity, and the way these events eroded imperial Austrian patriotism and dynastic loyalty, initiating the creation or strengthening of other bonds of loyalty in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia in the last months of the First World War. It outlines the situation in food provisioning up to 1918 when food shortages reached a critical point and some regions such as northwestern Bohemia found themselves on the verge of famine. In conversation with current scholarship on the history of famines, the chapter assesses the nutritional situation in these regions at the end of the war. It follows operations on the black market, popular violent reactions to shortages, and individual and collective attempts to procure food as well as new state incentives and repressive measures used in the (mostly futile or even counterproductive) attempts to control the situation. In addition, it looks at various private and public charities and their limited efforts to fight hunger. Finally, it analyses the breakdown of state authority in food rationing and the creation of alternative power centers controlling food supplies. In doing so, it shows the dynamics of how various political upheavals in the fall of 1918 generated post-imperial “successor states” and how their political successes were interrelated with their ability to procure food.

The chapter “Building the State: Hunger, Anger, and Postwar Consolidation” looks at food supplies in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the years 1918–1921. It focuses on the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia but does not ignore the wider national contexts as well as local and regional developments. Despite victorious post-independence euphoria and heightened popular expectations of a quick improvement in the fall of 1918, the rationing system, including its serious shortcomings, was kept in force. This chapter asks how the consolidation of the new political order and its legitimacy were related to the issue of food supply. It analyses the changes in the governance of the “food problem” by looking at how new states managed the food supply chain and dealt with conflicts in the public space, e.g., “food riots.” It takes into account new forms of governance, including anti-profiteering and taxation policies. It sees acts of violence and fraud associated with food supply as ways to examine abstract notions such as “legitimacy” or “stability” more concretely. In doing so, the chapter follows the behaviors and mentalities produced by on-going food shortages and reconstructs discourses on the causes and consequences of the food supply calamity that continued well into the early 1920s.

The chapter “Hopes, Promises, Realities: Food Scarcity and Foreign Aid” examines post-1918 international food relief. It follows the operations of foreign public and private relief providers, focusing on the American Relief Administration, the backbone of these efforts, and its activities in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia. The chapter analyzes the expectations of the governments and the population related to the deliveries of food from abroad. It follows the tensions between these expectations and the goals and aims of foreign protagonists. It shows how Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia managed to procure foreign aid and the role it played in solving the food scarcity crisis in the Bohemian Lands and in Slovenia. It also looks at the role of individuals, such as Lady Muriel Paget or Alice Masaryková (Alice Garrigue Masaryk), who were instrumental in building bridges between various countries. Finally, the chapter situates these developments in a wider international framework, showing how the events in Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands were a part of a larger development.

The chapter “Nourishing Contested Borderlands” analyzes the situation in borderlands that were contested by two successor states. It zooms in on Teschen Silesia/Těšínsko/Śląsk Cieszyński, contested by Czechoslovakia and Poland, as well as on Prekmurje on the border between Yugoslavia and Hungary. Through the lens of food supply, it looks at how governments from both sides of the demarcation line, as well as local actors, used food supply both in its materiality and as a discourse to strengthen the loyalties of the disputed regions’ populations. While plebiscites did not take place either in Teschen Silesia or in Prekmurje, a vote was announced—and subsequently canceled—to resolve the dispute between Czechoslovakia and Poland. In Prekmurje, occupied only in 1919 by the Yugoslav troops, a popular vote remained mere speculation, but it still made the actors proceed in a careful, tactical manner. The chapter looks at the role food played in popular mobilization from “below” and from “above,” in propaganda campaigns and clandestine actions by governments from both neighboring states and in the reactions of local actors in both regions.

The Epilogue recapitulates the findings of the previous chapters and discusses the significance of the food shortage for the future development of the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia. It asks why this serious food crisis did not leave a long-term legacy and was largely forgotten. Although there were modernization efforts in the interrelated fields of nutrition, public health, and agricultural production after 1918, they were limited in scope. On the one hand, the agricultural sectors in both countries were strong and falling prices for their products due to overproduction and competition on international markets became a major political issue rather than lack of food.

On the other hand, consumers often preferred to return to their established dietary patterns and were suspicious of expert opinion suggesting otherwise.

In sum, the book not only provides new research on the causes, nature, and consequences of postwar food scarcity in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia but also situates it within the larger framework of the tumultuous post-imperial era, in which continuities and ruptures coexisted. It shows that the shortages and the attempts to alleviate or solve them were a rather typical post-imperial story, in which the old and the new were deeply intertwined. New actors worked hand in hand with those who had existed for years, sometimes decades. Innovative methods were tried alongside established mechanisms that often still worked.

It could hardly have been otherwise, because these shortages were a complex challenge that could only be solved with the involvement of several protagonists using a variety of methods and approaches. They were also a challenge that had to be met transnationally, with cooperation that went beyond the newly established national borders and on the one hand reactivated some features of the Habsburg transportation network and economic space, while, on the other, brought in new foreign protagonists, especially those from the United States.

About the Authors

Václav Šmidrkal is a researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences and an Assistant Professor at Charles University in Prague. His research focuses on postwar transitions, war veterans, and military propaganda in twentieth-century Central Europe.

Rok Stergar is Professor in Modern History at the University of Ljubljana and a historian of the Habsburg Empire, the First World War, and of nationalism. He is the author of two books and numerous articles on nationalisms in the Habsburg Empire, the First World War, and post-imperial transitions.

1. Breaking the State: Food, Hunger, and Power in War

Maja Godina Golija and Václav Šmidrkal

Abstract: This chapter examines the collapse of Austria-Hungary's wartime food rationing system, the ensuing shortages, and their role in eroding imperial loyalty in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia during the final months of the First World War. It traces worsening provisioning up to 1918, when famine loomed in regions such as northwestern Bohemia. Engaging with famine historiography, it explores black market operations, violent popular responses, grassroots food procurement, and state measures—often ineffective or counterproductive. The chapter also considers limited charitable relief and the emergence of alternative authorities controlling supplies. It argues that the political breakthroughs of post-imperial successor states were closely tied to their ability to secure food for their populations.

Keywords: Austria-Hungary, food rationing, First World War, Bohemian Lands, Slovenia, state collapse

Introduction

A few weeks following the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the declarations of independence by Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in late 1918, the people of Grahovo/Grachowo—a village about 40 kilometers south of Ljubljana/Laibach—celebrated the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. A local politician expressed his gratitude to US President Woodrow Wilson for his role in these events. However, a local priest, speaking to another member of the enthusiastic crowd, dismissively

stated that Wilson should not be credited for the empire's downfall: "Hunger did all the work."¹

We can only speculate on what motivated this pastor to prefer depersonalized hunger as the key ingredient in breaking the old regime and making the new state happen over the deliberate efforts of political leaders, military commanders, and ultimately the whole nations that were celebrated in Grahovo on that day. In such a festive moment, his words belittling the merits of a victorious Allied power seemed politically subversive and reactionary to the district captain, and worthy of being reported to his superiors.

While "hunger" was certainly not the sole cause of the war's outcome, it was an inescapable factor that few could ignore. Both warring coalitions and neutral states alike understood that the organization of food supplies for the front and at home would be among the keys to victory. Despite a growing body of literature on food shortages in Habsburg Austria during the First World War, we still do not know much about the extent and impact of food shortages in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia beyond big cities such as Prague or Ljubljana.² What is especially pertinent for our book is the relation of food shortages and the downfall of empire to the rise of victorious nation-states. Therefore, with reference to the pastor's statement mentioned above, we ask in this chapter what role "hunger"—or more precisely the food shortages that caused it—played in the erosion and collapse of the imperial state and the revolutionary events of 1918 in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia, out of which Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia eventually emerged.

As mentioned in the Introduction to this volume, our approach to the topic is inspired by social and cultural history, which focuses on individual experiences and the attribution of meaning, as well as by the historical study of famine. Building on Amartya Sen's once pathbreaking "entitlement approach," which does not see the cause of famine as lying in a general lack of

1 Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Ljubljana (henceforth ARS), SI AS 61 Pokrajinska uprava za Slovenijo, Oddelek za notranje zadeve (1919–24) (henceforth SI AS 61), t. e. 17, 1908pr, Report by the chief of the district captaincy branch office in Cerknica (2 January 1919). We mentioned this story previously here: Václav Šmidrkal and Rok Stergar, "Food Shortages during the Post-Habsburg Transition in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia," *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 245.

2 Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) 31–86; Mojca Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno* (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2020); Claire Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution: Prague, 1914–1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 156–206. For an overview of the problem in Czech historiography, see Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2014), 240–58.

food but rather in the individual's inability to get food,³ we focus on "access to food" as a tool to understand the character and consequences of food shortages in our regions. Moreover, access to food lies at the intersection of the subjective ability to procure food and state food supply policies. The study of access to food, then, lends itself as a window into individual nutritional intake and survival strategies, as well as the broader socio-cultural context of food supply practices. Ultimately, we link this approach to the issue of power. Ensuring access to food speaks to power and powerlessness, both of which are key factors in the maintenance and disintegration of social order and the state—pressing issues for Habsburg Austria toward the end of the war.

First, this chapter summarizes the causes of food shortages in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy during the First World War. It takes examples from the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia to point out the growing differences in access to food and their impact on the internal polarization of society. The second part focuses on food crime, which began at the very beginning of food rationing, and lies at the heart of the disintegration of the state. The next section looks at the epidemic of deadly hunger edema that broke out, among other places, in northwest Bohemia in 1917 as an extreme consequence of long-term unequal access to food. This crisis necessitated increased activity from established and new charities, as well as emergency measures from the state and civil society. Finally, the chapter draws attention to the political instrumentalization of food shortages by Czech and Slovene nationalists in the late summer and fall of 1918, which helped to delegitimize the Austrian government and mobilize popular support to overthrow the state.

Reactive and Inconsistent: The Austrian Food Supply System's Weak Spots

The Habsburg Monarchy was ill-prepared for the outbreak of the First World War. Its leaders optimistically expected only a few months of combat and victory by Christmas of 1914. While civilians initially sent some treats and home-cooked food to their male relatives on the battlefield, access to food soon became unequal and irregular for both military and civilians, at the front and at home.⁴ Even if Austria-Hungary was self-sufficient in many

3 Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

4 Marija Stanonik, *Štiri matere – ena ljubezen: Zgodba neke družine* (Slovensko etnološko društvo, 1997), 27; Tomaž Kladnik, "Vojaštvo in Maribor v času 1. svetovne vojne in tik po njej,"

basic foodstuffs, exporting grain, livestock, and other commodities before 1914, the living and nutritional conditions of the population deteriorated drastically by 1918. This section summarizes basic knowledge about the Austrian food supply system and expands it with illustrative examples from Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands.

On a general level, the main reasons for the poor food supply of the civilian population were the decline in agricultural production, the naval blockade of international trade, internal “blockades,” or the poor performance of the state administration running the food rationing system, and the priority given to supplying combat forces.⁵ This later manifested on the market in shortages and high prices, not only for the most basic foodstuffs, but also for other daily necessities: coal and wood, clothes and shoes, candles and matches, and soap. Ironically, food was not the only thing in short supply. Sometimes, food ration cards themselves were also unavailable in larger towns, such as Ljubljana and Maribor/Marburg an der Drau.⁶

Various statistical data on agricultural production point to food availability decline as the unmissable marker of the worsening food crisis. The overall agricultural gross domestic product of Austria decreased by 48% between 1913 and 1917.⁷ This roughly confirms figures from the Bohemian Lands where, for example, the production of the most important nutrients was nearly halved: wheat production dropped from 6,407,000 tons in 1914 to 3,143,000 tons in 1918, and potato yields dropped from 57,260,000 tons in 1914 to 23,224,000 tons in 1918.⁸ Despite countertrends, such as an increase in sheep or goats, food production was halved by 1918.⁹

Studia Historica Slovenica 9, no. 2–3 (2009): 336; Rudolf Kučera, “Entbehrung und Nationalismus: Die Erfahrung tschechischer Soldaten der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee 1914–1918,” in *Jenseits des Schützengrabens: Der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung – Wahrnehmung – Kontext*, ed. Bernhard Bachinger and Wolfram Dornik (StudienVerlag, 2013), 121–37; Rok Stergar, “L’expérience des soldats austro-hongrois sur le front austro-italien: Le problème du ravitaillement en vivres,” in *Soldati e quotidianità della guerra*, ed. Giovanni L. Fontana and Marco Mondini (Pacini editore, 2019), 13–30.

5 For a summary of food deprivation in Austria-Hungary and Germany, see Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I* (Basic Books, 2014), 330–74.

6 Maja Godina Golija, “Pa smo stali v procesijah pred pekarnami...’ O lakoti in pomanjkanju v Mariboru med prvo svetovno vojno,” in *Vojne na Slovenskem: Pričevanja, spomini, podobe*, ed. Maja Godina Golija (Založba ZRC, 2012), 47–61; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 102.

7 Ernst Langthaler, “Dissolution before Dissolution: The Crisis of the Wartime Food Regime in Austria-Hungary,” in *Environmental Histories of the First World War*, ed. Richard P. Tucker et al. (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 39.

8 Rudolf Olšovský et al., *Úvod do hospodářských dějin* (Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1962), 43.

9 Olšovský et al., *Úvod do hospodářských dějin*, 44.

The deteriorating state of agriculture was linked to shortages of labor, fertilizers, seeds, livestock, and many other things. These became characteristic of the entire period of the First World War.¹⁰ The call-up of men posed a particular problem. As a result, food production relied mainly on the physical labor of women, children, and the elderly. Farmers repeatedly drew attention to the challenges of producing food and cultivating agricultural land. They asked the authorities to help by allocating prisoners of war to assist with fieldwork, for instance.¹¹ They also requested military units further from the front to grant leave to their male family members for short periods of time to assist with major agricultural work, such as ploughing, sowing, mowing, harvesting, and threshing. These letters were often ignored.¹²

The Allied naval blockade, which prevented imports to the Habsburg Monarchy by sea, was expected, and therefore did not cause much harm initially; moreover, it could be circumvented.¹³ Yet there were an even more important internal “blockades” between various provinces. Agriculturally productive regions were reluctant to support unproductive regions; challenges arose when food needed to be transported over long distances within the monarchy.¹⁴ The most obvious and painful internal “blockade” was the Austrian part of the monarchy’s overdependence on food imports from Hungary. Before the outbreak of the First World War, Hungary supplied 90% of everything the western part of the monarchy did not produce by itself.¹⁵ The drastic measures taken by the Hungarian government to reduce food exports to Austria led to severe shortages of basic foodstuffs, e.g., wheat flour; a problem which the Vienna government was unable to solve during the course of the conflict.¹⁶ On top of that, Austria temporarily lost access to one of its most agriculturally fertile regions in Galicia, which was occupied on and off by Russia, its production destroyed and depleted by the fighting.

The state reacted to this unfavorable development with various food control measures that were slowly phased in after the first problems with

10 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 31; Jernej Kosi, “Med državno zapovedanimi vojnimi napori in preživetvenimi strategijami podeželskega prebivalstva v času prve svetovne vojne: Primer sester Divjak,” *Zgodovinski časopis* 73, no. 1–2 (2019): 125.

11 Stanonik, *Štiri matere – ena ljubezen*, 22; Avguštin Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno: Avstrijska sodišča* (Ljudska tiskarna, 1939), 59.

12 Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 59.

13 Jörn Leonhard, *Über Kriege und wie man sie beendet: Zehn Thesen* (C. H. Beck, 2023), 92.

14 Martin Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg: Der Kampf des Hinterlandes ums Überleben 1914–1918* (Styria, 2014), 88.

15 Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 83.

16 Gusztáv Gratz and Richard Schüller, *Der wirtschaftliche Zusammenbruch Österreich-Ungarns: Die Tragödie der Erschöpfung* (Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1930), 68–70.

the supply of the civilian population arose during the summer of 1914.¹⁷ When there was a noticeable shortage of basic foodstuffs such as flour, bread, milk, and meat in many places in early 1915, the Austrian authorities introduced rationing.¹⁸ An imperial order issued on 21 February 1915 required that stocks of cereals and all types of flour be placed under lock and key. Shortly thereafter, the non-subsistence population could only buy 1,400 grams of flour and 1,960 grams of bread per person per week.¹⁹ Following this, restrictions on the sale of the most common sorts of meat such as pork and beef were introduced, and, in 1916, the authorities imposed further restrictions on the consumption of sugar, milk, coffee, lard, and tobacco, followed by potatoes and jam in 1917.²⁰ Together with consumption restrictions, the state gradually introduced price controls to keep food affordable for consumers while maintaining profitability for producers and distributors. However, these ill-designed and inconsistently enforced measures largely failed to prevent rapid price increases caused by the growing imbalance between food supply and demand, speculation, and other factors.²¹

Food supply in the Austrian part of the monarchy was initially the responsibility of local self-government and the existing state institutions, which were gradually expanded. After the establishment of the first of the *Zentralen*, the War Grain Institute (*Kriegs-Getreide-Verkehrsanstalt*), in February 1915, with its regional branches in each crownland to manage the supplies of rationed food, a specialized Office for People's Nutrition (*Amt für Volksernährung*) was separated from the Ministry of the Interior in 1916 and took responsibility for food supply policies across Austria.²²

Despite the introduction of food rationing and the existence of nationwide institutions and legal frameworks, there were differences in their

17 Maja Godina Golija, "Hunger and Misery: The Influence of the First World War on the Diet of Slovenian Civilians," in *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*, ed. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Rachel Duffett, and Alain Drouard (Ashgate, 2011), 95.

18 Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 40; Bojan Himmelreich, "Vsakdanje življenje v Celju v obdobju prve svetovne vojne," *Studia Historica Slovenica* 9, no. 2-3 (2012): 489; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 101-102.

19 Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor (henceforth PAM), SI PAM 1807 Zbirka lepakov, letakov in plakatov (1790-2013) (henceforth SI PAM 1807), t. e. 31/1; Jiří Štěpek, *Přídělové systémy na území Československa 1915-2015*, vol. 1, (1915-1945) (Odbor Archivní správy a spisové služby MV ČR, 2018), 40.

20 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 93-104; Štěpek, *Přídělové systémy*, 1:36-121.

21 For more on price control, see Hans Loewenfeld-Russ, *Die Regelung der Volksernährung im Kriege* (Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1926), 84-107.

22 Loewenfeld-Russ, *Die Regelung der Volksernährung im Kriege*, 51, 56.

implementation at the level of the crownlands and their districts, cities, and municipalities. These differences appeared in part because of a certain amount of autonomy, which the actors were afforded by law, and in part because of institutions' inability to manage divergences and differences that appeared. The lack of food ration cards as well as the cancellation of announced sales of food and changes of the date and place of their sale caused great problems, especially for women and children, who waited many hours in front of the shops to buy food for their daily meals.²³

When food finally appeared in shops, bakeries, and at the butcher's, rising food prices and the devaluation of currency were another major problem for shopkeepers and their customers alike.²⁴ The most affected were less affluent people, who could barely make a living from day to day, and often did not have the money to buy foodstuffs on the spot when groceries finally appeared in stores for a short period.²⁵ As the lawyer Avguštin Reisman wrote in his memoirs about the difficult situation of the inhabitants of the Lower Styrian city of Maribor: "There were fronts at home, especially in front of shops, butcher's, and bakeries, and even before that, in front of the ration card offices."²⁶

Food supply problems were not related only to insufficient food stocks in state warehouses but also to the poor organization of such things as commodity reserves, and the inefficient functioning of public services and institutions, as well as the poor performance of many officials.²⁷ As a result, although there was food to supply the population, its irregular and insufficient distribution often made it unavailable. In this situation, individuals and local institutions had to manage on their own.²⁸

23 ARS, SI AS 137 Okrajno glavarstvo Radovljica (1819–1941) (henceforth SI AS 137), t. e. 623, 1805/17, Letter to District Captain (27 February 1917); Maja Godina Golija, "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?: Food Supply and Nutrition of the Civilian Population in Maribor at the End of and after the First World War," *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 303.

24 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 148.

25 ARS, SI AS 137, t. e. 623, folder 2730/17, Letter to District Captain (28 March 1917).

26 Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 54.

27 Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 84; Ernst Langthaler, "Food and Nutrition (Austria-Hungary)," 1914-1918-online: *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. Ute Daniel et al. (Freie Universität Berlin, 2016), http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/food_and_nutrition_austria-hungary.

28 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna (henceforth ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (henceforth AdR), Volksernährungsamt, 1916–27 (henceforth BMfVE), K. 47, IV-9826, Decree from People's Nutrition Office (24 March 1917), 21; Žiga Oman, *Maribor v prvi svetovni vojni: Življenje v zaledju* (Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor, 2014), 22.

Over and under the Counter: Access to Food and the Crisis of Law Enforcement

Due to the inoperability of the Austrian system of rationed supplies and the severe shortage of food for the civilian population, the black market and war profiteering flourished.²⁹ Buying food from farmers on the black market was widespread in rural areas, and especially prevalent in the agrarian surroundings of major cities.³⁰ Large-scale undeclared trade in food was also widespread. It involved managers of food production or processing establishments, such as mills and slaughterhouses. It also extended to traders and railway workers involved in transporting and supplying food to civilians in their area.³¹ A particular problem for the authorities was the involvement of public officials, both junior and senior, in the black market. In various letters, the authorities drew attention to irregularities in the supply of food and they were particularly concerned about what happened during rail transport when large quantities of food disappeared or were stolen. A preserved letter from the provincial governor of Carniola describes a damaging incident at the Litija/Littai railway station, where railway employees were involved in the stealing and selling of food.³²

Due to the shortcoming of rationing and the limited availability of non-rationed food, the civilian population had to find additional ways to procure sufficient nutrition. Various strategies for survival used by the majority of the population developed as reactions “from below.”³³ A common—yet at times illegal—strategy was to buy food from nearby farmers who had hid the food from requisition commissions and offered it for sale.³⁴ Sunday processions of the urban population carrying backpacks to the countryside and bringing food to the city were also known in German as *Rucksackverkehr*.³⁵ The authorities constantly tried to prevent individual illegal trade and the self-sufficiency of the population in various ways, but they could not stop it. An eyewitness remembered that even the richest bourgeois ladies were not at all ashamed to carry packed backpacks with food to the city.³⁶ There

29 Kosi, “Med državno zapovedanimi,” 127; Godina Golija, “Pa smo stali,” 56.

30 Himmelreich, “Vsakdanje življenje v Celju,” 490; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 193.

31 ARS, SI AS 137, t. e. 623, 2819/17, Letter from Dovje municipality (6 April 1917).

32 ARS, SI AS 137, t. e. 623, 4483.

33 Himmelreich, “Vsakdanje življenje v Celju,” 489; Godina Golija, “‘Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?’,” 307.

34 Godina Golija, “Pa smo stali,” 56.

35 Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 42; Jana Mlakar Adamič, *Teknilo nam je!* (Zasavski muzej, 2004), 16.

36 Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 61.

was also widespread barter of food for valuable items: clothes, jewelry, silverware, or fur. Wealthy people even advertised in newspapers, specifying which valuable items, such as watches, gold, furs, and furniture, they were offering for the food they needed.³⁷

Much of the population, however, did not have these items, or had often traded them already. They had to find some other way to deal with the dire food shortage situation: they sold what they had or could get from their places of work. Thus, nail workers who received nails from the Carniolan Industrial Company exchanged them for food from farmers in Bohinj/Wochein.³⁸ Others exchanged some of their crops and products, e.g., wicker baskets, with people from other places, such as railway men and military units in the hinterland. Farmers in Bovec/Flitsch exchanged cheese and dairy products for cornmeal and flour with soldiers stationed in the area.³⁹ Fraud in obtaining state subsidies and food ration cards, smuggling, theft, and the trafficking of illegally obtained food became widespread.⁴⁰

War propaganda and newspapers promoted alternative solutions, such as various forms of urban gardening or the harvesting of wild plants and their use in food, e.g., cooking vegetable sauces from nettle, dandelion, and sourdough or tea from blackberry and strawberry leaves.⁴¹ They encouraged the cooking of fruit and berries with small amounts of sugar and the preparation of coffee from dried barley, rye, wheat, beans, and grape seeds. Coffee was also made from chicory, cumin, dried dandelion roots, acorns, and dried figs. For baking bread, the use of ground beans, chickpeas, beans, chestnuts, ground corncobs, and potatoes was established as a substitute for flour.⁴² Due to the lack of milk, families replaced milk with burnt flour soup for breakfast and dinner, and in summer substituted garden produce with various salads. Scarcity of food also led to an increase in the consumption

37 "V zameno," *Straža*, 29 November 1918, 5; "Za 20 kg," *Straža*, 28 October 1918, 5.

38 Tomaž Budkovič, *Bohinj 1914–1918: Med fronto in zaledjem* (Mohorjeva založba, 2009), 148.

39 Jernej Komac, "Srce se mi trga od žalosti": Vsakdanje življenje prebivalstva na Bovškem med veliko vojno (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino; Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 2022), 149.

40 Kornelija Ajlec, "Vojaške preskrbnine in pokojnine v prvi svetovni vojni: Zakonodaja in izvedba," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 55, no. 2 (2015): 205; Godina Golija, "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?," 308.

41 Martin Franc, "Bread from Wood: Natural Food Substitutes in the Czech Lands during the First World War," in *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*, 73–77; Maja Godina Golija, "Recepti in napotki za krizne čase: Primer slovenskega ozemlja med prvo svetovno vojno," *Etnolog* 22, no. 1 (2012): 65–80; Moll, *Die Steiermark*, 74.

42 Godina Golija, "Hunger and Misery," 91; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 167.

of mushrooms, which for some ended tragically.⁴³ Besides these natural substitutes, a wide range of industrially produced substitutes, such as various “stock cubes,” often of low nutritional value or even harmful to health, flooded the shelves.⁴⁴ The Austrian authorities also came up with various ideas aimed at using products that had traditionally been used as fodder and not food. They propagated the planting of certain crops, such as turnips and clover. A 1917 letter stated that clover was versatile and could be used to feed humans. The letter claimed it was a tasty and fattening delicacy that could be eaten raw or cooked like spinach.⁴⁵

The lack of food for the civilian population, irregular supplies, rising food prices, and the decline in the purchasing power of the civilian population during the war exacerbated existing social inequalities. They also created a new underclass of people at risk of starvation and a new upper class of war profiteers.⁴⁶ Those who had savings or valuables survived the period of food shortages with less difficulty and navigated the complicated circumstances of war more easily, due also to their name, profession, and social status.

Even though food ration cards were supposed to reduce social inequalities and provide equal access to food for all classes, class position and social capital did play a role in access to food in shops. Merchants generally did not sell food on deferred payment or credit to the less affluent strata of the population due to their low purchasing power and lower social status. However, they did sell to some more affluent individuals and households. The preserved accounts of the noble Sulkowsky family from the vicinity of Maribor bear witness to this. Despite the difficult war situation, this family spent a lot of money on food—cakes, cookies, the best cuts of beef and veal, French cognac—because, unlike many others, they could buy on deferred payment. At some Maribor food and drink merchants, they created large debts which they never repaid.⁴⁷

However, only the wealthier and more “respectable” inhabitants of cities and the countryside could purchase food on deferred payment or debt. They could buy on credit, even if they were penniless, due to their position in society and social capital. Those most in need of food—children, the elderly,

43 “Zastrupitev z gobami,” *Straža*, 30 August 1918, 5.

44 Gustav Schacherl, “Die Nahrungsmittel und ihre Fälschung sowie die Ersatzstoffe, welche während des Krieges und in der Nachkriegszeit in den Handel gebracht wurden, I. Teil,” in *Volksgesundheit im Krieg*, ed. Clemens Pirquet, vol. 2 (Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1926), 195–205.

45 ARS, SI AS 137, t. e. 623, 2378/17, Letter from Ministry of Agriculture (19 February 1917).

46 Godina Golija, “Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?” 307; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 248, 251.

47 PAM, SI PAM 1695 Zbirka računov (19. st.–20. st.) (henceforth SI PAM 1695), t. e. 1928029/1.

and women from less well-off families—were unable to obtain food on credit, as their reputation and social capital were low. Less affluent civilians also habitually received poorer quality goods compared to wealthier people; sellers kept better food for the wealthier or for acquaintances, and they sold poor cuts of meat and other products of dubious quality to the poor.⁴⁸

Another problem was that the type of food civilians could buy with food stamps was often inappropriate for human nutrition and did not correspond to their dietary needs and habits. This was due not only to official orders that, for example, intentionally lowered the quality of flour to make more of it, but also to the fact that peasants, millers, and bakers gave the state rationing authorities inferior products and sold the better ones on the black market. Civilians sent numerous letters to the authorities, warning them of the shortage of basic foodstuffs. They would rather buy cornmeal for their families' daily meals than meat. They also wanted to be able to purchase other nutritious foods, such as beans, peas, barley, potatoes, and lard.⁴⁹

In addition to one's material situation, the occupation of the individual during the war played an important role in providing food for family members. Some professions, such as judges, lawyers, officials, and doctors, were valued because they were often needed by civilians to help with their problems. In the diary of the Ljubljana judge Fran Milčinski, who helped many civilians with complaints, letters, and legal advice, there is a clear description of how he was paid for this work with food, so that even during the war he and his family could eat ham, chickens, roast meat, cakes, and cookies—and drink good wine.⁵⁰ Once, he was paid with 105 kilograms of potatoes, another time with a steady supply of milk, beans, and other crops.⁵¹ It can also be seen from the judge's diary that, due to their close social ties with merchants and officials, some of the townspeople were very well informed on when and where the food would be sold, and were able to send maids to the food queues in time to stock up on supplies.⁵²

Their better material and social position helped them navigate the complex situation much better than the poorer and less educated population could. Thus, wealthy citizens cleverly circumvented the official ban on buying food from farmers by renting land from them. The crops from

48 "Dopis," *Straža*, 25 May 1917, 6; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 252.

49 ARS, SI AS 137, t. e. 623, 4780/17, Letter to District Captain (13 June 1917); Letter about the lack of food (15 June 1917).

50 Fran Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920* (Slovenska matica, 2000), 267, 283.

51 Milčinski, *Dnevnik*, 229.

52 Milčinski, *Dnevnik*, 229; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 158.

these fields could then be brought from the countryside to their permanent addresses in the cities.⁵³

Similarly, the family of the medical doctor Karel Stretti in Prague did not have to live on food rations alone thanks to their wealth and social contacts. Thus, Marie Strettiová used to feed the rations of the hated corn flour bread to her dog. Owing to their connections, the Stretti family could fill their cellar with potatoes, obtain a bottle of Pilsner beer, or, even in times of the greatest milk shortage in 1918, find a liter or two for their consumption.⁵⁴

Members of the lower classes, deprived of the above-mentioned privileges of the rich, had greater difficulty accessing food for their daily meals and lived under the pressure of the everyday struggle for food. This had a strong effect on most of the civilian population, increasing dissatisfaction, engendering more radical criticism, and in some cases even sympathy with revolutionary and Bolshevik ideas. Social cohesion suffered because of a decline in trust in existing state institutions and demoralization of the population. Women, who typically took care of the family and provided adequate amounts of food, protested injustice in various ways, such as writing complaints to local authorities or protesting in public spaces. However, food supply only improved temporarily at best.⁵⁵

What followed was a radicalization of protests, from organized demonstrations and strikes to violent food riots, which included the looting of grocery stores, mills, and farms; the destruction of public offices; and the searching of private homes for hidden food. While in 1915 and 1916 there were 21 such violent demonstrations in the Bohemian Lands, in 1917 there were 78 in Bohemia alone, and 93 in 1918.⁵⁶ When the use of one's "voice," even loudly, did not lead to improved access to food, the other basic strategy, famously proposed by Albert O. Hirschman, was the "exit"—in this case through food criminality.⁵⁷

Such a development not only struck individual consumers but whole local communities that reacted in their own ways to the food supply challenge.

53 Milčinski, *Dnevník*, 284.

54 Marie Strettiová, *Jak jsme prožívali první světovou válku* (Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 2019), 38, 55.

55 Godina Golija, "Hunger and Misery," 88–89; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 136–139.

56 Peter Heumos, "'Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution': Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massenproteste in den böhmischen Ländern 1914–1918," in *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen, Slowaken und Deutschen*, ed. Hans Mommsen et al. (Klartext, 2001), 261–62. For more detailed analysis of such protests, see Ota Konrád and Rudolf Kučera, *Paths out of the Apocalypse: Physical Violence in the Fall and Renewal of Central Europe, 1914–1922* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

57 Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organisations and States* (Cambridge University Press, 1970).

Although the introduction of rationing was not in sight in the summer of 1914, and the official prognosis was that the duration of the war would be short, Ondřej Přikryl, the mayor of Prostějov/Proßnitz (an industrial town in the middle of the fertile plains of Central Moravia), decided to build up the town's supplies in view of the uncertain future. In total, around eighty wagons of food, medical supplies, and other necessities that could still be bought on the free market were purchased and stored in various places around the town, such as the basement of the local Sokol gymnastic association building, school buildings, and in the agricultural malting plant.⁵⁸ Although after the war Přikryl's deft procurement would be attributed to motives of anti-Habsburg resistance, his actions at the time were rather intuitive.⁵⁹ This "squirreling away" of provisions, a psychologically conditioned hoarding of food in anticipation of worse times to come, that had become widespread on an individual level by the summer of 1914, was projected by Přikryl onto the whole city, for which he was responsible as head of the municipal council.⁶⁰

In November 1915, when there was a shortage of flour in Prostějov and other Moravian towns for several weeks, Přikryl confirmed that it would not be possible to rely on the state alone to supply the town.⁶¹ In spite of this, the district captaincy reduced the flour ration for workers engaged in hard manual labor from 300 grams of flour per day to 200 grams. The owners of grain in the agricultural areas around the town were threatened with requisition. It was not possible to redeem all the bread vouchers that had been issued, and the unredeemed vouchers were forfeited without compensation.⁶² A delegation from Prostějov was then sent to the state authorities in the regional capital of Brno/Brünn—they even planned to go to the imperial capital of Vienna—to petition for food supplies for the town. But it returned empty-handed. Prostějov's German-language newspaper defended this shortfall in flour supplies in a "patriotic" spirit, attributing it to the poor official estimate of Prostějov as a self-sufficient district. The War Grain Institute was said to have learned a lesson from this thanks to the intervention of Alfred Fischl, a member of the Moravian Diet.

58 Pavel Marek, "První světová válka očima starosty města," *Archivum Trebonense* 13 (2014): 84–5; Ondřej Přikryl, *Úryvky ze zápisů v době válečné* (Vydavatelský spolek Hlasů z Hané, 1928), 20.

59 Jaroslav Budinský, *Morava za války: Ze vzpomínek na domácí odboj* (Moravský legionář, 1936), 162.

60 Antonín Nedvěd, *Jak to bylo 1914–1918 v Plzni a na českém západě: Záznamy a dokumenty* (Grafika, 1939), 30.

61 *Hlas z Hané*, 17 November 1915, 2.

62 Marek, "První světová válka," 85.

The newspaper further counselled readers that “patriotic sentiment” must suppress any bad feelings at the temporary shortage of flour.⁶³

“Patriotic sentiment” was a necessary part of the cultural mobilization of the population, which needed to be mentally prepared for the hardships of the war. In the area of nutrition, this meant inducing people to voluntarily limit their individual consumption, accept inferior quality and lesser availability of food, and patiently endure the various supply “malfunctions” in the interest of military victory. These were blamed on the enemy and its naval blockade and on a small group of domestic “profiteers.”⁶⁴ In other words, political scandalization of supply disruptions or angry discussion of them in the pages of the press or even on the streets, as would have been typical in the prewar era, would now only help the enemy without contributing to solving the problem.

However, it is clear that Příkryl was not willing to allow such Austrian patriotic sentiment to distract him from his principal task, which was to secure more supplies for the town.⁶⁵ Fulfilling this task required a war-time redefinition of “us” and “them.”⁶⁶ The historian Pavel Marek analyzed Příkryl’s unedited memoirs, in which he sketched out that closer cooperation between various ethnic (Czechs, Germans, Jews), political (civic parties and Social Democrats), and administrative actors (the Jewish community organization and the town hall) in Prostějov went hand in hand with aversion to strangers, such as refugees from Galicia or the Austrian Littoral. At the same time, the conflict between the local or district interests and the state came to the fore. Yet, as the truce was fragile and did not prevent Social Democrats from organizing their own illicit food supply chain in Prostějov, Příkryl also took advantage of his personal friendship with Kuneš Sonntág, the head of the Moravian War Grain Institute in Brno, to get preferential food supplies for Prostějov from “the state.”⁶⁷

At a meeting of the municipal representatives with local industrialists in November 1915, Příkryl officially informed those present about negotiations with the relevant authorities, which had promised to supply Prostějov with the necessary foodstuffs as far as they were able. In defense of the town’s leadership, he emphasized that supplies were provided by the state and

63 *Deutsche Stimmen aus Mähren*, 4 December 1915, 3–4.

64 Jörn Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs*, 6th ed. (C. H. Beck, 2015), 359.

65 Příkryl, *Úryvky ze zápisků*, 19–22.

66 Gabriela Dudeková Kováčová, *Človek vo vojne: Stratégie prežitia a sociálne dôsledky prvej svetovej vojny na Slovensku* (Veda, 2019), 181–84.

67 Marek, “První světová válka,” 85–87.

the municipality only redistributed what it received.⁶⁸ Přikryl closed the session with a shout of “Glory to the Emperor!” but in fact he did not share the patriotic conviction of the need for patient self-sacrifice, which until then had only meant slightly less flour. In his private diary from about that time, he wrote that it would be necessary to let “the law be the law” and to procure supplies for the town in an extra-legal manner.⁶⁹ Although rationed supplies remained the primary source of food for Prostějov, additional supplies obtained “under the counter” would become an indispensable supplement.

The penal measures that accompanied the rapidly growing number of food supply regulations, which gave the state ever greater control over the production, distribution and consumption of basic foodstuffs, did not seem to deter Přikryl.⁷⁰ Although Austrian criminologist Franz Exner claimed that offenses in the field of the managed economy on the home front were in fact “economic treason,” which was as harmful to the successful conduct of the war as political treason or espionage, the punishment for such offences was lenient and inconsistent.⁷¹ While the Prostějov Social Democrat Josef Kotek was sentenced to death by a military court in Moravská Ostrava/Mährisch Ostrau for an allegedly treasonous statement and was executed on 24 December 1914—similar disproportionate political repression occurred in Slovenia—the prosecution of violations of food supply regulations in the Austro-Hungarian penal system mostly fell within the category of misdemeanors, prosecuted by the political authorities and punished with fines or several days of prison. They rarely reached the courts as offenses or criminal acts.⁷² Accordingly, during the entire war, fewer than four hundred people were convicted of food supply offenses by the Bohemian courts (1914: 1, 1915: 74, 1916: 76, 1917: 105, 1918: 121⁷³), and the prison sentences handed down ranged mostly from a week to a month. Similarly, for offenses relating to the regulation of the grain trade in Bohemia,

68 Státní okresní archiv Prostějov, Archiv města Prostějov, 1393–1945, k. 539, “Zápis o schůzi velkopřemyslníků v Prostějově, konané dne 22. listopadu 1915 v zasedací síni nové radnice.” See also *Hlasý z Hané*, 13 November 1915, 3, and 20 November 1915, 2.

69 Marek, “První světová válka,” 85.

70 Kurt Frieberger, ed., *Die österreichischen Ernährungsvorschriften* (Manz’sche k. u. k. Hof-Verlags- und Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1917).

71 Franz Exner, *Krieg und Kriminalität in Österreich* (Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1927), 46.

72 In the Prostějov district, some of the punishments were published in the district captaincy’s official gazette, see e.g., *Úřední list c. k. okresního hejtmanství v Prostějově* 26 (June 1918), 25–26. For Kotek’s case, see Ferdinand Kahánek, *Oběť vojenské justice redaktor Josef Kotek zastřelen 23. prosince 1914 v Moravské Ostravě* (Česká mládež socialistická ve Slezsku a na Ostravsku, 1919).

73 *Trestní statistika z Čech, Moravy a Slezska v letech 1913–1918* (Státní úřad statistický, 1923), 26–27.

the number of people prosecuted during the course of the war was less than one hundred (1915: 19, 1916: 31, 1917: 17, 1918: 23⁷⁴).

But even political authorities, who had the power to punish food supply misdemeanors, faced a conflict of interest: they would often have to punish local people on whose cooperation the successful supply of the district depended.⁷⁵ Often the desire to maintain peace and order by meeting local needs as the ultimate goal came at the expense of compliance with supply regulations and the needs of the whole. This was also the lesson that Prostějov learned the hard way in April 1917. Although Prostějov had relatively better supplies than some other Moravian or Bohemian towns, it could not prevent “hunger riots.” On 25 and 26 April 1917, several thousand workers from local garment factories went onto the streets to vent their anger, fueled by rumors that they would not receive additional flour stamps.⁷⁶ The military bloodily suppressed the protests, shooting and killing 23 people and injuring several dozen others. This was one of the most tragic home front events of the entire war.⁷⁷ This traumatic experience, which was in fact not caused by a lack of food as such but rather by poor crisis management, confirmed the need for the town to procure supplies even by illegal means, “under the counter.”⁷⁸

Therefore, despite the many new food control regulations, including criminal law provisions, there was relatively little enforcement, for which there were multiple reasons. One of them was highlighted in a 1916 article in a Czech legal journal, which, in relation to the new food control laws, cautiously warned that “all these regulations are just dead letters that can only come alive by the efforts of the authorities and the understanding of the community.”⁷⁹ However, both the efforts of the authorities and the public understanding of these regulations were poor. In fact, not only a large proportion of the public but also those whose job it was to enforce the law gradually came to a tacit agreement that violations of the food supply regulations were a necessary evil, without which it would be impossible to

74 *Trestní statistika*, 26–27.

75 Martin Klečacký, *Poslušný vládce okresu: Okresní hejtman a proměny státní moci v Čechách v letech 1868–1938* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2021), 205.

76 For a historiographical reconstruction and assessment of the events based on the court files, see Pavel Marek, “‘Hladová bouře’ v Prostějově v dubnu 1917 – pravda a fikce,” *Střední Morava* 48 (2019): 27–38.

77 Marek, “‘Hladová bouře,’” 30.

78 Národní archiv, Prague (henceforth NA), Předsednictvo ministerské rady, 1918–39 (henceforth PMR), k. 3631, Prostějov Municipal Council to Presidency of Council of Ministers (3 November 1920).

79 Dr. Tlamich, “K novému císař. nařízení o zásobování obyvatelstva nezbytnými potřebami z 21. srpna 1916 ř. z. 261,” *Právník* 55 (1916): 924.

top up the irregular and insufficient food rations from the state. Thus, in the course of the war, compliance with these regulations gradually degenerated from one's patriotic duty to a "stupidity" by which one did not help society and harmed oneself. Those who were "at least half clever" could always find a way around the law, wrote one such person in northern Bohemia in December 1918 in relation to price control.⁸⁰

State officials charged with overseeing compliance with the supply regulations repeatedly noted the "lax" punishment of wartime profiteering by the courts. According to a December 1916 report, the criminal courts in Prague "have unfortunately not yet realized the seriousness of the tasks entrusted to them." In the view of its author, the outcome of such trials, which, despite the exceptional circumstances, adhered to the basic principles of judicial procedure, was often either acquittal or an excessively lenient sentence that did not have a deterrent effect.⁸¹ It seems that the situation remained largely the same, as in March 1918 the Anti-Profiteering Department of the Prague Police Directorate, when assessing the food regulation situation in Prague, complained that court proceedings were lengthy and the sentences too lenient. Shops in Prague consistently failed to mark goods with prices and restaurants and cafés allegedly charged more than the maximum allowed price. Another conspicuous feature were the good stocks of confectionery in the pastry shops and the plentiful offerings of delicatessens.⁸² The ministerial inspector was also surprised to find that, unlike in Vienna, there was little commercial activity in the public markets of Prague. The official explained this by the fact that a significant proportion of the population of Prague had contacts in the countryside and acquired food there to improve their diet, whereas the inhabitants of Vienna had fewer opportunities in this regard and were therefore more dependent on the state supply.⁸³ This was also confirmed by the case of Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský, a Prague resident who became a renowned expert and promoter of etiquette after 1918. His comprehensive knowledge of the rules of social behavior did not prevent him from illegally supplementing his own supplies during the war, thanks to his contacts with a priest from the central Bohemian village of Ouběnice/Aubienitz. In a letter from February 1918, Guth-Jarkovský made a humorous

80 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 57, "Abschrift an die Statthalterei Dep. R. in Prag" (8 December 1918).

81 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 39, "Bekämpfung der Preistreiberei und des Lebensmittelwuchers" (22 December 1916), 3.

82 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 39, War Profiteering Department of the Prague Police Directorate to the Office for People's Nutrition in Vienna (9 March 1918), 3.

83 War Profiteering Department of the Prague Police Directorate to the Office for People's Nutrition in Vienna, 4.

allusion to the central war offices (*centrály*), referring to the priest as “the central war office [*centrála*] for the supply of poor Czech writers.”⁸⁴

The anti-profiteering authorities were also in a difficult situation. Although they had detailed information on wide-scale violations of supply regulations, their hands were tied by the local situation. One such case from Moravská Ostrava was highlighted in an April 1918 report, in which officials mentioned specific profiteers who were supplying miners with food illegally and at high prices. However, if they dismantled this network, coal production would be reduced due to the deterioration of food supplies and, in consequence, less coal delivered would mean less food produced. At the same time, the authorities could not officially condone such actions and therefore had no choice but to ensure that only miners and not the rest of the population had access to such supplies. Turning a blind eye to black market purchases in the case of one social group, however, provoked outrage from others who had no such leverage.⁸⁵

Differences in people's ability to secure food supplies privately also led to differing expectations of the state supply authorities. While those who were able to sustain themselves from their own resources expected a more laissez-faire policy from the authorities, those who could not do so hoped for more support from the state. As a neutral institution, the state should have distributed food equally and effectively despite divergent, particularistic interests. Yet, to guarantee each person a ration of basic foodstuffs at an affordable price—the foundation of a functional rationing system—a strong state was a prerequisite. However, by the end of the war, the Habsburg Austrian state could hardly be considered strong.⁸⁶

Death by Starvation

To date, historical studies have largely focused on the severe shortage of food in the major cities of Austria-Hungary. The urban–rural divide in access to food was not so unambiguous as it may seem.⁸⁷ Food was also scarce in

84 Josef Petráň, *Dějiny českého venkova v příběhu Ouběnic* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2011), 431.

85 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 39, “Informative Bereisung der Kriegswucherämter. (Mährisch Ostrau)” (27 April 1918), 3–4.

86 Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, 381.

87 Ernst Langthaler, “Hungernde Stadt, sattes Land? ‘Volksernährung’ in Wien und Niederösterreich nach dem ersten Weltkrieg,” in *Wien und Niederösterreich – eine untrennbare Beziehung? Festschrift für Willibald Rosner zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Elisabeth Loinig, Stefan Eminger, and Andreas Weigl (NÖ Institut für Landeskunde, 2017), 281–87.

less productive areas of the countryside due to compulsory requisitioning of food on farms, shortages of labor, livestock and seeds, as well as poor harvests in 1917 and 1918.⁸⁸ Particularly affected were the poorest of the rural population: the peasant “proletariat” such as maids and daily wage-earners, who even in peacetime hardly got by and were often hungry, and whose situation deteriorated sharply during the war.⁸⁹ Wartime food shortages were also felt on small farms, where there was little or poor-quality arable land, and in remote, mountainous borderland regions. There, the women had to struggle with arduous agricultural tasks and the feeding of many children. Eighty women farmers from Upper Carniola, mainly from the municipality of Gorje/Göriach, wrote to the Carniolan provincial government in Ljubljana about this in April 1917. In the letter, they asked for help with food because they had nothing left: no flour, no potatoes, no milk, no meat, and no lard. They also wrote that people in the municipality of Gorje had begun to get sick and die of hunger. They needed urgent help.⁹⁰

Furthermore, hunger and food shortages were not only typical of cities and poorer rural areas but also of industrial centers. Thus, in 1917, the First Nail and Iron Crafts Cooperative in Kropa/Kropp and Kamna Gorica/Steinbüchel reported in a letter that there was hunger among ironworkers even though they were classified as heavy laborers who were entitled to more plentiful food rations. For 120 female workers in Kropa, the local authorities were unable to organize a regular supply of food, not even potatoes and legumes, which they had not received for a long time. Each worker could only be offered 6 kilograms of flour per month, which caused great dissatisfaction among the workers, who in turn demanded that they be provided with other ingredients, especially beans and barley, to prepare heartier meals.⁹¹

The material conditions of the urban and rural poor worsened during the First World War and strongly affected their ways of life. Poverty, malnutrition, monotonous and low-calorie food, and hunger led to lower labor productivity, higher sickness rates, and the spread of various infectious diseases. Mortality increased significantly during the First World War as figures from Ljubljana and Prague show. In 1918, the mortality rate in Ljubljana was 18.1 per thousand and in Prague 18.0 per thousand, while in the last five-year period before the First World War it was on average 14.9 per

88 For Germany, see Mary Elisabeth Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace: Women and Children in Germany, 1914–1924* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 135–69.

89 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 153, no. 34520, “Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der österr. Bevölkerung im Hinterland” (8 June 1918).

90 ARS, SI AS 137, t. e. 623, folder 3317, Letter from Gorje (2 April 1917).

91 ARS, SI AS 137, t. e. 623, folder 3354, Letter from Begunje Mayor (18 April 1917).

thousand in Ljubljana and 14.9 per thousand in Prague, according to data from 1913.⁹² The exhausted population suffered most from lung diseases, especially tuberculosis, which claimed the most casualties, including among schoolchildren and young people. In particular, the death rate from tuberculosis was high among young women between the ages of 15 and 30.⁹³ In the Bohemian Lands, the death rate from tuberculosis increased by 27.7% between 1914 and 1918.⁹⁴ Gout and intestinal catarrh spread, causing many exhausted elderly residents to die. Cases of smallpox, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and dysentery were recorded in northern Bohemia in 1918 and elsewhere.⁹⁵ Both Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands were also affected by the Spanish flu, which spread in two waves in 1918. The autumn wave, especially in mid-October, was stronger and claimed more lives, but caused relatively little agitation and fear among people due to all other health ailments.⁹⁶

In addition to health problems that existed before the war already and were exacerbated by wartime malnutrition, there were also new wartime diseases that were largely unknown even to the medical community during peacetime. At the end of the winter of 1917, patients began arriving at the garrison hospital and the insurance company outpatient clinic of the Viennese internist Arthur Schiff in strikingly high numbers with an illness that the experienced physician described a few months later in a medical journal as “a peculiar edema disease.”⁹⁷ The symptoms of this unknown disorder were swelling of the limbs around the instep and lower leg and sometimes also the thigh, a swollen face and, as most of the patients were men, a swollen scrotum. The swelling itself was not painful, but the patients suffered from the very frequent urge to urinate,

92 Jaromír Nečas, “Několik poznatků o zdravotním stavu v Praze za světové války,” *Sborník lékařský* 24 (1923): 87–93; Ivo Pirc, “Zdravstveno stanje in demografski podatki,” in *Spominski zbornik Slovenije: Ob dvajsetletnici kraljevine Jugoslavije* (Jubilej, 1939), 488; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 208.

93 Pirc, “Zdravstveno stanje in demografski podatki,” 488.

94 Šárka Caitlín Rábová, *Tuberkulóza a společnost: Obrazy nemoci v 19. a 20. století* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2022), 121.

95 ÖStA, AdR, BMFVE, K. 111, “K. k. Bezirkshauptmannschaft Böhm. Leipa am 7. Mai 1918: Sanitärer Bericht für April 1918”; “Amtsärztlicher Bericht über die Gesundheitsverhältnisse im politischen Bezirke Warnsdorf im Monate Mai 1918” (30 May 1918). See also *Mitteilungen des Deutschösterreichischen Staatsamtes für Volksgesundheit*, no. 2 (1918): 51–52.

96 Harald Salfellner, “Pandemie španělské chřipky 1918/19 se zvláštním zřetelem na České země a středoevropské poměry,” PhD diss. (Charles University, 2017); Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 230; Godina Golija, “Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?” 303. For a Central European overview, see Matthäus Wehowski and Filip Bláha, *Die Spanische Grippe und die Habsburgermonarchie: Gesundheitspolitik, multiple Krisen und Staatszerfall* (V&R unipress, 2025).

97 Arthur Schiff, “Über das gehäufte Auftreten einer eigenartigen Ödemkrankheit,” *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 26 May 1917, 975–79.

which caused them to get up six or seven times a night. They also complained of fatigue, exhaustion, and feelings of weakness, which may have been related to a reduced heart rate. In some patients, the swelling was not yet apparent, but other symptoms indicated that it was the same disorder. Although none of Schiff's patients had yet died of the disease, he had heard of untreated cases that resulted in a person's sudden death during work. Given the rapid increase and the dozens of cases Schiff had examined in a period of several weeks, he concluded that the incidence of the disease was an epidemic.

A study of the most recent medical literature confirmed to Schiff that this was not a Viennese peculiarity, as a similar disease appeared almost simultaneously in various German cities. The incidence of "edema disease," as he initially referred to it, had been reported in Austrian and German medical journals as early as 1915 in German-occupied Poland and in one region of Austrian Galicia.⁹⁸ Although the swellings could have been caused by poor kidney or liver function, Schiff, like other physicians, concluded that it was a disease that was typical of war, and had been recorded in Austria more than a century earlier during the Napoleonic Wars and was also known from "English concentration camps" during the Second Anglo-Boer War in South Africa at the beginning of twentieth century.⁹⁹

The cause of this disease of epidemic proportions was not infection, but long-term malnutrition caused by the insufficient intake and unbalanced composition of nutrition. In addition to low caloric intake, protein deficiency played a key role in the development of the disease, which resulted in the separation of water from blood, the accumulation of water under the skin and its increased excretion. Left untreated, the swelling from starvation could gradually affect the internal organs and lead to death. In another comprehensive study that was published six months later in November 1917, Schiff pointed out the statistical coincidence of the increase and decrease of hunger edemas with the rhythm of the agricultural year: the highest numbers of new cases were observed before the harvest in July and August, whereas after the harvest, in September and October, when food rations were also likely to have increased, the number of new cases began to fall rapidly.¹⁰⁰

With the aid of statistical data obtained from government authorities and professional medical associations, Schiff and the Prague internist Rudolf

98 B. Budzyński and K. Chełchowski, "O puchlinie głodowej," *Przegląd Lekarski* 54, no. 1 (1915): 1–8; no. 2 (1915): 4–11.

99 Schiff, "Über das gehäufte Auftreten," 978.

100 Arthur Schiff, "Zur Pathologie der Ödemkrankheit," *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 24 November 1917, 2133–43.

von Jaksch, independently of each other, created a map of the incidence of hunger edema. It revealed that although the disease reached epidemic proportions at the end of the winter of 1917, not all the inhabitants and regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were equally affected. Its social prevalence was directly related to social status and the ability to obtain food from private sources in addition to the insufficient state rations. Similarly, hunger edema was geographically concentrated in certain regions, while in others there was no or only sporadic incidence. Schiff observed that in Vienna, it was typically found in working-class districts, with three-quarters of the recorded cases occurring in five of the city's districts (the 10th, 12th, 16th, 20th, and 21st districts). It also occurred in certain "total institutions" such as prisons and mental hospitals, whose occupants were unable to purchase food privately and were dependent on institutional food. In Wiener Neustadt in Lower Austria, it was reported in a munitions factory, and in Styria its incidence was recorded in an ironworks. By contrast, no cases were reported in Tyrol, Carinthia, or Vorarlberg. In the southern part of the empire, it was recorded in Trieste/Trst and on certain Dalmatian islands in the Adriatic Sea.¹⁰¹ However, Schiff and Jaksch both noted the strikingly high incidence of hunger edema in the German-speaking districts of northern Bohemia. For example, in Vejprty/Weipert, a town on the border of Bohemia and Saxony in the Ore Mountains (Krušné hory/Erzgebirge), 800 people, or around 9% of the town's population, had fallen ill with hunger edema by August 1917.¹⁰²

According to the statistics collected and interpreted by Rudolf Jaksch,¹⁰³ who was a prominent internist and professor at the German University in Prague, a total of 22,842 people in Bohemia fell ill with hunger edema in 1917, of which 1,028 succumbed to the disease. Given that the population of Bohemia at that time stood at around five million, this figure may not seem particularly high. However, the social and regional stratification of the incidence of hunger edema was significant and directly proportional to the population's access to food. Hunger edema was prevalent in 41 German-majority districts of Bohemia but only in 10 Czech-majority districts. The German districts, mainly in the northern border region of Bohemia, accounted for 19,651 cases of illness and 1,026 deaths, while in the Czech-speaking districts of Bohemia, there were 3,191 cases of illness and two

101 Schiff, "Zur Pathologie der Ödemkrankheit," 2135–36.

102 Schiff, "Zur Pathologie der Ödemkrankheit," 2136; Rudolf von Jaksch, "Das Hungerödem," *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 8 June 1918, 1029–36.

103 For more on Jaksch in Prague, see Ludmila Hlaváčková, "Druhá česká a německá interní klinika v Praze v dobách přednostentství E. Maixnera, J. Thomayera a R. Jaksche," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae: Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 51, no. 2 (2011): 11–43.

deaths.¹⁰⁴ Jaksch attributed this striking difference between the German and Czech parts of Bohemia to the industrial or agricultural character of these areas. Even before the war, the industrial districts of northern Bohemia, with their poor agricultural production, were dependent on food imports from the Bohemian interior or from neighboring Germany. However, the border with Germany was closed to food imports during the war, and the possibilities of obtaining supplies from the Czech interior or other fertile parts of the empire relied on the state administration's ability to purchase, transport, and distribute food in northern Bohemia.

Jaksch and Schiff agreed that the disease was caused by insufficient caloric intake, which for these patients had long fallen below the minimum of 1,400 calories deemed sufficient for a person doing light physical work in warm weather. Moreover, for hard labor and the winter period it was necessary to allow for a higher minimum caloric intake. Equally dangerous for the development of the disease was the substitution of staple foods that people's digestive systems had long been accustomed to with foods from other parts of the empire that weakened bodies were not able to process. Thus, the population of Bohemia and the northern parts of the empire in general were not properly able to digest cornmeal and vegetable fats, while the population of the Dalmatian islands and the southern regions of the empire generally were not properly able to digest potatoes and animal fats.¹⁰⁵ In Bohemia, however, protein intake via milk consumption played a key role. Hunger edema was much less common in the Bohemian Forest (*Šumava/Böhmerwald*) region of southwestern Bohemia, which also suffered from food shortages as a mountainous and agriculturally unproductive area on the border with Germany. However, in this region, there were significantly more cows and volumes of cow's milk per person.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, access to food explained why the disease was completely absent among "peasants, agricultural workers, and subsistence farmers."¹⁰⁷

The conclusions of the medical experts were politically uncomfortable. Although it could be a fatal disease, its treatment required neither complex medical interventions nor special medication—all that was required was bed rest and a better diet, especially one rich in protein. Therefore, although hunger edema affected people's health and lives, it was not a specific problem for the medical profession, but for the authorities responsible for the people's nutrition

104 Jaksch, "Das Hungerödem," 1029.

105 Jaksch, "Das Hungerödem," 1031.

106 Jaksch, "Das Hungerödem," 1030.

107 Jaksch, "Das Hungerödem," 1032.

and the state's food supply policy in general. It was not the result of enemy action, such as the naval blockade that prevented the import of foodstuffs into the empire, but the failure of the state's own food supply policy, which did not ensure a minimum nutritional standard for all by redistributing foodstuffs of which there was a surplus in one district to districts whose agricultural production was insufficient to feed the local population. Although, according to 1917 data, death from hunger edema was a risk only for a small proportion of the population of Cisleithania, it had the potential to further undermine the functionality of the state's supply apparatus. Having to survive on food rations alone as they were supplied in the first half of 1917, meant falling ill to hunger edema sooner or later and then possibly death. Both doctors therefore concurred that the treatment of this disease was, in the first place, a matter for the state's food supply policy, not for medicine.

The medical statistics on the incidence of hunger edema must be viewed with caution, as the precise figures of its incidence relied on data that could be collected from individual physicians. Therefore, the statistics were bound to have excluded cases of starvation in which a patient failed to attend a doctor's appointment or in which a patient's disease or cause of death was diagnosed as something other than hunger edema. Wartime "patriotism" may also have played a role, as it did not allow the doctor to name cases accurately. For example, historian Martin Klečacký mentions the case of the town doctor of Varnsdorf/Warnsdorf in northern Bohemia.¹⁰⁸ In a letter to the Bohemian provincial governor from October 1917, this doctor confessed that he had written "infirmity" as the cause of death on the death certificates of people whom he believed had died of insufficient nutrition, as he did not want to cause undue concern to the local population with the word "starvation" or "give hostile foreign countries written proof of our misery and hardship."¹⁰⁹ To reiterate, aside from the overall amount of calories, it was the lack of proper protein intake that became instrumental in the development of the disease. Nevertheless, cases of hunger edema were used by the Austrian authorities in 1917 and 1918 as an indicator of local severe food shortages that required special attention from the state. A table compiled in mid-1918 for the Bohemian districts most affected by food shortages summarizes the extent of the problem using cases of hunger edema and participants in war kitchens as indicators (see Table 1).

¹⁰⁸ Klečacký, *Poslušný vládce okresu*, 354.

¹⁰⁹ NA, České místodržitelství Praha – osobní kancelář místodržitele Maxmiliána Coudenhove, 1915–18, k. 8, Varnsdorf Town Physician Dr. Bernard Herscher to Town Council (2 October 1917); Hans-Georg Hofer, "Ernährungskrise, Krankheit, Hungertod: Wien und Österreich-Ungarn im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte* 31 (2013): 41–42. See also Milčinski, *Dnevník 1914–1920*, 329.

Table 1.1 Data collected on emergency areas in Bohemia for the purpose of the Emergency Committee of the House of Lords (mid-1918)

Geographic sections (responsible members of the the House of Lords and the respective districts)	Number of inhabitants	Number of persons in need	War kitchen participants	Hunger oedema cases
I – Erwein Graf von Nostitz-Rieneck (Aš/Asch, Cheb/Eger, Skalná/Wildstein, Mariánské Lázně/Marienbad, Sokolov/Falkenau, Kraslice/Graslitz, Nejdek/Neudek, Horní Blatná/Platten, Locket/Elbogen, Karlovy Vary/Karlsbad)	350,000	265,000	106,000	104
II – Ottokar Graf von Westplaheln zu Fürstenberg (Most/Brüx, Duchcov/Dux, Teplice/Teplitz, Ústí n. L./Aussig)	250,000	125,000	105,000	30
III – Franz Graf von Clam-Gallas and Willy Ginzkey (Česká Lípa/Böhmische Leipa, Jablonné v Podještědí/Deutsch Gabel, Liberec/Reichenberg, Jablonec n. N./Gablonz, Turnov/Turnau, Frýdland/Friedland, Semily/Semil)	340,000	340,000	86,000	870
IV – Rudolf Graf Czernin von Chudenitz und Morzin (Jilemnice/Starkenbach, Vrchlabí/Hohenelbe, Trutnov/Trautenau)	190,000	95,000	33,000	42
V – Fürst Johann Adolf zu Schwarzenberg (Prachatic/Prachaticz, Český Krumlov/Krumau, Horní Planá/Oberplan, Hartmanice/Hartmanitz, Kašperské Hory/Bergreichenstein, Vimperk/Winterberg, Volary/Wallern, Chvalšiny/Kalsching)	100,000	25,000	2,000	0
VI – Karl Georg Graf Buquoy-Longueval (Jáchymov/St. Joachimsthal, Doupov/Duppau, Kadaň/Kaadén, Přísečnice/Pressnitz, Chomutov/Komotau)	150,000	115,000	40,000	109
VII – Karl Fürst Kinsky zu Wchinitz und Tettau (Děčín/Tetschen, Benešov nad Ploučnicí/Bensen, Česká Kamenice/Böhmische Kamnitz, Varnsdorf/Warnsdorf, Rumburk/Rumburg, Šluknov/Schluckenau)	240,000	240,000	76,000	830
VIII – Karl Georg Graf Buquoy-Longueval (Vyšší Brod/Honefurth, Kaplice/Kaplitz, Nové Hradky/Gratzen)	50,000	15,000	0	0
Total	1,670,000	1,220,000	448,000	1985

Source: SOA Třeboň, oddělení správy fondů a sbírek Český Krumlov, f. Schwarzenberská ústřední kancelář, nové oddělení, Generalia (Gb), sign 5 P 12b.

Die Hunger
im M...

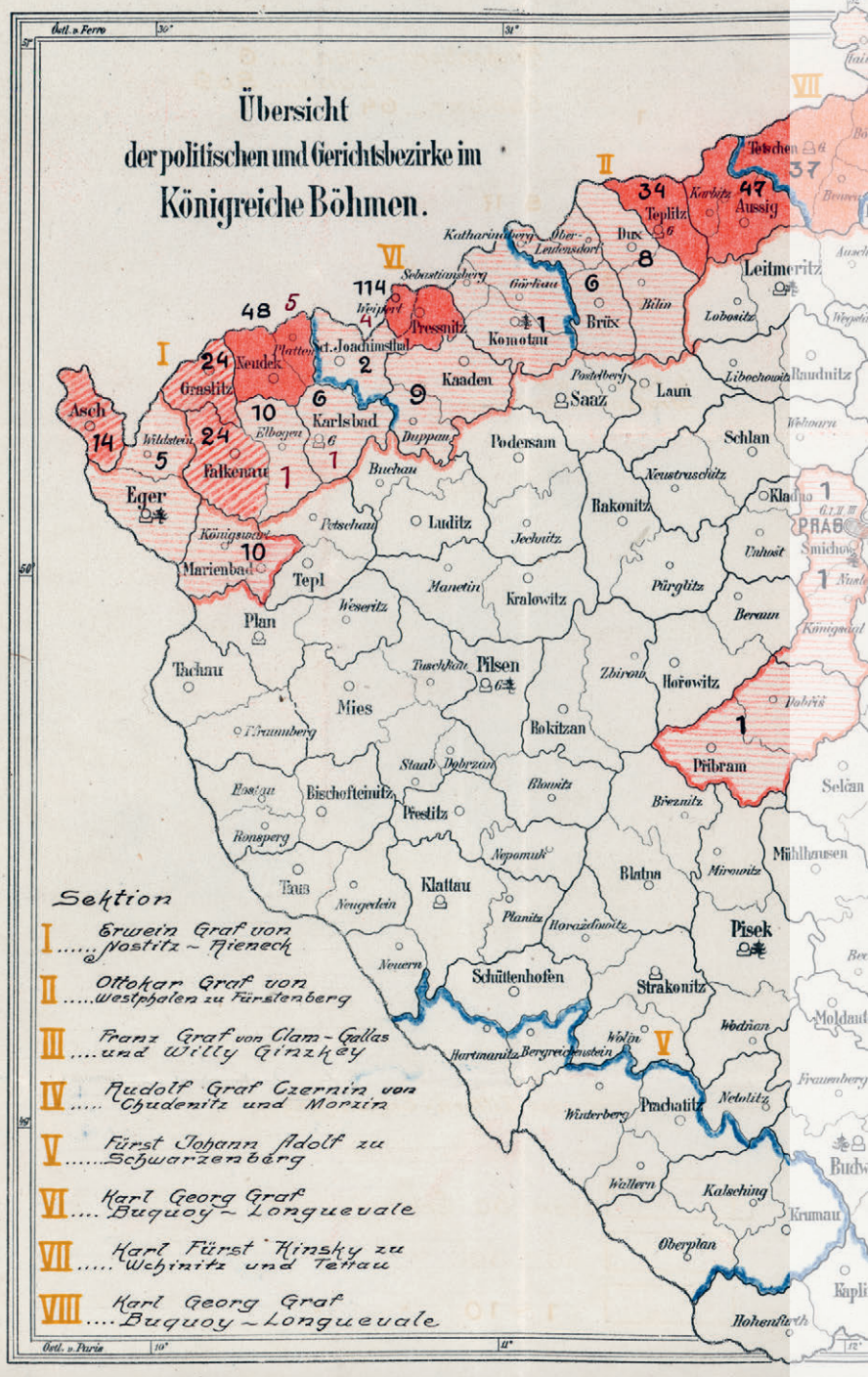
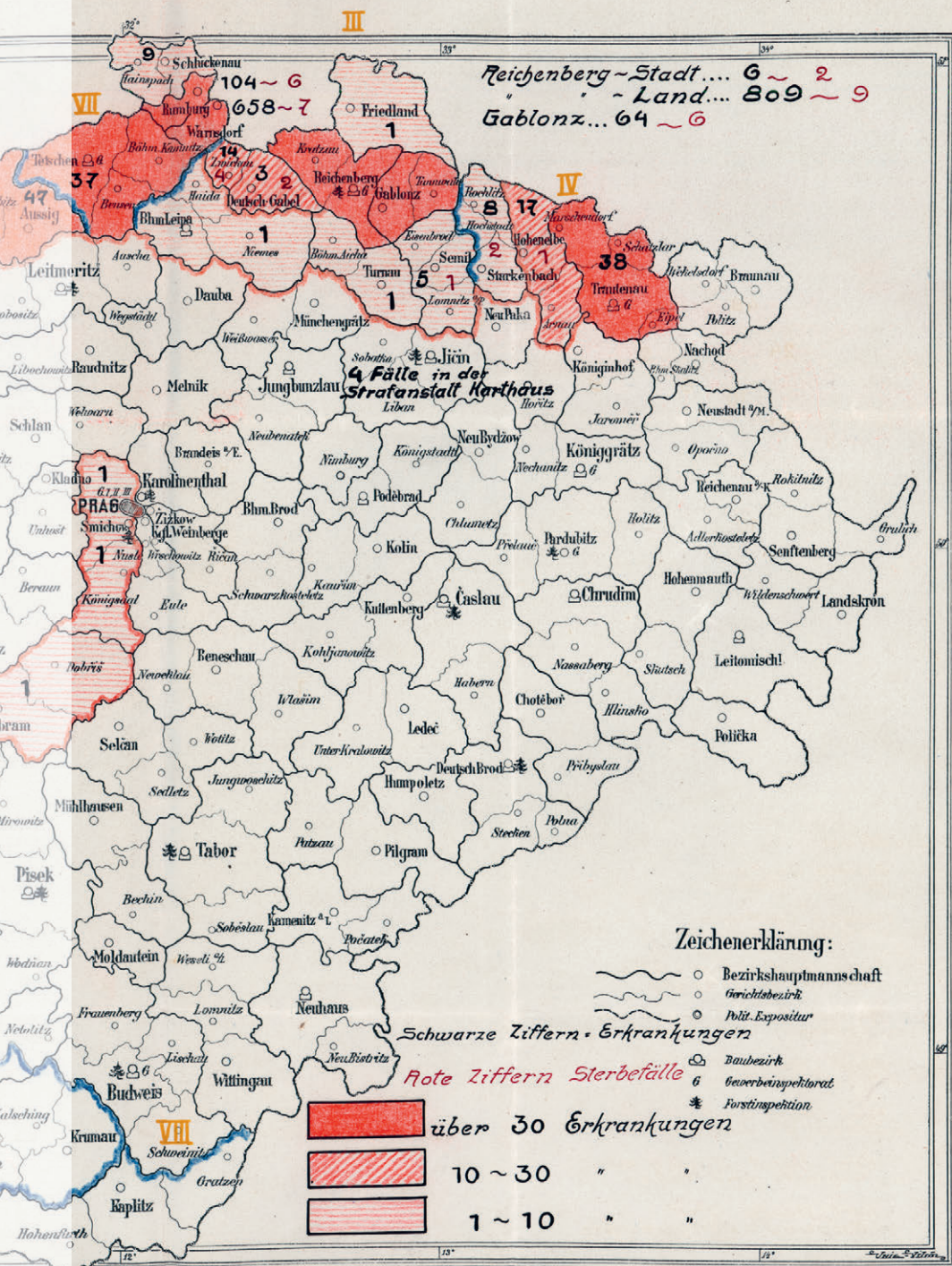


Figure 1.1 Map of Bohemia showing the number of cases (in black) and deaths (in red) from hunger edema in May 1918. The Roman numerals I to VIII indicate the regional sections of the German-Bohemian Emergency Committee of the House of Lords. Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň, oddělení správy fondů a sbírek Český Krumlov.

Hungerwassersucht im Mai 1918



The reasons for the regional difference in food supply in the Ore Mountains region compared to the rest of the Kingdom of Bohemia were identified by district commissioner Karl Uhlig from Chomutov/Komotau in a report to the Vienna government in August 1917. He pointed out that, even in peacetime, the diet of the area's low-income population had been deficient and consisted mainly of bread, potatoes, coffee, and roux soup. However, during the war, the level of nutrition was further reduced considerably and, instead of scarce bread and potatoes, semi-ripe pears, herbs, pastry made from scavenged grains ground with a coffee grinder, soups and pies made from bran, and cucumbers entered the diet, with cabbage as the main meal.¹¹⁰

Uhlig considered the main cause of the nutritional catastrophe in the Ore Mountains region to be the fundamental weakness of the empire's rationing of food supplies. Time and again, the population was forced to secure additional food sources privately to supplement the meagre state-supplied rations; all of this to obtain at least the minimum caloric intake necessary for survival. Uhlig ascertained from reports published by the Statistical Office that this stood at around 1,600 calories and 75 grams of protein per day. According to the figures available to him on the nutritional situation in Vejprty/Weipert in Bohemia and Bärenstein in Saxony—towns that were separated only by a stream marking the border—the northern Bohemian town's ration for the second week of August was 6,075 calories (i.e., 867 calories per day) and 170 grams of protein, while on the Saxon side it was 9,975 calories and 282 grams of protein. Even so, the situation in Vejprty was still relatively good, as the rations had fallen to only 400–500 calories per day in some places in the area during this period. Nevertheless, the essential difference was that in Bohemia, the rations covered only half a person's minimum necessary nutritional intake, and the other half had to be procured privately, whereas in Saxony only one fifth of a person's nutrition had to be obtained from private sources.¹¹¹

In the Ore Mountains region, it was particularly difficult to procure supplementary food privately by *Rucksackverkehr*. One reason, as elsewhere, was the low purchasing power of the population, which could offer cigarettes smuggled from Germany for barter at best. A geographically specific cause was the great distance between the mountain and foothill areas, which people had to cover on foot, sometimes having to sleep in the open on their

110 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 111, "Die Ernährungsverhältnisse im oberen Erzgebirge im August 1917" (26 August 1917), 1.

111 "Die Ernährungsverhältnisse im oberen Erzgebirge im August 1917" (26 August 1917), 3–5.

long journey.¹¹² Uhlig concluded his voluminous report with an appeal to his superiors that even if the population was bearing up loyally and patriotically while slowly starving and even if they did not protest beyond a few easily quelled riots, this state of affairs was a disgrace to the empire's political administration, which was all the worse as it stood in direct contrast with the nutritional conditions on the German side of the border. The main cause of disease and death from hunger was thus the civil service itself, which had created a negligent system and lost its ability to govern.¹¹³

The inability to sufficiently supplement state allocations with private supply at the individual, municipal, and company level was thus a significant difference between northern Bohemia and the rest of Bohemia and Moravia, including Prague. The cause lay not only in geographic remoteness, and therefore in greater demand leading to higher prices than elsewhere, but also in ethnic differences. Germans who travelled to Czech districts to procure supplies were confronted with unfamiliarity with the environment and the language and, above all, a lack of personal contacts.

In December 1917, Uhlig warned the Vienna Office for People's Nutrition of a catastrophic famine unless supplies to northern Bohemia improved significantly in 1918. He drew a historical parallel with Ireland's Great Famine of 1845–1852 to emphasize the point.¹¹⁴ In his view, in 1917, in some parts of north Bohemia, particularly in the Ore Mountains, there had been signs of an incipient famine like that in Ireland, which had had a fundamental impact on the demographic development of the area. Among the consequences he listed were an increase in deaths from starvation of up to 0.3% of the population, thousands of people sick or infirm and tens of thousands of people moved to more fertile areas such as Jičín/Jitschin or Nový Bydžov/Neubidschow in the Bohemian interior. In addition to the historical example of Ireland, Uhlig's concerns about the demographic impact were also based on eugenic considerations in relation to the effect of famine on population development, stressing that the consequences were not just immediate but would have devastating effects on the population in the long-term, as tens of thousands of people would lose their ability to reproduce as a result of malnutrition.¹¹⁵ Moreover, Uhlig predicted that hunger edema would spread to other regions, too. While

112 Hofer, "Ernährungskrise, Krankheit, Hungertod," 44.

113 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 111, "Die Ernährungsverhältnisse im oberen Erzgebirge im August 1917" (26 August 1917), 7.

114 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 138, "Bericht betreffend die Errichtung eines Wirtschaftsgebietes 'Nordböhmen' [...]" (13 December 1917), 3.

115 Vojtěch Pojar, "Feeding Experts: Hunger Crisis and the Discourse of Eugenics in the Habsburg Empire, 1916–1918," *Střed/Centre* 16, no. 1 (2024): 7–34.

the nutritional situation seemed relatively safe in the Bohemian Forest at the end of 1917, Uhlig warned that this was just a phase shift in the onset of the hunger edema epidemic that would break out in this region in 1918, just like it had in the Ore Mountains in 1917, if relief was not organized in due time.¹¹⁶

However, another reason for the relative calm may have been the fact that a genuinely starving population is generally not capable of protesting because it is physically and mentally weak. Nevertheless, this “patriotic loyalty,” which led to people quietly starving to death, and which was alien to people such as Prostějov mayor Ondřej Přikryl, resulted in a further deterioration in the local availability of food. In fulfilling their duty, the region’s German farmers, who more obediently than Czech farmers diverted even relatively smaller consignments of foodstuffs to the state according to the allocation plan, were in fact digging the grave of their neighbors, who might otherwise have obtained these foodstuffs illegally through informal supply networks, as in the case of Prostějov, rather than via state rations.¹¹⁷

The administrative solution was to create closed economic areas that would be balanced by including an appropriate combination of agriculturally productive and unproductive districts. Rather than equalize the difference across the whole of Cisleithania and the army in the field or at least across the Kingdom of Bohemia, its aim was for the official efforts in buying, transporting, and redistributing food to be confined to a smaller, more easily monitored area, so that the food produced would remain within a particular territory.¹¹⁸

The district captain of Most/Brüx formulated similar ideas on dividing Bohemia into smaller economic areas. In his view, Bohemia was too large for the supply to be coordinated and controlled from Prague. He identified three main reasons for the dysfunction of the existing system. The first was the unwillingness of farmers to relinquish their produce to the state if it was not clear for whom the food was intended. The second reason was that the attempt to manage the population’s nutrition based on statistics was doomed to fail because they were not accurate or were falsified outright. The third shortcoming was the lack of accountability on the part of the supply authorities. He envisaged that the creation of smaller areas would create a sense of mutual responsibility for the territory’s food supply. However, a

116 Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň, oddělení správy fondů a sbírek Český Krumlov (henceforth SOA Třeboň-ČK), Schwarzenberská ústřední kancelář, nové oddělení, Generalia (Gb) (henceforth SÚK), sig. Gb 5 P 12b, ev. no. 4942, “Bericht des k.k. Statthaltereii-Sekretärs Dr. Karl Uhlig über seine Wahrnehmungen” (17 December 1917), 1.

117 Loewenfeld-Russ, *Die Regelung der Volksernährung*, 66.

118 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 138, “Aufstellung eines Wirtschaftsgebietes für das Erzgebirge” (9 November 1917).

disadvantage of this plan was that enclosing some of the German districts of Bohemia—including the most productive ones—would probably worsen the supply of those areas that were not included.¹¹⁹

However, the war kitchens would play a key role in the prevention of hunger edema. In districts where the affliction was prevalent, these kitchens were more than just places where the poor languished over unappetizing food; they were a lifeline for their patrons. The issue was not the taste or the cuisine, but rather the intake of nutrients that determined health, illness, and ultimately, life or death. Unfortunately, these war kitchens often lacked sufficient food to cook with, and their ability to operate depended on their founders, such as municipalities or factories. Some kitchens only offered low-calorie soup, providing around 70 calories.¹²⁰ In Nový Bor/Haida, in April 1918, the war kitchen fed 1,160 people and offered main meals containing 155–65 calories, while a counterpart in Žandov/Sandau fed 680 participants (meals of 135–247 calories).¹²¹ In October 1918, in the Economic Area of Western Bohemia, there were 242 war kitchens that served 194,932 people.¹²²

Depending on official reports by medical doctors and local officials, the authorities established by mid-1918 that, beyond several epicenters, cases of hunger edema appeared occasionally in various places across Austria, even if some of the crownlands such as Bukovina seemed not to be affected at all.¹²³ In Slovenia, several cases had been spotted among Russian prisoners of war in the coalmines of Kočevsko/Gottscheeland in Lower Carniola since the fall of 1916.¹²⁴ More serious was the situation on the northern Adriatic coast, where cases of hunger edema had been noted by medical doctors since 1916. Without giving any statistics, the report by the district captain in Koper/Capodistria stated that most cases of hunger edema appeared in Piran/Pirano and that cases of death were altogether “not uncommon.”¹²⁵

119 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 138, Proposal by the district captain of Most to establish the West Bohemian economic area (29 October 1917).

120 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 138, “Aeusserung des Statthaltereii-Sekretärs Dr. Karl Uhlig” (25 January 1918), 2.

121 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 111, “K. k. Bezirkshauptmannschaft Böhm. Leipa am 7. Mai 1918: Sanitärer Bericht für April 1918” (7 May 1918).

122 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 138, “Verzeichnis über die im Wirtschaftsgebiete im Oktober 1918 bestehenden Kriegsküchen” (no date).

123 ÖStA, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (henceforth AVA), Ministerium des Innern, 1848–1918 (henceforth MdI), K. 3117, Zl. 125/S x 1918, “Oedemkrankheit” (4 January 1918).

124 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, K. 3117, Kočevje District Captaincy to Carniolan Provincial Government (6 September 1917); Carniolan Provincial Government to Ministry of Interior (2 November 1917).

125 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, K. 3117, Koper District Captaincy to Littoral Provincial Government (26 October 1917).

In 1918, warnings about hunger edema appeared in Slovene newspapers. As reported, the disease was strongly associated with starvation, insufficient food, and lack of nutrients and calories for daily meals, and could be cured with proper care and abundant food. According to the author, it was important to note that, as elsewhere, especially in western Bohemia, this disease could also occur in Slovenia, especially among workers in industrial centers, who were physically and mentally exhausted due to hard work and lack of food. The author also wrote that the risk of an outbreak was great because civilians in Slovenia were starving before the potato harvest in 1918.¹²⁶

This mortal danger, very real in Bohemia and more imagined in Slovenia, not only stimulated the activities of the state administration, but also gave rise to several relief organizations. The following section examines the emergence and operation of these organizations in our regions in the context of a state increasingly exhausted by war.

Food Relief between State and Charity, Emergency and Resistance

The alarmingly deteriorating food supply situation in Vienna and northern Bohemia, but also elsewhere in 1917, the simultaneous restoration of constitutionalism after the accession of Emperor Charles I, and the introduction of new welfare policies created the conditions for intensified food relief efforts. In Slovenia, which was less in danger of famine, the already existing charities, professional associations, and some local communities expanded their activities, while in Bohemia, new, more radical humanitarian interventions from the state as well as from civil society emerged.

Viennese Children in the Country (*Wiener Kinder aufs Land*) was founded as an initiative of Viennese aristocratic and bourgeois elites in 1916 with the aim of sending undernourished Viennese children as “the nation’s guests” to families or colonies in better supplied rural areas or holiday resorts in Austria, and, to a lesser extent, abroad. Subsequently, in late 1917, the Emperor Charles Welfare Organization (*Kaiser-Karl-Wohlfahrtswerk*) was established under the Joint Committee for Nutrition (*Gemeinsamer Ernährungsausschuss*) as a state enterprise that, among other activities, organized the temporary placement of children in need with wealthier

¹²⁶ Delavec, 2 March 1918, 1.

families.¹²⁷ While originally ethnically inclusive, in the Bohemian Lands the Emperor Charles Welfare Organization shrank to a “German” activity as the Czechs established their own parallel organization at about the same time.

Thus, in October 1917, the Czech national self-help organization Czech Heart (*České srdce*) was founded on the initiative of the Czech elites in Prague. Its rallying cry of “Don’t let them perish!” (*Nedejte zahynouti!*) appealed to the solidarity of the wealthier Czech classes, whether they were the urban middle and upper classes, rural landowners, or officers in the army, with the motif of a starving Czech child whose mother “on the front line” was unable to provide for its basic needs.¹²⁸ This image was intended to encourage Czechs to show solidarity but avoid provoking the press censors, as it was not targeted at the inability of individual mothers to provide for their children nor was it a criticism of the avarice of the wealthy. According to the Prague municipal physician Ladislav Prokop Procházka, another co-founder of Czech Heart, the actual cause of this situation was “the powerlessness, helplessness and ill-will of the state supply service,” which alarmingly afflicted the most vulnerable and needy members of society.¹²⁹ In a situation in which the state was, on one hand, failing catastrophically and, on the other, supporting “others” such as northern Bohemian Germans or Jewish refugees from Galicia, only self-help on the basis of Czech national solidarity would ensure access to food, since “The nation is all of us: the poor and the rich, the well-fed and the hungry.”¹³⁰ The writer Růžena Svobodová expressed this even more urgently in one version of the appeal addressed to wealthy Czechs, employing artistic language and the trope of a starving child cared for by the nation rather than by its poor parents: “[Just as] it is not possible for a Frenchman to drive away a hungry French child, or a Serb a Serbian child, or a German a German child, since each is the child, each is part of it, since every woman is its mother, every man its father, and there is no mine and thine, there is a single shared national treasure.”¹³¹

Czech Heart had two principal strategies to improve access to food for both selected children and adults. First, on account of its work in children’s

127 Annette Pommer, “(Wiener) Kinder aufs Land.’ Die Kinderverschickung im Ersten Weltkrieg,” MA thesis (University of Salzburg, 2019), 76, 116; for the statutes, see SOA Třeboň-ČK, SÚK, sig. Gb 5 P 12a, ev. no. 4941, “Kaiser Karl-Wohlfahrts-Werk: Kinder aufs Land.”

128 “Document 82,” in *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914–1918*, vol. 4, 1917 (Státní ústřední archiv, 1996), 199–200.

129 J. G. [Josef Groh], “Vznik a počátky Českého srdce,” in *20 let Českého srdce 1917–1937: Jubilejní památník jeho národní a humanitní činnosti*, ed. J. Groh and J. Schneider (České srdce, 1937), 27.

130 “Document 82,” in *Sborník dokumentů*, 4:199.

131 R. S. [Růžena Svobodová], “Nedejme zahynouti,” *Lípa* I (1917/1918), 30.

welfare, it was the Czech national counterpart to similar organizations that had sprung up in Vienna, Budapest, and neighboring Germany.¹³² Czech Heart had a similar mission of placing such “national guests” in Czech society and was even partly a competitor to the Emperor Charles Welfare Organization for host families in this respect. Thus, between 1917 and 1921, it managed to place 35,675 Prague children temporarily with other families in Bohemia and Moravia or in institutional care.¹³³

In addition to placing children where they could obtain better nutrition, Czech Heart also improved the availability of food by acquiring food and other necessities from rural areas and distributing them to Czechs in need in Prague, Vienna, Plzeň/Pilsen, and other places. The organization’s activist and Agrarian politician Josef Vraný later noted that, in this respect, Czech Heart in effect just institutionalized the informal supply practice that existed before it was established. Vraný estimated that the three villages around Bezděz/Schloßbösig in central Bohemia, where 800 inhabitants lived in 130 houses, regularly supplied food to around 350 of their relatives who lived in Prague and other industrial centres.¹³⁴ Czech Heart printed appeals to farmers in the Agrarian press and on leaflets, which stated that although “for three years the Bohemian countryside had given up everything it called its own,” it was now the time come to the aid of “our brother, the Czech, the blood of our blood, our suffering and starving brother.” Although the censors removed the phrase that the Bohemian countryside “had given often, not knowing to whom” from this appeal, which implied criticism of state provisioning, these appeals were allowed to circulate, even though Czech Heart inevitably violated the supply regulations by transporting food to Prague, in the same way that private individuals did by obtaining food from the countryside. While the results of Czech Heart’s fund-raising were public, the statistics on its food aid were not published until the end of the war.¹³⁵ Only after the war was it reported that from November 1917 to November 1918, the total amount of food aid came to 133.5 train wagon loads, including 81 wagon loads of potatoes, 19 wagon loads of flour, 16 wagon loads of grain, and many other commodities.¹³⁶

The historian Jochen Böhrer has drawn attention to the fact that humanitarian self-help organizations such as Czech Heart, partly or fully

132 Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 403; Morelon, *Streetscapes*, 198–206.

133 *Pět let Českého srdce 1917–1922* (České srdce, 1922), 39.

134 Josef Vraný, “Srdce a duch českého venkova,” in *20 let*, 33.

135 Vraný, “Srdce a duch českého venkova,” 34.

136 *Pět let Českého srdce*, 12.

independent of the state, began to emerge across Central and Eastern Europe during the First World War.¹³⁷ The separation into national Czech and German social welfare organizations pre-dated the war and the state played a lesser role in this area until 1917. The efforts of both older and newer charitable organizations thus alleviated the hardships of the population, which had a short-term stabilizing effect, and therefore the state initially welcomed and supported their activities, as was the case with Czech Heart.¹³⁸ In April 1918, during a several-month-long supply crisis between the harvests of 1917 and 1918, having been impressed by the previous successes of Czech Heart, the Bohemian deputies in the Austrian Parliament even considered the possibility of the organization assuming responsibility for the entire supply of the Bohemian Lands. This idea did not come to fruition. It would have meant that Czech Heart would have ceased to be a non-state charity organization and would be required to abandon its basic principle of national solidarity by supplying Czechs, Germans, and others alike. Moreover, societies such as Czech Heart had long contributed to the process of national separation, undermining the foundations of the imperial state. The state authorities were also aware that the organization was treading a fine line between activities of a charitable and a national-political nature. It was not just the episodic example of Czech Heart's support for Czech as well as South Slav anti-Habsburg political prisoners jailed in Terezín/Theresienstadt or Plzeň-Bory,¹³⁹ but the practical everyday demonstration of the functioning of Czech national solidarity in supplying those most in need against the background of a powerless imperial state. Czech Heart was thus a test of Czech nationalism as to whether it could unite an atomized society, reduce class tensions, and create a "moral community" through national solidarity between the "full" and the "starving."¹⁴⁰

While Czech Heart was walking the line between the supportive and the subversive, this was not the case of two other food relief initiatives that were founded in Bohemia in 1918 as an emergency reaction to the spread of famine. In March 1918, Emperor Charles I visited Bohemia in person to assess the catastrophic situation. In addition to several northern Bohemian towns on his route from west to east, the emperor also stopped at Nová Paka/Neupaka

137 Jochen Böhrer, "Deconstructing and Reconstructing Statehood: The Impact of the World Wars (Part I) – the First World War," in *The Routledge History Handbook of Central and Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Włodzimierz Borodziej, Sabina Ferhadbegović, and Joachim von Puttkamer, vol. 2, *Statehood* (Routledge, 2020), 137.

138 Josef Groh, "Pomáhalo České srdce za války snahám revolučním?," in *20 let*, 30–31.

139 Groh, "Pomáhalo České srdce," 32.

140 Stefan Auer, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe* (Routledge, 2004), 10.

in eastern Bohemia, which had a majority-Czech population.¹⁴¹ Instead of increased food rations to the area, which the Office for People's Nutrition was unable to obtain directly, the journey resulted in a credit of 10 million crowns from the Vienna government for the northern Bohemian districts.¹⁴² The city of Liberec/Reichenberg and several other surrounding towns joined together in Emergency Committee "North" (*Notstands-Ausschuss "Nord"*) to buy food for the money they received. These food purchases were intended to supply local war kitchens, but, given the meager and irregular state rations of staple foods in the spring of 1918, they also had to be used to replace these missing supplies. After the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, the food was to be purchased by contract agents in eastern Galicia, former Russian Poland, Ukraine, or Romania. However, other regions and organizations sent their buyers there, too: this extreme demand caused a drastically shrinking supply and a rapid increase in prices.¹⁴³ When Emergency Committee "North" ran out of financial subsidies, it borrowed money from a bank with the permission of the Prague Governor's Office, which promised to repay the committee later, and continued to buy overpriced food to feed the starving population.¹⁴⁴

A similar emergency food relief initiative was the establishment of the German-Bohemian Emergency Committee from the House of Lords of the Austrian Parliament (*Deutschböhmisches Notstandskomitee aus dem Herrenhause*) in early 1918.¹⁴⁵ In their aristocratic paternalism vis-à-vis the people living on their estates, the Bohemian members of the House of Lords from eight stricken areas in northern, western, and southern Bohemia were tasked with buying food with government subsidies and distributing it to consumers. By mid-June 1918 the Committee received a subsidy of 5 million crowns via the Prague Governor's Office that it used for purchases of often overpriced food that they distributed to the local population for affordable prices.¹⁴⁶ While the Committee's original plan was to divide the food equally

141 "36. Program cesty císaře Karla I.," in *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914–1918*, vol. 5, 1918 (Státní ústřední archiv, 1997), 143–4.

142 *Reichenberger Zeitung*, 29 March 1918 (evening issue), 1.

143 Státní okresní archiv Liberec (henceforth SOkA Liberec), Archiv města Liberec, 1560–1945, k. 449, "Tätigkeits-Bericht des Notstands-Ausschusses für die Bezirke Reichenberg Stadt und Land, Gablonz a. N. und Friedland" [1919], 4–5.

144 SOkA Liberec, Archiv města Liberec, 1560–1945, k. 449, Emergency Territory North in Liberec to Presidency of Political Provincial Administration in Prague (12 November 1921).

145 Eagle Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Harvard University Press, 2005), 77.

146 SOA Třeboň-ČK, SÚK, sig. Gb 5 P 12b, ev. č. 4942, Bohemian Provincial Government to German-Bohemian Emergency Committee from House of Lords in Vienna (15 June 1918).

among its eight sections, the Prague Governor's Office suggested that they use the degree of emergency based on the incidence of hunger edema cases as a key for distribution (see Table 1).¹⁴⁷ At the Committee's meeting at the end of June 1918, it was found that all the money had already been spent and that the nutritional situation had somewhat improved, and the question was raised as to whether the commission should be dissolved or wait for new tasks.¹⁴⁸

In reality, this money was intended to cover the deficit between the black market prices of food and the maximum legal prices at which it could be sold to consumers. As a commentary in the German newspaper *Reichenberger Zeitung* aptly noted, the state authorities thereby tacitly allowed the purchase of food "under the counter."¹⁴⁹ Thus, this emergency money to buy food "at any cost" may have improved the food supply situation somewhat, but it also opened the door to massive violations of food supply regulations. In fact, even if there had been no change in these regulations legalizing such purchases, there were indications from government officials in Bohemia as well as the central authorities in Vienna that they would tolerate them as an unavoidable emergency solution to combat the acute supply shortages. Unlike in the case of Prostějov, where the situation was handled secretly at the level of the town and its district, in northern Bohemia, the severity and extent of the nutritional problem meant it was addressed semi-publicly at the highest level of the government in Vienna. In such a situation, the already thin line between legitimate food self-help and illegal food profiteering became even thinner. During the postwar trial of J. K. Ort, the miller from Koštice/Kostitz in the Louny/Laun District who was known as the "Emperor of Profiteers," witnesses repeatedly testified that the state authorities knew about and agreed to the illegal food purchases in 1918. Even Anton Höfer, the Minister of People's Nutrition, was said to have given his blessing to the local industrialists to buy food "under the counter" when he visited northern Bohemia. Although Höfer could not guarantee them impunity, he was said to have insinuated that the minister of justice had reportedly instructed prosecutors to use their good judgement when prosecuting offences related to food procurement.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, in another major postwar court case

147 Bohemian Provincial Government to German-Bohemian Emergency Committee from House of Lords in Vienna (15 June 1918), 2–3.

148 SOA Třeboň-ČK, SÚK, sig. Gb 5 P 12b, ev. č. 4942, Minutes from the 30 July 1918 session of the Working Committee, 1–2.

149 *Reichenberger Zeitung*, 14 April 1918, 1.

150 Státní oblastní archiv v Praze (henceforth SOA Prague), Krajský soud trestní Praha 1850–1949 (henceforth KST), Vr XXVIII 3962/19, k. 1431, "Hlavní přelíčení" (6 August 1919), fol. 710.

involving the “King of Profiteers,” the Prague broker Václav Netušil referred to the imperial financial subsidy mentioned above, which was intended to cover overpriced purchases of food on the black market, since it was impossible to obtain it in any other way.¹⁵¹ While saving people from death by starvation, the state shot itself in the foot.

By contrast, there were no “emergency areas” declared by the state in Slovenia. Plans to match state-funded food relief action with a national, non-state one did not materialize. To help the civilian population, especially children, voluntary associations and organizations carried out various campaigns to collect and distribute aid, as well as charity events for children. These were especially numerous in the period before Christmas, because the charities tried to alleviate the suffering of children and make the most important holiday of the year more pleasant.¹⁵² In addition to helping those most in need, the competition between the various political orientations of these societies (Catholic, liberal, or Slovene- or German-nationalist) was again expressed. During the First World War, support organizations for children and the poor were heavily used for political purposes. Because of the tense relations between the German and Slovene populations during the First World War, food aid and care for the poor and children in Slovenia, especially in Lower Styria—e.g., in the cities of Maribor, Celje/Cilli, and Ptuj/Pettau—were increasingly nationalized.

In Maribor, a city with a numerically and economically strong German-speaking community, German nationalist associations, especially the School Association (*Schulverein*), were active. As early as the spring of 1916, the School Association started a campaign of distributing soup to children in Maribor. Poor children were presented with clothes, footwear, and food at their events. They also collected cash contributions from wealthy Maribor Germans, which they then used to finance the operation of the Children's War Kitchen (*Kinderkriegsküche*) of the *Schulverein*.¹⁵³ Another German society in Maribor, Women's Aid (*Frauenhilfe*), also worked similarly, distributing aid to poor and starving children, especially before the holidays.¹⁵⁴ The military stationed in Maribor were also involved in the distribution of aid. Before the New Year, the officers of the Maribor garrison donated bread and sausages to poor and hungry children at the event and at least

151 SOA Prague, KST, Vr XXXVII 15008/20, k. 1487, Netušil's Request for Clemency to Czechoslovak Republic Cabinet Office (28 November 1921).

152 Godina Golija, “Pa smo stali,” 57.

153 Vlasta Stavbar, *Kulturno dogajanje v Mariboru v letih 1914–1918* (Obzorja, 1998), 95–97.

154 Stavbar, *Kulturno dogajanje v Mariboru*, 95–97.

in this way alleviated their difficult situation and lack of food during the holidays.¹⁵⁵

German societies that helped children and the poor also tried to strengthen identification with German culture, acting out of clear nationalist interests. Meanwhile, many Slovene Catholic and liberal societies and associations were also active in promoting Slovene nationalist ideas through charitable activities. Among the Catholic societies, the Society of St. Vincent (*Vincencijeva družba*), the Society of Mary (*Marijina družba*), and the Society of St. Elizabeth (*Družba sv. Elizabete*) collected and distributed aid and food to the poorest families, especially children and orphans.¹⁵⁶ Among the liberal-oriented ones, the Society of SS. Cyril and Methodius, founded as a Slovene “national defense” society in the field of education in 1885, collected donations for poor children and students at its events.¹⁵⁷ Teachers’ associations supported the operation of “student kitchens” in primary schools with voluntary contributions from Slovene donors. In this way, they tried to provide at least one meal per day for the poorest children.¹⁵⁸

It is also worth mentioning the activities of various cultural, educational, gymnastic, and other societies under the auspices of the Red Cross.¹⁵⁹ At social events, members of these societies collected clothing, footwear, food, and money to be sent to men on the front or to civilians most in need. However, the attitude towards cooperation with the Austrian Red Cross in Slovene regions and social environments varied. Slovene nationalists and members of Slovene political parties in Lower Styria increasingly considered it to be a German organization that acted in the interest of the Austrian state and therefore did not want to participate in such events or cooperate with the Red Cross to a greater extent.¹⁶⁰ The civilian population of Lower Styria largely shared this attitude. As the Maribor lawyer Avguštin Reisman wrote in his memoirs, during the war, there were always scandalous rumors about how Red Cross officials embezzled money and donations. That was why people, as well as soldiers “didn’t want to hear anything about the Red Cross and co-operation with it.”¹⁶¹

155 “Dopisi,” *Straža*, 14 February 1916, 4.

156 Petra Testen Koren, “Dajte nam kruha! Sklenite mir! Zaledje (Soške) fronte, pomanjkanje in posledice revolucionarnega dogajanja na Ruskem,” *Monitor ISH* 20, no. 1 (2018): 98.

157 “Miklavžev večer,” *Slovenski gospodar*, 6 December 1917, 5.

158 Godina Golija, “Pa smo stali,” 57.

159 Stavbar, *Kulturno dogajanje v Mariboru*, 137.

160 PAM, SI PAM 1203 Zveza slovenskih štajerskih učiteljev in učiteljic (1903–22) (henceforth SI PAM 1203), t. e. 6.

161 Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 36.

It the Littoral and in Carniola, the response was better.¹⁶² This was certainly related to the fact that in these mostly Slovene-speaking provinces the Red Cross was operated by Slovenes who had leading positions in the society. Therefore, the Red Cross was not perceived as an alien German-speaking organization, as it was by Slovenes in Styria. For example, in Kobarid/Karfreit, in May 1918, after the front moved to the Piave and the civilian population returned to the area, a very successful fund-raising campaign for the Red Cross was carried out under the leadership of the mayor's wife, Marija Miklavič, in spite of severe food shortages.¹⁶³ Cooperation or non-cooperation with the Red Cross and other imperial societies and organizations in collecting aid for the poor, children, and others in need shows the strong political and nationalist motivations behind charitable work.

Charity campaigns declined due to difficult economic conditions in the last year of the First World War. On 24 May 1917, the Widows and Orphans Fund, which distributed charitable donations collected primarily during church and imperial celebrations, was established. Charity weeks were likewise introduced at the state level, when money and other donations for those in need were collected.¹⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the South Slav members of the Austrian Parliament, united in the Yugoslav Club, decided to establish a charitable organization based on the Czech example, Slovene Heart (*Slovensko srce*). The aim of this organization was to take hungry children to Croatia for convalescence and, above all, to purchase food in Croatia and distribute it to the hungry inhabitants of Carniola and the Littoral.¹⁶⁵ The members of the Yugoslav Club saw this initiative as one of the priorities of the National Council once it was established.¹⁶⁶

In the face of a severe food shortage in the summer and fall of 1918, Slovene politicians relied heavily on food aid from Croatia. However, the envisioned nationalist organization Slovene Heart, which was supposed to unite the South Slavs and promote mutual solidarity and self-help, did not materialize in the end. Instead, the National Council decided to take a different approach, focusing on political negotiations to increase food imports for Slovenes from Croatia and other countries.

162 Testen Koren, "Dajte nam kruha!," 98.

163 Drago Sedmak, *Življenje v Kobaridu med prvo svetovno vojno* (Mohorjeva založba, 2001), 152.

164 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 110.

165 See Mara Šovljakov, *Glad u Bosni i Hercegovini i smeštanje 10.000 dece u Karlovačku mitropoliju 1917–1920* (Arhiv Republike Srpske; Arhiv Vojvodine; Istorijski arhiv Užice, 2021).

166 Petra Svobljak and Gregor Antoličič, *Leta strahote: Slovenci in prva svetovna vojna* (Cankarjeva založba, 2018), 308.

The Slovene political elite was convinced of the mutual solidarity of the South Slavic peoples in the provision of food. The Slovene nationalist movement saw the organization of aid for children and the hungry as an important part of the political struggle for independence, first within the Austrian state, and from autumn 1918 also within the South Slavic community.¹⁶⁷ Slovene politicians optimistically believed in the economic power, natural resources, and sufficiency of food in the South Slavic countries, which, according to the principles of solidarity, should have helped to alleviate the poverty in Slovenia.¹⁶⁸ But expectations of a better life together were unrealistic and over-optimistic. The issue was politicized and nationalized and served to promote particular worldviews and political and nationalist values.

Starvation and Secession: Food Shortage and the Overthrow of the State in Bohemia and Slovenia

In the first half of 1918, the food situation had worsened from month to month, and the rationing system largely collapsed. What had happened in the most badly affected areas of western and northern Bohemia and elsewhere seemed to be slowly spreading to other regions of Habsburg Austria. In January 1918, the mayors of several of Prague's suburbs petitioned the Austrian prime minister to end the war, because living conditions in and around the Bohemian capital had become unbearable. Mayors complained about reduced staple food rations and nearly empty city warehouses. They pointed to widespread begging for food by children and adults alike, rising juvenile delinquency, and increasing morbidity and mortality. Garbage piled up in the streets because malnourished horses were unable to provide draft power. According to the petition, it was no longer a shortage of food that could be endured with patience: "the hunger monster" was coming, with all its devastating effects on human bodies and morals.¹⁶⁹

Similar developments were observable in Slovenia, where shortages of basic foodstuffs and their high prices caused serious illnesses as well as despair and psychological problems in the civilian population.¹⁷⁰ As journalist Vinko Gaberc wrote in his memoirs, this manifested itself as moral

167 "Krivična delitev kruha," *Slovenski narod*, 18 July 1918, 3.

168 Ivan Hribar, "Kvišku srca!," *Slovenski narod*, 27 October 1918, 2.

169 "10. Starostové měst Žižkova, Královských Vinohrad, Karlína, Smíchova, Vršovic, Nuslí a Košíř ministerskému předsedovi," in *Sborník dokumentů*, 5:44.

170 Godina Golija, "Hunger and Misery," 96; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 205.

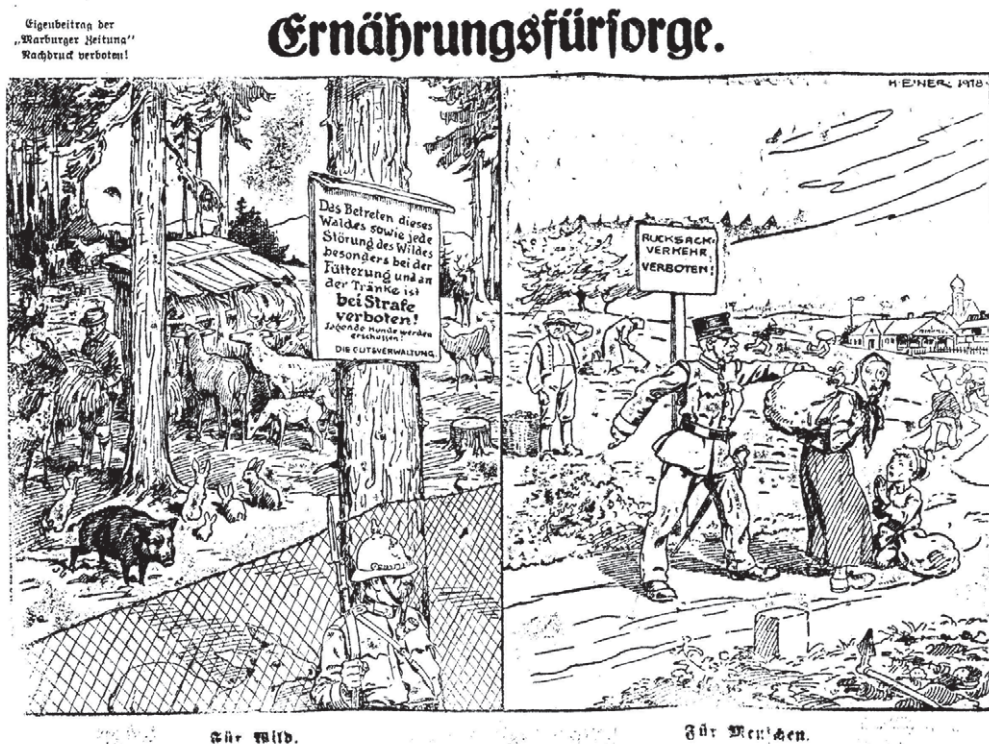


Figure 1.2 A satirical cartoon titled “Food Assistance.” In a wealthy lord’s hunting ground, the police make sure the game eats its fill, while preventing the needy from carrying home gleanings from the fields in backpacks. *Marburger Zeitung*, 15 September 1918, p. 4.

decay when people were willing to do things they would never have done in peacetime for a small amount of food.¹⁷¹ The worsening shortage of food forced people into a selfish struggle for survival, or, as an Austrian official wrote in his report on the social and economic situation in the spring of 1918, desperate people had to “fight against each other.”¹⁷²

While some of the inhabitants of Slovenia consumed merely 600 to 800 calories a day, occasionally, due to shortages and empty grocery stores, this dropped to 300 calories a day during this period.¹⁷³ The desperation of the people, their anger and broken patriotism were also reported by an Austrian official who wrote about the inhabitants of Slovenia in the spring

171 Vinko Gaberc, *Brez slave: Spomini na svetovno vojno* (self-published, 1935), 181.

172 ÖStA, BMfVE, K. 153, 34520, “Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der osterr. Bevölkerung im Hinterland” (March 1918).

173 “Vojna vodenica (oedem),” *Delavec*, 2 March 1918, 1.

of 1918: "Many see the solution to a difficult situation only in death."¹⁷⁴ In some regions, there were signs that the new harvest might be poor again. In early June 1918, a particularly severe frost in Styria destroyed the cucumber, pumpkin, lettuce, and bean crops, and to some extent also the potato, cabbage, and fruit crops.¹⁷⁵

Under the influence of the emergency events during the first half of 1918, in the summer of 1918, it might have seemed that the state supply system had collapsed for good and would not recover until the impending military defeat of the Central Powers. The Office for People's Nutrition in Vienna, on the contrary, expected that things would soon turn for the better after many months of crisis. According to Ludwig Paul, Minister of People's Nutrition, the 1918 harvest would be overall better than that of 1917 and perhaps the best since 1914.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, in order for this anticipated better harvest to translate into increased food rations, the state government would have to demonstrate its ability to govern and therefore buy, process, and distribute the harvested food and divide it among the population. After months of passivity, with the government turning a blind eye to flagrant violations of the supply laws due to its own powerlessness and even encouraging "under the counter" purchases by its financial subsidies, the state authorities would begin enforcing the food supply law again in the late summer of 1918.

Modest indications of future improvement were also felt by the population of Prague, as bread rations gradually increased during August. In the second half of July, three quarters of Prague's inhabitants received not even half a loaf of bread. At the beginning of August, however, half of the legal bread ration was distributed, followed by three quarters the next week and the full ration by the end of August.¹⁷⁷ While this slight improvement was a welcome relief for the people, it may have been rather disconcerting news for Czech politicians, who since June 1918 had joined together in the Czech National Committee, which was preparing to declare independence. If the government in Vienna had indeed succeeded in increasing food rations on account of the better harvest and improvement in state administration, the Czech criticism of the existing conditions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire

174 ÖStA, BMfVE, K. 153, 34520, "Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der österr. Bevölkerung im Hinterland" (10 May 1918).

175 "Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 7 June 1918, 5.

176 *Český Lloyd*, 13 August 1918, 258; "Warum geht es uns so schlecht?," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 1 September 1918, 2.

177 *Aprovisace obce pražské za války a po válce 1914–1922* (Aprovisační ústavy hlavního města Prahy, 1922), 187; Alois Žipek, "Zásobování Prahy v r. 1918 až do převratu," *Domov za války* (svědectví účastníků), edited by Alois Žipek, vol. 5 (Pokrok, 1931), 394.

and the promise of better food provisioning in an independent state could lose some of its potency. However, a slight increase or decrease in rations was not a decisive factor at this stage. As research on the relationship between hunger and political regime change shows, it is not grievous food shortages alone that bring about change, but also the political instrumentalization of the lack of food.¹⁷⁸

Towards the end of that summer, there was a competition between the government in Vienna—represented by the provincial government of Bohemia and its subordinate political administration—and the Czech National Committee over who could better exploit the issue of supply to further its policy. Nevertheless, the Czech National Committee, like many other political groups, feared a premature attempt to seize power that could be crushed by the Vienna government, or a violent regime change in the form of a revolution. For one thing, it was uncertain how the armed forces would react, as they were still at least partly loyal to the state government in Vienna. Moreover, the Czech National Committee was afraid of exploiting the protest potential that was manifested in the growing number of violent riots, which could degenerate into lawlessness and civil war, as they had in Russia.

Instead of dismantling the original power structures of the Austro-Hungarian state and risk creating a new establishment of power, the National Committee sought to take control of the existing power structures at the provincial level through a coup d'état. Unlike a revolution, the essence of a coup d'état is the "infiltration of a small but critically important segment of the state apparatus."¹⁷⁹ This critically important segment—though not that small—through which other parts of the state infrastructure could be controlled, was state supply. This path led not only to people's "stomachs" but also, via ideas concerning the fair distribution of food and the punishment of profiteers, to the "hearts and minds" of a large proportion of the Czech population, including those who worked in critical state infrastructure.

The Czech National Committee's first step in its attempt at a coup d'état was to create a shadow supply system. This could draw on the positive experience of Czech Heart, which had demonstrated that cooperation in supply based on national solidarity and responsibility could be effective. In August 1918, the National Committee called for the establishment of a system of hierarchically organized Czech economic councils from the level

178 Benjamin Talton, "Land to the Tiller: Hunger and the End of Monarchy in Ethiopia," in *Food in Zones of Conflict: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Paul Collinson and Helen Macbeth (Berghahn, 2014), 186.

179 Edward Luttwak, *Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook* (Harvard University Press, 1979), 27.

of the crownland through the political districts to the municipalities.¹⁸⁰ Representatives of all Czech political parties were to be represented in these councils, as was the case with the Czech National Committee. The Provincial Economic Council for Bohemia was established as the supreme body at the provincial level, followed a few weeks later by the Provincial Economic Councils for Moravia and Lower Austria (13 September 1918) and for Silesia (14 September 1918).¹⁸¹

However, these councils were initially evasive about their true mission in their dealings with state authorities. In a personal meeting at the end of August 1918, the board of the Provincial Economic Council, led by the Agrarian Party leader Antonín Švehla, assured the Bohemian Governor Max Julius Coudenhove that the newly founded organization's intention was not "to thwart public supply, but to improve it." At the same time, it presented him with a list of specific proposals that would improve supply for the population.¹⁸² Thus, from this meeting and from reports in the daily press, it might have seemed that these councils had actually been established to support the existing supply system. Their supposed task was "to remove all existing defects in supplying the necessities of everyday life to the people" and to ensure that "every citizen of our kingdom shall, as far as possible, be supplied with all that they require, equally and at prices affordable to all."¹⁸³

However, the statute of the Provincial Economic Council for Bohemia, which was also published in the press, made it clear that what stood behind the practical objective of improving supply was in fact the ambition of the Czech political parties to take control not only of supply but of the whole economy. The council would thus strive for increased, regular, and uniformly issued personal rations, for action to combat profiteering in agricultural and industrial products, and for the most effective possible operation of war and emergency kitchens. Moreover, it would also prevent the export of any goods from Bohemia until the local population had a year's supply in advance, and, conversely, secure for Bohemia imports of goods that the country lacked. Similarly, the council would have an overview of all the supplies in the country so that it could "assist" in their distribution. Finally, it would enable the "decisive participation of the people" in the organization of the supply service and oversight of the state administration.¹⁸⁴ As an

180 Otto Urban, *Česká společnost 1848–1918* (Svoboda, 1982), 631.

181 Jan Galandauer, *Ohlas Velké říjnové socialistické revoluce v české společnosti* (Svoboda, 1977), 166; *Venkov*, 13 September 1918, 5.

182 *Venkov*, 1 September 1918, 3.

183 Edvard Srb, "Organisace hospodářských rad," *Hospodář československý*, 14 September 1918, 1.

184 *Venkov*, 1 September 1918, 3.

unspoken consequence, the “people,” through their party representatives in a hierarchically structured system of councils, would become independent not only in the production and distribution of food but also in other sectors of the economy. Instead of following the instructions of the government in Vienna and its Office for People’s Nutrition, which worked in pursuit of the interests of the whole of the empire, the political administration in Bohemia would begin to carry out the instructions of the Provincial Economic Council, subordinated to the Czech National Committee, which would pursue the interests of Bohemia. However, the economic councils were meant to become a shadow state administration in the field of supply, which would first accelerate the collapse of the empire’s supply system by means of disintegrative activities and, after the declaration of independence, they would ensure its restoration within the framework of the new state.¹⁸⁵

For the time being, the economic councils could only force the population to comply with their instructions by appealing to “national discipline” with the deterrent of future retribution. The District Economic Council in Beroun/Beraun, central Bohemia, posted a decree listing the penalties for those who continued to trade illegally in foodstuffs. Instead of penalties of confiscation of goods, fines, or imprisonment, which were among the standard punishments for violations of the supply regulations, and which the economic council could not enforce at the moment, the list contained penalties of honor, such as the inclusion of the offenders’ names “in perpetuity” in the “black book of the economic council,” a summons to appear before the “national court” of the economic council, loss of civil rights, and loss of property acquired through profiteering at the expense of public institutions.¹⁸⁶

As historian Jörg Baberowski points out, a revolution that aspires to succeed must claim to defend the rights of the oppressed masses against the injustice of the existing holders of power, even if it is only a political myth.¹⁸⁷ However, the enduring inadequacy of state provision to which the population had become accustomed was not in itself the tipping point that was able to rouse decisive resistance. It needed a story that would turn all food supply efforts of the Vienna government into a deliberate crime against the Czechs and Czech political activities as defense to them.

185 Archiv města Plzně, Národní výbor Plzeň, 1918–19, k. 96, “Protokol o schůzi aprovisačního sboru N. V., která konána byla ve středu, dne 30. října 1918,” 1.

186 Otakar Šimandl, 1914–1918: *Příspěvek k dějinám našeho domácího odboje od vypuknutí světové války až do dne osvobození* (self-published, 1937), 283–5.

187 Jörg Baberowski, *Der bedrohte Leviathan: Staat und Revolution in Rußland* (Duncker & Humblot, 2021), 64.

The success of such a myth was all the easier because the population was willing to believe all sorts of rumors about food that corresponded with their obsessive fantasies that others were better supplied and “starving us out.”¹⁸⁸ Even if figures proved that the nutritional situation was on average worse in Vienna than in Prague or in the German-speaking districts of Bohemia than in the Czech-speaking ones, Czechs were eager to believe stories about Viennese or Bohemian Germans or high army officers indulging in excess food consumption at the expense of the Czechs. As historian Petr Karlíček pointed out, at the time when famine was raging in northern Bohemia in spring 1918, Czech newspapers published articles denying that Bohemian Germans starved by bringing examples of abundance and surplus of food in the Ore Mountains. The Czech daily *Národní listy* (National Papers) claimed that in the Roß Hotel in Most, beef soup, roast beef with dumplings made of the highest quality plain flour, yeast buns with cream (*buchtičky se šodó*) and black coffee sweetened with real crystal sugar were to be available on meatless days. Similarly, in neighboring Teplice/Teplitz, the Zauer Restaurant supposedly served a larger portion of delicious beef soup, a leg of mutton with carrots, spinach, and turnips and two large fritters with plum butter (*povidla*), all for 5 crowns. The article thus highlighted the large quantity of food, premium quality ingredients, excellent taste, and reasonable prices. According to the author, the situation in the region was simply better than in the Czech hinterland, challenging the official information on starvation in the Ore Mountains.¹⁸⁹

The first significant occasion on which the Czech National Committee succeeded in defending the rights of the masses against the alleged arbitrariness of the imperial government in Vienna was when the state administration attempted to suppress private supply using backpacks. For many months, likely since the start of rationing in 1915, the illegal purchase of food directly from agricultural producers by individuals and organizations to make up for inadequate state food rations was considered a necessary survival strategy. Now, at the end of August 1918, the Office for People's Nutrition issued an ordinance prohibiting private provisioning. Minister Ludwig Paul's proclamation spoke of the strict prosecution of illegal trade in grain and flour, of the highest possible monetary and custodial penalties,

¹⁸⁸ Watson, *Ring of Steel*, 366; Morelon, *Streetscapes*, 181; Ota Konrád, *Nevyvážené vztahy: Československo a Rakousko, 1918–1933* (Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2012), 69.

¹⁸⁹ *Národní listy*, 30 March 1918, 3; cf. Petr Karlíček, “Vdolky z dřevěných pilin a chleba z jehličí: Zásobování Šluknovska potravinami v době světové války,” in *První světová válka a role Němců v českých zemích*, ed. Marcela Zemanová and Václav Zeman (Muzeum města Ústí nad Labem; Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, 2015), 109.

and the confiscation of even the smallest amount of illegally held grain and flour and ill-gotten money from such activity. According to the office, these tougher measures would curb profiteering and improve the supply of breadstuff, which would help avert the worst emergencies, preserve internal harmony, and bring peace closer.¹⁹⁰ Jan Kosina, an official of the Bohemian provincial government, defended the purpose of this ordinance in a similar vein, adding that it was necessary to prevent food being smuggled across the Bohemian border.¹⁹¹ However, this effort to regain control over state supplies through increased repression and to obtain more food for rations made it possible for the Czech National Committee to accuse Vienna of committing an injustice against the Czech people and helped mobilize the Czech population in defense of their rights in the area of food supply.

In the Czech part of the Bohemian Lands, the prohibition did not sound like a necessary state measure to the ultimate benefit of all, but the imperial government's willful repression of the starving Czech population. Although a strict implementation of the measure would mean an immediate and noticeable deterioration in the nutrition of vast swathes of the population, its effect on increasing reserves for state food rations was uncertain. The announcement of the prohibition merited an entry in the diary of the young Karel Stretti, son of an upper-class medical doctor in Prague, on 31 August 1918: "This *Österreich*, what swine they are! As of tomorrow, there is a strict ban on any kind of self-supply. The dogs! A systematic starvation of the Czechs. Just you wait, you bastards! It will pass! But after that we will not take revenge, at least, I hope we are not so low."¹⁹² Thus, this prohibition seemed to have aroused strong negative emotions and therefore offered Czech political parties the opportunity to instrumentalize the situation.

The prohibition was a welcome target, as it was equally opposed by the Czech political left and right.¹⁹³ At a meeting of the Social Democrats on 5 September 1918 in the *Lidový dům* (People's House) in Prague, Alfréd Meissner argued with the aid of statistics that Bohemia was being measured against the Alpine countries with an "unjustly divisive cubit" and that Prague was worse supplied than Vienna. In addition to propagating the widespread idea that Bohemia and Prague were the worst off in terms of supply in the whole empire, Meissner also suggested that it was "patently intentional."

190 *Právo lidu*, 1 September 1918, 4.

191 *Venkov*, 5 September 1918, 5.

192 Strettiová, *Jak jsme prožívali*, 109.

193 *Venkov*, 8 September 1918, 6.

Minister Ludwig Paul was accused of hypocrisy, as he himself must have violated this regulation, since it was impossible to live off state rations.¹⁹⁴

The prohibition on private provisioning was interpreted differently in the German parts of Bohemia. This had little to do with the loyalty of the Bohemian Germans to the empire, for many of them longed for union with Germany, where they believed the state food supply also worked better.¹⁹⁵ Bohemian Germans' attitudes were rather practical, since the impact of this measure on the German districts was significant. Although people procured provisions privately in these areas, as was common elsewhere in Bohemia, it was possible to obtain considerably less food in this manner than in the Czech districts. Therefore, the local population were more reliant on the state's ability to redistribute food, which is why the prohibition did not provoke such outrage, even among Social Democrats.¹⁹⁶ The blind faith of Bohemian German workers in the state supply apparatus, which would "take from somewhere and give it to them," was seized on by the Czech Social Democratic newspaper *Právo lidu* (People's Right), which was characterized by its combination of class and national criticism. According to *Právo lidu*, the non-transparent state supply system was controlled by Germans, while the Czechs had no knowledge of how it worked and insufficient influence over it. However, after the incompetence shown in managing supply in the preceding months, no one trusted politicians and officials at all. In the opinion of *Právo lidu*, the prohibition on private provisioning by "backpacking" would primarily hurt the poor, while the supply of municipalities and businesses with "wagons and automobiles" continued before everyone's eyes. It was not favorable for future united action between Czech and German workers based on shared class interests that, although they agreed in their criticism of the existing conditions, they differed in their views on how to improve them. While the Germans favored strengthening the existing supply system, the Czech Social Democrats had a rather vague idea of rebuilding it on a "new, self-democratic" basis.¹⁹⁷

The myth of defending the supply interests of the local population against government injustice was also at work with the general strike called for

194 *Právo lidu*, 6 September 1918, 3.

195 Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (University of Chicago Press, 1961), 448; Holger Afflerbach, "Die Deutschösterreicher zwischen Staatsraison und 'Nibelungentreue,'" in *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg*, ed. Helmut Rumpler, vol. 1/2 (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016), 671–672; Arnold Suppan, *Neighbors for a Thousand Years: Austrians – Czechs – Sudeten Germans* (Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2023), 386.

196 *Prager Tagblatt*, 6 September 1918, 1.

197 *Právo lidu*, 7 September 1918, 6–7.

14 October 1918. The “Proclamation of the Working People,” which was read out at public gatherings, stated that “exports of food and coal” were “ravaging our lands” and “murdering the nation.” According to the proclamation, further exports were considered by the National Committee as “the same robbery and same crime against our sovereign state as was the attack on Belgium at the beginning of the war.”¹⁹⁸

In his memoirs, the Czech socialist Gustav Haberman wrote that the Vienna government wanted to weaken the Czech people to the point of powerlessness. Deprived of food, coal, and means of transport, they could be more easily defeated in their quest for independence from Austria. At the same time, the better supply of the Austrian lands through exports from Bohemia would make the people there “more unaccommodating to revolutionary sentiments.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, in this politicized interpretation, the general strike against food exports and the subsequent food boycott were intended to further Czech independence in two ways: withheld Czech food and coal would fuel Czech victory in the struggle for an independent state, while its scarcity in the Austrian lands would supposedly unleash the hitherto seemingly absent revolutionary mood among the German population that was necessary to facilitate the disintegration of the empire. Nationally oriented Czech politicians such as Jan Herben viewed the general strike as an effort to prevent the spread of Bolshevism by “leading the workers onto the national track.”²⁰⁰ According to Herben, national fervor—and withheld supplies—would drive away hunger and Bolshevism. In this he was ironically in accordance with later Marxist historiography, which understood the protest against food exports in a negative sense as an attempt by the Czech bourgeoisie to prevent “the transfer of the specter of the Bolshevization of the hungry masses to the Czech lands at all costs.”²⁰¹

The general strike of 14 October 1918 was indeed the crossroads at which the limits of independent action by the parties of the left on the road to proletarian revolution became apparent.²⁰² The Socialist Council, a body

198 “104. Rezoluce z veřejných shromáždění,” in *Sborník dokumentů*, 5:329; Státní okresní archiv Písek (hereafter SOKA Písek), Sbírka 14. Říjen, 1916–29, k. 1, II/A-C, “Proklamace všeho pracujícího lidu v národě československém” (14 October 1918).

199 Gustav Haberman, *Mé vzpomínky z války: Črty a obrázky o událostech a zápasech za svobodu a samostatnost* (Ústřední dělnické knihkupectví a nakladatelství, 1928), 240.

200 Jan Herben, *Lístky z válečného deníku 1914 až 1918* (Milena Herbenová, 1933), 87.

201 Miroslav Görtler, “Průběh 14. října 1918 ve středních Čechách,” *Středočeský sborník historický* 13 (1978): 31.

202 For a communist account of these events, see Zdeněk Šolle, *Dělnické hnutí v českých zemích za imperialistické světové války* (Rovnost, 1952), 101–22; for individual insight into the events, see

that brought together representatives of the Czech parties of the left, was tasked by the National Committee with recruiting organized workers to protest against the export of goods from Bohemia. However, the initial protest against the export of food and coal from Bohemia, which launched a national boycott of the supply system, on the initiative of the Socialist Council expanded in several places into the proclamation of an independent Czech Republic. Thus, in Pečky/Petschek in Central Bohemia, people began tearing down and mocking Austro-Hungarian state symbols, destroying portraits of the emperor and defacing German signs. At the train station they tore up the German timetable and confiscated four wagons of grain. They subsequently took several quintals of beef and pork from a local “war profiteer.”²⁰³ However, the National Committee and the state administration, which sent troops mainly to Prague and the central parts of Bohemia, stopped this activity.

Yet, the claim that the imperial government in Vienna had deliberately starved Prague and Bohemia by exporting foodstuffs out of the kingdom seems to have been part of a revolutionary myth which, like the prohibition on private provisioning in early September, reinterpreted the government’s legitimate attempt to continue state provisioning as a crime. The Vienna government certainly did not intend to give up the state food supply system and leave “Czech” food to Czechs or “Slovene” food to Slovenes, but planned, for example, in October 1918 to supply Trieste, Istria, and Styria with potatoes from Czech agricultural districts in Bohemia and from Eastern Galicia.²⁰⁴ A delegation of Bohemian-German parliamentary deputies who travelled to Vienna to inquire about the true state of affairs returned with the information that the export of grain and flour from Bohemia was taking place only to a negligible extent.²⁰⁵ The newspaper *Salzburger Wacht* (The Salzburg Guard) commented with a slight tone of resentment on the Czech general strike as a demonstration of national egotism, which was recklessly allowing other, less self-sufficient parts of the empire to starve and freeze to death. The newspaper claimed that Czech politicians were taking advantage of the fact that small quantities of food were still being transported from some areas of Bohemia to Vienna to instigate a general strike and subsequent complete boycott of the supply system. Not only Czech farmers and railway men would

Stanislav Holubec, *Nešťastná revolucionářka: Myšlenkový svět a každodennost Luisy Landové-Štychové (1885–1969)* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2021), 73–81.

203 Görtler, “Průběh 14. října ve středních Čechách,” 36.

204 ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K. 119, “Kartoffelverteilungsplan für Triest” (19 October 1918).

205 “Deutschböhmens Not,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 10 October 1918, 7.

participate; certain district captains still working for the common state, passively and in some cases even actively, would too. In the still-existent common state, Czech politicians, including the Social Democrats, spoke openly about “exporting” food from their “state” to “foreign countries,” by which they meant other crownlands of the empire.²⁰⁶ The perception of the Czech food boycott in the Austrian lands was somewhat of a reverse mirror image, in which the Hungarian, Czech, and Polish boycott against “Vienna’s starvation” of these nations in effect became the starvation of the Austrian lands. 14 October 1918 was effectively the day of the dissolution of the Habsburg empire.²⁰⁷ The People’s Manifesto of Emperor Charles, issued on 17 October 1918, which attempted to regain control of the situation by “showing the path” to a federalization of Austria, could not change much.²⁰⁸

Less than a week later, the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Worker’s Journal) announced the defeat of the empire’s state supply system, thereby acknowledging the success of not only the Czech but also the Polish and Hungarian national boycotts. It described the supply situation in recent days as a “national war of starvation” in which various parts of the empire that sought independence from the central government in Vienna stopped supplying food to Vienna and the Austrian lands.²⁰⁹ While attempting to identify with the shared class interests of Czech and German workers in opposing the central government, the Social Democratic newspaper was also opposed to Czech and German nationalists. However, in its opinion, the Czech national boycott of the state supply system had driven German workers in the Bohemian lands directly into the camp of German reaction, which held out a greater promise of securing food aid than the Czech bourgeoisie. Thus, the newspaper ultimately hailed the establishment of a Czech nation-state in Czech-speaking areas as a way of restoring the state’s ability to purchase food in Czech areas. The new German-Austrian government could then negotiate food matters with the new Czech government “on an equal footing.”²¹⁰

It was at this point at the latest that hitherto reprehensible supply crimes would become meritorious acts of anti-Habsburg resistance. In Prostějov, guidelines from the Provincial Economic Council for Moravia featured in the postwar trial of the chairman of the Economic Cooperative in defense of

206 *Salzburger Wacht*, 16 October 1918, 1; “Aushungerungskrieg gegen Deutsch-Österreich,” *Salzburger Wacht*, 24 October 1918, 1.

207 Gratz and Schüller, *Der wirtschaftliche Zusammenbruch Österreich-Ungarns*, 88.

208 John W. Boyer, *Austria, 1867–1955* (Oxford University Press, 2022), 578–579; SOkA Písek, Sbíрка 14. říjen 1918, 1916–29, k. 1, Decree from Bohemian Governorate (18 October 1918).

209 “Nationaler Aushungerungskrieg,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 20 October 1918, 1.

210 “Nationaler Aushungerungskrieg,” 1.

the hitherto illegal method of supply, which acquired a new interpretation as an “emergency measure” to prevent “non-allocated” grain from Czech districts being exported.²¹¹ Alois Rašín, one of the key Czech politicians in the coup d’état, wrote that such agitation against Vienna, along with the boycott of food exports out of the Czech lands and the simultaneous calls of the Provincial Economic Council for private provisioning “under the counter,” led to the maintenance of low state food rations and created favorable conditions for the coup of 28 October 1918.²¹² The effortless takeover of the War Grain Institute in Prague under the control of the National Committee, led by Antonín Švehla, on the morning of that day was therefore only the culmination of many weeks of efforts to gain control of the “stomach issue.”²¹³ However, now the Czechoslovak government faced a perhaps even more challenging task: to prove that it could actually deliver supplies in the new state better than had been the case “under Austria.”

Slovene nationalist politicians likewise exploited the lack of food and the incompetence of the Austrian authorities for their political goals in 1918. They connected the food supply issue with demands for the recognition of greater independence of the Southern Slavs within Habsburg Austria, as envisaged by the May Declaration of May 1917, and later for the establishment of an independent Yugoslav state. However, in Slovenia, there was no deliberate instrumentalization of the food issue, nor were there focused organizational preparations for a coup d’état to break away from the Habsburg Empire, as in the Czech case. The same state measures that the Czechs in the Bohemian Lands exploited to escalate national alienation from the Vienna government—such as the short-lived ban on the so-called *Rucksackverkehr* or on buying potatoes directly from farmers, also ignited popular anger and fueled newspaper criticism in Slovenia, in both the Catholic and the liberal press.²¹⁴ However, it did not generate the same level of popular mobilization that culminated in political actions, such as the Czech general strike on 14 October, which brought dissatisfied masses onto the streets across the country.

It was not because the necessary protest potential in the local population was lacking, but rather because of the want of orchestrated action. In

211 Zemský archiv v Opavě, pobočka Olomouc, Lichevní soud Olomouc, 1919–24, k. 8, Vr XIV 1962/19, “Hlavní přelíčení,” Testimony of District Captain František Studnař (25 January 1923), fol. 211.

212 Alois Rašín, *Paměti Dra Aloise Rašína* (L. Rašín, 1929), 207.

213 “Svědectví a dokumenty k historii říjnového převratu v českých zemích,” *Naše revoluce* 2, no. 2–4 (1924–1925), 328.

214 “O prehrani,” *Slovenec*, 7 September 1918, 3; “Mariborsko pismo. Aprovizacija mesta,” *Slovenski narod*, 26 September 1918, 3; “Aprovizacija,” *Slovenski narod*, 28 September 1918, 4. See also Milčinski, *Dnevnik*, 389.

Ljubljana, for example, there were protests against hunger in March and April 1918. At the 17 March 1918 protests, women demanded more political rights and sent their support to the Russian proletariat.²¹⁵ In April 1918, when another protest broke out, the police accused the mayor of Ljubljana, Ivan Tavčar, of inciting the civilian population to protest the provincial government. Carniolan Provincial Governor Heinrich Attems claimed that the protests were mainly due to food shortages, but they also had a political background and were directed against the Slovene loyalist politicians and the Germans.²¹⁶ On the other hand, nationalist mobilization also had its limits. In Maribor, in the spring of 1918, during the heightened political situation and conflicts between German and Slovene nationalists, the speech of the German nationalist mayor Johann Schmiderer was interrupted by the demonstrators' demand: "Give us bread, meat, and other foods instead. What do we need incendiary apostles for?"²¹⁷ Due to severe food shortages, people, especially the industrial and agrarian proletariat, were tired of political discussions, meetings, and speeches.

Czechs also informed the Slovene public about what was happening in Bohemia through the press. For example, on 23 September 1918, a report on the establishment of the Czech economic councils appeared in the Slovene newspaper *Slovenski narod* (The Slovene Nation), published under the pseudonym "H"; the author was Jan Hajšman, member of the Czech anti-Habsburg organization Maffia.²¹⁸ Although there was no Slovene counterpart to the Czech system of economic councils, the National Council for Slovenia for also took an active interest in food supply from its inception and began to organize parallel bodies that tried to follow good models of food supply.

The severe shortages of food and the dire living conditions faced by the civilian population in Slovenia during August and September 1918 exacerbated public dissatisfaction with the Vienna government, leading to widespread demands for substantial political reforms.²¹⁹ These demands were voiced by both representatives of the German Social Democratic party and by Slovene political parties and movements. The Social Democratic newspaper *Arbeiterwille* (Workers' Will) was particularly critical of the

215 "Zaradi prehrane," *Naprej*, 18 March, 1918, 2.

216 Janko Pleterski, *Prva odločitev Slovencev za Jugoslavijo: Politika na domačih tleh med vojno 1914–1918* (Slovenska matica, 1971), 234, 235.

217 "Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 13 May 1918, 2.

218 *Slovenski narod*, 23 September 1918, 1–2; in Czech: Jan Hajšman, *Jedna kampaň Mafie: České dopisy jihošlovanským listům z posledního roku světové války* (Orbis, 1938), 201.

219 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 149; Godina Golija, "Who Could be Strong When Hungry?" 304.

inefficiencies in food distribution, the privileges of the wealthy bourgeoisie, and the Austrian officials' handling of food provision in Slovene cities.²²⁰ The newspaper called for more effective strategies for food supply and for the redistribution of food resources to benefit the working class and the most impoverished segments of the population.

Slovene members of the Austrian Parliament belonging to the Yugoslav Club closely monitored developments in the Bohemian Lands and urged Slovene political parties to adopt similar approaches to addressing food shortages within Slovene territories. They thought that successful food provision would play a pivotal role in securing political support for Slovene nationalist movement while simultaneously countering Bolshevik ideology.²²¹ By July 1918, six interpellations from the Yugoslav Club had been submitted, exposing the opaque and inequitable distribution of food supplies across the South Slavic regions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the repeated, unjustified requisitions.²²² These interpellations were well-supported by data and evidence, with deputies warning that the policies implemented by Viennese authorities—beyond their direct influence—risked exacerbating the shortages. In response, members of the Yugoslav Club advocated for the urgent establishment of mechanisms to improve food supplies within Slovenia. They viewed this as a critical priority for the National Council upon its eventual formation.²²³ However, by the summer and early autumn of 1918, the food situation remained dire, with civilians facing growing desperation. Slovene economic experts concluded that a comprehensive overhaul of the war economy would be necessary to address these shortages.²²⁴

The two dominant political factions within the Slovene nationalist movement—the Catholic and liberal camps—understood the strategic importance of ensuring a stable food supply. Such stability was crucial not only to secure public support for the proposed new South Slavic state but also to ensure its long-term viability and the loyalty of its citizens to that state.²²⁵ At the founding meeting of the National Council for Slovenia, held in Ljubljana on 16–17 August 1918, provincial sections were established for Trieste, Istria, Gorizia/Gorica, Carinthia, Maribor, and other areas of strategic

220 "Nachrichten aus Steiermark. Marburg," *Arbeiterwille*, 25 April 1918, 7.

221 "Krivična delitev kruha," *Slovenski narod*, 18 July 1918, 3.

222 Svoljšak and Antoličič, *Leta strahote*, 307.

223 "Krivična delitev kruha," *Slovenski narod*, 18 July 1918, 3.

224 Fran Ogrin, "Nekaj misli o vojnem gospodarstvu," *Slovenec*, 26 August 1918, 1–2.

225 Rok Stergar, "Yugoslavia Is Worthless ... You Can Get Neither Sugar nor Kerosene.' Food Supply and Political Legitimacy in the Slovene Part of Yugoslavia, 1918–1924," *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 258.

importance.²²⁶ While no specific section was created solely to address civilian food supply, this issue fell under the remit of the economic section. Anton Korošec was elected as the president of the National Council, and the first session of the Economic Section convened on 7 September 1918.²²⁷ The meeting, chaired by Korošec, underscored the significance of economic issues and the urgent need to address the food crisis by establishing an autonomous Slovene food supply center, to which the Vienna government should transfer food supplies.²²⁸

Meanwhile, the disintegration of Habsburg Austria progressed. On 6 October 1918, Carniolan Provincial Governor Attems reported to the Vienna government on the situation in Carniola, stating that Slovene politicians had completely rejected the possibility of solving the Yugoslav question within Austria and that they only wanted permission to declare independence.²²⁹ In doing so, they had a great deal of support from the Slovene population because their agitation had reached even the most remote places. In his report, he also mentioned that the long-held hatred of the Germans had now turned into hatred of Austria.²³⁰

The second, and final, meeting of the Economic Section before the proclamation of the new state took place in Ljubljana on 21–22 October 1918.²³¹ The meeting revealed the extent of the food crisis in Slovenia, with supplies critically low or already exhausted. While there was some hope of securing assistance from Croatia, this remained uncertain. Korošec, preparing to travel abroad, was formally asked to secure food supplies through external channels. The shortage in Slovenia was dire: there only remained enough provisions for a mere two weeks. This prompted the members of the National Council to plan for the possibility of importing food from the United States or other foreign markets as soon as trade routes could be established.²³² They estimated that the Slovene provinces and Istria would require the following quantities of food for the first two months in the new state: 20,000 tons of grain, 1,500 tons of fats, and 2,500 tons of frozen meat. The National

226 Jurij Perovšek, *Slovenski prevrat 1918: Položaj Slovencev v Državi Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov* (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2018), 286.

227 Jože Šorn, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih 1919–1924* (Cankarjeva založba, 1997), 52.

228 Jože Šorn, "Slovenci in gospodarski položaj v prvi svetovni vojni," *Zgodovinski časopis* 35, no. 1–2 (1981), 79.

229 Walter Lukan, *Die Habsburgermonarchie und die Slowenen im Ersten Weltkrieg: Aus dem "schwarzgelben Völkerkäfig" in die "goldene Freiheit"?* (New Academic Press, 2017), 185.

230 Lukan, *Die Habsburgermonarchie und die Slowenen*, 186.

231 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 149.

232 Šorn, "Slovenci in gospodarski položaj," 79.

Council also appealed to Korošec to obtain essential medicines, which were already in short supply in Austria, a shortage exacerbated by the spread of influenza and other diseases.²³³

Even if there was no mass demonstration against the “export” of food out of Slovenia, the idea that food produced in Slovenia belonged to the Slovenes took root. The Economic Section resolved to issue a public notice prohibiting the selling of goods across “new borders in the making” by Slovene producers, in response to the widespread black-market trade of foodstuffs directed to Austria.²³⁴ In addition to the efforts of the Economic Section, regional provincial sections also prioritized food supply. For example, at the founding meeting of the National Council for Styria in Maribor on 26 September 1918, addressing food shortages in industrial and impoverished areas was identified as a major concern.²³⁵ The situation of food provision in Carinthia was very critical. Reports of the National Council for Carinthia to the National Council in Ljubljana revealed that food was critically scarce, particularly in the industrial and mining centers, and that residents were surviving with little more than the supplies available or meager hand-to-mouth provisions.²³⁶

Despite the September appeal to the Slovene population by the National Council, the selling of food to the Germans continued unabated. On 12 October 1918, the National Council for Styria notified the National Council in Ljubljana about significant smuggling activity towards the German markets in Upper Styria. Over two weeks later, on 27 October 1918, the National Council in Ljubljana ordered station chiefs at Krško/Gurkfeld, Sevnica/Lichtenwald, Rajhenburg/Reichenburg (now Brestanica) to act against these smuggling networks.²³⁷ Yet the National Council in Ljubljana remained largely limited to verbal interventions, such as appeals and correspondence, without establishing concrete mechanisms for food supply or creating shadow organizations to handle logistical challenges. The National Council's delayed response, combined with its disorganized structure and lack of direct administrative authority, hindered its ability to address the practical economic needs of the civilian population.

As noted by Lukan and others, the National Council was unprepared for the rapid pace of events during the final weeks of Austria-Hungary. Its

233 Šorn, “Slovinci in gospodarski položaj,” 79.

234 “Poziv Narodnega sveta,” *Slovenec*, 25 October 1918, 2.

235 Bruno Hartman, *Rudolf Maister: General in pesnik* (DZS, 2006), 35.

236 Šorn, “Slovinci in gospodarski položaj,” 80.

237 Šorn, “Slovinci in gospodarski položaj,” 79.

actions had minimal practical impact on improving the civilian population's living conditions.²³⁸ It was only on 29 October 1918 that the National Council, in agreement with Austrian Minister Paul, secured a decree stipulating that no requisition of food supplies should occur in Slovenia without explicit approval from the National Council in Ljubljana.²³⁹

Conclusion

Despite the gradual extension of state control over Habsburg Austria's food supply by rationing, price caps, and many other measures, the deliveries of food rations in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia became increasingly irregular, insufficient, and of inferior quality, and, by 1917 and 1918, often simply non-existent. Statistically, from year to year, there was less and less food overall for higher and higher prices. However, in accordance with the cycle of the agricultural year, there were alternating periods of relief after the harvest in late summer and distress as stocks dwindled in spring and early summer. Thus, in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia, it was not in the fall of 1918 that the food supply situation was at its worst, coinciding with the collapse of the Empire, but already in the first half of 1918.

What mattered for political legitimacy and power was not so much the total amount of food, but its uneven distribution. Our brief social geography of food shortages pointed to a person's social position and spatial location as two main—mutually reinforcing—determinants of access to food. Needless to say, the war economy and food shortages (re)stratified society, in its extremes resulting in the emergence of a new overclass of war profiteers and a new underclass of individuals facing death by starvation. Besides self-supplying agricultural producers, it was not necessarily those with a higher social status but rather those with various forms of capital that could be exchanged for food who enjoyed greater access to it.

Besides bigger cities, which are always difficult to feed due to high population density and food imports, a difficult situation also arose in inconspicuous remote areas disadvantaged by their peripheral location and low agricultural productivity. This was the case in many places in Carniola and Carinthia in Slovenia, where road and rail connections were poor and the hilly land did not produce large quantities of crops. Yet, the data on the incidence of hunger edema, however incomplete, drew a rather different

238 Lukan, *Die Habsburgermonarchie und die Slowenen*, 185.

239 Šorn, "Slovenci in gospodarski položaj," 80.

map of hunger in our regions. It was neither in large urban centers nor in all geographically disadvantaged regions that the disease was rampant. It broke out where the food rations, low in calories and protein, could not be increased by other means. This was the case in some “total institutions,” such as prisons or mental hospitals, whose inmates depended solely on institutional food. On a much larger scale, it manifested itself in many places in northern and western Bohemia due to low agricultural production (particularly of protein-rich food), high population density, closed borders with Germany, and big spatial and cultural distances to the ethnically different agricultural interior of Bohemia.

A key consequence of food shortages both in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia was the atomization of society. During the war, the central state and its authorities lost control over the food supply system, leading to individuals competing against one another for access to food. This sometimes happened in the gray areas or in violation of the law, through black markets, the smuggling of food, or buying food from farmers and traders and bypassing supply regulations and institutions. More importantly, local or district authorities such as mayors and their administrations, district captains and their offices, as well as armed officials addressed food shortages in the same way as individual households: by local protectionism. Likewise, pre-war and newly founded charities like Czech Heart had to break food supply laws and regulations to supply food—and were thus constructive and destabilizing at the same time.

Returning to the story at the beginning of this chapter, what work did hunger do, and what work did “Wilson” do for the defeat and disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the national independence declared in Prague and Ljubljana in late 1918? Hunger devastated many human bodies, but increased morbidity and mortality were not the most damaging to Habsburg rule. More significant was that hunger atomized society, undermined the rule of law, and eroded trust in state institutions and so their ability to govern. It made people act violently and fraudulently to get access to more food, not necessarily considering this behavior criminal. On the contrary, in the culminating food shortage crisis in the spring and summer of 1918, the state and its food supply system seemed to many at the grassroots level to be the cause of the food shortage problem, not its solution.

Enter “Wilson” as a metaphor employed within narratives and discourses which endowed the food shortage calamity with a political meaning. Besides various blame games, Austrian patriotic discourse—in which death by starvation could be honored as heroic self-sacrifice on the home front caused by external and internal enemies—lost its force. The voices simultaneously

coming from Vienna were less persuasive and promising than those coming from Prague. Czech politicians used food shortages to mobilize the population in September and October 1918 by boycotting the Austrian state and creating their own food supply system through economic councils. This was not only possible because Czechs were hungry and angry but because there was already a modern, national mass society that was—at least partially—ready to listen and act according to nationalist appeals. The overthrow of the state appealed to stomachs as well as to minds: Czech national independence and sovereignty would finally put more food on the table.

In Slovenia, food shortages were not instrumentalized against Habsburg Austria in the same way. In the spring and summer of 1918, the situation worsened considerably, and Austrian officials wrote in reports to the government in Vienna that the population was exhausted and apathetic. The plight of the civilian population and the collapse of the supply system also became a central topic of political discussion. The newly emerging Slovene government did use the lack of food and the poor situation of the civilian population for its political goals, but it did not reach the masses as in the Czech case. In both cases, however, the new state and its political representation faced a crucial problem: how to deliver on promises, strengthen its political legitimacy, and consolidate power by improving the food situation. Even more so when formal institutions had been discredited and civilians as well as returning soldiers were ready to act on their own. At the forefront of their interests were social needs, their fulfillment, the improvement of their own economic situation rather than the establishment of new states or other urgent political issues.

About the Authors

Maja Godina Golija is Professor in European Ethnology at the University of Maribor and Scientific Councilor at the Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). She is the author of six books and numerous articles on food culture, the history of everyday life, and urban culture in Slovenia.

Václav Šmidrkal is a researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences and an Assistant Professor at Charles University in Prague. His research focuses on postwar transitions, war veterans, and military propaganda in twentieth-century Central Europe.

2. Building the State: Hunger, Anger, and Postwar Consolidation

Václav Šmidrkal and Maja Godina Golija

Abstract: This chapter examines food supply challenges in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1921, focusing on the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia within their broader national contexts. Despite the independence euphoria, wartime rationing—and its flaws—persisted, shaping public expectations and political legitimacy. The chapter analyzes how new governments managed supply chains, confronted shortages, and addressed public unrest, including food riots. It explores governance innovations such as anti-profiteering measures and taxation, as well as violence and fraud surrounding food distribution. By linking material scarcity to concepts such as legitimacy and stability, it traces the mentalities and behaviors shaped by ongoing shortages and reconstructs debates over the causes and consequences of the enduring postwar food crisis.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, food shortages, postwar consolidation, political legitimacy

Introduction

The declaration of the Czechoslovak state on 28 October 1918 was accompanied by popular celebrations. Rituals symbolizing the death of the dissolved state merged with spontaneous celebrations of the birth of the new one. The people of Prague tore the Austrian double-headed eagles down from public buildings to the tune of an ironically performed funeral march and then chopped them to bits or drowned them in the Vltava River. Decorated with Czech national colors, Allied flags, and portraits of Presidents Tomáš G. Masaryk and Woodrow Wilson, the streets were filled with applause for

the new state. The Czech national anthem *Kde domov můj?* (Where Is My Home?) could be heard countless times in the streets of Prague, as could the French *La Marseillaise* and even the Slovene song *Slovenec sem* (I Am a Slovene). At dusk, Prague's streets and squares were not only lit up by lantern parades and fireworks; after a long period of energy-saving measures, the streetlamps were fully turned on again, just as they had been in times of peace.¹ However, due to ongoing food shortages, beer or other alcohol was not flowing in the celebration, unlike in similar celebrations before the war, nor were there much smoked meats, sausages, sweets, or other delicacies for sale.²

Nevertheless, restoring food supplies to peacetime levels seemed only a matter of time. On 29 October 1918, the new administrative commission of the Prague-based War Grain Institute (*Válečný obilní ústav*) issued a proclamation calling on all citizens to cooperate and fulfill their duties, promising also to introduce the principles of "equality and people's interest [*lidovost*]" into the supply system.³ The Social Democratic daily *Právo lidu* (People's Right) expressed support, stating that once a comprehensive inventory of all stock was compiled, rations could be increased. The paper urged everyone to "be honest and transparent when reporting their supplies."⁴ As a former official at the Czechoslovak Ministry of People's Supply recalled, some peasants and farmstead owners—reportedly "out of joy over our liberation"—voluntarily offered their previously concealed food supplies to the ministry or the district captaincies at the maximum officially permissible prices, which was below the market value, or even for free.⁵ The optimism over the future was, after all, justified by the state when it increased the basic flour ration from 1,150 grams per week to 1,400 as of 18 November 1918, and to 2,100 grams per week as of 15 December 1918.⁶ Things were also

1 *Národní listy*, 29 October 1918, 2. Likewise, Claire Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution: Prague, 1914–1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 259–64.

2 Antonín Robek, Mirjam Moravcová, and Jarmila Šťastná, eds., *Stará dělnická Praha: Život a kultura pražských dělníků 1848–1939* (Academia, 1981), 209. For an account of simultaneous events in Ljubljana, see Rok Stergar, "'We Will Look like Fools if Nothing Comes of This Yugoslavia!': The Establishment of Yugoslavia from the Perspective of Slovene Contemporaries," *Hiperborea* 10, no. 1 (2023): 82.

3 *Právo lidu*, 29 October 1918, 7. Cf. also "Document 95," in *Boj o směr vývoje československého státu*, ed. Alois Kocman et al., vol. 1, *Říjen 1918–červen 1919* (Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1965), 116.

4 *Právo lidu*, 29 October 1918, 7.

5 Aug. Hašek, "Počátky našeho zásobování," in *Domov za války (svědectví účastníků)*, ed. Alois Žipek, vol. 5 (Pokrok, 1931), 643.

6 Jiří Štěpěk, *Přídělové systémy na území Československa 1915–2015*, vol. 1, (1915–1945) (Pokrok, 2018), 69.

looking up on the free market, as the price of pork in Prague fell by almost half, from 48 crowns a kilo in October 1918 to 32 crowns in November 1918 and 28 crowns in December 1918.⁷ Newspapers reported that the prices of butter and fabric had also dropped.⁸

This promising development, however, was only sporadic and temporary. The city of Prague tried to put all the remaining stocks of food on sale. It attempted to secure the import and purchase of new foodstuffs under the state monopoly as well as on the free market. It also urged the expulsion of Galician war refugees, who were seen as a burden. Yet the stocks were insufficient to cover the higher ration levels, and the promise to increase them was often nothing more than mere words on paper.⁹ As soon as it turned out that peacetime would not bring any major changes to the food market, goods began to disappear from the shops and prices started to rise again.¹⁰ One month after the Czech coup d'état, the editorial of *Písecké listy* (Písek Papers), a newspaper published in the eponymous southern Bohemian town, mentioned the rapid waning of "that holy enthusiasm, the spiritual uplifting of the first days of freedom" and the actual return to the previous situation where the "good of the republic" once again gave way to selfish interests:

A farmer prefers to sell or exchange foodstuffs secretly as he gains more. Just as a miller continues to cheat when milling to gain flour for himself which he then greedily exchanges for cash. Butchers are not satisfied with those exorbitant profits during the war that allowed them to buy up lots of real estate, but although the prices are dropping around us, the profiteers here still thrive after only a negligible cut in prices. [...] And if we turn to other everyday necessities, one after another we will see that not one thing remains untouched by the wartime hardships, nor will you find one whose price could be described as adequate for this time of peace.¹¹

It was the continuing profiteering linked to the shortage and overpricing of foodstuffs which, according to the article's author, was evidence that it was not enough to merely take the reins of government and change the form of the state. Even though the author did not invoke the contemporary notion

7 *Aprovisace obce pražské za války a po válce 1914–1922* (Aprovisační ústavy hlavního města Prahy, 1923), 291.

8 *Národní listy*, 22 November 1918, 1.

9 *Aprovisace obce pražské*, 194–97.

10 "Document 247," in *Boj o směr vývoje*, 1:262.

11 *Písecké listy*, 30 November 1918, 1.

of “de-Austrianization” (*odrakouštění*), he did in fact appeal for that to be purged “what the government of the old, perished state had taught us.”¹²

In Slovenia, popular enthusiasm and expectations from the new state were likewise associated with many overoptimistic promises about the economic wealth, plentiful natural resources, and working abilities of the South Slavs.¹³ Better organization, national justice, and greater democracy in the new country, where all pressing issues would be resolved better than before, were also to be mirrored in the food supply.¹⁴ Some of Slovenia’s top politicians made statements about a brighter and more prosperous future for Slovenes, a life in the “golden freedom,” encouraging people to expect a rapid improvement in everyday life.¹⁵

Shortly after the proclamation of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs on 29 October 1918, the new government took various measures to improve the food supply. It was aware of the importance of this issue, especially in connection with popular support for the new state and people’s loyalty to the new authorities.¹⁶ If food shortages continued, they could make the country ungovernable, waste popular support, and ruin Slovene and Yugoslav state-building plans.¹⁷ Therefore, the National Government in Ljubljana/Laibach set prices for wheat, rye, barley, oats, millet, buckwheat, beans, and potatoes.¹⁸ It also removed restrictions on the fruit trade, cooking spirits, and the slaughter of pigs. Local authorities in Slovene towns kept the population informed about more extensive stocks of food that were made available and could be bought from traders.¹⁹ Some municipal authorities also tried to

12 *Písecké listy*, 30 November 1918, 1. See also Claire Morelon, “State Legitimacy and Continuity between the Habsburg Empire and Czechoslovakia: The 1918 Transition in Prague,” in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon (Berghahn, 2019), 43–63.

13 Ivan Hribar, “Kvišku srca!,” *Slovenski narod*, 27 October 1918, 2.

14 Jurij Perovšek, *Slovenski prevrat 1918: Položaj Slovencev v Državi Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov* (Inštitut za slovensko novejšo zgodovino, 2018), 292; Rok Stergar, “‘Yugoslavia Is Worthless ... You Can Get Neither Sugar nor Kerosene.’ Food Supply and Political Legitimacy in the Slovene Part of Yugoslavia, 1918–1924,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 254.

15 Walter Lukan, “Habsburška monarhija in Slovenci v prvi svetovni vojni,” *Zgodovinski časopis* 62, no. 1–2 (2008): 212.

16 Bojan Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh: Organizacija preskrbe z živili v Celju v času obeh svetovnih vojn* (Zgodovinski arhiv Celje, 2001), 92; Mojca Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno* (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2020), 153; Stergar, “Yugoslavia is Worthless,” 256.

17 Jurij Perovšek, “V zaželeni deželi”: *Slovenska izkušnja s Kraljevino SHS/Jugoslavijo: 1918–1941* (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2009), 20; Perovšek, *Slovenski prevrat 1918*, 207; Stergar, “Yugoslavia is Worthless,” 213.

18 “Cene za žito in krompir,” *Straža*, 11 November 1918, 4.

19 “Dopisi. Maribor,” *Straža*, 25 November 1918, 4.

alleviate the food shortage by processing horse meat and making sausages and goulash. There were numerous horses, especially in Ljubljana, that had been abandoned by Austro-Hungarian soldiers retreating from the Italian front and that roamed the city, so they were distributed widely.²⁰

Improving food supply was important in view of the approaching Christmas season, which was traditionally associated with an increased consumption of a variety of foods. On the one hand, the Slovene authorities slightly eased the measures of rationing supplies.²¹ On the other, they increased the quantity of the food the population could still buy on rations, such as meat. Before the Christmas holidays, salt was also on sale, and the price of bacon decreased.²² Some state institutions showed special care for their employees and gave them gifts of food. Thus, judges in Ljubljana were given rum, tea, sausages, and bacon before the holidays so that they could enjoy a pleasant Christmas.²³

However, like in the case of the Bohemian Lands, this improvement in conditions did not prove to be an unstoppable trend, but rather a brief and sporadic respite. Most people with low incomes in Slovenia experienced hunger in the fall and winter of 1918/1919.²⁴ The frustration, disappointment, and anger of women, who were often the only ones taking care of feeding their family members, was immense and was like their wartime discontent. In November 1918, there were break-ins in shops in several Slovene towns,²⁵ as well as large women's protests where they demanded more food and faster government measures in the field of nutrition from the Minister of Nutrition, Ivan Tavčar.²⁶ Provision warehouses were often empty despite the efforts of the new authorities to secure sufficient quantities of food.²⁷ The impatiently expected food aid from the Allies, especially American sugar

20 "Po konje v Ljubljano," *Straža*, 11 November 1918, 3; Fran Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920* (Slovenska matica, 2000), 401; Andrej Studen, "O 'ferdamanih babah in dedih': Odraž vsakdanjika v zapisih okrajnega sodišča Konjice v prevratni dobi," *Zgodovina za vse* 27, no. 2 (2020): 40–41.

21 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 433; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 156.

22 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 409–10.

23 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 411.

24 Maja Godina Golija, *Prehrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih 20. stoletja* (Obzorja, 1996), 35; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 154.

25 Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor, Maribor (henceforth PAM), SI PAM 0645 Okrožno sodišče Maribor 1898–1941, t. e. 54, Vr VII 87,4/18; "Aprovizacija," *Slovenec*, 6 December 1918, 3; Lev Centrih, "Govorile so celo strojnice! Boljševizem v prevratni dobi na Slovenskem: Med preprostim ljudskim uporništvom in vplivi ruske revolucije," in *Slovenski prelom 1918*, ed. Aleš Gabrič (Slovenska matica, 2019), 315.

26 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 405; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 155.

27 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 93; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 154.

and grain, had not yet arrived. Organized food aid from Croatia and Serbia, with which Slovenia was to be united into one state, did not come either. The Slovene government realized that it was left alone with its problems.²⁸ Since there was a flour, fats, and sugar shortage, some municipal authorities and organizations decided to buy food in Croatia on their own for their residents.²⁹

The more affluent helped themselves by trading illegally and buying food from warehouse stocks, which they then resold or exchanged for other foods.³⁰ They went to the countryside and bought flour, eggs, potatoes, beans, lard, and milk from farmers, so they did not feel any significant shortage. As the undeclared food trade and the accumulation of food by some individuals caused prices to rise rapidly, the minister of nutrition and the government took additional measures to limit the amount of food sold to individuals by the end of November 1918.³¹ Few were relatively well-stocked with food, and most of the population continued to live in severe shortage. Thus, living in “golden freedom” could easily turn into a bitter disappointment for many due to the ill-preparedness of the new government, daily conflicts, and the lack of a clear concept of the organization and management of life in the new Yugoslav state.³²

Thus, after the surprisingly smooth proclamation of the new states in Prague and Ljubljana, there was no quick return to “normal conditions” for food supplies, contrary to popular expectations and to explicit and implicit promises. New uncertainties about the transitional period began. The development of the new states depended on how well they would cope with the challenges of the multiple post-1918 transitions described in the Introduction. These processes can actually be seen directly in the critical policy of food supplies, the failure of which could have brought a new and even more challenging internal conflict, such as the one in Russia that soon made its way to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.³³ However glad

28 Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 94; Željko Oset and Kristina Ferk, *Porajanje Jugoslavije: Doživljaji Ljubljancev (Miljutina Zarnika) leta 1918* (Založba Univerze v Novi Gorici, 2020), 119–20, 128; Mojca Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 154; Maja Godina Golijia, “Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?: Food Supply and Nutrition of the Civilian Population in Maribor at the End of and after the First World War,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 305.

29 Godina Golijia, “Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?,” 307; Stergar, “Yugoslavia is Worthless,” 257.

30 “Oglas,” *Straža*, 15 November 1918, 4; “Oglas,” *Straža*, 29 November 1918, 4.

31 Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 92; Godina Golijia, “Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?,” 308.

32 Lukan, “Habsburška monarhija in Slovenci,” 213.

33 Eliza Ablovatski, *Revolution and Political Violence in Central Europe: The Deluge of 1919* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

the Czech and Slovene politicians were to emphasize that the proclamation of their states had been free of bloodshed, unlike other revolutions, this was actually an exceptional moment in an otherwise continual series of diverse acts of collective violence, often induced by conflicts around the unsatisfactory supply situation.³⁴ In short, this chapter asks what food supply tells us about the post-1918 transition when the Bohemian Lands became the core region of Czechoslovakia and Slovenia became a peripheral part of Yugoslavia—or, as the German ethnologist Utz Jeggle once wrote, what cultural and political meanings are “consumed” along with food?³⁵

First, using northwestern Bohemia and Lower Styria as examples, this chapter examines the relationship between the provision of food and the control of state territory immediately after the Habsburg Empire disintegrated in the fall of 1918 (more complex cases are the subject of Chapter 4). Secondly, it identifies contradictions in the governance of food supply that the new states inherited from the old and describes how these contradictions were managed. Next, the chapter examines how the new states resolved conflicts provoked by persistent food shortages. Finally, it traces the dismantling of state rationing and the transition to a peace-time economy.

Bread and Bayonets in Northwestern Bohemia and Lower Styria

Among the first challenges of the post-imperial transition were the territorial disputes between the Habsburg successor states of German Austria on the one hand and Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia on the other. While Czechoslovakia claimed the entire territory of the historic Bohemian Lands, German Austria followed the principles of the People’s Manifesto from 16 October 1918, leading to the division of the Bohemian Lands along ethnic lines and the creation of four German-speaking provinces in the fall of 1918. Slovene nationalist politicians, on the other hand, sought to divide the historic crownland of Styria and integrate Lower Styria, with its sizable German-speaking minority, into the Yugoslav state. Using the examples of northwestern Bohemia, where the province of “German Bohemia” (*Deutschböhmen*) seceded from the rest of Bohemia to become part of German Austria, and of Lower Styria, which the Slovene government sought

34 Ota Konrád and Rudolf Kučera, *Paths Out of the Apocalypse: Physical Violence in the Fall and Renewal of Central Europe, 1914–1922* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

35 Utz Jeggle, “Eßgewohnheit und Familienordnung: Was beim Essen alles mitgegessen wird,” *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 84 (1988): 189.

to separate from the rest of Styria, we analyze the role food supply played in controlling these territories.

The declaration of the independent province of German Bohemia on 29 October 1918 as part of the new state of German Austria was not accompanied by the same popular exultation as the declaration of Czechoslovakia one day earlier. The author of an editorial in *Egerer Zeitung* (Eger Newspaper) from 1 November 1918 asked why Vienna, Cheb/Eger, Liberec/Reichenberg and Ústí nad Labem/Aussig showed far less enthusiasm than Prague, Plzeň/Pilsen, České Budějovice/Budweis, Zagreb/Agram/Zágráb, Rijeka/Fiume, or Ljubljana.³⁶ Even if we know from other sources that German Austria was welcomed with church bells, mortar shots, and black-red-gold stripes as decorations in a place like Žatec/Saaz,³⁷ according to the author, it was the “impermeable fog of uncertainty concerning the future” rolling over the defeated German-Austrian state that did not leave much space for celebration.

Indeed, the rather gloomy mood testified to the indifference shown by the broader echelons of German-speaking society towards the effort of the political elites to exercise the right to self-determination in the case of the Germans in the Bohemian Lands. In a diary entry from 1 November 1918, the German-Bohemian journalist Karl Tins wrote about the returning soldiers in Aš/Asch: “At present, they are indifferent to everything: the form of government, whether their homeland belongs to a German or a Czech state—they have only one aim: to find food.”³⁸ Such political apathy of the local populace, together with exaggerated rumors on what bread rolls were like in Prague, gave the Czechoslovak government a strategic advantage.³⁹

It was the food supply system that was the touchstone of the new states’ ability to rule from the beginning. German Bohemia was no exception. The rations of flour or potatoes, so eagerly awaited by the consumers, could only be provided by a sovereign state able to purchase, deliver, and distribute

36 *Egerer Zeitung*, 1 November 1918, 1.

37 *Saazer Anzeiger*, 30 October 1918. Cited in Jan Mareš and Zdena Patrovská, eds., *Osvobození nebo porážka? Říjen 1918 na Lounsku, Podbořansku a Žatecku očima Čechů a Němců* (Státní oblastní archiv Litoměřice, 2018), 16–17.

38 Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek im Sudetendeutschen Haus, Munich, inv. nr. 35226, Karl Tins, “Tagebuch von Karl Tins, Schriftleiter der ‘Ascher Zeitung’, aus d. J. 1918–1919,” unpublished manuscript, 6. See also Petr Karlíček, “‘Zavři hubu, pse, taky ty budeš pověšen!’ Carl Tins a obsazení nejzápadnějších Čech,” in *Vznik Československa a provincie Deutschböhmen*, ed. Pavel Jakubec and Jaroslav Pažout (Státní oblastní archiv v Litoměřicích-Technická univerzita v Liberci-Scriptorium, 2019), 148.

39 Vladimír Kaiser, “Odkdy patřilo Ústí nad Labem k Československu?,” in *Vznik Československa a provincie Deutschböhmen*, 101.

these foodstuffs under generally binding and enforceable rules. While the author of an article in the *Egerer Zeitung* at the end of October 1918 saw “Czech bags of flour, [...] Czech bread and Czech sugar” as more of a threat to German Bohemia than “Czech bayonets,”⁴⁰ the sovereign state’s “bayonets” and food supplies were two sides of the same coin: there could be no food rations without the state, and no state without the food rations. German-Bohemian politicians realized, too, that if the new state failed to establish order in food supplies as quickly as possible, they would be “heading towards another Russia”—or surrender to Czechoslovakia.⁴¹

As shown in Chapter 1, northwestern Bohemia was one of the worst-supplied regions in Habsburg Austria and was fully dependent on food imports. The local food supply crisis worsened after 14 October 1918, when the Czechs boycotted the Austrian supply system by blocking the export of foodstuffs to “Vienna” and to the German-speaking border areas of the Bohemian Lands.⁴² The German Bohemians responded with a counter-boycott starting at the end of October 1918, when they detained foodstuffs and blocked trains transporting food to the Bohemian heartland.⁴³ For example, a “strictly confidential” circular of the district committee of Chrástava/Kratzau in the Liberec political district, dated 23 October 1918, called on German farmers and the mayors of German-speaking villages to stop deliveries of bread products and flour to the War Grain Institute in Prague and to refrain from selling them to buyers from Czech districts.⁴⁴ Although the supply situation in German Bohemia was generally worse than in Central Bohemia, the counter-boycott may have had a local significance in the mixed Czech-German border districts between the envisaged new states, urging Czechs to declare loyalty to German Bohemia, as was the case with the western Bohemian town of Manětín/Manetin, which was cut off from supplies of grain from the surrounding, prevalently German-speaking, villages.⁴⁵

40 *Egerer Zeitung*, 26 October 1918, 1.

41 *Egerer Zeitung*, 3 November 1918, 1. For the situation in this region, see also Vilém Knoll, “Nie und nimmer.: Chebský podzim roku 1918,” in *Dny práva – 2008 – Days of Law*, ed. Jan Neckář et al. (Masarykova univerzita, 2008), 450–68.

42 Walter Reichel, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht im Widerstreit: von der nationalen Kontroverse zum militärischen Kräftemessen: Der Grenzkonflikt zwischen Deutschösterreich und der Tschechoslowakei 1918/1919* (Studienverlag, 2021), 76.

43 Karel Řeháček, *Němci proti Československu na západě Čech (1918–1920)* (self-published, 2008), 14.

44 Státní okresní archiv Liberec (henceforth SOKA Liberec), Archiv města Chrástava, 1565–1945, k. 91, Chrástava District Committee to All Municipalities (23 October 1918).

45 Řeháček, *Němci proti Československu*, 45–46.

From the very beginning, Czech politicians were aware of their predominance in food supplies. On the one hand, Bohuslav Vrbenský, the Minister of People's Supply, argued at a government meeting that all regions of Czechoslovakia, including the German-speaking ones, should be supplied equally.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Prague also saw food supplies as a means of exerting pressure to gain control over the whole of the Bohemian Lands and it did not intend to help German Bohemia stand up on its own feet. This was the lesson learned by German-Bohemian MP Rudolf Lodgman von Auen during unofficial talks with the members of the Czech National Committee in Prague on 30 October 1918, when he unsuccessfully tested the possibility of establishing links between the two political representations. One of his objectives was to renew supplies to German Bohemia from Bohemia's interior. Similarly, a few days later, negotiations with the German-Bohemian Social Democratic leader Josef Seliger regarding the deliveries of foodstuffs ended in failure as the Czechs declared the administrative indivisibility of Bohemia and the sovereignty of the Prague authorities over supplies to the crownland as a whole. The Czech politicians turned down the proposals to split the War Grain Institute into two parts, Czech and German, as that would be a de facto admission of the administrative division of Bohemia. Even though the German-Bohemian government could attempt a counter-blockade and cut off Prague from coal supplies from the northern Bohemian basin, Seliger understood their own weak position and, after his return to Ústí nad Labem, portrayed the failed negotiations as a Czech plan to "use starvation to force northern Bohemia to comply."⁴⁷ There was more than a grain of truth in his words: the Prague government made the continuation of food supplies to all of Bohemia conditional on Czechoslovak military control of those territories.

The state's ability to secure food supplies thus became more relevant for its immediate legitimacy than sophisticated political arguments. The two political representations therefore tried to communicate their claims

46 Národní archiv, Prague (henceforth NA), Předsednictvo ministerské rady, Praha (1918–45), k. 4029, "Zápis o I. schůzi ministerské rady, konané dne 14. listopadu 1918" (14 November 1918).

47 František Soukup, 28. *říjen 1918*, vol. 2 (Ústřední dělnické knihkupectví a nakladatelství, 1928), 1159; Jaroslav Valenta, "Legenda o 'rebelech, s nimiž se nevyjednává,'" *Moderní dějiny* 2 (1994): 197–214; Jan Hálek et al., eds., *Nekonečný příběh: (Historiografické) narativy vzniku Československa v proměnách času a prostoru (1918–1992/1993)* (Academia; Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2023), 127. Cf. "Dok. č. 39," in Jan Hálek, Boris Moskovič, and Peter Prokš, eds., *Národní výbor(y) a vznik Československa 1916–1918: Edice dokumentů* (Historický ústav AV ČR, 2022), 88. On coal as an instrument of pressure, see Aliaksandr Piahana, "Each Wagon of Coal Should Be Paid for with Territorial Concessions: Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Coal Shortage in 1918–21," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 34, no. 1 (2023): 86–116.

to control German Bohemia to the population using the language of food supplies. The National Committee in Plzeň, for instance, spread German-language leaflets addressed to “fellow citizens,” in which it emphasized the appeal of better care for supplies and public nutrition in the Czechoslovak state.⁴⁸ A similar leaflet in German, issued by the Czech National Committee for North Bohemia in Duchcov/Dux, emphasized the unity of Bohemia as the only means of establishing an economically functional state unit as opposed to German Bohemia being independent or joining Germany.⁴⁹ The local German council in Cheb, on the contrary, spread leaflets warning people against being tempted to join the Czech state for reasons of better food supplies and called for the support of all Germans to come together and form one state. According to the leaflet, the war that had just ended had shown that the supply system was, and would continue to be, better in Germany than Bohemia. In Germany, the leaflet claimed, everyone got their fair ration during the war, while the Czechs had allegedly let Prague starve to the point of desperation.⁵⁰ Another leaflet was directed at German farmers, alluding to the biblical story of Esau, who sold his birthright for bread and a plate of food to his younger brother Jacob, to warn them not to sell their German nationality in exchange for the Czech “lentil dish.”⁵¹

Besides the political negotiations and propaganda, however, the decisive factor was the practice of everyday supply, in which the weakness of the central state was manifested at the local level. The newly founded Ministry of Nutrition in Vienna declared that the nutritional regulations remained “preliminarily” in force and the state supply institutions continued their activities. The ministry, however, was aware that it was struggling with smaller administrative units that sought a solution to the food supply problem by shutting down food exports and other state interventions with

48 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna (henceforth ÖStA), Deutschböhmisches Landesregierung, 1918–19 (henceforth DBLR), K. 5, “Mitbürger!” leaflet by the National Committee in Plzeň (no date).

49 ÖStA, DBLR, K. 5, “An die deutschen Bewohner Böhmens!” leaflet by the Czech National Committee for North Bohemia in Duchcov (November 1918).

50 ÖStA, DBLR, K. 2, “Landsleute!” leaflet by the German Local Council [in Cheb] (no date). On the economic attractiveness of Germany, see also Holger Afflerbach, “Die Deutschösterreicher zwischen Staatsraison und ‘Nibelungentreue,’” in *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg*, ed. Helmut Rumpler, vol. 1/2 (Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016), 671–72; Laurence Cole, “Questione nazionale e radicalizzazione degli austro-tedeschi,” in *La Grande Guerra e la dissoluzione di un Impero multinazionale*, ed. Paolo Pombeni (FBK Press, 2017), 42–43.

51 ÖStA, DBLR, K. 2, “Deutsche Bauern!” leaflet by the German Local Council [in Cheb] (no date).

no consideration for the rest of the state.⁵² On top of that, the provincial government, as well as the districts and municipalities of German Bohemia, faced a specific supply dilemma because of competition from the Prague government. As an official report from one German-Bohemian district mentioned, an increase in flour rations by the Prague government in November 1918 may have seemed like a humane act after months of hardship but could have had fatal consequences for the continued existence of German Bohemia. According to the author of the report, this was a call to a besieged town from its conquerors to consume all its food stock as quickly as possible and thus be forced to surrender sooner. However, distributing lower rations was not a solution either. Stocks would have been available for several months longer, but further restrictions on consumption would have undermined the authority of the German-Bohemian government, while the authority of the Prague government would have grown due to the higher rations. Moreover, the numerous Czech minorities living in German Bohemia would have pushed for higher rations to be provided as instructed by the Prague government. Finally, after a possible Czechoslovak occupation, the Czechoslovak army could have started handing out the stocks of food, stockpiled thanks to the population's great sacrifice, thus exposing the German-Bohemian government's inability to provide supplies despite these reserves.⁵³

Meanwhile, local solutions were already underway. In some better-supplied villages around Chrastava in the Liberec region, the local officials decided to increase the bread ration to 3.5 kilograms and the flour ration to 1 kilogram per week, while also banning all transport of grain out of their villages. The district committee sharply criticized this arbitrary decision of the village councils as inadmissible, as a shortage might have led to discontent, unrest, and looting in other areas, and also warned that the old nutrition regulations were "still" in effect and had to be adhered to.⁵⁴ Other districts, such as Dubá/Dauba, decided to release all the remaining stocks to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Czechs in the event of a military occupation. By issuing three-month grain rations in advance to those who were unable to provide for themselves, they became

52 Vojenský ústřední archiv-Vojenský historický archiv, Prague (henceforth VÚA-VHA), 9. sborové velitelství, 1883–1918, k. 431, č. j. 2261, State Office for Military Affairs of German Austria to Litoměřice Military Commando (22 November 1918).

53 ÖStA, DBLR, K. 2, Česká Lípa National Committee to Provincial Economic Office for German Bohemia (6 December 1918), 1–2.

54 SOkA Liberec, Archiv města Chrastava, 1565–1945, k. 91, Chrastava District Committee to All Municipalities (9 November 1918).

dependent on food aid from elsewhere.⁵⁵ Where there was nothing to distribute, the local authorities had to adopt extraordinary measures. In Lovosice/Lobositz, in early November, the town council confiscated a railcar with ingredients to be used to make confectionery for the army in a local factory in order to distribute it among the locals to prevent possible looting.⁵⁶ In “hungry” districts, such as Vejprty/Weipert on the Bohemian-Saxon border, the local national committee permitted private supplies to be brought in in backpacks as the only real means of providing nutrition to the town’s inhabitants. Yet they limited the volume of such supplies to avoid the further illegal reselling and overpricing of foodstuffs procured in this way.⁵⁷ The Czech minority also received an instruction from the Czechoslovak National Minority Committee in northern Bohemia in November 1918 not to rely on state supplies and “whoever can should take up a backpack, as they have been doing so far, and for now provide for themselves.”⁵⁸

The inability to reclaim control over food supply went hand in hand with the failure of the German Bohemian regional government to reconstitute the new army, the *Volkswehr* (People’s Defense), either from volunteers or from the masses of returning soldiers. It was often the “returnees” who initiated various lootings; sometimes they were even joined by members of the *Volkswehr*. The Czechoslovak government undoubtedly faced similar issues when arranging an improvised army, but it could deal with these incidents. For example, the commander of the Slovácko Brigade, which was deployed to occupy the German-speaking provinces in southern Moravia, warned the minister of national defense in late November that “even our most enthusiastic forces would yield totally” if the rank-and-file were hungry and freezing and the officers were paid less than they used to be in the Austro-Hungarian army.⁵⁹ Without material support, there was a risk of soldiers stealing food and other items for themselves, perhaps declaring

55 ŮStA, DBLR, K. 2, Česká Lípa National Committee to Provincial Economic Office for German Bohemia (6 December 1918), 2.

56 VÚA-VHA, 9. sborové velitelství, 1883–1918, k. 431, č. j. 342, Lovosice Mayor’s Office to Intendence of Litoměřice Military Commando (7 November 1918).

57 Vladimír Víttek, “Ohlasy událostí na rozhraní let 1918–1919: Okres Chomutov,” in *Vznik samostatného Československa a severní Čechy* (Okresní archiv; Odbor pro vnitřní věci SKNV, 1968), 157.

58 Jitka Budinská, “Příspevek k vývoji českého a německého hnutí na Teplicku, Duchcovsku a Bílinsku v prvním roce ČSR,” in *Vznik samostatného Československa a severní Čechy*, 63.

59 VÚA-VHA, Slovácká brigáda, 1918–19, k. 3, Slovácko Brigade Command to Minister of National Defense Václav Klofáč (30 November 1918); Order and directive based on reports from liaison officers (13 December 1918).

them “confiscated,” of soldiers being bribed by the locals, or joining the looters instead of stopping them.⁶⁰

The crisis of rule was further exacerbated by clashing instructions coming from Prague and from German Bohemia’s capital Liberec. In many places, the local officials had to fend for themselves, balancing between the two. On top of this, the Czechs possessed the original provincial-level administrative infrastructure located in Prague while the German Bohemians first had to build those authorities from scratch.⁶¹ The weak position of the original state administration led not only to the establishment of national committees like in the Bohemian interior, but also opened up much greater space for the chaotic establishment of various councils of workers, soldiers, or farmers. Functioning as institutions of direct democracy that advanced the specific interests of various socioeconomic groups, they represented a new form of power “from the grassroots,” which challenged the state administration’s claim to authority.

The looting of public and private property escalated and exposed the crisis of rule in German Bohemia. Without reliable armed forces and efficient state administration, the provincial government was unable to manage the state stock of foodstuffs and other necessities.⁶² Moreover, while in the Czech-speaking parts of Bohemia the original Austrian military infrastructure became the property of the new nation-state, in German Bohemia, it often tended to be viewed almost as abandoned property that anyone could take. That was the case of the former camp for prisoners of war in Jindřichovice/Heinrichsgrün in the Sokolov/Falkenau District, where looting went on for several weeks between the departure of the guards at the end of October 1918 and the arrival of the Czechoslovak army in early January 1919. The local *Volkswehr* was not only too weak to guard the site, but its members actually joined the looters.⁶³ Likewise, in Cheb, some 400 horses that originally

60 VÚA-VHA, Slovácká brigáda, 1918–19, k. 3, Material preparations for operations (7 January 1919). See also Stergar, “We Will Look like Fools,” 77.

61 SOKA Liberec, Archiv města Liberec, 1560–1945, k. 116, Direction of Provincial Economic Office for German-Bohemia to All Political District Authorities in German-Bohemia (29 November 1918); Ministry of People’s Supply to President of Liberec Municipal Administrative Committee (27 February 1919).

62 VÚA-VHA, 9. sborové velitelství, 1918–33, k. 431, č. j. 1096, Litoměřice Military Command (22 November 1918).

63 Romana Beranová Vaicová and Vladimír Bružeňák, *Ozvěny Velké války: Zajatěcký tábor Jindřichovice 1915–1918 = Der Nachhall des großen Kriegs: Das Gefangenenlager Jindřichovice 1915–1918 = Echoes of The Great War: Prison Camp Jindřichovice 1915–1918*, 2nd ed. (Muzeum Sokolov, 2018); Dagmar Hájková and Martin Klečacký, “Kriegsgefangenenlager in Böhmen bzw. auf dem Territorium des heutigen Tschechiens im Ersten Weltkrieg: Geschichte und Gedenken,”

belonged to the military had been partially sold in public auctions and partially given away to the locals. In the eyes of the Czechoslovak military commander this was embezzlement of state property.⁶⁴

While plundering was an ineffective way of economic redistribution, it was more pertinent as a political protest. For the company in Frýdlant/Friedland, whose stock of 300 sugar loaves, reserved for pharmacies, hospitals, infants, and the sick, was looted on 8 November 1918, it was the German-Bohemian government that bore responsibility: illegal distribution or sale of sugar to the masses would have been less damaging to the company than violent plundering.⁶⁵

Two waves of looting in Ústí nad Labem, one of the biggest towns in northern Bohemia, had an especially devastating impact both on the property and the political authority of the German-Bohemian government. The first of them, on 2 and 3 November 1918, saw the plundering of military foodstuff stores in nearby villages of Kramoly/Krammel and Novosedlice/Obersedlitz. The crowd was fired up by rumors that the stored foodstuffs would be confiscated by the approaching Czechoslovak army (which did indeed try to seize stores of food)⁶⁶ and that the foodstuffs had already begun to be taken away “for the needs of influential persons.”⁶⁷ People were carrying away large quantities of food all night, and some *Volkswehr* members joined the looters. Eventually, one of the facilities was deliberately set on fire. In addition, the military armaments store in Trmice/Türmitz was looted during the night, while the armed forces were able to defend other storage sites from the attacking crowds.⁶⁸

The German-Bohemian government tried to negotiate military assistance in Prague and in neighboring Germany, but to no avail. Its inability to maintain peace and order and prevent damage to both state and private property prompted a delegation of German-Bohemian factory owners from northern Bohemia to travel to Prague in early November 1918 to demand that the Czechoslovak army take control of German Bohemia. While it was

in *Kriegsgefangenschaft in Österreich-Ungarn 1914–1918: Historiographie, Kontext, Themen*, ed. Verena Moritz and Julia Walleczek-Fritz (Böhlau, 2022), 253–68; VÚA-VHA, Hlavní štáb – operační oddělení, 1919–39, k. 1, “Jindřichovice” (9 January 1919).

64 VÚA-VHA, Hlavní štáb – operační oddělení, 1919–39, k. 1, Flouting of agreement with the Cheb region by the self-governing authorities of Cheb (16 January 1919).

65 ŮStA, DBLR, k. 2, E. Hermschlag Company in Frýdlant, German-Bohemia, to German-Bohemian Provincial Government in Liberec (7 December 1918).

66 “Document 122,” in *Boj o směr vývoje*, 1:139.

67 Jan Bouček and Jiří Jelínek, “Události na Ústecku na konci roku 1918,” in *Vznik samostatného Československa a severní Čechy*, 28.

68 Bouček and Jelínek, “Události na Ústecku na konci roku 1918,” 27–29.

referred to as a demeaning “walk to Canossa” by the German-Bohemian politicians, industrialist leaders saw this as a pragmatic solution.⁶⁹

It was not until November, after Czechoslovak army units had been set up from the remnants of Austrian infantry regiments and other units, volunteers, former deserters, and former prisoners of war, that they slowly began to progress from the Czech heartland towards the new state borders.⁷⁰ By the end of December, the whole area, with a few exceptions, was under Czechoslovak military control.⁷¹ In some places, such as Most/Brüx, skirmishes broke out with the local *Volkswehr* that led to injuries and fatalities, but in many other places the occupation was primarily a result of negotiations and involved no fighting. Although representatives of the local governments did typically protest against the occupation of their town by the Czechoslovak army, referring to their right to self-determination and the anticipated decision of the Peace Conference, in general the local population and authorities were, according to reports from the Czechoslovak commanders, relieved to see the soldiers arriving, assuming order would be restored and food supplies would improve.⁷² In Dubá, for example, after the district had been captured by the Czechoslovak army, the same district captain as before issued a circular warning that after what may have been a period of lawlessness, all laws and regulations were “reinstated in full.”⁷³

This was also the case in Ústí nad Labem, where the second wave of looting was much worse than the first. It started on 9 December 1918, spreading from the army barracks to the town center, and leading to the destruction of many storage facilities, shops, and goods. Five people lost their lives in the effort to suppress the looting crowd. The town’s representatives called for military assistance from Prague, and the Czechoslovak army took control of Ústí nad Labem on 11 December 1918.⁷⁴

69 *Egerer Zeitung*, 7 November 1918, 1.

70 Jiří Hutečka, “‘Completely Forgotten and Totally Ignored’: Czechoslovak Veterans of the Austro-Hungarian Army and the Transition of 1918–1919,” *Nationalities Papers* 49, no. 4 (2021): 632–33.

71 *Vojenské dějiny Československa*, ed. Pavel Major and Petr Klučina, vol. 3, *Od roku 1918 do roku 1939* (Naše vojsko, 1987), 30–35; Martin Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität: Die tschechoslowakische Armee und ihre Nationalitätenpolitik 1918–1938* (Oldenbourg, 2006), 34–38.

72 VÚA-VHA, Hlavní štáb – operační oddělení, 1919–39, k. 1, Occupation of the towns of Kraslice and Jindřichovice (18 February 1919); Report of the occupation of the town of Jáchymov on 30 December 1918 (31 December 1918).

73 Státní okresní archiv Česká Lípa, Archiv obce Pavlovice, 1602–1945, k. 13, Dubá District Authorities to All Mayor’s Municipal Offices (19 December 1918).

74 Vladimír Kaiser et al., *Dějiny města Ústí nad Labem* (Město Ústí nad Labem, 1995), 160.

Further south, the separation of Lower Styria from the rest of the historic crownland of Styria was, in a sense, the opposite of what happened in Bohemia: Slovene bread and bayonets succeeded in dividing the country. In the chaotic period of the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, the formation of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs was proclaimed on 29 October 1918. Two days later, the Slovene National Government was formed, claiming for itself Lower Styria, including the German-speaking towns of Maribor/Marburg an der Drau, Celje/Cilli, and Ptuj/Pettau. However, even after the proclamation of the new state, the political situation in Lower Styria remained complex, and the uncertainty of the Slovene and German populations in this area was great.⁷⁵ On 1 November 1918, Slovene officer Rudolf Maister took command of Maribor in front of astonished officers of the Austro-Hungarian army and established Slovene military authority in the city.⁷⁶ Despite Slovene military authority in Maribor and Lower Styria, parallel German municipal authorities operated in Maribor until 2 January 1919 when Srečko Lajnšič, the Slovene district captain of Maribor, took control of the municipality. Both authorities also took care of supply to the population, primarily to ensure enough food, which was crucial for assessing the efficiency and quality of the authorities in these uncertain conditions.⁷⁷ The National Council for Styria appealed to farmers to help the starving Slovene population. It issued posters emphasizing the importance of surviving the difficult conditions and lack of food in those first days of the new state.⁷⁸ Karel Verstovšek, the president of the National Council for Styria, also warned that food shortages could cause political instability: "Anyone who helps bring foodstuffs from Slovene Styria to German Styria is tearing apart Yugoslavia and is a traitor to his new homeland."⁷⁹ On the one hand, the implementation of Slovene economic policy was hindered by German civilians and politicians in Lower Styria, who, in their newspapers, blamed the lack of food, incompetence and poor organization of the new Slovene authorities. On the other hand, writers in Slovene newspapers often wrote about hunger and food shortages in Austria, especially in Vienna, and convinced readers that the situation in

75 Jurij Perovšek, "Iz Avstro-Ogrske," in *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: Od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije, 1848–1992*, vol. 1, ed. Jasna Fischer (Mladinska knjiga, 2005), 174.

76 Godina Golija, "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?," 301.

77 Godina Golija, "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?," 305.

78 PAM, SI PAM 0005/002/012/00 Mestna občina Maribor: Dokumenti o prevratu, National Council for Lower Styria Poster (1 November 1918).

79 Bruno Hartman, *Maribor – dogajanja in osebnosti* (Litera, 2009), 32.

Slovenia was better in terms of food supply and that they could be happy to live in the new Yugoslav state.⁸⁰

From November 1918 to February 1919, life in Lower Styria was characterized by the tense political situation due to protests and violence as well as the difficult economic situation of the population. The new Slovene authorities understood the importance of good food supplies. As early as mid-November 1918, the city's economic office informed the merchants of Maribor that they could buy apples, onions, and eggs in shops, and allowed some merchants to import pigs from Croatia and Bosnia.⁸¹ Maribor's economic office also decided to raise the price of milk while keeping it low for the city's poorer inhabitants.⁸² It was aware that sufficient food for civilians was essential to ensure political support for the new authorities, which was particularly important in Lower Styria, where there was a sizable German community opposing the Slovene government.⁸³

In the winter of 1918/1919, there were also frequent protests by the workers and the German-speaking population. At the beginning of November, Verstovšek felt that a better cooperation of farmers in supplying the population could prevent runaway riots and violence in the towns.⁸⁴ In order to avoid further expressions of discontent by the population and to gain as much support as possible, the new Slovene authorities clarified in the press that all donated food would be consumed only by the inhabitants of Lower Styria and the local army. Slovene representatives also became members of the city's food supply office, declaring that they wanted to ensure all citizens' complete safety and well-being.⁸⁵ The measures of the new Slovene authorities were opposed not only by the German-speaking population, especially the working class, but also by German officials and the German mayor Johann Schmiderer, who refused to hand over mayoral duties to Vilko Pfeifer, who had been appointed as commissioner to the city of Maribor.⁸⁶

The tense political situation in Styria worsened with the American Delimitation Commission visiting Styria and the city of Maribor on 27 January 1919. On the day of the visit, the Germans of Maribor organized a demonstration on the main square; due to the volatile situation it was attended by many

80 "Prehrana Nemške Avstrije," *Slovenec*, 16 November 1918, 3; "Dunaj brez mesa," *Slovenec*, 26 February 1919, 6.

81 "Prehrana v Mariboru," *Straža*, 15 November 1918, 3.

82 "Cene mleka," *Straža*, 15 November 1918, 3.

83 Hartman, *Maribor – dogajanja in osebnosti*, 32.

84 Karel Verstovšek, "Kmetje!," *Straža*, 1 November 1918, 1.

85 Godina Golija, "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?," 305.

86 "Mariborski občinski svet razpuščen," *Slovenski narod*, 3 January 1919, 1.

workers from local factories and their family members. The Slovene army intervened after a physical confrontation between Slovene and German participants, but it was ill-prepared to manage this complex situation. Soldiers shot thirteen protesters.⁸⁷ After the terrible event, which shocked the German public in particular, Slovene politicians and American members of the delegation lamented that the situation was out of control.

The situation in Lower Styria only worsened after this event. The lack of basic necessities, especially food, continued to fuel discontent and unrest among the population. Some even thought that life in German Austria would have been better because the old Austrian state had been more organized and the food supply had been better, which is why they remembered the old homeland with nostalgia.⁸⁸ An agreement between the (German) Styrian provincial government in Graz and the National Government in Ljubljana signed on 13 February 1919 stopped the fighting and established a line of separation,⁸⁹ but the life of the population was difficult, regardless of this political act and an individual's nationality. This problem is made clear by letters to the municipal authorities in Maribor and by newspaper articles. In one of them, a Slovene official from Maribor described his difficult situation in the new country in detail: "I have been silent for so long that people are amazed. Now I can no longer remain silent—whatever happens to me. [...] It is easy to be enthusiastic when you have a full plate. But it is different to work for the homeland while starving and waiting for charity. I have waited a long time for justice and dreamed of a better homeland, but it seems I will fade away first."⁹⁰

Contradictions of the Old Supply System in the New States

An official circular was distributed in the Czech villages of Moravia in November 1918, explaining why the old Austrian system of the state providing foodstuffs had to be maintained even after the coup d'état and declaration of Czechoslovakia.⁹¹ After the initial warning that failure to provide nutrition

87 "Žrtve nemških izgrediv v Mariboru," *Slovenski narod*, 29 January 1919, 1.

88 Stergar, "Yugoslavia is Worthless," 258.

89 Darko Friš, Gregor Jenuš, and Ana Šela, "Maribor med prevratom in senžermensko pogodbo. 'Zasijalo nam je sonce svobode: Maribor je jugoslovanski!'," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 60, no. 3 (2020): 110–48.

90 "Obupanci," *Slovenec*, 7 March 1919, 4.

91 Státní okresní archiv Olomouc (henceforth SOkA Olomouc), Okresní úřad Litovel, 1850–1945, inv. č. 812, k. 704, Circular "Order and Peace in the Hands of Rural Areas" (9 November 1918). The

to the masses of workers and soldiers could lead to “chaos, potentially even civil war and unrest” and could render the state unable to oppose the possible “invasion of hungry Vienna” across the new Czechoslovak-Austrian border into Moravia, it explained the essence of the state coup in the supply system. Rather than making a hazardous attempt to establish a new supply system that could have led to “Russian anarchy,” it was necessary to preserve the “old way” of running the state supply system, including the institutions, staff, standards, and practices involved. The circular expressed an understanding for the people’s “hatred” of the “central war offices [*centrály*], their directives, district captaincies, the provincial government, the police, and everyone who has cooperated in purchasing foodstuffs.” However, it also emphasized that the system was now “ours, under our government, under our control.” The circular also pointed out that matters of nutrition could not be resolved on the grounds of “district considerations” and at the district level, but had to be dealt with by the central government through state authority while respecting statewide interests, “otherwise one district would have stocks for the whole year while another would rise up and revolt out of hunger.”⁹²

Despite the apparent haste in which it was written, this circular reflected several substantial aspects that characterized state supply in the newly declared state of Czechoslovakia. It underlined the continuing importance of state-run supplies of foodstuffs which, contrary to popular belief, should not be abolished and replaced with the free market as had been the case before the war. The government even saw it as a necessary safeguard to prevent chaos that could result in a civil war.

The circular also pointed out two contradictions in the building of the new state that made this peaceful and organized development difficult. First, the Czechoslovak state should not create new power from scratch and build a new state apparatus. Instead, it should take control of the discredited monarchical institutions and their unpopular personnel.⁹³ Adding a new national aspect to the activities of these governmental forms of the Habsburg Empire, originally criticized as alien to the nation, should have been sufficient to allow them to function in the new nation-state.⁹⁴

circular was also published in the press in a partially different wording; see *Moravský hospodář*, 15 November 1918, 486–487.

92 SOkA Olomouc, Okresní úřad Litovel, 1850–1945, inv. č. 812, k. 704, Circular “Order and Peace in the Hands of Rural Areas” (9 November 1918).

93 Michal Pullmann, “Spravedlnost a demokracie v moderní době: Přelom roku 1918 mezi revolucí a reformou,” in *Spravedlnost a demokracie v evropské integraci*, ed. Marek Hrubec (Filosofia, 2005), 111–35.

94 Morelon, “State Legitimacy and Continuity.”

While this did eliminate the immediate risk of chaos and instability when building new institutions, the new state, if founded in this way, would have faced the suspicion that the coup d'état had merely transferred "Vienna" to "Prague," and the real revolution was yet to come.

Soon, new institutions of power were set up. In the autumn of 1918, a parallel hierarchical structure of approximately three hundred national committees was created in the Czech lands. Originally intended as "destructive" institutions, they were supposed to be dissolved when the coup was over.⁹⁵ Even though motions were filed with the Prague National Committee in November 1918, calling for a more permanent system of national committees as a beneficial "bond of trust" between citizens expecting a change and the original state administration, the government issued a proclamation on 7 December 1918 that dissolved the national committees. According to the government, the national committees had served their purpose in seizing power during the coup, but their continued interference in central state administration and the arbitrary adoption of state competences led to a dangerous duality of power at the district level.⁹⁶ Early in November 1918, the chairman of the Agrarian Party and Minister of the Interior, Antonín Švehla, admitted that national committees could help to resolve the key questions of demobilization and food supplies, but eventually gave in to the opinion that, rather than by chaotic competition between the national committees and district captaincies, these issues would be resolved by "iron-clad orders" executed through a hierarchically-controlled state administration.⁹⁷ That was, after all, the approach that the government, aiming to strengthen the monopoly of political administration, applied to various workers', peasants' and military councils in the former German Bohemia, which it dissolved after taking control of the province and reinstating the district captaincies.⁹⁸

As institutions whose mission during the coup was to "spoil the action of the [Austrian] state-run food supply," the economic councils were to be dissolved, too.⁹⁹ Unlike the national committees, their activities were not

95 Hálek, Moskovič, and Prokš, eds., *Národní výbor(y)*, 25, 27.

96 "Příloha č. 9," in Václav Peša, *Vznik Československé republiky 1918 a české národní výbory* (Horizont, 1988), 104–105; Hálek, Moskovič, and Prokš, eds., *Národní výbor(y)*, 27–9. For a similar phenomenon in Slovenia, see Lovro Bogataj, "Uprava v Sloveniji od prevrata 1918 do izvršitve vidovdanske ustave," in *Slovenci v desetletju 1918–1928: Zbornik razprav iz kulturne, gospodarske in politične zgodovine*, ed. Josip Mal (Leonova družba, 1928), 382–83.

97 Peša, *Národní výbory*, 69–70.

98 Zdeněk Kárník, *Za československou republiku rad: Národní výbory a dělnické rady v českých zemích, 1917–1920* (Československá akademie věd, 1963), 59–61.

99 Archiv města Plzně, Národní výbor, k. 96, "Protokol o schůzi aprovisačního sboru N. V., která konána byla ve středu, dne 30. října 1918," 1. For an older overview of the councils' history, see Jan

formally terminated, but their influence and importance began to wane in favor of the political administration and municipal self-government shortly after the proclamation of independence.¹⁰⁰ Early in January 1919, however, the economic councils were reinstated by the Ministry of People's Supply, which itself was transformed from the original Bohemian provincial economic council and Section R of the Bohemian provincial government.¹⁰¹ The instruction to organize economic councils, adopted at the government session held on 11 January 1919, assumed that in some districts and villages these councils would have to be newly founded, while in other places they could continue to exist and it would suffice for them to adopt the newly defined mission, i.e., carry out a "volunteer civil control service" under the leadership of the provincial economic authority and the Ministry of People's Supply. In municipalities with a population of less than ten thousand, the councils were comprised of five members, while in district (and city) councils, the number of council members was ten. The members were to be nominated by the local political parties and one-fifth had to be women. The instruction emphasized that the councils' main task was to assume control of all public trade related to food supply as well as the supply activities of the municipalities. An institution called "civil control" could be established to support the work of the economic councils, comprising inspectors tasked with defending consumers' interests.¹⁰²

In May 1919, the gazette of the Ministry of People's Supply gave an optimistic estimate that more than ten thousand economic councils would be established in the Bohemian Lands, and 55,000 people would be involved in civil control.¹⁰³ It is likely that the economic councils and civil control never reached these numbers, but the existence of 140 district economic councils and 1,100 municipal economic councils with approximately fifty thousand people, as published in the gazette in September 1919, was an apparent success for the ministry as regards to the development of this temporary institution.¹⁰⁴

Janák and Zdeňka Hledíková, *Dějiny správy v českých zemích do roku 1945* (Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1989), 432–33.

100 Zdislav Vodák, "O hospodářské rady," *Věstník ministerstva pro zásobování lidu v Československé republice* (henceforth *Věstník MZL*), 13 September 1919, 387.

101 Aug. Hašek, "Počátky našeho zásobování," in *Domov za války (svědectví účastníků)*, ed. Alois Žipek, vol. 5, 1918 (Pokrok, 1931), 642–44; "Dok. 23," in Hálek, Moskovič, and Prokš, eds., *Národní výbor(y)*, 74.

102 Zemský archiv v Opavě, Zemský hospodářský úřad Opava, 1917–28, k. 144, Instruction for the work of the economic councils, third revised edition (no date), 3, 14.

103 *Věstník MZL*, 12 May 1919, 125.

104 *Věstník MZL*, 27 September 1919, 410.

The reinstatement of economic councils and the introduction of civil control were a response to the left-wing criticism of Austrian “bureaucratism,” which was supposed to be cured by “the thorough popularization [zlidovění] of public administration.”¹⁰⁵ It was through the economic councils that broader echelons of the population gained influence over the state administration, which up to then had appeared as “cold, uncooperative, flaunting its unpopularity.” Their task was also to check the work of the self-governing municipal bodies, which were elected under the pre-war system that discriminated against the poor and women.¹⁰⁶ However, the economic councils were a measure implemented by a single ministry and confined to its agenda. It may have been the opposition of the coalition partners that led to the existence of economic councils not established by law, and their activities were thus carried out solely on the grounds of a ministerial decree. This emphasized both their provisional character as necessitated by the temporary situation and their weaker position compared to that of authorities established under the law. Thus, the economic councils and civil control, despite their formalized nature, operated in the gray zone between the well-established institutions and various supply commissions and councils set up on an ad-hoc basis. At the same time, with only a few exceptions, their members did not wield executive power nor enjoy protection as state servants under Section 68 of the Penal Code. They were merely supposed to report their control findings to the authorities who did have the competence to act.¹⁰⁷

The refusal of the ministries of Agriculture and Trade to accept the economic councils and civil control as equal counterparts, and criticism of their work in the right-wing press, showed how they were seen as a leftist experiment within the Ministry of People's Supply.¹⁰⁸ This was exacerbated by the media coverage of the cases of Antonín Zápotocký, a radical left-wing and later communist politician involved in civil control, as well as the ironically written report that the Ministry of People's Supply had appointed to the supply service “three experts: a locksmith, a bricklayer, and a ticket seller.” Despite the argument that Zápotocký was only a volunteer inspector, not a ministerial official, and that controlling profiteering and profiteers' tricks required practical experience rather than any special training, it was apparent that the “layman component” in state administration clashed

105 *Věstník MZL*, 12 May 1919, 113.

106 *Věstník MZL*, 13 September 1919, 387.

107 *Věstník MZL*, 31 May 1919, 172.

108 *Věstník MZL*, 28 June 1919, 236.

with the persisting ideal of an unbiased and professional bureaucracy.¹⁰⁹ According to the lawyer and right-wing politician Bohumil Baxa, civil control in fact brought no benefit at all, and was an example of the undermining of state authority if it allowed, without legal grounds, the “least suitable” people to “play the authority game” for this purpose. By doing so, in his opinion, such people had not only gained a way to “harass” citizens but had also opened up a new opportunity for fraud. In the end, as Baxa put it, the civil control that had been established to combat old bureaucracy would inevitably degenerate into the very opposite, becoming institutionalized and turning into new bureaucracy.¹¹⁰

Even though the Ministry of People’s Supply defended the work of the economic councils and civil control by emphasizing the material resources preserved for the public supply system, their key significance lay elsewhere. Economic councils and civil control primarily filled the gap that had opened during the war between the discredited formal institutions that were losing the ability to rule, and the radicalized population that felt ignored, resorting to self-help through the black market and through acts of collective violence. Many cases of “hunger riots,” as referred to by the Austrian as well as Czechoslovak authorities, were not just destructive but also bore the traits of attempts to establish public control over the supply service.¹¹¹ However great a source of instability the economic councils and civil control had become, due to their partially uncoordinated and unpredictable operations, they nonetheless absorbed some of the radical potential of popular participation in the supply system through “the street” when they gave it official legitimacy and powers instead of becoming the subject of anti-system policy themselves.¹¹²

The second contradiction was that the central state supply system had to face a wide variety of local supply methods that evolved during the war as a rational yet anarchically subversive response to the failures of the state supply system.¹¹³ The state system therefore had to overcome local protectionism

109 *Věstník MZL*, 24 May 1919, 154–155.

110 Bohumil Baxa, *Autorita státní* (Národ, 1920), 18–19.

111 Cf. František Forst, “Protidrahotní bouře v Nymburce po první světové válce,” *Středočeský sborník historický* 8, no. 1 (1973): 5–16.

112 Václav Šmidrkal, “‘What a Republic It Was!’: Public Violence and State Building in the Bohemian Lands after 1918,” *Contemporary European History* 28, no. 3 (2019): 303–18. See also Karel Řeháček, “Diktatura ‘ulice’ v popřevratové Plzni (1918–1921),” in *Násilí: Jiná moderna*, ed. Bedřich Loewenstein et al. (Historický ústav AV ČR, 2017), 155–74.

113 Lars T. Lih, *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914–1921* (University of California Press, 1990), 233.

or “local patriotism” which defended “us,” varying in size, against “them.”¹¹⁴ This contradiction between the state and locally organized supplies spanned from the hoarding of foodstuffs by individuals and households, through a preference for the interests of each factory, municipality, or military unit, usually up to the district level as “district supply policy.” The state’s inability to achieve a balance between these conflicting interests led to the various segments competing for foodstuffs, with growing differences and tension between them. What they were mostly defending themselves against, however, were the efforts of the central state to break local protectionism, aiming to introduce equally organized supplies across the entire state.

Such undermining of the state supply system actually suited the Czech “anti-Austrian” policy at the end of the war, and the Czech National Committee and its Provincial Economic Council purposely escalated it by boycotting the export of foodstuffs from the Bohemian Lands in October 1918. The immediate consequences of the boycott, however, were not felt only in Vienna and the Austrian Lands but also in the Bohemian Lands themselves. Despite the new government’s various moral appeals that rural people hand over their harvests to the new state, the farmers—even with the support of the economic councils and national committees—made the most of this provisional period in the fall of 1918, according to reports from district captains, to “lose” a considerable portion of their harvests and not hand over the produce to either the Austrian or the Czechoslovak state.¹¹⁵

In August 1919, almost one year after the war, the Ministry of People’s Supply called “for the last time” upon district political administrations to report concealed stocks of grain held by towns in their districts that had been purchased on the black market before or after the coup d’état to avoid confiscation and criminal prosecution.¹¹⁶ The town of Prostějov/Proßnitz, for example, also hoarded concealed stocks of harvest produce before and even after 28 October 1918, and finally handed in more than 52 wagons of grain to the Provincial Grain Institute (*Zemský obilní ústav*) in Brno/Brünn involuntarily and under protest, when forced to do so by the state authorities.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the chairman of the agricultural cooperative

114 Gabriela Dudeková Kováčová, *Človek vo vojne: Stratégie prežitia a sociálne dôsledky prvej svetovej vojny na Slovensku* (Veda, 2019), 191.

115 NA, Ministerstvo vnitra – stará registratura, 1918–44 (henceforth MV-SR), k. 280, Rychnov nad Kněžnou District Political Administration to Ministry of Interior (3 February 1919).

116 NA, Předsednictvo ministerské rady, 1918–45 (henceforth PMR), k. 3631, Ministerial circular (3 August 1919).

117 *Věstník MZL*, 4 October 1919, 442; NA, PMR, k. 3631, Prostějov Municipal Council to Presidium of Council of Ministers (3 November 1920).

in Prostějov, Eduard Adámek, was put on trial for “taking advantage of exceptional circumstances to overprice food” in the years 1917–19. In 1923, Adámek was acquitted, since the court ruled that he did not do so to profiteer but in cooperation with the district captain and the municipal council to supply the town in need.¹¹⁸

This problem was connected to the third contradiction, namely the continued governance under the original Austrian and Hungarian food regulations. Due to their impracticality, the regulations had been demoted to nothing more than “laws on paper” long before the coup, but on 28 October 1918, Czechoslovakia adopted them through a reception law (No. 11/1918 Coll.).¹¹⁹ Thomas Hobbes pointed out that it is not until after a state has been established that the generally binding criteria distinguishing between justice and injustice can be defined.¹²⁰ Although Czechoslovakia smoothly succeeded the dissolved empire, the new state could not merely acquire the criteria of justice from the old legal system but had to carefully reflect upon the new situation when applying them.

The wartime regulations suppressing profiteering as well as other nutritional regulations of the time were affected not only by their non-democratic creation during the time that parliament was suspended, but also by their original intention: “They tended to enable one to ‘persevere’ [*vydržení*, derived from German *durchhalten*] until the end of the war in favor of the former Austria.”¹²¹ Similar criticism was also raised after the coup regarding administrative measures. The high grain quotas that the eastern Bohemian district of Žamberk/Senftenberg had been ordered to deliver by the old Austrian government and whose delivery had been enforced by the Czechoslovak state early in 1919 were refused by the district captain as impossible to fulfill. He argued that not only were there many circumstances that were unpredictable and unfavorable for the harvest, but also that the original intention behind the old Austrian regulation was to “plunder our homeland,” and its enforcement in the new situation would be an evident act of injustice.¹²²

To overcome the persistent tension between the conflicting expectations of quick improvement and the continuation of the wartime state

118 Zemský archiv v Opavě, pobočka Olomouc, Lichevní soud Olomouc, 1919–24, k. 8, Vr XIV 1962/19, Verdict (4 June 1923), fol. 233.

119 Ladislav Vojáček, *První československý zákon: Pokus o opožděný komentář* (Wolters Kluwer, 2018).

120 Wolfgang Kersting, *Thomas Hobbes zur Einführung* (Junius, 2002), 112.

121 Jos. Zelinka, “Boj proti lichvě potravinami a předměty nutné potřeby,” *Právník* 58, no. 4 (1919): 122.

122 NA, MV-SR, k. 280, Žamberk District Captaincy to Ministry of Interior in Prague (8 February 1919).

supply system with all its shortcomings, the Czechoslovak authorities had to occasionally resort to promises instead of factual arguments to appease the public. Eventually, in Czechoslovakia, too, an analogy to the formerly Austrian sense of *durchhalten* emerged, promising a future reward in exchange for patient perseverance through present hardships. One of the official reports explaining the causes of shortage of coal and kerosene, acknowledged that the population had “patiently endured five years of horror and the hardships of war waged against us [sic!],” and had to continue enduring various deprivations even in peacetime, which was all the more important. The report concluded, “This situation leads us to recognize that peace makes one renounce more than the war does, and that patience in peace is more beneficial than it was during the war.”¹²³ In everyday governing, however, the officials who used these arguments ran the risk that unfulfilled promises would only undermine the government’s credibility further, and repeating appeals for patience angered people. For instance, in June 1920, it seemed to the district captain in Vysoké Mýto/Hohenmauth in eastern Bohemia that he was doing nothing more than “trying to soothe and calm” the situation due to the food shortage, and “invoking the idea of a brighter future.”¹²⁴

However, as the head of the district grain office in Litomyšl/Leitomischl, eastern Bohemia, opined in a report to the Ministry of People’s Supply, “whoever in the republic tries to report anything in a more optimistic or pessimistic light than the truth, like they did during the times of Austria, is acting against the state, as measures adopted on the grounds of such a report are not adequate, and incite unrest, something a small state in particular must avoid.”¹²⁵ Hence, in the Habsburg Empire, the concealment, censorship, and misrepresentation of facts about the real status of food supply—legitimized by wartime objectives and Austrian patriotism—undermined confidence in the state and facilitated the spread of all kinds of rumors.¹²⁶ By contrast, the Czechoslovak authorities were now expected to communicate openly and factually about food supplies.

123 NA, PMR, k. 3617, Report on the causes of the shortages in coal and kerosene supplies (no date).

124 NA, PMR, k. 3629, Resolution of the Social Democratic trade union council and the political organization of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers’ Party in Vysoké Mýto; captain’s letter (22 June 1920).

125 NA, PMR, k. 3631, Litomyšl District Grain Office to Ministry of People’s Supply (25 October 1920).

126 Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 122–59.



„Fronta na chléb“ v Praze za času rakouské tyranie.

Tato dopisnice byla zabavena slavnou cenzurou v měsíci dubnu 1918, protože by měla špatný vliv na úspěšné skončení války.

Figure 2.1 Czech postcard from post-1918 Bohemia revealing the reality of war-time Habsburg Austria. The horizontal caption says: “Bread line’ in Prague during the time of Austrian tyranny.” The vertical caption says: “This postcard was seized by the ‘famous’ Austrian censorship in April 1918, ‘because it might have a bad influence on the successful conclusion of the war’.” Private collection.

For this purpose, the Ministry of People’s Supply began to publish its own gazette in March 1919, which, besides containing information about official announcements and legislative changes, also gave space to professional commentators on the supply situation. Having started as a weekly, it was later published every fortnight and was supposed to serve as a source of information for institutions in charge of supplies, economic councils, and civil control, and for the general public. A German version and a Slovak supplement were added later, and each issue also included a brief summary of the contents in French and English.¹²⁷

The ministerial press department also monitored how the dailies reported on food supplies, and its gazette responded to reports they perceived as biased. Using the field experience of food supply officials as well as theoretical knowledge of agriculture and economics, the gazette debunked some of the nationalist or partisan assumptions about supply circulating in the public sphere. For example, when the gazette published livestock statistics for Bohemia, it showed that the overall loss of 32% during the war was

127 *Věstník MZL*, 22 March 1919, 1; 20 March 1920, 1.

unevenly distributed across the country. While Czech districts lost up to 41% of livestock, German districts, exceptionally, lost only up to 23% and most of them only between 1–14%. However, the paper avoided the casual nationalist explanation that this was because Habsburg Austria's government wanted to harm Czech peasants and protect Germans. Rather, the Gazette mentioned the drought of 1917, which was more severe in Czech lowland areas than in the German hilly districts. The drought led to a shortage of forage, increased culling, and insufficient weaning of calves, which caused the reduction in breeding.¹²⁸

These above-mentioned contradictions were also inherent in the Slovene case. Initially, the Slovene National Government also realized that it should not require the civilian population to make sacrifices for the new state, as had been the usual practice in the Habsburg Empire. Rather, it should capitalize on the initial enthusiasm of the majority for the new state and encourage people to volunteer out of their desire to help and their loyalty.¹²⁹ It was expected that people would be so happy with the new state that they would volunteer to participate in its construction.¹³⁰

At the time, Slovene newspapers tried to appease disgruntled sections of the population by portraying food shortages abroad as being even worse than at home, especially in Vienna and in Austria in general. They highlighted that the people of Slovenia were fortunate to live in Yugoslavia and not in Austria, where food shortages were severe and conditions were desperate.¹³¹ To appease people's discontent in the new state, the new government and Slovene nationalist politicians began with propaganda, and some newspaper articles were published on the Slovene government's efforts to improve the problematic situation, shortages of food and other necessities, and to limit the price increases.¹³²

Intellectuals and other public figures also published statements in support of the new authorities. In her emotional article "Spasimo Jugoslavijo!" (Save Yugoslavia!), Marica Bartol, a Slovene writer and teacher, tried to

128 *Věstník MZL*, 19 July 1919, 291. See also a report on drought in 1917 from Červenka, Central Moravia; SOkA Olomouc, Okresní úřad Litovel, 1850–1945, inv. č. 812, k. 706, Farmer's Dairy Cooperative in Červenka to Central Union, General Commissioner of Provincial Fats Office in Brno (1 August 1917).

129 Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 42; Hribar, "Kvišku srca!," 2.

130 Hribar, "Kvišku srca!," 2.

131 "Die Hungersnot in Wien," *Marburger Zeitung*, 5 October 1919, 2; "Razmere na Dunaju," *Slovenec*, 11 December 1919, 3; Godina Golija, "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?," 311.

132 "Cene za krompir," *Straža*, 11 November 1919, 4; Peter Ribnikar, ed., *Sejmi zapisniki Narodne vlade Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov v Ljubljani in Deželnihi vlad za Slovenijo: 1918–1921*, vol. 1, *Od 1. nov. 1918 do 26. feb. 1919* (Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1998), 80.

persuade women to organize themselves better and support the new state.¹³³ However, calls to support the new state and make sacrifices for its benefit only swayed a portion of the population. Meanwhile, others continued to try to secure sufficient and affordable food, albeit illegally, mainly through smuggling and reselling.¹³⁴ Workers, officials, and the urban poor felt that the government was neglecting the problems of the domestic population, in particular the scarcity and high price of food. There was growing frustration that the government was exporting too much food while failing to address domestic shortages.¹³⁵

The new Slovene government did not have a clear economic strategy on what measures it would take to regulate the food supply after the proclamation of the new state. As the first president of the National Council (*Narodno vijeće*) of the short-lived State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, Anton Korošec, later stated, the “speed of this process” and the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire surprised them. At first, Slovene and Yugoslav politicians believed Austria-Hungary would not collapse until February 1919.¹³⁶ However, this process was shorter, so the new government had to act fast. At the end of October 1918, just before independence was proclaimed, the members of the Slovene National Council decided that the new Slovene government would maintain the Austrian system, according to which the district captains would prescribe how much food farmers had to deliver. They also advocated for the establishment of a Yugoslav nutritional office as soon as possible, which would take over all tasks from the Austrian Office for People’s Nutrition.¹³⁷ Subsequently, the National Government established the Ministry of Nutrition, led by Ivan Tavčar.¹³⁸ It also took over the imperial agencies, which were in charge of organizing the provision of the population and continued their work in the new state, such as the Grain Institute and the Institute for Livestock and Animal Fats in Ljubljana.¹³⁹ At the municipal and local levels, the relevant municipal authorities continued their work as well.¹⁴⁰

133 Marica Bartol, “Spasimo Jugoslavijo!,” *Slovenski narod*, 22 April 1920, 1.

134 “Ujeti klobasarji,” *Slovenski gospodar*, 8 January 1920, 6; “Volkwirtschaft,” *Marburger Zeitung*, 3 October 1920, 6.

135 “Politiki izvažajo moko in žito,” *Slovenski gospodar*, 31 December 1919, 5; “Padec vlade,” *Slovenski gospodar*, 26 February 1920, 1.

136 Lukan, *Habsburška monarhija in Slovenci*, 125.

137 “Osamosvojitve naše prehranjevalne organizacije,” *Slovenski narod*, 27 October 1918, 1.

138 Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki Narodne vlade*, 1:52; Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 81.

139 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 92; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 153.

140 Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki Narodne vlade*, 1:97.

In managing the provision of the civilian population, the Slovene authorities thus adopted the tested Austrian wartime rationing system. However, taking over this system of supply in the new Yugoslav state did not bring about an improvement in the nutrition of the civilian population. By late 1918 and early 1919, Slovene territory was still experiencing severe shortages of essential goods such as flour, meat, sugar, salt, and fat as well as other commodities like kerosene and leather.¹⁴¹ Municipal councils frequently debated food supply challenges, high prices, and black-market trading and took various measures and initiatives to improve the supply. In the Carniolan town of Tržič/Neumarkt, the mayor urged the gendarmerie to crack down on individuals known for hoarding and reselling food at inflated prices.¹⁴² The poor food supply situation in the first months of 1919 and the tension between the old bureaucratic system and the demand for greater public participation in governance led the Slovene government to create new bodies to manage food supply responsibilities. One such measure involved forming supply committees and food commissions that included civilian representatives with firsthand knowledge of local conditions. Municipalities were tasked with establishing these committees, though their responses varied. In some towns, for example Celje, the committees were very active and held many meetings to address food supply problems and set food prices. In April 1919, local authorities in Tržič requested political parties to appoint a female representative to serve on their committee.¹⁴³ However, despite this initiative, women did not have a decisive role in the work of the committees and key food supply decisions remained in the hands of men.¹⁴⁴

Because of disproportionate price hikes, in November 1919, the Ministry of Nutrition and Reconstruction in Belgrade called on provincial governments to establish municipal and city committees to set prices. The objective of these measures was to ascertain the market prices of foodstuffs and to impose limits on excessive price increases.¹⁴⁵ Traders, producers, and consumers had to be equally represented on the price-setting committees.

141 "Mestna aprovizacija," *Nova doba*, 28 February 1919, 3; Godina Golija, *Prehrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih*, 34; Stergar, "Yugoslavia is Worthless," 257.

142 Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana, enota za Kranj, Kranj (henceforth ZAL KRA), SI ZAL TRŽ/0001 Občina Tržič (1850–1947) (henceforth Občina Tržič), t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Tržič Mayor to Tržič Gendarmerie Station (30 June 1919).

143 ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Mayor of Tržič to political parties and labor associations (11 April 1919).

144 More about this in Chapter 4 of this book.

145 Ribnikar, *Sejmi zapisniki*, vol. 2, *Od 28. feb. 1919 do 5. nov. 1919* (Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1999), 421; "Naredbe ministrstva prehrane glede preskrbovanja prebivalstva z živili," *Naprej*, 29 November 1919, 1.

In industrial centers, workers also had to be represented. Mayors chaired the committees, and all political parties were included. The committees met three times a month, and the members were responsible for setting food prices according to local market conditions. The committees forwarded their price lists to district authorities and local gendarmerie stations for enforcement.¹⁴⁶

The disorderly market conditions and high prices of food prompted the formation of additional local commissions to oversee food supply. In November 1919, the “People’s Commission against Dearth and General Corruption” was established in Celje to inspect food prices, monitor supplies, and uncover hidden stockpiles. The Celje branch of the Yugoslav Socialist Party initiated this measure, which was widely supported by the working class and lower middle-class citizens, who opposed trade liberalization and demanded greater state control over food distribution.¹⁴⁷

As the problems with food supply continued into late 1919 and early 1920, a segment of the population advocated for even stricter state control and intervention. In February 1920, the Slovene Department of Nutrition ordered the establishment of district procurement councils, which included representatives of consumers and food producers, proportionally from all political parties. These councils served as advisory bodies, ensuring transparency in food procurement. The purpose of the councils was also to provide the public with better information and insight into the procurement business in the county. By doing so, they wanted to eliminate complaints about the operation of individual supplies.¹⁴⁸

Although various measures—including propaganda, public engagement through food supply committees, and price regulations in year 1919 and early 1920—were implemented to address food supply, workers, small farmers, and junior officials supported by Social Democrats strongly favored even greater state control over food distribution, reflecting the population’s ongoing problems with food supplies and their disappointment with the functioning of the newly established state. By October 1920, the district captain of Ptuj reported to the Provincial Government that the population was demanding permanent state control over food supply to provide essential goods to the impoverished and middle-class citizens.¹⁴⁹

146 ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Provincial Government to all mayors (31 March 1919).

147 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 111.

148 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 104.

149 Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Ljubljana (henceforth ARS), SI AS 60 Pokrajinska uprava za Slovenijo, Predsedstvo (1918–1924) (henceforth AS 60), t. e. 4, a. e. 43, 1828/pr., Report from Ptuj district captain (9 October 1920).

Consumer Stomachs, Producer Pockets, and Profiteer Houses

The contradictions of the old food supply system in the new state had an impact at the grassroots level and could lead to serious conflicts. As one delegate put it at a regional conference of the Moravian economic councils in Brno in December 1919, the state supply system was generally unpopular because it put too little money in the pockets of agricultural producers and too little food in the stomachs of consumers. While these shortcomings were inherent in the system, the critical moment came when someone instrumentalized the sense of injustice that not every producer and every consumer had to make equal sacrifices to challenge the legitimacy of the state.¹⁵⁰ This section analyzes two such critical moments from the Bohemian Lands that escalated into violence. The first are the anti-profiteering riots of May 1919, staged by the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party as a consumer protest. The second is an uprising of peasants against forced food requisitions in Pohořelice/Pohrlitz, in southern Moravia in February 1920. Next, the section looks at food supply conflict and reactions to food supply criminality in Slovenia.

Although food profiteering was one of the most sensitive social problems and the Czechoslovak National Committee had called for its “eradication in all estates and classes” in its appeals to the population even before October 1918, the new Czechoslovak government did little to fight it more actively, only repeating these appeals.¹⁵¹ In the fall of 1918, it seemed that food profiteering might disappear quickly on its own. Rather than a new moral force of the nation-state preventing one Czech from exploiting another Czech, this was to be an early transition to a peace economy in which profiteering would cease to make sense because food would be plentiful, and its prices would fall.¹⁵²

Inflation and food scarcity had a devastating impact on social cohesion and trust.¹⁵³ While almost everyone who bought food resented the exorbitant prices, they themselves demanded the highest possible price for their goods or services in order to be able to afford their own purchases. This mixed

150 Státní okresní archiv Prostějov, Národní výbor (1918), 1918–20, k. 2, Paper by M. Trunkát delivered at a conference of Moravian district economic councils in Brno (6 December 1919), 11.

151 “Document 77,” in *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války, 1914–1918*, vol. 5, 1918 (Státní ústřední archiv v Praze, 1993), 282; “Document 95,” in *Boj o směr vývoje*, 1:116.

152 Šmidrkal, “‘What a Republic It Was!,’” 312; *Národní listy*, 22 November 1918, 1.

153 Harold James, *Seven Crashes: The Economic Crises That Shaped Globalization* (Yale University Press, 2023), 105–10.

anger at others with shame at one's own actions and the criminality of these transactions with necessity of engaging in them for one's own survival. Inflation and food shortages thus created a vicious circle, as virtually all levels of society suffered from them and had a stake in them at the same time. Despite popular beliefs associating food profiteering with certain groups, such as the Jewish refugees from Galicia, the culprits could not simply be assigned to a particular social or ethnic group but were dispersed across society.¹⁵⁴

At the same time, however, the state struggled to find a precise criminal definition of food profiteering and to combat it in practice. The issue was further complicated by the illegal trade in food as an emergency measure to prevent starvation or riots when the state was unable to provide food. In the Czech environment, breaking the food supply law was further justified by anti-Austrian resistance. While some Czech legal experts argued that food usury committed before 28 October 1918 should be given impunity because it harmed Austria and accelerated the establishment of Czechoslovakia, others refused to acknowledge this political moment and emphasized the economic nature of profiteering.¹⁵⁵

As shown in Chapter 1, the rather passive attitude of the Habsburg state toward the prosecution of profiteering was to a certain extent acceptable under the war mentality of "perseverance." But immediately after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the accumulated injustices and the promises of the new state triggered a popular need for a reckoning with the alleged war profiteers. On the one hand, this manifested itself through the collective plundering of private property that occurred in several places in the Bohemian Lands in late 1918.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, buyers who during the war had often begged peasants to sell them food at any price, now demanded that sellers refund the overpayment.

One of them, a Czech cottager from Bučina/Butschina in eastern Bohemia complained in a letter to the editor in the agricultural press that, she had sold several small pigs for 500 crowns each in August 1918, which was about the market price at the time. A few months later the buyers came back and pressured her to return the overpayment, but she did not have the money. She argued that while she sold the pigs for a high price, she also had to pay

154 Jan Miller, *Z tradic selského rodu Vinduškova*, vol. 4, *Památník světové války* (self-published, 1935), 231. For antisemitism in Czechoslovakia after 1918, see Michal Frankl and Miloslav Szabó, *Budování státu bez antisemitismu? Násilí, diskurs loajality a vznik Československa* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2015).

155 Josef Zelinka, "Několik kapitol z nového práva lichevního," *Právník* 59, no. 2 (1920): 49–50.

156 Frankl and Szabó, *Budování státu bez antisemitizmu*, 26–97.

high prices for fodder, cloth, or shoes that no one would pay back to her. The editors advised her not to give the money back: "Those of you who try to collect enough to make ends meet with your families have not committed profiteering and cannot be held responsible for it."¹⁵⁷ This situation, in which everyone bought dearly and sold dearly, created an explosive atmosphere that left people feeling guilty and aggrieved at the same time.

The state responded to this growing tension with a variety of measures. Some were aimed at restoring public finances, others at restoring public order. Besides the war tax that was levied for the last time in 1919, some of the money accumulated during the war was partly siphoned off by currency reform in the late winter of 1919. First, one third of the new money was withheld as a state loan. Second, taking an inventory of private property on that occasion, the state levied a property tax and property increase tax that aimed at taxing wealth and those who profited from war.¹⁵⁸ To settle the individual conflicts between producers and consumers in the countryside, where mutual extortion and violence were rife, the state introduced people's price courts (no. 299/1919 Coll.) in May 1919. They were supposed to assess the price paid and decide on the amount of the overpayment to be repaid and, if necessary, on the penalty. These measures were not strong enough, though, because they did not criminalize food profiteering.

However, even more important than the wrongs of the past was the fact that food profiteering continued at a small and large scale in the new state too. In spring 1919, the police caught several large-scale food profiteers whose cases were followed closely by the press. One of them was the miller J. K. Ort from Koštice/Kostitz in northern Bohemia, who was accused by the police of massive fraud he had committed in the milling of flour both during and after the war. By manipulating the quantity, quality, and price of flour, Ort was able to illegally supply many people not only from the surrounding area but also prominent individuals such as an actor in the Prague national theater or in institutions like the refugee camp in Gmünd in Lower Austria.¹⁵⁹

Rather than reassuring the public that the state was actively fighting usury, this case provoked astonishment at the fact that such acts of food

¹⁵⁷ *Večer*, 3 March 1919, 2.

¹⁵⁸ Josef Štefan, *Státní účetnictví československé* (self-published, 1921), 292–96; Antonie Doležalová, *Rašín, Engliš a ti druzí: Československé státní rozpočty v letech 1918–1938* (Vysoká škola ekonomická; Nakladatelství Oeconomica, 2007), 111.

¹⁵⁹ SOA Prague, KST, Vr XXVIII 3962/19, k. 1431, Spis obžalovací (26 June 1919). For more on Ort's case, see Hynek Oberhel, "Ortova aféra: Mlynář J. K. Ort keřas, nebo dobrodinec?" *Paginae Historiae* 31, no. 1 (2023): 343–57.

profiteering could take place at all, unchecked for several months “under the Republic.” At the same time, the public was concerned that people like J. K. Ort, with their contacts, money, and lawyers, would be able to escape punishment, as Ort had managed to do all along. Thus, it seemed suspicious when, in mid-May 1919, J. K. Ort was transferred from the prison of the provincial criminal court to Prague General Hospital for health reasons.

Coincidentally, Ort’s case came to the fore during the campaign for the June 1919 municipal elections. The Czechoslovak Social Democrats looked to use it in the party political struggle against their main rival, the Agrarian Party. That is why the Social Democratic Minister of Justice, František Soukup, unexpectedly came to the hospital in the middle of the night to check on Ort. Soukup found that Ort enjoyed good food, a nice room, and the care of renowned physicians. Moreover, he was not isolated from the outside world but was free to move about the building and to receive and send mail, which was much more liberal than in the prison.¹⁶⁰

Social Democrats dramatized the case in their newspapers as a conspiracy of the “arch-profiteering mafia” and linked it to the Agrarians. They also organized protest meetings in Prague and many other places in the Bohemian Lands in the following days. Under the slogan “The Last Warning to the Profiteers,” they combined party agitation with a staged exercise of popular justice against profiteers. In addition to red banners, the singing of workers’ songs, and attacks on the Agrarians, processions of people carrying wooden gallows, broad axes, or wildlife snares went from shop to shop, forcing inventories and sales at “peace” prices, and making the owners swear under the gallows that they would no longer profiteer.¹⁶¹ In particular, they aimed to publicly expose the fact that certain people ignored food supply laws while workers suffered from food shortages. For example, at the Central Hotel in downtown Prague, workers entered the kitchen where cooks were preparing slices of ham with white bread buns for their guests even though Wednesday was a meatless day and it was forbidden to bake from white flour.¹⁶²

However, in some places, the “last warning” turned into outright looting, as in Teplice in northern Bohemia: about thirty shops were plundered on 25 May 1919.¹⁶³ Moreover, goods bought at “peace” prices or stolen were

160 *Večerník Práva lidu*, 20 May 1919, 1.

161 Šmidrkal, “‘What a Republic It Was!’,” 308–9; Konrád and Kučera, *Paths Out of Apocalypse*, 377–78.

162 *Právo lidu*, 22 May 1919, 1; “Document 323,” in *Boj o směr vývoje*, 1:331.

163 “Document 20 B,” in *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení presidia zemské správy politické v Praze o situaci v Čechách 1919–1920*, ed. Alois Kocman (Československá akademie věd, 1959), 67.

sometimes immediately resold at higher prices and thus the anti-profiteering campaign ended in further profiteering.¹⁶⁴ The Agrarian press countered the rampage of the “arch-mafia” by describing the workers’ anti-profiteering protests as “Bolshevik violence and bestiality.”¹⁶⁵

The government faced a dilemma: it could not acknowledge that there was a class of profiteers who stood behind food shortages and high prices because it was not true. At the same time, it could not remain passive either because this could suggest government complicity.¹⁶⁶ The government responded to the protests with a lengthy statement summarizing the current state of supply and the many measures already taken to fight food profiteering. One of them was the further strengthening of food law enforcement by the police. Indeed, the number of reports received by the Prague Anti-Profiteering Police Department increased significantly between 1919 and 1920.¹⁶⁷ Accordingly, the police conducted more searches of shops and warehouses, monitored marketplaces more closely, and arrested suspects more frequently. In 1919 alone, they confiscated food and other daily necessities worth a total of nearly 470 million crowns.¹⁶⁸

The government also promised to create new profiteering courts that would be able to punish profiteers more severely and would be composed of lay jurors representing different social groups. The new, much harsher penalties included up to twenty years in prison, a fine of up to two million crowns and, when martial law was declared, the death penalty. Thus, the public became empowered and co-responsible for judging what was real profiteering that deserved punishment and what only looked like it.¹⁶⁹

At the same time, the government’s statement sought to dissociate profiteering from any particular group, institution, or the state as such. Instead, it blamed the situation on the “rotten Austrian state” and called for the need to “de-Austrianize oneself.”¹⁷⁰ Various medical metaphors had already been employed earlier by the Ministry of People’s Supply for the same purpose. They described the fight against profiteering as a “cleansing cut” into the

164 *Věstník obecní hlavního města Prahy* 26 (1919): 153.

165 *Večer*, 27 May 1919, 1.

166 Michael B. Tyquin, “Profiteering in Australia during the First World War,” *War & Society* 39, no. 1 (2020): 23–41.

167 *Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu a soubor zákonů, nařízení i výnosů zásobování se týkajících* (Tiskový odbor ministerstva pro zásobování lidu v republice československé, 1920), 227–28.

168 *Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu a soubor zákonů*, 230.

169 *Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu a soubor zákonů*, 234–60. For more on this topic, see Václav Šmidrkal, “Food Profiteering, Paper Laws, and Criminal Justice in the Bohemian Lands after 1918,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 266–82.

170 “Document 190,” in *Boj o směr vývoje*, 1:218.

deeply embedded rot of “Austrian” corruption, leading to other beneficial “purulent yet purifying processes.” They also emphasized that responsibility for this situation could not be ascribed to the republic’s authorities: the police action against the culprits and their prosecution in court were to serve as a “cleansing instrument,” not as the cause of the ailment.¹⁷¹ These metaphors, intended to de-escalate violence and redirect attention to a common, impersonal enemy of the new state, were also adopted by some of the Social Democrats. The Social Democratic Minister of Justice, František Soukup—who had been involved from the outset of the anti-profiteering riots—described profiteering in an article for *Právo lidu* as “moral syphilis” and a “pernicious plague,” which could only be defeated if everyone lent the republic and its institutions a hand.¹⁷²

Six months later, the second critical case happened. Early in 1920, the Czechoslovak grain authorities began to feel uneasy about the inadequate stocks of grain purchased.¹⁷³ According to a circular of the Provincial Grain Institute in Brno, only 42% of the grain quota was purchased, while the figure was 62% at the same time in the previous year. This was partly blamed on the commissioners’ lack of interest in purchasing grain for the state, and the preference for crops such as legumes, which could be freely traded. The circular included both a moral appeal issued “at the eleventh hour of our supplies” with the approaching “supply failure,” coupled with threats of penalties and “merciless” reprisals by the state organizations.¹⁷⁴ Several days later, another circular of the Moravian Provincial Economy Office (*Moravský zemský hospodářský úřad*) also called on farm workers not to shirk their work and not to claim a share in the crops as a reward in excess of the ration to which they were legally entitled. The circular warned that such behavior, which would result in a flour shortage in towns, would only exacerbate the already high tension between the rural and urban populace that had persisted since the war.¹⁷⁵ At the beginning of February 1920, the administrative committee of the State Grain Institute (*Státní obilní ústav*)

171 *Věstník MZL*, 26 April 1919, 89.

172 *Večerník Práva lidu*, 24 May 1919, 2.

173 Cf. the address of Fedor Houdek in parliament, published in *Věstník MZL*, 14 February 1920, 721.

174 SOKa Olomouc, Okresní úřad Litovel, 1850–1945, inv. č. 812, k. 704, Circular to all commissioners on the purchase of grain (6 January 1920), 1–2.

175 SOKa Olomouc, Okresní úřad Litovel, 1850–1945, inv. č. 812, k. 704, Circular of the regional political administration to all district political administrations (15 January 1920). See also the public appeal of the Civil Control at the Ministry of People’s Supply published in *Věstník MZL*, 14 February 1920, 724–25.

informed Prime Minister Vlastimil Tusar that there were only enough stocks of grain to cover the next fourteen days, and called for “grain to be bought up immediately within the country on the strictest terms by special commissions, with the support of the gendarmerie and, if necessary, the military.”¹⁷⁶ Thus, at the end of the winter of 1920, Czechoslovakia saw the dawn of another conflict between the interests of the agricultural countryside and the town consumers, in response to which the state began requisitioning.

Since the beginning of the war, farmers had typically shown passive resistance rather than open opposition to the duty to hand over their produce. Hiding grain and other produce from requisition—in bricked-up rooms, underground, in the forest, or in other, sometimes bizarre places—was a common way of evading this duty, after which the produce could be traded.¹⁷⁷ The requisitions, however, brought the crystallization of the conflict between the producers and the state enforcing nutritional regulations. Most cases involved no violence, but there were also some instances where lives were at stake. Even if the new instruction for military assistance during grain requisitioning emphasized the need to persuade peasants by kind words and various appeals to patriotism rather than by brute force, the soldiers were armed and could use their weapons.¹⁷⁸

One of the bloodiest grain requisitions, carried out in Pohořelice in February 1920, during which two people lost their lives, can be used to demonstrate the circumstances of its development, and also the subsequent public debate that reflected various collective interests as regards the state supply system.

In an atmosphere of considerable tension due to the waning stocks and the ongoing requisitions, grain was scheduled to be requisitioned on 18 February 1920, Ash Wednesday, with the assistance of soldiers and police in the predominantly German-speaking area around Pohořelice in South Moravia. In the morning, however, some four to five thousand people from the surrounding villages, led by the local politicians, gathered

176 NA, PMR, k. 3631, State Grain Institute Administrative Committee to Prime Minister (5 February 1920).

177 Karel Řeháček, “Život venkovského obyvatelstva v okolí Plzně v době velké války (1914–1918),” in *Venkov, rolník a válka v českých zemích a na Slovensku v moderní době* (Národní zemědělské muzeum, 2017), 69–82; Martin Klečacký, *Poslušný vládce okresu: Okresní hejtman a proměny státní moci v Čechách v letech 1868–1938* (Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2021), 209–10.

178 NA, PMR, k. 3616, Instructions for requisition command leaders. See also Nancy M. Wingfield, “Democracy’s Violent Birth: The Czech Legionnaires and Statue Wars in the First Czechoslovak Republic,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 53 (2022): 10.

to protest the requisitions, singing the German nationalist songs *Wacht am Rhein* and *Deutschland über alles*. The presence of politicians could also be related to the fact that municipal elections were to be held in Pohořelice the following month.¹⁷⁹ As in some other places, it was expected that the Czechs would take control of the town hall in place of the Germans, who had ruled the town until then. The speakers, including the local politicians and former as well as current MPs, unleashed a stream of invective against the Czechoslovak state. Most of them spoke German, but Czech was heard at the protest meeting, too. According to the speeches, the coup d'état of 1918 had allegedly promised to put an end to requisitions, yet this still continued more than a year after the end of the war. The new Czechoslovak authorities' requisitions included the use of military assistance, something that was most humiliating for the rural peasant population. The Czech-speaking Fratišek Vaníček from Traiskirchen in Lower Austria criticized, among others, "the masters in Prague who do nothing, eat well, and want to suck the nation dry." The German-speaker Richard Pfoser of Medlov/Mödlau also denounced the district captaincy in Mikulov/Nikolsburg, where there was allegedly a surplus of food, big cigars, girls—and plenty of employees.¹⁸⁰

The younger participants in particular were still feeling the Shrovetide buzz, which had culminated in a carnival before the fast. For some of them, the morning demonstration was a continuation of their night-long celebration. In any case, the local restaurant was open from early morning and was selling spirits across the street in quarter- and half-liter glasses. The people tried to persuade the soldiers present at the scene not to carry out their orders, saying it was no longer like in the times of Old Austria and they could have a drink with them, too. While a delegation of twenty members negotiated with the state representatives, a clash broke out near the restaurant between Czechoslovak legionnaires (veterans of the Czechoslovak anti-Habsburg resistance) and drunken protesters, as the protesters tried to disarm the soldiers, attacking them with sticks and insulting them. The soldiers started shooting into the crowd without an order, killing two youngsters, Franz Iventz and Josef Mödritzer, and injuring another protester.¹⁸¹ Some ten other people suffered severe and minor injuries by runaway horses.¹⁸²

179 *Lidové noviny*, 22 March 1920 (morning issue), 1.

180 Archiv Kanceláře prezidenta republiky, Prague (henceforth AKPR), Kancelář prezidenta republiky (henceforth KPR), k. 32, D 7665/25, Ministry of Justice to the Office of the President on the riots in Pohořelice (23 May 1920).

181 AKPR, KPR, k. 32, D 7665/25, Ministry of Interior to President's Office (8 March 1920).

182 AKPR, KPR, k. 32, D 7665/25, Ministry of Justice to the Office of the President on the riots in Pohořelice (23 May 1920).

Notwithstanding the various forms of active resistance against requisitions that were seen a few days before this in Vlkoš/Wilkosch near Přerov/Prerau, or in the Znojmo/Znaim region, the killing of two protesters and injuring of several others made the Pohořelice incident one of the worst requisition cases, and it understandably became a topic of a public debate that sought to uncover the root causes of this tragedy.¹⁸³ Czech newspapers blamed deaths on the “defiant” German farmers and local German politicians, while the German-speaking press blamed the requisition commission, Czech soldiers and especially the legionnaires among them.¹⁸⁴ The left-wing press criticized the Agrarian and clerical parties for having long incited the rural population to rebel against the state supply system and also mentioned the demands of the mayors of rural villages, threatening that if a free market were not introduced, they would stop cultivating grain.¹⁸⁵ The Agrarian press criticized the actions of the requisition commission as inappropriate and the military assistance as not “moderate, prudent or peaceful.” It emphasized the harmful influence of members of the Social Democratic party who joined in the requisitions as fiduciaries of the consumers. It also stressed that the army had not acted with such violence when it intervened against workers looting Prague shops in May 1919. The non-partisan *Lidové noviny* (People’s News) and the Social Democratic *Právo lidu* eventually agreed on rejecting violence as a means of political struggle or a method of purchasing grain, and also on the need to keep the existing food supply system in place.¹⁸⁶ As *Právo lidu* wrote, it was only through the joint efforts of farmers in the countryside and workers in the towns that “the republic could be saved.”¹⁸⁷

Both protests—in May 1919 and in February 1920—were nurtured and instrumentalized by party politics and the coming elections. They did so by exposing the continuous contradictions of the new state in the field of food supply. The Social Democratic protests against profiteering in May 1919 addressed all three of the contradictions of state-building discussed in this chapter: the persistent distrust of the authorities, which were seen as corrupt; the dysfunctionality of the old laws passed under the monarchy; and the search for solutions at the level of the political party rather than at the level of the central state. At the same time, the profiteering courts were a response that addressed this deficit in state building. Even if they

183 “Document 624” and “Document 625,” in *Hnutí venkovského lidu v českých zemích v letech 1918–1922*, ed. Jaroslav César and Milan Otáhal (Historický ústav ČSAV, 1959), 382–84.

184 *Lidové noviny*, 20 February 1920, 1.

185 *Večerník Práva lidu*, 20 February 1920, 1–2.

186 *Lidové noviny*, 20 February 1920, 1.

187 *Večerník Práva lidu*, 20 February 1920, 1.

could not eradicate food profiteering, they became a platform where some of the profiteering bubbles could burst, and truth could be reconstructed with the participation of the “people.”

The peasant protest against requisition was locally isolated and exposed the tension between local interests and the central state. The peasants—or at least their political representatives—did not ask for new institutions or laws but rather for their abolition by re-introduction of free market of agricultural goods. What was at stake in Pohořelice and elsewhere was rather how the state carried out requisitions and how the locals understood their duties.

In neither case did the initiators of the protests want to pointlessly damage, kill or overthrow the government. Rather, they aimed at turning anger provoked by unsolved food supply problems into better elections results. In both cases, we can observe specific solutions, such as the introduction of profiteering courts or detailed analysis of the incident in the case of Pohořelice, as well as embedding these events into a patriotic narrative of a shared path out of a dark past and into a bright future. Finally, the destruction of property and the loss of life were enough of a warning to make the public and state institutions carefully read the message of these political protests and realize the limits of instrumentalizing food supply problems.

In Slovenia, the fight against profiteering and smuggling likewise became increasingly important. In November 1919, due to violations and disorder in the food market, the Provincial Government issued a decree establishing the Office for the Suppression of Price Gougers, Profiteers, and Smugglers. The main task of this office was to prevent excessive price increases and the reselling of foodstuffs, as well as the accumulation of stocks by individuals. The headquarters of the Ljubljana office was organized as a department of the local police headquarters, and it also had several branches at the district level. The office against rising prices operated until April 1921, when the food supply situation sufficiently improved.¹⁸⁸

Smuggling, food reselling, illegal trade, and food profiteering continued to flourish after the war and reached enormous proportions in some areas.¹⁸⁹ It

188 “729. Naredba poverjenišтва za notranje zadeve, dogovorno z ljubljanskim odsekom ministrstva za prehrano in obnovo dežel o ustanovitvi urada zoper navijalce cen, verižnike in tihotapce,” *Uradni list Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani* 1, no. 167 (28 November 1919), 613, and “101. Naredba celokupne deželne vlade za Slovenijo, s katero se ukinja urad zoper navijalce cen, verižnike in tihotapce,” *Uradni list Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani* 3, no. 39 (15 April 1921), 209; “Seja mestnega sosveta,” *Mariborski delavec*, 23 July 1919, 2.

189 “Vprašanje prehrane,” *Slovenec*, 6 December 1918, 3; Stergar, “Yugoslavia is Worthless,” 260; Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 98; Godina Golija, “Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?,” 308.

was pervasive in border areas—along the new border with Italy, e.g., around Vrhnika/Oberlaibach, and on the border with Austria, e.g., in the Maribor area and Upper Carniola.¹⁹⁰ There was even a shortage of potatoes in Upper Carniola because smugglers sold them to Austria.¹⁹¹ This was mainly due to differences in prices of individual foods, overcrowding, the availability of food in shops in individual areas, and currency differences because the value of the crown differed from country to country. For Maribor, it was established that several thousand people were involved in smuggling and were taking advantage of the civilian population's plight during the food shortages in 1919 and 1920.¹⁹² Buying from food smugglers became an established method of obtaining food even after the war for many people, especially those who had enough cash or valuables. Food smuggling, the unjust enrichment of smugglers and food dealers, and the associated rise in food prices led to protests and public expressions of discontent, particularly among workers and miners in industrial centers and towns.¹⁹³ The people lost confidence in the new government due to the illegal trade and were disappointed by the poor functioning and inefficiency of the new state. In January 1919, the Slovene Provincial Government's Minister of Welfare, Anton Kristan, initiated a police crackdown on smugglers and launched a police raid against speculators and profiteers.¹⁹⁴ In the fall of 1919, the Slovene government tried various measures to reduce food smuggling, but the smuggling and selling of food continued. Reports from the vicinity of Maribor show that smuggling was very lively and that organized groups were active in places along the Austrian border. They mainly smuggled meat, sugar, and sausages because the prices for these foods varied greatly in Austria and Slovenia.¹⁹⁵ Because of currency differences, for instance, sugar was much cheaper in Austria than in Slovenia.¹⁹⁶

Workers, miners, small farmers, and officials were critical of the government's supply policy as well as tolerance for smuggling and demanded more stringent measures.¹⁹⁷ It was believed that the food supply situation would

190 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 429, 433; "Tihotapstvo," *Slovenski gospodar*, 28 January 1919.

191 ZAL KRA, SI ZAL KRA/0002 Občina Kranj (1632–1947) (henceforth Občina Kranj), t. e. 148, a. e. 1450, Department of Nutrition, letter on the purchase of potatoes (October 1919).

192 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 421.

193 "Današnji položaj," *Slovenski narod*, 29 April 1920, 4; Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 434, 436; Stergar, "Yugoslavia is Worthless," 260.

194 Ribnikar, *Sejní zapiski Narodne vlade*, 1:103, 140, 302, 303, 311–13.

195 "Dopisi," *Slovenski gospodar*, 28 January 1919, 3.

196 "Kmetje na Dravskem polju...," *Slovenski gospodar*, 8 January 1919, 6; T. G. Otte, ed., *An Historian in Peace and War: The Diaries of Harold Temperley* (Routledge, 2014), 394.

197 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 404.

have improved significantly if there had been no smuggling and reselling of food. For example, the Yugoslav Civil Servants' Association called for stricter control of food exports and the introduction of "people's courts" that could sentence "these pests" to fines of up to two million crowns, up to twenty years in prison, confiscation of property, and even death—but only in "special cases."¹⁹⁸ According to newspaper reports, "hanging smugglers" was generally considered an appropriate solution to the problem among the population, who were tired of speculators and the black market. Harsh punishment, the public assumed, would teach other smugglers the consequences of breaking the law and smuggling and selling food.¹⁹⁹ Due to widespread smuggling and the sale of food on the black market, the government established special municipal courts to prosecute speculators and profiteers, which was met with great approval among the people.²⁰⁰ These courts investigated and adjudicated the smuggling, chain-linking, and selling of food by expedited procedure. However, the courts were unable to impose severe punishments, such as the death penalty, which caused further disillusionment with the new government's handling of the crisis as food smuggling continued to flourish.²⁰¹ The work of the courts has shown that penalties and other repressive measures could not solve the problem of severe food shortages. Organized smuggling also flourished on a large scale, even in later years, and some smuggling operations involved essential personalities from the economy. Illegal food trafficking and smuggling did not significantly decrease until the late 1920s, but most people who engaged in trafficking went unpunished. In 1922, 272 smugglers and speculators were punished, and in 1930, only 30.²⁰²

The unregulated food supply situation and the ineffective state system, which did not find solutions to food shortages, food smuggling, and high food prices in 1919 and the first half of 1920, increased discontent among the people and their doubts about the better and more just new state.²⁰³ People who were exhausted from the war and the postwar events reacted spontaneously and violently to the injustices, the enrichment of some individuals through scarcity and the black market, and to the unfortunate actions of the government, which did not fulfill its promises. In particular, the workers, miners, and peasant proletariat were disappointed with the

198 ARS, AS 60, t. e. 3, a. e. 31, 1004/246, Report from Maribor police commissioner (19 October 1919).

199 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 102.

200 *Uradni list pokrajinske uprave za Slovenijo* 4, no. 6 (21 January 1922).

201 "Veriženje," *Slovenski gospodar*, 8 January 1920, 6; Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 104.

202 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 105.

203 Stergar, "Yugoslavia is Worthless," 261–62.

situation in the new state, which they expressed at protests or as angry and violent individuals in different situations. It is therefore not surprising that on the first anniversary of the new state, on 29 October 1919, leaflets appeared in Ljubljana calling for a revolution due to poor living conditions: "Today, on the anniversary, there is no flour, no white bread and potatoes, no beans! We are naked and barefoot! To the barricades!"²⁰⁴ Despite the swift removal of these leaflets by the police, this did little to satisfy popular discontent, as people primarily demanded more food and a better life. However, it should be emphasized that these riots and protests were local and did not turn into a long-lasting, coordinated movement that could threaten the new state.

Abolish or Maintain? From State Rationing to the Monitored Free Market

Despite its repeated failures and chronic flaws that earned it intense hatred, the complex system of state food rationing was the government's most powerful food supply tool. At the same time, it was a relic of the war and of the old regime that were both gone. Moreover, it was not clear if the widely dysfunctional state rationing was actually improving the food supply by limiting individual consumption, setting affordable prices, and distributing the rations or making it worse by demotivating the producers, disappointing the consumers, and opening the gates to food criminality. Therefore, both the abolition and the maintenance of state rationing measures had their advantages and drawbacks as documented in the heated postwar debates.

To be more precise, the question was not whether the whole system of state supply that developed over several years should disappear at once, but rather how it should be phased out. On the one hand, we can see the state food supply measures as a tiered system of stages reaching from free market to state monopoly—and back.²⁰⁵ On the other, such a schematized image does not reflect the fact that different commodities found themselves at different stages or substages of this system. There were also many measures that were not clearly connected to these stages but limited consumption, for example, "meatless days" or the ban on baking with white flour.

204 Pavle Čelik, *Slovenski stražniki, 1918–1941* (Fakulteta za družbene vede, 2002), 130.

205 Aleksandar R. Miletić, "'From Disorder to 'the Normality': Food Provisioning in Western, Central, and Southeast Europe, 1914–1924," *Hiperborea* 8, no. 1 (2021): 59–80.

The Czechoslovak Ministry of People's Supply was generally reluctant to dismantle the state supply system too quickly and insisted that consumers, many of whom were the "human motor" of the industry, needed on-going protection by the state. Reports on the food situation that the ministry compiled for the Inter-Allied Scientific Food Commission and the American Relief Administration in the spring and summer of 1919 indeed painted a grim picture. The combined lack of food, sunlight, and heat during the winter period undermined the health of broad segments of the population. It was not only tuberculosis, scrofulosis, or rickets in the case of children, but also scabies and other skin diseases due to a lack of soap and washing soda. A lack of light caused various visual disorders, while a lack of coal and firewood meant that meals could not be cooked. Cold that could not be compensated by warm clothes and blankets caused rheumatism and other serious diseases. Poor people were said to be sewing clothes from their sheets and supposedly had no more underwear.²⁰⁶ In the Jilemnice/Starkenbach District in northern Bohemia, people were said to be so weak from malnutrition that they could not walk and did not leave their homes in winter.²⁰⁷ On the other hand, hunger edema—recorded as a marker of famine under the Habsburg Empire—had disappeared "almost entirely" in northern Bohemia by May 1919.²⁰⁸

Another report for the Americans compiled statistical data on the number of clients in war kitchens and soup institutions in Bohemia. These indicated how many people depended on public support in the consumption of their daily meals. The ministry itself found this data "interesting" because it showed big differences between the various districts of Bohemia. Prague, where 9% of the population had its daily meals in war kitchens, was much worse off than many Czech-speaking districts in inner Bohemia, where war kitchens were less important or even negligible, e.g. Mladá Boleslav/Jungbunzlau (2.1%) or Rokycany/Rokitzen (0.2%); but Prague was much better off than some German-speaking district in Bohemia's western and northern regions, like Aš/Asch with 48.7%, Šluknov/Schluckenau with 33%, or Jablonec nad Nisou/Gablonz an der Neiße with 18.7%.²⁰⁹ Perhaps contrary to the ministry's biased view, this again confirmed that the food supply situation was most serious in the dominantly German-speaking fringes of Bohemia rather than in Prague or in Bohemia's Czech-speaking interior.

²⁰⁶ *Věstník MZL*, 12 July 1919, 259.

²⁰⁷ *Věstník MZL*, 12 July 1919, 259.

²⁰⁸ *Věstník MZL*, 25 October 1919, 486.

²⁰⁹ *Věstník MZL*, 31 May 1919, 166–67.

However, unlike the Americans who were interested in measuring hunger through anthropometric data, for the Czechoslovak Ministry of People's Supply, the most important indicators of the food situation were the quantities and prices of agricultural products on the one hand, and the incomes and budgets of consumers on the other. From the various data sets, it was clear that during and after the war, food prices skyrocketed while wages rose much more slowly. As the ministry announced in July 1919, wages rose by 57% during the war, while food prices skyrocketed by 500–1000%; on the black market, even more.²¹⁰ Thus the ministry was reluctant to dismantle the state supply system before there was enough food and greater balance between supply and demand. It feared that a premature introduction of the free market would increase prices to black market levels, reorient production towards goods with the highest profit margin and leave the non-subsistence population even less supplied.

As mentioned above, aside from economic statistics, the ministry also used medical metaphors to justify the government's ongoing intervention on behalf of consumers. For example, in an expert conference organized by the ministry at the end of March 1920, state secretary Antonín Srba argued for state rationing using a metaphor of a sick organism, whose reactions contradict peacetime economics: "What was true in times of peace is different today, and the sick person reacts differently from the healthy person. A sick person may feel cold, and yet he must be given cold compresses; no one can say to him, 'Get up and walk' so that he gets well immediately. But in economic life they say, 'Introduce free trade,' without considering the terrible consequences that must necessarily follow." Srba argued that low supply and high demand would deform the market and for a significant part of the population mean a question of life and death. In the interest of its own survival, he urged the state to distribute basic food and set its prices in order to make food available to broader segments of the society.²¹¹ Such views were certainly a red rag to the producers and traders who countered that a recovery could only come with the free market and not through the state continuously distorting the economy by preferring consumers over producers.²¹²

210 *Věstník MZL*, 12 July 1919, 258. For the estimation of black market prices, see *Věstník MZL*, 20 March 1920, 2.

211 NA, Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu, 1918–33, k. 505, "Protokol o anketě pro zjištění a odstranění příčin stále stoupající drahoty a lichvy [...] dne 30. a 31. března 1920," speech by Antonín Srba (13 April 1920).

212 *Venkov*, 22 April 1920, 7.

Still, the ministry's views did not seem unfounded as problems with the introduction of free trade with various commodities both abroad and in the Bohemian Lands showed. The free trade of cherries is a case in a point. Although the cherry harvest of 1920 was abundant and trade in fruit and vegetables free (no. 350/1920 Coll.), cherries were sold at unaffordable prices or did not reach the consumers at all. This was mainly due to speculation by cherry traders and the efforts of the ministry and other authorities to secure their access to consumers. Although the price of cherries on the trees was officially set at 0.60–0.70 Czechoslovak crowns per kilo, they began to appear on the Prague markets in June 1920 at a price of 10–12 crowns per kilo. The ministry initially tolerated this exorbitant price for early cherries as a “luxury” commodity. Eventually, however, it convened a price-setting committee representing various stakeholders and set an official price of 3.20–3.50 crowns per kilo that also included a “decent civic profit.”²¹³

This measure notwithstanding, cherries did not appear in plenty and cheaply at Prague's markets. This was mainly because the merchants controlling the Prague market stopped supplying them with cherries in response to this enforced price drop. Such an artificially induced shortage by a seeming monopoly on trade in cherries should have put pressure on the authorities to increase selling prices again. However, the authorities reckoned that with the accelerated ripening of cherries in the coming weeks, the traders, having no other legal outlet, would have to deliver them to the Prague market to make at least some money on them. Yet, traders preferred to let the cherries overripen and partially spoil than offer them to consumers at these official prices. They subsequently applied to the ministry for permission to process the spoiled fruit into jam. The ministry did not allow them to do so because of the general lack of sugar and the health hazards of rotten cherries. As a solution, the ministry offered the possibility of having the cherries distilled for alcohol. The traders kept insisting on jam because jam companies were buying the cherries for three crowns per kilogram, while the distilleries were paying significantly less.²¹⁴

This cherry contest between traders and the public authorities was accompanied by media coverage full of mutual accusations and self-advocacy. The press also stirred up the anger of consumers, who were annoyed by both the high prices and the shortage of cherries and were looking for a scapegoat. This was evidenced by a note in *Národní politika* (National Politics) from a reader in Stará Paka/Altpaka in eastern Bohemia. He described a

213 *Věstník MZL*, 12 June 1920, 203–4.

214 *Věstník MZL*, 17 July 1920, 282–83.

shortage of cherries in his hometown, while in nearby, mainly German-speaking Vrchlabí/Hohenelbe there should have been plenty of cherries, priced between 5.60 and eight crowns per kilogram. An inspection by the district captain, of Czech nationality as the ministry noted, confirmed that there were smaller amounts of cherries in Vrchlabí that were initially sold for 5.60 crowns per kilogram and later at the official price of 2.80 crowns per kilogram. The district captain rejected the rumors that cherries were plentiful and overpriced in the German-speaking districts.²¹⁵

Cherries were indeed a special commodity. They were not a staple, their season was short, and similar problems had already occurred in 1919. On the other hand, as the first fruit of the season, they were popular with consumers, and their unaffordability could lead to serious protests or even bloody riots. Such was the case in Graz, Austria, where on 7 June 1920, high cherry prices at the city market provoked protests that ended up in a shootout that left twelve people dead and eighteen seriously wounded.²¹⁶ This tragic course of events had its roots in local conditions, but the high prices of cherries were the starting point. This is why even if there was a free market in cherries in the Bohemian Lands, the authorities were still active in regulating the supply side by price control and the demand side by providing background information. In this case, even though some cherries went bad and did not reach consumers and other cherries were sold at higher prices, this kind of public intervention and communication proved indispensable on the road to the free market.

It is also necessary to mention that the improvement in the supply situation in the Bohemian Lands was not linear. As before, it depended on the phases of the agricultural year. However, even within these phases, supply failures of greater or lesser magnitude continued to occur due to the vagaries of the weather, problems in transporting or processing foodstuffs, and due to human factors. For example, in early November 1919, there was another “supply failure” in the Bohemian Lands. Although the domestic harvest had just taken place and food was also imported from abroad, flour was suddenly in short supply. According to the Minister of People’s Supply Fedor Houdek, who spoke on that topic in parliament, the main reason was the time conflict between the delayed harvest and the fall agricultural labor. There was also a shortage of gasoline and coal for threshing and a shortage of railroad cars for transporting grain to consumers. The minister self-critically admitted

215 *Národní politika*, 22 June 1920, cited in *Věstník MZL*, 3 July 1920, 249.

216 Gerhard Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik: Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1938* (Wilhelm Fink, 1983), 78.

that this situation could have been anticipated and the ministry had tried to purchase 10,000 wagons of grain from abroad in advance. This, however, failed, and the grain from abroad was still on trains in Austria and on ships bound for Bohemia on the Elbe at the time of the supply failure. Houdek also mentioned other infamous reasons for the situation, such as the “district supply policy” blocking transport of grain or the reluctance of producers to supply food to the state.²¹⁷ As a result, while flour rations were increased from 1,950 grams per person a week to 3,000 grams on 21 September 1919, due to this failure, they decreased to 2,250 grams per person a week on 9 November 1919.²¹⁸ Needless to say, these prescribed rations were in reality not available to everyone everywhere. As the American Relief Administration observed, in notoriously less supplied areas such as North Bohemia, the factual size of the flour ration was smaller than in places such as Prague.²¹⁹

In summary, the introduction of the free market was a process of back and forth, trial and error, and mutual learning. Even when trade with grain as the last major commodity was liberalized as of 1 July 1921, the ministry retained several instruments to protect consumer supply. To cushion the possible price shock of free trade, the state still had the right to buy 40,000 wagons of grain from farmers at a lower price from the 1921 harvest.²²⁰ Flour rations were still distributed to the poor in the following half year until the price of flour dropped significantly in the beginning of 1922.²²¹ While the various war-time food supply institutions were gradually dismantled, the Ministry of People’s Supply limited its operations but was not abolished until 1933.²²²

By contrast, the government in Ljubljana said a quicker farewell to many war-time supply measures despite the on-going difficult situation. In January 1919, the gendarmerie from Vrhnika wrote in a report that the situation of civilians was challenging and that the villagers in one of the smaller towns along the demarcation line with Italy had last received sugar in August 1918.²²³ In January 1919, the Celje newspaper *Nova doba* (New Era) published a report illustrating the shortage and hardship of people waiting in long lines for bread or flour, similar to the severe shortage during the

217 *Věstník MZL*, 15 November 1919.

218 *Věstník MZL*, 15 November 1919, 532; Štěpek, *Přídělové systémy*, 1:69.

219 Arthur C. Ringland and Dorothy Gerbering, “Food Surveys and Sample Diet Studies in Czecho-Slovakia,” *American Relief Administration Bulletin* 12, no. 7 (1920): 29–36.

220 *Věstník MZL*, 28 July 1921, 1.

221 Štěpek, *Přídělové systémy*, 1:127.

222 Janák and Hledíková, *Dějiny správy v českých zemích*, 434.

223 Stergar, “Yugoslavia is Worthless,” 257.

war.²²⁴ There was also a shortage of coal and other fuels, and many schools were closed in February 1919.²²⁵ Even in Ljubljana, where the Provincial Government and its food supply institutions were located, the situation was no better. During the winter of 1918/1919, the city suffered from a severe fat, sugar, and flour shortage.²²⁶ In February 1919, the municipality of Ljubljana had to inform the government that the stock of flour in Ljubljana was down to ten days.²²⁷

Under challenging conditions, when food was insufficient and the aid of the Allied forces to the newly founded country did not arrive in adequate quantities, the Slovene government found itself in severe distress. They expected external aid and solidarity from other parts of the country, especially Croatia. At a meeting of the government on 13 January 1919, Minister of Nutrition Ivan Tavčar had to admit that the situation was very critical and that the stock of flour in Ljubljana had been reduced to fifty wagons and in Maribor to only 24 wagons, which was enough to supply the population for a week.²²⁸ In order to improve the supply of flour and bread, the National Government on 24 January 1919 issued the Ordinance of the Ministry of Nutrition on the General Regulation of the Consumption of Bread and Mill Products. This stipulated that in cities and towns with more than 6,000 inhabitants, bread and mill products could only be sold based on food cards in pretty much the same way as during the war.²²⁹ With these stricter measures, the government tried to influence merchants and bakers to control food sales more closely because the system was not working well.²³⁰ They also controlled trade in sugar produced in Yugoslavia; despite imports of sugar from the Bohemian Lands, there was a severe shortage of sugar on the market.

As the population's patience and affection for the new country waned, Slovene newspapers, under the influence of nationalist politics, called on the

224 Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 107.

225 PAM, SI PAM 0791 Osnovna šola Franceta Prešerna Maribor (1838–2013), t. e. 144, School chronicle for the year 1918/1919.

226 "Prehrana," *Slovenski narod*, 23 January 1919, 1; "Aprovizacija," *Slovenec*, 12 March 1919, 4; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 154.

227 Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 156.

228 Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 107; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani*, 156.

229 "322. Naredba poverjenistva za prehrano o splošni uravnavi porabljanja kruha in mlinjskih izdelkov," *Uradni list Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani* 1, no. 43 (28 January 1919), 112.

230 Peter Ribnikar, "Narodna vlada SHS v Ljubljani in Deželne vlade za Slovenijo 1918–1921," in Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki Narodne vlade*, 1:298; Bojan Balkovec, *Prva slovenska vlada 1918–1921* (Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1992), 151–52; Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 81–87; Jurij Perovšek, *Slovenski prevrat 1918*, 205–7.

population to cooperate with the newly elected authorities and to respect the measures. They expected people to make sacrifices for the new state. In particular, they appealed to farmers who should not sell their produce to smugglers, traffickers, and Germans who—the government claimed—opposed Yugoslavia, misled the population with false information, and were destroying peace and order in the country:

Many of the officials and workers of German nationality or Germans who are still living on our Slovene soil have been dismissed. [...] And these Germans now have the time to walk among you to buy food for themselves and to export it elsewhere and make great profits. These hypocrites have a double purpose: they want to please Slovene farmers and tell you blatant lies to buy as much and as cheaply as possible from you, and on the other hand they want to incite you against good and honest Slovenes. [...] Therefore, do not sell anything to the Germans. For why should they breed among us and do nothing? Give the food to your relatives and other Slovenes who are working for you!²³¹

In February 1919, due to severe food shortages in Slovenia, a representative of the American mission in Belgrade visited Slovenia to find out about the food shortage and prepare a report for the head of the American Food Mission. Based on statistical data, Slovene politicians showed the American diplomat the poor food supply situation in Carniola, and the high-ranking American guest was accompanied to Celje and Maribor, where the situation was even more difficult. They also warned that they had not received any cereals that the Yugoslav Ministry of Nutrition and Reconstruction sent from Novi Sad, nor did they receive any Croatian maize.²³²

As the food supply system failed to meet expectations in the winter of 1918/1919, the new government sought solutions. Two political factions emerged: one that believed that free trade would lead to an improvement in the market situation, especially in the sale of flour and bread, and the other, led by Social Democrats, opposing the end of rationing, fearing it would worsen food accessibility for most citizens. In February 1919, the central government decided to gradually introduce free trade in food, which was a consequence of the arrival of US food from Trieste/Trst.²³³

231 "Kmetje na Dravskem polju, bodite previdni in pozorni!," *Slovenski gospodar*, 9 January 1919, 2.

232 "Prehranjevalna komisija v Mariboru," *Slovenec*, 8 February 1919, 2.

233 More about this in Chapter 3 of this book.

This act filled the shops with some foodstuffs in the late winter and early spring of 1919. As a citizen of Ljubljana wrote, buns, cakes, and various breads suddenly appeared in the displays of bakeries.²³⁴ However, due to high prices, this food supply remained inaccessible to the majority of the population, and the free trade of food did not improve the supply for the general public.²³⁵ Rather, it increased feelings of helplessness among them and further highlighted the great social differences in Slovene society. There was still a shortage of flour, bread, fat, meat, and sugar, but if these foods appeared on sale, prices were too high for most of the population. The municipality of Kranj/Krainburg reported to the Grain Institute in Ljubljana that, due to high prices, neither the poorest population nor the middle class could afford food. They said it was high time that the relevant state services took action to improve supplies and control food prices.²³⁶ The Social Democrats and other representatives of the proletariat used the high prices of food and problems of less wealthy families for their political activities, including protests.²³⁷

On the other hand, wealthier citizens enjoyed the fact that affordable butter, sausages, cakes, and other sweets appeared in the shop windows after a long time.²³⁸ They often bought more significant, even unnecessary quantities of food on the open market, and accumulated stocks of various foodstuffs. This accumulated food was then resold when the shops began to run out of certain foodstuffs, e.g., flour, or they exchanged the food for other goods. Due to these irregularities in the free sale of food, the district captains adopted specific measures to ensure enough food for most of the population, including the less fortunate. Among them was the measure that citizens had to declare the possession of large quantities of food or the import of food from abroad.²³⁹

US food aid shipments in February and May 1919—comprising flour, lard, and bacon²⁴⁰—did not improve the availability of food for the majority of

234 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 421.

235 Alma M. Karlin, "Ein Mensch wird: Auf dem Weg zur Weltreisenden" (unpublished manuscript, 1931), 381, available at: <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:IMG-Q5MOEU8E>; Otte, *An Historian in Peace and War*, 393–94.

236 SI ZAL KRA, Občina Kranj, t. e. 148, a. e. 1450, Letter to the Grain Institute in Ljubljana (7 January 1919).

237 "Stavka železničarjev – odgodena," *Naprej*, 26 March 1920, 4.

238 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 418–19; Karlin, "Ein Mensch wird," 386.

239 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 93.

240 "Živila za dravsko divizijo," *Slovenec*, 4 February 1919, 4; "Hrana za naše kraje," *Slovenec*, 18 February 1919, 3.

the population due to persistently high retail prices.²⁴¹ According to the calculations, in 1919 alone, food prices rose by as much as 186%, with the price of sugar, potatoes, and cornmeal rising the most.²⁴² The situation was particularly difficult for working and mining families in Trbovlje/Trifail, Zagorje/Sagor, Hrastnik/Hrastnigg, Celje, and Maribor. Representatives of the American Relief Administration estimated that by 1919, around 20,000 children in Slovenia would need food aid.²⁴³

As already mentioned, on 25 February 1919, all food restrictions—except on sugar and salt—were lifted, but traders opposed this policy due to inadequate supplies from producers.²⁴⁴ In mid-March, the Ministry of Nutrition and Reconstruction in Belgrade prohibited individual traders from making unrestricted food purchases of food on Yugoslav territory. This was allowed only to supply food to institutions and services.²⁴⁵ Experts and political authorities in Ljubljana also had similar concerns. So, on 3 March, the ministry in Belgrade warned that free trade would lead to food scarcity and a sharp rise in food prices.²⁴⁶ In order to prevent this, the Department of Nutrition in Ljubljana issued a decree that anyone in the territory of the Provincial Government who owned grain, flour, potatoes, beans, lard, or oil and wished to sell more than a hundred kilograms of it must inform the department, which had the right to purchase these foods first.²⁴⁷

In addition to rising food prices and high inflation, currency differences in the value of the crown in Austria and Slovenia also caused major problems for regional and central governments. This resulted in very different food prices in Slovenia and in the neighboring countries and dramatically influenced the flourishing of food smuggling and reselling in the border regions.²⁴⁸ In December 1918, the Slovene government's Ministry of Finance banned

241 Katarina Keber, "Post-World War I Children's Healthcare in Slovenia as Experienced by Angela Boškin, the First Slovenian Nurse," *Virus: Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte der Medizin*, no. 17 (2018): 295–303; Godina Golija, *Prehrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih*, 35; Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University (henceforth HILA), American Relief Administration European Operational Records (henceforth ARAEO), box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 4–6.

242 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 125.

243 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 4–6.

244 "397. Naredba prehranjevalnega urada v Ljubljani," *Uradni list deželne vlade za Slovenijo* 1, no. 61 (11 March 1919), 185.

245 "Iz seje mestnega aprovizacijskega odseka," *Slovenski narod*, 13 March 1919, 6.

246 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 93.

247 "397. Naredba prehranjevalnega urada v Ljubljani."

248 "Neopravičena relacija med krono in dinarjem," *Slovenski narod*, 26 April 1920, 2; Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 437.

the importation of banknotes over 1,000 crowns into the country. At the same time, it decided to stamp the crown banknotes. Since counterfeiting the crown stamps was relatively easy and frequent, unique stamps were added to the crown banknotes. The marking of crown banknotes on Slovene territory was completed by 31 January 1919. How to exchange the crowns for the new Yugoslav currency, the dinar, was the next difficult question for the government. This was also required by Article 206 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which stipulated that the crown must be exchanged for the new currency no later than twelve months after the treaty entered into force. In March 1920, the National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes began exchanging crowns for Yugoslav dinars at a rate of four to one.²⁴⁹ Other currencies used on the territory of Yugoslavia were also replaced. By January 1923, all accounts in the kingdom were settled only in dinars.²⁵⁰

At the beginning of January 1919, recognizing the dire conditions, the National Government in Ljubljana also started an Aid Action for the Poor.²⁵¹ In addition, there were other minor relief actions organized at the local level, e.g., student kitchens or assistance given to war widows, poor children, war disabled, etc. These initiatives continued into 1920 as food prices remained high and the situation of most of the civilian population was difficult.²⁵² To address this, the government bought or bartered food from other European countries, including some formerly hostile ones (e.g., Germany, Austria) and Czechoslovakia.²⁵³ For example, the Slovene government even exported corn flour, potatoes, and beans to German Austria—to get salt.²⁵⁴ However, such organized food exports met with public and political disapproval, and critical reflections on food exports were often published in the newspapers of the time. The newspaper *Slovenski gospodar* (Slovene Homeowner) wrote that politicians were exporting flour and grain, while the people still lacked these items and paid for the food too dearly.²⁵⁵

By the fall of 1919, food shortages intensified due to inefficient Yugoslav market operations and the problems of transporting food to Slovenia. The

249 Šorn, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih*, 126–27.

250 "Neverjetnosti – proti prosti trgovini," *Slovenski narod*, 25 April 1920, 1; "Ureditev notranje in vnanje trgovine," *Slovenski narod*, 27 April 1920, 4; Šorn, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih*, 133; Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 130.

251 "Za vdove in sirote," *Slovenski gospodar*, 3 January 1919, 2.

252 "Naša trgovina," *Slovenec*, 29 August 1920, 1.

253 Ribnikar, *Sejmi zapisniki Narodne vlade*, 1:97.

254 Šorn, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih*, 105.

255 "Zakaj izvoz hrane?," *Slovenski gospodar*, 31 December 1919, 5.

Slovene government bought flour and other foodstuffs from Serbia, but three hundred wagons of food did not make it to Slovene territory. At the same time, there was a shortage of sugar and salt, and merchants withheld these goods in anticipation of higher prices.²⁵⁶ In many districts, there was also a shortage of fats and meat because their production was insufficient.²⁵⁷ In November, the municipality of Tržič reported in a letter to the district captain of Kranj that there was a severe local shortage of milk and sugar, which had not been supplied to the town for several months, even though there were many weakened and sick inhabitants and working-class families.²⁵⁸ There was also a severe shortage of flour on the entire territory of Slovenia because it could not be transported from Vojvodina due to problems with the Yugoslav railway. The situation on the railways and the supply of flour only improved in Slovenia at the end of November 1919.²⁵⁹ Despite the efforts of the provincial and local authorities and various measures, the shortage of basic foodstuffs throughout 1919 was still considerable. Slovenia did not produce enough food for its population and was mainly dependent on imported food: as many as two thirds of its food needs (cereals, potatoes, meat, and fat) had to be covered by imports from other parts of the country and from abroad.²⁶⁰

Due to the lack of food and the disrupted supply of it, as well as due to the food traffickers, who, according to many, were the main culprits of the problematic situation in the country, the inhabitants were disappointed and agitated.²⁶¹ The severity of the situation and the growing dissatisfaction with both the provisioning system and state authorities are well documented in contemporary reports from district captains. In a report from Ptuj dated November 1919, it was noted that hundreds of individuals gathered daily outside the district office seeking food assistance, with “the most dangerous remarks” reportedly heard among the assembled crowd. Expressions such as “It’s all Yugoslavia’s fault!” were frequently voiced by disgruntled citizens.²⁶²

The partial liberalization of the food trade fueled political debates over rationing and the regulation of the food supply in the new Yugoslav state.

256 Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 98; Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 433, 437.

257 SI ZAL KRA, Občina Kranj, t. e. 148, a. e. 1450; Report on meat shortage (1 October 1919).

258 SI ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Report from the municipality of Tržič (12 November 1919); Keber, “Post-World War I Children’s Healthcare in Slovenia,” 300.

259 “Pomanjkanje moke in kruha je vsak dan občutnejše,” *Naprej*, 22 November 1919, 1; Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki Narodne vlade*, 2:409–10.

260 “Slovenski kmet prvič minister v Jugoslaviji,” *Slovenec*, 21 January 1920, 1.

261 Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 435.

262 Stergar, “Yugoslavia is Worthless,” 260.

This strengthened initiatives for the complete abolition of the rationalized food supply system and for the introduction of free trade. However, difficulties in selling and buying food led the Yugoslav Minister of Nutrition and Reconstruction, Anton Korošec, to seriously consider reintroducing extensive rationing of the food supply in the summer of 1919.²⁶³ This idea was linked to the state of supply in the first half of 1919, when even the most needed foods were often in short supply—sugar, salt, flour, meat, fat, and sometimes even milk.²⁶⁴ However, strong opposition prevented full-scale rationing, with only sugar and salt remaining regulated. As shortages continued into the early 1920s, the Provincial Government looked for solutions to improve the situation.

In addition to the already mentioned establishment of district supply councils, in the spring of 1919, meetings of representatives of the Provincial Government and the food office, representatives of ministries, political and professional organizations, and consumer organizations (cooperatives and city municipalities) began to be convened. During the spring 1920 meeting, participants drew attention to the still present problems of grain supply. Slovenia needed seven hundred grain wagons per month, which it did not regularly receive, not even in 1920. This was mainly due to issues with cash payments and the requisition of grain by the army. Problems with the purchase of cereals in Slovenia were related to the lack of stamped banknotes, which made it even more difficult to ensure sufficient quantities of food.²⁶⁵ Some representatives of political groups, for instance the Social Democrats, even proposed the abolition of free trade, the introduction of controls on the sale of foodstuffs, the regulation of producer prices, and their uniform setting on the market, stricter centralized control of the export of food out of the country, and a more determined fight against smuggling and speculators who raised the price of food.²⁶⁶ In the following years, the participants of the consultation also proposed measures that would improve the food supply of the population, especially those that would have an impact on its lower price: a reduction in railway tariffs for food transport,

263 "Prehrana ostane v državni oskrbi," *Slovenec*, 13 December 1919, 2; "Neverjetnosti – proti prosti trgovini," *Slovenski narod*, 25 April 1920, 1; Keber, "Post-World War I Children's Healthcare in Slovenia," 300; Godina Golija, "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?," 311.

264 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 94, 95; Emma Anne Hatto, "A Slovene Perspective on Yugoslav State-Building Examined Through the Political Career of Dr Anton Korošec 1918–28," PhD diss. (University of Southampton, 2022), 230.

265 "Za izboljšanje dostave živil v Slovenijo," *Naprej*, 26 March 1920, 3.

266 "Pred prevratom," *Naprej*, 10 April 1919, 1.

revision of the fight against speculation, more consistent prosecution of the illegal food trade, and the writing off of loans to state-approved suppliers.²⁶⁷

The unstable food supply situation was often the subject of mutual accusations and political battles, especially in 1919 and 1920, when there were frequent changes of government in the Yugoslav state. At the end of March 1920, the Ministry of Nutrition and Reconstruction under the leadership of Anton Korošec announced that it no longer had food in stock. The government of Stojan Protić (Radical Party) and Korošec (Slovene People's Party) was meant to receive full food supplies from the previous government but was supposed to use these within a few weeks.²⁶⁸ Many accused Korošec of acting as minister primarily for the interests of his party colleagues from the Slovene People's Party. In addition to the problems with grain, salt, and sugar, the discontent of the population in late 1920 was caused by renewed problems with the supply of meat, which were repeated two years after the end of the war. The cause of the problem was the high price of meat, which did not allow traders to sell at the prescribed prices, which in turn were too low to cover their costs. Among the butchers, the picture resembled the worst days of the war.²⁶⁹ The dissatisfied population blamed the government for serving the interests of the rich and supporting their food export business while the less affluent population went hungry.²⁷⁰

The situation in Slovenia during the first two postwar years remained complicated, especially in the industrial and mining centers of Upper Carniola and Styria.²⁷¹ Consequently an all-encompassing abolition of rationed supply was impossible, and normalization only proceeded gradually. In Maribor, bread rationing was abandoned on 15 June 1920. In Celje, the last traces of food rations disappeared in November 1920,²⁷² while in Ljubljana, the last remains of bread rationing vanished with the closure of the municipal bakery on 9 January 1921.²⁷³

The unstable situation continued in 1921 and 1922, so there were still occasional initiatives for the reintroduction of controlled food sales and

267 "Anketa o naraščanju draginje," *Jutro*, 6 September 1921, 1.

268 Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 106.

269 "Zur Jahreswende," *Marburger Zeitung*, 1 January 1921, 1.

270 "Zakaj izvoz hrane?," *Slovenski gospodar*, 31 December 1919, 5.

271 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 4, 6; Maja Godina Golija, *Iz mariborskih predmestij: o življenju in kulturi mariborskih delavcev v letih od 1919 do 1941* (Obzorja, 1992), 34; Keber, "Post-World War I Children's Healthcare in Slovenia," 300.

272 Himmelreich, *Namesto zemlje črni kruh*, 111.

273 *Naprej*, 9 January 1921.

food stamps.²⁷⁴ The high prices of basic foodstuffs made many despair and express their discontent at protests and rallies.²⁷⁵ Therefore, between 1922 and 1923, the Provincial Government still organized the supply of food for the less affluent strata and called on the districts to inform them of the number of people interested in purchasing food at reduced prices in their areas.²⁷⁶ In June 1922, the Provincial Government also passed a law to reduce the price of necessities and to counter “unscrupulous food speculation” in order to regulate the situation in the food market.²⁷⁷ To a large extent, however, it failed to do so. Despite a more regular availability of food on the market, the poorer sections of the population still had empty stomachs in the “promised land.”²⁷⁸

The standard of most of the population in Slovenia deteriorated until 1921, and after that year, it began to improve only slowly. Inflation in the country was high from 1919 to 1923.²⁷⁹ It was only with the regulation of state finances in 1923 that inflation was stopped, and prices and the cost of living stopped rising after nine years.²⁸⁰ However, the standard of living in Slovenia was still lower in 1923 than it was before the start of the First World War.²⁸¹ The consequences of the First World War and significant political changes continued to shape Slovene society long into the postwar transition.

Conclusion

In both the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia, the food crisis lasted much longer than expected after the Habsburg Empire collapsed in 1918. For the years that followed, food supply remained a primary individual interest as well as a key public concern. Politicians understood that the provision of sufficient and affordable food was an important factor in political stability,

274 ÖStA, AdR, Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (1918–2005), BKA-AA HP Handelspolitik, Abteilung 14, 1918, K. 14, Report on the harvest in Yugoslavia in 1920 (18 June 1920).

275 “Današnji položaj,” *Slovenski narod*, 29 April 1920, 4; “Železničarska stavka,” *Slovenec*, 22 April 1920, 3.

276 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 112.

277 “6. Zakon o pobijanju draginje življenskih potrebščin in brezvestne spekulacije,” *Uradni list pokrajinske uprave za Slovenijo* 4, no. 5 (18 January 1922): 62–63.

278 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, Report on Children’s Feeding in Slovenia, 4, 6; Karlin, “Ein Mensch wird,” 381; Milčinski, *Dnevnik 1914–1920*, 404.

279 Šorn, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih*, 234.

280 Jože Šorn, “Cene in mezde ter gospodarski položaj industrijskega delavstva na Slovenskem neposredno po prevratu,” *Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja* 7, no. 1–2 (1967): 233–35.

281 Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh*, 130.

not only in places with populations that were not favorable to the new state on ethnic grounds, but also in the core Czech and Slovene lands. Despite the optimism surrounding the creation of both Czechoslovakia and the Yugoslav state and the measures taken by the new governments to improve the food supply system, food availability generally did not improve that quickly and sufficiently. Significant portions of the population in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia experienced hunger and other forms of material deprivation during the winter of 1918/1919 and beyond.

In the chronology of postwar food shortages, we should not be confused by the fact that the governments in Prague and Ljubljana reacted differently to the fundamental question of free market versus state rationing of food. Since the rationing measures did not provide enough food for the population in Slovenia, Slovene politicians and intellectuals made various appeals to the population to renounce “material gods” and be modest, to follow government measures strictly, and to increase the participation of producers in the provision of food, especially for children. However, the calls for greater support of the new state reached only some people, while others continued to seek cheaper and sufficient food, including through the black market and smuggling. While the dysfunctional food rationing system in Slovenia was partially abolished as early as February 1919, the Czechoslovak government insisted on its indispensability and maintained it, albeit for fewer and fewer goods, until mid-1921. Both solutions, however, brought dissatisfaction because neither could balance the supply and demand for food in the postwar economic chaos. The free market in Slovenia did not bring greater availability of food to most of the population; it only increased social inequalities. In 1919 and 1920, the prices of basic foodstuffs skyrocketed, and people still faced shortages. The standard of living of most of the population in Slovenia continued to fall until 1921. After the state finances stabilized in 1923, inflation decreased, and the cost of living stopped rising. However, the standard of living in Slovenia was still lower than before the First World War in 1923. In the Bohemian Lands, inflation was curbed more quickly, but food rationing led to endless protests by producers, widespread black marketeering, and extreme public pressure on state institutions to manage the situation properly.

All the governments in the regions discussed understood that food supply was a lever for their claims to sovereignty in contested areas. However, Czechs and Slovenes had a better hand than the Bohemian or Lower-Styrian Germans. Besides the strategically important political support of the Allies, daily governance at the local level relied on the reconstitution of the armed forces and provisioning of food. The Czechs controlled the original

provincial infrastructure in Prague, had more food stocks, and the national enthusiasm to endure some more hardships in the name of a better future also helped. For some Bohemian Germans, too, the Czechoslovak occupation was temporarily more acceptable than the chaos that broke out in northwest Bohemia at the end of October 1918. In Lower Styria, apart from individual protests, there was no serious resistance by the German population, which, despite occasional criticism of the new authorities, surrendered to the fate of life in the Yugoslav new state. There was no other alternative for the German-speaking population in this territory, despite the nostalgia of some for the old Austro-Hungarian Empire or a longing for the annexation of Lower Styria to German Austria.

With the food that was (and was not) provided, people across our regions also “consumed” their sense of democracy, freedom, justice, and other promises of 1918. These often turned out to be disappointed over-expectations that together with popular radicalism could create an explosive mixture. It manifested itself in the two most visible and long unhealed social fractures inherited from the war. The first was the conflict between locals and the central state. The collapse of Habsburg Austria rendered state institutions all but powerless, and the smooth overthrow of the state in Prague and Ljubljana, which took control of the government, did not mean that the state reasserted itself so smoothly at lower levels of governance. On the contrary, in many places, local solutions to food supply came into conflict with state regulations, institutions, and practices long after 1918. The state could not simply break them up by force, for that would provoke a strong backlash and undermine its legitimacy even more. Thus, many of the formal as well as informal—and in some cases criminal—wartime food supply practices continued even if they may have gotten a new meaning of what was and was not legal, patriotic, or moral.

Related to the first was the second social rupture, between producers and consumers, who constantly accused each other of taking advantage of the situation at the expense of the other. Their anger was directed not only at each other and their respective partisan representations, but also at the state, which they accused of doing too much and too little at the same time. Because of ongoing food rationing in the Bohemian Lands, this problem was easier to pinpoint as a failure of the state: food profiteering, instrumentalized by the Social Democrats as a result of the state's passivity, had its counterpart in unfair state crop requisitioning, which was thematized by the Agrarians. In Slovenia, this conflict was similar, although the state allowed greater scope to the free market and then tried to redress the consequences without the instrument of large-scale food rationing.

One way for the state to address these problems was government communication based on facts and figures. They also tried to depoliticize the food supply problem by using the narrative of a “social illness” which had infected everyone, which had been inherited from the Habsburg past, and which would be curable through participation in the national future. The other way was the creation of new, albeit temporary, institutions that would resolve these smoldering conflicts. While in both cases the governments relied on the original administrative system as a guarantee of stability and sought to abolish national, economic, and other councils and committees, soon after the coup d'état, they too had to allow temporary forms of popular participation. The economic councils and profiteering courts established in the Bohemian Lands in 1919 and the price and anti-smuggling committees in Slovenia were instruments that channeled some of the popular anger from the streets into formal institutions. The gradual improvement of the food supply situation rendered these institutions obsolete, and they could be abolished. While the management of the food crisis fell largely on the shoulders of local actors in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia, the next chapter looks at potential game-changer to postwar consolidation: food aid from the Allied countries.

About the Authors

Václav Šmidrkal is a researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences and an Assistant Professor at Charles University in Prague. His research focuses on postwar transitions, war veterans, and military propaganda in twentieth-century Central Europe.

Maja Godina Golija is Professor in European Ethnology at the University of Maribor and Scientific Councilor at the Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). She is the author of six books and numerous articles on food culture, the history of everyday life, and urban culture in Slovenia.

3. Hopes, Promises, Realities: Food Scarcity and Foreign Aid

Dagmar Hájková and Rok Stergar

Abstract: Humanitarian aid underwent a radical change after the First World War. Modern, state-supported, and professionalized foreign aid played an important role in solving the food crisis in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia in the postwar years. A comparison of these two cases reveals that despite all the pre-existing and emerging differences between these regions, the similarities were striking. Some were structural, as certain aspects of foreign aid could not be provided differently, but many stemmed from the shared imperial history of Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands. From this perspective, foreign aid manifested itself as a post-imperial phenomenon, in which new and old, modern humanitarian agencies and imperial institutions worked together to solve a crisis caused by war.

Keywords: foreign aid, American Relief Administration, humanitarianism, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia

Introduction

In November 1914, a group of doctors and nurses led by the Czech American evangelical minister Vincent Písek boarded a ship in the port of New York headed for the Adriatic coast. John Whipple Frothingham, an American philanthropist and great supporter of the Serbs, financed the expedition.¹ The goal was to provide humanitarian aid to war-torn Serbia. At the time of the First World War, Serbia, like Belgium, was on the mental map of

¹ Emanuel Voska, "Z účasti zaoceánského emigranta v československém odboji," *Naše revoluce* 1, no. 2–3 (1923): 246.

providers of aid to the needy. The Serbian Relief Fund was established in London as early as late September 1914 on the initiative of Lady Muriel Paget, the wife of the former British envoy to Serbia; Lord Fitzmaurice, who was a diplomat stationed in Istanbul; Bertram Christian, a publicist who had served as an aid worker in the Balkan wars; and Robert William Seton-Watson, a historian interested in Central and Eastern Europe, along with several other prominent Britons. In addition to fundraising, the committee was instrumental in sending doctors, nurses, and various supplies to Serbia.²

The main goal of the November 1914 Czech expedition was along the same lines. Its initiators wanted to set up a 200-bed hospital in Skopje/Skoplje/Üsküp. Two members of the expedition, František Kepl and František Synáček, however, also wanted to establish ties with Czech anti-Austrian circles. Although there is no evidence that they were successful in their attempts to establish contact with the nascent Czech domestic resistance, their mission serves as an important reminder that, as Julia Irwin points out, humanitarian aid is never a purely charitable enterprise. It is and was also a form of propaganda, a means of social control, and an instrument of state power.³ Aid can also serve as a means of economic intrusion, as Ad van de Staaij demonstrates with the example of aid to Ukraine in the first half of the 1920s, or a way of divesting the domestic surplus of food.⁴ Humanitarian relief during the war and in the interwar period thus also came with a long-term agenda—it did not just aim to alleviate the suffering, but also hoped to transform and rebuild the societies targeted.⁵

2 Aleksandar P. Rastović, “British Humanitarian and Medical Missions in Serbia in the 1914–1918,” in *Al fronte: La Grande Guerra fra interventismo, cronaca e soccorso*, ed. Andrea Carteny, Giuseppe Motta, and Alessandro Vagninni (Nuova Cultura, 2018), 124. See also M. B. B. Biskupski, “Strategy, Politics, and Suffering: The Wartime Relief of Belgium, Serbia, and Poland, 1914–1918,” in *Ideology, Politics, and Diplomacy in East Central Europe*, ed. M. B. B. Biskupski (University of Rochester Press, 2003), 31–57.

3 Julia F. Irwin, “Taming Total War: Great War-Era American Humanitarianism and Its Legacies,” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4 (2014): 763.

4 Patricia Clavin, “The Austrian Hunger Crisis and the Genesis of International Organization after the First World War,” *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 271; Ad van de Staaij, “American and Dutch Food Aid in 1922: Differing Attitudes?” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 40, no. 1 (2022): 44–46. For more on the US aid to Russia, see Bertrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford University Press, 2002).

5 Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); Silvia Salvatici, *A History of Humanitarianism, 1755–1989: In the Name of Others* (Manchester University Press, 2019); Davide Rodogno, *Night on Earth: A History of International Humanitarianism in the Near East, 1918–1930* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); Doina Anca Cretu, *Foreign Aid and State Building in Interwar Romania: In Quest of an Ideal* (Stanford University Press, 2024).

Although the motivations of many donors and aid workers were primarily altruistic—they responded to the hardships and the violence with increased sensitivity, empathy, and willingness to help alleviate the disastrous consequences of the war—this was only a part of the story. As the November 1914 expedition clearly shows, humanitarian workers, promoters of the independence of small nations, and advocates of the dissolution of Austria-Hungary sometimes worked hand-in-hand—or were even the same people.

Acknowledging the multifaceted nature of foreign relief and the radical changes of humanitarian aid during this period, this chapter focuses on the role that foreign aid played in solving the food supply crisis in Bohemian Lands and Slovenia after the war had ended, identifying the main actors, their goals, and their strategies. It looks at the activities of various agencies and charities that delivered aid, at the strategies the governments of new states employed to secure foreign relief, at the agendas of the donors, but also at the reactions of the local populations to foreign aid. It also aims to compare these two cases, showing the differences and similarities and the reasons behind them. Finally, while the chapter focuses on Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands, it strives to situate these cases in the wider historiography on postwar food relief and foreign aid.

Great Expectations

On the eve of independence, Ivan Hribar, the former mayor of Ljubljana/Laibach and a member of the National Council for Slovenia and Istria, assured the hungry Slovenes that the new South Slav state would be blessed with “almost inexhaustible natural wealth” from the mines, forests, and rivers to the fertile plains. Food supply would not be the slightest problem.⁶ Yet, the reality was much harsher—the stores and warehouses were empty, the railways hardly operational, and the next harvest months away. In November, a few weeks after the proclamation of an independent State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, a Slovene newspaper article pithily summarized the situation, stating that “the late Austria left behind empty coffers, as well as empty warehouses.”⁷ To anyone who did not entirely succumb to euphoria, it was painfully obvious that the dire food supply crisis would not be easy to solve.

Most protagonists were fully aware that in the immediate postwar era only foreign aid could at least alleviate, if not resolve, the acute food crisis.

6 Ivan Hribar, “Kvišku srca!,” *Slovenski narod*, 27 October 1918, 2.

7 “Razsodnost je boljša kot žamet,” *Slovenski narod*, 19 November 1918, 3.

Accordingly, already on 26 October 1918, three days before the independence of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs was proclaimed, the Economic Section of the National Council for Slovenia and Istria debated the supply crisis at length and decided to establish contacts with the National Committee in Prague and ask for its help.⁸ Soon after, the deputy mayor of Ljubljana and a minister in the newly established National Government, Karel Triller, warned that in the absence of foreign aid people would start dying from hunger in March and April of the following year.⁹ Consequently, the Ljubljana government called on the National Council in Zagreb to approach the Entente states and ask for their help.¹⁰ The assumption shared by almost everyone in charge was that the new Yugoslav state was one of the victorious states—especially after the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs united with the Kingdom of Serbia on 1 December 1918—and that the US and other victorious powers should and would help. Therefore, the National Government expected shipments of grain, fats, and canned meat to start as soon as possible; the newly appointed Minister of Nutrition, Ivan Tavčar, was also convinced that the food should be provided “for free.”¹¹

The situation was similar in newborn Czechoslovakia. Towards the end of the First World War, the disbelief in Austria's ability to solve the social and economic situation and the growing supply problems turned the inhabitants against the Habsburg monarchy. Its collapse was greeted with enthusiasm by the Czech-speaking population of the Bohemian Lands and was followed by several days of celebrations. The celebratory speeches included not only optimism and a belief in a better future in the new state, but also a reflection on the bad situation. A long discussion on food supply took place in the revolutionary parliament as early as November 1918. The deputies emphasized the need for proper nutrition for all the inhabitants while they reaffirmed their belief that the previous regime had caused the crisis. They emphasized that adequate food supply was a necessary condition for a better future. In the words of Josef Kadlčák, deputy of the Moravian Catholic Party: “If our Czechoslovak Republic is to prosper, if it is to develop, if it is to flourish, or, if I may say, if it is to be a better system

8 Jože Šorn, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih 1919–1924* (Cankarjeva založba, 1997), 46–48.

9 Lojze Slanovec, “Ljubljanska kronika,” *Kronika slovenskih mest* 1 (1934): 69.

10 Peter Ribnikar, ed., *Sejni zapisniki Narodne vlade Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov v Ljubljani in Deželnih vlad za Slovenijo: 1918–1921*, vol. 1, *Od 1. nov. 1918 do 26. feb. 1919* (Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1998), 80.

11 Mojca Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno* (Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2020), 153, 154.

than the old one, we must first of all see to it that all classes of our people are properly fed."¹²

Aware of the prewar economic strength of the Bohemian Lands and their assumed democratic tradition, Czech politicians assured their citizens of the new republic's exceptional position in the world. Tomáš G. Masaryk, the newly elected president, claimed that the Allies considered the Czechoslovaks to be the best organized, the best prepared, the most capable, and the most loyal. In his message to parliament on 22 December 1918, however, he also stressed the need for foreign relief, summarizing his previous dealings with American, British, and French officials: "We have secured financial aid from the Allied countries; the United States, President Wilson himself, has pledged support for necessary supplies during the interim."¹³

Masaryk also urged that order should be always maintained to preserve the sympathies of the Allies. Great Britain and the United States in particular, he said, would not tolerate disorder. The good reputation of the republic was considered a *sine qua non* for the stabilization of the state and the arrival of foreign food supplies which were desperately needed. Consequently, the Presidium of the Ministry of Interior in Prague instructed the various police directorates on 13 January 1919 to maintain vigilance and make sure that "the good name of the Czechoslovak Republic abroad, especially in friendly countries, remains untarnished. The people must prove themselves worthy of the freedom won after 300 years of subjugation."¹⁴ In February, the police commissariat in Moravská Ostrava/Mährisch Ostrau issued a decree to this effect. It called for calm and peaceful work, which would solve everything, and blamed the unhappy past for the troubles. "Our republic occupies one of the leading positions in Europe as far as social reforms are concerned. The future of a rich Belgium and a happy Switzerland awaits us if we remain calm and patient," the police commissariat assured the public. It also made it clear that those who did not comply would be punished.¹⁵

12 Národní shromáždění československé 1918–20, Stenoprotokoly, 5. schůze (26 November 1918). Available at: Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, Společná česko-slovenská digitální parlamentní knihovna: Dokumenty českého a slovenského parlamentu, <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1918ns/ps/stenprot/005schuz/s005002.htm>.

13 Tomáš G. Masaryk, "Poselství prezidenta republiky 22. 12. 1918," in *Cesta demokracie*, ed. Vojtěch Fejlek and Richard Vašek, vol. 1, *Projevy – články – rozhovory* (Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 2003), 32.

14 Zemský archiv v Opavě (henceforth ZAO), Policejní ředitelství Moravská Ostrava, 1854–1945, k. 622, sign. 476, Presidium of Ministry of Interior to Police Commissariats (13 January 1919).

15 ZAO, Policejní ředitelství Moravská Ostrava, 1854–1945, k. 622, sign. 476, Circular of Police Commissariat in Moravská Ostrava to Citizens (7 February 1919). Similar circulars were issued by the police commissariat on 26 and 30 July 1919.

“Wilson Will Send Us Food”

As European countries were unable to produce and distribute enough food to feed their civilian populations and armies during the First World War, the role of the United States grew. During the war, Herbert Hoover's Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) demonstrated that it was possible to deliver food aid efficiently even in the most complicated situations. In many respects, the activities of the CRB were the birth of modern humanitarianism. The relief of Belgium proved the feasibility of large-scale food aid operations, while a lot of expertise was accumulated as humanitarians grappled with the intricacies of logistics.¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, US President Woodrow Wilson put Herbert Hoover, a former mining engineer and the *spiritus movens* of the CRB, at the head of the newly established United States Food Administration which was founded as an independent agency in August 1917. After the war, Hoover and his associates were able to build seamlessly on their experience. On 7 November 1918, Wilson authorized Hoover to create a “single agency” based on an expanded CRB that would “coordinate all efforts of the American people” and the government in providing supplies, machinery, finance and currency, shipping, trade relations, and philanthropic aid.¹⁷ Hoover and his staff were to go to Europe to set up the new American Relief Administration.

By that time and based on the war-time performance of the CRB and the Food Administration, America had become the hope for famine relief in Europe. In August 1918, already before the end of the war, the Czech Social Democratic newspaper *Právo lidu* (People's Right) wrote that Hoover was convinced, based on the results of the previous year's harvest, that America could supply all European nations with grain and that it would supply the Allies with 400 million pounds of fat, 900 million pounds of meat, or 1.5 billion pounds of sugar in 1919.¹⁸ In the fall of 1918, alongside Woodrow Wilson as the ideological creator of the New Europe, Herbert Hoover was increasingly mentioned as the man who would save the continent from starvation. A cartoonist in Vienna's *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung* depicted him as a man with a pipe bringing a large bowl of steaming food, eagerly awaited by the

16 John Branden Little, “Band of Crusaders: American Humanitarians, the Great War, and the Remaking of the World,” PhD diss. (University of California, Berkeley, 2009); Elisabeth Piller, “The Blockade and the Making of Modern Food Aid in the Era of the Two World Wars,” *The International History Review* 64, no. 4 (2024): 551–67.

17 Kendrick A. Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, vol. 6, *Imperfect Visionary, 1918–1928* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 2.

18 “Boj o chléb: V Rakousku je chléb nejdrazší a je ho nejméně,” *Právo lidu*, 17 August 1918, 2; “Co dodá Amerika spojencům,” *Právo lidu* (*Večerník*), 26 August 1918, 1.

leaders of Western European countries, with an Englishman, a German, an Austrian, a Dutchman, a Swiss, and a Frenchman sitting around a table with empty plates and their eager eyes fixed on Hoover. The countries of Eastern and Southern Europe were not at the table. In an accompanying article, the author asked which starving nation would get American food first. According to his sources, it would be Austria and Vienna.¹⁹

However, nothing was guaranteed and the European states—old and new, victorious and vanquished—had to overcome several challenges before the aid could begin to arrive. Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia faced various hurdles too. For one, cities such as Prague, Ljubljana, or Belgrade could not quite match the reputation of Vienna as important centers of European culture, scholarship, and economy. Additionally, some Allied experts argued that it was Austria and Vienna that—cut off from their sources of food—were the most vulnerable.²⁰ Indeed, the newly established Yugoslavia was, exactly as Ivan Hribar had told the public, an agriculturally rich country, producing surpluses, which initially made other countries reluctant to help. According to US estimates, for instance, the granaries in the formerly Hungarian Banat (today divided between Serbia and Romania) were full and between 600,000 and 800,000 tons of grain were available for export at the beginning of 1919.²¹ Based on talks with Yugoslav government officials and their travels through the country, American representatives on the ground initially came to the conclusion that, notwithstanding transport difficulties, Yugoslavia should be able not only to supply its own population, but should also make large quantities of food available for export. “Greater Serbia [i.e., Yugoslavia] presents every prospect of being able to feed her total population after the next harvest” is what ARA’s Alonzo E. Taylor wrote in his April 1919 country report, adding that “[i]ndeed, we may look forward to the surplus [...] as representing, after the next harvest, the supplies from which German Austria must draw her bread.”²²

19 “Lebensmittel Kontrollor in Europa: Wer kommt zuerst daran?,” *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 17 December 1918, 1–2.

20 Clavin, “The Austrian Hunger Crisis,” 268–70.

21 Frank M. Surface and Raymond L. Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period: Operations of the Organizations under the Direction of Herbert Hoover, 1914 to 1924* (Stanford University Press, 1931), 207–8. See also “Memorandum by the Secretary of Embassy at Paris (Gibson) for the Secretary of State,” in *Papers Relating to The Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, ed. Joseph V. Fuller, vol. 12 (United States Government Printing Office, 1947), Document 75, available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Parisv12/d75>.

22 A. E. Taylor, “Surveys of Conditions in Central Europe and in Greater Serbia,” *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 29 April 1919, 11.

The initial US assessment of the situation in Czechoslovakia was remarkably similar. Compared to countries such as Germany and Austria, Czechoslovakia did not seem to present a major problem. This was largely a consequence of the Czech leaders' determination to present the new republic in the best light. In his memoirs, Herbert Hoover recalled that Edvard Beneš, the foreign minister, wrote to him immediately after the armistice, assuring him that food was not going to be a problem because of the good yield of the land.²³ It can be assumed that Beneš, who was in Paris at the time (rather than in Czechoslovakia), wanted to portray the new state in a positive light. His opinion may also have been based on the pre-war debate on economic self-sufficiency that took place within Masaryk's Realist Party in 1914 and about which the economist Jan Koloušek published an analytical article in *Naše doba* (Our Era) in September 1914.²⁴ In the immediate postwar period, Czechoslovak politicians and officials, lacking reliable data from the Slovak part of the state, also viewed Slovakia as a self-sufficient agricultural country capable of supplying food to the Bohemian Lands. However, they later discovered that the reality was quite different: Slovakia faced shortages and was unable to adequately supply the Bohemian Lands.²⁵

It was not until January 1919, when the situation was already urgent, that the question of supplies to Czechoslovakia began to be raised internationally. The official state narrative began to portray Czechoslovakia as a democratic nation in Central Europe with a rich culture and history and an advanced economy that had been ravaged for centuries by the former Austrian regime. For this reason, and because it was a loyal ally, it deserved help. The Paris Peace Conference was a key venue where Czechoslovak representatives used this narrative. However, it was also being spread by Czechs abroad, foreign

23 Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure 1874–1920* (Macmillan, 1951), 380; Herbert Hoover, *An American Epic*, vol. 3, *Famine in Forty-five Nations: The Battle on the Front Line, 1914–1923* (Henry Regnery, 1961), 107.

24 Jan Koloušek, "Výživa českých zemí vlastními plodinami: Hospodářský stav českých zemí přirovnán k ostatním zemím rakouským," *Naše doba*, 20 September 1914, 1079–1088; Jan Herben, *T. G. Masaryk*, vol. 2 (Spolek výtvarných umělců Mánes, 1927), 339.

25 Archiv Národního muzea, Prague (henceforth ANM), Sum Antonín, 1877–1947, k. 56, Final Report of the Work in Czecho-Slovakia (April 1919–September 1920) Prepared by the Members of the Mission in Cooperation with the Czecho-Slovak Péče o dítě (30 September 1920); Barbora Jakobyová, "Americká potravinová pomoc pre deti po prvej svetovej vojne," in *Dlhá cesta od monarchie k republike: Zmeny režimov, myslenia a životného štýlu na Slovensku a v strednej Európe od polovice 19. do polovice 20. storočia* (Veda, 2021), 177–92; Pavel Horák, "Rozkradený blahobyt? Zásobování potravinami a státní autorita v plebiscitní kampani na Oravě a Spiši 1919–1921" (forthcoming).

sympathizers from academic and journalistic circles, and by humanitarians and social workers.²⁶

Yet these diplomatic maneuvers and expert opinions were not something most of the population knew anything about. Based on their lived experience, most people in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia were convinced that help was needed and fully expected the swift arrival of foreign aid. Towards the end of 1918, Slovene newspapers were reporting on almost every move of Herbert Hoover as they predicted that “Wilson will send us food and other necessities” and that French aid was already on its way.²⁷ Some district captaincies were also informing the public about the imminent arrival of food “promised by the Entente.”²⁸

If anything, the expectations in the Bohemian Lands were even higher. From the earliest days of the Czechoslovak state, the United States was seen as its co-creator, and the greatest credit was given to President Wilson. In the fall of 1918, trees were planted in his honor, streets were named after him, and a monument was swiftly erected. Postcards showed him as a heroic liberator, American democracy was to become a model, and Czechoslovakia was to become a kind of American vanguard in Europe. An officer of the US Army, Sedley Clarendale Peck, reported seeing more images of President Wilson and American flags in Prague than in Washington.²⁹ The Americans were treated as celebrities and received with great pomp by state representatives, military bands, and throngs of people in various costumes. Yet all of this was not just sincere gratitude and admiration, it was also a clever political tactic that aimed to secure deliveries of food and other necessities. Unsurprisingly, the key figure in these lobbying efforts was Herbert Hoover. During his visit to Prague in August 1919, he was greeted by crowds as a savior and he received several honorary doctorates.³⁰

26 Dagmar Hájková, “Promoting the State through Food Scarcity: Czechoslovakia and the United States after World War I,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 312–26.

27 “Wilson nam pošlje živil in drugih potrebščin,” *Slovenski narod*, 12 November 1918, 4; “Francozi nam pomorejo z živili,” *Slovenski narod*, 19 November 1918, 4.

28 Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana, enota za Kranj, Kranj (henceforth ZAL KRA), SI ZAL KRA/0002 Občina Kranj (1632–1947) (henceforth Občina Kranj), t. e. 145, a. e. 1435, Kranj District Captaincy proclamation (2 December 1918).

29 *Cedar-Rapidské listy*, 24 July 1919, in Vojenský ústřední archiv-Vojenský historický archiv, Prague (henceforth VÚA-VHA), České národní sdružení, Fond Alice Masarykové, i. č. 889.

30 Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí, Prague (henceforth AMZV), Politické zprávy vyslanectví Washington, 1921, no. 62, Report of Bedřich Štěpánek (21 February 1921); AMZV, III. sekce MZV – zpravodajská, 1918–39, k. 36, Herbert Hoover; *Program českého vysokého učení technického v Praze na studijní rok 1921–1922* (ČVUT, 1921), 9.

The American Relief Administration and Other Foreign Humanitarian Organizations

Foreign governments quickly became aware of the challenging conditions as various fact-finding missions that descended on the region as soon as the war had ended invariably sent back reports that stressed how desperate the situation was.³¹ Hamilton Fish Armstrong, a young American diplomat and the future editor of *Foreign Affairs*, who travelled to Yugoslavia in early 1919, remembered that “communications, by road, rail or wires, were nonexistent or uncertain. Starvation and epidemics were prevalent; food and medicines were in short supply.”³² At about the same time, on 24 January 1919, Herbert Hoover, the newly appointed Director General of Relief in Europe, sent a cable to the recently established American Yugo-Slav Relief, a philanthropic organization based in New York, and summarized the situation in a single sentence: “Unless you ship relief in February there is no hope of keeping liberated peoples alive through March.”³³

The first impressions of Czechoslovakia appear to have been somewhat better. Hugh S. Gibson, an American diplomat and a member of the inter-Allied mission that was touring the successor states, was pleasantly surprised by his splendid accommodation in Prague and the abundance of food, which was in sharp contrast to the situation in Vienna. “Real coffee, real bread, and sugar” available in the Czechoslovak capital astonished him and he was even offered a chocolate cake when he visited the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Karel Kramář. Gibson remarked that he did not know “whether they were doing something extra special for us, but I would not want a better meal anywhere.”³⁴ Yet outside the posh hotels and governmental palaces in Prague, the situation was starkly different. In a detailed account of the dire situation that he sent to the US Secretary of State, Gibson highlighted the scarcity of food, particularly in the border regions that had a predominantly German-speaking population. After a visit to Teplice/Tepłitz Castle, owned by Maria Carlos Clary-Aldringen, he painted a bleak picture: “In the castle of an old

31 Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 27–28.

32 Hamilton Fish Armstrong, *Peace and Counterpeace: From Wilson to Hitler* (Harper & Row, 1971), 48. On Armstrong’s lifelong involvement with Yugoslavia, see Madelyn Lugli, “Hamilton Fish Armstrong and Yugoslavia: How an Internationalist’s Idea of a New State Made Interwar-Era Foreign Affairs—and *Foreign Affairs*,” *Modern American History* 7, no. 1 (2024): 1–23.

33 Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana (henceforth NUK), Rokopisna zbirka (henceforth RZ), MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Jugoslav relief, *American Yugo-Slav Relief Bulletin* 8, 12 March 1919.

34 Vivian Hux Reed and Jochen Böhler, eds., *An American in Europe at War and Peace: Hugh S. Gibson’s Chronicles, 1918–1919* (DeGruyter, 2021), 525.

friend of mine, Prince Clary, I found over eighty of these [malnourished] people gathered to receive their weekly ration of one pound of flour which was all that could be scraped together for them. They were most of them, monstrosities with swollen feet and legs, and very few of them have any hope of recovery.”³⁵ The shortages were not limited to the periphery; they continued even in the capital and people complained that the promised change had not arrived.³⁶

For the governments of victorious powers that were eager to stop the region’s descent into chaos and the spread of Bolshevism, food therefore became a central part of their plan to “win the peace.” Contrary to expectations and against loud opposition, they soon started helping even the defeated countries in their attempt to stop the social upheaval.³⁷ The United States, which had the required tools at its disposal, took on the leading role in the effort. Newspapers from the region were right to follow Herbert Hoover’s every step in the fall of 1918 because he was undoubtedly the main protagonist in the postwar food relief. On 11 January 1919, Wilson named him Director General of Relief in Europe, although he was not formally appointed until 24 February, after Congress had passed the Relief Act.³⁸

Hoover did not wait for a final agreement on the structure of the relief program to begin working. Instead, he got Wilson to order the War Department to continue sending food to European ports and to transfer \$5 million from his National Security and Defense Fund for first salaries. On 24 February 1919, President Wilson signed into law a bill establishing a \$100 million (\$1,836,248,555 in 2022) revolving fund to finance the relief program and formally appointed Hoover director general to run the operation. He effectively became the “alimentation dictator of the former Monarchy” as

35 “Memorandum by the Secretary of Embassy at Paris (Gibson) for the Secretary of State,” 236.

36 Claire Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution: Prague, 1914–1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 277.

37 Charles E. Strickland, “American Aid to Germany, 1919 to 1921,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 45, no. 4 (1962): 256–70; Friederike Kind-Kovács, “The Great War, the Child’s Body and the American Red Cross,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 23, no. 1–2 (2016): 33–62; Doina Anca Cretu, “Humanitarian Aid in the ‘Bulwark Against Bolshevism’: The American Relief Administration and the Quest for Sovereignty in Post-World War I Romania,” *Journal of Romanian Studies* 1, no. 2 (2019): 65–88; Franz Adlgasser, “The Roots of Communist Containment: American Food Aid in Austria and Hungary after World War I,” in *Austria in the Nineteen Fifties*, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Rolf Steininger (Routledge, 2020), 171–88; Kimberly Lowe, “Better Fed than Red: International Famine Relief, 1921–22,” in *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, ed. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (Manchester University Press, 2023), 163–83.

38 Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, 6:5.

some newspapers started calling him.³⁹ As soon as his men had submitted reports on conditions in Central and Eastern Europe, he instructed them to set up offices and invited Allied representatives to join them. ARA was not the only organization involved—as we will show, the American Red Cross and various other organizations and initiatives were also active in the region—but it was the mainstay of US and international efforts. Soon after the US Congress appropriated the necessary funds for ARA, it took over food relief in the early spring of 1919 while the American Red Cross refocused its efforts on medical assistance.⁴⁰

With government money pouring in, relief efforts were dramatically scaled up in the entire region. In early 1919, Yugoslavia was divided into six districts and ARA representatives were sent to Zagreb, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik/Ragusa, Kotor/Cattaro, Belgrade, and Ljubljana. The Ljubljana representative was in charge for the Slovene part of the country.⁴¹ Later in the year, the number of districts was raised to 17, and distributing stations were established in 73 cities and towns.⁴² The terrible state of transport infrastructure mentioned in almost every report was among the several hurdles that the humanitarian assistance to Yugoslavia had to overcome, and this is why Hoover also sent a special technical mission to the country.⁴³

In Yugoslavia, ARA worked hand in hand with the American Yugo-Slav Relief, a philanthropic organization that was established in New York in December 1918 and focused on raising funds for the relief efforts in the newly established Yugoslav state. Helped by a campaign in major newspapers, it raised considerable funds from corporations—US Steel donated \$100,000 (\$1,836,249 in 2022), for instance—as well as individuals. The American Yugo-Slav Relief president, the philanthropist Mary Harriman, donated

39 Clavin, "The Austrian Hunger Crisis," 271; Irwin, "Taming Total War," 772.

40 Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 143, 147.

41 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Jugoslav relief, *American Yugo-Slav Relief Bulletin* 10, 14 March 1919.

42 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Jugoslav relief, "Memorandum on Children's Relief in Jugoslavia" (22 October 1919).

43 Gary Dean Best, "Herbert Hoover's Technical Mission to Yugoslavia, 1919–20," *The Annals of Iowa* 42, no. 6 (1974): 443–59; Vesna Aleksić, "Mission Impossible of American Experts in Serbia 1919–1920," in *125 Years of Diplomatic Relations between the USA and Serbia*, ed. Ljubinka Trgovčević (Faculty of Political Sciences University of Belgrade, 2008), 103–19; Vesna Aleksić, Sonja Jerković, and Saša Ilić, "The First US Intervention in Serbian Economic Reconstruction and Recovery," *International Review*, no. 3–4 (2014): 9–26.

\$25,000 (\$459,062 in 2022) herself.⁴⁴ As early as November 1918, the Yugoslav National Council as the umbrella organization of South Slavs in the US also announced the imminent establishment of a relief fund, and called on all the South Slavs in the United States to organize and help “feed the hungry and clothe the naked.”⁴⁵ The Chicago-based Yugoslav Relief was finally established in January 1919 under the auspices of the Yugoslav ambassador to the US, Slavko Gruić. The charity quickly organized a collection of money and in-kind contributions that were shipped to Yugoslavia in June 1919.⁴⁶ Several other organizations also contributed, and they included groups from South America, where sizable South Slav expatriate communities existed.⁴⁷ In December 1919, for instance, ARA received \$15,000 (\$275,437 in 2022) from the Yugoslav National Defense (*Jugoslavenska narodna obrana*) based in Chile.⁴⁸

These initiatives—or at least the people involved in them—often continued the work of those that supported Serbia during the war or lobbied for the breakup of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of a South Slav nation-state.⁴⁹ Besides ARA, several other foreign private charities and state agencies also provided various forms of food relief in Yugoslavia. However, they had no sustained presence in the northernmost part of the new state because they focused on provinces such as Bosnia, Dalmatia, Montenegro, parts of Serbia and Macedonia, i.e., territories where the situation was more desperate than in Slovenia.

In the Bohemian Lands, many of the protagonists were similar or the same, but overall, many more organizations and agencies were present there.

44 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Yugoslav relief, “The American Yugo-Slav Relief” (18 December 1918). See also *American Yugo-Slav Relief Bulletin* 7, 20 February 1919, and 14, 6 June 1919. For an example of the sympathetic reporting in the press, see “Ask Funds to Save Yugoslav Children,” *The New York Times*, 27 April 1919, 16.

45 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Yugoslav relief, Yugoslav National Council proclamation (21 November 1918).

46 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Yugoslav relief, “Objava”; “Amerikanska pomožna akcija: Jugoslav relief v Chicagu,” *Slovenec*, 12 October 1919, 2–3.

47 “The European Children’s Fund in Jugo-Slavia,” *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 1 December 1920, 36.

48 Hoover Institution Library & Archives (henceforth HILA), American Relief Administration European Operational Records (henceforth ARAEO), box 79, folder 2, R. L. Bland to ARA ECF Mission in Belgrade (16 January 1920). See also Marcel Kolin, *Jugoslaveni u Južnoj Americi u radu za svoj narod* (self-published, 1920), 24.

49 On US humanitarian aid to Serbia and US-Serbian relations during the war, see Biskupski, “Strategy, Politics, and Suffering,” 31–57; Ubavka Ostojić-Fejić, “Američka humanitarna delatnost u Srbiji tokom Prvog svetskog rata,” *Istorijski časopis* 39 (1992): 199–206; Ubavka Ostojić-Fejić, *Sjedinjene Američke Države i Srbija, 1914–1918* (Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1994).

Unsurprisingly, the Czechs and Slovaks in the United States were quick to organize a relief effort. Continuing their war-time support for Czechoslovak independence, they could lean on a network of willing donors and organizations that were already in place. From the fall of 1918, the Bohemian (Czech) National Alliance and other organizations, such as the National Union of the Czech Catholics or the Slovak League in America, collected money for the homeland, appealing to the patriotism of their compatriots. In May 1919, the United Czechoslovak Relief (UCR) was established in cooperation with the Czechoslovak consulate general in New York and the embassy in Washington. Its aim was to collect in-kind donations from compatriots in one place and arrange for their transport to Czechoslovakia.⁵⁰

The British circles that supported the establishment of Czechoslovakia did not lose interest in the events in the country after this goal was achieved. In January 1919, urgent appeals for help from the newly established Czechoslovak Red Cross reached Robert William Seton-Watson, Muriel Paget, and Robert Young, detailing the poor nutrition and health of the population caused by wartime suffering and inadequate supplies:

In general, our situation in the Czechoslovak republic is unknown. The foreign countries are badly informed through Vienna which purposely circulates a bright view of our situation, as if we had plenty of everything, whilst the people there are really dying with hunger... Human nature is on average everywhere the same it can endure only up to a certain limit. If the only quiet, disciplined spot in Central and Eastern Europe is to be saved for itself, for Europe and for civilization, immediate relief must be sent to tide the young Republic over to the next harvest, after which it will take care of itself.⁵¹

About a month later, Alice Masaryk, the Czechoslovak president's daughter, wrote a letter to Muriel Paget, a well-known British philanthropist, whom her father met in Siberia during the war. In her February 1919 letter, Alice Masaryk implored Lady Paget:

50 "The Czech Heart," *The Czechoslovak Review* 3, no. 5 (1919): 121; Dagmar Hájková, "Naši strýčci v Americe': Humanitární pomoc českých krajanů po první světové válce: motivace a realita," in *Od almužny k nároku: Vize a prax sociální politiky na Slovensku a v českých krajinách 19. a 20. století*, ed. Gabriela Dudeková Kováčová et al. (Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy; Historický ústav SAV, 2024), 229–30.

51 UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London (henceforth SSEES), Seton-Watson Papers, SEW, 6, I, 3 XIII, 3, Report on the Conditions in Czechoslovakia (19 February 1919).

Come and help us! We are at the edge of precipice. Our children die. The conditions are desperate. Austria said that if she must lose Bohemia, she would lose it as a corpse. They tried their best to rob us of everything, and they succeeded. But we won't die, for we are destined to live, and we have a word to say in the world's history.⁵²

In March 1919, the British responded by forming the Anglo-Czech Relief Society (ACRF). Its main task was to raise money, establish contacts in political circles, and disseminate pro-Czechoslovak propaganda. The energetic Muriel Paget was one of the founders and herself travelled to Czechoslovakia and toured the country with Alice Masaryk in the late spring of 1919 to assess the situation.⁵³ In June 1919, on a visit to Brno/Brünn in Moravia, Paget observed how schoolchildren were fed daily but that the portions were meager. "Each children [sic] had a Knoodel [sic] (made of flour) a cup of vegetables soup no fat, no meat – and no milk," she noted in her diary.⁵⁴

Eventually, Muriel Paget realized that the work of her mission was most needed in the poor areas of Slovakia, where she was instrumental in establishing canteens and hospitals. Along the way, the Mission of Lady Muriel Paget was completely separated from the activities of the ACRF, which continued its efforts to raise money in Britain for the needs of Czechoslovakia. By the fall of 1919, however, it became clear that the ACRF was losing its *raison d'être*. It donated its remaining funds (£2,818) of the total donation (£25,347 [£1,345,000 in 2022]) to Lady Paget's Mission, and a new Czech Society of Great Britain was established in December 1919. The Society, however, intended to focus on the strengthening of Czechoslovak-British relations, with emphasis on culture and education.⁵⁵

In addition to Czech and Slovak expatriates from the US and the well-meaning Britons, several American organizations, for instance the YWCA, the YMCA, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the American Red Cross, developed relief activities in the Bohemian Lands. Many came thanks to the efforts of President Masaryk and his daughters, who used their large network to ask for help. In December 1918, for instance, Alice Masaryk sent a telegram to Mary McDowell, an eminent American social worker, asking for her help in introducing a modern and professional

52 Wilfried Blunt, *Lady Muriel: Lady Muriel Paget, Her Husband and Her Philanthropic Work in Central and Eastern Europe* (Methuen, 1962), 135.

53 Blunt, *Lady Muriel*, 138–39.

54 Leeds University Library, Special Collections, Lady Muriel Paget Papers, LRA/MS 1405, Czechoslovakia Spring and Summer 1919, MS.

55 SSEES, Seton-Watson Papers, SEW, 6, I, 3 XIII, 3, Anglo-Czech Relief Society minutes, 1919.

welfare system to Czechoslovakia.⁵⁶ As a result, the War Work Council of the National YWCA selected three young American social workers to go to Czechoslovakia and help the local welfare organizers. Ruth Crawford, who oversaw the mission, was instructed to work through the local people and not to impose the American pattern of social work, but only to introduce American experience and techniques. The Americans were not involved in direct relief, but in observing the situation and introducing American concepts into the training of social workers.⁵⁷

On the urging of the younger Masaryk daughter, Olga, the North American YMCA was also brought to Czechoslovakia and tasked with keeping up the fighting spirit of the soldiers but also with preventing them from rioting or even starting a revolution. The YMCA used various methods to achieve this goal, but it all began with a cup of hot cocoa and bread buns. YMCA huts started to serve food to the soldiers in 1919; in 1920, they distributed 5,434,902 cups of hot drinks and 5,210,170 buns. While feeding the soldiers was not the YMCA's main goal, the quantities were not insignificant and the soldiers certainly noticed the effort.⁵⁸ As we will show later, the YWCA and the YMCA were involved with relief to students as well. What is also important to note is that, in contrast to some other aid providers, the YMCA established a more permanent presence in Czechoslovakia, perhaps precisely because its efforts were not focused on the supply of food only. Something similar can be said for another charity that was present in Czechoslovakia. The European Student Relief, a Protestant student organization that was only established in 1920, continued to provide humanitarian assistance, often in close cooperation with the YMCA, long after the postwar crisis has been solved.⁵⁹

56 Pittsburgh University Archives, Ruth Crawford Mitchell Papers, box 2, folder 2, Miss McDowell's Statement in Response to A. Masaryk's Letter of 5 December 1918 (10 February 1919). See also Ruth Crawford Mitchell, *Alice Garrigue Masaryk 1879–1966: Her Life as Recorded in Her Own Words and by Her Friends* (Pittsburgh University, 1980), 104. On Alice Masaryk's postwar activism, see further Bruce R. Berglund, "We Stand on the Threshold of a New Age: Alice Masaryk, The Czechoslovak Red Cross, and the Building of a New Europe," in *Aftermaths of War: Women's Movements and Female Activists, 1918–1923*, ed. Ingrid Sharp and Matthew Stibbe (Brill, 2011), 355–74.

57 Smith College Special Collections, Northampton, MA, Sophia Smith Collection of Woman's History, YWCA of the U.S.A., Czechoslovakia, 1919–1922, Ann Caldwell, "Report of Work in Czechoslovakia, August 15, 1922 to April 1, 1923." See also Crawford Mitchell, *Alice Garrigue Masaryk*, 108–10.

58 Ondřej Matějka, "Forging a 'Winning Spirit': The North American YMCA and the Czechoslovak Army, 1918–1921," in *In the Shadow of the Great War: Physical Violence in East-Central Europe, 1917–1923*, ed. Jochen Böhrer, Ota Konrád, and Rudolf Kučera (Berghahn, 2021), 142–62.

59 Isabella Löhr, "Coping with a Post-War World: Protestant Student Internationalism and Humanitarian Work in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1920s," *Social History* 48, no. 1 (2023): 43–64.

Starting in March 1919, the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee also established its presence in Prague and around Czechoslovakia. The organization that was founded in 1914 and coordinated the humanitarian efforts of American Jews was already present in the Bohemian Lands during the war when it helped Jewish refugees from Galicia. In 1917, as the US entered the war on the side of the Entente, it had to stop its efforts.⁶⁰ After the war, the JDC returned and developed various activities aimed at helping Czechoslovak Jewish communities and the remaining refugees. When it came to food, its activities went hand-in-hand with the activities of the ARA from the spring of 1920.⁶¹ In fact, the ARA cleverly allowed several humanitarian organizations to use its infrastructure, primarily through the bulk sales of supplies from its warehouses. In this way it enlarged its reach and was able to finance some of its activities with the proceeds from sales. In Czechoslovakia, the ARA distributed 561 tons of supplies worth \$85,683 (\$1,358,234 in 2022) using this channel.⁶²

As in Slovenia, the biggest, most visible, and most capable foreign relief organization in the Bohemian Lands was the American Relief Administration. Its activities were enabled by a contract that the Czechoslovak government and the ARA signed on 24 February 1919. The contract called for monthly deliveries of 27,500 tons of flour, 4,000 tons of fat, and 500 tons of condensed milk, valued at approximately \$8,000,000 (\$126,814,770 in 2022). The deliveries were financed by cash, by loans from the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, by charitable donations, and via commodity exchanges (mainly with Italy, Yugoslavia, and Poland). Czechoslovakia was included in the category of “countries under treasury advances” together with Belgium, Serbia, and Romania and managed to rank highest among the recipients of supplies.⁶³ To facilitate these activities, the American Relief Administration established its mission in downtown Prague in February 1919 headed by Lincoln Hutchinson, an economist, sociologist, and diplomat.⁶⁴

60 Doina Anca Cretu, “Jewish Refugees, Encampment, and the Humanitarian Paradox in Austria-Hungary during the First World War,” in *Refugees and Citizens in 20th Century East-Central Europe: An Unlikely Refuge?*, ed. Michal Frankl (Central European University Press, forthcoming).

61 American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives (henceforth JDC Archives), Records of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee of the years 1919–21, Series: Czechoslovakia: Administration – NY AR191921/4/10/1/126.3, Leon Wechsler, “Report on the Relief Work of the Joint Distribution Committee in the State of Czechoslovakia”; Jaclyn Granick, *International Jewish Humanitarianism in the Age of the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 83–84, 92 and passim.

62 Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 94.

63 Suda Lorena Bane and Ralph Haswell Lutz, *Organization of American Relief in Europe 1918–1919* (Stanford University Press, 1943), 293–96.

64 “Chéf americké misse, prof. Lincoln Hutchinson o česko-americký stycích,” *Národní listy*, 13 May 1919, 2.

Foreign Aid Arrives

However, these efforts mostly started only in early 1919, and very little foreign aid materialized before the onset of the winter of 1918, which was harsh for most. In January 1919, *Nova doba* (The New Era), a Celje paper, published an anonymous rumination, illustrating the situation in the country well: "You get up in the morning and go onto the street [...] and see something that looks like a Feast of Corpus Christi procession, and all your good spirits vanish in an instant. In front of a couple of stores stand the masses, waiting for bread or flour, just as they did one or two years ago."⁶⁵ Foreign aid was largely not arriving yet, and neither were supplies from the rest of Yugoslavia. Grain and other supplies from Croatia and Serbia could only reach Slovenia in limited quantities, mainly because the transport infrastructure was in a desperate state. In the beginning of February 1919, when a US diplomat visited Slovenia to inquire about food supply, officials from Ljubljana informed him that neither the supplies promised by the government in Belgrade nor those that Zagreb was supposed to have delivered had arrived.⁶⁶ A few days later, the Ljubljana Municipal Supply Committee warned that the stores were empty and that flour would run out in a week.⁶⁷ At the time, American experts warned that "[t]he situation of Slovenes in particular [is] most distressing." They concluded that "the territory [...] known as Slovenia [has] little food" and estimated that to cover its needs some 2,500 tons of food per month would have to be delivered from elsewhere.⁶⁸

The population of the Bohemian Lands faced a similar situation. In February 1919, the situation in the new state was the subject of a lengthy report, presumably prepared by the Czechoslovak Red Cross and sent to the UK:

There is hardly a place in Europe, with the exception of Russia, which would be in such a deplorable want as the capital of the young Czechoslovak republic. On[e] does not hear much about it, because the Czechoslovaks are too proud to complain; they will ask for help but only the most crying need will make them repeat their request.⁶⁹

65 Cited in Janez Cvirn, "Meščanstvo v Celju po razpadu Avstro-Ogrske," in *Iz zgodovine Celja: 1918–1941*, ed. Marija Počivavšek (Muzej novejšje zgodovine Celje, 1996), 202.

66 Ribnikar, *Sejmi zapiski*, 1:363.

67 "Aprovizacija," *Naprej*, 17 February 1919, 4.

68 HILA, ARAEO, box 513, folder 8, Telegram (24 March 1919); A. E. Taylor, "Surveys of Conditions in Central Europe and in Greater Serbia," *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 29 April 1919, 7.

69 SSEES, Seton-Watson Papers, SEW, 6, I, 3 XIII, 3, Report on the Conditions in Czechoslovakia (19 February 1919).

The report that Henry G. Alsberg, the representative of the JDC, who had just arrived in Prague, sent on 16 March 1919, made a similar point. The situation was not good, and “the Jewish People’s Soup Kitchen [...] adds more water and less food to its soups every day.”⁷⁰

Yet the situation was about to change. In March 1919, Hutchinson, the newly appointed head of the ARA mission in Prague, wrote a letter about the food situation in Europe to Czechoslovak President Masaryk, assuring him that help is coming. He stressed that Czechoslovakia and other “liberated nations” had an advantage over the defeated countries of Germany, Austria, and Hungary because they could access Allied loans and did not have to pay for their food supplies in gold as the defeated countries were. He also emphasized that Czechoslovakia would receive more aid per capita than Germany. Hutchinson, who was speaking for Hoover, wanted the Czechoslovak citizens to understand the situation and not to believe reports that the treatment of the defeated countries was better than that of the victorious ones. Accordingly, he asked that his information be disseminated as widely as possible. Two days later, his letter was published in *Národní listy* (National Papers) with the title “Food from America is Coming.”⁷¹ The Czech politicians presented the US loan to the public as a friendly gift and the result of the great abilities of the Czechs, since “our organizational skills have won us the sympathy of our allies and the respect of our enemies.”⁷²

Indeed, the situation began to improve in the spring of 1919, as aid started to arrive in noticeable quantities. In April, a critical month in which the previous year’s stocks were already running low, the flour rations in Bohemia decreased, but the arrival of food supplies paid by an American loan changed the situation. Despite the considerably higher cost of American flour, its supply helped to alleviate the suffering of the population.⁷³ All the while, the efforts of Czech and Slovak expatriates in the United States were also progressing. As soon as the postal service and international banking connections were restored, individuals started sending money, food, and other

70 JDC Archives, Records of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee of the years 1919–21, Series: Czechoslovakia: Administration – NY AR191921/4/10/1/126.2, Henry G. Alsberg to Lewis Strauss (16 March 1919).

71 Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, Prague, Archiv Ústavu T. G. Masaryka, Masaryk Garrigue Tomáš, k. 463, sign. R-36-11c, L. Hutchinson to T. G. Masaryk (22 March 1919); “Potraviny z Ameriky budou!,” *Národní listy*, 25 March 1919, 4–5.

72 Masaryk, “Poselství prezidenta republiky 22. 12. 1918,” 33.

73 Vlastislav Lacina, *Formování československé ekonomiky 1918–1923* (Academia, 1990), 171–72; Daniel Štěpánek, “Zásobovací situace v benešovském okrese po první světové válce,” *Sborník vlastivědných prací Podblanicka* 38 (1998): 324.

necessities to their relatives in the “old country.” Simultaneously, the aid campaign of Czech and Slovak organizations in the US produced results. Donations were collected by the United Czechoslovak Relief branches, packed in boxes, and then shipped to Europe. The Omaha branch of the United Czechoslovak Relief, for example, planned to send seventy boxes of food to “the old country to alleviate the misery of relatives and friends of our compatriots here.” The aid that the immigrants were sending was primarily intended for their families, as the Omaha example suggests.⁷⁴

Donors could use two methods to send help. They could pack clothing and recommended food items (coffee, tea, spices, soap, powdered or condensed milk, rice, flour, chocolate, and starch) in boxes, weigh and deliver them to the collection point with a list of the items and an address of the recipient. An easier way was to send a check for the purchase of a parcel to the address of the Czechoslovak consulate general in New York. There were twelve types of parcels (marked A through H), worth \$10 and \$25 (\$159 and \$396 in 2022). Package A, for example, was worth \$10 and contained 5 pounds of coffee, ½ pound of spices, 3½ pounds of flour, ½ pound of tea, ½ pound of cocoa, 5 pounds of soap, 2 pounds of milk, 1 pound of starch, ½ pound of chocolate, and 2 pounds of rice. Anyone could send any number of packages, even to a single address.⁷⁵

In the early summer of 1919, the aid that the US expatriates sent on their ship the “Wilson” arrived in Czechoslovakia. A train from Trieste/Trst arrived at the Holešovice/Holleschowitz train station in Prague on 30 June 1919. In the following months, further shipments came via the port of Hamburg, which became operational after the signing of the peace treaty with Germany.⁷⁶ According to a 1921 estimate by Josef Pecivál, chairman of the Czechoslovak National Council in America, the total value of these shipments was about \$5 million (about \$80 million in 2022).⁷⁷ Despite the sizable sum, the initiative, known as “ships of love,” was not exactly a resounding success. UCR contracted the Czechoslovak Commercial Corporation of America (CCCA) to manage the logistics. However, due to transport, customs, and administrative difficulties as well as corruption, successive shipments were delayed, goods

74 “Z české Omahy,” *Květy americké: Ilustrovaný týdeník věnovaný českému lidu v Americe*, 21 May 1919, 16.

75 “United Czechoslovak Relief,” *Květy americké: Ilustrovaný týdeník věnovaný českému lidu v Americe*, 21 May 1919, 11.

76 “The Relief Ship,” *The Czechoslovak Review* 3, no. 6 (1919): 181; “Šlechtné srdce tam za oceánem, buďte požehnána! Co dovede česká Amerika – Dvě lodě s dárky pro nás,” *Večerník Práva lidu*, 12 July 1919, 1; Emanuel Voska, *Ve víru poválečném* (E. V. Voska, 1922), 17.

77 “Čechoslováci v Americe,” *Venkov*, 24 June 1921, 2.

were damaged, spoiled, or not delivered at all, and the donors ultimately felt cheated. The Czechoslovak National Council and the Slovak League in America demanded an accounting and an explanation. In addition, the Czechoslovak Commercial Corporation of America did not make the expected profit. The whole affair ended in mutual recriminations between the expatriate organizations and the CCCA and left an aftertaste of failure.⁷⁸

The arrival of American aid to Slovenia and Yugoslavia followed a similar timeline. At the end of February 1919 already, the funds collected by the American Yugo-Slav Relief were wired to the ARA on the urging of Herbert Hoover, and his organization used them to purchase food the Americans had already accumulated at Adriatic ports. The American Red Cross that already had personnel on the ground then swiftly distributed it throughout Yugoslavia.⁷⁹ Initial shipments were followed by others as the ARA took over logistics. Towards the end of April, when several loads of American pork lard reached Slovenia, newspapers were already proclaiming the end of the crisis.⁸⁰ Lieutenant LeRoy King, an American officer on a fact-finding trip to the region, was also optimistic. On 10 May 1919 he reported to Archibald Cary Coolidge, the head of the US mission in Vienna, that “[t]here is plenty of food everywhere.”⁸¹ Indeed, the situation started to improve noticeably even if such triumphant assessments were somewhat premature. In May, some 2,000 railway cars of US flour arrived in Slovenia from Trieste. These deliveries were bought by the Yugoslav government, which had received US and British loans for this purpose. In fact, most of the food supplies from the United States after the war were financed by foreign loans. According to Hoover, Yugoslavia received food shipments worth almost \$46 million (\$729,184,930 in 2022), and only slightly more than \$2 million (\$31,703,693 in 2022) was paid for by the United States.⁸²

In any case, the Provincial Government in Ljubljana, the body that was still largely in charge of food supply even when ministries in Belgrade were slowly taking over, ended bread rationing once flour started coming from

78 VÚA-VHA, Krajanské spolky v Americe – ostatní spolky, i. č. 2, Minutes of the Plenary Session of the Czechoslovak National Council in America, Pittsburgh (7 November 1919); Slovenský národný archív, Bratislava, Slovenská liga v Amerike, 1906–97, k. 3; AMZV, Politické zprávy velvyslanectví Washington, č. 3559, Report of Bedřich Štěpánek (23 February 1921).

79 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Jugoslav relief, American Yugo-Slav Relief Press Release (21 February 1919).

80 “Konec prehranjevalne krize na Slovenskem,” *Slovenski narod*, 19 April 1919, 3.

81 Jerome Jareb, “LeRoy King’s Reports from Croatia, March to May 1919,” *Journal of Croatian Studies* 1 (1960): 165.

82 Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 384; Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 9, 208.

Trieste.⁸³ The centralized distribution of grain through the Grain Institute, an imperial war-time organization that continued to control grain supplies after the war had ended and the Empire ceased to exist, was also suspended.⁸⁴ Except for the poor, who still received some support from the government, most of the population was now expected to provide for themselves as a free market of food was reinstated after many years.⁸⁵

The drive organized by the Yugoslav Relief that ended in April 1919 also produced results. More than 1,700 boxes worth \$350,000 (\$6,426,870 in 2022) were collected and shipped to Trieste. With the help of US personnel, fourteen train wagons were transported to Ljubljana and distributed throughout Yugoslavia. The boxes contained clothing and shoes, smaller agricultural tools, but also nuts, sugar, condensed milk, and other imperishable foodstuffs.⁸⁶ Most of these boxes were sent to known recipients, usually to relatives, but in some cases the distribution was left to local institutions.⁸⁷ Sometime in 1919, a Catholic priest in the village of Dragatuš/Drăgăuș in the south of Slovenia noted in the parish chronicle that five Yugoslav Relief boxes were delivered to his parish. Four of them were intended for specific families, while he was asked to distribute the contents of the fifth box to the poor.⁸⁸ According to newspaper reports, 1,013 boxes for known recipients—63 of those were addressed to various institutions—and 38 boxes without a known recipient were shipped to Slovenia.⁸⁹ Of course, many expatriates also bypassed organized channels and sent money and food directly to their relatives.

Feeding the Children: The European Children's Fund and its Kitchens

Just as the situation began to improve noticeably in the summer of 1919, the expiration of the ARA's federal mandate at the end of June 1919 presented

83 Slanovec, "Ljubljanska kronika," 148; Bojan Himmelreich, "Preskrbljenost Celja z živili v kriznih časih: Mikroštudija razmer v času po prvi in pred drugo svetovno vojno," *Zgodovina za vse* 7, no. 2 (2000): 53, 58; Bojan Himmelreich, *Namesto žemlje črni kruh: Organizacija preskrbe z živili v Celju v času obeh svetovnih vojn* (Zgodovinski arhiv Celje, 2001), 90.

84 ZAL KRA, Občina Kranj, t. e. 148, a. e. 1450, Grain Institute circular letter (26 May 1919).

85 Vilma Brodnik, "Preskrba Ljubljane med 1. svetovno vojno," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 29, no. 2 (1989): 315. See also chapter 2 in this book.

86 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, subfolder VI: Jugoslav relief, Jugoslav Relief Circular #10 (9 April 1919); "Amerikanska pomožna akcija: Jugoslav relief v Chicagu," *Slovenec*, 12 October 1919, 2–3.

87 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, subfolder VI: Jugoslav relief, "Support to the Yugoslavs" (n. d.).

88 Arhiv župnije Dragatuš, Parish chronicle for 1918 and 1919, 146.

89 "Amerikanska pomožna akcija: Jugoslav relief v Chicagu," *Slovenec*, 12 October 1919, 3.

a new challenge. After the war, federal aid enabled the American Relief Administration not only to carry out ambitious relief programs, but also to assist in some reconstruction projects, such as the rebuilding of Central European railways and coal mines. The expiration of government funding for the ARA marked the end of this period. Help, however, was still needed. To enable its continued operations, the Relief Administration needed to reorganize. An important part of the ARA continued its operations as a private charity, called the European Children's Fund.⁹⁰ The Fund, created by Hoover in the summer of 1919, had only about \$15 million (almost \$240 million in 2022) at its disposal and lacked the political clout of its public predecessor. Although the remaining governmental funds were supplemented by private donations and contributions of food and clothing collected by immigrant groups in America, its limited resources did not allow it to do more than respond to the most acute needs.⁹¹

Children were an obvious choice from the very beginning, and the ARA had already helped children before its transformation. Not only were they the most vulnerable who had already suffered the consequences of war-time scarcity, but they were seen as the future. It was also not hard to use children in propaganda. This is why they were at the center of humanitarian efforts across Europe. Not just the ARA, but most of the protagonists of humanitarian relief in postwar Europe prioritized children in their activities.⁹² In the changed atmosphere, when the US government's full backing was gone and the sympathies of the American public were dwindling as well, the American Red Cross, for instance, also refocused its efforts on children.⁹³

The American Yugo-Slav Relief went along with this. From the middle of 1919, it financially supported the school meals program and canteens for children, nursing mothers, and pregnant women that the ECF helped establish.⁹⁴ This change of focus and the spectatorial nature of sympathy

90 Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, 6:74; Irwin, "Taming Total War," 773; Matthew Lloyd Adams, "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland (1919–1923)," *European Journal of American Studies* 4, no. 2 (2009): 6–8.

91 Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, 6:74.

92 There is a large historiography on children as the focus of humanitarian efforts. See, e.g., Granick, *International Jewish Humanitarianism*, 197–200; Friederike Kind-Kovács, *Budapest's Children: Humanitarian Relief in the Aftermath of the Great War* (Indiana University Press, 2022); Tatjana Eichert and Rebecca Gill, "Children and the 'Hunger Politics' of 1919–20: Food Aid to German Children and the Founding of the International Save the Children Movement," in *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, ed. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (Manchester University Press, 2023), 210–29.

93 Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 144, 147; Irwin, "Taming Total War," 772–3.

94 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Yugoslav relief, *American Yugo-Slav Relief Bulletin* 14, 6 June 1919.

were reflected in the Relief's flyers featuring photos and pictures of hungry, sick, and destitute children as well as text with suggestive titles such as "In Some Town Over There is a Baby Who Can Live If You Say the Word," which were meant to elicit the sympathy of potential donors.⁹⁵ Destitute children were also emphasized in the expatriate press that once again appealed to American Slovenes and asked for their donations. Besides the claims that "our youth is our future, because tomorrow they will be our nation," the Slovene newspapers in the US also stressed that all the help donated by the Slovenes would go only to Slovenia and would not be spread throughout Yugoslavia.⁹⁶

In the Slovene part of Yugoslavia, the ARA already started to distribute food to children at the end of May 1919 and decided to focus its activities on larger towns and industrial centers.⁹⁷ This was probably a consequence of the Bolshevik scare but also reflected the hierarchical nature of much postwar aid. While modern humanitarianism was universal in principle, in practice it often prioritized certain groups.⁹⁸ Additionally, local knowledge and advice played an important role in making the decision. Based on reports from the field, the Slovene administration concluded that children from working class families were the most vulnerable group and urgently needed help. Reports by Angela Boškin, the newly appointed welfare nurse for Jesenice/Assling, a steel town in Upper Carniola, for instance, painted a bleak picture. "Families with six, eight children go a whole month without a drop of milk," she wrote at the end of February 1919, urging the government in Ljubljana to send condensed milk that it received through foreign relief to industrial areas.⁹⁹

Consequently, the Provincial Government in Ljubljana designated the towns Ljubljana, Maribor/Marburg, Jesenice, Celje/Cilli, and Ptuj/Pettau as distribution centers. Besides the town itself, the center in Celje also cared for the coal mining towns of Zagorje/Sagor, Trbovlje/Trifail, and Hrastnik/

95 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Jugoslav relief, American Yugo-Slav Relief flyer. On the use of photography in humanitarian efforts, see Heide Fehrenbach, "Children and Other Civilians: Photography and the Politics of Humanitarian Image-Making," in *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 165–99.

96 "Oklic na članstvo K. S. K. J.," *Glasilo K.S.K. jednote*, 27 August 1919, 1.

97 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 1–2.

98 Tomás Irish, "The Most Deplorable Victims? The Language of Humanitarianism and Relief to Intellectuals in the Era of the Great War," in *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, ed. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (Manchester University Press, 2023), 230–31.

99 Katarina Keber, "Post-World War I Children's Healthcare in Slovenia as Experienced by Angela Boškin, the First Slovenian Nurse," *Virus: Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte der Medizin*, no. 17 (2018): 300.

Hrastnigg, whereas the Ptuj center was also responsible for the nearby Strnišče/Sterntal refugee camp.¹⁰⁰ When the information about this became public, the Upper Carniolan town of Tržič/Neumarktl, where a shoe factory and a textile factory were located, petitioned the Provincial Government in Ljubljana, and was subsequently added to the list.¹⁰¹ At the end of June 1919, a children's asylum in the Croatian coastal town of Crikvenica/Cirquenizza was added to the scheme even if it lay outside the territory administered by the government in Ljubljana. Because a plebiscite was pending in Carinthia, the Americans were also getting ready to start supplying its provincial capital, Klagenfurt/Celovec, if it "becomes Jugo Slav."¹⁰² At least according to some newspaper reports, municipalities around Maribor also gained access to ECF aid in the late summer of 1919.¹⁰³ Unsurprisingly, there were other attempts to join the scheme. In July, the mayor of a village near Tržič wrote to the district captain in Kranj demanding that the children in his village be given US food as well. He accused the Tržič municipal authorities of unfairness and added that the "American aid" should be given to "the children of workers and not the children of capitalists." His plea, however, was unsuccessful.¹⁰⁴

The American mission left the details of the distribution scheme to the local authorities, which was—according to American experts—only possible in the formerly Habsburg parts of the new state, where a child welfare system and the necessary expertise already existed in some form.¹⁰⁵ In his July 1919 report, Captain Florian Anton Cajori, an officer in the US Army's Sanitary Corps and ARA representative in Ljubljana, stressed that "the Slovenian Government had an efficient organization for food control," which should guarantee "that the child-feeding program would be handled in a way that would insure (sic) proper distribution of the ration."¹⁰⁶ This was in line with

100 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 1–2; ZAL KRA, SIZAL TRŽ/0001 Občina Tržič (1850–1947) (henceforth Občina Tržič), t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Nutrition Department circular (6 May 1919). See also "Amerika za našo deco," *Slovenec*, 10 May 1919, 2.

101 ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Tržič Textile Factory to Tržič Mayor (12 May 1919); Tržič Mayor to Provincial Government in Ljubljana (12 May 1919); Tržič Mayor to Tržič Textile Factory (14 May 1919); Kranj District Captain to Tržič Mayor (24 May 1919).

102 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 4–5.

103 *Male novice*, 7 August 1919, 4.

104 ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Sv. Katarina pri Tržiču Mayor to Kranj District Captain (15 July 1919); Tržič Mayor to Kranj District Captain (22 July 1919).

105 "The European Children's Fund in Jugo-Slavia," *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 1 December 1920, 36.

106 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 1.

the US aims; the Americans wanted to keep the cost under control and encourage local involvement to increase self-reliance.¹⁰⁷

However, the mission set clear priorities. For one, it emphasized that only poor children under the age of fourteen would be eligible and suggested that food should be distributed daily in schools, day care centers, or soup kitchens according to the proven model used in Belgium during the war. It assessed that initially, before Tržič was added to the list, more than 20,000 children would receive food through the network, and that some 130 tons of sugar, cocoa, and milk would have to be delivered monthly.¹⁰⁸ Towards the end of May 1919, cocoa, milk, and rice, which was added to the list, were delivered from Trieste, while sugar was en route from Czechoslovakia. The American mission in Ljubljana approved the distribution plan that the Slovene Provincial Government and municipal authorities in the included towns prepared. It announced that its chief, Captain Cajori, would visit all the towns to see how aid delivery had been managed in practice and if any minor adjustments were needed. The ARA mission also asked for reports every two weeks.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the Slovene government informed local authorities about the relevant details. One-page instructions included a meal plan and rather detailed food preparation guidelines.¹¹⁰

Schools in the towns that were included in the effort set up so-called American kitchens, which served cocoa and other food. A girl's middle school in Maribor served cocoa with a slice of bread four times and rice pudding twice a week to 164 children. According to the school chronicle, the meals, which were prepared by their cook, were "exquisite" and the children loved them. All in all, 1,400 kids up to the age of 14 were helped in Maribor alone.¹¹¹ In Tržič, children were fed in the soup kitchen that was established during the war and was managed by the local chapter of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, a Catholic charity. Religious sisters, the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, baked bread with American flour and used cocoa, sugar, milk, rice, and beans to prepare supplementary meals for the

107 Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 31.

108 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 1; ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Nutrition Department circular (6 May 1919).

109 ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Nutrition Department circular (23 May 1919).

110 Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor (henceforth PAM), SI PAM 0005 Mestna občina Maribor (1528–1941), t. e. 195, 5668/20, District Child and Youth Protection to Maribor Town Hall (22 March 1920).

111 PAM, SI PAM 0797 Državna I. dekliška meščanska šola Maribor (1886–1944) (henceforth Državna I. dekliška meščanska šola), t. e. 23, School chronicle for 1919/20.

children. The food was served twice a day, at 8 am and at 6 pm.¹¹² Sources, however, suggest that some of the American kitchens were not active from the very beginning or through the entire period of the ARA's and ECF's presence in Yugoslavia. In Maribor there were no kitchens at first, the food was distributed from magazines, and the distribution was still controlled by rationing cards.¹¹³ Later, kitchens were established in the Styrian town too. One of the elementary schools in Maribor, for instance, served cocoa four times and rice twice a week to a hundred girls from May to June 1920.¹¹⁴ In fact, the ECF delivered aid in four different programs, each lasting several months. The May–June 1920 period coincided with the third program.¹¹⁵

Pregnant women and younger children, those under the age of six, were also included in the program and could get sugar, cocoa, rice, and condensed milk in special distribution centers.¹¹⁶ Newspapers regularly informed the public where and when aid would be available; sometimes they added helpful advice on how best to prepare condensed milk for consumption, stressing that the water added needed to be boiled if the milk was meant for babies.¹¹⁷ At the same time, children above the age of six that were fed in schools and in other institutions were not allowed to take their meals home to ensure that other members of the family would not eat, sell, or barter them. In some cases, children who tried to ignore this rule were excluded from the program. When an outraged father complained about this in the papers, the welfare department of the Provincial Government for Slovenia informed the public that the American mission explicitly demanded this. In fact, it added, the mission at first even wanted the parents to bring their infants and toddlers to the kitchens to be fed.¹¹⁸

112 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 3; ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 697, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Tržič Chapter, to Tržič Mayor (18 May 1920); a. e. 696, Tržič Mayor to Kranj District Captain (9 June 1919). On the activities of this society in Carniola, see Irena Selišnik, "The Ladies of Charity in Carniola, 1848 to 1914," *Aspasia* 8, no. 1 (2014): 74–77.

113 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 3.

114 PAM, SI PAM 0791 Osnovna šola Franceta Prešerna Maribor (1838–2013), t. e. 144, School chronicle for 1918/19.

115 "The European Children's Fund in Jugo-Slavia," *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 1 December 1920, 38.

116 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 3–5; "Amerikansko blago za otroke," *Slovenski narod*, 16 June 1919, 5.

117 "Amerikanska pomoč," *Male novice*, 1 July 1919, 2–3.

118 "O amerikanski akciji za šolske otroke," *Naprej*, 7 July 1919, 3; "Amerikanska akcija za šolske otroke," *Naprej*, 10 July 1919, 3.

From the very beginning, the American mission also made it clear that the cost of aid distribution and the operation of kitchens and distribution centers would have to be met by the Slovene government and local authorities. These, in turn, tried and succeeded in involving some local charities. In Tržič, as we have seen, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul ran the kitchen; in Maribor, on the other hand, the local children's shelter worked hand-in-hand with the teachers and the volunteers from the Maribor Women's Society to set up the kitchens.¹¹⁹ To cover their costs, donations were solicited on the local level. In Maribor, for example, the women's society organized a "flower day," a fundraiser at which more than 20,000 crowns (approximately \$100 in 1920) were donated. Pupils from the First Middle School for Girls also gathered 2,000 crowns from their relatives and friends, and a local wood trader donated wood.¹²⁰

Clearly, the local population was not just an aid recipient. It could contribute to the program—financially and otherwise. Moreover, the Slovene government helped shape the program; the list of places that received American aid for children was determined through dialogue between the government in Ljubljana and the American mission. Furthermore, the case of Maribor and its surrounding municipalities seems to suggest that local protagonists had some autonomy and could—at least occasionally—follow their own agendas. The mayor of Tržič, for instance, also arbitrarily shared some of the donated food with the neighboring villages.¹²¹ Similar things had happened in Belgium, where the locals, especially the local women, were a crucial part of the CRB aid. In Romania and Hungary, local collaboration was extremely important as well and women also played an outsized role. Not least, the Austrian branch of the ARA, the Amerikanische Kinderhilfsaktion, could not have succeeded without its local staff, while its head, the Viennese doctor Clemens Pirquet, and his Pirquet System of Nutrition influenced ARA programs outside the country.¹²² In short, local involvement shaped the American aid programs and ultimately made them successful.

119 "Za mariborske otroke," *Mariborski delavec*, 7 May 1920, 2. For more on the women's society, see Metka Vrbnjak, "Mariborsko žensko društvo," in *Splošno žensko društvo 1901–1945*, ed. Nataša Budna Kodrič and Aleksandra Serše (Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 2003), 453–87.

120 PAM, Državna I. dekliška meščanska šola, t. e. 23, School chronicle for 1919/20.

121 ZAL KRA, Občina Tržič, t. e. 64, a. e. 696, Tržič Mayor to Kranj District Captain (22 July 1919).

122 Michael Burri, "Clemens Pirquet: Early Twentieth-Century Scientific Networks, the Austrian Hunger Crisis, and the Making of the International Food Expert," in *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, ed. Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley (Oxford University Press, 2020), 39–71; Elisabeth Piller, "Beyond Hoover: Rewriting the History of the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) through Female Involvement," *The International*

The Bohemian Lands were no exception in this regard. Collaboration with the local protagonists and a sensible use of the existing structures was needed and, to the benefit of everyone involved, possible from the very beginning. In April 1919, J. T. Shaw and R. A. Wheeler, officers in the US Army, arrived in Prague to coordinate food aid. Under the auspices of the president of the Czechoslovak republic and with active involvement of Czech officials, they established an organization known as the Czechoslovak Child Care – American Relief Administration (*Československá péče o dítě, CCC*).¹²³ The local protagonists reacted straight away, not just asking for help but also offering to help. The Czech Provincial Commission for the Care of Children and Youth in Bohemia (*Česká zemská komise pro dítě a mládež v Čechách*), for instance, immediately contacted the government. The Commission had experience in running homes for the orphaned, neglected, and disabled children and hoped that American supplies would help improve the diet of the children in their care and keep the homes running. Because it coordinated an already established network of District Youth Welfare Committees (*Okresní péče o mládež*), its leaders believed that without their cooperation, the American operation could not be implemented effectively and quickly.¹²⁴ The Provincial Commission offered the use of its staff, its vast experience in the field of child nutrition and statistics, as well as the cooperation of other associations, such as the Protection of Mothers and Infants (*Ochrana matek a kojenců*) or the Czech Heart (*České srdce*). In fact, the representatives of the Provincial Commission for the Care of Children and Youth in Prague believed—and the Moravian Commission in Brno agreed—that the US effort would only be successful if its implementation were entrusted to them.

The Bohemian and Moravian humanitarian organizations' attempts to take over the distribution of American food supplies were unsuccessful. The Americans wanted to retain control and set up their own system. Other incoming organizations were also interested in closely monitoring the

History Review 45, no. 1 (2023), 202–24; Kind-Kovács, *Budapest's Children*, 153–83; Cretu, *Foreign Aid and State Building in Interwar Romania*, 61–93.

¹²³ *Československá péče o dítě* (Th. Venta, 1920), 107.

¹²⁴ Národní archiv, Prague (henceforth NA), Ministerstvo sociální péče, 1918–38, k. 1, Czech Provincial Commission for the Care of Children and Youth in Bohemia to Ministry of Social Welfare (2 April 1919). For more on the network of child welfare organizations in Bohemia, see Jakub Rákosník, "Czech Children in Need and the Mixed Economy of Welfare in Interwar Czechoslovakia (1918–1939)," in *Caring for the Socially Marginalised in Interwar Europe, 1919–1939: The Mixed Economy of Welfare*, ed. Michele Mioni and Stefano Petrungaro (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 97–118.

allocation of their resources. In the fall of 1920, Muriel Paget expressed her conviction that in the prevailing circumstances in Central Europe it was imperative for external agencies to carefully supervise the distribution of food to ensure its equitable and transparent distribution.¹²⁵ However, the Ministry of Social Welfare informed the Provincial Commission for the Care of Children and Youth that it would be invited to cooperate on the national, provincial, and local levels.¹²⁶

In fact, as the Czechoslovak Child Care gradually built up a network of district and local committees, its operation was greatly facilitated by the involvement of existing charitable organizations. Local and district committees usually had five members, a chairperson, a secretary, a supply officer, a medical doctor, and a kitchen inspector. All the members were volunteers, except for the secretary, who received a small salary. The composition of the committee took into account the nationality of the population.¹²⁷ Not entirely unexpectedly, women were well represented. According to the instructions for the establishment of local committees issued by the CCC district committee in Písek, southern Bohemia, they were to have nine members with only the chairperson and vice-chairman being men.¹²⁸

In some of the worst affected areas, such as Cheb/Eger and Aš/Asch in western Bohemia, Most/Brüx, Duchcov/Dux and Teplice in northern Bohemia, and Opava/Troppau, Ostrava/Ostrau, and Frýdek/Friedek/Frydek in Silesia, a so-called flying committee, consisting of a US Army officer, an ARC worker, and a Czechoslovak legionnaire as an interpreter, was tasked with setting up the local committees.¹²⁹ On the whole, however, the involvement of the Americans was minimal. The people working for the CCC on the local level were frequently the people who had been involved with humanitarian assistance during the war and could seamlessly build on their wartime efforts. In Benešov/Beneschau in central Bohemia, for

125 Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham, Save the Children Fund Archive, reel No. 21, EJ 68, Muriel Paget to Miss Jebb (19 September 1920).

126 NA, Ministerstvo sociální péče, k. 1, Ministry of Social Welfare to Provincial Commission for the Care of Children and Youth in Prague, 5 April 1919.

127 ANM, Sum Antonín, k. 56, Final Report of the Work in Czecho-Slovakia (April 1919–September 1920) Prepared by the Members of the Mission in Cooperation with the Czecho-Slovak Péče o dítě (30 September 1920).

128 Státní okresní archiv Strakonice (henceforth SOKA Strakonice), Péče o dítě – místní výbor Bavorov, 1919, Instructions of the CCC committee in Písek (20 July 1919).

129 ANM, Sum Antonín, k. 56, Final Report of the Work in Czecho-Slovakia (April 1919–September 1920) Prepared by the Members of the Mission in Cooperation with the Czecho-Slovak Péče o dítě (30 September 1920).

example, the Veselý couple had long been involved in humanitarian aid. František Veselý was a lawyer, a long-time supporter of T. G. Masaryk, and a representative of the new political elite. Together with his wife Milada, he supported the charity Czech Heart during the war. Before the war, Milada Veselá was the head of the local Women's Association (*Ženský spolek*), which focused on charitable activities, including providing education, medical care, and food for impoverished children. Soup kitchens were a particular focus of her efforts. These activities continued after the war.¹³⁰

The so-called American kitchens were established gradually. As soon as the central office of the Czechoslovak Child Care in Prague was informed that a local committee had been set up, its staff arrived to inspect and approve the local operation. In a matter of weeks, the kitchens were up and running in the industrial town Kladno and in the working class districts of Prague, followed by the hard-hit districts in the Ore Mountains (Krušné hory/Erzgebirge) and the Podkrkonoší/Riesengebirge foothills.¹³¹ In Písek, as well as in Varnsdorf/Warnsdorf, northern Bohemia, they started cooking in an American kitchen in July 1919, while in Bavorov/Barau, southern Bohemia, they did not even establish a committee until August. In Litomyšl/Leitomyšl, eastern Bohemia, the kitchen became operational only in October 1919.¹³² By the fall of 1919, 13.33% of children in Czechoslovakia were fed in the kitchens operated by the CCC. There were, however, huge regional differences. In Slovakia, where the fighting was ongoing and the logistics challenging, fewer than 6,000 children, about 1% of all children, were getting help. In Bohemia, 283,698 children under the age of 14, a whole 70% of the relevant population, were included in the CCC feeding program.¹³³ Once again, local expertise and local conditions made a difference.

130 Státní okresní archiv Benešov, České srdce, 1917–19, k. 1.

131 *Československá péče o dítě*, 120.

132 "Místní výbor americké potravinové akce – Československá péče o dítě," *Písecké listy: Věstník z Pootaví*, 26 July 1919, 4; Státní okresní archiv Svitavy se sídlem v Litomyšli (henceforth SOKa Svitavy), Okresní péče o mládež Litomyšl, 1915–47, kn. 1, CCC Committee in Litomyšl, 3rd session, minutes (7 November 1919); Státní okresní archiv Děčín (henceforth SOKa Děčín), Hooverova akce Varnsdorf, 1919–23, k. 1, Letter from Varnsdorf School Soup Kitchen Direction for Administering Wartime People's Kitchens (25 August 1919); SOKa Strakonice, Péče o dítě – místní výbor Bavorov, 1919, Direction of CCC Committee in Písek (20 July 1919); Státní okresní archiv Písek (henceforth SOKa Písek), Československá péče o dítě Protivín, II B/1, Weekly reports of the CCC Kitchen in Protivín (1919).

133 *Československá péče o dítě*, 120. On logistical challenges, see HILA, ARAEO, box 57, folder 1, "Report of Prague Mission Chief Arthur C. Ringland to ECF London Headquarters" (11 January 1920).



Figure 3.1 Feeding children with US food aid in one of the kitchens run by Czechoslovak Child Care in Mědryka/Mändrik, East Bohemia, c. 1920. Státní okresní archiv Svitavy se sídlem v Litomyšli.

The local and the national press diligently informed the population about these developments. The Social Democratic newspaper *Právo lidu*, for instance, reported in April 1919 that food would be prepared on a scientific basis, with all the nutritious components, and that the relief would be administered the “American way,” without political, religious, or national distinction.¹³⁴ Indeed, the ARA emphasized the distribution of food on the basis of need rather than nationality or religion. This was also in line with the wishes of the Czechoslovak government, which needed to stabilize the country and neutralize potential centers of radicalism and unrest.

Before children could be enrolled in the program, they had to be examined by a doctor. The ARA required a fairly thorough monitoring of the children's health to prove that their presence was necessary and that the aid was effective. Improvements in health conditions, the most visible evidence of which were weight gain and improved school attendance, were to serve as proof. After the exam, the children were divided into three groups. Healthy

134 “Československá péče o děti,” *Právo lidu*, 29 April 1919, 7.

children who did not need help were placed in Group A. Group B included children who needed additional food because they were malnourished, and Group C was composed of children in urgent need of assistance. No child was entitled to a meal without a card issued after the medical examination. These cards had to be presented at each meal and could also be confiscated by the kitchen inspectors if the rules governing the meals were broken. As in Slovenia, these rules explicitly stated that the children had to consume the food on site and that its resale was prohibited.¹³⁵

The meals were served in public kitchens, orphanages, schools, and other educational institutions. The food had to be prepared according to ARA-approved recipes, which were based on scientific criteria influenced by the Pirquet system. Its crucial component was the so-called NEM unit, which corresponded to the nutritional value of one gram of milk. According to this system, the nutritional value of 1 gram of flour was 5 NEM, 1 gram of butter 12 NEM, 1 gram of bread 3.5 NEM, and 1 gram of potatoes 1.25 NEM.¹³⁶ The nutritional needs of each person, expressed in NEM, were determined using a special measuring method. According to an article in *České slovo* (Czech Word), Pirquet presented the easiest-to-understand guide to adequate nutrition.¹³⁷ Although the method was appreciated by Czechoslovak experts and the CCC headquarters strictly required measurements from local committees, it was not always possible to obtain all the data. Nevertheless, the measurements collected by the CCC showed that children's nutrition was improving.¹³⁸

In the kitchens, children up to the age of six received cocoa, adolescents between the ages of six and fourteen soup, while older children were excluded from the program. At first, the meals were intended to supplement and not replace the domestic diet, and their nutritional value was supposed to be around 200 calories.¹³⁹ Over time, the caloric value of the meals and their composition changed. In September 1919, when the representatives of all the American missions in Europe met in Prague's Old Town Hall, Walter

135 Státní okresní archiv Havlíčkův Brod (henceforth SOKA Havlíčkův Brod), Československá péče o dítě Ledeč, k. 1, sl. 1, ARA circular (May 1919).

136 Burri, "Clemens Pirquet," 43–44. See also Clemens Pirquet, *An Outline of the Pirquet System of Nutrition* (W. B. Saunders, 1922).

137 "Mléko jako měřítko výživnosti," *Československá zemědělec*, 12 May 1921, 420; "Výživa podle Pirquetových nemů," *České slovo*, 1 January 1922, 15; "Mléko jako jednotka míry," *Československý zemědělec*, 20 March 1924, 433.

138 *Československá péče o dítě*, 143–47.

139 ANM, Sum Antonín, k. 56, "Final Report of the Work in Czecho-Slovakia (April 1919–September 1920) Prepared by the Members of the Mission in Cooperation with the Czecho-Slovak Péče o dítě" (30 September 1920).

Lyman Brown, ARA's Director General for Europe, toured Prague's feeding stations and recommended that the number of calories be increased to 400–600. He also suggested that biscuits with cocoa should be baked and given to children as a snack to increase the intake of calories.¹⁴⁰ Following this advice, the ARA increased the nutritional value of its meals in April 1920. Children receiving cocoa (0–6 years) had their food ration increased from 254 calories to 413 calories; children receiving soup (6–14 years) had their food ration increased from 371 calories to 524 calories. The biscuits became an important addition to the meal and other foods were added. So-called podix, a bean- or rice-based porridge that the Czech doctor F. X. Hnátek devised, was one such addition—and it seems that the children universally hated it.¹⁴¹

The inclusion of podix further shows that local expertise was valued and that local experts played an active part in the program. Indeed, Czechoslovak collaboration was an important part of the CCC's child feeding. So-called Leach biscuits, named after the ECF's chief medical officer, were baked in local bakeries; the ARA supplied cocoa, milk, and lard, while the Czechoslovak government provided the necessary flour and sugar.¹⁴² The government also contributed financially. In fact, when the ARA's federal mandate was about to expire in summer 1919, the Czechoslovak government was preparing to take over the entire program. It was sure it could be run by Czechoslovaks as long as they would be given enough time “to learn, still under the guidance of our American friends, the excellent methods of work which helped them in the first place to achieve so rapid and remarkable a result.”¹⁴³

Because Herbert Hoover managed to reinvent the ARA as the European Children's Fund, this was not necessary, but the local staff nevertheless assumed an ever-increasing role. In September 1919, the US mission staff was reduced to three officers due to the demobilization of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe. The departure from Europe also involved

140 “Sjezd amerických vyživovacích misí v Praze,” *Venkov*, 18 September 1919, 5; “Sjezd amerických vyživovacích misí,” *Čech*, 18 September 1919, 6; NA, Ministerstvo sociální péče, k. 1, Program of the American Nurturing Missions Convention in Prague.

141 Arthur C. Ringland, “A Survey of Relief Work in Czecho-Slovakia,” *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 31 December 1920, 11–24; F. X. Hnátek, “Stručný nástin vzniku a činnosti Československé péče o dítě,” *Praktický lékař*, 1 February 1922, 36–37.

142 HILA, ARAEO, box 57, folder 1, “Report of Prague Mission Chief Arthur C. Ringland to ECF London Headquarters” (21 November 1919); *Československá péče o dítě*, 129–30.

143 NA, Ministerstvo sociální péče, k. 1, Ministry of People's Supply to Directorate of Czechoslovak Child Care, 9 August 1919; Conference program.

American Red Cross personnel.¹⁴⁴ The number of US workforce involved in the program was not big to begin with—at its height it included about twenty officers and thirty female American Red Cross volunteers. Now it was reduced to a minimum. Since the local staff successfully took over and the supplies were still arriving, the average citizen probably did not even notice that the Americans had departed and that the ECF was now funding the program. In the popular consciousness, the distribution centers continued to figure as American Aid, American Kitchens, or Hoover Aid.

Yet, the population certainly noticed one change that was introduced because of the ARA's transformation into the ECF. In January 1920, the CCC was forced to introduce a small monthly fee of three Czechoslovak crowns for each child. Half of the collected funds was to go to the head office and the rest to be divided between the district and local committees.¹⁴⁵ The CCC emphasized that the fee was needed to cover the cost of the operation but that it should also “instill a sense of duty in the Czechoslovak people.” Thus, they were convinced that “by donating such an amazing amount of food, the feeling of gratitude is lost and that our people—unfortunately—have become convinced that they must receive everything for free.”¹⁴⁶

There were partial exemptions for orphans and families with many children, but the local committee had to raise money elsewhere—through collections, contributions from the community, proceeds from theater performances, etc. Money was also raised by selling postcards. This proved to be a challenge, and records show that several communities stopped running kitchens, mainly because they were unable to raise funds and because the parents were not ready to pay the fees. For example, the local CCC committee in Zbiroh/Sbirow, a small town in eastern Bohemia in the Plzeň/Pilsen region, informed the district committee in Rokycany/Rokitzan that they could not cover the cost because they had no income. Hence, they decided to run the kitchen until the supplies were exhausted and then close it.¹⁴⁷ As various complaints and protests continued to

144 ANM, Sum Antonín, k. 56, “Final Report of the Work in Czecho-Slovakia (April 1919 – September 1920) Prepared by the Members of the Mission in Cooperation with the Czecho-Slovak Péče o dítě” (30 September 1920).

145 SOkA Havlíčkův Brod, Československá péče o dítě – okresní komitét v Ledči nad Sázavou, 1919–20, k. 1, sl. 1, Circular to District CCC Committes (15 November 1919).

146 Státní okresní archiv Rokycany (henceforth SOkA Rokycany), Československá péče o dítě okresní komitét Rokycany, 1919–1925, k. 1, Announcement to the citizens of Jilemnice about the competences of the Social Welfare Office (1920).

147 SOkA Rokycany, Československá péče o dítě okresní komitét Rokycany, 1919–1925, k. 1, CCC Committee in Zbiroh to District Committee in Rokycany (11 March 1920).

arrive to the CCC headquarters, Antonín Sum, one of the Czech officials, explained: "The Americans give and the Americans command. We have no choice but to comply with their wishes, even if they are outside Czech routine. We note that the Americans follow the same principles all over Central Europe."¹⁴⁸

Whatever the Czechs were thinking, feeding about half a million children was indeed a huge task. It was expensive and supplying the growing number of kitchens was a vast logistical undertaking. The ARA issued circulars with precise rules on how to organize the transport, storage, preparation, and distribution of food. The logistics were based on military models and the whole process was monitored by the Americans. Food supplies were transported by rail to the principal warehouses in Ústí nad Labem/Aussig and Prague, from where they were distributed to the regional warehouses. The local committees then distributed them to the kitchens, which in return had to submit weekly reports detailing the number of portions distributed, the days on which they were distributed, etc. Copies of these reports were sent to the head office in Prague and to the district committee; failure to submit the reports could result in the suspension of food supplies. Despite detailed instructions, most of the responses were not very thorough. The children, for instance, were rarely weighed even if that was a requirement.¹⁴⁹

There were other problems. At the end of September 1919, a member of the ARA staff produced a critical report on the state of Prague kitchens:

Following the inspection of eight of the sixty feeding stations in Prague, I found that in every case they were in a very unsanitary condition and under very lax control. In one case the children were being fed in a military barrack still occupied by soldiers, the only room available for feeding being about 40 feet square and adjoining the toilets, the odor of which would certainly not act as an appetizer. The paid inspector who has been on the job since the last of June did not know the location of

148 SOKA Havlíčkův Brod, Československá péče o dítě – okresní komitét v Ledči nad Sázavou, 1919–20, k. 1, sl. 3, Antonín Sum to Head of District Committee in Ledec nad Sázavou (1 March 1920).

149 Reports kept in SOKA Rokycany, Československá péče o dítě okresní komitét Rokycany, 1919–1925; SOKA Svitavy, Okresní péče o mládež Litomyšl, 1915–47, k. 15; SOKA Havlíčkův Brod, Okresní komitét Čsl. péče o dítě Ledec nad Sázavou; SOKA Děčín, Hooverova akce Varnsdorf; SOKA Strakonice, Péče o dítě – místní výbor Bavorov, 1919; SOKA Písek, Československá péče o dítě; Státní okresní archiv Jindřichův Hradec (henceforth SOKA Jindřichův Hradec), Místní komitét péče o dítě Lomnice nad Lužnicí, 1919–20. See also HILA, ARAEO, box 57, folder 1, Description of the distribution system (10 September 1919).

feeding stations, which was sufficient proof for me that he had not been attending to business.¹⁵⁰

The program often suffered from poor coordination; deliveries were late, damaged, or incomplete. Committees and kitchens then resorted to improvisation, diverging from strict American regulations. The proceedings of the Litomyšl District Committee are informative and show a high degree of arbitrariness. According to these proceedings, the kitchen staff often added water to stretch the portions. Sometimes even that did not help, and some children were left without their cocoa or soup. On the other hand, the children sometimes took their food home and identification cards were issued without signatures.¹⁵¹ During his September 1919 visit to Prague, Walter Lyman Brown also noted that in some kitchens in Prague, children took food home and he suggested stricter enforcement of the rules.¹⁵²

Despite all the problems and despite its rather abrupt and premature termination, the ARA's child feeding program definitely had a noticeable positive impact in Slovenia and in the Bohemian Lands. For the latter, there are even exact numbers that show decreased mortality, noticeable weight gains, and much-improved health status of the child population.¹⁵³

Food Draft Program and Relief to Intellectuals

In December 1919, as governmental support was running out, the American Relief Administration initiated a special food aid program for Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary, and Poland. Yugoslavia was not included. The so-called food draft program hoped to mobilize European immigrants in the US by allowing them to purchase special vouchers for their relatives and friends in Europe in participating banks. These would then be sent to the recipient, with copies going to offices in New York and London. Vouchers could be exchanged for food parcels, shipped from the US, at American Relief Administration warehouses in all the participating countries. The smaller

150 HILA, ARAEO, box 57, folder 1, Progress Report from C. N. Leach to ECF London (25 September 1919).

151 SOkA Svitavy, Okresní péče o mládež Litomyšl, 1915–47, kn. 1, CCC Committee in Litomyšl, 3rd session, minutes (7 November 1919).

152 "Sjezd amerických vyživovacích misí v Praze," *Venkov*, 18 September 1919, 5; "Sjezd amerických vyživovacích misí," *Čech*, 18 September 1919, 6; NA, Ministerstvo sociální péče, k. 1, Program of the American Nurturing Missions Convention in Prague.

153 *Československá péče o dítě*, 143–49.

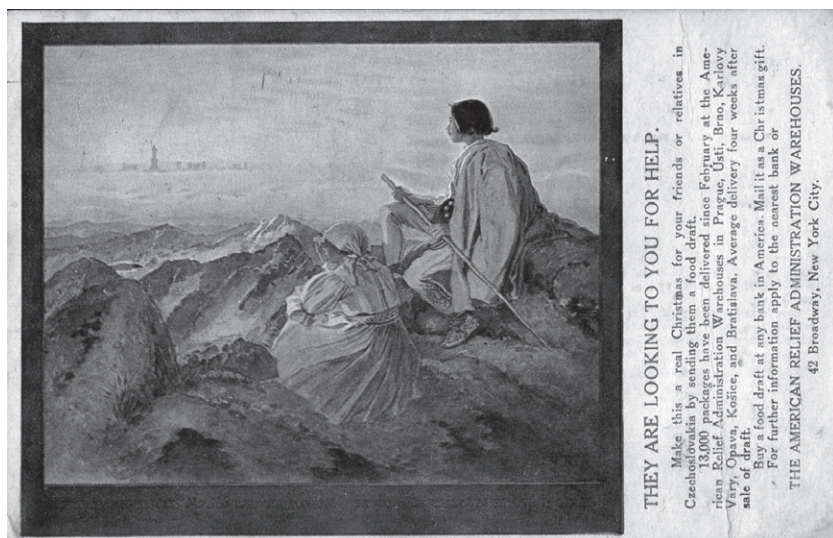


Figure 3.2 American Relief Administration Warehouses postcard, sent from Czechoslovakia to relatives in the US to encourage food draft purchases. Front-side painting by Adolf Kašpar, "We Gratefully Remember Mr. H. C. Hoover Across the Sea." Private collection.

package, worth \$10, contained 11.13 kilograms of flour, 4.55 kilograms of beans, 3.63 kilograms of bacon, and 8 boxes of condensed milk. The larger package, valued at \$50 (\$918 in 2022), contained 63.4 kilograms of flour, 22.75 kilograms of beans, 7.26 kilograms of bacon, 6.82 kilograms of lard, 5.4 kilograms of beef, and 48 boxes of condensed milk.¹⁵⁴ There was also a kosher version, which was a consequence of the ARA's cooperation with the Joint Distribution Committee, the main humanitarian organization of American Jews. The JDC joined the program, and it successfully sold food drafts through its US network of Jewish organizations.¹⁵⁵ In the end, 2,802 kosher packages—slightly more than 13% of the total number—were distributed in Czechoslovakia.¹⁵⁶

The food draft resembled emigrant initiatives that were operating about a year earlier. As we have seen, they were fraught with problems. The food draft, however, relied on the robust ARA infrastructure and was also more

¹⁵⁴ HILA, ARAEO, box 103, folder 2, ARA Prague to ARA EO London (14 February 1920); Edgar Rickard, "Genesis and the Development of the Food Draft," *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 15 October 1920, 8; Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 91.

¹⁵⁵ Granick, *International Jewish Humanitarianism*, 90, 91.

¹⁵⁶ Zosa Szajkowski, "Private American Jewish Overseas Relief (1919–1938): Problems and Attempted Solutions," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (1968): 349, table III.

secure than buying food and shipping it to Europe individually, in which case the shipment was often lost, damaged, or stolen. As the program was underway, warehouses started opening their doors across the Bohemian Lands and the entire region. In Czechoslovakia, the warehouses were established in ten cities; in Austria, 32; in Germany, seven; while in Hungary there was only one warehouse, and Poland got fifteen. A total of 403,037 food vouchers of all kinds, valued at \$5,913,370 (\$104,944,478 in 2022), was sold and delivered while the warehouses were in operation. Sales of food vouchers began in January 1920 and continued until 30 April 1921.¹⁵⁷

An intense propaganda campaign accompanied the start of the program in the Bohemian Lands and throughout Czechoslovakia. In February 1920, many newspapers announced the formation of a new organization called ARA Warehouses (ARAW), which would be distributing food. The ARAW instructed that notices in all the languages spoken in Czechoslovakia should be posted in the railway stations, post offices, cafés, gyms, etc.: “It is inevitable that all sections of the population, without distinction of nationality or religion, should be alerted to the organization of warehouses, since the importation of food is of great importance for the whole Republic.” The announcements were placed primarily in areas with a high rate of emigration. 200,000 posters and flyers were distributed in Czechoslovakia.¹⁵⁸ To promote the program, the people in the Bohemian Lands were also urged to take individual action: “Residents of our republic who have relatives or friends in America can write to them to purchase a food voucher for them at an American bank.” The Czech painter Adolf Kašpar designed a postcard especially for the occasion. It depicted a boy and girl in folk costume looking across the ocean from the Bohemian mountains at the Statue of Liberty. Czechoslovak Child Care gave the original to Hoover as a token of its gratitude.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ *Československá péče o dítě*, 164; Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 93–95.

¹⁵⁸ HILA, ARAEO, box 103, folder 2, “Advertising in Five Languages.” See also copies of various undated circulars SOkA Havlíčkův Brod, Okresní komitét Čsl. péče o dítě Ledec nad Sázavou, k. 1, Various circulars; “Zur Einfuhr von Lebensmitteln aus Amerika,” *Brünner Morgenpost*, 18 February 1920, 2; “Mitwirkung der Staatsgetreideanstalt an der neuen großen Aktion Mr. H. Hoovers,” *Grenzbote: Deutsches Tagblatt für die Karpathenländer*, 6 March 1920, 4; “Az országos gabonahivatal működése Mr. H. Hoover új akcióján,” *Hiradó – politikai napilap*, 7 March 1920, 5; “American Relief Administration/European Children’s Fund/Československá péče o dítě,” *Český svět*, 22 April 1920, 23.

¹⁵⁹ “American Relief Administration/European Children’s Fund/Československá péče o dítě,” *Český svět*, 22 April 1920, 25.

Yet the frequent calls by the Czechoslovak Child Care headquarters to its local committees to use the ARAW suggest that vouchers were not being used to the extent that the ARA expected. On 28 February 1920, soon after the program got off the ground, ECF headquarters in London described the problems in Czechoslovakia: "To date the number of drafts for delivery in Czecho-Slovakia as advised by New York is rather disappointing. Whether this is due to small Czech emigration to America, lack of Czech publicity in America, or indifference of the Czechs in America for their people in Europe, it is impossible to state."¹⁶⁰ In July 1920, the Czechoslovak Ministry of People's Supply informed the Czechoslovak Press Office that the ARAW had again approached the ministry with a request that the state administration promote the warehouses because there was little interest in them in Czechoslovakia, which was in stark contrast to the situation in Vienna. The ministry pointed out that the use of warehouses was in the interest of the republic not only because they delivered food to those in need, but also because the American Relief Administration measured the need for food within the country through their use. If the warehouses were not used, the US could be "given false ideas" about the need for food in Czechoslovakia, the ministry stressed.¹⁶¹

In the end, the results were indeed somewhat disappointing as only 21,231 packages worth \$347,750 (\$6,171,513 in 2022) were delivered to the entire country; the deliveries declined precipitously after the early months of 1921 and the sale of the drafts ceased at the end of April.¹⁶² The limited success of the food draft program in the Bohemian Lands and Czechoslovakia likely had several causes. An effort on the part of the recipient was needed, many people did not have relatives or acquaintances in the US, and the poor reputation of American food might have played a role as well. Since Czechoslovakia apparently did not take full advantage of the program, it is also possible that it did not need as much imported food as Austria or Germany.

Another food relief program that was not present in Slovenia or the rest of Yugoslavia but had a noticeable impact in the Bohemian Lands, was relief to intellectuals. University professors, teachers, lawyers, doctors, actors, engineers, and civil servants were often unable to secure enough food from

¹⁶⁰ HILA, ARAEO, box 103, folder 3, ARAW London (Henry B. Smith) to ARA Prague (28 February 1920).

¹⁶¹ NA, Předsednictvo ministerské rady, 1918–45, k. 3630, Ministry of People's Supply to Czechoslovak Press Office (9 July 1920); "Americké pomocné skladiště," *Nitrianske noviny*, 3 October 1920, 146–47.

¹⁶² Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 95, 171, 480–81.

their incomes in the tumultuous postwar years. As with children, the survival of the educated, however, was seen as a prerequisite for future prosperity and the functioning of the state. The intellectuals were also seen as guardians of the existing societal order as well as potential revolutionaries.¹⁶³ Hence, several foreign organizations participated in this targeted aid, the largest of which was the Commonwealth Fund, established in October 1918. Its funds were used to support child welfare, health and hygiene activities, and educational research. Their food aid, which is what we are mostly interested in, was distributed through existing channels.¹⁶⁴ Within Czechoslovakia, the Commonwealth Fund utilized the network established by the Americans instead of relying on the local charities. It employed ARA's warehouses and their voucher system for food distribution, and in the years 1919–21 it distributed 400,000 meals in that way. Additionally, the European Children's Fund donated significant funds for a student feeding program that was operated by the YMCA and the YWCA in cooperation with local student organizations from March to September 1921. Almost 3,000 students received 245,907 meals through that channel.¹⁶⁵

The first report on the activities of the Commonwealth Fund appeared in the Czechoslovak press in May 1919, and the project itself began in July. At that time, the Fund provided \$25,000 in food vouchers for the intelligentsia, which included 31,350 kilograms of flour and 11,295 kilograms of rice, 3,060 kilograms of bacon, 3,240 kilograms of lard, as well as canned meat, milk, and oil. Captain Will Shafroth oversaw the distribution and devised a system whereby various groups themselves determined the quantities that the individuals in the group would receive. Special committees composed of teachers, professors, writers, musicians, journalists, actors, and artists were responsible for distribution. Since neither nationality nor religion was to play a role in the distribution of food, these committees usually consisted of two members from Czech and two members from German associations and one independent member appointed by the Ministry of Education. Their recommendations determined who would be placed on the list and who

163 Gábor Egry, "Petit Bourgeois Local Revolutions? Post-Habsburg Transitions, Democratization, Local Elites, and the Place of Western Hungary/Burgenland," in *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border*, ed. Hannes Grandits, Ibolya Murber, and Katharina Tyran (Berghahn, 2025), 139; Irish, "The Most Deplorable Victims?," 232–33. See also Tomás Irish, *Feeding the Mind: Humanitarianism and the Reconstruction of European Intellectual Life, 1919–1933* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 59 and passim.

164 Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 96.

165 Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 100–101, 110–11.

would receive food. The quota set for each profession had to be respected and a quarter of the entire budget was allocated to student canteens.¹⁶⁶

Local involvement played a role in other ways as well. Various professional organizations compiled lists of their members in need or urged them to come forward. In the spring and early summer of 1920, when Czechoslovakia was again experiencing food shortages, various newspapers published several calls to that effect. In July 1920, for instance, the Provincial Association of Municipal Teachers in Prague called on the chairpersons of relevant societies and clubs to provide the addresses of two to three members who needed help from the Commonwealth Fund.¹⁶⁷ At the same time, the Svatobor Literary Association proposed that 76 writers, widows and orphans of writers receive food vouchers.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, a local humanitarian organization called Rescue (*Záchrana*) set up the Masaryk Relief Fund for the Suffering Intelligentsia from the Middle Class in Prague's Vinohrady district to alleviate poverty and called on the residents with a steady income to make regular contributions.¹⁶⁹

There were cases of members of professional associations refusing their benefits and giving them to those in need, such as widows and orphans. For example, the district teachers' union in Písek decided to forego American donations in favor of their suffering colleagues in the industrial and border districts.¹⁷⁰ In this particular context, there was a remarkable shift in the prevailing sense of entitlement, which gave way to solidarity. The expressed loyalty of this group of intellectuals to the newly established state, coupled with their willingness to tighten their belts, and perhaps the gradual improvement in food supplies, may have had a significant impact on this phenomenon.

In July 1921, university and secondary school professors were the final recipients of food provisions. The allocation of aid was terminated in that month, and the remaining food supplies were allocated to various local

166 "Velkomyslný dar inteligenci v Československu," *Venkov*, 14 July 1920, 5; "Skvělý dar potravinový z Ameriky české intelligence," *Večer*, 14 July 1920, 3; "Americký dar pro strádající inteligenci v republice Československé," *Národní listy*, 14 July 1920, 3; "Americký dar pro inteligenci v republice Československé," *Čas*, 15 July 1920, 6; HILA, ARAEO, box 103, folder 1, ARAW Mission to Czechoslovakia (Will Shafroth) to ARA ECF (14 and 21 July 1920).

167 "Sekretariát Slov. hudeb. Unie," *České slovo*, 20 July 1920, 5; "Zemský svaz městského učitelstva v Praze," *Národní listy*, 21 July 1920, 4; "Zemský svaz městského učitelstva v Praze," *České slovo*, 22 July 1920, 6; "Zemský svaz městského učitelstva v Praze," *Čas*, 22 July 1920, 7.

168 "Ze Svatobora," *Venkov*, 28 October 1920, 8.

169 "Pomozte trpící inteligenci," *Český deník (Večerník)*, 18 June 1920, 4; "Pomozte trpící inteligenci," *Lidové noviny*, 21 June 1920, 2.

170 "Velkomyslný americký dar inteligenci v Československu," *Venkov*, 24 July 1920, 4.

committees.¹⁷¹ By that time, 6,375,000 crowns worth of food had been delivered. In total, Commonwealth Fund aid eventually provided the equivalent of 545,200 meals for 19,671 people in Czechoslovakia at a total cost of \$82,501 (\$1,464,144 in 2022).¹⁷²

The Americans Leave

Despite all the efforts and despite a plethora of initiatives, the impact of foreign aid was limited. It was not a magic wand that could solve all problems. It helped feed the people from spring 1919 onwards and thus it also helped stabilize the new states, but the promised abundance did not quite materialize. While food scarcity was not such an unsurmountable problem anymore at the end of 1919, for the urban and rural poor and in some regions, shortages were still noticeable. Wartime “thrifty cookbooks” were still being reprinted, and people continued to pick and preserve forest fruits. In short, getting enough food on the table was still a challenge.¹⁷³ In March 1920, Arthur C. Ringland, the head of the ARA mission in Czechoslovakia, reported a critical shortage of flour, fat, milk, and potatoes in many parts of the country.¹⁷⁴ According to the report, the Czechoslovak government had been inaccurate in its estimate of requirements for 1919–20 and had also been “extravagant” in its distribution. Consequently, wheat flour used for cooking was only available until 8 March, and bread flour (a mixture of wheat and rye) until 30 April. The approaching elections in April exacerbated the situation. Strikes and demonstrations as well as social and political unrest caused by the food shortages forced the government to increase its credit with the US Grain Corporation and ask the ARA for a loan of 550 tons of flour.¹⁷⁵

171 “Unterstützung der Intelligenz durch Amerika,” *Prager Presse*, 7 July 1921, 2; “Nachrichten aus Mähren und Schlesien,” *Brünner Morgenpost*, 8 July 1921, 2; “Americké potraviny československé inteligenci,” *Lidové noviny*, 9 July 1921, 2; “American Relief Administration,” *Československý denník*, 12 July 1921, 2.

172 Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 100–101.

173 Maja Godina Golija, *Prehrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih 20. stoletja* (Obzorja, 1996); Maja Godina Golija, “Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?: Food Supply and Nutrition of the Civilian Population in Maribor at the End of and after World War I,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 298–311. Also see Chapter 2 in this volume.

174 HILA, ARAEO, box 57, folder 1, Ringland’s food survey (27 March 1920).

175 ANM, Sum Antonín, k. 56, “Final Report of the Work in Czecho-Slovakia (April 1919–September 1920) Prepared by the Members of the Mission in Cooperation with the Czecho-Slovak Péče o dítě” (30 September 1920).

Foreign relief workers were perfectly aware of how precarious the situation still was. The October 1919 "Memorandum on Children's Relief in Jugo-Slavia" summarized the situation: "There is need for continued food relief for 200,000 children through the winter, this number to be reduced to 150,000 before the end of the operation on May 1 [1920]."¹⁷⁶ On 27 February 1920, the American Yugo-Slav Relief announced that it would continue to support the European Children's Fund, which was running out of public money, and reminded its donors that "stories of plenty of food in Yugo-Slavia must not be confused with the lack of nourishment for children," adding that cocoa, milk, and sugar were needed because "children cannot grow on grain foods alone."¹⁷⁷ A few months later, in April 1920, Czechoslovak Child Care conducted a survey (of the 600 forms sent out, more than 85% were returned) that included families from all social classes. The results showed that malnutrition was found in all families whose weekly income was less than 200 crowns and that the pre-war nutritional standard was not reached in any family with an income below 500 crowns per week.¹⁷⁸ At a conference held in Venice in June 1920, ARC fieldworkers also reported that the people of Yugoslavia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia were still suffering from hunger, and argued for continued US involvement.¹⁷⁹

Despite that, the ECF's program in Yugoslavia was shut down at the end of August of 1920 after that year's harvest turned out better than expected. Consequently, American Yugo-Slav Relief, which up to that moment had collected \$363,847 (\$6,102,247 in 2022), also stopped soliciting donations in the United States.¹⁸⁰ Some "American kitchens" continued to operate for a few more months until their stocks ran out—the kitchen in Tržič only closed in October 1920, for example.¹⁸¹ However, new shipments of food stopped coming. By then, more than 56 million meals had been served across the country.¹⁸² The children fed in the so-called American kitchens

176 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Jugoslav Relief, "Memorandum on Children's Relief in Jugo-Slavia" (22 October 1919).

177 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, subfolder VI: Jugoslav Relief, American Yugo-Slav Relief Notice (27 February 1920). See also "Bodoče delovanje v korist Jugoslovanskim otrokom," *Slovenske novice* (Calumet, MI), 19 March 1920, 3.

178 ANM, Sum Antonín, k. 56, "Final Report of the Work in Czecho-Slovakia (April 1919–September 1920) Prepared by the Members of the Mission in Cooperation with the Czecho-Slovak Péče o dítě" (30 September 1920).

179 Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 174–75.

180 "American Yugoslav Relief ustavi nadalnje nabiranje prispevkov," *Slovenski narod*, 2 September 1920, 3.

181 "Iz Tržiča," *Večerni list*, 27 October 1920, 2.

182 Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 74, 211.

in Slovenia received approximately 350 tons of food, which was around 5% of the Yugoslav grand total.¹⁸³ The initial estimate of 20,000 Slovene children was never reached; 6,000 children were fed by the third program, and in the fourth and final program the number was halved. Only 3,000 children still received the ECF's meals before the program was shut down in August 1920.¹⁸⁴ But the so-called American kitchens represented just a small part of the aid. In total, Yugoslavia received more than 127,000 tons of food worth almost \$46 million (more than \$800 million in 2022) from various US and British government programs.¹⁸⁵

In absolute and relative terms, Czechoslovakia received much more. From 1919 to 1922, 545,135 tons of aid worth more than \$115,438,351 (more than \$2 billion in 2022) were delivered to the country. Most of the aid, around 95%, however, was not charity; the deliveries were paid either by cash or by loans that the Czechoslovak government received from the Allies.¹⁸⁶ A different chronology explains the gap to a degree. While ARA left Yugoslavia and Slovenia in August 1920, it continued delivering food to Czechoslovakia and the Bohemian Lands a year longer. Initially, the provision of food aid to Czechoslovakia was scheduled to conclude with the harvest of 1919. However, this timeframe was subsequently extended.¹⁸⁷ At the request of the Czechoslovak government, Alice Masaryk's pleas, and in view of the field survey, which showed that many children continued to be malnourished, the ARA extended its child-feeding program until August 1921 at the beginning of September 1920. However, the daily allocation was limited to 100,000 portions, with Slovakia remaining in the hands of Lady Paget and the Ministry of People's Supply.¹⁸⁸

In June 1921, Alonzo Taylor compared conditions in the countries of Central Europe under the care of the American Relief Administration with those of a year earlier. He believed that improvement was slowly being achieved, except in Austria, and in the coming crop year these states would require less import of food than was the case last year. He was convinced

183 Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 665–69.

184 "The European Children's Fund in Jugo-Slavia," *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, 1 December 1920, 38–39.

185 Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 384; Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 9, 208.

186 Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 381; Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 170–72, 464–65.

187 *Československá péče o dítě*, 104–6; Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 169–71.

188 *Československá péče o dítě*, 132–33.

that the efficient and friendly cooperation between ARA officials and local government officials would continue.¹⁸⁹ In August/September 1921, the ARA ceased to provide aid, but its central office in Prague continued to function until June 1922. The office was mostly engaged in administrative tasks needed to shut down the entire operation definitively. The Americans finally withdrew in the fall of 1922 when Czechoslovak Child Care transferred its assets to its successor, Protection of Mothers and Children. Of course, various humanitarian activities, primarily conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Czechoslovak Red Cross, persisted.¹⁹⁰

Local Reactions

How did the populations of Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands react to foreign relief? Were they grateful or did they feel humiliated? Did they think they deserved it? Did they think that the aid was delivered reasonably quickly and in sufficient quantities, or that it arrived too slowly and there was not enough of it? Unfortunately, all these questions are hard if not impossible to answer, because—as other historians of humanitarianism and philanthropy have already found out—there are simply not enough personal recollections for a representative sample.¹⁹¹ That is why we mostly focus on public expressions of feelings and attitudes in this section.

Even though the enormous expectations were not quite fulfilled, and despite the ARA's and the ECF's somewhat premature departure, there seems to have been no major public criticism of foreign aid—or rather the lack of it—in Slovenia. This is surprising, because Slovene and Yugoslav authorities were often sharply criticized, and the legitimacy of the new state was questioned precisely because of food scarcity.¹⁹² By contrast, the United States was seen in a very positive light, and its help was nothing but

189 HILA, ARAEO, box 7, folder 3, Alonzo Taylor, "American Relief Administration: Review of European Conditions" (15 June 1921).

190 "Pomocné akce," in *Deset let republiky československé*, vol. 3 (Státní tiskárna v Praze, 1928), 577.

191 Elisabeth Piller, "Despondence, Dependence and Dignity: On the Dilemmas of Being an Object of International Charity in Western Europe – a Weimar German Case Study," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 30, no. 5 (2023): 771.

192 Jernej Kosi, "'Yugoslavia Has Nothing. Yugoslavia Has No Bread. But Hungary Gives Us Bread': Access to Food and (Dis)Loyalty in a 'Redeemed' Yugoslav Borderland," *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 283–97; Rok Stergar, "'Yugoslavia is Worthless ... You Can Get neither Sugar nor Kerosene': Food Supply and Political Legitimacy in the Slovene Part of Yugoslavia, 1918–1924," *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 254–65.

appreciated. At least this is what the Americans claimed. When she returned to the US, Malvina Hoffman, whom the ARA and the American Yugo-Slav Relief had sent to Yugoslavia in the fall of 1919, reported that "she found a complete faith in America and America's willingness to carry through this particular work." Everywhere the ECF's stations were "regarded as a symbol of America's sympathy and interest in the country" and she found "the gratitude of the people for American help [...] touching."¹⁹³ In a triumphant article, *The Red Cross Bulletin* reported that school attendance rose as the news of American kitchens spread thorough Yugoslavia and that "both the children and their parents have shown the heartiest appreciation of the work of the American mission."¹⁹⁴

While a degree of skepticism regarding these reports is certainly warranted, local sources do not contradict them. Indeed, even the Social Democratic newspapers, usually sharply critical, did not deviate from the positive tone. When, for instance, the chief of the Ljubljana mission was leaving his post in early July 1919, *Naprej* (Forward), the paper of the Yugoslav Social Democratic Party, praised his efforts and emphasized that "it is to his unselfish efforts that we owe it, in particular, that this action, which is of the utmost importance for our war-starved and war-weary children, will continue in the months to come." "Slovenia will always remember the gracious Captain Cajori with gratitude," the Socialist journalist concluded.¹⁹⁵ In a rare personal recollection that mentions US aid, Miro Turel, whose family fled the Italian-occupied Littoral in early 1919 and was then living in the refugee camp in Strnišče in Lower Styria, remembered how life in the camp was "a pleasant change." While food was scarce in war-time Trieste, in Strnišče they started getting cocoa and bread for lunch in the camp school shortly after their arrival.¹⁹⁶

In the Bohemian Lands, especially in the Czech-speaking areas, there was initially a triumphant atmosphere, which, supported by the official narrative, developed into a feeling that the citizens of the new state were living in a state that deserved recognition and help from the Allies. The national and local press reported on foreign visitors, their positive impressions, and the arrival of foreign aid. American flour was promised, and no distinction was made as to whether it would come from government loans

193 NUK, RZ, MS 1173, mapa 6, VI: Jugoslav Relief, "Memorandum on Children's Relief in Jugoslavia" (22 October 1919).

194 "Food for Thought and More," *The Red Cross Bulletin*, 28 July 1919, 6.

195 "V četrtek zapusti Ljubljano g. kapitan Cajori," *Naprej*, 8 July 1919, 2–3.

196 Vida Rojic, "Iz zgodovine Strnišča in Kidričevega," *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 55, no. 1 (1984): 74.

or from humanitarian aid. Once the food began to arrive, the ARA started receiving letters of appreciation, some written in the scope of a campaign that the CCC headquarters orchestrated, but many written spontaneously.¹⁹⁷ In September 1920, when several Americans, including Arthur Ringland, departed from their posts, the representatives of the northern Bohemian committees presented the Americans with tokens of appreciation for their exemplary care and services in nourishing the children in these regions. The Rokycany committee, for instance, again gathered letters of gratitude.¹⁹⁸ Another head of the American mission, Joseph T. Shaw, received a marble sculpture of a Slovakian peasant mother and her two children on a different occasion.¹⁹⁹

Much of this was again a result of persistent and targeted propaganda about the “generous help of the American people” and “prudent philanthropy” that was disseminated through leaflets, newspaper notices, postcards, and posters. It was coordinated not only by the American side, but also by the Czechoslovak government.²⁰⁰ The Ministry of Social Welfare disseminated circulars containing propaganda to Czechoslovak Red Cross committees, District Youth Welfare, and Czechoslovak Child Care committees.²⁰¹ Committees were encouraged to purchase CCC postcards and to dispatch them to the United States to foster a connection between Czech expatriates in the US and their compatriots in the “old country.” Similarly, committees were encouraged to buy the special issue of *Český svět* (Czech World) dedicated to the CCC.²⁰² The desired results were achieved, and in his June 1921 report, Alonso Taylor noted that the attitude of the Czech public remained what it has always been, one of gratitude and trust.²⁰³

However, not everyone joined the chorus and there were dissenting voices. Immediately after the war, the control of food distribution by foreign organizations caused dissatisfaction, something that has been hitherto mostly concealed in local archival records. The strict enforcement of rules

197 HILA, ARAEO, box 103, folder 1, Catholic priest Vilém Havlák to Miss Ryan (10 August 1920); folder 2, Ch. V. Petzold to Hoover (1 June 1920).

198 SOkA Rokycany, Československá péče o dítě okresní komitét Rokycany, 1919–1925, k. 1.

199 Milton Shaw, *Joseph T. Shaw: The Man Behind Black Mask* (Steege Properties, 2019), 69.

200 HILA, ARAEO, box 103, folder 2, ARA in Prague (A. Ringland) to ARAEO in London (14 February 1920).

201 SOkA Jindřichův Hradec, Místní komitét péče o dítě Lomnice nad Lužnicí, 1919–20, Circular from Ministry of Social Welfare (29 November 1919).

202 SOkA Jindřichův Hradec, Místní komitét péče o dítě Lomnice nad Lužnicí, 1919–20, Circulars signed by Antonín Sum for local CCC committees (1 April 1920).

203 HILA, ARAEO, box 7, folder 3, Alonso Taylor, “American Relief Administration: Review of European Conditions” (15 June 1921).

and penalties for failure to provide reports provoked profound discontent and—as we have shown—even led to a refusal of aid. In September 1920, the CCC committee from Litomyšl, for instance, refused to join the coordinated action and instead decided that no “gift for America” would be dispatched to Prague.²⁰⁴ This was likely the result of enduring disagreements concerning the delayed delivery of foodstuffs.

Criticism also arose when the price of imported food was too high, even though the government had set a maximum price.²⁰⁵ In some cases, the allotted American bacon was not sold out because people could not afford it due to the high price. In the Opava region, for example, the Silesian Provincial Government ordered a reduction in the price of bacon and paid for the difference from the food aid fund. However, the local food commissions refused further deliveries of bacon because it still could not find enough buyers. Critical voices were also raised in the case of American flour.²⁰⁶ The situation was discussed at the government level at the beginning of 1920. The Minister of Finance, Kuneš Sonntag, a member of the Agrarian Party, said that the situation would not improve if raw materials and food were purchased only in the West, while the Minister of People's Supply, Fedor Houdek, a member of the Slovak National and Agrarian Party, stated that the mere transport of grain from America cost more than the grain itself. According to Sonntag, “our salvation lies not in the West or in American flour, but in the East, where we are already buying 15,000 carloads of Samara and Kuban wheat.” According to the daily press, the solution was to establish relations with countries that paid in raw materials and to move away from the supposedly egotistical West to the East.²⁰⁷

Furthermore, a certain suspicion that the aid providers were not entirely disinterested, but also pursued their economic interests also arose quite early in the Bohemian Lands. In October 1919, the satirical magazine *Humoristické listy* (Humorous Papers) implied that: “America gets the railways and post offices, England the industry, France the mines, Italy gets agriculture, and

204 SOKA Svitavy, Okresní péče o mládež Litomyšl, 1915–47, kn. 1, District CCC Committee, 15th session, minutes (5 October 1920).

205 “Z organizace veřejného zásobování,” *Družstevník*, 18 July 1919, 67.

206 ZAO, Zemská vyživovací komise Opava, 1914–28, k. 1, sig. 3, Opava District Committee to Opava Provincial Government (26 July 1919); Opava Provincial Government to Bruntál District Captain (23 July 1919).

207 “Hledání nápravy,” *Věstník ministerstva pro zásobování lidu v Československé republice*, 17 January 1920, 651–52. For a wider analysis of gratitude, ingratitude, and humanitarian aid, see Elisabeth Piller, “(In)Gratitude, US Ascendancy and Transatlantic Relations after the First World War,” *Contemporary European History* 34, no. 2 (2025): 213–31.

Bohemia gets the organization of festivals and entertainment.”²⁰⁸ Once the situation stabilized, American flour was also increasingly portrayed as a formidable rival, which “pushed its way into Europe and can no longer be pushed out.”²⁰⁹

Conclusion

In his memoirs, Herbert Hoover, the American “food czar,” claimed that by “generosity unparalleled in the history” the United States “saved hundreds of millions of lives in Europe from famine, pestilence, and revolutionary chaos.” He also added that his boss, the US President Woodrow Wilson, “went down into the pit of chaos and came out with something that expanded liberty and lessened the suffering of the world.”²¹⁰ The cases of Bohemia and Slovenia—or Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia for that matter—do not quite confirm Hoover’s triumphant assessment. While foreign relief certainly helped solve the postwar supply crisis, other factors also played an important role. The reestablishment of international trade, the rebuilding of transport and communication networks, the return of working-age men from the fronts, the very fact that the war and the fighting had largely stopped were at least as important as the shipments of food from abroad.

There would have been more suffering, and it would have lasted longer, yet the crisis would have been solved even without the help of the ARA and other private and state-run foreign relief organizations. That said, the arrival of foreign aid in the spring of 1919 undoubtedly made the transition to a peace-time regime of supply quicker and smoother; this also helped to quell simmering unrest and stabilize the newly established states. Without any doubt, the United States and the American Relief Administration were the mainstays of the relief effort. Besides, the US did not just send food, but also helped in other ways, for instance with technical assistance that enabled a more rapid reconstruction of transport networks, especially the railways. Crucially, the United States intervened diplomatically to stop the Italian blockade of the eastern shores of the Adriatic, which in February 1919

208 *Humoristické listy*, 3 October 1919, 326.

209 Jan Žák, “Některé novější prostředky na zvýšení pekařské hodnoty mouky,” *Mlýnář: Orgán spolku mlýnářů českomoravských*, 11 April 1930, 175; Jan Žák, “Mlýnářství,” in *Československá vlastivěda*, vol. 9, *Technika* (Sfinx, 1929), 331.

210 Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 472.

threatened the supply of food not only to Yugoslavia but to all the countries in the hinterland, including Czechoslovakia.²¹¹

The food supply crisis, however, was not solved by a single man. In other words, Woodrow Wilson or Herbert Hoover did not go “into the pit of chaos” and singlehandedly save the day. The crisis was not solved by the United States and its allies alone either. As the second chapter of this book show, the governments of successor states, their officials, countless volunteers, the peasants and railway workers, and many others also worked tirelessly to stabilize and improve the situation. In fact, many had already been doing their best to prevent people from starving for some years. This was certainly true for the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia. Not only did both countries inherit identical laws, regulations, and administrative structures from Austria, but they also inherited a reasonably well-organized system of welfare. While the war pushed the welfare system to its limits, and it was often criticized—and not just by Alice Masaryk—it provided a good starting point for the postwar relief efforts. This was something that the incoming relief workers noticed and emphasized. In this regard, the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia differed from the rest of their states, and this mattered a lot. While in Bosnia and Kosovo, for instance, ARC staff was needed to distribute food to the children, in Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands, this was left entirely to local volunteers and school employees and the Americans only advised, supervised, and inspected.²¹² So, while Herbert Hoover was convinced that “the leaders of [Yugoslavia] were of course ignorant of all such modern organizations as food administration,” and while the chief of the ARA mission to Yugoslavia was convinced that the Serbs—in his opinion, a “Nation of Warriors” —had neither the interest nor the “mental training” necessary for child relief, their subordinates on the ground soon found out that they could rely almost entirely on the local staff in Slovenia.²¹³

Not everything was so similar, however. Where the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia differed significantly was in their international standing. Nominally, they were both parts of victorious states, especially after the

211 HILA, ARAEO, box 341, folder 8, Herbert Hoover to Woodrow Wilson (12 February 1919); Hoover, *An American Epic*, 3:102–3. On the subsequent role of the Trieste port in supplying the hinterland, see Marco Bresciani and Klaus Richter, “Trieste and Danzig after the Great War: Imperial Collapse, Narratives of Loss, Reconfigured Globalization,” *The Journal of Modern History* 95, no. 3 (2023): 564.

212 On Bosnia, see Doina Anca Cretu, “The American Red Cross and Visions of Rebuilding of the Balkans after the First World War,” *Zeitgeschichte* 51, no. 3 (2024): 327.

213 Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 382; HILA, ARAEO, box 7, folder 5, Report on ARA mission to Yugoslavia, 12–13.

short-lived State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs united with the Kingdom of Serbia on 1 December 1918. But this was only a part of the story. The Czech anti-Habsburg émigrés already founded the Czechoslovak National Committee headed by Tomáš G. Masaryk in February 1916 and then successfully lobbied for the recognition of an independent Czechoslovak state. Doing that, Masaryk and his colleagues established close and amicable relations with some of the most important Entente-states leaders, to whom they also had almost unprecedented access when they became leaders of the newly established Czechoslovakia after the war. In the final phase of the war, Masaryk negotiated not only the contours of the future state, but above all the economic loan of ten million dollars from the USA, which he considered “the practical consummation of [political] recognition.” Masaryk, who had successfully expanded his networks of contacts in academic, political, and media spheres, built long before the war, returned to Czechoslovakia with the feeling that he had gained the interest of Entente politicians who would be willing to help the new state. Indeed, as the new state reached to its allies for help, war-time networks and social capital proved immensely valuable.²¹⁴ Many diplomats and political leaders also highly regarded Edvard Beneš, Masaryk’s trusted assistant. The French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, for instance, thought that Beneš was “one of the best of them all.”²¹⁵

While the Yugoslav Committee led by the Croat émigré Ante Trumbić was less successful than its Czechoslovak counterpart, the Kingdom of Serbia of course gained a lot of prestige in the Allied States with its unexpectedly successful resistance to the Austro-Hungarian offensives of 1914. Most of this was transferred to the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Serbia and Yugoslavia had their supporters in the media, in academia, and—most importantly—in government circles in London, Paris, and Washington. Independent since 1878, Serbia also had a diplomatic network upon which Yugoslavia could rely after the war, even while the Allies refused to recognize it diplomatically.²¹⁶ Milenko Vesnić, the Serbian

214 Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 24; Dagmar Hájková, “Masarykova jedenáctá hodina,” in *Korespondence T. G. Masaryk – Velká Británie*, ed. Dagmar Hájková and Jitka Jindřišková (Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2021), 5–28.

215 Alexander Maxwell, “Edvard Beneš and the Soft Sell: Czechoslovak Diplomacy toward Lusatia, 1918–1919,” *Bohemia* 54, no. 2 (2014): 361–62.

216 Ivo J. Lederer, *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study in Frontiermaking* (Yale University Press, 1963), 82. For more detailed information on the international standing of the new kingdom, see Bogdan Krizman, “Vanjskopolitički položaj Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca godine 1919,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2, no. 1 (1970): 23–59; Tijana Šurlan, “International

ambassador to France and one of the leaders of the Yugoslav delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, for example, spent time in Washington during the war and got to know Woodrow Wilson because his American wife was a friend of the president's spouse.²¹⁷

However, this was of limited help to Slovenia in the immediate aftermath of the war, as the shortages had to be solved locally, by the government in Ljubljana. The ability of the central government in Belgrade to intervene was limited not only because money was tight, and the transport and communication networks were hardly functioning, but also because the Yugoslav government prioritized other challenges. According to a US report, for instance, Belgrade "was unable to provide any funds for Slovenian Child Relief" when the ARA started its American kitchens scheme in 1919.²¹⁸

In comparison with the Czechoslovak government in Prague, the government in Ljubljana was in a much weaker position regarding access to Allied decision makers and government officials. Unlike the government in Prague, the government in Ljubljana was only a provincial government, which limited its ability to procure foreign relief. The chapter has shown that it could negotiate with the American mission representative in Ljubljana on the modalities of their help but, beyond that, its reach was limited. It was the government in Belgrade that negotiated with other governments and relief organizations like the American Relief Administration through diplomatic channels. For the ministers of the Ljubljana government, bypassing these channels and appealing to top-level administrators, or even the likes of Woodrow Wilson or Herbert Hoover directly, was out of the question. In Ljubljana, there was simply no Tomáš G. Masaryk and no Edvard Beneš, both well-known leaders of the wartime anti-Habsburg resistance, who had a wide network of contacts outside Czechoslovakia. There was also no Alice Masaryk, the English-speaking daughter of an American mother, who herself had lived and worked in the United States for several years. Whereas the American Relief Administration archives at Stanford contain numerous letters of Czechoslovak leaders to Herbert Hoover and other chief protagonists, a search for similar letters from Ljubljana would be in vain. And the links were not only epistolary. In April 1919, Alice Masaryk visited Herbert Hoover personally in Paris, showing him "a piece of ash

Legal Recognition of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes," *Istorija 20. veka* 41, no. 1 (2023): 1–18.

217 Fabrizio Rudi, "Milenko R. Vesnić e la questione Adriatica, da Washington a Rapallo," *Rivista di studi politici internazionali* 88, no. 3 (2021): 351.

218 HILA, ARAEO, box 397, folder 12, "Report on Children's Feeding in Slovenia," 5.

gray cornbread which was being eaten throughout Czechoslovakia,” which brought him to tears.²¹⁹ This level of access was unimaginable for anyone from Slovene government circles—indeed, for anyone in Slovenia.

While the ministers in the Ljubljana government were seasoned politicians, they gained their experience in Habsburg institutions, i.e., in the Austrian parliament, the provincial diets, and in municipal councils. They were largely unknown in the Entente capitals—if they did not have the unfortunate reputation of people who remained Habsburg loyalists until the very end. The fact that almost no one in Ljubljana spoke English did not exactly help either. All of this was evident in the negotiations about the borders in Paris but was also detrimental when it came to foreign relief.²²⁰ Not only did these people lack direct connections with decision makers, but they often lacked the necessary skills. When, for example, the members of the Ljubljana government met with the representatives of the Inter-Allied Food Commission in January 1919, at the time when the food supply crisis was at its harshest, they spent most of the meeting complaining about Italian policies in the region and the unsolved border questions, thus missing the opportunity to expedite or increase food deliveries.²²¹ Once again, there was no Alice Masaryk and no “piece of ash gray cornbread” at that meeting.

It is impossible to know for certain whether the lack of informal channels of communication had an impact on the quantities of food that the Americans delivered to Slovenia, on the prolonged involvement of the ARA in the Bohemian Lands and Czechoslovakia, or on the number of foreign relief organizations that were active in each region. However, it is hard to believe that it did not matter. Yet, this only partially explains the divergent paths between the two cases if it explains them at all. Other differences were consequential as well. For one, as Ivan Hribar promised in the fall of 1918 and as the American diplomats observed in the field, Yugoslavia really had the capacity to feed its population from the very beginning. The stores of grain in Slavonia and Vojvodina were not figments of the imagination. They very much existed in the fall of 1918. The problem was, however, that they could not be transported to Bosnia, Dalmatia, or Slovenia and so the people were hungry and even starving there. Once the problem of distribution was

219 Crawford Mitchell, *Alice Garrigue Masaryk*, 106.

220 Andrej Rahten, *Med Kakanijo in Wilsonio: Poklicne in politične preizkušnje Hansa Schwegla alias Ivana Švegla* (Mohorjeva založba, 2018), 117–50.

221 HILA, ARAEO, box 345, folder 19, “Political and Military Notes Regarding Austria, the Czecho-Slovaks and the Jugo-Slavs,” 1–3. See also Rahten, *Med Kakanijo in Wilsonio*, 115.

solved, there was no need to import food anymore and Yugoslavia was able to export some food very early after the war.

Yet despite all preexisting and emerging differences, the similarities cannot be overlooked. Some were structural, as certain aspects of foreign relief simply could not be done differently, but many stem from the shared imperial history of Slovenia and the Bohemian Lands. From this perspective, foreign relief manifests itself as a peculiar, post-imperial phenomenon where the new and the old, modern humanitarian agencies and imperial institutions worked jointly to solve a crisis caused by the Great War.

About the Authors

Dagmar Hájková is a senior researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archive of the Czech Academy of Sciences. She specializes in modern Czech history within the broader Central European context. She is the author and editor of several books and numerous articles on the First World War and interwar Czechoslovakia.

Rok Stergar is Professor in Modern History at the University of Ljubljana and a historian of the Habsburg Empire, the First World War, and of nationalism. He is the author of two books and numerous articles on nationalisms in the Habsburg Empire, the First World War, and post-imperial transitions.

4. Nourishing Contested Borderlands

Pavel Horák and Jernej Kosi

Abstract: In Prekmurje and Teschen Silesia, food provisioning became a critical tool of state legitimacy amid political contestation after the First World War. The Czechoslovak government used the demarcation line and food distribution to garner local support during the plebiscite campaign in Teschen, while Poland struggled with inefficiencies and competing priorities. Prekmurje's fragmented administration and weak state presence allowed smuggling and shortages, fueling discontent and pro-Hungarian demonstrations. Yugoslav authorities responded with land reforms, infrastructure development, and migration controls. The meeting of basic material needs—food, land, and a stable livelihood—was paramount in shaping popular loyalties and new states' legitimacy in the contested borderlands.

Keywords: Teschen Silesia, Prekmurje, borderlands, food supply, political legitimacy

Introduction

In October 1919, Albin Prepeluh, the Minister of Welfare in the Provincial Government for Slovenia, wrote a report to his colleagues in Ljubljana describing political dynamics and social circumstances in Prekmurje. According to Prepeluh, in the recently occupied northernmost Yugoslav region, the local Slovene population “seemed suspicious of us and our administration.”¹ The distrust originated from the rapid changes in authority during the preceding year, which led to anti-Yugoslav propaganda being well

1 Peter Ribnikar, ed., *Sejní zapisniki Narodne vlade Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov v Ljubljani in Deželni vlad za Slovenijo: 1918–1921*, vol. 2, *od 28. feb. 1919 do 5. nov. 1919* (Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1999), 386. Although the official name of the state was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes

received among many residents of the region. In addition, rumors spread by the local Hungarian-oriented elite promised the imminent departure of the Yugoslavs and a simultaneous return of Hungarian officials and military forces. The legitimacy of Yugoslav rule in Prekmurje did not have universal support. In Prepeluh's view, if the new Yugoslav administration wished to acquire the consent of the local population, the officials should approach the local community with tolerance. In addition to showing sensitivity for the political reservation and cultural peculiarities of the population living in the former Hungarian area, the priority should be to ensure that the local impoverished population would receive essential food items, particularly salt and sugar. As a measure to ensure that the allocation of scarce foodstuffs and other necessities would run smoothly, the task should be centralized in the hands of a single state-delegated administrative body.²

Prepeluh's report was regarded with all necessary seriousness by the Provincial Government in Ljubljana. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes' occupation and administrative control of Prekmurje had begun only several months ago, in August 1919, and at that moment the region was still not internationally recognized as part of the Yugoslav state. The possibility of a plebiscite as a means of ultimately determining the fate of the region still loomed on the horizon. Maintaining the legitimacy of the Yugoslav regime was therefore a priority for the Slovene authorities, who took over the policing of everyday affairs in Prekmurje. Unsurprisingly, at its upcoming meeting, the Provincial Government thus allocated funds for the upkeep of Prekmurje and made the decision to centralize the provisioning measures and grant a distribution monopoly to the "Commercial Cooperative for Prekmurje."³

About four hundred kilometers to the north, in the Cieszyn/Těšín/Teschen region, the Czechoslovak administration was also faced with the problem of supplying the local population. Here, however, from the summer of 1919 onwards, food supply even became the main tool for influencing public opinion in the incipient plebiscite campaign between Czechoslovakia and Poland. The supply campaign was to decide which country the local population would vote for. On the Czechoslovak side of the demarcation line, at least judging by the admiration that can be deduced from official Polish documents, the supply system was initially "excellent" or "simply

(and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929 onward), it will be referred to as "Yugoslavia" or the "South Slav state" throughout this chapter.

2 Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki*, 2:385–87.

3 Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki*, 2:387.

outstanding.⁴ Yet the Czechoslovak side enhanced this effect through the effective use of the Teschen demarcation line with the aim of worsening the supply situation on the Polish side. By managing this border, Czechoslovakia could also decide what items would, or would not, make their way to the territories controlled by Poland. This practice was also followed especially with strategic raw materials, for example for brewing beer, a beverage that the heavy industry workers operating the blast furnaces in the industrialized Teschen region were accustomed to, and that they would not do without, according to official Polish reports. The export of raw materials to Poland for the production of beer, and malt to ferment it, i.e., typically Czech products, was banned by the Czechoslovak government as early as February 1919. Production in the Cieszyn-based brewery of Archduke Friedrich of Habsburg on the Polish side of the demarcation line, which had produced 130,000 hectoliters of quality beer a year before the war, had now been brought to a complete halt under the Polish administration, or produced insufficient volumes from substitutes, especially sugar beet.⁵ The plebiscite campaign in the Teschen region was to be decided by fuller stomachs and more tempting tastes.

As these two brief insights into the on-the-ground realities suggest, in two post-Habsburg borderland territories, Prekmurje and Teschen, which belonged to two successor states, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, both Yugoslav and Czechoslovak officials encountered a common challenge: the regulation of sufficient availability of food. At first glance, this commonality seems surprising considering the profound dissimilarities between Teschen and Prekmurje. In terms of political environment and socio-economic circumstances, the two regions could not be more different. The Teschen region was one of the most industrialized areas of the monarchy, with significant coal resources and a key railway line. Prekmurje was a predominantly agricultural area outside the main transport routes. The Teschen region had inherited the Cisleithanian administration system from the former Habsburg Empire; Prekmurje, the Transleithanian. There was also another dimension related to administration. In the Teschen region, Czechoslovak state power

4 Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw (henceforth AAN), Ministerstwo aprowizacji w Warszawie, 1917–21 (henceforth MAW), sygn. 141, Cieszyn National Economy Office to MP Jan Zamorski (27 January 1920); Cieszyn National Economy Office to Minister of Food Supplies (12 February 1920); sygn. 796, Cieszyn National Economy Office to Minister of Food Supplies in Warsaw (28 January 1920).

5 AAN, MAW, sygn. 795, Cieszyn National Economy Office to Minister of Food Supplies in Warsaw (22 January 1920); sygn. 141, Cieszyn National Economy Office to Minister of Food Supplies in Warsaw (7 June 1920).

was strongly present, while in Prekmurje, due to frequent prior changes of governments and the expulsion of Hungarian officials, the Yugoslav administration was still in the process of establishing and consolidating local administrative bodies. While Teschen, where a plebiscite was planned, received extraordinary attention from the Polish and Czechoslovak governments on the question of supply, the Yugoslav state occupied the whole region of Prekmurje and sought—as it turned out, not entirely successfully—to monopolize the available communication channels to communicate the material advantages of living in Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, the comparison is interesting not only in the context of different states, but precisely in the different profiles of the two regions. Indeed, the example of food supply can show the different forms of politicization of the population and the strategies of asserting new power in different environments, industrial and agrarian. And all this within a different administrative heritage. The optics of food supply in these areas offers several opportunities for research. If the obligation to feed the entire population became a fundamental measure of the state's legitimacy during the First World War, postwar contested areas became a kind of laboratory within which to observe what it meant for a weakened state authority to immediately supply sufficient food to a given region in the context of political contestation.

The original Teschen region, formerly located in the east of Austrian Silesia with an area of 2282 square kilometers and 434,821 inhabitants in 1910, was historically part of the Bohemian Lands. Thanks to the development of coal mining and the establishment of metallurgical enterprises in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Principality of Teschen became one of the most important industrial areas in the entire monarchy. The last census before the First World War in 1910 found that 233,850 (54.8%) of the inhabitants stated their language of everyday use as Polish, 115,604 (27.1%) stated Czech, 76,916 (18.1%) were German-speaking, and 10,965 (2.5%) practiced the Jewish religion.⁶ However, these figures need to be put into context. The linguistic composition of the inhabitants of Teschen began to be strongly influenced by a large migratory stream from Galicia and the Bohemian and Moravian hinterland from the 1880s onwards. The western part of the Teschen region was becoming more Czech-speaking, the eastern part mainly Polish-speaking. In the region, where the popular reception of modern national identifications was intensified by immigration, social disputes grew into ethnic animosities from the beginning of the twentieth

6 Jews, who could not register as a separate national category or claim Yiddish as their language of everyday use, registered under other categories and languages.

century. However, a significant part of the indigenous Slavic population in the Teschen region did not consider themselves Czechs or Poles. Among these groups, there were quite influential groups of so-called Slunzaks,⁷ who spoke a Slavic dialect that was close to Polish, but did not identify with the Polish national program aimed at the restoration of the Polish state.⁸ Although their members (an estimated 50,000 in 1910)⁹ were counted among the population with a Polish language, they claimed a provincial, Silesian identity, stressed the need for cooperation with the culturally more “advanced” Germans, and saw the arrival of cheap Polish labor from Galicia as a danger of “upsetting the old Silesian peace.”¹⁰

Unlike heavily industrialized Teschen, Prekmurje was a predominantly agrarian region, with approximately 100,000 inhabitants living in an area of 948 square kilometers in 1910. The vast majority resided in villages and were dependent on small-scale subsistence farming, while only a small proportion of the population was engaged in non-agricultural activities in the regional commercial centers. Given that half of the arable land was incorporated into noble estates by 1919, the peasant population compensated for the lack of local resources by seasonal migration to the interior of Hungary or by migration abroad, mostly to the USA. Prior to the arrival of Yugoslav

7 We adopted the English equivalent of Slunzak (Ślązak, i.e., “Silesian”) as suggested by Tomasz Kamusella in *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848–1918* (Purdue University Press, 2007). Kamusella argues that not only the German, Polish, and Czech national programs competed for the loyalty of the Silesian population, but also the regional ethnicities, such as the Szlonzoks of Prussian Silesia or the Slunzaks of Austrian East Silesia, which is the subject of this chapter. We also refer to the political program that claimed to speak for this ethnic group, represented by the Silesian People’s Party, known as the “Slunzak movement.”

8 Pavel Kladiwa, “Rakouské a české (československé) Slezsko,” in *Republika československá 1918–1939*, ed. Dagmar Hájková and Pavel Horák (Nakladatelství lidové noviny, 2018), 165.

9 For a cautious estimate of how many inhabitants identified as Silesians, see Stanisław Zahradnik, “Národnostní struktura na Zaolží podle výsledků sčítání lidu (1880–1991),” in *Nástin dějin Těšínska*, ed. Mečislav Borák and Dan Gawrecki (Advertis, 1992), 249–50; for a more general overview, see Jaroslav Valenta, “Die Teschener Frage in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1918–1939,” in *Polen und die böhmischen Länder im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Politik und Gesellschaft im Vergleich* (Oldenbourg, 1997), 129–50.

10 For the essential literature on the national categorization of the population in Teschen Silesia, see e.g. Dan Gawrecki, *Politické a národnostní poměry v Těšínském Slezsku 1918–1938* (Muzeum Těšínska, 1999); more generally, see Pavel Kladiwa, “Die nationale Situation in Mähren und in Österreichisch-Schlesien an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Neue tschechische Interpretationen der Fragen des tschechisch-deutschen Zusammenlebens*, ed. Jiří Pešek and Petr Vorel (Meine, 2008), 43–70; Pavel Kladiwa, “National Classification in the Politics of the State Census: The Bohemian Lands 1880–1930,” *Bohemia* 55, no. 1 (2015): 67–95; Kamusella, *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms*.

troops, Prekmurje did not exist as an administrative unit. Until the Yugoslav occupation, the future area of Prekmurje consisted of four districts in the westernmost edges of two Hungarian counties—Zala and Vas.¹¹ Although the population of Prekmurje was linguistically and religiously heterogeneous, the Slavophones stood out in terms of numbers. Since at least the mid-nineteenth century, the national affiliation of these Slavophones was a matter of differing interpretations and divergent classifications. The Hungarian state and administrative bodies categorized Slavophones as Vends. Conversely, Slovene national activists from the Austrian or Cisleithanian part of the monarchy identified them as members of the Slovene nation and mapped this part of the Kingdom of Hungary as a component of Slovene national space. Yet until October 1918, no large-scale identification with the notion of Sloveneness, which gained massive support in the Cisleithanian crownlands, existed in the future area of Prekmurje. Fearing the specter of “Panslavism,” the Hungarian government largely curtailed the Slovene nationalist movement in this area, while the institutional and legal framework necessary for the emergence of popular Slovene nationalism was lacking in Hungary. Therefore, most of the local peasant population could not and did not identify with the concept of (“Cisleithanian”) Slovene nationhood upon the dissolution of the dual monarchy. In addition, despite the Hungarian Vendic category being official before the First World War, the Slavophones of the future Prekmurje identified themselves in a variety of different ways owing to their social and, most of all, religious heterogeneity.¹² It was only in the fall and winter of 1918 that enthusiasm for Slovenes on the other side of the former administrative border between Hungary and Austria and for Yugoslavia in general began to gain noticeable support among a part of the Slavophone population. The use of the ethnonym “Slovene” as a marker of a community living in the area between the Northern Adriatic and the Western Pannonian plain, and between the Alps in the north and the Carniolan/Styrian-Croatian border in the south, also became more frequent.¹³

11 These included the districts of Mursazombat/Murska Sobota and Szentgotthárd/Monošter in Vas County and the districts of Alsólendva/Dolnja Lendava and Letenye/Letina in Zala County.

12 The local Slavophone population self-described in various ways, including as Sloveni, Vogrski Slovenci, Vendsloveni. Miroslav Kokolj, *Prekmurski Slovenci: Od narodne osvoboditve do nacistične okupacije: 1919–1941* (Pomurska založba, 1984), 12.

13 On the population in Prekmurje, see Janez Malačič, “Demografski razvoj v Prekmurju 1919–2019: Upadanje prebivalstva ter modernizacija razvoja,” in *“Mi vsi živeti ščemo”: Prekmurje 1919: Okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice*, ed. Peter Štih, Kornelija Ajlec, and Attila Kovács (Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2020), 351–77; Attila Kovács, “Številčni razvoj prekmurskih Madžarov v 20. stoletju,” *Razprave in gradivo*, no. 48–49 (2006): 6–36. On the division of agricultural land, see Kokolj, *Prekmurski Slovenci*, 589–91. On seasonal and permanent migration,

Despite the significant disparities between Prekmurje and Teschen, both regions encountered similar difficulties following the dissolution of Austria-Hungary. The two areas were the subject of a dispute by rival successor states, each claiming them for themselves. After the collapse of the monarchy, the representatives of the Polish and Czechoslovak state began to struggle with each other over the heavily industrialized Teschen region with its strategic raw material resources. For Czechoslovakia, the region held additional significance as it was traversed by the Košice-Bohumín railway, the only full-fledged rail link between the Bohemian Lands and Slovakia. While the Polish side argued for the right to self-determination and demanded a plebiscite, Czechoslovakia made the argument of so-called historical rights and rejected the plebiscite. Later, however, it accepted the plebiscite to avert a technical division of the Teschen region, which could have been unfavorable. Even before that, at the end of January 1919, the Czechoslovak government intervened militarily in that part of the Teschen region which had been occupied by Poland at the end of the world war and which Czechoslovakia considered to be its sovereign historical territory. After this so-called Seven-Day War, the Inter-Allied Commission divided the Teschen region arbitrarily during February 1919 by a provisional military demarcation line. This division of Teschen roughly into half, with Czechoslovakia controlling most of the mining and industrial sites and Poland the entire town of Teschen with its strategic railway station, was also in force during the plebiscite campaign that officially began on 27 September 1919. However, the fact that each side administered its own part increased the competition between the two governments to see which could offer more to the local population.¹⁴

see Matija Maučec, "Prenaseljenost in sezonsko izseljevanje v Prekmurju," *Geografski vestnik* 9 (1933): 107–17; Mihael Kuzmič, *Slovenski izseljenci iz Prekmurja v Bethlehemu v ZDA: 1893–1924: Naselitev in njihove zgodovinske, socialne, politične, literarne in verske dejavnosti*, vol. 2, *Migracije* (Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 2001). On the linguistic composition of the region, see Attila Kovács, "Oblikovanje slovensko-madžarske jezikovno-etnične meje od druge polovice 18. stoletja do razpada Avstro-Ogrske monarhije," in *"Mi vsi živeti ščemo"*, 254–92. On national/ethnic categories of identification and patterns of classification in the region, see Jernej Kosi, "The Imagined Slovene Nation and Local Categories of Identification: 'Slovenes' in the Kingdom of Hungary and Postwar Prekmurje," *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (2018): 87–102. On postwar visions and political proposals regarding the administrative reorganization of the region along the Mura River, see Miroslav Kokolj, "Prekmurje v prevratnih letih 1918–1919," in *Revolucionarno vrenje v Pomurju v letih 1918–1920*, ed. Janko Liška (Pomurska založba, 1981), 53–205; and László Göncz, "Načrti avtonomne in upravne organiziranosti Slovenske krajine v obdobju Károlyijeve ljudske republike (od novembra 1918 do marca 1919)," *Studia Historica Slovenica* 21, no. 3 (2021): 727–87.

¹⁴ For an overview of the developments that preceded the plebiscite, including references to the literature, see e.g. Marie Gawrecká, *Československé Slezsko mezi světovými válkami 1918–1938*

At the same time, beginning in the fall of 1918, the southwestern frontier of the Kingdom of Hungary entered a period of profound and far-reaching transition. During this period, mass political mobilization took place as numerous new political actors and national activists sought to assert their influence and redefine their place in the rapidly changing regional political landscape. The region experienced frequent and often abrupt regime change, with different factions taking power in quick succession, each with its own vision for the future. After the Austro-Hungarian defeat at the front, no fewer than eight different political regimes and military formations traded power over the area (or parts of it) before the Yugoslav army finally occupied it in August 1919 and administratively formed a new region: Prekmurje. In June 1920, with the Treaty of Trianon, the region was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and acquired Prekmurje as a new official name. The responsibility to locate the exact position of the new state border, however, was delegated to the Yugoslav-Hungarian Boundary Commission and was not conclusively resolved until 1924. Moreover, the Boundary Commission was authorized to deviate from the line of the border prescribed in the Treaty of Trianon in certain sections, if economic considerations or the right to self-determination so warranted. This, in turn, raised hopes among the pro-Hungarian local elite and Hungary that, based on the right to self-determination and the possible holding of a plebiscite, Prekmurje would eventually end up in the Hungarian state. Anti-Yugoslav aspirations and efforts compelled the authorities to act. Given that Hungarian propaganda, which was widely disseminated especially in the northern parts of Prekmurje, promised better living conditions for the local population in the context of postwar deprivation, the Yugoslav side focused on trying to satisfy the locals' material expectations.¹⁵

Two themes have recently dominated historical accounts of the post-imperial transition in the disputed post-Habsburg border regions: physical violence and systematic attempts at the top-down nationalization of the

(Slezská univerzita v Opavě, 2004), 19–26; further, Marek Kazimierz Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918–1921* (Neriton, 2003), or Petr Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy Československa a Polska 1918–1924* (Matice slezská, 2009).

15 The centenary of the Treaty of Trianon gave an impetus to several new studies on the immediate political consequences of the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy and the ensuing peace treaty in present-day Prekmurje. See, *inter alia*, Peter Štih, Kornelija Ajlec, and Attila Kovács, eds., *"Mi vsi živeti ščemo": Prekmurje 1919: Okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice* (Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2020); László Göncz, *A Muravidék útja a délszláv királyságba: a tájegység története az első világháború végétől a jugoszláv megszállásig: (1918 őszé–1919 augusztusa)* (Magyar Nyugat Könyvkiadó, 2024). For a general overview, see also Kokolj, *Prekmurski Slovenci*; Kokolj, "Prekmurje v prevratnih letih 1918–1919," 53–205.

border populations. The scale of scholarly literature dealing with major or minor non-state and state violence in post-Habsburg borderlands is extensive. The same is true for works that focus on state actors' varying degrees of success in adjusting the identity preferences of local populations. Teschen and Prekmurje align with these narratives, given the extent of nationalizing efforts and violent incidents in both regions. However, the example of the Teschen plebiscite campaign between Czechoslovakia and Poland, as well as the turbulent competition for territory and people in the west of Hungary, which the Yugoslav army occupied in August 1919, paint a more complex picture of the integration of contested regions into successor states that nominally defined themselves as nation-states. Besides resorting to various modes of physical and rhetorical violence, but also to different levels of administrative control and suppression, in both cases state authorities tried to foster and maintain the legitimacy of the existing political order with the promise of satisfactory food provisioning. Food sustenance arrangements were vital for successor states in contested border regions during the post-Habsburg transition because they represented the very first and the most visible test of their capacity to govern effectively—and to do so without provoking local populations to revolt in the times of social uncertainty and political volatility. In other words, in the tumultuous postwar years, love for the state and political regime came from the stomach.¹⁶ Yet, despite its omnipresence in administrative sources and various printed materials aimed at the public, food seems to play a minor, if any, role in historical accounts dealing with the process of post-imperial political transition in border regions under consideration here.¹⁷

16 The social issues which food provisioning entails, however, have been central to the “revisionist” narrative of the collapse of Austria-Hungary which replaced national antagonism with state failure and incapacity to alleviate the social effects of the war as the main internal reason for dissolution. This refocus inspired new approaches in tackling the complexity of post-imperial transitions in general, but also in the context of “peripheral” regions. A recent example: Gábor Egyri, “Petit Bourgeois Local Revolutions? Post-Habsburg Transitions, Democratization, Local Elites, and the Place of Western Hungary/Burgenland,” in *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border: Agendas, Actors, and Practices in Western Hungary/Burgenland after World War I*, ed. Hannes Grandits, Ibolya Murber, and Katharina Tyran (Berghahn, 2025), 133–53.

17 Contemporary historiography dealing with plebiscites has so far only marginally touched on the agitational significance of supply in plebiscite campaigns in the Teschen region. Regarding postwar plebiscites in general, previous research has focused mainly on diplomatic-political relations or purely military, administrative or propaganda contexts, and studies of Czechoslovak-Polish plebiscites have had a similar focus, e.g., Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vzťahy*; Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918–1921*. Regarding the plebiscites after the First World War from a broader geographical perspective and in English, the same is also true of more complex analyses such as Sarah Wambaugh, *Plebiscites since the World War: With a Collection of Official Documents*

In what follows, we aim to shed light on specific food provisioning initiatives, communication methods, and administrative measures taken in Teschen and Prekmurje to avert social unrest, maintain order, and build trust between the new state authorities and the linguistically and ethnically diverse local population that expressed multiple allegiances. All this during a period when there was a real possibility that the local population would be able to express its position on the (lack of) success of state efforts by casting a vote in a plebiscite.

Teschen Plebiscite Area

On Sunday, 9 November 1919, the farmer Pavel Gryč of Oldřichovice/Oldrzychowice/Oldrzychowitz, a village on the Czechoslovak side of the demarcation line that bisected the plebiscite area of Teschen Silesia, decided to go to Puńców/Puncov/Punzau, a village in the part controlled by Poland. He was going to his sister's wedding, bringing nine hens for the wedding banquet. When he was checked at the border crossing, the Czechoslovak soldiers confiscated all the hens—and evidently also ate them soon after.¹⁸ The practice regarding how much food a traveler could carry across the border for personal use assumed a three-day supply per person.¹⁹ This incident, however, was quite discomforting for the Czechoslovak authorities in the plebiscite region, as it led to the culmination of a series of complaints about the behavior of the Czechoslovak border patrols. While they were supposed to represent the order of the new national state, there was an

(Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933). In German, see Nina Jebesen, *Als die Menschen gefragt wurden: Eine Propagandaanalyse zu Volksabstimmungen in Europa nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Waxmann, 2015). Even the most recent comprehensive survey on the so-called Wilsonian plebiscites after the First World War essentially omits supply as a major agitation tool. See Sergiusz Bober, ed., *Post-World War One Plebiscites and Their Legacies: Exploring the Right of Self-Determination* (CEU Press, 2024). We could not take into account the recently published monograph by Steffen Kailitz, Matthäus Wehowski, and Sebastian Ramisch-Paul, *Demokratisierung an den Grenzen der Nation: Parlamente, Räte, Volksabstimmungen: Das Dreiländereck Deutschland – Polen – Tschechoslowakei 1918–1921* (Verlag Herder-Institut, 2024). The research on the annexation of Prekmurje overlaps with the above findings on the Teschen region. The issue of supply, and particularly the role of the provision of necessities in ensuring the legitimacy of the Yugoslav state, has not been a major focus of research interest.

18 Národní archiv, Prague (henceforth NA), Komise pro plebiscit na Těšínsku, 1919–20 (henceforth KPT), k. 24, Teschen Plebiscite Commission, reports (3 and 24 October 1919).

19 Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí České republiky, Prague (henceforth AMZV), Úřad subdelegáta ČSR při mezinárodní plebiscitní subkomisi pro Oravu a Spiš, k. 2, Regulations for the import and export of goods (28 May 1920).



Figure 4.1 “In Teschen Silesia: Take these things [terror, promises, violence, 10,000 crowns] and go turn people into Poles.” Published in *Smích republiky/Le rire de la république*, 20 September 1920, p. 5, author Karel Stroff.

increasing number of complaints about them being drunk or stealing from sheds and chicken coops in the villages near the demarcation line. Czechoslovak plebiscite officials had already reported that the Polish propaganda machine highlighted similar cases in the media, as well as spreading the news that dogs were also mysteriously disappearing near the border, and that

Czechoslovak soldiers were increasingly often referred to as *Hundefresser* (dog-eaters).²⁰

The military garrisons were no longer seen as a welcome economic benefit for the region, as they had been before the war. Instead, they were becoming a curse and competition in the struggle for limited local resources.²¹ In the Teschen region, moreover, they created a border that had never been there before, leading to the locals experiencing bullying and bribery on an everyday basis. The Gryč case, however, was seen by the Czechoslovak plebiscite officials as a serious threat to the plebiscite campaign. The Czechoslovak soldiers actually ruined the wedding banquet of an active member of the Silesian People's Party, a party that had just begun to purposefully cooperate with the Prague government in this plebiscite region and was its most important support in the upcoming plebiscite campaign. Its adherents, so-called Slunzaks, spoke the Silesian dialect, a Slavic vernacular similar to Polish, but rejected the Polish national movement. They preferred to cooperate with Czechoslovakia which, from their viewpoint, remained part of "Western culture."²²

The Czechoslovak military headquarters therefore had to apologize to Gryč's family, compensate him for the loss, and punish the culprits.²³ The Slunzak movement was a crucial factor in the Czechoslovak plebiscite campaign. In terms of international law, their regional identity bound to the Silesian region helped to oppose the self-determining argumentation of the Poles, which was based on the assertion that the Polish language was prevalent in the region. As regards the technical aspects of the plebiscite campaign, motivated members of the Silesian People's Party could help the Czechoslovak authorities distribute food supplies in a targeted and efficient way. And through the party's consumer cooperatives, the authorities also had a hybrid form of access to the Polish side of the demarcation line (by smuggling).²⁴

The border actually helped the Czechoslovak plebiscite authorities gain a comparative advantage over the Poles because the Czechoslovak government was able to provide a better supply of foodstuffs to its part of the

20 NA, KPT, k. 24, Report from the Teschen Plebiscite Commission (15 November 1919).

21 Jiří Hutečka, "Wartime Provisioning, the People, and the State in Habsburg Central Europe during World War I," *Střed/Centre* 16, no. 1 (2024): 86–87.

22 The power of the Slunzak movement can be seen in the fact that when their Silesian People's Party was founded in 1909, its leader Josef Koždoň clearly won over the priest Josef Londzin, a leading pro-Polish official, in the elections to the Silesian Diet. For Koždoň's biography, see Dariusz Jerczyński, *Józef Koždoň a narodowość śląska* (Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, 2013).

23 AMZV, Těšínsko, 1917–25, k. 10, Hughesogram with Teschen (19 February 1920).

24 For materials pertaining to the activity of the consumer cooperative, see the collection of Josef Koždoň in the Zemský archiv v Opavě (ZAO). A small part of this collection was moved to Státní okresní archiv Karviná.

Teschen region in the fall of 1919. As mentioned in one of the reports of the Czechoslovak plebiscite commission to the Prague government:

The demarcation line is a fence that is necessary to prevent them from stealing all the apples in our western part of the garden and withdrawing to the east. If we let them have an apple or two, we can open, even if only a little bit, the door in the fence but slam it shut immediately should we feel that was enough. Considering this situation, our authority must leave a considerable degree of freedom for people to open and close the door depending on who is asking for the apples.²⁵

In the Teschen region, where a considerable proportion of the population might make its plebiscite decision based on strategic interests, the Czechoslovak government, by operating the border, set the scene for a space that was supposed to fulfil the ideas of the greater potential of the Czechoslovak state.

Border

The specific location of the demarcation line that divided the Teschen region into two halves, Czechoslovak and Polish, was determined by the international Allied commission in Paris during February 1919. The armies present on both sides were only an indicator of which authorities and laws governed that specific area.²⁶ On 27 September 1919, the peace conference announced the decision to hold a plebiscite in the whole Teschen area, while it assumed that the Czechoslovak and Polish troops would withdraw from the plebiscite area after the scheduled arrival of the International Allied Plebiscite Commission, to be replaced with French and Italian units.²⁷ The Czechoslovak side, however, saw the potential withdrawal of its troops as a disadvantage as that would make it harder to control the supplies in a clearly defined area, which was Czechoslovakia's best trump card in the campaign.²⁸

25 AMZV, Úřad subdelegáta ČSR při Mezinárodní plebiscitní komisi pro Oravu a Spiš, k. 10, Hughesogram (9 February 1920).

26 Ferdinand Pelc, "O Těšínsko." *Vzpomínky a úvahy* (Slezská matice osvěty lidové, 1928), 113–14.

27 For a short study on the diplomatic background of the establishment of borders, see Dagmar Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914–1920* (E.J. Brill, 1962), 228–56; more recently, Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy*, or Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918–1921*.

28 Evidence for this position can be found, for instance, in many hughesograms from the Teschen region, e.g., AMZV, Úřad subdelegáta ČSR při Mezinárodní plebiscitní komisi pro Oravu a Spiš, k. 10.

The Czechoslovak approach to the plebiscite was in line with the legacy of the war economy that had brought a “culture of entitlement” to basic necessities, especially foodstuffs. Under this wartime logic, states and their institutions were seen as providers of welfare, a category that was part of the new understanding of social justice.²⁹ The establishment of an “atmosphere of welfare” also became the primary task of the Czechoslovak authorities immediately after Minister for Foreign Affairs Edvard Beneš had presented his request on 10 September 1919 that the plebiscite be held. As Ferdinand Pelc, a Czechoslovak plebiscite official, noted in his memoirs:

We were quite successful with that welfare in the Teschen region, but that was often at the expense of other parts of the republic. At that time, the [Czechoslovak] plebiscite commission's wish was an order for the ministry. Railway supplies of flour for Prague had to be redirected to the Teschen region when miners in Karviná called for their stock of flour to be increased and that they be fully provided for with food.³⁰

The Czechoslovak government established the Czechoslovak plebiscite commission in the Teschen region as its local representative authority immediately after declaring the plebiscite. This commission was to coordinate supplies and produce propaganda (the concept of which we will mention below) so that “as many people as possible would vote for Czechoslovakia.”³¹ It assigned the commission a generous budget and instructed that its requests for foodstuffs be given priority both at the central supply points and in planning the railway capacity.³² This enabled the plebiscite authorities to place orders with a priority right, and their solvency allowed them to purchase foodstuffs directly from the producers and at a price higher than usual, subsequently subsidizing the purchased items and distributing them to consumers in the Czechoslovak part of Teschen Silesia at a 20–40% discount. Following a decision passed by the council of ministers, from October 1919 the lower prices of meat in the Teschen region alone constituted an expenditure

29 Hutečka, “Wartime Provisioning,” 96–97.

30 Pelc, “*O Těšínsko*,” 114.

31 Pelc, “*O Těšínsko*,” 181.

32 Slovenský národný archív, Bratislava (henceforth SNA), Minister Československej republiky s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska, 1918–27 (henceforth MPS), k. 307, Permanent [Interministerial] Commission for the Teschen region (21 October 1919); NA, Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu, 1918–33 (henceforth MZL), k. 55, Provincial Economy Office for the Moravian and Silesian Industrial District in Moravská Ostrava. Allocation for the Plebiscite Commission (8 November 1919); Provincial Grain Institute in Brno, Supplies for the Teschen region (20 October 1919).

of the Czechoslovak state amounting to 972,000 crowns per month, which cut the price of a kilogram of beef to 5.50 crowns while its maximum price determined by the state was twelve crowns.³³ In addition, these goods were sold in the stronger Czechoslovak currency, so the residents on the Polish side, holding the weaker Polish currency, could not benefit from this.³⁴ By its pragmatic management of the border, the Czechoslovak authorities increased pressure on the Poles. Government supplies led to a major price gap with basic foodstuffs which caused the purchase prices of farming products in the Teschen region to fall so much that some non-subsidized farmers faced bankruptcy, especially those in that part of the Teschen region controlled by Poland, which was more agrarian than the industrialized Czechoslovak part.³⁵

By comparison, the Czechoslovak side was able to regularly supply the inhabitants of the plebiscite area with 2.25 kilograms of flour per capita every week, or 3 kilograms of flour per week for miners and heavy industry workers, and adding an extra supply of up to 3 kilograms of fruits, rice, and often 1 kilogram of bread flour in both cases, all of which were considerably cheaper than on the Polish side.³⁶ In February 1920 in the Polish plebiscite area, supplies were still only around 1.40 kilograms of flour per capita, or 2.1 kilograms for heavy industry workers, but no extra food was added.³⁷ Another hardship for the Poles was that those living close to the plebiscite areas only received 0.5–0.75 kilogram of flour per week, something which, according to official Polish reports, threatened “famine, graveyard, and ruin.” Violent protests were likely to break out especially in Bielsko-Biała/Bílsko-Bělá/Bielitz-Biala, a Polish conurbation that was divided into a plebiscite and non-plebiscite part and surrounded by fully German-speaking villages. For instance, the price for rationed sugar in Biała, the non-plebiscite part, was more than four times higher than in Bielsko, the plebiscite part.³⁸ The causes of the short supply on the Polish side are to be analyzed below. However, the

33 NA, MZL, k. 54, Official note (3 October 1919).

34 NA, MZL, k. 55, Meat supplies for the inhabitants in the Teschen plebiscite area (9 December 1919).

35 Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy*, 100–101.

36 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (20 February 1920).

37 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (23 February 1920); Delegate of Polish Ministry of Food Supplies to Prime Minister of Poland (13 February 1920); National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (12 February 1920).

38 AAN, MAW, sygn. 138, Mayor of Biała to Jan Zamorski (20 January 1920); sygn. 795, Association of Industrialists from Bielsko-Biała and its Surroundings to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (18 November 1919).

Polish plebiscite authorities and Silesian officials at least appealed to the Ministry of National Defense asking that army patrols in former Congress Poland not take excessive measures to prevent the Silesian locals trying to take foodstuffs away from there at their own risk. This semi-legal transport, people travelling to the countryside to obtain food—if they still had any money left—was seen by the Polish plebiscite authorities as a partial solution to which the state, unable to help otherwise, should at least turn a blind eye.³⁹

While the Czechoslovak supply system was described as “excellent” or “simply outstanding” in official Polish documents,⁴⁰ the Czechoslovak side enhanced this effect through the effective use of the Teschen demarcation line. By managing this border, Czechoslovakia could also decide what items would make their way to Poland. This practice was also followed, as mentioned, with strategic raw materials for brewing beer, which until then were imported from the Bohemian Lands, so the heavy industry workers operating the blast furnaces on the Polish side of Teschen region suddenly had to get used to beer made from subpar substitutes.⁴¹ On the contrary, the Czechoslovak state actually smuggled some foodstuffs into Poland and offered them to Slunzaks and the German-speaking population on favorable terms through consignment shops belonging to the Silesian People’s Party.⁴² Although the Polish administration body, the National Council of the Duchy of Teschen, tried to prevent these transfers, it received no strong political support from the Polish government even in this endeavor. The Polish preparations for the war against the Russian Bolsheviks, and the importance of Allied supply lines for the Polish army that led through Czechoslovakia, precluded a more prominent official response.⁴³

39 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, Presidium of the Council of Ministers to Minister of Food Supplies (3 February 1920); sygn. 864, Ministry of Food Supplies, Lviv Branch, to Lviv District Army Command (4 December 1919).

40 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to MP Jan Zamorski (27 January 1920); National Economy Office in Teschen to Minister of Food Supplies (12 February 1920); sygn. 796, National Economy Office in Teschen to Minister of Food Supplies in Warsaw (28 January 1920).

41 AAN, MAW, sygn. 795, National Economy Office in Teschen to Minister of Food Supplies in Warsaw (22 January 1920); sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to Minister of Food Supplies in Warsaw (7 June 1920).

42 NA, KPT, k. 24, Silesian Union in Teschen Consumer Cooperative Association to Plebiscite Commission Economic Section (28 March 1920); AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to MP Jan Zamorski (27 January 1920).

43 Włodzimierz Borodziej and Maciej Górny, *Der vergessene Weltkrieg: Europas Osten 1912–1923*, vol. 2, *Nationen 1917–1923* (wbg Theiss, 2018). For the local point of view, see Jaroslav Valenta, *Česko-polské vztahy v letech 1918–1920 a Těšínské Slezsko* (Krajské nakladatelství Ostrava, 1961), 202–4.

On 30 January 1920, the International Allied Plebiscite Commission arrived to stay at the Pod Brunatnym Jeleniem hotel in the town of Teschen, on the Polish side of the demarcation line. The Czechoslovaks warned the Entente delegates that the hotel's restaurant would often put up signs saying, "No meals being served due to lack of flour" and tried to convince them that they would find things more comfortable in the Czechoslovak towns of Ostrava/Ostrawa/Ostrau or Opava/Troppau, located in areas with a better supply system. The commission, however, decided to stay in the town of Teschen to take control over the plebiscite area from there, or negotiate how the area would be administered.⁴⁴

The main objective for the Czechoslovak negotiations was to maintain the demarcation line. Rudolf Matouš, the Czechoslovak delegate in the Entente commission who had thought out Czechoslovak negotiation tactics in Teschen, argued before the commission that if the two plebiscite areas were to come under joint administrative control, the Czechoslovak party could not be held responsible for Polish failures in supply, and if it had to compensate for these failures, the rationing for the area as a whole would decrease, and as a result the dissatisfied inhabitants would turn directly against the commission. As Matouš reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague on 6 February 1920: "We have decided to maintain the principle that supplies are only a part and an output of our administration, and that consequently we are not only entitled but also obliged to provide supplies to that part placed under our administration. We cannot accept joint supplies to the whole Teschen region with Poland as we would have to waive a powerful means of campaigning for the plebiscite while our provision of supplies is far superior to that of the Poles."⁴⁵

The international Allied commission accepted the Czechoslovak arguments. Contrary to the Polish statements, soon after arriving it decided that it would leave the demarcation line as the divide between the spheres of Czechoslovak and Polish administrative control.⁴⁶ The Polish administrative

44 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, "Memorandum" of the director of the National Economy Office in Teschen (December 1919).

45 AMZV, Těšínsko, k. 10, Hughesogram (6 February 1920).

46 The demarcation line with its supply effect was eventually maintained in practical terms, even though the plebiscite area became a closed-off customs area requiring an export permit, to which only institutions authorized by both states were allowed to import. However, as Ferdinand Pelc tersely noted, "This led to a lot of trouble." Pelc, "*O Těšínsko*", 118; NA, MZL, k. 55, Notes on the proposal to establish administration in East Silesia during the plebiscite period presented by the International Allied Commission (31 October 1919); NA, KPT, k. 24, Regulation of imports and exports during the plebiscite (20 February 1920); NA, MZL, k. 55, Rudolf Matouš, Notes on

zone was converted into a so-called Eastern Prefecture with a Polish prefect, and the Czechoslovak area became a so-called Western Prefecture with a Czechoslovak prefect. In formal terms, there was free transit between the two zones, but in fact the Czechoslovak administration continued to exercise control over its territory, which was defined by the demarcation line, and the international plebiscite commission had no option but to accept the status quo.⁴⁷ The unfavorable news for the Polish side was that the International Allied Commission determined the supply standard for the whole plebiscite area as based on the existing Czechoslovak volumes of supplies, i.e. 2.25 kilograms or 3 kilograms of flour per person per week, a volume which was totally impossible for Poland in February 1920.⁴⁸

The Poles, moreover, further complicated their position with their territorial claims. If Polish government officials strove to abolish the demarcation line that left many villages with a Polish majority under Czechoslovak rule,⁴⁹ back in September 1919 the Polish plebiscite officials had warned Warsaw that the immediate take-over of these villages by Poland would result in a humanitarian catastrophe.⁵⁰ When upon arrival the international commission partially satisfied the Polish government in the coal district area by establishing a "neutral zone" in the district of Karviná/Karwina/Karwin, where supplies were also to be shared by Poland, it came as another blow to Polish prestige. Although it had no food reserves, Poland had to commence, basically overnight, providing supplies for a top priority group of some 80,000 miners and their families. The immediate decline in living standards that this entailed was reported by the Polish plebiscite authorities as a "major political achievement of the Czechs."⁵¹

the proposal to establish administration in East Silesia during the plebiscite period presented by the International Allied Commission in Teschen (undated).

47 Pelc, "O Těšínsko", 113, 117, 137.

48 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw, Department of Plebiscite (16 May 1920); NA, KPT, k. 24, Prefect Michálek to Ministry of Food Supplies (24 February 1920).

49 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, Presidium of the Council of Ministers to Minister of Food Supplies (3 February 1920).

50 AAN, MAW, sygn. 795, National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw, Department of Plebiscite (19 September 1919); National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (23 February 1920); AMZV, Těšínsko, k. 22, Organization of plebiscite tasks, Těšín (20 November 1919); k. 10, Hughesogram (6 February 1920).

51 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (20 February 1920); National Economy Office in Teschen to Prime Minister (13 February 1920); Department of Plebiscite Administration to Presidium of the Council of Ministers (20 July 1920).

The System

Both in Cisleithania and Transleithania, one impact that state supervision had on the distribution of foodstuffs during the First World War was the occurrence of bizarre patterns of economic competition that, albeit unintentionally, eventually subverted the state's authority. For instance, the fact that the state delegated responsibility for supplies to municipalities forced local officials to compete for resources with other municipalities and apply increasingly desperate measures that in turn worsened the situation nationwide. The feeling of bitterness that one municipality, one region, or one part of the state was living at the expense of another became the prevailing mood in society. The resentment against the state and grudges amongst neighbors became a legacy that the Czechoslovak Republic, too, acquired along with the Austrian supply system. As state authorities were increasingly unable to fulfil their supply commitments, "bidding wars" were waged between the entities in charge of supplies, in which municipalities that had the funds tried to outbid other municipalities directly at the food producers. While in the Teschen plebiscite campaign the Czechoslovak government promoted an approach in which the state was to be judged according to its ability to provide its citizens with "welfare" as their basic entitlement, attention had to focus especially on issues related to these bidding wars.⁵²

The final distribution of foodstuffs in Czechoslovakia was either organized directly by the state, or municipalities, or was acquired and provided by consumer cooperatives. In Teschen Silesia, a region encompassing part of the Ostrava-Karviná coal district, enterprises in the strategic industries played a crucial role owing to the power and resources derived from their position. Cooperatives operated by these strategically significant enterprises supplied over half of the region's population, many of whom produced no foodstuffs themselves. And as securing strategic industry was the priority for the Czechoslovak government, it had granted the cooperatives of key enterprises a relatively broad degree of autonomy even before the plebiscite campaign was launched. The enterprises thus established their own purchasing offices whose capacity and performance could not be matched by the supply system organized directly by the state, hence the state, paradoxically, was seen in an unfavorable light even in the places where it had surrendered some of its control.⁵³

52 Hutečka, "Wartime Provisioning," 86–87.

53 Especially the Velkonákupní společnost consumer cooperative, which provided supplies to miners in the coal district and directly to the Vítkovické železářny enterprise, established its

The cooperatives run by the mining companies or ironworks were essentially granted the privilege to pursue a predatory purchasing policy. They began using their fuel commodities, especially coal, as a “premium” for the exceptionally willing owners of food stocks even in more remote locations outside the boundaries of Silesia, such as in Slovakia, where the meat market was unrestricted. In contrast, the reputation of the Provincial Economy Office as a body representing the state that provided supplies to the remaining section of the region’s population and, moreover, that bore responsibility for supplies for the whole region as the supervising body, was considerably impaired. Another reason behind the unenviable position of the state-run supply chain was that it had no “premium” commodities such as coal or fertilizers, yet it had to charge the highest prices.⁵⁴ The significant disproportion between the state and enterprises regarding their capacity to provide foodstuffs within a single region meant that as the plebiscite campaign started, state institutions first had to prove themselves capable of making effective supplies, otherwise the rules that they had chosen threatened to turn against them.

Immediately after the plebiscite was announced, the Czechoslovak government instructed that plebiscite requests for food supplies be prioritized by the central supply depots as well as railway operators.⁵⁵ It also divided the supplies for the plebiscite region into two categories. The Provincial Economy Office in Moravská Ostrava/Mährisch Ostrau as a state administration body provided the basic rations, while the newly established Czechoslovak plebiscite commission administered extra rations which it further distributed through its local branches as required for campaigning purposes. The plebiscite commission was only allowed to allocate for the campaign after the basic rations had been provided. The distribution points for the campaign rations included shops run by government supporters and loyal local governments, and by consumer cooperatives.⁵⁶ The plebiscite commission as a political body had a large budget for the purchase of foodstuffs

own highly productive purchasing office. NA, KPT, k. 24, Potatoes for the Provincial Economy Office in Moravská Ostrava (6 April 1920).

54 NA, KPT, k. 24, Potatoes for the Provincial Economy Office in Moravská Ostrava (6 April 1920).

55 SNA, MPS, k. 307, Permanent [Inter-ministerial] Commission for the Teschen Region (21 October 1919); NA, MZL, k. 55, Provincial Economy Office for the Moravian and Silesian Industrial District in Moravská Ostrava. Allocations for the plebiscite commission (8 November 1919); Provincial Grain Institute in Brno, supplies to the Teschen region (20 October 1919).

56 NA, KPT, k. 24, Teschen Plebiscite Commission, allocation of rice and pasta from plebiscite stock (29 March 1920).

and paid instantly. The relevant ministries only intervened if the requests were not prioritized.⁵⁷

This system was an immediate success, and the supplies for the Teschen region improved during the fall of 1919 to such a degree that the disproportion between this and the rest of Czechoslovakia led to security issues. This was especially the case with the Místek region, an undersupplied passive area that shared a 30-kilometer-long border with the Teschen region, where there was the threat of riots according to security reports. It also endangered Czechoslovak propaganda on the whole, as the Polish press repeatedly obtained evidence of extra supplies being provided to the Teschen region.⁵⁸ The Czechoslovak plebiscite commission therefore demanded that plebiscite supplies be sent to the region without markings on the rail cars.⁵⁹ And the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs repeatedly called upon the press department of the Ministry of People's Supply to refrain from providing information to the Czech press that could lead to public criticism of the supply situation in other parts of Czechoslovakia where no plebiscite was to take place. All uneven food (and other) supplies and unequal treatment were kept secret by the Czechoslovak government, as admitting them would impair Czechoslovakia's international reputation.⁶⁰

If the Czechoslovak supplies to the Teschen region were good enough to be referred to as "simply outstanding" in the Polish communication between authorities, what then was the difference between the approach taken by the two states? The answer is primarily related to priorities. The Polish state had several other plebiscites underway at various stages of preparation and, more importantly, it was preparing for war against the Bolsheviks in the East.⁶¹ The waning of the state's attention was evident in the competence of the Polish plebiscite authorities. In practice, a Czechoslovak plebiscite official, unlike his Polish counterparts, was authorized to use

57 SNA, MPS, k. 307, Permanent [Inter-ministerial] Commission for Teschen (21 October 1919); NA, MZL, k. 55, Provincial Economy Office for the Moravian and Silesian Industrial District in Moravská Ostrava. Allocations for the plebiscite commission (8 November 1919); Provincial Grain Institute in Brno. Supplies to the Teschen region (20 October 1919).

58 NA, MZL, k. 55, Teschen Plebiscite Commission, supplies to the Místek region (29 November 1919).

59 NA, MZL, k. 55, Teschen Plebiscite Commission (27 October 1919).

60 NA, MZL, k. 55, Plebiscite Commission of the Ministry of Interior (20 October 1919).

61 These were plebiscites in Orava/Árva/Orawa/Arwa and Spiš/Szepesség/Spisz/Zips with Czechoslovakia; Upper Silesia, Danzig/Gdańsk, and Eastern Prussia with Germany; Wilno/Vilnius/Vil'na with Lithuania; and Eastern Galicia with Ukraine, whose establishment was being considered by the Allied powers. Volker Prott, "Plebiscites and the Difficult Transition to Peace after the First World War," in *Post-World War One Plebiscites*, 42.

the telegram and telephone for official business from the beginning, such as in cases related to preference on railways and reminders of deliveries.⁶² The competence was also related to the usage of credit notes. While the Czechoslovak government, or the Ministry of Finance, immediately granted the Czechoslovak plebiscite commission credits (several million crowns in the first months alone) that were also used to push down food prices,⁶³ the Polish plebiscite authorities first had to go through the complicated process of accounting for funds for these purposes through the Polish Ministry of Supplies. And, as they were unable to pay for the goods immediately, they tended to become less flexible and have less time to respond to the prices determined by the Czechoslovak party.⁶⁴

On 8 November 1919, the Polish government decided to provide its plebiscite committee with an advance of 15 million Polish crowns a month to pay for the rations.⁶⁵ Yet, lacking any greater government protection, this ended up in the labyrinth of bidding wars. These government credits were used by the National Economy Office in the town of Teschen to order, upon advance payments, large deliveries from private producers in former Congress Poland, but only a negligible amount of these contractual foodstuffs reached the plebiscite area. With the lack of state and political cover, unlike in Czechoslovakia, the tradesmen tried to claim receivables from one another in this private system, and the goods, instead of being delivered to the Teschen region at the originally agreed price, were dispatched to other Polish regions at prices many times higher, determined by inflation and, most importantly, by the chain trade system. Moreover, in the fall of 1919, the Polish government entrusted Jerzy Kantor, a liaison officer between the Warsaw government and the plebiscite committee, with purchasing foodstuffs for the plebiscite area on behalf of the National Economy Office in Teschen. However, before the campaign had even come to an end, he and the banking institutions with which he had cooperated were investigated for making advance payments to dubious companies that lacked experience

62 AMZV, Těšínsko, k. 22, Organization of plebiscite tasks (20 November 1919).

63 NA, KPT, k. 24, New regulation of the export of foodstuffs to the Teschen region after the abolition of the former demarcation line (9 March 1920).

64 AMZV, Těšínsko, k. 22, Credit for supplies to the Teschen region during the plebiscite (8 October 1919).

65 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, Department of Plebiscite Administration, Loan for provisions (13 February 1920); National Economy Office in Teschen to Presidium of Council of Ministers (3 February 1920). On 3 February 1920, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers provided credit of 20,000,000 crowns per month, 5,000,000 of which the ministry spent to cover the lack of sugar during the plebiscite. The remaining amount, i.e., some 15,000,000 crowns per month, was at the disposal of the National Economy Office in Teschen.

with such large orders. Eventually, those companies only delivered approximately one-fifth of the agreed volume of food to the Teschen region.⁶⁶

In January 1920, the director of the National Economy Office in the town of Teschen that provided supplies to the plebiscite area sent a memorandum to the Polish government, explaining why the Czechoslovak arrangement was more effective. In his opinion, the first reason was that the Polish government had made the office he headed nothing more than a passive distributor of foodstuffs that it had obtained, or rather not obtained, from the center in Warsaw. And when the Teschen office needed support from the state regarding purchases, the Ministry of Supplies was extremely lax in its approach, with no one answering the telephone in the afternoons or on weekends, while the minister only responded with “ceremonial promises.” The solution offered by the director of the Teschen office was that the relevant ministries purchase foodstuffs for the plebiscite area abroad, noting that, contrary to the exorbitant prices of American articles, the best prices were offered by Yugoslavia, as they could be decreased through compensation. He also mentioned that this was where the Czechoslovak party had already purchased 1,100 wagonloads of food, mostly grain, and where it was negotiating about 400 wagonloads of cattle. As neither of his requirements was met, he stated that the last remaining solution was to provide and transport stock, especially grain, from the Poznań/Posen region, a former Prussian district, the majority of which was ceded to Poland in January 1920 under the Treaty of Versailles, the only place to still offer some food surpluses.⁶⁷

Available archival sources from the Warsaw Ministry of Supplies indicate that the Polish government’s approach only changed with the International Allied Commission’s arrival in Teschen in late January 1920, ordering that the supply standard in the whole plebiscite area would be the rations provided by the Czechoslovaks.⁶⁸ The Polish government decided to save the situation by allocating the grain stock from the Poznań region.

66 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, Department of Plebiscite Administration to Presidium of Council of Ministers (20 July 1920); National Economy Office in Teschen to Presidium of Council of Ministers (3 February 1920).

67 “So many times have I heard the Minister of Food Supplies utter the most ceremonial words of assurance of the good intentions for Silesia, but they always remained nothing more than nice words, and so many times have I been given binding and strict promises that were never kept.” AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, Memorandum of the director of the National Economy Office in Teschen (2 January 1920); sygn. 144, Delegate of the Chamber of Deputies to Prime Minister (10 February 1920).

68 AAN, MAW, sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (23 February 1920).

And as the only railway connection from Silesia to the Poznań region via Warsaw was too complicated and expensive, the government negotiated and provided transport via another plebiscite area, Upper Silesia, for which it competed with Germany, and which was under German administration. As the state secured this route for the transport of foodstuffs from Poznań, the distance was cut by half, as was the demand for rolling stock. From the end of March 1920, Poland was at least able to come close to providing the same amount of basic supplies as the Czechoslovaks,⁶⁹ and in the case of potatoes, for instance, a commodity the Czechoslovaks were constantly short of, Poland was even better off in the spring 1920, enabling it to escalate the plebiscite campaign not only in the Teschen region but also in Upper Silesia, where the German state was also reported to show “excellent supplies.”⁷⁰

Propaganda

The essence of the plebiscite campaign lay in creating the illusion of a welfare state. That was why when it had been launched, the government also decided to prioritize communication in order to satisfy the plebiscite needs.⁷¹ In general, it approved of the opinion of the powerful ministries—i.e., of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior—that any information from state authorities about supply issues and shortcomings on the part of the state in any part of the republic should not be leaked during the campaign. When highlighted in the media, the contrast in supplies between parts of Czechoslovakia could reveal welfare in the Teschen region to be a myth. In the Czechoslovak media, which was mostly in private hands and subject to party competition, the editors were not obliged to publish governmental or ministerial statements. The ministry’s press releases were not guaranteed a place even in the newspapers loyal to the government, let alone on their front pages. And the Czechoslovak Press Office, run by the government, had no power over the media to arrange the publication of ministerial statements.

69 AAN, MAW, sygn. 144, For the information of the Ministry of the Former Prussian District in Poznań, Department of Provisions (3 February 1920); sygn. 141, National Economy Office in Teschen to Ministry of Food Supplies in Warsaw (23 February 1920).

70 AAN, MAW, sygn. 135, Ministry of Defense to Presidium of the Council of Ministers (13 May 1920).

71 SNA, MPS, k. 307, Permanent [Inter-ministerial] Commission for the Teschen region (21 October 1919).

The loyal editorial boards and leading journalists, however, were informed of the need to respect the plebiscite campaign and tried to satisfy it.⁷²

At the same time, a propaganda war was being waged on the international stage.⁷³ The Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs influenced foreign media through its disposal funds, while the Polish government strove to do the same, for instance in Vienna, which it saw as one of the keys to winning the favor of the German population in the Teschen region. When the Czech media reported that the Polish government had bought off the editors of Viennese newspapers for fifty wagonloads of foodstuffs, the Polish ambassador to Vienna expressed his regrets in his letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw in March 1920, stating that “there is not the slightest truth to this news.” Following that, the Polish Ministry of Supplies began to provide material support to the editors associated in the Economic Association of Viennese Journalists (*Wirtschaftsverband der Wiener Journalisten*), and in June 1920 alone sent them a tanker of kerosene, 6,000 kilograms of butter, one and a half wagonloads of flour, and one large wagon filled with equal shares of eggs and bacon. Along with this cargo, the Polish ambassador sent a letter to the editor-in-chief of the *Neue Freie Presse* (New Free Press), expressing his hope that he could “combine political tasks [i.e. support for the Polish claims over Teschen] with a love for your neighbor.”⁷⁴

Czechoslovak state propaganda, as well as that of the Slunzak movement, was based on the motif of the Poles’ alleged backwardness and poverty. The Slunzak press, funded by the Czechoslovak plebiscite commission, tried to reach out to the original Silesian population, warning that the Teschen region would be flooded by newcomers from Polish Galicia, controlled by Galician officials, and exploited by the Galician administration. The printed plebiscite materials, in both Czech and German, highlighted the topic of the Polish/Galician “dwarf economy” as well as the superiority of the Polish/Galician aristocracy relying on the support of the Jews. Along with this, they thematized illiteracy and widespread alcohol abuse, where the aristocracy profited from the production of spirits and the Jews from their sale. The official propaganda posters often depicted a Polish/Galician trinity—a

72 NA, Předsednictvo ministerské rady, 1918–45, k. 3286, Press releases.

73 For an overview of this topic, see Nina Jebesen, *Als die Menschen gefragt wurden*.

74 AAN, MAW, sygn. 135, “W sprawie Aprowizacji dla dziennikarzy wiedeńskich” (12 June 1920); “Wirtschaftsverband der Wiener Journalisten” (4 June 1920); “W sprawie notatki (‘České slovo’) o aprowizowaniu dziennikarzy wiedeńskich przez Rząd Polski” (26 March 1920).

priest, Jew, and a Polish officer—symbolizing the oppression and lack of freedom that the Teschen region should expect if annexed by Poland.⁷⁵

The example of the “disorganized” Galician economy, in which the farmers were under the control of the aristocracy, an economy which could gradually spread to the Teschen region, was further enhanced by the Czechoslovak propaganda’s use of pre-war statistics. It disseminated the information that Galicia, 28,000 square kilometers larger than the Bohemian Lands, yielded only 25% of the amount of wheat produced in Cisleithania, while in the Bohemian Lands it was 34%; that Galicia grew 24% of rye while the Bohemian Lands grew 30%; and that Galicia contributed 19% of barley while the figure for the Bohemian Lands was 37%. Josef Koždoň, the leader of the Slunzak Silesian People’s Party, spoke about the conflict between Western and Eastern culture at public meetings. The flyers, written as situational dialogues, compared the Western and Eastern mindset, the latter allegedly debauched, indolent, and conceited.⁷⁶ Czechoslovak propaganda used the phrase “Polish mess” on a systematic basis. The campaign flyers compared prices of foodstuffs, computed the state debt per capita and highlighted the strong Czechoslovak currency and stable investment environment, unlike in the warring Polish state with its uncertain position on the Eastern Front.⁷⁷

Rather than on economic topics, the Polish campaign focused on arguments about identity formation related to ethnicity, language, and, negatively, the alleged atheism of the Czechs.⁷⁸ Adopting a defensive posture, it had to focus primarily on the question of how to approach the worse supply system. The high prices, compared to the Czechoslovak ones, were explained as resulting from the sharp rise in Czechoslovak indebtedness or from the Austrian supply system being left in place in the Bohemian Lands, based on the “outdated” and “unusually strict” system of requisitions accompanied by merciless military assistance.⁷⁹ Polish propaganda explained the alleged Czech requisition harassment by reference to another Polish plebiscite in Upper Silesia, mentioning the “Prussian” character of the Czechs: “They

75 Lubomír Novotný, “Metody plebiscitní kampaně na Těšínském Slezsku v letech 1919–1920,” in *Bibliotheca Antiqua 2012: Sborník z 21. konference 7.–8. listopadu 2012 Olomouc*, ed. Rostislav Krušínský and Tereza Vintrová (Vědecká knihovna v Olomouci, 2012), 218, 222.

76 SNA, MPS, k. 307, collection of campaign flyers; Dominika Janáková, “Plebiscitní úřady na Těšínsku, Oravě a Spiši v letech 1918–1920,” PhD diss. (Univerzita Hradec Králové, 2016), 49.

77 SNA, MPS, k. 307, Press releases, Supplies in Poland (8 November 1919).

78 SNA, MPS, k. 307, Press releases, Plebiscite Campaign “Milí bratři!” (undated).

79 AMZV, Těšínsko, k. 22, Report by V. Gunther, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegate in Teschen (8 October 1919); SNA, MPS, k. 307, Plebiscite campaign “Kto ma ocy, nisk widzi!” (undated).

write that there is famine in Poland, that Poland just fights and does not want peace. [...] Ask anyone in the whole of Poland whether the Polish army requisitioned goods in the same way as the Czechoslovak army did. These bastards from Prague even counted hens and geese. They were about to count dogs and cats, and only because of the approaching plebiscite they stopped showing off for a while. The Prague simpletons say that Poland is at war. Do they think we will allow the Bolsheviks to come to Poland and run away from them like they fled Slovakia to escape the Hungarian Bolsheviks?"⁸⁰

Both the Polish and Czechoslovak state propaganda was negative and deeply hateful. Along with the vulgarized campaign, however, there was a surge of violent protests, as well as acts of extraordinary and yet unseen brutality among the population, often resulting in fatalities. Probably as a gesture of goodwill to help calm the situation in the region, immediately after arriving in Teschen, the International Allied Commission abolished preliminary censorship of the press and public addresses in the whole of the plebiscite area.⁸¹ This benevolent approach to freedom of speech, however, immediately proved to be problematic. Several days after the arrival of the commission, for instance, one of the many bloody street riots occurred in Orlová/Orłowa/Orlau, an area under Czechoslovak control, with demonstrating Polish miners confronting the Czech inhabitants, which only ended after the French battalion was deployed.⁸² As it seemed likely that the International Allied Commission would fail to guarantee the rule of law, after these events it banned all public gatherings, at least in the western (Czechoslovak) prefecture. Meetings could only be held in closed rooms with a pre-approved agenda, and under supervision of the (Czechoslovak) police.⁸³ As this measure made it impossible for the pro-Polish population to organize more high-profile protests, the Poles accused the International Allied Commission of "Czechophilia," and Jan Zamorski, the Polish ambassador to the Commission, publicly stepped down. When the violence escalated in the following weeks, the International Allied Commission declared a state

80 SNA, MPS, k. 307, Plebiscite campaign "Jako Czesi naród okłamują" (undated); Plebiscite campaign "Milí bratři!" (undated).

81 Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy*, 100; AMZV, Těšínsko, k. 22, Report from 10 December 1919.

82 The paramilitarization of society was boosted by appearances by the Polish Military Organization (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*) terrorist guerrilla group that operated in the Czechoslovak zone and attacked pro-Czechoslovak, especially Slunzak and German people on the Polish side as well. On the Czechoslovak side, an equivalent group was established under the name Civil Defense (*Občanská obrana*), although compared to the openly terrorist Polish group, it was insufficiently armed. Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy*, 113–14.

83 Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy*, 107.

of emergency on 25 May 1920, accompanied by the reestablishment of the preliminary censorship of the press.⁸⁴

By then, securing foodstuffs was no longer the key concern for the population in the over-supplied plebiscite area. The people were more worried about the everyday threat of violence that most often turned against the native Slunzak population, who were victims not only of brutality, but also of the contemporary discourse of international diplomacy that played out solely in the national sphere.⁸⁵ The final arbitrary decision passed by the superpowers on 28 July 1920 annulled the plebiscite vote due to the instability and definitively divided the Těšín/Cieszyn/Teschen area into two parts, Polish and Czechoslovak. The ideas of the original Silesian inhabitants who sought to maintain the integrity of the region were overruled by Czech-Polish relations, which left little room for respecting the regional perspective and local ties.

Prekmurje

At the moment of Yugoslav occupation of Prekmurje in August 1919, poverty, deprivation, misery, and hunger characterized the living conditions of most of the region's population. The outbreak of the First World War exacerbated the already dire living conditions in an overpopulated region where 89% of the population worked in agriculture or lived from smallholding subsistence farming.⁸⁶ Armed conflicts necessitated the conscription of a substantial number of working-age males into military formations.⁸⁷ The rest of the peasantry, however, endured the repercussions of the war on the so-called home front.⁸⁸ Moreover, in the last year of the conflict, the social order was

84 NA, KPT, k. 30, Implementation guidelines to the decree of the International Commission (19 May 1920).

85 Josef Koždoň's archival collection in the Provincial Archives in Opava includes a list of five hundred names—victims of repressions by the Polish armed guerrillas, k. 5.

86 Malačič, "Demografski razvoj," 355–57.

87 Approximately 25,000 men from Prekmurje, born between 1865 and 1900, were conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian Army, of whom around 3,000 were killed in action, while many others returned from the front lines bearing minor or severe disabilities. See Gordana Šövegeš Lipovšek, *Prišo je glás: Prekmurci v vojni 1914–1918: Padli in pogrešani* (Pomurski muzej, 2016).

88 In addition to requisitions of food and other primary products, Prekmurje's residents contributed to the war effort primarily by purchasing government-backed war bonds, participating in local Red Cross initiatives, caring for the wounded, and collecting raw materials. See Miklós Melega, "Podnošenje žrtve i solidarnosti – Okrug Murska Sobota kao ratna pozadina (1914–1918)," in *Pomurje 1914–1920: Zbornik radova = Mura mente 1914–1920: Szöveggyűjtemény*, ed. Branimir

shaken. "Green Cadres" were emerging across Austria-Hungary, and the state was losing control of the obedience and allegiance of its citizens.⁸⁹ At the end of the war, the monopoly on the use of violence was slipping from the hands of local authorities in the western parts of Zala and Vas counties. As the military forces began to return from the Italian front, rioting erupted.⁹⁰ Local merchants, many of them Jews, were those who felt the general discontent and the breakdown of the monopoly on violence most concretely, as the rural population, together with demobilized soldiers, plundered stores.⁹¹

Yet the limited access to essential caloric sources and other necessities among broader sections of the rural population cannot be solely attributed to the war and the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. Neither were shortages in Prekmurje a direct result of the social upheavals and the formation of successor states during the post-imperial transition period. Already before the onset of the First World War, owing to agricultural overpopulation and the fact that a dozen large estates controlled vast areas of farmland, a substantial portion of peasants in the western sections of the Vas and Zala counties struggled to acquire enough food for mere physical survival. Since the late nineteenth century, population growth and the prevalence of economically passive farms with limited arable land and increasingly fragmented agricultural plots significantly constrained overall productivity and, consequently, family income availability. The overpopulation of rural areas and the increase in village poverty compelled peasants to pursue opportunities beyond their localities. Numerous individuals migrated to the United States in pursuit of a better life, while those who remained on their farms often sought to mitigate the absence of local subsistence options in a region with undeveloped non-agrarian sectors by engaging in seasonal labor migration. In other words, even in prewar times marked by peace and institutional stability, most of the rural population could not be fed by the region's resources.⁹² What is more, the scarcity transcended

Bunjac (Povijesno društvo Međimurske županije, 2011), 59–82; Darja Kerec, "Prekmurje leta 1917," *Studia Historica Slovenica* 18, no. 3 (2018): 811–25.

89 For a comprehensive account see Jakub S. Beneš, *The Last Peasant War: Violence and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2025), 41–112.

90 Zoltán Paksy, "Dejavnost vodilnih teles za Medžimurje in Pomurje v letih 1918–1919," *Zbornik soboškega muzeja*, no. 11–12 (2008): 7–22; Ibolya Foki, "Protest županije Zala protiv odcjepljenja međimurskih i pomurskih naselja," in *Pomurje 1914–1920*, 303–12.

91 On the looting of shops in the village of Beltinci, see Ivan Jerič, *Moji spomini* (Murska Sobota, 2000), 40–41, as well as Kokolj, "Prekmurje v prevratnih letih," 73–79; Göncz, *A Muravidék*, 104–34.

92 Kuzmič, *Slovenski izseljenci*; Matija Maučec, "Prenaseljenost in sezonsko izseljevanje v Prekmurju," *Geografski vestnik* 9 (1933): 107–17; Ludvik Olas, "Razvoj in problemi sezoneškega

political upheavals and remained a distinguishing characteristic of daily life for many rural inhabitants of Prekmurje well into the interwar period.⁹³

Food Supply Management in the Period of Political Transition: State Endeavors from Above and Local Agency from Below

Scarcity was not unknown to many inhabitants of the westernmost districts of the Zala and Vas counties at the end of the war, as demonstrated by the socioeconomic circumstances briefly described above. What changed profoundly, however, was the attitude of political actors and state authorities towards the food provisioning situation in the region. Beginning in the fall of 1918, the postwar political mobilization of ordinary people encouraged various authorities to ensure adequate supplies and to seek to improve the social conditions of local communities. Against a background of ongoing social and political turmoil and competition between the Hungarian and Yugoslav authorities for this majority-Slavophone territory, the prospect of a better life came to feature prominently as a subject of political propaganda and as a chief objective of state intervention in the existing social fabric. Numerous officials and political representatives—from Károlyi's short-lived government to the post-Trianon Yugoslav administrative bodies—identified the question of supply, production, and allocation of food as an imminent political concern, but also as a means to win the loyalty of people and to establish control over the contested region. Between the fall of 1918 and the finalization of the process of Yugoslav-Hungarian border demarcation in 1924, several successive state and quasi-state authorities thus tried to improve the region's overall material conditions and to organize appropriate food provisioning of the population in Prekmurje, in particular.

In the fall of 1918, when the historical Kingdom of Hungary began to face a maelstrom of political uncertainty, popular unrest, and (paramilitary) violence, the Slavophones traditionally classified as Vends drew significant attention from central Hungarian authorities in Budapest. After the success

zaposlovanja prekmurskega prebivalstva," *Geografski vestnik* 12 (1956): 176–208; Kokolj, *Prekmurški Slovenci*, 589–91.

93 For an illustrative description of the meagre living conditions, poor diet, and risk of famine, see the "on the ground" report from the mid-1930s published in Ivo Pirc and Franjo Baš, *Socialni problemi slovenske vasi*, vol. 1 (Socialno-ekonomski institut, 1938), 80, 90–91. An ethnographic study published after the end of the Second World War confirms the continuity of deprivation among the strata of smallholding farmers in Prekmurje into the communist era. Vilko Novak, *Ljudska prehrana v Prekmurju: Etnografska študija* (Slovenski knjižni zavod, 1947).

of the Aster Revolution and the establishment of the Hungarian People's Republic on 31 October 1918, Serbian, Romanian, and Czechoslovak troops occupied large parts of the country and sought to push further into the Hungarian interior. In addition, the non-Hungarian national movements sought independence from Budapest based on the right to self-determination. Confronted with the danger of the state's disintegration, Prime Minister Mihály Károlyi tried to resolve the situation by initiating a discussion with minority leaders. The government in Budapest showed readiness to provide a number of cultural and political concessions to non-Hungarian ethnic groups by drawing up legislation that would enact national autonomies. As part of these efforts, Hungarian politicians and officials aimed to build contacts with representatives of Vends—the Slavophone population living on the border with the emerging South Slav state.⁹⁴

In November 1918, Oszkár Jászi, whom Károlyi appointed as minister for national minorities, sent a university lecturer, Béla Obál, to the southwest of Vas County as a government “commissioner.” Obál's task was to establish a dialogue with politically influential Vends to provide reliable information to Budapest on the political mood of the local population. At the beginning of December, Obál summarily reported to Budapest in a telephone conversation that the Vend population was living in considerable neglect and misery and that the mood was thus bleak and despairing. Nevertheless, it would still be possible to win their sympathy by means, among other things, of adequate provisioning. According to Obál, “the provision of basic necessities and food would have a positive impact on their mood and situation.”⁹⁵ Significant stocks of various consumables would have to be provided, including tobacco, candles, kerosene, soap, as well as 70 tons of sugar. Back in Budapest, authorities followed Obál's suggestion. Jászi's office

94 On postwar developments in Hungary, see Ignác Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (Corvina; Osiris, 1999); Tamás Révész, “Post-war Turmoil and Violence (Hungary),” in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. Ute Daniel et al. (Freie Universität Berlin, 2014), <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/post-war-turmoil-and-violence-hungary-1-1/>; Miklós Zeidler, “Trianon, Treaty of,” in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. Ute Daniel et al. (Freie Universität Berlin, 2014), <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/trianon-treaty-of/>. On Vends and the efforts of the Hungarian authorities, political concepts, concessions, forms of administrative organization, various proposals for autonomy, see Göncz, “Načrti avtonomne in upravne organiziranosti”; László Göncz, “Utrinki iz zgodovine Beltincev v t. i. prevratnem obdobju (Od oktobra 1918 do jugoslovanske zasedbe Prekmurja),” in *Raznolikost v raziskovanju etničnosti: Izbrani pogledi III*, ed. Sonja Novak-Lukanovič and Barbara Riman (Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 2023), 73–100.

95 Göncz, “Načrti avtonomne,” 737–38.

immediately asked the Ministry of Food to prioritize the transportation of sugar to Vends as a measure of “national interest” in order to maintain their benevolent opinion of Hungary.⁹⁶

In November 1918, János Czigány, the district administrator of Dolnja Lendava/Alsólendva that bordered the recently proclaimed South Slav state, also shed light on the importance of socioeconomic stability as a prerequisite for the legitimacy of state authorities in local Slavophone rural settlements. In his report for the sheriff (*alispán/podžupan*) of Zala County on the situation in Beltinci/Belatincz and the surrounding villages along the Hungarian-Yugoslav border, which had been affected by the outbreak of looting and pillaging two weeks earlier, the district administrator pointed out that the local Vends’ first and foremost desire was to improve their living conditions. In this regard, Czigány revealed that the intense cross-border Slovene nationalist propaganda found a receptive audience partly because the local Slavophones, being informed about the political development on the other side of the border, could easily imagine a brighter future in Yugoslavia instead of in politically turbulent Hungary. In addition, the district administrator highlighted a problem that would eventually plague the region: unlawful cross-border trading. According to the administrator, regional agricultural surpluses were smuggled and sold in large quantities across the river Mura border. Hungarian agricultural produce and livestock were in great demand and thus reached higher prices on the Yugoslav side. As a result, many corrupt gendarmes and civil servants took part in illicit trade according to Czigány.⁹⁷

Regulated trade in agricultural produce and foodstuffs had traditionally taken place across the administrative border between Cisleithania and Transleithania, which was defined in this sector by the Mura river. Before the war, farmers from these parts of Hungary sold such things as meat and livestock to Styria and, in significant quantities, to its provincial capital Graz.⁹⁸ However, such trade routes were already severely restricted by the export restriction policies during the war when Hungarian authorities enacted a regulation from 1912 mandating that peasants provide their products to the state. The decree persisted until February 1921, although laws prohibiting the export of cereal grains and other goods without

96 Göncz, “Načrti avtonomne,” 737–38. A similar intervention from Obál with the goal to consolidate the legitimacy of the Hungarian regime by the means of provisioning took place in January 1919. Göncz, “Načrti avtonomne,” 751.

97 Göncz, “Utrinki iz zgovine,” 82.

98 Ferid G. Keršovan, “Spomini na gospodarsko in socialno življenje v Prekmurju,” *Kronika* 12, no. 3 (1964): 174.

the authorization of the minister of food supply remained in effect until February 1923.⁹⁹ After the war, the situation became even more complex. A combination of causes—among them, the Allied economic blockade stands out—led to a food crisis in Hungary and especially in Budapest.¹⁰⁰ Successive Hungarian governments therefore sought to channel commercial flows from the Hungarian countryside to the urban centers, while at the same time preventing sales on the black market or smuggling abroad.

The problem of satisfactory supply continued to present an important issue as well after 21 March, when the Hungarian Soviet Republic was established with a new government, i.e., the Revolutionary Governing Soviet. In a predominantly Vend-inhabited area of Vas County, the Soviet of the Vend District, with a seat in Murska Sobota/Muraszombat, was proclaimed, and the Directorate of the Vend District began to exercise public authority.¹⁰¹ In a way, the tense situation in Hungary linked Vend areas more closely to urban centers and the political epicenter in Budapest. Due to food shortages in Hungarian urban centers, the Governing Soviet started to introduce food ration cards for a range of foodstuffs. State buyers of livestock, lard, eggs, and cereals went around the countryside to supply the urban population and the army. In the Vend District, similarly to other rural areas, farmers were hesitant to sell their produce due to their mistrust of the new currency, what they called “white money.” As a result, the Governing Soviet introduced an exchange of agricultural products for consumer goods. The lack of industrial products in Hungary, however, triggered an explosion in smuggling activities. As elsewhere along the Austro-Hungarian border, smugglers in the Vend District started buying industrial goods from the other side, where supplies were plentiful.¹⁰²

At the beginning, the Directorate of the Vend District informally authorized smuggling and even started issuing certificates for the transport of goods, for such transactions ensured the supply of the local population and, in

99 Michael Burri, “The Interallied Commission for the Delimitation of the Boundary between Austria and Hungary, and the New International Order in Austria,” in *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border*, 61.

100 For a thorough account, see Friederike Kind-Kovács, *Budapest's Children: Humanitarian Relief in the Aftermath of the Great War* (Indiana University Press, 2022), 60–86.

101 “Oglász k lüdsztvi szlovenszke okrogline! Delavci! Pörgarje! Szoldajce!,” *Novine*, 30 March 1919, 1.

102 Julij Titl, *Murska republika 1919* (Pomurska založba, 1970), 30–31. Cross-border smuggling was not limited to this area but took place along the entire border. On smuggling activities along the border north of the Vend District/Prekmurje, see Sabine Schmitner-Laszakovits, “Surviving and Resisting the Wartime Order: Black-Market Economy in the Border Region of Wiener Neustadt during and after World War I,” in *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border*, 93–109.

a sense, maintained social stability by exchanging local wheat and livestock for Austrian consumer goods. In May 1919, however, imports were completely monopolized by the local levers of power. From then on, illegal exchange was no longer treated as “smuggling” but as “the organized import and distribution of goods.” The Directorate even obtained bank loans to facilitate and fund the operation. Yet, the specifics of cross-border transactions quickly attracted the attention of mid-level county and central state authorities, and the conflict broke out on the relation between Murska Sobota and Budapest. The local leadership in the Vend District wanted to keep most of the goods in the province. After all, the supply had a very favorable effect on the mood of the population, not to mention that it brought fantastic fortune to local operators. Budapest’s interest was, of course, entirely the opposite: to ensure that as many of these goods as possible went to the capital.¹⁰³

The conflict over the allocation of resources ultimately escalated and several local representatives of the Soviet regime openly rebelled. On 29 May, under the leadership of Vilmos Tkálec, a person in charge of illegal trade, the Republic of Mura was proclaimed in Murska Sobota as an independent state based on the principle of national self-determination. Unsurprisingly, the new state on the border between Hungary, Austria, and Yugoslavia was suppressed only a few days later by the intervention of the Hungarian Red Army. With the reestablishment of the central Soviet regime over the region, the supply of the local population deteriorated. Organized smuggling was abolished and the delivery and shipment of foodstuffs from the province to Budapest increased substantially, resulting in scarcities of salt, sugar, and tobacco. The economic situation in the country deteriorated further due to the increased requisitioning of foodstuffs, which affected the peasant population.¹⁰⁴

The Yugoslav Occupation of Prekmurje: How to Feed a “Redeemed” Region in an Era of Shortages

The short-lived period of the Hungarian Soviet Republic ended on 1 August 1919. Within a few days, the local population experienced a new change. On 12 August at noon, Yugoslav troops occupied four districts on the westernmost edges of Zala and Vas counties and renamed them Prekmurje. As soon became clear, a significant part of the population in Prekmurje was not sympathetic to the Yugoslav authorities. Many expected a return of

¹⁰³ Titl, *Murska republika*, 33–36.

¹⁰⁴ Titl, *Murska republika*, 53.

Hungarian rule. Moreover, after the Carinthian plebiscite in October 1920, which Yugoslavia lost, rumors began to circulate in the province that a similar plebiscite would also take place in Prekmurje.¹⁰⁵ Although the Yugoslav delegation in Paris had lobbied for a plebiscite in Prekmurje in 1919, the position changed after the “national disaster” in Carinthia.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, Yugoslav officials in Prekmurje expressed doubts that the local population would opt for the Yugoslav side unless they enjoyed a significant material improvement beforehand. Immediately after the consolidation of the occupation and the establishment of the provisional administration, the task of supplying the population became one of the primary responsibilities of Yugoslav officials. In a state of political turbulence—wherein national boundaries remained only as provisional lines of demarcation—it became clear to the recently installed Yugoslav authorities that the legitimacy of the regime must be consolidated by material means.

At a meeting with representatives of the local elite on 2 October, a temporarily appointed “civil commissioner,” the head of the Yugoslav administration in Prekmurje, reported that “except for the population, which does not have stamped money, the whole of Prekmurje is supplied with salt, sugar, kerosene, matchboxes, and also to some extent with flour and lard. There are now three warehouses for foodstuffs, from which goods were supplied on a wholesale basis. The sugar for October had also arrived and the distribution will start this week.”¹⁰⁷ Despite the civil commissioner’s public assertion regarding the sufficient supply of foodstuffs and other essential commodities, the voluminous internal administrative records appear to contradict this claim. As early as 3 November, the very same official asked the ministry responsible for coal deliveries in Ljubljana to provide three wagons of coal for a mill in Murska Sobota. In this way, he planned to organize the milling of grain and make up for the shortage of flour, which had been supposedly sent to supply the population but had never arrived in Prekmurje.¹⁰⁸ The lack of adequate numbers of Yugoslav civil servants further hampered the provision

105 On mistrust and different sources of popular dissatisfaction, see Kokolj, *Prekmurški Slovenci*, 34–46.

106 The Yugoslav delegation in Paris asked for plebiscites in the Banat, Bačka, Baranja, Prekmurje, Styria, Carinthia, Istria, and Dalmatia. “Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers Held in M. Pichon’s Room at the Quai d’Orsay, Paris, on Wednesday, 27 August, 1919, at 11 a.m.,” in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, ed. Joseph V. Fuller, vol. 7 (United States Government Printing Office, 1946), Document 45, available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Parisv07/d45>.

107 Ribnikar, *Sejmi zapisniki*, 2:386.

108 Pokrajinska in študijska knjižnica Murska Sobota (henceforth PIŠKMS), Sresko načelstvo Murska Sobota (1917–41) (henceforth SNMS), t.e. 11, 11/71, “Telegrami Civilnega komisarja deželni

of supplies to the local population. On 9 November, the civil commissioner requested that an additional official be sent to assist the work of the Military Support Commission. As the work in the office lagged, "the transfer of aid is being delayed, which is causing bad blood among the poor and needy population."¹⁰⁹ On the same day the civil commissioner also wrote a telegram to the Department of Nutrition with the following content:

The eight wagons of salt, which have been announced, have still not been delivered. Prekmurje has been completely without salt for a long time and at the very time when it is also urgently used for the conservation of meat. Please urgently issue the necessary order to supply salt immediately. The population is extremely upset that we cannot even provide them with the most basic necessities of life.¹¹⁰

And again on 16 December, in a telegram to the presidency of the Provincial Government:

There is a justifiable restlessness among the population of Prekmurje, because for some time now all deliveries of salt have ceased. The need is all the greater because it is now the season for pig slaughter and salt is urgently needed for preserving meat. The Department of Nutrition has promised eight wagons of salt but despite repeated requests, there is neither salt nor a reply. Please intervene immediately.¹¹¹

In February 1920, the same story repeated itself, as can be seen from a telegram to the Department of Nutrition: "The promised salt for February and the announced contingent of sugar have not yet arrived. I ask for the necessary urgent orders, as the people are justifiably upset at the constant deprivation of Prekmurje."¹¹²

Although shortages during this period were still widespread across the entirety of Yugoslavia, the deprivation crisis in Prekmurje was exacerbated by two additional factors. On the one hand, the region was virtually cut off logistically from the rest of the South Slav state. Only on the extreme south-eastern edge, in Dolnja Lendava, was there a railway station that linked the region with the interior, and then only with the "Croatian" part of Yugoslavia.

vladi, oddelku za premog, oddelku za prehrano, predsedništvu in oddelku za socialno skrb" (henceforth Telegrami) (3 November 1919).

109 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 11, 11/71, Telegrami (9 November 1919).

110 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 11, 11/71, Telegrami (9 December 1919).

111 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 11, 11/71, Telegrami (16 December 1919).

112 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 11, 11/71, Telegrami (14 February 1920).

The other important factor concerned the lack of funds. The companies that were willing to supply Prekmurje were only prepared to do so if they were paid in advance. It was for these two reasons, for instance, that fifteen wagons of salt had still not been shipped from Ljubljana at the end of December 1919. During the Christmas holidays, road and rail traffic was even slower than usual or stopped altogether. At the same time, private wholesalers made it clear to the Department of Nutrition of the Provincial Government that they would not dispatch the goods without advance payment.¹¹³

The needs of the local population in Prekmurje for state aid were by all accounts considerable. According to statistics compiled by the civil commissioner in the fall of 1920 for the Department of Nutrition, about one fifth of the population needed assistance. Of the 92,000 inhabitants living in the province, 74,000 were said to be able to feed themselves from their own land. In the words of the civil commissioner: "6000 are eligible for full state provision, 8000 for discounted food purchases, and 4000 for purchases at cost price. These figures indicate a minimum requirement which leaves no room for any reduction."¹¹⁴ In other words: in a predominantly agricultural region that exported significant food surpluses every year, 20% of the population lived below the subsistence level.

The Yugoslav administration's reports leave no doubt that some foodstuffs and daily necessities were clearly in short supply in Prekmurje in the years immediately after the occupation. However, the available official figures also imply that, given the scale of regional agricultural productivity, Prekmurje could theoretically maintain a delicate balance between regional calorific resources and the needs of the population—regardless of the region's overpopulation.¹¹⁵ On a large proportion of small farms, families were indeed living in deprivation due to limited production capacity. On the other hand, however, particularly on the large estates, the annual harvest on average brought substantial cereal yields. In other words, an autarkic break-even point could be achieved in Prekmurje when it came to the supply of staple food. The fact of potential self-sufficiency did not mean, however, that local production in Prekmurje led to local consumption. Given that farming on large estates was embedded in supralocal market relations, prices for crops were set by the relationship

113 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 10, 10/40, Letter from the Department of Nutrition about supplying Prekmurje with food and fuel (1920).

114 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 11, 11/63, Statistical information about the population's nutrition in Prekmurje (1920).

115 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 10, 10/37, Statistical report of the Murska Sobota District to the command of the Maribor Military District on nutrition, sanitary conditions, and mineral wealth in Prekmurje (26 July 1922).

between supply and demand. Until the end of the First World War, this relationship was regulated in the context of the Kingdom of Hungary, which was a net exporter of agricultural produce. As a result, the annual harvest on large estates usually ended up on external markets, where a better price could be obtained. When the Yugoslav administration gained control of the region in August 1919, this was the predominant structure of grain production and trade.

Administrative documents clearly illustrate that the provisioning crisis was a primary concern in Prekmurje in 1919 and 1920. However, Slovene politicians and government officials quickly identified the region's economic and nutritional potential. In his report to the Provincial Government for Slovenia, Albin Prepeluh, the Minister of Welfare, pointed out that "Prekmurje is a great acquisition in economic terms, as it should serve as a granary for us."¹¹⁶ The opinion of the minister was shared by Franc Vojsk, a traveling teacher of agriculture, whose report to the Department of Agriculture of the Provincial Government also highlighted the enormous long-term economic potential of Prekmurje.¹¹⁷ In subsequent years, Slovene newspapers and magazines accepted the trope and disseminated the notion of Prekmurje as Slovene granary among their readership.¹¹⁸

The image of Prekmurje as a source of abundance that would benefit the whole Slovene community did not, however, entirely align with the material interests and political aspirations of the majority of the local population. This became abundantly clear with the introduction of universal male suffrage and a multi-party Yugoslav political system that gave voices of dissatisfaction—poor and impoverished peasant communities—a platform to express themselves.¹¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, new, influential political actors that emerged in the Prekmurje political landscape sought to ride the wave of mass postwar popular discontent, demanding the fair distribution of existing regional resources. The most

116 Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki*, 2:385.

117 Arhiv Republike Slovenije (henceforth ARS), AS 60 Pokrajinska uprava za Slovenijo, Predsedstvo (1918–1924) (henceforth AS 60), š. Prekmurje V, t. e. 13535, Report from traveling agricultural teacher Franc Vojsk (17 November 1919).

118 See for instance "Naše Prekmurje," *Sokolšč* 1, no. 5–6 (1919): 71; "Prekmurci," *Mladost* 13, no. 6 (1920): 93; "Izpraznitev Radgone in Prekmurje," *Slovenec*, 30 June 1920, 2; "Konec Slovenije?," *Novi čas*, 7 January 1921, 1.

119 Whereas until 1918, only approximately 6% of Hungarian citizens had been entitled to vote, with individuals' suffrage rights dependent on property and education, around 20% of Prekmurje's population was eligible to participate in the political process in the interwar Yugoslavia. On voting rights in the Kingdom of Hungary, see György Kepes, "The Question of Universal Suffrage in Hungary after the First World War, 1918–19," *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 40, no. 2 (2020): 201–17. On results of elections in the post-annexation years in Prekmurje, see Kokolj, *Prekmurški Slovenci*, 96–102, 150–54, 234–40.

successful among them was in this sense a retired Catholic priest Jožef Klekl, who established himself as the most vocal advocate of distributing the landlords' harvest to destitute small landholders and agricultural workers. Addressing the social conditions of an impoverished population, Klekl managed to transform himself from an influential rural dignitary with political ambitions into a member of the Yugoslav parliament and the leader of the Peasants' Union for Prekmurje (*Kmečka zveza za Prekmurje*), a regional branch of the Slovene People's Party. Furthermore, as the editor of the regional newspaper *Novine* (News), he acted as the mouthpiece for the interest of the rural poor of Prekmurje, rallying the rural population under the party's flag.¹²⁰ On 4 July 1920, the newspaper reported on a resolution passed at the meeting of the "Peasants' Union." Members of the party demanded that all the grain produced on the estates of Prekmurje landholders should be given to the local population, while the export of grain from the region should not be allowed "until every house in Prekmurje has been supplied with the necessary grain by the time of the harvest in 1921."¹²¹

As it turned out, the Peasants' Union succeeded with its proposal to supply the poor with locally harvested cereals. Two weeks later, *Novine* reported that, according to a government decision, the grain from the landowners' fields should first be used to supply the poor in Prekmurje, which was to be taken care of by the state offices.¹²² However, in 1920, the state provided for the poor not just by subsidizing the sale of grain or flour at half price.¹²³ It also set up temporary controls on the circulation of foodstuffs and handed over control of sales to the municipal administrations. To meet local needs first, the latter were responsible for authorizing the sale of cereals, meat, oil, flour, potatoes, and many other products outside the municipal boundaries.¹²⁴ The following year, state intervention in the regional social fabric took on the more traditional character of taking care of village paupers. State officials took over the role of municipal offices, which were unable to carry out this task due to meager budgets and administrative disarray in small rural municipalities.¹²⁵ In the summer of 1921, the Department of Welfare

120 On Klekl and his role as a leader of the Slovene People's Party in Prekmurje, see Franc Kuzmič, "Stranke v Prekmurju med obema vojnama," *Kronika* 39, no. 1-2 (1991): 58-63; Edo Škulj, ed., *Kleklov simpozij v Rimu* (Mohorjeva družba, 1995).

121 "Določila 'kmečke zveze za Prekmurje' v Beltincih jun. 20.," *Novine*, 4 July 1920, 1.

122 "Zrnje grofovskih imánj," *Novine*, 18 July 1920, 2.

123 "Naši siromaki dobijo po nižanji ceni zrnje," *Novine*, 12 September 1920, 3; "Siromaki v Prekmurji," *Novine*, 26 September, 1920, 2.

124 "Brez dovoljenja občine," *Novine*, 1 August, 1920, 2.

125 Jernej Kosi, "Razmere se bistveno razlikujejo od onih v ostali Sloveniji: Prekmurski gerenti in občinsko poslovanje v Prekmurju (1919-1927)," *Zgodovina za vse* 28, no. 2 (2021): 106-23.

of the Provincial Government for Slovenia thus granted financial aid to local people with the recognized status of being poor, for which an official request had to be made first.¹²⁶

As for grain, the availability of livestock and animal products theoretically provided enough resources for regional needs, given the engagement of many small and medium-scale farms in animal husbandry. Yet the surpluses continued to be predominantly sold outside the region in the years after the Yugoslav occupation, as had been the case since the fall of 1918. To some degree, the movement of home-grown livestock and home-produced meat out of Prekmurje was a result of the Provincial Government for Slovenia's conscious policy. In order to ensure the supply of the Slovene areas of the South Slav state, especially Ljubljana but also other smaller urban settlements, the provisioning office of the Provincial Government in Ljubljana granted an exclusive right to purchase pigs and cattle in Prekmurje to a local merchant named Jožef Benko.¹²⁷ Buying livestock from landowners and selling them outside Prekmurje brought Benko great profits, for his de facto monopoly allowed him to greatly reduce average purchase prices in the province. Unsurprisingly, the "Benko monopoly" became a source of enormous political discontent.¹²⁸ But it had another important consequence. Unsatisfactory purchase prices offered by Benko as the "official purchaser" encouraged many local farmers and butchers to seek more lucrative sales channels. The easiest solution was just across the border, in neighboring Austria, which was experiencing significant food shortages, and to some degree also in Hungary. Consequently, in the months following the Yugoslav occupation, illegal trading and smuggling across the state border flourished.

Provisioning "from Below": New Border, Old Patterns of Smuggling

Alongside the concern for the adequate provisioning of the Prekmurje population, a further major problem facing the Yugoslav authorities in the immediate aftermath of the occupation was illegal cross-border trade with staple foods. In his report to the authorities in Ljubljana soon after

126 "Podpora siromakom," *Prekmurski glasnik*, 26 June 1921, 2.

127 Keršovan, "Spomini," 174. According to the newspaper report, the challenges of supplying the population of Ljubljana were not solved even in the fall of 1920; see "Aprovizacija ljubljanskih konsumentov," *Slovenski narod*, 3 October 1920.

128 "Sosvet," *Novine*, 28 March 1920, 1; "Kak smo dosegnili, ka smemo živino, svinje vovoziti po celoj Jugoslaviji," *Novine*, 10 October 1920, 2.

the Yugoslav occupation, Minister of Welfare Prepeluh already stressed the problem of mass smuggling.¹²⁹ Yet in the early 1920s, smuggling was not only an acute problem in Prekmurje but was omnipresent in other parts of Yugoslav Slovenia. As such, it garnered the attention of Slovene administrative bodies. In the context of insufficient Yugoslav agricultural output and overall scarcity in the immediate postwar period, the unregulated illegal traffic of such precious goods across the border was seen as an important reason for price hikes and shortages on the plates of the domestic population.¹³⁰

In Prekmurje, two additional factors contributed to the flourishing of illegal trade. Firstly, the Yugoslav (Serbian) military units guarding the national border actively participated in the smuggling.¹³¹ Furthermore, Prekmurje bordered Austria and Hungary. These two states faced severe food shortages at the time, which is why certain segments of the domestic population were willing to pay much more for food than producers in Prekmurje could legally earn in Yugoslavia. As a result, smugglers had a strong material incentive to try to get their goods from Prekmurje across the border to Hungary and, to an even larger extent, into Austria, where the shortage of foodstuffs offered opportunities for fantastic profits.¹³²

Facing such opportunities, individuals from different social backgrounds and occupations took part or even joined forces in smuggling. Many farmers, local traders, and butchers tried to make money by selling a few heads of cattle, small quantities of meat, eggs, and pumpkin seed oil on the other side of the state border. In October 1919, *Novine* reported that the landowner Geza Knar had been caught trying to smuggle three pigs into Austria, while the “dangerous smuggler” Štefan Benkič, a cattle dealer, had sought to transport eleven sows in the same direction. A large bull was seized from Anton Bagola, a butcher, when he attempted to take it to Austria. Jožef Nemčič was also caught trying to carry 200 kilograms of pork, 350 kilograms of veal, and 120 kilograms of beef on two carts to Hungary. All of them were fined,

129 Ribnikar, *Sejni zapiski*, 2:387.

130 “Posvetovanje glede prehrane in draginje,” *Slovenski narod*, 13 April 1920, 3.

131 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 9, 9/28, Report to the Presidency of the Provincial Government for Slovenia: Prekmurje, uncouth behavior of the army toward the population and the development of contraband (1919).

132 For a segment of the population that either possessed food surpluses or showed a willingness to take risks, the first months of Yugoslav “freedom” in Prekmurje were thus a moment of material improvement, if not enrichment. Keršovan mentions three young men from the villages along the border who, through smuggling, created the capital to set up a textile trading company and later an underwear factory. Keršovan, “Spomini,” 179–80.

and their goods seized and distributed to local communities for free.¹³³ In some villages along the border, according to the regional newspaper *Prekmurski glasnik* (The Prekmurje Herald), all adults, men and women, were smuggling, while in others only a handful of villagers were involved in the illegal trade.¹³⁴ The large-scale illegal traffic was, as *Prekmurski glasnik* claimed, particularly characteristic of the areas along the Kučnica stream, where large numbers of smugglers crossed the Austrian-Yugoslav border. The newspaper reported about large-scale organized smuggling for large sums of money: the demand for wheat was exceptionally high in Austria and the buyers were willing to accept any terms of sale and to pay in different currencies.¹³⁵

However, smuggling was not driven solely by the desire for profit. It appears to have been conditioned by a wider situation of scarcity and the inability of the state to regulate the conditions for profitable domestic trade. In the fall of 1920, *Prekmurski glasnik* sought to provide an explanation for the large-scale participation of the local population in the illegal trade, justifying cross-border traffic on the basis of socioeconomic circumstances and poorly functioning market relations in Prekmurje.¹³⁶ As for poor peasants, the author believed their involvement to be a direct consequence of impoverishment and the land tenure relations that were widespread in Prekmurje. Many villagers grew food for their own consumption on land leased from larger farmers or landlords, being forced to pay their rent with labor. The transaction did not involve payment in currency, depriving the rural proletariat of the opportunity to receive banknotes needed to buy other basic commodities beside food, such as winter clothes and shoes. Such commodities were rare and expensive in Prekmurje, and the only way they could be got was to sell food supplies on the other side of the border for hard currency. For the poor, therefore, engaging in smuggling was a matter of survival, despite the risk of disgrace or even death. As for the participation in smuggling by better-off farmers, butchers, livestock dealers, and innkeepers, the author of the article pointed to the limited opportunities for livestock trade and between the lines criticized the "Benko monopoly" as a reason.¹³⁷ Indeed, Benko's exclusive right to trade

133 "Zopet vlovljeni tihotapci," *Novine*, 12 October 1919, 3; "Drügi tihotapci," *Novine*, 12 October 1919, 3; "Póli tihotapstvo," *Novine*, 12 October 1919, 3.

134 "Tihotapstvo," *Prekmurski glasnik*, 19 August, 1920, 3.

135 "Iz Petanjčev," *Prekmurski glasnik*, 26 August 1920, 3.

136 "Memento," *Prekmurski glasnik*, 2 September 1920, 1.

137 "Memento," *Prekmurski glasnik*, 2 September 1920, 1.

became notorious in the regional public sphere and was therefore soon abolished.¹³⁸

The Yugoslav authorities showed resolute commitment to eliminating the illicit export of food products from Prekmurje. The civil commissioner for Prekmurje warned the population of the consequences of participating in smuggling and illegal cross-border trade in a public proclamation as early as the late fall of 1919. He also threatened to revoke the trade licenses of local butchers and businesspeople if they were found to be smugglers. At the same time, he urged the population to denounce all known smugglers to the Yugoslav gendarmerie. In return, they were promised the right to half of the confiscated goods if the smuggler was caught.¹³⁹ In the following months, the state authorities responded to the smuggling by increasing border surveillance and harshly punishing offenders. The district captain, among other things, dismissed the Cankova/Vashidegkút village mayor, who allegedly supported the smuggling, and implemented his threats to revoke craftsmen's trade licenses. He also issued many fines and ordered several multi-day imprisonments for smugglers.¹⁴⁰ The scale of illegal trade in Prekmurje even resulted in draconian proposals. Božidar Sever, the mayor of Dolnja Lendava, the second largest town in Prekmurje, argued that "people's courts (caning and shameful exposure) should be set up."¹⁴¹ In addition, Sever proposed an alternative way of distributing the confiscated goods. Instead of giving half to the person who denounced the smuggler, but it should be given to the destitute of the municipality where the smuggling took place.¹⁴² This radical measure, which would have "socialized" the surpluses of the richer villagers at municipal level to provide for the poor, was not adopted and did not take effect. Neither were "people's courts" set up, something that Sever probably did not regret in retrospect. A year later, he was dismissed as mayor of Lendava, having

138 "Slobodno kupüvanje máre v Prekmurji," *Prekmurski glasnik*, 3 October 1920, 3.

139 "Na znanje Prekmurcom!," *Novine*, 12 October 1919, 3; "Tihotapce naznanite!," *Novine*, 12 October 1919, 3.

140 "Tihotapci vlovljeni," *Novine*, 12 October 1919, 3; PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 2, 2/13, 2050, Suggestion of the Cankova station commander to replace the mayor of the Cankova municipality (25.11.1919); PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 11, 11/7, Statement of Janez Malačič and Janez Horvat on smuggling charges and fine sentence (1920); PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 11, 11/32, Report on the smuggling of pumpkin oil near Sv. Jurij (1920); PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 21, 21/41, Petition of Albert Vogel for an innkeeper's and merchant's permit in Šalovci (1920); PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 12, 12/25, Award to Dr Čuš for successfully acting against smugglers (19 May 1920).

141 "Posvetovanje glede prehrane in draginje," *Slovenski narod*, 13 April 1920, 3.

142 "Posvetovanje glede prehrane in draginje," *Slovenski narod*, 13 April 1920, 3.

been accused, among other things, of taking part in smuggling across the Yugoslav-Hungarian border.¹⁴³

According to the newspaper report, cross-border trafficking persisted in Prekmurje at the onset of the fall of 1921, indicating that the implemented repressive measures and propaganda efforts were ineffective in curbing smuggling.¹⁴⁴ The participation of the local population in illegal activities serves as an indicator of broader structural issues related to the political transition in Prekmurje, which were only exacerbated by the proximity of Hungary and Austria. In other words, cross-border trafficking indicates the limited state capacity of Yugoslavia in the field of welfare. Especially for the impoverished rural population, resorting to smuggling was a desperate measure—a way to compensate for inadequate provisions that the Yugoslav regime had failed to improve. For wealthier farmers and artisans, on the other hand, it presented a lucrative business opportunity, particularly given the trade restrictions in the domestic market and the limited transport links with the interior of the Yugoslav state. In this sense, smuggling functioned as a safety valve, which in a way helped mitigate the postwar socioeconomic devastation. However, the latent and simmering discontent of a significant part of the population persisted despite the alleviating effects of smuggling. Shortages, restrictive trade policies, and transport chaos—which encouraged the population to take part in illegal trade and provisioning “from below”—undermined the legitimacy of the Yugoslav regime, if not explicitly calling into question the vision of a Yugoslav future in a region that until a few months ago was a constitutive part of (the Kingdom of) Hungary. For why would the population of an occupied territory support a public authority that could not meet its basic existential needs and expectations? And why would it remain loyal to a state whose economic policies threatened to drive it into poverty or undermine the livelihoods of the most influential local opinion makers—namely, the petty bourgeois elite and wealthier farmers? In a context where the border question was still unsettled, and where fear of international scandal prevented the authorities from using force to pacify the local populace, these were hardly trivial questions. The outbreak of mass demonstrations in the fall of 1921 laid bare, to its very core, the political potential of inadequate provisioning and transitional upheaval in Prekmurje.

143 PIŠKMS, SNMS, t.e. 25, 25/57, Demand from the president of the Committee for Internal Affairs for the removal of Božidar Sever from the position of commissioner in the Dolnja Lendava municipality (30 October 1920).

144 *Prekmurški glasnik*, 4 September 1921.

The Informal Plebiscite: Weaponizing Food Scarcity upon the Arrival of the Boundary Commission in 1921

In June 1920, the Treaty of Trianon formally ceded Prekmurje to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Although the treaty delineated the border's trajectory in extensive detail, it concurrently entrusted the Yugoslav-Hungarian Boundary Commission with determining the definitive course of the border between the two states. This provision conferred upon the members of the Boundary Commission the power to modify the line in Prekmurje in case a thorough analysis of local conditions were to provide economic or ethnographic justification for this. Unsurprisingly, Hungary sought to capitalize on this window of opportunity for revision, which paradoxically persisted even after the signing of the Treaty of Trianon. After the commission had started to work on the border's exact trajectory in Prekmurje, the Hungarian envoy focused on trying to convince other delegates that the region ought to be partially or even fully restored to Hungary. At the same time, the Hungarian state aimed to create suitable conditions on the ground by establishing and financially supporting a network of local pro-Hungarian activists in Prekmurje who were tasked with mobilizing the rural population to express their support for the Hungarian cause publicly. In this context, following the Boundary Commission's arrival in Prekmurje in the fall of 1921, widespread demonstrations occurred among the populace in several localities.¹⁴⁵

As became clear later, the success of pro-Hungarian propaganda was rooted in dissatisfaction with supply conditions and bleak livelihood prospects. In truth, the circumstances in Prekmurje indeed offered great potential for creating an anti-Yugoslav atmosphere. Even after two years of Yugoslav rule, the situation did not seem to have improved much. The Yugoslav administration seemed well aware of this fact. On 16 September 1921, just a few days before the arrival of the Boundary Commission, the district captain (a former civil commissioner who had received the new official title in the meantime) reported to the Provincial Government for Slovenia to

145 On the Yugoslav-Hungarian Boundary Commission and the border in Prekmurje, see David Cree, "Yugoslav-Hungarian Boundary Commission," *The Geographical Journal* 65, no. 2 (1925): 89–110; Rudy Kyovsky, "Trianonska pogodba in slovensko-ogrska meja," in *Revolucionarno vrenje v Pomurju v letih 1918–1920*, ed. Janko Liška (Pomurska založba, 1981), 236–59; László Göncz, "Življenje ob novi državni meji po priključitvi Prekmurja Kraljevini SHS in delo razmejitvene komisije na tem odseku," in *"Mi vsi živeti ščemo"*, 293–350; Matija Slavič, *Naše Prekmurje: Zbrane razprave in članki*, ed. Viktor Vrtnjak (Pomurska založba, 1999); and Kokolj, *Prekmurski Slovenci*, 120–26.

prepare for the possibility that food shortages would occur in Prekmurje the following spring. In the densely populated region, the state's ban on travel across the new international border for seasonal labor on large Hungarian estates, combined with droughts and hailstorms, could result in people facing starvation, he claimed.¹⁴⁶

In the days preceding the arrival of the Yugoslav-Hungarian Boundary Commission on 19 September, anonymous propagandists began to distribute hundreds of leaflets among the inhabitants of Prekmurje, encouraging them to use the opportunity of the commission's arrival to express their discontent publicly. As it turned out, the local rural population responded *en masse* to the call for political mobilization. As the sun rose on the day of the Boundary Commission's arrival, crowds of locals began swarming towards Murska Sobota from the countryside. Protesters later gathered along the route traveled by the delegates and continued to demonstrate the following day, when the commission continued its assessment of the situation on the ground.¹⁴⁷

The widespread outbreak of dissatisfaction with Yugoslav rule exposed a significant lack of allegiance to the South Slav state among a substantial portion of the local population. Officials on the ground, the Slovene political elite, and the public were shocked and even horrified by the fact that thousands of Slavophones attended the demonstration, waved Hungarian flags, and demanded the return of the alleged national oppressor. Many Slovene observers searched for an in-depth explanation of what exactly instigated the outbreak of popular discontent. In the ensuing days, two interpretations emerged in the public sphere, seeking to find a rationale that underpinned the locals' anti-Yugoslav individual and collective political agencies. The first interpretation justified the population's disloyal political articulations with the notions of national lukewarmness, unawareness, or even indifference. By following a well-established trope in Slovene nationalist discourse, shocked Slovene observers consoled themselves with the belief that, due to unfavorable circumstances and various contingent political reasons, the Prekmurje Slovenes had not yet developed sufficient awareness of their own national identity. An alternative interpretation attempted to explain the mass political mobilization against the Yugoslav

146 ARS, SI AS 60, t.e. Prekmurje IV, V (Prekmurje – razmere v Prekmurju), 803, Situational report (16 September 1921).

147 Kokolj, *Prekmurski Slovenci*, 120–24; Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor, Maribor (henceforth PAM), Kazenski spisi (henceforth KS), Vr IX 2037/21, Agitation and preparation of demonstrations in favor of Hungary upon the arrival of the Boundary Commission on 19 September 1921 (henceforth Agitation and Preparation) (1921), 1.

authorities as a logical outcome of a systematic propaganda campaign conducted by the opponents of the South Slav state. Foreign agents and domestic propagandists—both allegedly financed by Hungary—misled local protesters into waving Hungarian flags, chanting *Éljen* (Long live!), and singing the Hungarian anthem.¹⁴⁸

However, a mere week after the protests, it became clear to state officials and gendarmes that neither national lukewarmness nor Hungarian propaganda were the two crucial causes of the outbreak of discontent. A thorough investigation showed that the main source of the unrest lay elsewhere. Only a few days after the demonstration, both the head of the gendarmerie and the district captain agreed that the root cause of the discontent was to be found in inadequate food provisioning, scarcity, and reduced earning opportunities. On 28 September, the commander of the gendarmerie brigade in Prekmurje reported to his superiors in Ljubljana that pro-Hungarian agitators were responsible for the demonstrations, but also stressed that “the main reason why our people responded to this seduction and pressure was severe destitution in the northern part of Prekmurje.”¹⁴⁹ Before the Yugoslav occupation, farmers from these villages migrated every year for seasonal work into the interior of Hungary, where they were paid with grain to feed their families over the winter. However, this was no longer possible, since crops had become “heavily taxed by the authorities when transported from Hungary to our territory—a fact that people have stressed to the Boundary Commission at all times and in every place—as well as the fact that they lack any transportation links which would facilitate the cheaper import of foodstuffs from the rear.” For this reason, people “publicly shouted out during the demonstrations: ‘Yugoslavia has expensive bread, we want to belong where we earn our bread.’”¹⁵⁰

The district captain similarly recounted to the Provincial Government in Ljubljana that he had approached groups of people demonstrating during the protests in frontier villages and asked them about the causes of their

148 A segment of this subchapter draws on research published in Jernej Kosi, “Yugoslavia Has Nothing. Yugoslavia Has No Bread. But Hungary Gives Us Bread’: Access to Food and (Dis)Loyalty in a ‘Redeemed’ Yugoslav Borderland,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 283–97.

149 ARS, SI AS 60, t. e. Prekmurje IV, V (Prekmurje – razmere v Prekmurju), 896, “Demonstracije v Prekmurju. Komanda V. žandarmerijske brigade – Komandantu celokupne žandarmerije” (30 September 1921).

150 ARS, SI AS 60, t. e. Prekmurje IV, V (Prekmurje – razmere v Prekmurju), 896, “Demonstracije v Prekmurju”. Komanda V. žandarmerijske brigade – Komandantu celokupne žandarmerije (30 September 1921).

dissatisfaction. He received the same answer everywhere, “that they were satisfied with our administration and with the overall situation, only the prospects of survival were to be improved.”¹⁵¹ At the beginning of November, the district captain’s report included even more specific information. The causes of discontent were, on the one hand, poor transportation infrastructure, which in northern Prekmurje had an impact on rising costs, and, on the other hand, customs restrictions, which severely limited the possibilities of a traditional source of alternative income, namely seasonal agricultural work.¹⁵²

The massive outburst of discontent in Prekmurje, expressed in the form of nationalist demonstrations in favor of Hungary, was hence a response by the local rural population to the socioeconomic precariousness of the post-imperial transition. The Hungarian national iconography that accompanied the protests, the slogans shouted by the protesters, and the singing of the Hungarian national anthem were to a large extent merely external expressions of the Prekmurje peasantry’s individual and collective political agency. In other words, although the demonstrations on a rhetorical and visual level represented clear Hungarian nationalist sentiments, the political and social reasons for the mass protests only partially overlapped with the ideological visions, premises, and vocabulary of modern nationalist movements.

Prekmurje’s peasants did not fight in September 1921 for abstract political concepts, nor for the Hungarian national state, the idea of national sovereignty, or the notion of the right to national self-determination. The main source of dissatisfaction was much more prosaic and easier to digest. A field worker, Mihael Fartek, put it vividly and succinctly. After venting his anger to gendarmes in Tvrdkova/Türke (today Trdkova)—“What are you looking for here on our land, bandits? Get lost; guns down!”—Fartek added that “Yugoslavia has nothing, Yugoslavia has no bread. But Hungarians give us bread. We cannot live without the Hungarians. *Éljen a magyar*, down with Serbia.”¹⁵³ In a word, the peasantry’s political mobilization was driven by a demand for radical change in the way food was produced, circulated, and consumed.

151 ARS, SI AS 60, t. e. Prekmurje IV, V (Prekmurje – razmere v Prekmurju), 845, “Okrajno glavarstvo v Murski Soboti. Situacijsko poročilo” (22 September 1921).

152 ARS, SI AS 60, t. e. Prekmurje IV, V (Prekmurje – razmere v Prekmurju), 1504, “Razmejitev v Prekmurju, protidržavne demonstracije” (6 November 1921).

153 PAM, KS, Vr IX 2037/21, Agitation and Preparation, Mihael Fartek, 133.

Pacifying Rural Unrest in a Disputed Borderland: The Land Reform, Rerouting Seasonal Migration, and Infrastructural Projects

The grim situation after the Yugoslav occupation, as shown so far, at first glance suggests that the Yugoslav authorities did not invest much effort in improving the economic and social situation in the region. However, this was not the case. Already from the beginning of the occupation of Prekmurje in August 1919, Yugoslav officials who encountered the local population were conscious of the difficult socioeconomic circumstances in the region. Numerous reports were sent to state administrative centers, detailing the problems and listing proposals that could improve local material conditions. These reports reveal that there was no lack of commitment among politicians and state officials to solving the plight of the local population. Moreover, officials on the ground began to warn the Slovene provincial authorities in Ljubljana shortly after the occupation that the loyalty of the local population and the legitimacy of Yugoslav control over Prekmurje would be directly dependent on the sufficient improvement of material and social conditions.

In addition to efforts to provide basic necessities, starting in spring 1920 the Yugoslav authorities also began to intervene radically in socioeconomic conditions and property relations in Prekmurje. Several months after the occupation, the local peasantry witnessed the initiation of a pivotal nationwide measure to pacify the Yugoslav rural population: land reform. As elsewhere in Central Europe, the promise of a better life became one of the central topics of the Yugoslav political imagination in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. In a country where most of the population made a living from agriculture, the matter of land ownership emerged as a salient political concern. If left unresolved, this issue had the potential to foment anti-Yugoslav, anti-state, and anti-monarchical sentiments. The Yugoslav political elite was acutely aware of this potential and, in the period following the collapse of the dual monarchy, the first promises of land reform were formulated. In January 1919, Regent Alexander Karađorđević released a proclamation that announced the expropriation of landed estates and the distribution of arable land among veterans, poor farmers, and landless peasants. In February 1919, the first law on land reform was promulgated, stipulating that expropriated agricultural land would be granted on a temporary lease until the legislation was sorted out, and that large estates could keep up to a maximum of 200 hectares.¹⁵⁴

154 Questions surrounding land reform in Yugoslavia have been discussed many times and in detail in the existing literature. See especially Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics, and*

The land redistribution policy of Yugoslavia diverged considerably from that of Hungary. After the collapse of Austria-Hungary, both Károlyi's government and the government of the Hungarian Soviet Republic were unable to carry out land reform in a way that would meet the wishes of the poorer peasants. The arable land of large estates was not distributed during Károlyi's period, while the Revolutionary Governing Soviet decided simply to expropriate the large estates and set up state farms or cooperatives.¹⁵⁵ Thanks to the Yugoslav occupation, families of smallholders and agricultural workers in Prekmurje were suddenly given the opportunity to buy arable land. As a result, the peasant population's access to land improved markedly compared to the situation before. By the spring of 1921, for instance, some 5,000 peasants had been granted leases on the land of one large estate alone (the Zichy Estate).¹⁵⁶

In the years that followed, thousands of hectares of farmland changed ownership. In truth, the transfer of property came into effect sluggishly because of the many conflicting interests and the complexity of the process of land division itself. However, the landlords were legally obliged to offer land on lease to the peasants immediately and well in advance of the actual implementation of the land reform. All in all, the initial lease and subsequent sale of arable land transformed access to land and contributed to the improvement of the economic and social conditions in the region. Before the beginning of the agricultural reform in Prekmurje, one could cross the whole region from one end to the other (approximately 90 kilometers) without leaving the estates of only twelve large landowners. A good decade after the introduction of the first decrees, almost ten thousand land seekers held legal property rights to 56% of the farmland that had formerly been part of large estates. Even though a lot of the arable land remained in the hands of large landowners, the land reform enabled many farmers to obtain

Economic Change in Yugoslavia (Stanford University Press, 1955), 344–82; Milivoje Erić, *Agrarna reforma u Jugoslaviji: 1918–1941 god.* (Veselin Masleša, 1958); Bogdan Lekić, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji: 1918–1941* (Udruženje ratnih dobrovoljaca 1912–1918, njihovih potomaka i poštovalaca, 2002); Dietmar Müller, *Bodeneigentum und Nation: Rumänien, Jugoslawien und Polen im europäischen Vergleich, 1918–1948* (Wallstein Verlag, 2020). For Prekmurje, see especially Olga Janša, "Agrarna reforma v Sloveniji med obema vojnama," *Zgodovinski časopis* 18 (1964): 173–89; Žarko Lazarević, *Kmečki dolgovi na Slovenskem: Socialno-ekonomski vidiki zadolženosti slovenskih kmetov 1848–1948* (Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1994); Attila Kovács, "Agrarna reforma in kolonizacija na območju Dolnje Lendave med obema vojnama," *Razprave in gradivo*, no. 53–54 (2007): 68–97.

¹⁵⁵ Romsics, *Hungary*, 94–95, 101, 103–5.

¹⁵⁶ Kokolj, *Prekmurški Slovenci*, 530.

their own plots.¹⁵⁷ In the context of Prekmurje, the Yugoslav land reform was thus a socially radical and at the same time politically opportunistic measure that could strengthen the attachment of an important segment of the regional peasantry to Yugoslavia.

Another important turning point in the state's efforts to improve the socioeconomic situation was the arrival of the Boundary Commission in Prekmurje and the subsequent outbreak of demonstrations. In the aftermath of the demonstrations, the South Slav state sought to address two crucial causes of local discontent and provide impoverished rural households with alternative sources of income, thus compensating them for losses incurred due to the new border. First, the authorities attempted to remedy the disastrous state of transport links to the Yugoslav interior, and, second, to ease the consequences of restrictions on the traditional seasonal migration routes that had been cut off by the newly established border between Yugoslavia and Hungary. With improved transport links, trade would flow more smoothly, simultaneously opening new domestic markets for the sale of Prekmurje's agricultural products and reducing transport costs, which drove up the price and availability of essential industrial products in Prekmurje (clothing, shoes, etc.). At the same time, the state's regulation of seasonal migration and new employment opportunities on the large estates of Yugoslavia would ensure an inflow of money for agricultural laborers who had hitherto migrated annually to work in the interior of Hungary. This part of the population in particular found itself in existential hardship due to the new national border and the Yugoslav government's deliberate prevention of seasonal migration to Hungary. Before the Yugoslav occupation, the peasantry worked as agricultural laborers on the estates of noble landowners in the interior of Hungary. Receiving payment in money and grain upon completion of the harvest, the laborers transported the grain back to Prekmurje to feed their families throughout the winter months. In many cases, the stored food did not last until the next harvest.¹⁵⁸

Even if very slowly and on a limited scale, the Yugoslav state in the early 1920s indeed began to commit money to infrastructural projects that would significantly improve the accessibility of Prekmurje. In this context, one of the main natural obstacles hindering the region's integration with the rest

¹⁵⁷ Kokolj, *Prekmurški Slovenci*, 483–591.

¹⁵⁸ On the prewar history of seasonal and permanent migration, see Olas, "Razvoj in problemi," 179–81; Marietta Boross, "O življenjskih in delovnih razmerah železnožupanijskih slovenskih sezoncev med dvema vojnama," *Etnologija Slovencev na Madžarskem = A Magyarországi szlovének néprajza* 4 (2003): 9–40; Katalin Munda Hirnök, "Sezonstvo," *Etnologija Slovencev na Madžarskem = A Magyarországi szlovének néprajza* 1 (1997): 19–66.

of the Yugoslav state was the Mura river as its natural border. Commercial and passenger transit was only possible via the bridge at Dolnja Lendava (towards the region of Međimurje in modern-day Croatia) or by crossing the half a dozen fords that dotted the length of the Mura. It was not until April 1922 that the first new bridge over the Mura was built, further connecting Prekmurje with Yugoslav Slovenia.¹⁵⁹ The local population also pressed hard for improved rail links. By 1919, there were only two railway lines that operated in Prekmurje, both of which were directed towards the interior of Hungary. With the Treaty of Trianon, they were cut off from their previous network by the creation of the demarcation line. This made the export of agricultural products and the import of industrial and other goods extremely difficult. Finally, in 1921, a plan was adopted to connect these lines to the existing railway network west of Prekmurje, across the Mura. In November 1924, a line was built which linked Murska Sobota to Ljutomer/Luttenberg in Styria via a bridge on the Mura and onwards to the Yugoslav railway network.¹⁶⁰

A further and similarly important state-led intervention concerned seasonal migration and emigration, two traditional means of financial compensation for the economic constraints and demographic coercions that had plagued the Prekmurje peasantry. Seasonal migration and remittances from emigrants who found permanent residence abroad remained two key sources of livelihood between the two world wars. However, Yugoslav rule in Prekmurje radically transformed the migration patterns of thousands of peasant families. Soon after the region's occupation and subsequent annexation, the Yugoslav administration began to severely restrict migration to Hungary.¹⁶¹ By 1925, departures to the Hungarian estates in the vicinity of Lake Balaton slowed dramatically due to unfavorable currency exchange rates and high customs duties. At the same time, the state facilitated and, in some periods, strongly encouraged migration to other places. With the

159 Kokolj, *Prekmurški Slovenci*, 126–27. Until the construction of the first new bridge, the population of Prekmurje had direct access to the rest of Yugoslavia only via bridges to Međimurje, i.e., to the former parts of Zala County between the Drava and Mura rivers, which had been occupied by Croatian volunteer troops at the end of December 1918. On Međimurje in the immediate postwar period see Vladimir Kalšan, “Međimurje 1918/19. i akcija Erminija Jurišića u Prekmurju,” in “*Mi vsi živeti ščemo*”, 104–24.

160 For the history of railways in Prekmurje, see Zoltán Lendvai Kepe, *Poglavja iz zgodovine železnice v Lendavi = Fejezetek Lendva vasúttörténetéből* (Galerija-Muzej, 2020); Kokolj, *Prekmurški Slovenci*, 181–82.

161 In February 1921, the provincial government in Ljubljana issued a decree which opened the possibility to migrate for seasonal work in Hungary only for those given approval by the State Labor Agency. Ribnikar, *Sejní zapisniki*, 2:260.

assistance of the local unit of the State Labor Agency (*Državna posredovalnica za delo*), peasants found work in the fields of Vojvodina (in modern-day Serbia) and Slavonia (in modern-day Croatia), and as masons in the neighboring Slovene parts of Yugoslavia. From the beginning of the 1920s, the agency began to arrange transport to Germany and France as well as assist with permanent emigration to Argentina and Canada.¹⁶²

To sum up, the Yugoslav state apparatus aimed to improve the socio-economic situation of the rural population of Prekmurje through three discrete interventions. The first, land reform, sought to provide landless peasants and smallholders (as well as their families) with the necessary basis for subsistence farming. Second, by developing road and rail transport links, officials and politicians sought to improve the circulation of food. In doing so, the inhabitants of Prekmurje would be given the opportunity to buy cheaper domestic goods and likewise enter the Yugoslav market with their own agrarian products. Finally, by systematically diverting seasonal migration inland, by issuing passports and organizing migration to other European markets and, above all, by tolerating emigration, the state offered the population of Prekmurje the possibility to secure the additional financial resources needed to buy and consume food and other basic goods.

Conclusion

The Teschen region and Prekmurje in the immediate postwar period may be considered two pictures of two different worlds that suffered from scarcity and needed to be fed if central state power wanted to gain recognition. The fulfilment of this task placed the highest demands on the performance of the administration. It was not enough just to send increased supplies, as in the Teschen plebiscite area, or at least to keep food within the region, as in Prekmurje. It was necessary to control the flow of food in areas where there had never been a border before and to learn to use the border to the new state's advantage. In the Teschen region, the basic tactic of the Czechoslovak government in the plebiscite campaign was to maintain its own supply administration over a given territory. Thus, the key to success was not merely to have a monopoly of violence over the territory. What was really at stake was the maintenance of the monopoly of supply. Czechoslovakia was able to ensure excellent supply without any interruptions in the Teschen region. It simply had to. If not, Polish material agitation would have come

162 Olas, "Razvoj in problemi," 184–95; Maučec, "Prenaseljenost," 107–17.

into play, and the Prague government would have lost its main trump card in the plebiscite campaign based on the promise of a prosperous state. In Prekmurje, the changing governments there initially failed to take control of the border and thus stop the outflow of supplies. The lesser presence of the central government and the machinations of corrupt authorities caused the impoverishment of a very fertile region, which Slovene politicians and government officials referred to as Slovenia's granary.

In Prekmurje, unlike in Teschen, central state power was largely absent in the initial period. This was not only due to geographical remoteness and insufficient infrastructure, but also to frequent changes in rulership. At the same time, the change of power made the previous administrative ties, which may have been inherited from the Hungarian administrative system, dysfunctional. Local government representatives usually strove to protect a region from being completely drained of its resources. Indeed, during the war, self-governing communities developed survival strategies based on local protectionism, which consisted of a balancing act between the demands of the center and the needs of their own community. With the disintegration of the supply system, supra-regional solidarity disappeared. Instead, solidarity was limited to one's own county or municipality, which "suffers more than others." However, in the environment of Prekmurje, given the changes in power, there was no one who consistently acted to prevent food exports. This involved a sad paradox, whereby a significant proportion of the population living in a primarily agricultural area that exported significant food surpluses each year found itself below the poverty line and without access to food. It was symptomatic that both local adventurers who usurped power and state officials, civil servants, or soldiers resorted to black market practices such as smuggling. This could serve as a source of personal enrichment, but it could also become one of the survival strategies of the government itself, as had been the case during Hungarian Bolshevik rule. In this case, however, the interpenetration of the state with the networks of the informal economy did not contribute to the legitimacy of the central government. It was not only those who could not participate in this parallel system who fell victim to it, but also the region in general, as this constellation drained it of its resources.

Conversely, however, in the case of a strong state presence, such illegal practices, tolerated and even practiced by governments, could temporarily become a tool to maintain social stability. This is also how the Czechoslovak and Polish governments in the Teschen region used the principles of the gray economy in a covert way during the plebiscite campaign. Indeed, if the governments were to provide supplies there, they would have to

stage a better alternative not only to the conditions on the other side of the demarcation line, but above all to their own black market, and even to collaborate with it directly. In a situation where society's ability to distinguish between legal and criminal behavior had weakened, governments themselves covertly used pragmatic practices that are more common to the black market. If, for example, the principle of rationing is that the state or consumers must not accumulate supplies in one place and thus prevent an even supply, the Polish and Czechoslovak governments in the Teschen region did just the opposite when they accumulated food there. In the Teschen region, both Czechoslovak and Polish officials engaged in overpaying for goods, i.e., on the principle of chain trade. The governments on both sides then organized smuggling routes and tolerated illegal "gopher transport" on their territories, i.e., the self-organized transport of large quantities of food between districts—if it was destined for plebiscite areas. Thus, through these practices, governments in contested areas again risked one of the causes of the breakdown of social consensus during the war, when different regions tried in different ways to keep as much food as possible within their borders, and when one region could seemingly and in fact live at the expense of another. Paradoxically, the impact of food shortages on society in both Prekmurje and Teschen was to be reduced by methods that were the very cause of the shortages.

As in other parts of the book, it is possible here to trace in the contested and ethnically indifferent areas the role played by the cultures of "victory" or "national liberation" in the question of trust and loyalty to the state. The findings here are rather negative. In Prekmurje, a victorious Yugoslavia competed with a defeated Hungary. Yugoslav troops occupied Prekmurje in August 1919. However, the new state powers gradually found out, also through public expressions of dissatisfaction, that the vague promises of the possibilities of a victorious state were not enough. Not to mention that the border demarcation process in Prekmurje was not formally completed until 1924, which contributed to the overproduction of competing narratives. As this chapter has shown, nationalist visions only partially coincided with the social reasons for the mass protests. The newly influential political actors in Yugoslavia were shaken by the scenes in Prekmurje, where a significant number of Slavophones, due to a lack of food, took part in protests waving Hungarian flags. They therefore had to propose new approaches not only to the distribution of food products, but also to the distribution of land itself. The state therefore played a paternalistic role as the protector of popular interests, which would achieve justice and guarantee economic opportunities through the purification of the community. The campaign

for the new state was primarily about competing for the rural voter with an understandable social issue: land reform, an agenda in which the region was to participate and from which it was to benefit. Like the Teschen region, where two victorious states competed, state propaganda in Prekmurje was built on a social ethos, which was one of the legacies of the war. To sum up, the Teschen region and Prekmurje both reveal that it was the level of success in the pragmatic fulfilment of essential material needs—access to food, land, and stable livelihoods—that most decisively shaped popular loyalties and determined the legitimacy of emerging political entities in the postwar landscape. The promise of satisfactory material security thus represented a decisive factor that solidified lasting social and national allegiances within contested territories.

About the Authors

Pavel Horák is a researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences, focusing on interwar Czechoslovakia and political exile in the twentieth century. He has published numerous studies on political culture and information management.

Jernej Kosi is an Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Ljubljana. He published a monograph on the emergence of Slovene nationalism and several articles and book chapters on nationalism, First World War refugees, and post-imperial transitions and transformations on the territory of present-day Slovenia.

Epilogue

Václav Šmidrkal, Rok Stergar, Maja Godina Golija, Dagmar Hájková, Pavel Horák, and Jernej Kosi

Abstract: The Epilogue synthesizes the main findings of *Nourishing Victory* and underscores the significance of the food supply crisis during and after the First World War in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia. Largely forgotten and, to some extent, overshadowed by the master narrative of national liberation, this experience was central for contemporaries, and it offers historians a productive analytical lens on the erosion and reconstitution of social order and political legitimacy. The Epilogue further broadens the scope of the volume by incorporating additional reflections on the role of food, nutrition, and the state in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia during the early 1920s.

Keywords: Austria-Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, food shortages, state collapse, state building

The people of post-Habsburg Central Europe who lived through the reconstruction after the Second World War often reminisce about the packages that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) distributed after the war. One author of this book, for instance, frequently heard anecdotes about the chocolate they contained and the peculiar taste of the powdered eggs that the local population somewhat mischievously dubbed *Trumanova jajca* after US President Harry S. Truman.¹ He also found one of the UNRRA cardboard boxes in a basement of the apartment he moved into some twenty years ago. In short, the scarcity after the Second World

¹ The Slovene phrase *Trumanova jajca* can mean either Truman's eggs or Truman's balls. See Maja Godina Golija, "Slovene Food Consumption in the Twentieth Century – From Self-Sufficiency to Mass Consumerism," in *The Rise of Obesity in Europe: A Twentieth-Century Food History*, ed. Derek J. Oddy and Peter J. Atkins (Routledge, 2009), 49.

War and the foreign relief that helped alleviate it are part of the regional collective memoryscapes.

On the other hand, the severe shortages during and after the First World War and the attempts to prevent and stop these seem to have been mostly forgotten in Slovenia and the Czech Republic. To a large extent, this is due to their remoteness in time. After all, the people who lived through those times are no longer alive. However, the memory of these events has also been suppressed by a narrative of national liberation that is still dominant, especially in the Czech Republic, where the 2018 centenary of the establishment of Czechoslovakia was commemorated on a large scale. Since the collapse of the “second” Yugoslavia in 1991, the establishment of the “first” South Slav state is no longer celebrated in Slovenia, and the event does not have such an overwhelmingly positive connotation. However, the end of the Habsburg Empire and the establishment of the “first Slovene government” still dominate the public perception of the period.

As we have argued in the introduction to this volume, this assessment largely holds true for the relevant historiography as well. While historians have not overlooked the wartime and postwar shortages and have even addressed them in some recent synthetic works, they have not exactly been the focus of their attention. Yet, as this book and some other recent scholarly works have attempted to show, the dimensions of scarcity and its effects were far from negligible. It was a crisis of immense proportions that could only be resolved with the utmost effort exerted by local, regional, national, and international actors. It was a crisis that almost everyone experienced in one way or another. It affected politics and everyday life. It caused severe suffering and even death. In fact, there is even some exciting research indicating that exposure to malnutrition and starvation can influence the human epigenome and have transgenerational effects.² If there really is “a heritable memory of starvation/hunger” in humans, as this research suggests, then some Central Europeans are still living with the consequences of the war time and postwar food shortages.

The lack of foodstuffs was an undeniable accompanying factor in the breakdown and reconstitution of social order in both the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia during the First World War and the initial postwar years. The gradual implementation of the Habsburg state rationing system was a step intended to bring about economic rationalization during the war and

2 For a recent summary of the relevant literature, see Patricia González-Rodríguez, Jens Füllgrabe, and Bertrand Joseph, “The Hunger Strikes Back: An Epigenetic Memory for Autophagy,” *Cell Death & Differentiation* 30, no. 6 (2023): 1404–15.

to guarantee necessary nutrition to every citizen in the hinterland. This unprecedented state intervention in the field of production, distribution, and consumption of foodstuffs did not necessarily have to end in collapse. For example, the food rationing system implemented in the Nazi-occupied Bohemian Lands during the Second World War faced similar challenges. But through a robust administrative system and strict (and often brutal) law enforcement, it was largely able to prevent starvation, food riots, and massive fraud.³ At the same time, this had tragic consequences, because such an efficient system made it possible to deliberately use starvation as a weapon against people considered enemies by the Nazi regime.⁴ The Habsburg Monarchy, however, was not prepared to wage a long-term war of attrition and to manage this new area of public policy. While its agricultural production had largely made the empire self-sufficient before the war, the stark decrease in production during the war, the lack of cooperation between both halves of the empire, and problems with distribution caused a crisis that neither the political nor the administrative system were equipped to deal with.

Our book has mapped out the specific chronology and social geography of the lack of food in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia during and after the First World War. The supplies worsened not only linearly, but also in the traditional annual cycles that depend on the stages of the agricultural year. Following this fluctuation, the situation was not the worst at the time of state overthrows in October 1918, shortly after the new harvest, but rather in the first half of 1918. The Czech organizers of the coup d'état were aware of that: their task was to subvert the state food supply system by keeping the newly harvested crops within Czech territory, thereby artificially decreasing the already low state food rations. After the new states were proclaimed, the food supply crisis did not suddenly end precisely because there were other things that mattered more than nationalist politics when it came to food supply. Besides the annual cycles, it was overall economic conditions, the devalued currency, the state of transport networks, the availability of agricultural workers, etc., that framed the crisis. That is why the crisis continued for some more years as production only slowly returned to pre-war

3 Jan Vondráček, *Herrschaft, Verwaltung und Alltag im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren: Alltägliches Wirtschaften im politischen Bezirk Kladno 1939–1945* (Herder-Institut, 2021). See also Martin Franc, *Dějiny výživy a stravování v českých zemích 1945–1970* (Academia, 2024), 129–36.

4 Tatjana Tönsmeier, "Supply Situations: National Socialist Policies of Exploitation and Economies of Shortage in Occupied Societies During World War II," in *Coping with Hunger and Shortage under German Occupation in World War II*, ed. Tatjana Tönsmeier, Peter Haslinger, and Agnes Laba (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3–23.

levels and the transport and distribution networks were reconstructed. If we take the abolition of food rationing and the presence of the American Relief Administration as indicators, we can see that scarcity became manageable only in 1921–22. In Slovenia, the gradual abolition of the food rationing system began as early as February 1919, while in the Bohemian Lands it remained largely in force for more than two years, until the middle of 1921. The operations of the ARA, on the other hand, lasted until 1922 and 1921, respectively.

The lack of foodstuffs also entailed a specific social geography. In addition to larger agricultural producers, for whom the problem was not the procurement of food but of industrial products, food was more accessible to those who had social capital and useful connections or various types of capital that they could exchange for food. This was not necessarily money, which lost value anyway due to inflation, but anything that could be bartered, such as jewelry, furniture, clothing, furs, or firewood and coal. Nor is it absolutely true that the worst food situation in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia was in urbanized areas such as Prague or Ljubljana/Laibach. On the contrary, data pertaining to the incidence of various diseases related to malnourishment, especially hunger edema from 1917 and 1918, however incomplete, shows high figures in the peripheral border regions with a higher population density, low agricultural production, and individual diets low in protein. These were, for instance, western and northern Bohemia, or the eastern Adriatic coast; in other words, areas with poor soil quality that were inhabited by a large number of rural and industrial wage workers.

In addition to wartime statistics, more sophisticated methods of measuring malnutrition, such as the anthropometric Pelidisi and Sacratama indices used by foreign food aid providers to measure the impact of their activities, roughly confirm this geographic distribution of the most affected areas. These data also suggest that there were other deprived areas within the newly formed states, such as northern and central Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia in Czechoslovakia, or Dalmatia and parts of Bosnia in Yugoslavia.⁵ At the same time, we must remember that hunger and satiety were close neighbors. There were towns and villages in western and northern Bohemia where some people were dying of hunger while others were enjoying delicacies in local restaurants or at home as if there were no shortages. During and after the war, access to food often depended more on social class than on anything else. In Slovenia, for instance, the urban and rural poor and

5 For Czechoslovakia, see e.g., *Československá péče o dítě* (Th. Venta, 1920), 120–29, for Yugoslavia, *Final Report of the Work in Kingdom S.H.S.* (American Relief Administration, 1920), 10–12.

even some officials and other state employees struggled to put enough food on the table in the 1920s because inflation remained a problem until about 1925. While significant parts of the agricultural sector profited from the high demand and the rising prices, for others the scarcity seemed endless. As in other times, access to food also depended on gender and age. Usually, although certainly not always, men of working age were better fed than children, women, and the elderly.

The gradual atomization of society was one of the major consequences of the lack of foodstuffs. Not only individuals and households but also factories, towns, and districts battled over rations and items of food on the black market. Agriculturally self-sufficient areas and individuals tried to conceal at least some of their food from the state for their own consumption or for resale on the black market, while others were increasingly desperate in their effort to purchase foodstuffs. As Lars T. Lih pointed out in the case of Russia, it was the self-reliance of smaller communities that was rational and anarchic at the same time.⁶ Through cooperation in food procurement across political, ethnic, and class lines, smaller communities improved food supply at the local level and slowed down the Hobbesian “war of all against all.” Where this did not occur (or ceased to occur), scarcity could also lead to a total collapse of intercommunal relations that occasionally had deadly consequences.⁷ Furthermore, local cooperation was only possible by closing the community off from its neighbors on the one hand, and by means of state interventions on the other. That necessarily exacerbated the situation in other localities and in the state as a whole. Nevertheless, Habsburg Austria itself decided to establish self-sufficient closed economic areas such as “West Bohemia” in 1918. The goal was to create a smaller region that would be more easily manageable than the entire crownland and even the whole state.

While both the state apparatus as the executive power and imperial patriotism as a moral compass were increasingly unable to overcome this growing antagonism during the war, nationalist actors were, to some extent, able to bring together the various segments of the food supply chain in the name of national solidarity. In the Czech case, this development is evidenced by the establishment and work of the Czech Heart but also the system of subversive economic councils established in 1918. In Slovenia, on the contrary, although a plan was set up to establish a Slovene Heart after the Czech example, this never came to fruition. For one, the newly

6 Lars T. Lih, *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914–1921* (University of California Press, 1990).

7 Jan Rybak, “A Death in Kraków and the End of an Empire,” *European Journal of Jewish Studies* (2025), pre-print, 1–24.

established parallel Slovene institutions were not as sophisticated and all-encompassing as their Czech counterparts. Furthermore, most Slovene leaders were convinced that Austria-Hungary would survive another winter and that they still had time to organize before it would fall apart. However, the idea that national solidarity should trump all other things, embodied in calls for peasants to help “their own,” and that this alone would solve pressing problems, was not absent from Slovene nationalist discourse.

Like all other successor states, the newly proclaimed Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia faced the problem of weakened sovereignty due to disputed state borders and a moral crisis that decomposed institutions and disintegrated society. The new power centers in Prague and Ljubljana were more successful in mobilizing their armed forces and controlling the food supply system than their adversaries in Vienna, Liberec/Reichenberg, or Graz in disputes over the borderland territories with German Austria. On the one hand, this had to do with the fragmentation of the once unified economic space, where Prague and Ljubljana took advantage of having agricultural regions and food stocks under their control. On the other hand, the national euphoria of victory and the promises of a brighter future made by both national politicians and the Entente powers helped to maintain morale and to bear the continuing hardships somewhat better than in the defeated parts of the former monarchy. The so-called victorious states enjoyed several other advantages over the defeated ones. The Allied supplies were definitely an important bonus, but even in the victorious countries it took several months for these to arrive after independence was declared and the war ended. Consequently, the shortages did not miraculously end, and people had to wait for a real improvement. Austria and Hungary, on the other hand, experienced the worst supply crisis after the breakup of the monarchy and the armistice as they were still under the blockade and denied Allied supplies for a certain time.

The material and moral benefits that came with the status of a victorious state were not without their limits, however, as the unrest that did not cease at the end of October 1918 clearly shows. Significant parts of the new states' population did not subscribe to the so-called culture of victory, while unrealistic promises had the potential to backfire when the population realized that they would not be fulfilled. The case of southern Carinthia, a disputed region on the Austrian-Yugoslav border, where a plebiscite was held in October 1920, is a good example of this. Not only the German-speaking inhabitants of the region, but also many Slovene speakers did not identify with the supposedly victorious South Slav state, while food supply was one of the central problems of the Yugoslav administration in the occupied

region throughout 1919 and 1920. In the end, Yugoslavia lost the plebiscite as a large part of the Slovene-speaking majority in the disputed territory voted for Austria. While food shortages had not been the only reason for this decision, which shocked Slovene nationalists, it was certainly one of them. In fact, it was not so much the lack of food, which was probably a bigger problem in Austria, but a sense that the government was not doing its job, that it had not delivered on its promises, and that the people were not being treated fairly.⁸

Food was a bargaining chip in these border conflicts that both sides weaponized against each other, both in the material sense and in terms of propaganda. Food blockades as well as promises of better food supply appeared in various places and at different levels of governance during the disintegration of the empire and delimitation of new state borders. Mutual accusations of “starvation” were also widespread, functioning as a political language rather than a description of reality. When Czechs accused Vienna of starvation in the fall of 1918, it was primarily an effective mobilizing tool to cut off Czech agriculture from the rest of the monarchy. When Bohemian-German politicians accused Prague of the same thing a few weeks later, it was to dramatize Prague’s claim to food supply sovereignty over the whole of Bohemia, preventing the creation of “German Bohemia.”

In addition, in long disputed areas such as Teschen Silesia or Prekmurje, where plebiscites were considered as a solution, the specific needs, experiences, and ideas of the local population clashed with the claims of the central state to control the territory. Despite significant political and socio-economic differences, the two regions were very similar in two respects. First, it was often local leaders who could play a protective role in these regions and seek advantages when balancing between the interests of central governments and their own. In the Teschen region, it was the Slunzak autonomist movement that propagated their non-national political vision for the region and was ready to represent the locals to the new central government. In Prekmurje, the retired priest Jožef Klekl emerged as a sort of people’s tribune. Klekl, as a self-proclaimed representative and guardian of local interests, especially of the peasant population, first became the interlocutor of the Hungarian government and later the informal leader of the regional branch of the most powerful Slovene interwar-period party—the Slovene People’s Party. Secondly, though a plebiscite remained a mere possibility in Prekmurje, it did have an impact on state policies and people’s behavior. The importance

8 Philipp Jernej, “Osvoboditelji ali okupatorji: Jugoslovanska uprava na Koroškem 1918–1920,” in *Koroški plebiscit – 100 let kasneje*, ed. Danijel Grafenauer (Slovenska matica, 2021), 77–79.

of the plebiscite was all the more prominent in the Teschen region. In the run-up to the planned plebiscite, people living in this territory received close attention from both Prague and Warsaw. Here, central governments pandered to the locals not only through promises and propaganda but also by providing extra food rations or abolishing food requisitions. Even more so, state authorities occasionally turned a blind eye to the infringement of food supply laws through actions such as hoarding supplies, overpaying for goods, or smuggling across the demarcation line. In Prekmurje, however, where every effort was made to crack down on smuggling, it was especially the issue of land reform that the central government hoped would bind the population to Yugoslavia.

New states faced challenges in undisputed territories as well. A lack of foodstuffs led to a multifaceted crisis, the causes and consequences of which were not solely of an economic and political nature but affected society as a whole. It also involved a moral crisis, where the low efficiency of the state food supply system and the collective and individual survival strategies, including violent self-help, undermined the state and its authority. Because the existing legal system remained in place and many of the same people continued working in the same offices as during the war, it was difficult to claim that a revolution had happened, and that the moral economy of food supply had been restored. Strengthening respect for the law that had lost much of its capacity to distinguish between the legal and the criminal remained a challenge. That is why the political class found it necessary to adopt specific measures to strengthen the power and legitimacy of the state. This involved the implementation of new forms of democratic participation in food administration and the prosecution of food profiteering or smuggling. However, these were temporary institutions typically designed to support, not replace, the inherited imperial institutions.

All the while, the aforementioned problems became ever less pressing as supply steadily improved. Foreign supplies from the US, but also from the UK, France, or Switzerland could not replace domestic production, which remained the main source of food throughout the post-1918 period. However, both commercial and charitable deliveries from abroad helped improve the nutritional situation and reduce social tensions. They also served to establish international contacts and strengthen the position and reputation of the new states. The network of contacts with the Entente leaders that the Czechoslovak resistance leaders in exile had established during the war was an important asset that the political representatives of Czechoslovakia could subsequently expand on as they instrumentalized it for the promotion of the "victorious" state. Emphasizing shared democratic

values and a rejection of autocracy, they created virtual bonds between countries that were otherwise distant in many ways. In this respect, Czech politicians had more potential for political lobbying than Slovene leaders, who stood in the shadow of the Serbian political elite.

For the United States and fellow victorious powers, food supplies were not just a matter of selfless humanitarian aid or profit-seeking commercial interest. By providing food, these states also pursued a political goal to stabilize the new governments of Central Europe. American food was used as leverage against mutual extortion between successor states, such as Czechoslovakia and Austria, and was intended to stabilize the region to prevent the spread of Bolshevism. However, with the improvement of the situation and the US turning towards isolationism in the 1920s, major US aid providers left the region. Among the few organizations that continued their work was the Rockefeller Foundation that then turned its attention to social reform and public health in particular. This transition from relief to welfare, as Sara Silverstein has called it, was again seen as means to stabilize the successor states and prevent the resurgence of “German militarism” alongside the spread of communism.⁹ The consequences of insufficient nutrition, which manifested as physical weakness, higher morbidity and mortality, were thus subsumed in the more general notion of public health, and the greater role of the state in this area.

Czechoslovakia was the first country in the region that started collaborating with the Rockefeller Foundation. Its representatives arrived as early as the summer of 1920. Further experts soon followed. They developed a scheme that included a national institute of public health focused on preventative medicine with regional branches and a network of primary and secondary health centers. The scheme was supposed to be employed in Czechoslovakia and serve as a blueprint for the entire region. Instead of the originally planned Institute of Human Nutrition focusing solely on food, in 1925, the Czechoslovak government established the State Institute of Health with a much broader program thanks to sizable financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation. When a representative of the Foundation came to Yugoslavia in 1924, he was impressed by the work that had already been started in 1919. Led by the brilliant Andrija Štampar, director of public health, the Yugoslav government began the establishment of a health service

9 Sara Silverstein, “Reinventing International Health in East Central Europe: The League of Nations, State Sovereignty, and Universal Health,” in *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, ed. Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley (Oxford University Press, 2020), 71–98.

that was remarkably similar to the model that the Rockefeller Foundation helped develop in Czechoslovakia. The driving principle was that healthcare should be accessible to all and that a network of primary health centers and children's clinics should be established. Additionally, several state and regional public health institutes and schools were founded. Impressed by Štampar's work, the Foundation funded his development of a sophisticated rural network of health centers and stations in 1924. This then became a blueprint not just for other countries in Eastern and Southern Europe but also for many countries outside of Europe following its adoption by the League of Nations.¹⁰

While the proponents of social medicine were genuinely interested in improving the lives of the newly established states' citizens, a degree of paternalism and even eugenic ideas were often present in their thinking. Unsurprisingly, efforts to reform human nutrition, to make it healthier, emerged in such a setting. While a few years earlier hunger and malnutrition were the most serious problems, the health hazards of an unbalanced diet and excessive consumption quickly became the focus of attention. Experts such as Ladislav Prokop Procházka, a doctor and former Minister of Healthcare (1920–21) and People's Supply (1921), was among those who sounded the alarm in Czechoslovakia. In an article published in 1924, Procházka pointed out that Czech cuisine was characterized by overeating, with oversized portions of mostly flour-based dishes and an excessive consumption of beer.¹¹

All the while, changing popular eating habits, which blissfully returned to pre-war patterns as food became more affordable, proved difficult. Opponents of such "top-down" modernization argued for the "natural" character of local cuisine and pointed to the absurdity of wartime experiences with expert interventions of whatever provenance. Thus, alluding to the war, *rationalized* food was easily disqualified as wartime *rationed* food. This conflict between established dietary stereotypes and popular common sense on the one hand and rationalization based on scientific dietetic expertise on the other was part of the lessons learned from the food supply crisis. The national way out of the food crisis was both to modernize the infrastructure by new health care policies and to satisfy individual tastes in a very traditional way.

10 Paul Weindling, "Public Health and Political Stabilisation: The Rockefeller Foundation in Central and Eastern Europe between the Two World Wars," *Minerva* 31, no. 3 (1993): 253–67; Sara Silverstein, "The Periphery Is the Centre: Some Macedonian Origins of Social Medicine and Internationalism," *Contemporary European History* 28, no. 2 (2019): 220–33.

11 Ladislav P. Procházka, "O české kuchyni," *Přítomnost*, no. 40 (1924): 628–29.

Foreign food aid actors also learned that feeding the malnourished was easier than changing long-established eating habits. While they were officially met with gratitude, their efforts did not take deeper root in society. Such was the experience of Lady Muriel Paget's mission in northwestern Slovakia, near the town of Čadca/Csaca/Czadca. The locals mainly grew potatoes, cabbage, and oats in their fields. Unlike in Britain, where the highly nutritious oats were commonly found in meals, the Slovaks only used them to feed cattle as did most of continental Europe. Nevertheless, the ambitious and naïve Lady Paget had oats milled into flakes in Britain and taught the local housewives how to cook porridge with them. When the mission was over, however, there were no mills to make flakes, and the locals reverted to old habits; oats porridge did not become a part of their everyday diet.¹²

In Czechoslovakia, it was surplus production that became an issue, as did the pressure from cheaper foreign competition from the countries of Southeastern Europe that pushed down prices. The agrarian-industrial economy of interwar Czechoslovakia required the state to seek a balance between the entitlement of producers to set competitive purchase prices of agricultural products and that of consumers to demand affordable prices of foodstuffs. The government needed to balance the interests of the agrarian sector to protect domestic production and of the industrial sector that had a strong export focus. The main Yugoslav export, on the other hand, were agricultural products, mainly grain. The fertile regions that Slovene nationalists were fantasizing about in the fall of 1918 did in fact produce significant surpluses that were largely exported, especially after export was entirely liberalized in 1923. As there was little competition on European markets, the prices were high and rising, which was also happening on the domestic market, and peasants with larger estates were doing very well at least until mid-1920s. Because this was achieved rather effortlessly, various reform plans were quickly forgotten and the structural problems of the countryside continued to be ignored. While the land reform was enacted, its goals were primarily political as the distribution aimed to pacify the restless peasants and also change the ethnic composition of some regions.¹³

12 Ladislav Prokop Procházka, *Cestou za zdravím* (Lékařské knihkupectví a nakladatelství Mladé generace lékařů, 1931), 69.

13 Ana Kladnik, "Faithful Guardians of the National and State Border': Refugees, Land Reform, and Colonization in the Post-1918 Central European Borderlands," *Nationalities Papers* 53, no. 6 (2025): 1310–1331. For similar efforts in Czechoslovakia, see Daniel Miller, "Colonizing the Hungarian and German Border Areas During the Czechoslovak Land Reform, 1918–1938," *Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003): 303–17.

However, more ambitious plans to modernize the agricultural sector and the countryside were put to the side.

Milko Brezigar, an editor with the Viennese paper *Reichspost* and a member of the so-called Slovene *maffie*, a group that secretly collaborated with the anti-Habsburg émigré Yugoslav Committee, published an ambitious plan to modernize the Slovene economy in the new nation-state as early as September 1918. It included radical modernization of the agricultural sector, and Brezigar predicted that, in the new state, “[t]he farmer will not be forced to hand over his produce but will have to change the way he has been farming for the sake of the nation. The nation will require him to extract from the soil all the gifts that are hidden in it. This can only be achieved by intensive and rational cultivation.”¹⁴ Such plans, however, were supplanted by postwar inflationary growth on the one hand and the increasingly efficient use of force to police the countryside on the other. Consequently, most Yugoslav peasants continued to live in dire conditions, with malnutrition and hunger afflicting a significant number of the rural poor in the interwar years.¹⁵

By the mid-1920s, the food supply crisis had subsided across much of Europe and putting enough food on the table once again became a problem only for the economically disadvantaged parts of the population. However, in the defeated states, scarcity was not forgotten, and this was not only because it had taken place in a somewhat harsher form. Many blamed it on the Entente blockade and were convinced that the shortages were one of the main reasons for the collapse of the home front and the defeat. Consequently, Germany and Austria sought to boost their agricultural self-sufficiency by modernizing the agricultural sector, thus strengthening their own production, and by promoting the so-called settlement movement, while the trauma of starvation continued to feature in political debates and popular culture.¹⁶ Such developments were not limited to defeated states

14 Milko Brezigar, *Osnutek slovenskega narodnega gospodarstva* (Omladina, 1918), 16.

15 Žarko Lazarević, *Kmečki dolgovi na Slovenskem: Socialno-ekonomski vidiki zadolženosti slovenskih kmetov 1848–1948* (Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1994), 33–41; Žarko Lazarević, “Peasants, Land, and Work: Structures of Peasant Economy in Slovenia in the Interwar Period,” in *Changing Living Spaces: Subsistence and Sustenance in Eurasian Economies from Early Modern Times to the Present*, ed. Satoshi Murayama, Žarko Lazarević, and Aleksander Panjek (University of Primorska Press, 2025), 55–75.

16 Carolyn D. Taratko, “Autarky from the Ground Up: Settlement and Agricultural Independence in Weimar Germany,” *The American Historical Review* 128, no. 2 (2023): 842–61; Tara Zahra, “Anti-Globalism and the Collapse of Austria,” *The American Historical Review* 128, no. 2 (2023): 862–80. See also Mary Elisabeth Cox and Anne van Mourik, “‘I Haven’t Eaten so Well for so Long!’: Representations of the Allied Blockade of Germany in German Textbooks and Film,

of the First World War. Only a few years after the Fascists came to power in victorious Italy, their move towards autarky began, and the opening salvo was the so-called Battle for Grain, which began in 1925. The attempt to achieve self-sufficiency was marked by the settlement of previously uninhabitable land and by scientific endeavors, such as introducing new strains of wheat.¹⁷

In Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, on the other hand, shortages started fading into oblivion and food supply ceased to be a pressing political issue. Although the political narrative of national liberation, which Habsburg Austria sought to suppress through “blood, violence, and starvation,” did not disappear, the crisis was also explained away as a consequence of the war and the mismanagement of the Habsburg administration. Increasingly, it was seen as an aberration, and attention was turned towards the promising future guaranteed by the advantageous peace order. In places with deeper wounds, such as Prostějov/Proßnitz, where people involved in “hunger riots” were shot dead on 26 April 1917, these events were not forgotten, but the victorious perspective helped redirect attention from the ominous past to a better future. In 1923, on the sixth anniversary of the tragedy, the local newspaper expressed the opinion that the commemoration of “our fallen fighters” was not intended to evoke the “song of revenge” but the “song of a new, better life.”¹⁸

Indeed, the material improvement in daily life was the proof of the pudding, and without providing satisfactory nourishment for bodies, victory could hardly bring popular satisfaction. At the same time, victory also nourished at least some souls in the new states and healed potentially traumatic memories. Moreover, the political stabilization of the new states and the suppression of radical alternatives—the outlawing of the Communist Party in Yugoslavia, for instance—minimized the potential for political narratives that could build on the wartime and postwar crisis and instrumentalize still-existing scarcity and inequality. After all, as our book has shown, what often mattered more than scarcity itself were the many ways in which it was presented and understood.

1914–32,” in *The Politics of Famine in European History and Memory*, ed. Ingrid de Zwarte and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco (Routledge, 2025), 165–82.

17 Tara Zahra, *Against the World: Anti-globalism and Mass Politics between the World Wars* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2023), 208–21.

18 *Nový den*, 26 April 1923, 3.

About the Authors

Václav Šmidrkal is a researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences and an Assistant Professor at Charles University in Prague. His research focuses on postwar transitions, war veterans, and military propaganda in twentieth-century Central Europe.

Rok Stergar is Professor in Modern History at the University of Ljubljana and a historian of the Habsburg Empire, the First World War, and of nationalism. He is the author of two books and numerous articles on nationalisms in the Habsburg Empire, the First World War, and post-imperial transitions.

Maja Godina Golija is Professor in European Ethnology at the University of Maribor and Scientific Councilor at the Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). She is the author of six books and numerous articles on food culture, the history of everyday life, and urban culture in Slovenia.

Dagmar Hájková is a senior researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archive of the Czech Academy of Sciences. She specializes in modern Czech history within the broader Central European context. She is the author and editor of several books and numerous articles on the First World War and interwar Czechoslovakia.

Pavel Horák is a researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences, focusing on interwar Czechoslovakia and political exile in the twentieth century. He has published numerous studies on political culture and information management.

Jernej Kosi is an Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Ljubljana. He published a monograph on the emergence of Slovene nationalism and several articles and book chapters on nationalism, First World War refugees, and post-imperial transitions and transformations on the territory of present-day Slovenia.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Austria

Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna (ÖStA), Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA)
Ministerium des Innern, 1848–1918
Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR)
Bundeskanzleramt/Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, 1918–38
Deutschböhmisches Landesregierung, 1918–19
Volksernährungsamt, 1916–27

Czechia

Archiv Kanceláře presidenta republiky, Prague (AKPR)
Kancelář prezidenta republiky
Archiv města Plzně (AM Plzeň)
Národní výbor Plzeň, 1918–19
Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí (AMZV)
III. sekce MZV – zpravodajská, 1918–39
Politické zprávy velvyslanectví Washington
Těšínsko, 1917–25
Úřad subdelegáta ČSR při Mezinárodní plebiscitní subkomisi pro Oravu a Spiš,
1920–21
Archiv Národního muzea, Prague (ANM)
Sum Antonín, 1877–1947
Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, Prague, Archiv Ústavu T. G. Masaryka
Masaryk Garrigue Tomáš
Národní archiv, Prague (NA)
České místodržitelství Praha – osobní kancelář místodržitele Maxmiliána
Coudenhove, 1915–18
Komise pro plebiscit na Těšínsku, 1919–20
Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu, 1918–33
Ministerstvo vnitra – stará registratura, 1918–44
Ministerstvo sociální péče, 1918–38
Předsednictvo ministerské rady, 1918–45
Státní oblastní archiv v Praze (SOA Prague)
Krajský soud trestní Praha, 1850–1949
Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň, oddělení správy fondů a sbírek Český Krumlov
(SOA Třeboň-ČK)
Schwarzenberská ústřední kancelář

Státní okresní archiv Benešov (SOkA Benešov)

České srdce, 1917–19

Státní okresní archiv Česká Lípa

Archiv obce Pavlovice, 1602–1945

Státní okresní archiv Děčín (SOkA Děčín)

Hooverova akce Varnsdorf, 1919–23

Státní okresní archiv Havlíčkův Brod (SOkA Havlíčkův Brod)

Československé péče o dítě – okresní komitét v Ledči nad Sázavou, 1919–20

Státní okresní archiv Jindřichův Hradec (SOkA Jindřichův Hradec)

Místní komitét péče o dítě Lomnice nad Lužnicí, 1919–20

Státní okresní archiv Liberec (SOkA Liberec)

Archiv města Liberec, 1560–1945

Archiv města Chrastava, 1565–1945

Státní okresní archiv Olomouc (SOkA Olomouc)

Okresní úřad Litovel, 1850–1945

Státní okresní archiv Písek (SOkA Písek)

Československá péče o dítě Protivín, 1919–20

Sbírka 14. říjen 1918, 1916–29

Státní okresní archiv Prostějov

Archiv města Prostějov, 1393–1945

Národní výbor Prostějov (1918), 1918–20

Státní okresní archiv Rokycany (SOkA Rokycany)

Československá péče o dítě okresní komitét Rokycany, 1919–25

Státní okresní archiv Strakonice (SOkA Strakonice)

Péče o dítě – místní výbor Bavorov, 1919

Státní okresní archiv Svitavy se sídlem v Litomyšli

Okresní péče o mládež Litomyšl, 1915–47

Vojenský ústřední archiv-Vojenský historický archiv (VÚA-VHA)

9. sborové velitelství, 1883–1918

České národní sdružení, Fond Alice Masarykové

Hlavní štáb – operační oddělení, 1919–39

Krajanské spolky v Americe – ostatní spolky

Slovácká brigáda, 1918–19

Zemský archiv v Opavě (ZAO)

Koždoň Josef, 1897–1948

Policejní ředitelství Moravská Ostrava, 1854–1945

Zemská vyživovací komise Opava, 1914–28

Zemský hospodářský úřad Opava, 1917–28

Zemský archiv v Opavě, pobočka Olomouc

Lichevní soud Olomouc, 1919–24

Poland

Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw (AAN)

Ministerstwo Aprowizacji w Warszawie, 1917–21

Slovakia

Slovenský národný archív, Bratislava (SNA)

Minister Československej republiky s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska, 1918–27

Slovenská liga v Amerike, 1906–97

Slovenia

Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Ljubljana (ARS)

Okrajno glavarstvo Radovljica (1819–1941)

Pokrajinska uprava za Slovenijo, Oddelek za notranje zadeve (1919–24)

Pokrajinska uprava za Slovenijo, Predsedstvo (1918–1924)

Arhiv župnije Dragatuš

Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana (NUK)

Rokopisna zbirka

Pokrajinska in študijska knjižnica Murska Sobota (PIŠKMS)

Sresko načelstvo Murska Sobota (1917–41)

Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor (PAM)

Državna I. dekliška meščanska šola Maribor (1886–1944)

Mestna občina Maribor (1528–1941)

Kazenski spisi

Okrožno sodišče Maribor 1898–1941

Osnovna šola Franceta Prešerna Maribor (1838–2013)

Zbirka lepakov, letakov in plakatov (1790–2013)

Zbirka računov (19. st.–20. st.)

Zveza slovenskih štajerskih učiteljev in učiteljic (1903–22)

Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana, enota za Kranj (ZAL KRA)

Občina Kranj

Občina Tržič (1850–1947)

United Kingdom

Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham

Save the Children Fund Archive

Leeds University Library, Special Collections

Lady Muriel Paget Papers

University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies (UCL SSEES)

Seton-Watson Papers

United States

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives, New York City, NY

Records of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee of the years 1919–21

Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford, CA

American Relief Administration European Operational Records

Smith College Special Collections, Northampton, MA

Sophia Smith Collection of Woman's History

Pittsburgh University Archives

Ruth Crawford Mitchell Papers

Unpublished Narrative Sources

Karlin, Alma M. "Ein Mensch wird: Auf dem Weg zur Weltreisenden" (unpublished manuscript, 1931), available online at Digital Library of Slovenia, <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:IMG-Q5MOEU8E>.

Tins, Karl. "Tagebuch von Karl Tins, Schriftleiter der 'Ascher Zeitung,' aus d. J. 1918–1919" (unpublished manuscript), available at Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek im Sudetendeutschen Haus, Munich, inv. no. 35226.

Newspapers and Periodicals

American Relief Administration Bulletin

Arbeiterwille

Arbeiter-Zeitung

Brünner Morgenpost

Čas

Čech

České slovo

Československý zemědělec

Český deník

Český Lloyd

Český svět

The Czechoslovak Review

Delavec

Deutsche Stimmen aus Mähren

Družstevník

Egerer Zeitung

Grenzbote

Hiradó – politikai napilap
Hlasy z Hané
Hospodář československý
Humoristické listy
Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung
Jutro
Květy americké
Lidové noviny
Lípa
Marburger Zeitung
Mitteilungen des Deutschösterreichischen Staatsamtes für Volksgesundheit
Mladost
Mlynář
Moravský hospodář
Naprej
Národní listy
Naše doba
Novi čas
Novine
Nitrianske noviny
Písecké listy
Prager Presse
Prager Tagblatt
Praktický lékař
Právník
Právo lidu
Prekmurski glasnik
The Red Cross Bulletin
Reichenberger Zeitung
Saazer Anzeiger
Salzburger Wacht
Slovenec
Slovenske novice
Slovenski gospodar
Slovenski narod
Smích republiky
Sokolič
Straža
Uradni list Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani
Uradni list pokrajinske uprave za Slovenijo

Úřední list c. k. okresního hejtmánství v Prostějově

Večer

Večerní list

Večerník Práva lidu

Venkov

Věstník Ministerstva pro zásobování lidu v Československé republice

Věstník obecní hlavního města Prahy

Published Sources and Literature

Ablovatski, Eliza. *Revolution and Political Violence in Central Europe: The Deluge of 1919*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Adamič Mlakar, Jana. *Teknilo nam je!* Zasavski muzej, 2004.

Adams, Matthew Lloyd. "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland (1919–1923)." *European Journal of American Studies* 4, no. 2 (2009): 1–16.

Adlgasser, Franz. *American individualism abroad: Herbert Hoover, die American Relief Administration und Österreich, 1919–1923*. VWGÖ, 1993.

Adlgasser, Franz. "The Roots of Communist Containment: American Food Aid in Austria and Hungary after World War I." In *Austria in the Nineteen Fifties*, edited by Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Rolf Steininger. Routledge, 1995.

Afflerbach, Holger. "Die Deutschösterreicher zwischen Staatsraison und 'Nibelungentreue'." In *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg*, ed. Helmut Rumpler, vol. 1/2. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016.

Ajlec, Kornelija. "Vojaške preskrbnine in pokojnine v prvi svetovni vojni: Zakonodaja in izvedba." *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 55, no. 2 (2015): 126–42.

Aleksić, Vesna. "Mission Impossible of American Experts in Serbia 1919–1920." In *125 Years of Diplomatic Relations between the USA and Serbia*, edited by Ljubinka Trgovčević, Faculty of Political Sciences University of Belgrade, 2008.

Aleksić, Vesna, Sonja Jerković, and Saša Ilić. "The First US Intervention in Serbian Economic Reconstruction and Recovery." *International Review*, no. 3–4 (2014): 9–26.

Aplinc, Miran. "Morda bodo prišli še taki časi, ko boste morali jesti tak kruh, kjer bodo špice ven gledale": Odmev velike vojne skozi organizacijo preskrbe v Šoštanju v času prve svetovne vojne in prevratne dobe. Muzej Velenje; Muzej usnjarstva na Slovenskem, 2019.

Aprovisace obce pražské za války a po válce 1914–1922. Aprovisační ústavy hlavního města Prahy, 1922.

- Arco Blanco, Miguel Ángel del. "Famine in Spain During Franco's Dictatorship, 1939–52." *Journal of Contemporary History* 56, no. 1 (2021): 3–27.
- Armstrong, Hamilton Fish. *Peace and Counterpeace: From Wilson to Hitler*. Harper & Row, 1971.
- Auer, Stefan. *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe*. Routledge, 2004.
- Baberowski, Jörg. *Der bedrohte Leviathan: Staat und Revolution in Rußland*. Duncker & Humblot, 2021.
- Bachmann-Medick, Doris. *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*. De Gruyter, 2016.
- Bader-Zaar, Birgitta. "Democratization and the Practices of Voting in Habsburg Austria, 1896–1914: New Directions in Research." *Austrian History Yearbook* 53 (2022): 107–20.
- Bader-Zaar, Birgitta. "Democratization in Europe after World War I: (Dis-)Continuities in Electoral Reform, 1917–1921." In *Vermessung einer Zeitschwelle: Die Bedeutung des Jahres 1918 in österreichischer, europäischer und globaler Perspektive / Surveying a Time Threshold: The Importance of 1918 in an Austrian, European and Global Perspective*, edited by Brigitte Mazohl et al. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2024.
- Balkovec, Bojan. *Prva slovenska vlada 1918–1921*. Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1992.
- Bane, Suda Lorena, and Ralph Haswell Lutz, eds. *Organization of American Relief in Europe 1918–1919*. Stanford University Press, 1943.
- Baxa, Bohumil. *Autorita státní. Národ*, 1920.
- Beneš, Jakub S. *The Last Peasant War: Violence and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2025.
- Beranová Vaicová, Romana, and Vladimír Bruženač. *Ozvěny Velké války: Zajatecký tábor Jindřichovice 1915–1918 = Der Nachhall des großen Kriegs: das Gefangenenlager Jindřichovice 1915–1918 = Echoes of The Great War: Prison Camp Jindřichovice 1915–1918*, 2nd ed. Muzeum Sokolov, 2018.
- Berglund, Bruce R. "'We Stand on the Threshold of a New Age': Alice Masaryk, The Czechoslovak Red Cross, and the Building of a New Europe." In *Aftermaths of War: Women's Movements and Female Activists, 1918–1923*, edited by Ingrid Sharp and Matthew Stibbe. Brill, 2011.
- Best, Gary Dean. "Herbert Hoover's Technical Mission to Yugoslavia, 1919–20." *The Annals of Iowa* 42, no. 6 (1974): 443–59.
- Biskupski, M. B. B. "Strategy, Politics, and Suffering: The Wartime Relief of Belgium, Serbia, and Poland, 1914–1918." In *Ideology, Politics, and Diplomacy in East Central Europe*, edited by M. B. B. Biskupski. University of Rochester Press, 2003.
- Blackburn, Christopher. "The Rebirth of Poland: American Humanitarianism after the Great War." *Studia Historyczne* 57, no. 4 (October 2014): 521–39.

- Blaive, Muriel. "Democracy for the Czechs: Political Legitimacy and a Collective Identity." *Revue d'études comparatives est-ouest* 34, no. 1 (2003): 59–82.
- Bland, Raymond, and Frank Macy, eds. *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period: Operations of the Organizations under the Direction of Herbert Hoover 1914 to 1924*. Stanford University Press, 1931.
- Blunt, Wilfried. *Lady Muriel: Lady Muriel Paget, Her Husband and Her Philanthropic Work in Central and Eastern Europe*. Methuen, 1962.
- Bne Saad, Majda. *The Global Hunger Crisis: Tackling Food Insecurity in Developing Countries*. Pluto Press, 2013.
- Bober, Sergiusz, ed. *Post-World War One Plebiscites and Their Legacies: Exploring the Right of Self-Determination*. CEU Press, 2024.
- Bódy, Zsombor, ed. *Háborúból békébe: a magyar társadalom 1918 után: Konfliktusok, kihívások, változások a háború és az összeomlás nyomán*. MTA BTK Történettudományi Intézet, 2018.
- Bódy, Zsombor. "A World Lifted off Its Hinges: The Social Impact of World War I on Hungary." *Hungarian Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (2022): 702–32.
- Bogataj, Lovro. "Uprava v Sloveniji od prevrata 1918 do izvršitve vidovdanske ustave." In *Slovenci v desetletju 1918–1928: Zbornik razprav iz kulturne, gospodarske in politične zgodovine*, edited by Josip Mal. Leonova družba, 1928.
- Böhler, Ingrid, and Norbert Schnetzer. "Hunger im Ländle: Das lange Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges in Vorarlberg 1918–1920/21." *Zeitgeschichte* 26, no. 2 (1999): 71–89.
- Böhler, Jochen. *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918–1921: The Reconstruction of Poland*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Böhler, Jochen. "Deconstructing and Reconstructing Statehood: The Impact of the World Wars (Part I) – The First World War." In *The Routledge History Handbook of Central and Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2, *Statehood*, edited by Włodzimierz Borodziej, Sabina Ferhabegović, and Joachim von Puttkamer. Routledge, 2020.
- Boisserie, Étienne. *Les Tchèques dans l'Autriche-Hongrie en guerre (1914–1918): "Nous ne croyons plus aucune promesse"*. Eur'Orbem Éditions, 2017.
- Bonzon, Thierry, and Belinda Davis. "Feeding the Cities." In *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919*, edited by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Borodziej, Włodzimierz, and Maciej Górny. *Der vergessene Weltkrieg: Europas Osten 1912–1923*, vol. 2, *Nationen 1917–1923*. wbg Theiss, 2018.
- Boross, Marietta. "O življenjskih in delovnih razmerah železnožupanijskih slovenskih sezoncev med dvema vojnama." *Etnologija Slovencev na Madžarskem = A Magyarországi szlovének néprajza* 4 (2003): 9–40.
- Botz, Gerhard. *Gewalt in der Politik: Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1938*. Wilhelm Fink, 1983.

- Bouček, Jan, and Jiří Jelínek, "Události na Ústecku na konci roku 1918." In *Vznik samostatného Československa a severní Čechy*. Okresní archiv; Odbor pro vnitřní věci SKNV, 1968.
- Boyer, John W. *Austria, 1867–1955*. Oxford University Press, 2022.
- Brádlarová, Daniela. *Milada Paulová: První česká profesorka: mezi soudobými dějinami a byzantologií*. Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2021.
- Bresciani, Marco. "Una rivoluzione 'antiasburgica': Caos postbellico, violenza e ascesa fascista nell'Istria post-asburgica (1918–1923)." *Studi storici*, no. 4 (2022): 931–60.
- Bresciani, Marco, and Klaus Richter, "Trieste and Danzig after the Great War: Imperial Collapse, Narratives of Loss, Reconfigured Globalization." *The Journal of Modern History* 95, no. 3 (2023): 557–95.
- Brezigar, Milko. *Osnutek slovenskega narodnega gospodarstva*. Omladina, 1918.
- Brodnik, Vilma. "Preskrba Ljubljane med 1. svetovno vojno." *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 29, no. 2 (1989): 281–323.
- Brus, Marko. "Veljava ODZ po prvi svetovni vojni do danes." *Pravnik* 67, no. 5/6 (2012): 457–82.
- Budinská, Jitka. "Příspěvek k vývoji českého a německého hnutí na Teplicku, Duchcovsku a Bílinsku v prvním roce ČSR." In *Vznik samostatného Československa a severní Čechy*. Okresní archiv; Odbor pro vnitřní věci SKNV, 1968.
- Budinský, Jaroslav. *Morava za války: Ze vzpomínek na domácí odboj*. Moravský legionář, 1936.
- Budkovič, Tomaž. *Bohinj 1914–1918: Medfronto in zaledjem*. Mohorjeva založba, 2009.
- Budzyński, B., and K. Chelchowski. "O puchlinie głodowej." *Przegląd Lekarski* 54, no. 1 (1915): 1–8; no. 2 (1915): 4–11.
- Bugge, Peter. "Czech Democracy 1918–1938 – Paragon or Parody?" *Bohemia* 47, no. 1 (2007): 3–28.
- Burke, Peter. *What is Cultural History?* Polity, 2019.
- Burri, Michael. "Clemens Pirquet: Early Twentieth-Century Scientific Networks, the Austrian Hunger Crisis, and the Making of the International Food Expert." In *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, edited by Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley. Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Burri, Michael. "The Interallied Commission for the Delimitation of the Boundary between Austria and Hungary, and the New International Order in Austria." In *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border: Agendas, Actors, and Practices in Western Hungary/Burgenland after World War I*, edited by Hannes Grandits, Ibolya Murber, and Katharina Tyrann Berghahn, 2025.
- Cabanes, Bruno. *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Cabanes, Bruno. *La victoire endeillée: La sortie de guerre des soldats français (1918–1920)*. Seuil, 2004.

- Čelik, Pavle. *Slovenski stražniki, 1918–1941*. Fakulteta za družbene vede, 2002.
- Centrih, Lev. “‘Govorile so celo strojnice!’ Boljševizem v prevratni dobi na Slovenskem: Med preprostim ljudskim uporništvom in vplivi ruske revolucije.” In *Slovenski prelom 1918*, edited by Aleš Gabrič. Slovenska matica, 2019.
- César Jaroslav, and Milan Otáhal, eds. *Hnutí venkovského lidu v českých zemích v letech 1918–1922*. Historický ústav ČSAV, 1959.
- Československá péče o dítě 1919–1920. Th. Venta, 1920.
- Čižmarová, Libuše. “History of and Popular Attitudes towards Names for the Czech-Speaking Territory.” *Acta Universitatis Carolinae: Geographica* 50, no. 1 (2015): 7–22.
- Clavin, Patricia. “The Austrian Hunger Crisis and the Genesis of International Organization after the First World War.” *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 265–78.
- Clements, Kendrick A. *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, vol. 6, *Imperfect Visionary, 1918–1928*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Cole, Laurence. “Questione nazionale e radicalizzazione degli austro-tedeschi.” In *La Grande Guerra e la dissoluzione di un Impero multinazionale*, edited by Paolo Pombeni. FBK Press, 2017.
- Cox, Mary E. *Hunger in War and Peace: Women and Children in Germany, 1914–1924*. Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Cox, Mary Elisabeth, and Anne van Mourik. “‘I Haven’t Eaten so Well for so Long!’: Representations of the Allied Blockade of Germany in German Textbooks and Film, 1914–32.” In *The Politics of Famine in European History and Memory*, edited by Ingrid de Zwart and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco. Routledge, 2025.
- Cree, David. “Yugoslav-Hungarian Boundary Commission.” *The Geographical Journal* 65, no. 2 (1925): 89–110.
- Cretu, Doina Anca. “The American Red Cross and Visions of Rebuilding of the Balkans after the First World War.” *Zeitgeschichte* 51, no. 3 (2024): 313–33.
- Cretu, Doina Anca. *Foreign Aid and State Building in Interwar Romania: In Quest of an Ideal*. Stanford University Press, 2024.
- Cretu, Doina Anca. “Humanitarian Aid in the ‘Bulwark Against Bolshevism’: The American Relief Administration and the Quest for Sovereignty in Post-World War I Romania.” *Journal of Romanian Studies* 1, no. 2 (2019): 65–88.
- Cretu, Doina Anca. “Jewish Refugees, Encampment, and the Humanitarian Paradox in Austria-Hungary during the First World War.” In *Refugees and Citizens in 20th Century East-Central Europe: An Unlikely Refuge?*, edited by Michal Frankl. Central European University Press, forthcoming.
- Čuček, Filip. “K zgodovini češkoslovaško-jugoslovanskega koridorja (češko-slovenski zorni kot).” *Zgodovinski časopis* 70, no. 1/2 (2016): 206–25.
- Cvirn, Janez. “Meščanstvo v Celju po razpadu Avstro-Ogrske.” In *Iz zgodovine Celja: 1918–1941*, edited by Marija Počivavšek. Muzej novejšje zgodovine Celje, 1996.

- Davis, Belinda J. *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Deset let republiky československé*, vol. 3. Státní tiskárna v Praze, 1928.
- Doležalová, Antonie. *Rašín, Engliš a ti druzí: Československé státní rozpočty v letech 1918–1938*. Vysoká škola ekonomická; Nakladatelství Oeconomica, 2007.
- Dudeková Kováčová, Gabriela. *Človek vo vojne: Stratégie prežitia a sociálne dôsledky prvej svetovej vojny na Slovensku*. Veda, 2019.
- Egry, Gábor. *The Empire's New Clothes: How Austria-Hungary's Legacy Kept the Successor States Running*. Foundation for Austrian Studies, 2020.
- Egry, Gábor. "The Leftover Empire? Imperial Legacies and Statehood in the Successor States of Austria-Hungary." In *Postwar Continuity and New Challenges in Central Europe, 1918–1923: The War That Never Ended*, edited by Tomasz Pudłocki and Kamil Ruszała. Routledge, 2022.
- Egry, Gábor. "Petit Bourgeois Local Revolutions? Post-Habsburg Transitions, Democratization, Local Elites, and the Place of Western Hungary/Burgenland." In *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border: Agendas, Actors, and Practices in Western Hungary/Burgenland after World War I*, edited by Hannes Grandits, Ibolya Murber, and Katharina Tyran. Berghahn, 2025.
- Eichenberg, Julia, and John Paul Newman. "Introduction: Aftershocks. Violence in Dissolving Empires after the First World War." *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 3 (2010): 183–94.
- Eichenberg, Julia, and John Paul Newman. "Introduction: The Great War and Veterans' Internationalism." In *The Great War and Veterans' Internationalism*, edited by Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Eichert, Tatjana, and Rebecca Gill. "Children and the 'Hunger Politics' of 1919–20: Food Aid to German Children and the Founding of the International Save the Children Movement." In *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, edited by Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie. Manchester University Press, 2023.
- Erić, Milivoje. *Agrarna reforma u Jugoslaviji: 1918–1941 god*. Veselin Masleša, 1958.
- Exner, Franz. *Krieg und Kriminalität in Österreich*. Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1927.
- Fasora, Lukáš et al. eds. *Demokratische Monarchie, undemokratische Republik? Kontinuitäten und Brüche zwischen Monarchie und Republik in Mitteleuropa*. Lit, 2022.
- Fathi, Romain, and Bart Ziino. "Coming Home: Australians' sorties de guerre after the First World War." *History Australia* 16, no. 1 (2019): 5–19.
- Fehrenbach, Heide. "Children and Other Civilians: Photography and the Politics of Humanitarian Image-Making." In *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, edited by Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Feinberg, Melissa. *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1950*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

- Final Report of the Work in Kingdom S.H.S.* American Relief Administration, 1920.
- Flateau, Cosima. "Les sorties de guerre : Une introduction." *Les Cahiers Sirice* 17, no. 3 (2016): 5–14.
- Foki, Ibolya. "Protest županije Zala protiv odcjepljenja međimurskih i pomurskih naselja." In *Pomurje 1914–1920.: Zbornik radova = Mura mente 1914–1920.: Szöveggyűjtemény*, edited by Branimir Bunjac. Povijesno društvo Međimurske županije, 2011.
- Forst, František. "Protidrahotní bouře v Nymburce po první světové válce." *Středočeský sborník historický* 8, no. 1 (1973): 5–16.
- Franc, Martin. "Bread from Wood: Natural Food Substitutes in the Czech Lands during the First World War." In *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*, edited by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Rachel Duffett, and Alain Drouard, Ashgate, 2011.
- Franc, Martin. *Dějiny výživy a stravování v českých zemích 1945–1970*. Academia, 2024.
- Frankl, Michal, and Miloslav Szabó. *Budování státu bez antisemitismu? Násilí, diskurz loajality a vznik Československa*. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2015.
- Frieberger, Kurt, ed. *Die österreichischen Ernährungsvorschriften*. Manz'sche k. u. k. Hof-Verlags- und Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1917.
- Friš, Darko, Gregor Jenuš, and Ana Šela. "Maribor med prevratom in senžermensko pogodbo. 'Zasijalo nam je sonce svobode: Maribor je jugoslovanski!'" *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 60, no. 3 (2020): 110–48.
- Frizzera, Francesco. "The Politics of Food: State Reactions." In *Hunger Redraws the Map: Food, State, and Society in the Era of the First World War*, edited by Mary E. Cox and Claire Morelon. Cambridge University Press, 2025.
- Fuller, Joseph V., ed., *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, vol. 7 and vol. 12. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1946–47.
- Gaberc, Vinko. *Brez slave: Spomini na svetovno vojno*. [self-published], 1935.
- Gabrič, Aleš, ed., *Slovenski prelom 1918*. Slovenska matica, 2019.
- Galandauer, Jan. *Ohlas Velké říjnové socialistické revoluce v české společnosti*. Svoboda, 1977.
- Gawrecká, Marie. *Československé Slezsko mezi světovými válkami 1918–1938*. Slezská univerzita v Opavě, 2004.
- Gawrecki, Dan. *Politické a národnostní poměry v Těšínském Slezsku 1918–1938*. Muzeum Těšínska, 1999.
- Gerwarth, Robert, and John Horne, eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Glassheim, Eagle. *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy*. Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Godina Golija, Maja. "Hunger and Misery: The Influence of the First World War on the Diet of Slovenian Civilians." In *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*,

- edited by Rachel Duffett, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, and Alain Drouard. Ashgate, 2011.
- Godina Golija, Maja. "Pa smo stali v procesijah pred pekarnami...": O lakoti in pomanjkanju v Mariboru med prvo svetovno vojno." In *Vojne na Slovenskem: Pričevanja, spomini, podobe*, edited by Maja Godina Golija. Založba ZRC, 2012.
- Godina Golija, Maja. *Prehrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih 20. stoletja*. Založba Obzorja, 1996.
- Godina Golija, Maja. "Recepti in napotki za krizne čase: Primer slovenskega ozemlja med prvo svetovno vojno." *Etnolog* 22, no. 1 (2012): 65–80.
- Godina Golija, Maja. "Slovene Food Consumption in the Twentieth Century – From Self-Sufficiency to Mass Consumerism." In *The Rise of Obesity in Europe: A Twentieth Century Food History*, edited by Derek J. Oddy and Peter J. Atkins. Routledge, 2009.
- Godina Golija, Maja. "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?: Food Supply and Nutrition of the Civilian Population in Maribor at the End of and after World War I." *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 298–311.
- Göncz, László. *A Muravidék útja a délszláv királyságba: a tájegység története az első világháború végétől a jugoszláv megszállásig: (1918 ősze–1919 augusztusa)*. Magyar Nyugat Könyvkiadó, 2024.
- Göncz, László. "Načrti avtonomne in upravne organiziranosti Slovenske krajine v obdobju Károlyijeve ljudske republike (od novembra 1918 do marca 1919)." *Studia Historica Slovenica* 21, no. 3 (2021): 727–87.
- Göncz, László. "Utrinki iz zgodovine Beltincev v t. i. prevratnem obdobju (Od oktobra 1918 do jugoslovanske zasedbe Prekmurja)." In *Raznolikost v raziskovanju etničnosti: Izbrani pogledi III*, ed. Sonja Novak-Lukanovič and Barbara Riman. Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 2023.
- Göncz, László. "Življenje ob novi državni meji po priključitvi Prekmurja Kraljevini SHS in delo razmejitvene komisije na tem odseku." In "*Mi vsi živeti ščemo*": *Prekmurje 1919: Okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice*, edited by Peter Štih, Kornelija Ajlec, and Attila Kovács. Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2020.
- González-Rodríguez, Patricia, Jens Füllgrabe, and Bertrand Joseph. "The Hunger Strikes Back: An Epigenetic Memory for Autophagy." *Cell Death & Differentiation* 30, no. 6 (2023): 1404–15.
- Görtler, Miroslav. "Průběh 14. října 1918 ve středních Čechách." *Středočeský sborník historický* 13 (1978): 25–43.
- Grandits, Hannes. "Polarization, Persistence, and Political Mobilization of Class Belongings in Western Hungary/Burgenland after World War I (1919–1920)." In *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border: Agendas, Actors, and Practices in Western Hungary/Burgenland after World War I*, edited by Hannes Grandits, Ibolya Murber, and Katharina Tyran. Berghahn, 2025.

- Granick, Jaclyn. *International Jewish Humanitarianism in the Age of the Great War*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Gratz, Gusztáv, and Richard Schüller. *Der wirtschaftliche Zusammenbruch Österreich-Ungarns: Die Tragödie der Erschöpfung*. Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1930.
- Grgić, Stipica, and Ivan Hrستیć. "The Creation of the State: The Fate of Old Institutions of Political Power and the Creation of New Ones in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes from 1918–1923." *Historyka Studia Metodologiczne* 52 (2022): 185–203.
- Groh, Josef, and J. Schneider, eds. *20 let Českého srdce 1917–1937: Jubilejní památník jeho národní a humánní činnosti*. České srdce, 1937.
- Guštin, Damijan. "'Zeleni kader' in vojaški upori v slovenskih enotah spomladi 1918." In *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: Od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije, 1848–1992*, vol. 1, edited by Jasna Fischer. Mladinska knjiga, 2005.
- Habrman, Hustav. *Mé vzpomínky z války: Črty a obrázky o událostech a zápasech za svobodu a samostatnost. Ústřední dělnické knihkupectví a nakladatelství*, 1928.
- Hájková, Dagmar. "Masarykova jedenáctá hodina." In *Korespondence T. G. Masaryk – Velká Británie*, edited by Dagmar Hájková and Jitka Jindřišková. Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2021.
- Hájková, Dagmar. "'Naši strýčci v Americe': Humanitární pomoc českých krajanů po první světové válce: motivace a realita." In Gabriela Dudeková Kováčová et al., *Od almužny k nároku: Vize a prax sociální politiky na Slovensku a v českých krajinách 19. a 20. století*. Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy; Historický ústav SAV, 2024.
- Hájková, Dagmar. "Promoting the State through Food Scarcity: Czechoslovakia and the United States after World War I." *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 312–26.
- Hájková, Dagmar, and Martin Klečacký. "Kriegsgefangenenlager in Böhmen bzw. auf dem Territorium des heutigen Tschechiens im Ersten Weltkrieg: Geschichte und Gedenken." In *Kriegsgefangenschaft in Österreich-Ungarn 1914–1918: Historiographie, Kontext, Themen*, edited by Verena Moritz and Julia Walleczek-Fritz. Böhlau, 2022.
- Hajšman, Jan. *Jedna kampaň Mafie: České dopisy jihoslovanským listům z posledního roku světové války*. Orbis, 1938.
- Hálek, Jan et al., *Nekončící příběh: (Historiografické) narativy vzniku Československa v proměnách času a prostoru (1918–1992/1993)*. Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR; Academia, 2023.
- Hálek, Jan, Boris Mosković, and Petr Prokš, eds. *Národní výbor(y) a vznik Československa 1916–1918: Edice dokumentů*. Historický ústav AV ČR, 2022.
- Hartman, Bruno. *Maribor – dogajanja in osebnosti*. Litera, 2009.
- Hartman, Bruno. *Rudolf Maister: General in pesnik*. DZS, 2006.

- Hašek, Aug. "Počátky našeho zásobování." In *Domov za války (svědectví účastníků)*, edited by Alois Žipek, vol. 5. Pokrok, 1931.
- Hatto, Emma Anne. "A Slovene Perspective on Yugoslav State-Building Examined Through the Political Career of Dr Anton Korošec 1918–28." PhD diss., University of Southampton, 2022.
- Healy, Maureen. *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday life in World War I*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Heimann, Mary. *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*. Yale University Press, 2009.
- Hein-Kircher, Heidi, and Steffen Kailitz. "‘Double Transformations’: Nation Formation and Democratization in Interwar East Central Europe." *Nationalities Papers* 46, no. 5 (2018): 745–58.
- Herben, Jan. *Lístky z válečného deníku 1914 až 1918*. Milena Herbenová, 1933.
- Herben, Jan. *T. G. Masaryk*, vol. 2. Spolek výtvarných umělců Mánes, 1927.
- Heumos, Peter. "Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution.: Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massenproteste in den böhmischen Ländern 1914–1918." In *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen Slowaken und Deutschen*, edited by Hans Mommsen et al. Klartext, 2001.
- Himmelreich, Bojan. *Namesto zemlje črni kruh: Organizacija preskrbe z živili v Celju v času obeh svetovnih vojn*. Zgodovinski arhiv Celje, 2001.
- Himmelreich, Bojan. "Pomanjkanje prehrane med 1. svetovno vojno v Celju." In *Lakote in pomanjkanje*, ed. Mojca Šorn. Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2018, 147–65.
- Himmelreich, Bojan. "Preskrbljenost Celja z živili v kriznih časih: Mikroštudija razmer v času po prvi in pred drugo svetovno vojno." *Zgodovina za vse* 7, no. 2 (2000): 51–64.
- Himmelreich, Bojan. "Vsakdanje življenje v Celju v obdobju prve svetovne vojne." *Studia Historica Slovenica* 9, no. 2-3 (2012): 469–94.
- Hirnök, Katalin Munda. "Sezonstvo." *Etnologija Slovencev na Madžarskem = A Magyarországi szlovének néprajza* 1 (1997): 19–66.
- Hirschhausen, Ulrike von, and Jörn Leonhard. *Empires: Eine globale Geschichte, 1780–1920*. C. H. Beck, 2023.
- Hirschman, Albert O. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States*. Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Hladký, Ladislav. "Czech-Slovenian Relations." In *Czech Relations with the Nations and Countries of Southeastern Europe*, edited by Ladislav Hladký. Srednja Europa, 2019.
- Hlaváčková, Ludmila. "Druhá česká a německá interní klinika v Praze v dobách přednostentství E. Maixnera, J. Thomayera a R. Jaksche." *Acta Universitatis Carolinae: Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 51, no. 2 (2011): 11–43.

- Höbelt, Lothar. *Die erste Republik Österreich (1918–1938): das Provisorium*. Böhlau, 2018.
- Hofer, Hans-Georg. “Ernährungskrise, Krankheit, Hungertod: Wien und Österreich-Ungarn im Ersten Weltkrieg.” *Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte* 31 (2013): 33–66.
- Hölscher, Katharina, Julia M. Wittmayer, and Derk Loorbach. “Transition versus Transformation: What’s the Difference?” *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 27 (2018): 1–3.
- Holubec, Stanislav. *Nešťastná revolucionářka: myšlenkový svět a každodennost Luisy Landové-Štychové (1885–1969)*. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2021.
- Hoover, Herbert. *An American Epic*, vol. 3, *Famine in Forty-five Nations: The Battle on the Front Line, 1914–1923*. Henry Regnery, 1961.
- Hoover, Herbert. *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure 1874–1920*. Macmillan, 1951.
- Horák, Pavel. “Rozkradený blahobyť? Zásobování potravinami a státní autorita v plebiscitní kampani na Oravě a Spiši 1919–1921.” *Historický časopis*, forthcoming.
- Horne, John. “Beyond Cultures of Victory and Cultures of Defeat? Inter-war Veterans’ Internationalism.” In *The Great War and Veterans’ Internationalism*, ed. Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Howard, N. P. “The Social and Political Consequences of the Allied Food Blockade of Germany, 1918–19.” *German History* 11, no. 2 (1993): 161–88.
- Hutečka, Jiří. “‘Completely Forgotten and Totally Ignored’: Czechoslovak Veterans of the Austro-Hungarian Army and the Transition of 1918–1919,” *Nationalities Papers* 49, no. 4 (2021): 629–45.
- Hutečka, Jiří. *Men under Fire: Motivation, Morale and Masculinity among Czech Soliders in the Great War, 1914–1918*. Berghahn, 2020.
- Hutečka, Jiří. “Wartime Provisioning, the People, and the State in Habsburg Central Europe during World War I.” *Střed/Centre* 16, no. 1 (2024): 80–97.
- Ignácz, Károly. “The Emergence of the Outskirts of Budapest as a New Administrative District through the Organisation of the Food Supply, 1917–1919.” *Südost-Forschungen* 79, no. 1 (2020): 71–95.
- Irish, Tomás. *Feeding the Mind: Humanitarianism and the Reconstruction of European Intellectual Life, 1919–1933*. Cambridge University Press, 2024.
- Irish, Tomás. “‘The Most Deplorable Victims’? The Language of Humanitarianism and Relief to Intellectuals in the Era of the Great War.” In *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, ed. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie. Manchester University Press, 2023.
- Irwin, Julia. *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation’s Humanitarian Awakening*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

- Irwin, Julia F. "Taming Total War: Great War-Era American Humanitarianism and Its Legacies." *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4 (2014): 763–75.
- Jakobyová, Barbora. "Americká potravinová pomoc pre deti po prvej svetovej vojne." In *Dlhá cesta od monarchie k republike: Zmeny režimov, myslenia a životného štýlu na Slovensku a v strednej Európe od polovice 19. do polovice 20. storočia*. Veda, 2021.
- Jaksch, Rudolf von. "Das Hungerödem." *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 8 June 1918, 1029–36.
- James, Harold. *Seven Crashes: The Economic Crises That Shaped Globalization*. Yale University Press, 2023.
- Janák, Jan, and Zdeňka Hledíková. *Dějiny správy v českých zemích do roku 1945*. Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1989.
- Janáková, Dominika. "Plebiscitní úřady na Těšínsku, Oravě a Spiši v letech 1918–1920." PhD diss., University of Hradec Králové, 2016.
- Janša, Olga. "Agrarna reforma v Sloveniji med obema vojnama." *Zgodovinski časopis* 18 (1964): 173–89.
- Jareb, Jerome. "LeRoy King's Reports from Croatia, March to May 1919." *Journal of Croatian Studies* 1 (1960): 75–168.
- Jászi, Oscar. *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*. University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Jebsen, Nina. *Als die Menschen gefragt wurden: Eine Propagandaanalyse zu Volksabstimmungen in Europa nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*. Waxmann, 2015.
- Jeggle, Utz. "Eßgewohnheit und Familienordnung: Was beim Essen alles mitgegessen wird." *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 84 (1988): 189–205.
- Jelínek, Petr. *Zahraničně-politické vztahy Československa a Polska 1918–1924*. Matice slezská, 2009.
- Jerczyński, Dariusz. *Józef Koźdoń a narodowość śląska*. Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, 2013.
- Jerič, Ivan. *Moji spomini*. Murska Sobota, 2000.
- Jernej, Philipp. "Osvoboditelji ali okupatorji: Jugoslovanska uprava na Koroškem 1918–1920" In *Koroški plebiscit – 100 let kasneje*, edited by Danijel Grafenauer. Slovenska matica, 2021.
- Jeschke, Felix. "A Shakespearean Prophecy Fulfilled? Slav Solidarity and the Colonial Gaze in Czech Tourism on the Eastern Adriatic (1890s–1930s)," *Austrian History Yearbook* 54 (2023): 47–60.
- Judson, Pieter M. "L'Autriche-Hongrie était-elle un empire ?" *Annales: histoire, sciences sociales* 63, no. 3 (2008): 563–96.
- Judson, Pieter M. "Endet das Imperium nach seinem Ende?" In *Kakanien revisited – Rückblick und Ausblick: 2000–2024*, edited by Marijan Bobinac, Wolfgang Müller-Funk, and Clemens Ruthner. Narr Francke Attempto, 2024.

- Judson, Pieter M. *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Kahánek, Ferdinand. *Oběť vojenské justice redaktor Josef Kotek zastřelen 23. prosince 1914 v Moravské Ostravě*. Česká mládež socialistická ve Slezsku a na Ostravsku, 1919.
- Kailitz, Steffen, Matthäus Wehowski, and Sebastian Ramisch-Paul, *Demokratisierung an den Grenzen der Nation: Parlamente, Räte, Volksabstimmungen: Das Dreiländereck Deutschland – Polen – Tschechoslowakei 1918–1921*. Verlag Herder-Institut, 2024.
- Kailitz, Steffen, Sebastian Ramisch-Paul, and Tim Buchen. “Zeiten der Unsicherheiten: Demokratisierung und Nationalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa auf regionaler und lokaler Ebene (1918–1923).” *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 73 (1): 1–15.
- Kaiser, Vladimír et al., *Dějiny města Ústí nad Labem*. Město Ústí nad Labem, 1995.
- Kaiser, Vladimír. “Odkdy patřilo Ústí nad Labem k Československu?” In *Vznik Československa a provincie Deutschböhmen*. Státní oblastní archiv v Litoměřicích; Technická univerzita v Liberci, Fakulta přírodovědně-humanitní a pedagogická; Scriptorium, 2019.
- Kalšan, Vladimír. “Međimurje 1918/19. i akcija Erminija Jurišića u Prekmurju.” In *“Mi vsi živeti ščemo”: Prekmurje 1919: Okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice*, edited by Peter Štih, Kornelija Ajlec, and Attila Kovács. Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2020.
- Kamiński, Marek Kazimierz. *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918–1921*. Neriton, 2003.
- Kamusella, Tomasz. *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848–1918*. Purdue University Press, 2007.
- Karlíček, Petr. “Vdolky z dřevných pilin a chleba z jehličí: Zásobování Šluknovska potravinami v době světové války.” In *První světová válka a role Němců v českých zemích*, edited by Marcela Zemanová and Václav Zeman. Muzeum města Ústí nad Labem; Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, 2015.
- Karlíček, Petr. ““Zavři hubu, pse, taky ty budeš pověšen!”: Carl Tins a obsazení nejzápadnějších Čech.” In *Vznik Československa a provincie Deutschböhmen*. Státní oblastní archiv v Litoměřicích; Technická univerzita v Liberci, Fakulta přírodovědně-humanitní a pedagogická; Scriptorium, 2019.
- Kárník, Zdeněk. *Za československou republiku rad: Národní výbory a dělnické rady v českých zemích, 1917–1920*. Československá akademie věd, 1963.
- Keber, Katarina. “Post-World War I Children’s Healthcare in Slovenia as Experienced by Angela Boškin, the First Slovenian Nurse.” *Virus: Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte der Medizin*, no. 17 (2018): 295–303.
- Kepe, Zoltán Lendvai. *Poglavja iz zgodovine železnice v Lendavi = Fejezetek Lendva vasúttörténetéből*. Galerija-Muzej, 2020.

- Kepes, György. "The Question of Universal Suffrage in Hungary after the First World War, 1918–19." *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 40, no. 2 (2020): 201–17.
- Kerec, Darja. "Prekmurje leta 1917." *Studia Historica Slovenica* 18, no. 3 (2018): 811–25.
- Keršovan, Ferid G. "Spomini na gospodarsko in socialno življenje v Prekmurju." *Kronika* 12, no. 3 (1964): 169–84.
- Kersting, Wolfgang. *Thomas Hobbes zur Einführung*. Junius, 2002.
- Kind-Kovács, Friederike. *Budapest's Children: Humanitarian Relief in the Aftermath of the Great War*. Indiana University Press, 2022.
- Kind-Kovács, Friederike. "The Great War, the Child's Body and the American Red Cross." *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 23, no. 1–2 (2016): 33–62.
- Klabjan, Borut. "Borders in Arms: Political Violence in the North-Eastern Adriatic after the Great War." *Acta Histriae* 26, no. 4 (2018): 985–1002.
- Klabjan, Borut. *Českoslovaška na Jadranu: Čehi in Slovaki ter njihove povezave s Trstom in Primorsko od začetka 20 stoletja do druge svetovne vojne*. Annales, 2007.
- Kladiwa, Pavel. "National Classification in the Politics of the State Census: The Bohemian Lands 1880–1930." *Bohemia* 55, no. 1 (2015): 67–95.
- Kladiwa, Pavel. "Die nationale Situation in Mähren und in Österreichisch-Schlesien an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert." In *Neue tschechische Interpretationen der Fragen des tschechisch-deutschen Zusammenlebens*, edited by Jiří Pešek and Petr Vorel. Meine, 2008.
- Kladiwa, Pavel. "Rakouské a české (československé) Slezsko." In *Republika československá 1918–1939*, edited by Dagmar Hájková and Pavel Horák. Nakladatelství lidové noviny, 2018.
- Kladnik, Ana. "'Faithful Guardians of the National and State Border': Refugees, Land Reform, and Colonization in the Post-1918 Central European Borderlands." *Nationalities Papers* 53, no. 6 (2025): 1310–31.
- Kladnik, Tomaž. "Vojaštvo in Maribor v času 1. svetovne vojne in tik po njej." *Studia Historica Slovenica* 9, no. 2–3 (2009): 317–42.
- Klečacký, Martin. "Im Dienste des neuen Staates? Beamtenkarriere im Prozess des Aufbaus der tschechoslowakischen Staatsverwaltung 1918–1920." In *Hoheitsdämmerung? Verwaltung und ihr Personal in den Nachfolgestaaten der Habsburgermonarchie 1918 bis 1920*, edited by Peter Becker et al. Böhlau, 2020.
- Klečacký, Martin. *Poslušný vládce okresu: Okresní hejtman a proměny státní moci v Čechách v letech 1868–1938*. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2021.
- Klečacký, Martin. "Převzetí moci: Státní správa v počátcích Československé republiky 1918–1920 na příkladu Čech." *Český časopis historický* 116, no. 3 (2018): 693–944.
- Knoll, Vilém. "'Nie und nimmer': Chebský podzim roku 1918." In *Dny práva – 2008 – Days of Law*, edited by Jan Neckář et al. Masarykova univerzita, 2008.

- Kocman, Alois, ed. *Boj o směr vývoje československého státu*, 2 vols. Academia, 1965–69.
- Kocman, Alois, ed. *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení presidia zemské správy politické v Praze o situaci v Čechách 1919–1920*. Československá akademie věd, 1959.
- Köfner, Gottfried. *Hunger, Not und Korruption: Der Übergang Österreichs von der Monarchie zur Republik am Beispiel Salzburgs*. Neugebauer, 1980.
- Kokolj, Miroslav. "Prekmurje v prevratnih letih 1918–1919." In *Revolucionarno vrenje v Pomurju v letih 1918–1920*, edited by Janko Liška. Pomurska založba, 1981.
- Kokolj, Miroslav. *Prekmurški Slovenci: Od narodne osvoboditve do nacistične okupacije: 1919–1941*. Pomurska založba, 1984.
- Kolin, Marcel. *Jugoslaveni u Južnoj Americi u radu za svoj narod*. [self-published], 1920.
- Komac, Jernej. "Poštteni možje, ali vam prinesemo čompe ali polento?: O preskrbi v vsakdanjem življenju prebivalcev Bovškega v zaledju frontne linije v letih 1915–1917." *Zgodovina za vse* 25, no. 2 (2018): 51–61.
- Komac, Jernej. "Srce se mi trga od žalosti": Vsakdanje življenje prebivalstva na Bovškem med veliko vojno. Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino; Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 2022.
- Konrád, Ota. *Nevyvážené vztahy: Československo a Rakousko, 1918–1933*. Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2012.
- Konrád, Ota. "Von der Kulisse der Nationalstaatsgründung zur Europäisierung der Forschung: Die tschechische Historiographie zum Ersten Weltkrieg." In *Bewältigte Vergangenheit? Die nationale und internationale Historiographie zum Untergang der Habsburgermonarchie als ideelle Grundlage für die Neuordnung Europas*, edited by Helmut Rumpler and Ulrike Harmat. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2018.
- Konrád, Ota, and Ines Koeltzsch. "From 'Islands of Democracy' to 'Transnational Border Spaces': State of the Art and Perspectives of the Historiography on the First Czechoslovak Republic since 1989." *Bohemia* 56, no. 2 (2016): 285–327.
- Konrád, Ota, and Rudolf Kučera. *Paths out of the Apocalypse: Physical Violence in the Fall and Renewal of Central Europe, 1914–1922*. Oxford University Press, 2022.
- Kopeček, Michal. "Czechoslovak Interwar Democracy and its Critical Introspections." *Journal of Modern European History* 17, no. 1 (2019): 7–15.
- Kordiš, Ivan. "Peter Kozler and his Map of the Slovenian Land and its Provinces (1849–1871)." *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography* 68, no. 2 (2016): 212–31.
- Kosi, Jernej. "The Imagined Slovene Nation and Local Categories of Identification: 'Slovenes' in the Kingdom of Hungary and Postwar Prekmurje." *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (2018): 87–102.
- Kosi, Jernej. *Kako je nastal slovenski narod: Začetki slovenskega nacionalnega gibanja v prvi polovici 19. stoletja*. Sophia, 2013.

- Kosi, Jernej. "Med državno zapovedanimi vojnimi napor in preživetvenimi strategijami podeželskega prebivalstva v času prve svetovne vojne: Primer sester Divjak." *Zgodovinski časopis* 73, no. 1–2 (2019): 118–37.
- Kosi, Jernej. "Razmere se bistveno razlikujejo od onih v ostali Sloveniji: Prekmurski gerenti in občinsko poslovanje v Prekmurju (1919–1927)." *Zgodovina za vse* 28, no. 2 (2021): 106–23.
- Kosi, Jernej. "Yugoslavia Has Nothing. Yugoslavia Has No Bread. But Hungary Gives Us Bread: Access to Food and (Dis)Loyalty in a 'Redeemed' Yugoslav Borderland." *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 283–97.
- Kostrbová, Lucie et al., 1918: *Model komplexního transformačního procesu? Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR*, 2010.
- Kovács, Attila. "Agrarna reforma in kolonizacija na območju Dolnje Lendave med obema vojnama." *Razprave in gradivo*, no. 53–54 (2007): 68–97.
- Kovács, Attila. "Oblikovanje slovensko-madžarske jezikovno-etnične meje od druge polovice 18. stoletja do razpada Avstro-Ogrske monarhije." In *"Mi vsi živeti ščemo": Prekmurje 1919: Okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice*, edited by Peter Štih, Kornelija Ajlec, and Attila Kovács. Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2020.
- Kovács, Attila. "Številčni razvoj prekmurskih Madžarov v 20. stoletju." *Razprave in gradivo*, no. 48–49 (2006): 6–36.
- Křen, Jan. *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft: Tschechen und Deutsche 1780–1918*. Oldenbourg, 2000.
- Krizman, Bogdan. "Vanjskopolitički položaj Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca godine 1919." *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2, no. 1 (1970): 23–59.
- Kubů, Eduard, and Jiří Šouša. "Z časů, kdy nebylo co jíst... Český sedlák/rolník za Velké války." In *Venkov, rolník a válka v českých zemích a na Slovensku v moderní době*, edited by Jitka Balcarová, Eduard Kubů, and Jiří Šouša. Národní zemědělské muzeum, 2017.
- Kubů, Eduard et al. "Der Zerfall des einheitlichen Wirtschaftsraumes und die Folgen: Tschechoslowakei, Ungarn, Jugoslawien." In *Das Erbe der Habsburgermonarchie in den Nachfolgestaaten: Brüche und Kontinuitäten*, edited by Ulrike Harmat. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2025.
- Kučera, Rudolf. "Entbehrung und Nationalismus: Die Erfahrung tschechischer Soldaten der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee 1914–1918." In *Jenseits des Schützengrabens: Der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung – Wahrnehmung – Kontext*, ed. Bernhard Bachinger and Wolfram Dornik. StudienVerlag, 2013.
- Kučera, Rudolf. "Exploiting Victory, Sinking into Defeat: Uniformed Violence in the Creation of the New Order in Czechoslovakia and Austria, 1918–1922." *The Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 4 (2016): 827–55.
- Kučera, Rudolf. *Rationed Life: Science, Everyday Life and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914–1918*. Berghahn, 2016.

- Kührer-Wielach, Florian, and Sarah Lemmen, "Transformation in East Central Europe: 1918 and 1989: A Comparative Approach." *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 23, no. 4 (2016): 573–79.
- Kuzmič, Franc. "Stranke v Prekmurju med obema vojnama." *Kronika* 39, no. 1–2 (1991): 58–63.
- Kuzmič, Mihael. *Slovenski izseljenci iz Prekmurja v Bethlehemu v ZDA: 1893–1924: Naselitev in njihove zgodovinske, socialne, politične, literarne in verske dejavnosti*, vol. 2, *Migracije*. Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 2001.
- Kyovsky, Rudy. "Trianonska pogodba in slovensko-ogrska meja." In *Revolucionarno vrenje v Pomurju v letih 1918–1920*, edited by Janko Liška. Pomurska založba, 1981.
- Lacina, Vlastislav. *Formování československé ekonomiky 1918–1923*. Academia, 1990.
- Langthaler, Ernst. "Dissolution before Dissolution: The Crisis of the Wartime Food Regime in Austria-Hungary." In *Environmental Histories of the First World War*, edited by Richard P. Tucker et al. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Langthaler, Ernst. "Food and Nutrition (Austria-Hungary)." In *1914-1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, edited by Ute Daniel et al. Freie Universität Berlin, 2014, http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/food_and_nutrition_austria-hungary.
- Langthaler, Ernst. "Hungernde Stadt, sattes Land? 'Volksernährung' in Wien und Niederösterreich nach dem ersten Weltkrieg." In *Wien und Niederösterreich – eine untrennbare Beziehung? Festschrift für Willibald Rosner zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Elisabeth Loinig, Stefan Eminger, and Andreas Weigl. Verlag NÖ Institut für Landeskunde, 2017.
- Lazarevič, Žarko. *Kmečki dolgovi na Slovenskem: Socialno-ekonomski vidiki zadolženosti slovenskih kmetov 1848–1948*. Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1994.
- Lazarevič, Žarko. "Peasants, Land, and Work: Structures of Peasant Economy in Slovenia in the Interwar Period." In *Changing Living Spaces: Subsistence and Sustenance in Eurasian Economies from Early Modern Times to the Present*, edited by Satoshi Murayama, Žarko Lazarevič, and Aleksander Panjek. University of Primorska Press, 2025.
- Lederer, Ivo J. *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study in Frontiermaking*. Yale University Press, 1963.
- Lekić, Bogdan. *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji: 1918–1941*. Udruženje ratnih dobrovoljaca 1912–1918, njihovih potomaka i poštovalaca, 2002.
- Leonhard, Jörn. *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des ersten Weltkriegs*. 6th edition. C.H. Beck, 2014.
- Leonhard, Jörn. *Über Kriege und wie man sie beendet: Zehn Thesen*. C. H. Beck, 2023.
- Lih, Lars T. *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914–1921*. University of California Press, 1990.

- Linasi, Marjan. *Jugovzhodna Koroška 1918-1920: Poskus sinteze burnih dogajanj od prevrata do plebiscita na območju nekdanjih političnih okrajev Velikovec/Völkermarkt, Wolfsberg (Volšperk) in Slovenj Gradec (Windischgraz)*. Mohorjeva založba, 2024.
- Lipovšek, Gordana Šovegeš. *Prišo je glás: Prekmurci v vojni 1914–1918: Padli in pogrešani*. Pomurski muzej, 2016.
- Little, John Branden. "Band of Crusaders: American Humanitarians, the Great War, and the Remaking of the World," PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2009.
- Loewenfeld-Russ, Hans. *Die Regelung der Volksernährung im Kriege*. Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1926.
- Löhr, Isabella. "Coping with a Post-War World: Protestant Student Internationalism and Humanitarian Work in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1920s." *Social History* 48, no. 1 (2023): 43–64.
- Lowe, Kimberly. "Better Fed than Red: International Famine Relief, 1921–22." In *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, edited by Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie. Manchester University Press, 2023.
- Lugli, Madelyn. "Hamilton Fish Armstrong and Yugoslavia: How an Internationalist's Idea of a New State Made Interwar-Era Foreign Affairs—and Foreign Affairs." *Modern American History* 7, no. 1 (2024): 1–23.
- Lukan, Walter. *Die Habsburgermonarchie und die Slowenen im Ersten Weltkrieg: Aus dem "schwarzgelben Völkerkäfig" in die "goldene Freiheit"?* New Academic Press, 2017.
- Lukan, Walter. "Habsburška monarhija in Slovenci v prvi svetovni vojni." *Zgodovinski časopis* 62, no. 1–2 (2008): 91–149.
- Luttwak, Edward. *Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook*. Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Malachič, Janez. "Demografski razvoj v Prekmurju 1919–2019: Upadanje prebivalstva ter modernizacija razvoja." In *"Mi vsi živeti ščemo": Prekmurje 1919: Okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice*, edited by Peter Štih, Kornelija Ajlec, and Attila Kovács. Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2020.
- Marek, Pavel. "'Hladová bouře' v Prostějově v dubnu 1917 – pravda a fikce." *Střední Morava* 48 (2019): 27–38.
- Marek, Pavel. "První světová válka očima starosty města." *Archivum Trebonense* 13 (2014): 75–95.
- Mareš, Jan, and Zdena Patrovská, eds. *Osvobození nebo porážka? Říjen 1918 na Lounsku, Podbořansku a Žatecku očima Čechů a Němců*. Státní oblastní archiv Litoměřice, 2018.
- Mark, James. "Wilson's White World: The Foundation of Central-Eastern European Nation-States after World War I." In *Off White: Central and Eastern Europe and the Global History of Race*, edited by Catherine Baker et al. Manchester University Press, 2024.

- Maršálek, Zdenko. "Armáda v roce jedna – nový duch versus kontinuita." In *Moc, vliv a autorita v procesu vzniku a utváření meziválečné ČSR (1918–1921)*. Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2008.
- Masaryk, Tomáš Garrigue. *Cesta demokracie*, vol. 1, *Projevy – články – rozhovory*, edited by Vojtěch Fejlek and Richard Vašek. Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 2003.
- Matějka, Ondřej. "Forging a 'Winning Spirit': The North American YMCA and the Czechoslovak Army, 1918–1921." In *In the Shadow of the Great War: Physical Violence in East-Central Europe, 1917–1923*, edited by Jochen Böhrer, Ota Konrád, and Rudolf Kučera. Berghahn, 2021.
- Maučec, Matija. "Prenaseljenost in sezonsko izseljevanje v Prekmurju." *Geografski vestnik* 9 (1933): 107–17.
- Maxwell, Alexander. "Edvard Beneš and the Soft Sell: Czechoslovak Diplomacy toward Lusatia, 1918–1919." *Bohemia* 54, no. 2 (2014), 348–67.
- Meier, Maria. *Von Notstand und Wohlstand: Die Basler Lebensmittelversorgung im Krieg, 1914–1918*. Chronos, 2020.
- Melega, Miklós. "Podnošenje žrtve i solidarnosti – Okrug Murska Sobota kao ratna pozadina (1914–1918)." In *Pomurje 1914–1920: Zbornik radova = Mura mente 1914–1920: Szöveggyűjtemény*, edited by Branimir Bunjac. Povijesno društvo Međimurske županije, 2011.
- Melik, Vasilij. *Volitve na Slovenskem: 1861–1918*. Slovenska matica, 1965.
- Milčinski, Fran. *Dnevnik 1914–1920*. Slovenska matica, 2000.
- Miletić, Aleksandar R. "From Disorder to 'the Normality': Food Provisioning in Western, Central, and Southeast Europe, 1914–1924." *Hiperborea* 8, no. 1 (2021): 59–80.
- Miller, Daniel. "Colonizing the Hungarian and German Border Areas During the Czechoslovak Land Reform, 1918–1938." *Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003): 303–17.
- Miller, Jan. *Z tradic selského rodu Vinduškova*, vol. 4, *Památník světové války*. [self-published], 1935.
- Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu a soubor zákonů, nařízení i výnosů zásobování se týkajících*. Tiskový odbor ministerstva pro zásobování lidu v republice československé, 1920.
- Mitchell, Ruth Crawford. *Alice Garrigue Masaryk 1879–1966: Her Life as Recorded in Her Own Words and by Her Friends*. University Center for International Studies, 1980.
- Moll, Martin. *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg: Der Kampf des Hinterlandes ums Überleben 1914–1918*. Styria, 2014.
- Morelon, Claire. "State Legitimacy and Continuity between the Habsburg Empire and Czechoslovakia: The 1918 Transition in Prague." In *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, edited by Paul Miller and Claire Morelon. Berghahn, 2019.

- Morelon, Claire. *Streetscapes of War and Revolution: Prague, 1914–1920*. Cambridge University Press, 2024.
- Müller, Dietmar. *Bodeneigentum und Nation: Rumänien, Jugoslawien und Polen im europäischen Vergleich, 1918–1948*. Wallstein Verlag, 2020.
- Murber, Ibolya. "Österreich und Ungarn in der bolschewistischen Sogwirkung Russlands 1917–1920." In *Das Erbe der Habsburgermonarchie in den Nachfolgestaaten: Brüche und Kontinuitäten*, edited by Ulrike Harmat. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2025.
- Národní shromáždění československé 1918–1920, Stenoprotokoly, 5. schůze (26 November 1918). Available at: Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, Společná česko-slovenská digitální parlamentní knihovna: Dokumenty českého a slovenského parlamentu, <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1918ns/ps/stenprot/005schuz/005002.htm>.
- Nečas, Jaromír. "Několik poznatků o zdravotním stavu v Praze za světové války." *Sborník lékařský* 24 (1923): 86–93.
- Nedvěd, Antonín. *Jak to bylo 1914–1918 v Plzni a na českém západě: Záznamy a dokumenty*. Grafika, 1939.
- Newman, John Paul. *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building, 1903–1945*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Novak, Vilko. *Ljudska prehrana v Prekmurju: Etnografska študija*. Slovenski knjižni zavod, 1947.
- Novotný, Lubomír. "Metody plebiscitní kampaně na Těšínském Slezsku v letech 1919–1920." In *Bibliotheca Antiqua 2012: Sborník z 21. konference 7.–8. listopadu 2012 Olomouc*, edited by Rostislav Krušínský and Tereza Vintrová. Vědecká knihovna v Olomouci, 2012.
- Ó Gráda, Cormac. *Famine: A Short History*. Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Oberhel, Hynek. "Ortova aféra: Mlynář J. K. Ort keřas, nebo dobrodinec?" *Paginae historiae* 31, no. 1 (2023): 343–57.
- Olas, Ludvik. "Razvoj in problemi sezonskega zaposlovanja prekmurskega prebivalstva." *Geografski vestnik* 12 (1956): 176–208.
- Olšovský, Rudolf et al., *Úvod do hospodářských dějin*. Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1962.
- Oman, Žiga. *Maribor v prvi svetovni vojni: Življenje v zaledju*. Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor, 2014.
- Orzoff, Andrea. *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Oset, Željko, and Kristina Ferk. *Porajanje Jugoslavije: Doživljaji Ljubljanačana (Miljutina Zarnika) leta 1918*. Založba Univerze v Novi Gorici, 2020.
- Ostojić-Fejić, Ubavka. "Američka humanitarna delatnost u Srbiji tokom Prvog svetskog rata." *Istorijski časopis* 39 (1992): 199–206.

- Ostojić-Fejić, Ubavka. *Sjedinjene Američke Države i Srbija, 1914–1918*. Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1994.
- Otte, T. G., ed. *An Historian in Peace and War: The Diaries of Harold Temperley*. Routledge, 2014.
- Paksy, Zoltán. "Dejavnost vodilnih teles za Medžimurje in Pomurje v letih 1918–1919." *Zbornik soboškega muzeja*, no. 11–12 (2008): 7–22.
- Pánek, Jaroslav et al., *A History of the Czech Lands*. Karolinum Press, 2018.
- Patenaude, Bertrand M. *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921*. Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Paulová, Milada. *Tajný výbor (Maffie) a spolupráce s Jihoslovany v letech 1916–1918*. Academia, 1968.
- Pelc, Ferdinand. "O Těšínsko." *Vzpomínky a úvahy*. Slezská matice osvěty lidové, 1928.
- Perhauc, Rafael. *Upor mornarjev v Boki Kotorski*. Partizanska knjiga, 1976.
- Perman, Dagmar. *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914–1920*. E. J. Brill, 1962.
- Perovšek, Jurij. "Iz Avstro-Ogrske." In *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: Od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije, 1848–1992*, vol. 1, edited by Jasna Fischer (Mladinska knjiga, 2005)
- Perovšek, Jurij. "Die Slovenen in der Umbruchszeit und im neuen jugoslawischen Staat (1918–1929)." In *Region und Umbruch 1918: Zur Geschichte alternativer Ordnungsversuche*, edited by Harald Heppner and Eduard Staudinger. Lang, 2001.
- Perovšek, Jurij. *Slovenski prevrat 1918: Položaj Slovencev v Državi Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov*. Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2018.
- Perovšek, Jurij. "V zaželeni deželi": *Slovenska izkušnja s Kraljevino SHS/Jugoslavijo: 1918–1941*. Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2009.
- Peša, Václav. "Národní výbory v roce 1918 na Moravě a ve Slezsku." *Časopis Matice moravské* 77, no. 3–4 (1958): 249–89.
- Peša, Václav. *Vznik Československé republiky 1918 a české národní výbory*. Horizont, 1988.
- Pět let Českého srdce 1917–1922*. České srdce, 1923.
- Petráň, Josef. *Dějiny českého venkova v příběhu Ouběnic*. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2011.
- Pfoser, Alfred, and Andreas Weigl, eds., *Im Epizentrum des Zusammenbruchs: Wien im Ersten Weltkrieg*. Metroverlag, 2013.
- Piahana, Aliaksandr. "Each Wagon of Coal Should Be Paid for with Territorial Concessions.' Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Coal Shortage in 1918–21." *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 34, no. 1 (2023): 86–116.
- Piller, Elisabeth. "Beyond Hoover: Rewriting the History of the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) through Female Involvement." *The International History Review* 45, no. 1 (2023), 202–24.

- Piller, Elisabeth. "The Blockade and the Making of Modern Food Aid in the Era of the Two World Wars." *The International History Review* 64, no. 4 (2024): 551–67.
- Piller, Elisabeth. "Despondence, Dependence and Dignity: On the Dilemmas of Being an Object of International Charity in Western Europe – a Weimar German Case Study." *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 30, no. 5 (2023): 770–90.
- Piller, Elisabeth, and Neville Wylie, eds., *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*. Manchester University Press, 2023.
- Piller, Elisabeth. "(In)Gratitude, US Ascendancy and Transatlantic Relations after the First World War." *Contemporary European History* 34, no. 2 (2025): 213–31.
- Pirc, Ivo. "Zdravstveno stanje in demografski podatki." In: *Spominski zbornik Slovenije: Ob dvajsetletnici kraljevine Jugoslavije*. Jubilej, 1939.
- Pirc, Ivo, and Franjo Baš. *Socialni problemi slovenske vasi*, vol. 1. Socialno-ekonomski institut, 1938.
- Pirquet, Clemens. *An Outline of the Pirquet System of Nutrition*. W. B. Saunders, 1922.
- Pleterski, Janko. *Prva odločitev Slovencev za Jugoslavijo: Politika na domačih tleh med vojno 1914–1918*. Slovenska matica, 1971.
- Pojar, Vojtěch. "Feeding Experts: Hunger Crisis and the Discourse of Eugenics in the Habsburg Empire, 1916–1918." *Střed/Centre* 16, no. 1 (2024): 7–34.
- Pojar, Vojtěch. "Prague's Urban Elites and the Problem of Spreading Hunger, 1914–1918." *Prager wirtschafts- und sozialhistorische Mitteilungen/Prague Economic and Social History Papers* 22, no. 2 (2015): 55–68.
- Pommer, Annette. "(Wiener) Kinder aufs Land.' Die Kinderverschickung im Ersten Weltkrieg." MA thesis. University of Salzburg, 2019.
- Prassnigger, Gerhard. "Hunger in Tirol." In *Tirol und der Erste Weltkrieg*, edited by Klaus Eisterer, Studien-Verlag, 1995.
- Příkryl, Ondřej. *Úryvky ze zápisků v době válečné*. Vydavatelský spolek Hlasů z Hané, 1928.
- Procházka, Ladislav Prokop. *Cestou za zdravím*. Lékařské knihkupectví a nakladatelství Mladé generace lékařů, 1931.
- Procházka, Ladislav P. "O české kuchyni." *Přítomnost*, no. 40 (1924): 627–30.
- Program českého vysokého učení technického v Praze na studijní rok 1921–1922*. ČVUT, 1921.
- Prott, Volker. "Plebiscites and the Difficult Transition to Peace after the First World War." In *Post-World War One Plebiscites and Their Legacies: Exploring the Right of Self-Determination*, edited by Sergiusz Bober. CEU Press, 2024.
- Pullmann, Michal. "Spravedlnost a demokracie v moderní době: Přelom roku 1918 mezi revolucí a reformou." In *Spravedlnost a demokracie v evropské integraci*, edited by Marek Hrubec. Filosofia, 2005.

- Rábová, Šárka Caitlín. *Tuberkulóza a společnost: Obrazy nemoci v 19. a 20. století*. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2022.
- Rahten, Andrej. *Med Kakanijo in Wilsonio: Poklicne in politične preizkušnje Hansa Schwegla alias Ivana Šveгла*. Mohorjeva založba, 2018.
- Rahten, Andrej. *Pozabljeni slovenski premier: Politična biografija dr. Janka Brejca (1869–1934)*. Mohorjeva založba, 2002.
- Rákosník, Jakub. "Czech Children in Need and the Mixed Economy of Welfare in Interwar Czechoslovakia (1918–1939)." In *Caring for the Socially Marginalised in Interwar Europe, 1919–1939: The Mixed Economy of Welfare*, edited by Michele Mioni and Stefano Petrungaro. Palgrave Macmillan, 2024.
- Rašín, Alois. *Paměti Dra Aloise Rašína*. L. Rašín, 1929.
- Rastović, Aleksandar P. "British Humanitarian and Medical Missions in Serbia in the 1914–1918." In *Al fronte: La Grande Guerra fra interventismo, cronaca e soccorso*, edited by Andrea Carteny, Giuseppe Motta, and Alessandro Vagninni. Nuova Cultura, 2018.
- Rauchensteiner, Manfred. *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914–1918*. Böhlau, 2013.
- Reed, Vivian Hux, and Jochen Böhrer, eds., *An American in Europe at War and Peace: Hugh S. Gibson's Chronicles, 1918–1919*. DeGruyter, 2021.
- Řeháček, Karel. "Diktatura 'ulice' v popřevratové Plzni (1918–1921)." In *Násilí: Jiná moderna*, edited by Bedřich Loewenstein et al. Historický ústav AV ČR, 2017.
- Řeháček, Karel. *Němci proti Československu na západě Čech (1918–1920)*. [self-published], 2008.
- Řeháček, Karel. "Zásobovací poměry v Plzni na přelomu let 1918–1919." *Západočeský historický sborník* 7 (2001): 297–329.
- Řeháček, Karel. "Život venkovského obyvatelstva v okolí Plzně v době velké války (1914–1918)." In *Venkov, rolník a válka v českých zemích a na Slovensku v moderní době*. Národní zemědělské muzeum, 2017.
- Reichel, Walter. *Selbstbestimmungsrecht im Widerstreit: von der nationalen Kontroverse zum militärischen Kräftemessen: Der Grenzkonflikt zwischen Deutschösterreich und der Tschechoslowakei 1918/1919*. Studienverlag, 2021.
- Reisman, Avguštin. *Iz življenja med vojno: Avstrijska sodišča*. Ljudska tiskarna, 1939.
- Révész, Tamás. "Post-war Turmoil and Violence (Hungary)." In *1914–1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, edited by Ute Daniel et al. Freie Universität Berlin, 2014, <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/post-war-turmoil-and-violence-hungary-1-1>.
- Ribnikar, Peter, ed. *Sejmi zapisniki Narodne vlade Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov v Ljubljani in Deželnih vlad za Slovenijo: 1918–1921*. 2 vol. Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1998–99.

- Robek, Antonín, Mirjam Moravcová, and Jarmila Šťastná, eds. *Stará dělnická Praha: Život a kultura pražských dělníků 1848–1939*. Academia, 1981.
- Rodogno, Davide. *Night on Earth: A History of International Humanitarianism in the Near East, 1918–1930*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Rodogno, Davide, Francesca Piana, and Shaloma Gauthier, “Shaping Poland: Relief and Rehabilitation Programmes Undertaken by Foreign Organizations, 1918–1922.” In *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, edited by Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jakob Vogel. Berghahn, 2014.
- Rojic, Vida. “Iz zgodovine Strnišča in Kidričevega.” *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 55, no. 1 (1984): 57–121.
- Romsics, Ignác. *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*. Corvina; Osiris, 1999.
- Rudi, Fabrizio. “Milenko R. Vesnić e la questione Adriatica, da Washington a Rapallo.” *Rivista di studi politici internazionali* 88, no. 3 (351) (2021): 329–86.
- Rybak, Jan. “A Death in Kraków and the End of an Empire.” *European Journal of Jewish Studies* (2025), pre-print, 1–24.
- Saje, Franček. “Revolucionarno gibanje kmečkega ljudstva v Sloveniji 1917–1919.” *Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja* 7, no. 1–2 (1967): 141–50.
- Salfellner, Harald. “Pandemie španělské chřipky 1918/19 se zvláštním zřetelem na České země a středoevropské poměry.” PhD diss., Charles University, 2017.
- Salvatici, Silvia. *A History of Humanitarianism, 1755–1989: In the Name of Others*. Manchester University Press, 2019.
- Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914–1918*, vol. 4, 1917. Státní ústřední archiv, 1996.
- Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914–1918*, vol. 5, 1918. Státní ústřední archiv, 1997.
- Schacherl, Gustav. “Die Nahrungsmittel und ihre Fälschung sowie die Ersatzstoffe, welche während des Krieges und in der Nachkriegszeit in den Handel gebracht wurden, I. Teil.” In *Volksgesundheit im Krieg*, vol. 2, edited by Clemens Pirquet. Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1926.
- Scheufler, Pavel. “Zásobování v Praze v letech 1. světové války.” In *Etnografie dělnictva* 9. Ústav pro etnografii a folkloristiku ČSAV, 1977.
- Schiff, Arthur. “Über das gehäufte Auftreten einer eigenartigen Ödemkrankheit.” *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 26 May 1917, 975–79.
- Schiff, Arthur. “Zur Pathologie der Ödemkrankheit.” *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 24 November 1917, 2133–43.
- Schmitner-Laszakovits, Sabine. “Surviving and Resisting the Wartime Order: Black-Market Economy in the Border Region of Wiener Neustadt during and after World War I.” In *The Disputed Austro-Hungarian Border: Agendas, Actors, and*

- Practices in Western Hungary/Burgenland after World War I*, edited by Hannes Grandits, Ibolya Murber, and Katharina Tyran. Berghahn, 2025.
- Šedivý, Ivan. *Češi, české země a Velká válka*. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2014.
- Šedivý, Ivan. "K otázce kontinuity nositelů státní moci: jmenování vedoucích úředníků v kompetenci ministerstva vnitra v letech 1918–1921." In *Moc, vliv a autorita v procesu vzniku a utváření meziválečné ČSR (1918–1921)*. Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2008.
- Sedmak, Drago. *Življenje v Kobaridu med prvo svetovno vojno*. Mohorjeva založba, 2001.
- Selišnik, Irena. "Female Suffrage in Slovenia." In *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe: Voting to Become Citizens*, edited by Blanca Rodríguez Ruiz and Ruth Rubio Marín, Brill, 2012.
- Selišnik, Irena. "The Ladies of Charity in Carniola, 1848 to 1914." *Aspasia* 8, no. 1 (2014): 64–89.
- Sen, Amartya. *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Shaw, Milton. *Joseph T. Shaw: The Man Behind Black Mask*. Steeger Properties, 2019.
- Silverstein, Sara. "The Periphery Is the Centre: Some Macedonian Origins of Social Medicine and Internationalism." *Contemporary European History* 28, no. 2 (2019): 220–33.
- Silverstein, Sara. "Reinventing International Health in East Central Europe: The League of Nations, State Sovereignty, and Universal Health." In *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, ed. Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley. Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Šimac, Miha. "Upor 2. gorskega strelskega polka v Codroipu 1918." *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 88, no. 4 (2017): 5–20.
- Šimandl, Otakar. *1914–1918: Příspěvek k dějinám našeho domácího odboje od vypuknutí světové války až do dne osvobození*. [self-published], 1937.
- Škulj, Edo, ed. *Kleklov simpozij v Rimu*. Mohorjeva družba, 1995.
- Slabová, Markéta. "'Kdo si v létě nesošil ovoce a houby, bude v zimě sušit hubu.' Strava a stravování ve válečných letech 1914–1918." In *Krajiny prostřených i prázdných stolů*, vol. 1, *Evropská gastronomie v proměnách staletí*, edited by Blanka Jedličková et al. Univerzita Pardubice, 2016.
- Slanovec, Lojze. "Ljubljanska kronika." *Kronika slovenskih mest* 1, no. 1 (1934): 61–76; no. 2 (1934): 142–56.
- Slapnicka, Helmut. *Österreichs Recht ausserhalb Österreichs: Der Untergang des österreichischen Rechtsraums*. Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1973.
- Slavič, Matija. *Naše Prekmurje: Zbrane razprave in članki*, edited by Viktor Vrtnjak. Pomurska založba, 1999.

- Šmidrkal, Václav. "Food Profiteering, Paper Laws, and Criminal Justice in the Bohemian Lands after 1918." *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 266–82.
- Šmidrkal, Václav. "'What a Republic It Was!': Public Violence and State Building in the Bohemian Lands after 1918." *Contemporary European History* 28, no. 3 (2019): 303–18.
- Šmidrkal, Václav, and Rok Stergar. "Food Shortages during the Post-Habsburg Transition in the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia." *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 243–53.
- Šmidrkal, Václav et al. *Vanquished and Victorious: World War I Veterans in Austria and Czechoslovakia, 1918–1938*. Berghahn, 2024.
- Šolle, Zdeněk. *Dělnické hnutí v českých zemích za imperialistické světové války*. Rovnost, 1952.
- Šorn, Jože. "Cene in mezde ter gospodarski položaj industrijskega delavstva na Slovenskem neposredno po prevratu." *Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja* 7, no. 1–2 (1967): 233–35.
- Šorn, Jože. "Slovinci in gospodarski položaj v prvi svetovni vojni." *Zgodovinski časopis* 35, no. 1–2 (1981): 57–81.
- Šorn, Jože. *Slovensko gospodarstvo v poprevratnih letih 1919–1924*. Cankarjeva založba, 1997.
- Šorn, Mojca. *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno*. Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2020.
- Soukup, František. 28. říjen, 2 vols. Ústřední dělnické knihkupectví a nakladatelství, 1928.
- Šovljakov, Mara. *Glad u Bosni i Hercegovini i smeštanje 10.000 dece u Karlovačku mitropoliju 1917–1920*. Arhiv Republike Srpske; Arhiv Vojvodine; Istorijski arhiv Užice, 2021.
- Staaïj, Ad van de. "American and Dutch Food Aid in 1922: Differing Attitudes?" *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 40, no. 1 (2022), 33–60.
- Staliūnas, Darius. "Introduction: 1918, A Sharp Rupture or a Period of Transition?" *Slavic Review* 78, no. 3 (2019): 637–39.
- Stanonik, Marija. *Štiri matere – ena ljubezen: Zgodba neke družine*. Slovensko etnološko društvo, 1997.
- Stavbar, Vlasta. *Kulturno dogajanje v Mariboru v letih 1914–1918*. Obzorja, 1998.
- Štefan, Josef. *Státní účetnictví československé*. [self-published], 1921.
- Stegmann, Natali. *Kriegsdeutungen – Staatsgründungen – Sozialpolitik: der Helden- und Opferdiskurs in der Tschechoslowakei 1918–1948*. Oldenbourg, 2010.
- Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrates, XXII. Session*. K. k. Hof- und Staats-Druckerei, 1918.
- Štěpánek, Daniel. "Zásobovací situace v benešovském okrese po první světové válce." *Sborník vlastivědných prací Podblanicka* 38 (1998): 309–32.

- Štěpek, Jiří. *Přídělové systémy na území Československa 1915–2015*, vol. 1, (1915–1945). Odbor Archivní správy a spisové služby MV ČR, 2018.
- Stergar, Rok. "L'expérience des soldats austro-hongrois sur le front austro-italien: Le problème du ravitaillement en vivres." In *Soldati e quotidianità della guerra*, ed. Giovanni L. Fontana and Marco Mondini. Pacini editore, 2019.
- Stergar, Rok. "Continuity, Pragmatism, and Ethnolinguistic Nationalism: Public Administration in Slovenia during the Early Years of Yugoslavia." In *Hofratsdämmerung? Verwaltung und Ihr Personal in den Nachfolgestaaten der Habsburgermonarchie 1918 bis 1920*, edited by Peter Becker et al., Böhlau, 2020.
- Stergar, Rok. "Hrana na bojiščih 1. svetovne vojne: Izkušnje slovenskih vojakov." *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 55, no. 2 (2015): 22–53.
- Stergar, Rok. "'We Will Look like Fools if Nothing Comes of This Yugoslavia!': The Establishment of Yugoslavia from the Perspective of Slovene Contemporaries." *Hiperboreea* 10, no. 1 (2023): 82–101.
- Stergar, Rok. "'Yugoslavia Is Worthless ... You Can Get Neither Sugar nor Kerosene.' Food Supply and Political Legitimacy in the Slovene Part of Yugoslavia, 1918–1924." *Austrian History Yearbook* 55 (2024): 254–65.
- Štih, Peter, Kornelija Ajlec, and Attila Kovács, eds. *"Mi vsi živeti ščemo": Prekmurje 1919: Okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice*. Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2020.
- Stiplovšek, Miroslav. *Razmah strokovnega-sindikalnega gibanja na Slovenskem 1918–1922: Pregled razvoja in delovanja strokovnih organizacij v jugoslovanskem delu Slovenije od prevrata 1918 do ponovne utrditve revolucionarnih strokovnih organizacij konec 1922*. Partizanska knjiga; Delavska enotnost, 1979.
- Strettiová, Marie. *Jak jsme prožívali první světovou válku*. Ústav T.G. Masaryka, 2019.
- Strickland, Charles E. "American Aid to Germany, 1919 to 1921." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 45, no. 4 (1962): 256–70.
- Studen, Andrej. "O 'ferdamanih babah in dedih': Odraz vsakdanjika v zapisih okrajnega sodišča Konjice v prevratni dobi." *Zgodovina za vse* 27, no. 2 (2020): 25–56.
- Suppan, Arnold. *Neighbors for a Thousand Years: Austrians – Czechs – Sudeten Germans*. Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2023.
- Surface, Frank M., and Raymond L. Bland. *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period: Operations of the Organizations under the Direction of Herbert Hoover, 1914 to 1924*. Stanford University Press, 1931.
- Šurlan, Tijana. "International Legal Recognition of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes." *Istorija 20. veka* 41, no. 1 (2023): 1–18.
- Svoljšak, Petra, and Gregor Antoličič, *Leta strahote: Slovenci in prva svetovna vojna*. Cankarjeva založba, 2018.

- Svoljšak, Petra, ed. *Istra u velikom ratu: glad, bolesti, smrt = L'Istria nella grande guerra: fame, malattie, morte = Istra v veliki vojni: glad, bolesti, smrt*. Histria Editiones, 2017.
- Szajkowski, Zosa. "Private American Jewish Overseas Relief (1919–1938): Problems and Attempted Solutions." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (1968): 285–350.
- Talton, Benjamin. "‘Land to the Tiller’: Hunger and the End of Monarchy in Ethiopia." In *Food in Zones of Conflict: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Paul Collinson and Helen Macbeth. Berghahn, 2014.
- Taratko, Carolyn D. "Autarky from the Ground Up: Settlement and Agricultural Independence in Weimar Germany." *The American Historical Review* 128, no. 2 (2023): 842–61.
- Tchoukarine, Igor. "‘The Sea Connects; It Does Not Divide’: Czech Tourism on the Interwar Adriatic." *Journal of Tourism History* 6, no. 2–3 (2014): 139–57.
- Testen Koren, Petra. "‘Dajte nam kruha! Sklenite mir!’ Zaledje (Soške) fronte, pomanjkanje in posledice revolucionarnega dogajanja na Ruskem," *Monitor ISH* 20, no 1 (2018): 95–121.
- Titl, Julij. *Murska republika 1919*. Pomurska založba, 1970.
- Tomasevich, Jozo. *Peasants, Politics, and Economic Change in Yugoslavia*. Stanford University Press, 1955.
- Tönsmeier, Tatjana. "Supply Situations: National Socialist Policies of Exploitation and Economies of Shortage in Occupied Societies During World War II." In *Coping with Hunger and Shortage under German Occupation in World War II*, edited by Tatjana Tönsmeier, Peter Haslinger, and Agnes Laba. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Trestní statistika z Čech, Moravy a Slezska v letech 1913–1918*. Státní úřad statistický, 1923.
- Tyquin, Michael B. "Profiteering in Australia during the First World War." *War & Society* 39, no. 1 (2020): 23–41.
- Ude, Lojze. "Upori slovenskega vojaštva v avstro-ogrski armadi." *Zgodovinski časopis* 22, no. 3–4 (1968): 185–205.
- Urban, Otto. *Česká společnost 1848–1918*. Svoboda, 1982.
- Valenta, Jaroslav. "Die Teschener Frage in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1918–1939." In *Polen und die böhmischen Länder im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Politik und Gesellschaft im Vergleich*. Oldenbourg, 1997.
- Valenta, Jaroslav. "Legenda o 'rebelech, s nimiž se nevyjednává.'" *Moderní dějiny* 2 (1994): 197–214.
- Valenta, Jaroslav. *Česko-polské vztahy v letech 1918–1920 a Těšínské Slezsko*. Krajské nakladatelství Ostrava, 1961.

- Vítek, Vladimír. "Ohlasy událostí na rozhraní let 1918–1919: Okres Chomutov." In *Vznik samostatného Československa a severní Čechy*. Okresní archiv; Odbor pro vnitřní věci SKNV, 1968.
- Vojáček, Ladislav. *První československý zákon: Pokus o opožděný komentář*. Wolters Kluwer, 2018.
- Vojenské dějiny Československa*, vol. 3, *Od roku 1918 do roku 1939*. Naše vojsko, 1987.
- Vondráček, Jan. *Herrschaft, Verwaltung und Alltag im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren: Alltägliche Wirtschaften im politischen Bezirk Kladno 1939–1945*. Herder-Institut, 2021.
- Voska, Emanuel. *Ve víru poválečném*. E. V. Voska, 1922.
- Voska, Emanuel. "Z účasti zaoceánského emigranta v československém odboji." *Naše revoluce* 1, no. 2–3 (1923): 239–51.
- Vrbnjak, Metka. "Mariborsko žensko društvo." In *Splošno žensko društvo 1901–1945*, edited by Nataša Budna Kodrič and Aleksandra Serše. Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 2003.
- Wambaugh, Sarah. *Plebiscites since the World War: With a Collection of Official Documents*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933.
- Watson, Alexander. *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I*. Basic Books, 2014.
- Wehowski, Matthäus and Filip Bláha, *Die Spanische Grippe und die Habsburgermonarchie: Gesundheitspolitik, multiple Krisen und Staatszerfall*. V&R unipress, 2025.
- Weigl, Andreas. "The Winter of Misery: Demographic Indicators of the Austrian Republic in the Postwar-Period 1918/19." In *Vermessung einer Zeitschwelle: Die Bedeutung des Jahres 1918 in österreichischer, europäischer und globaler Perspektive / Surveying a Time Threshold: The Importance of 1918 in an Austrian, European and Global Perspective*, edited by Brigitte Mazohl et al. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2024.
- Weindling, Paul. "Public Health and Political Stabilisation: The Rockefeller Foundation in Central and Eastern Europe between the Two World Wars." *Minerva* 31, no. 3 (1993): 253–67.
- Weinreb, Alice. *Modern Hungers: Food and Power in Twentieth-Century Germany*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Wingfield, Nancy M. "Democracy's Violent Birth: The Czech Legionnaires and Statue Wars in the First Czechoslovak Republic." *Austrian History Yearbook* 53 (2022): 1–17.
- Zahra, Tara. *Against the World: Anti-globalism and Mass Politics between the World Wars*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2023.
- Zahra, Tara. "Anti-Globalism and the Collapse of Austria." *The American Historical Review* 128, no. 2 (2023): 862–80.

- Zahradnik, Stanisław. "Národnostní struktura na Zaolží podle výsledků sčítání lidu (1880–1991)." In *Nástin dějin Těšínska*, edited by Mečislav Borák and Dan Gawrecki. Advertis, 1992.
- Žák, Jan. "Mlynářství." In *Československá vlastivěda*, vol. 9, *Technika*. Sfinx, 1929.
- Zeidler, Miklós. "Trianon, Treaty of." In *1914-1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, edited by Ute Daniel et al. Freie Universität Berlin, 2014, <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/trianon-treaty-of/>.
- Žipek, Alois. "Zásobování Prahy v r. 1918 až do převratu." In *Domov za války (svědectví účastníků)*, edited by Alois Žipek, vol. 5. Pokrok, 1931.
- Zückert, Martin. *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität: Die tschechoslowakische Armee und ihre Nationalitätenpolitik 1918–1938*. Oldenbourg, 2006.
- Zwarte, Ingrid de. *The Hunger Winter: Fighting Famine in the Occupied Netherlands, 1944–1945*. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Index

- Adriatic Sea, 31, 64, 73, 165, 185, 214, 226, 280
 Agrarian Party (Czech), 76, 87, 123, 138–39, 143, 163, 213
 agricultural workers, 47, 65, 259, 268, 270, 279
 Alsberg, Henry Garfield, 183
 American Czechs, 172, 178–79, 183–85, 204, 212
 American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 179, 181, 183, 202
 American Red Cross, 108, 176, 179, 185, 187, 194, 199, 208, 211, 215
 American Relief Administration, 22, 41, 148, 152, 156, 170, 174, 176–77, 181, 183, 185, 187–88, 190, 192, 196, 198, 200, 204, 207, 209–12, 214–15, 217–18, 280
 food draft program, 201–2, 204
 kitchens, 190–92, 194–95, 197, 199–201, 208–9, 211, 217
 warehouses, 181, 203–4
 American Yugo-Slav Relief, 174, 176, 185, 187, 208, 211
 Anglo-Czech Relief Society, 179
 Argentina, 273
 Armstrong, Hamilton Fish, 174
 artisans, 264
 Aš/Asch, 110, 148, 194
 Aster Revolution, 251
 atheism, 246
 Attems-Heiligenkreuz, Heinrich Christian von, 96, 98
 Austria (after 1918), 21–22, 31, 34, 99, 109–10, 119, 121, 145, 152, 156–57, 163, 171–72, 183, 201, 203–4, 209, 226, 254, 260–62, 264, 282–85, 288
 Austria (before 1918), 21, 29, 30, 44–48, 60, 66, 72–74, 83, 94–95, 98, 100, 102, 111, 130–31, 136, 163, 215, 223, 226, 239, 246, 252, 281, 289
 Austria-Hungary, 20–21, 24–27, 28–29, 31–32, 39, 43, 45, 47, 60, 63, 94–95, 99, 101, 109, 119, 122, 129, 131–132, 136, 148, 161, 167–68, 177, 223, 227, 229, 249, 270, 278–79, 282
 Austrian Red Cross, 81

 Baberowski, Jörg, 88
 Balaton Lake, 272
 Banat, 171
 Bärenstein, 70
 Bartol, Marica, 131
 Bavorov/Barau, 195
 Baxa, Bohumil, 126
 beef, 48, 52, 89, 93, 202, 234, 261
 beer, 54, 104, 223, 236, 286
 Belgium, 92, 165, 169–70, 181, 190, 192
 Belgrade, 133, 154, 156, 171, 176, 182, 185, 217
 Beltinci/ Belatincz, 252
 Beneš, Edvard, 172, 216–17, 234
 Benešov/Beneschau, 194

 Benkič, Štefan, 261
 Benko, Jožef, 260, 262
 Beroun/Beraun, 88
 Bertram, Christian, 166
 Bielsko-Biala/Bílsko-Bělá/Bielitz-Biala, 235
 black market, 33, 40, 50, 53, 58, 60, 79–80, 89–99, 101, 115, 126–27, 133, 136, 144–46, 149, 160, 162, 253, 274–75, 281
 blast furnaces, 223, 236
 blockade
 inner, 46–47, 112, 122
 naval, 21, 32, 46–7, 56, 66, 214, 253, 282–83, 288
 Bohemia, 37, 54, 57–59, 64–65, 67–68, 70–74, 76–77, 79, 86–93, 96, 101, 109, 112–13, 119–30, 148, 152, 179, 183, 195, 199, 214, 283
 Central, 76, 83, 88, 93, 111, 148, 194
 Eastern, 78, 129, 136, 150, 195–96, 199
 German, 109–18, 123, 283
 Northern, 59, 62, 64–66, 70–71, 74, 78–79, 83, 89, 101, 112–13, 115, 117, 137–38, 148, 152, 163, 194–95, 212, 280
 Northwestern, 22, 40, 45, 109, 111
 Southern, 72, 78, 105, 194–95
 Southwestern, 65
 Western, 73–74, 78, 83, 101, 111, 148, 194, 280–81
 Bohemian Lands, 20, 27–30, 35–36, 39–42, 44–46, 54, 62, 75, 77, 90, 94–95, 97, 100–101, 107, 109–12, 124, 127, 135–36, 138, 150–51, 153, 161–64, 167–69, 172–73, 177, 179, 181–82, 193, 201, 203–4, 209–13, 215, 218–19, 224, 227, 236, 246, 278–80
 Böhler, Jochen, 76
 bolshevism, 24, 26, 35, 37, 54, 92, 97, 139, 175, 188, 236, 241, 247, 274, 285
 Boškin, Angela, 188
 Bosnia, 120, 177, 215, 218, 280
 Boundary Commission, Yugoslav-Hungarian, 228, 265–67, 271
 Bovec/Flitsch, 51
 bread, 48, 51, 54, 70, 80, 85, 96, 109–111, 113–14, 119, 130, 138, 147, 152–55, 160, 171, 174, 180, 182, 185, 190, 197, 211, 267–68
 Brestanica (before Rajhenburg/Reichenburg in der Steiermark), 99
 bribery, 116, 232
 Brno/Brünn, 19, 55–56, 127, 135, 140, 179, 193
 Brown, Walter Lyman, 198, 201
 Bučina/Butschina, 136

 Cajori, Anton Florian, 189–90, 211
 calories, 61, 63, 65–66, 70, 73–74, 84, 101, 197–98, 249
 Canada, 273
 Cankova/Vashidegkút, 263
 Carinthia, 28–29, 64, 97, 99–100, 189, 255, 282, 286
 Carniola, 28, 50, 82, 96, 98, 100, 154, 226

- Lower, 73
 Upper, 61, 145, 160, 188–89
 Catholic societies, 80–81
 Catholicism, 95, 97, 186, 190, 258
 Celje/Cilli, 80, 119, 133–34, 152, 154, 156, 160, 182, 188
 censorship, 75–76, 129–30, 247–48
 cereals, 48, 154, 158–59, 252–53, 257, 259
 chain trade system, 146, 242, 275
 charity, 40, 45, 74, 77, 80–82, 101, 121, 166–67, 177,
 180–81, 187, 190, 192, 194–95, 205, 284
 Charles I of Austria, 74, 77, 94
 Cheb/Eger, 110, 113, 116, 194
 children, 34, 47, 49, 52, 61–62, 74–76, 80–83,
 148, 156–57, 162, 179, 186–201, 205, 208–12,
 215, 217, 281, 286
 Chomutov/Komotau, 70
 Chrastava/Kratzau, 111, 114
 Cieszyn/Těšín/Teschen, 223
 Cisleithania, *see* Austria (before 1918)
 Civil Commissioner for Prekmurje, 255–57,
 263, 265
 civil control of food supply (in Czechoslovakia),
 124–26, 130
 Clary-Aldringen, Maria Carlos, 174–75
 clergy, 43–44, 59–60, 186, 245–46, 258–59, 283
 coal, 46, 60, 73, 92–93, 112, 129, 148, 151, 153, 223,
 238–40, 255, 280
 mining, 187–88, 224
 cocoa, 180, 184, 190–91, 197–98, 201, 208, 211
 coffee, 48, 51, 70, 89, 174, 184
 Commercial Cooperative of Prekmurje, 222
 Commission for Relief in Belgium, 170, 192
 Commonwealth Fund, 205–7
 conference, peace, 118, 172, 217–18, 233, 255
 Coolidge, Archibald Cary, 185
 cooperatives
 agricultural, 94, 127–28, 270
 consumer, 159, 232, 239, 240
 corn products, 51, 53–54, 65, 156–57, 218
 Coudenhove, Max Julius, 66, 87
 coup d'état, Czech on 28 October 1918, 25, 86,
 95, 103, 105, 121–23, 127–28, 142, 164, 279
 courts, 57, 59, 79, 88, 138, 140, 146
 military, 57
 people's (in Yugoslavia), 146, 263
 people's price (in Czechoslovakia), 137
 profiteering (in Yugoslavia), 164
 usury (in Czechoslovakia), 128, 139–40,
 143–44, 164
 Crawford, Ruth, 180
 Crikvenica/Cirquenizza, 189
 Croatia, 82, 98, 108, 120, 153–54, 182, 189, 226,
 256, 272–73
 currency, 49, 145, 156, 170, 235, 246, 253, 262,
 272, 279
 currency reform
 in Czechoslovakia, 137
 in Yugoslavia, 157
 Czech Heart, 75–77, 86, 101, 193, 195, 281
 Czech National Committee, 85–90, 92–93, 95,
 112–13, 123, 127, 135, 168, 216
 Czech Provincial Commission for the Care of
 Children and Youth in Bohemia, 193–94
 Czech Society of Great Britain, 179
 Czechoslovak Child Care, 193–200, 203–4, 208,
 210, 212–13
 Czechoslovak Commercial Corporation of
 America, 184–85
 Czechoslovak National Council in America,
 184–85
 Czechoslovak Plebiscite Commission, 233–34,
 240–42, 245
 Czechoslovak Press Office, 204, 244
 Czechoslovak Red Cross, 178, 182, 210, 212
 Czigány, János, 252

 Dalmatia, 64–65, 177, 218, 255, 280
 death penalty, 57, 139, 146
 de-Austrianization, 106, 139
 debts, 52, 53, 78, 242, 246
 demarcation line
 between Yugoslavia and Italy, 152
 in Prekmurje, 41, 250, 255, 272, 275, 284
 in Teschen Silesia, 41, 222–23, 227, 230–33,
 236–38, 275–76, 284
 demonstrations, 54, 58, 77, 92–93, 96, 99, 107,
 120–21, 135, 138–39, 142–44, 147, 151, 155, 161,
 207, 235, 247, 264–68, 271, 275
 Department of Nutrition (Ljubljana), *see*
 Ministry of Nutrition (Ljubljana)
 Department of Welfare (Ljubljana), *see*
 Ministry of Welfare (Ljubljana)
 Directorate of the Vend District, 253–54
 district captain, 44, 55, 72–73, 94, 101, 104,
 118–19, 122–23, 127–29, 132, 134, 142, 151, 155,
 158, 173, 189, 263, 265, 267–68
 district grain office, 129
 District Youth Welfare Committees (Bohemian
 Lands), 193, 212
 Dolnja Lendava/Alsólendva, 226, 252, 256, 263,
 272
 Dragatuš/Dragatusch, 186
 Dubá/Dauba, 114, 118
 Dubrovnik/Ragusa, 176
 Duchcov/Dux, 113, 194

 economic councils (Bohemian Lands), 19–20,
 86–88, 94–96, 102, 123–27, 130, 135, 164, 281
 eggs, 108, 120, 245, 253, 261, 277
 emergency
 areas, 67, 80
 Emergency Committee “North,” 78
 German-Bohemian Emergency Committee
 from the House of Lords, 67, 69, 78
 state of, 248
 ethnicity, 28, 56, 71, 75, 101, 109, 136, 162, 224–25,
 227, 230, 246, 251, 275, 281, 287

- European Children's Fund, 186–87, 189, 191,
198–99, 204–5, 208–11
- European Student Relief, 180
- export, 20, 45–47, 87, 92–95, 99, 111, 113, 127, 146,
154, 157, 159–60, 171, 219, 223, 237, 242, 252,
257–259, 261–62, 272, 274, 287
- famine, *see* starvation
- Fartek, Mihael, 268
- Fischl, Alfred, 55
- Fitzmaurice, Gerald Henry, 166
- flour, 47, 48, 51, 53, 55–57, 61, 76, 89–90, 93, 104–5,
108, 110–11, 114, 133, 137–38, 140, 144, 147, 151–59,
175, 179, 181–85, 190, 197–98, 202, 205, 207, 211,
213–14, 234–35, 237–38, 245, 255, 259–60, 286
- food
- access to, 45, 50, 52, 54, 60, 64–65, 75,
100–101, 249, 274, 249, 276, 280–81
 - barter of, 51, 70, 100, 105, 108, 155, 157, 191,
253, 280
 - hoarding of, 55, 127, 133, 284
 - import of, 21, 31, 47, 65–66, 82, 87, 98, 100,
105, 111, 120, 151, 153, 155, 158, 203–4, 209,
213, 219, 254, 267
 - profiteering, 40, 50, 52, 56, 59–60, 79–80,
86–88, 90, 93, 100, 105, 125, 128, 135–40,
143–46, 163, 284
 - requisitioning of, 50, 55, 61, 97, 100, 135,
141–44, 159, 163, 246, 254, 284
- foreign aid, 20–22, 31, 41, 107–8, 153, 155–56,
164–219, 280, 285, 287
- France, 22, 181, 213, 217, 273, 284
- free trade
- introduction in Slovenia, 134, 154–56,
158–59, 185–86
 - introduction in the Bohemian Lands, 122,
143–44, 149–50, 152
- Friedrich, Archduke, 223
- Frothingham, John Whipple, 165
- fruit, 51, 70, 85, 106, 120, 150–51, 233
- Frýdek/Friedeck/Frydek, 194
- Frydlant/Friedland, 117
- Gaberc, Vinko, 83
- Galicja, 47, 56, 63, 75, 78, 93, 105, 136, 181,
224–25, 245–46
- gasoline, 151
- Gazette of the Ministry of People's Supply, 124,
130–31
- Gdańsk/Danzig, 241
- gendarmierie, 133–34, 141, 152, 252, 263, 267–68
- general strike on 14 October 1918, 91–93, 95
- Germans
- in Slovenia, 28, 80, 81, 96, 98–99, 109, 119–21,
154, 162–63, 282
 - in the Bohemian Lands, 28, 55–56, 64–65,
71–72, 75, 77, 79, 89, 91–94, 110–118, 131,
141–143, 148, 151, 162–63, 174, 224–25,
235–36, 245, 283
- Germany, 21–22, 29, 34, 39, 65, 70, 76, 91, 101,
113, 117, 157, 172, 183–84, 201, 203–4, 241, 244,
273, 288
- Gibson, Hugh Simons, 174
- Gmünd, 137
- Gorje/Göriach, 61
- government
- National/Provincial of Slovenia, 28–30,
102, 106–109, 119–121, 131–134, 144–146,
152–159, 161–62, 168, 185, 188–192, 217–18,
221–22, 256–260, 265, 267, 278
 - of (German) Austria, 94
 - of Austria (before 1918), 45, 47, 70, 78–79,
85–90, 92–96, 98, 102, 128, 131
 - of Czechoslovakia, 29, 94–95, 110–15,
122–24, 127, 129, 135, 139, 162, 181, 193, 196,
198, 207, 209, 212–13, 217, 223–24, 227,
232–34, 239–44, 273–75, 284–85, 287
 - of German Bohemia, 112, 114–117
 - of Hungary, 47, 226, 250–51, 253, 270, 283
 - of Poland, 224, 227, 236, 238, 242–245,
274–75, 284
 - of Yugoslavia, 160, 171, 182, 185, 217, 271, 284–85
 - provincial of Bohemia, 78–79, 86–87, 90, 124
 - provincial of Carniola, 50, 61, 96, 98
 - provincial of Silesia, 213
 - provincial of Styria, 61, 96, 121
- Grahovo/Grachowo, 43, 44
- grain, 46, 55, 57, 70, 76, 89–90, 93, 95, 98, 108,
111–12, 114, 127, 140–41, 143, 151–52, 156–60,
168, 170–71, 182, 186, 208, 213, 218, 243, 252,
255, 258–60, 267, 271, 287, 289
- Graz, 121, 151, 252, 282
- Great Britain, *see* United Kingdom
- Green Cadres, 37, 249
- Gruič, Slavko, 177
- Gryč, Pavel, 230, 232
- Guth-Jarkovský, Jiří Stanislav, 59
- Haberman, Gustav, 92
- Habsburg Empire, *see* Austria-Hungary
- Hajšman, Jan, 96
- Hamburg, 184
- Harriman, Mary, 176
- Herben, Jan, 92
- Hirschman, Albert O., 54
- historical rights, 28, 227
- Hnátek, František Xaver, 198
- Höfer, Anton, 79
- Hoffman, Malvina, 211
- Hoover, Herbert, 170–76, 183, 185, 187, 198–9,
202–3, 214–15, 217
- Hrastnik/Hrastnigg, 156, 188–89
- Hribar, Ivan, 167, 171, 218
- Hungary, 21, 28–31, 34, 41, 47, 183, 192, 201, 203,
225–26, 228–29, 239, 250–54, 258, 260–61,
264–68, 270–73, 275, 279, 282
- hunger edema, 45, 62–69, 71–74, 79, 100, 148,
280

- hunger, 24, 40, 44, 61–68, 71–75, 80–83, 86, 92,
 100–102, 107, 115, 119, 122, 149, 160, 162, 168,
 178, 208, 218, 248, 278, 280, 286, 288
 Hutchinson, Lincoln, 181, 183
 inflation, 38, 48–49, 52, 78, 83, 100, 105, 108, 131,
 135–36, 114–46, 149–50, 155–58, 161–62, 242,
 280–81, 287–88
 Inter-Allied Scientific Food Commission, 148, 218
 International Allied Plebiscite Commission,
 227, 233, 237–38, 247
 ironworks, 61, 64, 223, 236, 240
 Irwin, Julia, 166
 Istanbul, 166
 Istria, 93, 97–98, 167–68
 Italy, 29, 31, 145, 152, 181, 213–14, 218, 233, 289
 Jablonec nad Nisou/Gablonz an der Neiße, 148
 Jaksch, Rudolf, 63–65
 Jászi, Oszkár, 251
 Jesenice/Assling, 188
 Jews, 56, 75, 136, 181, 183, 202, 224, 245, 249
 Jilemnice/Starkenbach, 148
 Jindřichovice/Heinrichsgrün, 116
 Yugoslav Relief, 177, 186
 Kadlčák, Josef, 168
 Kamna Gorica/Steinbüchel, 61
 Karlíček, Petr, 89
 Károlyi, Mihály, 250–51, 270
 Karviná/Karwina/Karwin, 234, 238–39
 Kašpar, Adolf, 202–3
 King, LeRoy, 185
 Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, *see*
 Yugoslavia
 kitchens, American, *see* American Relief
 Administration kitchens
 kitchens, war, 66–67, 73, 78, 80–81, 87, 148, 183
 Kladno, 195
 Klagenfurt/Celovec, 189
 Klečacký, Martin, 66
 Klekl, Jožef, 259, 283
 Knar, Geza, 261
 Kobarid/Karfreit, 82
 Kočevsko/Gotscheeland, 73
 Koloušek, Jan, 172
 Koper/Capodistria, 73
 Korošec, Anton, 98–99, 132, 159, 160
 Košice-Bohumín railway, 227
 Kosina, Jan, 90
 Kosovo, 215
 Košnice/Kostitz, 79, 137
 Kotek, Josef, 57
 Kotor/Cattaro, 176
 Kramář, Karel, 174
 Kramoly/Krammel, 117
 Kranj/Krainburg, 155, 158, 189
 Kristan, Anton, 145
 Kropa/Kropp, 61
 Krško/Gurkfeld, 99
 Kučnica (river), 262
 Lajnsič, Srečko, 119
 land reform, 269–71, 273, 276, 284, 287
 landowners, 75, 259–61, 270–71
 lard, 48, 53, 61, 108, 155–56, 185, 198, 202, 205,
 253, 255
 leaflets, 76, 113, 147, 212, 266
 Liberec/Reichenberg, 78, 110–111, 114, 116, 282
 Litomyšl/Leitomischl, 129, 195–96, 201, 213
 Littoral, Austrian, 28, 56, 82, 211
 livestock 46–47, 61, 106, 120, 130–32, 136, 243,
 252–54, 260–262, 287
 Ljubljana/Laibach, 28–30, 44, 46, 53, 61–62,
 96–101, 106–10, 121, 132, 144, 147, 152–57, 160,
 162–63, 167–68, 171, 176, 182, 185–86, 188–90,
 192, 211, 217–18, 221–22, 255, 257, 260, 267,
 269, 280, 282
 London, 166, 201, 204, 216
 Lovosice/Lobositz, 115
 Macedonia, 177
 Maister, Rudolf, 119
 Manětín/Manetin, 111
 Marek, Pavel, 56
 Maribor/Marburg an der Drau, 46, 49, 52, 80–81,
 96–97, 99, 119–21, 145, 153–54, 156, 160, 188–92
 Masaryk
 Alice, 41, 178–79, 209, 215, 217–18
 Olga, 180
 Tomáš Garrigue, 103, 169, 179, 183, 195, 216–17
 Masaryk Relief Fund, 206
 Matouš, Rudolf, 237
 meat, 48, 53, 61, 89, 96, 98, 104, 107, 133, 138, 145,
 147, 155, 158–60, 168, 170, 179, 205, 234, 240,
 252, 256, 259–61
 Medlov/Mödlau, 142
 Meissner, Alfréd, 90
 merchants, 50, 52–53, 101, 106, 120, 133, 149–50,
 153, 156, 158, 160, 242, 249, 260–61
 Mikulov/Nikolsburg, 142
 Milčinski, Fran, 53
 milk, 48, 51, 53–54, 61, 65, 108, 120, 158–59, 179, 181,
 184, 186, 188, 190–91, 197–98, 202, 205, 207–8
 miners, 60, 145–46, 234–35, 238, 247
 Ministry
 of Education and National Enlightenment
 (Prague), 205
 of Finance (Ljubljana), 156
 of Finance (Prague), 213, 242
 of Food (Budapest), 252
 of Foreign Affairs (Prague), 234, 237, 241,
 244–45
 of Foreign Affairs (Warsaw), 245
 of Interior (Prague), 169, 241, 244
 of Interior (Vienna, before 1918), 48
 of National Defense (Prague), 115
 of National Defense (Warsaw), 236

- of Nutrition (Department of Nutrition)
 - (Ljubljana), 132, 134, 153, 156, 255–56, 257
- of Nutrition and Reconstruction (Belgrade), 133, 154, 156, 160
- of People's Nutrition (Vienna, after 1918), 113, 133, 244, *see also* Office for People's Nutrition (Vienna, before 1918)
- of People's Supply (Prague), 104, 124–27, 129–30, 139, 148–52, 204, 209, 241
- of Social Welfare (Prague), 194, 210, 212
- of Supplies (Warsaw), 242–43, 245
- of Welfare (Department of Welfare)
 - (Ljubljana), 191, 255, 259, 260
- Mladá Boleslav/Jungbunzlau, 148
- Montenegro, 177
- Moravia, 19, 28, 55, 58, 71, 76, 115, 121–22, 224, 135, 141, 179, 224
- Moravian Catholic Party, 168
- Moravská Ostrava, *see* Ostrava
- mortality, 61, 83, 101, 201, 285
- Most/Brüx, 72, 89, 118, 194
- Mura
 - Republic of, 254
 - river, 227, 252, 272
- Murska Sobota/Muraszombat, 226, 253–55, 266, 272
- National Bank (Yugoslavia), 157
- National Council
 - Czechoslovak National Council in America, 184–85
 - for Carinthia, 99
 - for Slovenia and Istria, 82, 96–100, 132, 167–68
 - for Styria, 99, 119
 - of the Duchy of Teschen, 236
 - of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs (Zagreb), 132, 168, 177
 - Yugoslav National Council (in the United States), 177
- National Economy Office (Polish), 242–43
- National Union of the Czech Catholics, 178
- NEM unit, 197
- Nemčić, Jožef, 261
- Netušil, Václav, 80
- New York City, 165, 174, 176, 178, 184, 201, 204
- nobility, 52, 175, 225, 271
- Nová Paka/Neupaka, 77
- Novosedlice/Obersiedlitz, 117
- Nový Bor/Haida, 73
- Obál, Béla, 251–52
- Office for People's Nutrition (Vienna, before 1918), 48, 71, 78, 85, 88–90, 132
- Office for the Suppression of Price Gougers, Profiteers, and Smugglers, 144
- officials, 20, 29, 49–50, 53, 59–60, 73, 79, 81, 84, 90–91, 97, 101–104, 114, 116, 120–21, 129–34, 145–46, 154, 169, 171–72, 182, 193, 200, 204, 210, 215, 217, 222–24, 231–35, 238–39, 241, 245, 250–52, 255–56, 258–59, 266–69, 273–75, 281
- Oldřichovice/Oldrzychowice/Oldrzychowitz, 230
- Omaha, 184
- Opava/Troppau, 194, 213, 237
- Orava/Árva/Orawa/Arwa, 241
- Ore Mountains/Krušné hory/Erzgebirge, 64, 70–72, 89, 195
- Orlová/Orłowa/Orlau, 247
- Ort, J. K., 79, 137–38
- Ostrava/Ostrawa/Ostrau, 57, 60, 169, 194, 237, 239–40
- overpayments, 136–37
- Paget, Muriel, 41, 166, 178–79, 194, 209, 287
- Panslavism, 226
- Paris, 172, 216–18, 233, 255
- parliament
 - of Czechoslovakia, 151, 168–69
 - of Austria (before 1918), 24, 77–78, 82, 97, 128, 218
 - of Yugoslavia, 259
- patriotism
 - Austrian (imperial), 40, 55–57, 59, 66, 71–72, 84, 101, 129, 141, 281
 - Czechoslovak, 20–21, 144, 178
 - local, 127, 141
- Paul, Ludwig, 85, 91, 100
- Peasants' Union for Prekmurje, 259
- Pecivál, Josef, 184
- Peck, Sedley Clarendale, 173
- Pečky/Petschek, 93
- Pelc, Ferdinand, 234, 237
- People's Manifesto (1918), 94, 109
- Pfeifer, Vilko, 120
- philanthropy, 165, 170, 174, 176, 178, 210, 212
- Piran/Pirano, 73
- Pirquet, Clemens, 192, 197
- Písek, Vincenc, 165
- Písek/Pisek, 194–95, 206
- plebiscite
 - in Carinthia, 29, 189, 255, 282–83
 - in Prekmurje, 222, 228, 255, 265, 283
 - in Teschen Silesia, 222–24, 227–48, 273–75, 284
- Plzeň/Pilsen, 76–77, 110, 113, 199
- Podkrkonoší/Riesengebirge foothills, 195
- Pohořelice/Pohrlitz, 135, 141–44
- Poland, 21, 39, 41, 63, 181, 201, 203, 208, 222–23, 227, 229–30, 235–38, 242–44, 246–47
- Russian (Congress), 78, 236, 242
- police, 59, 84, 96, 122, 137–41, 144–45, 147, 169, 247, 288
- Polish Military Organization, 247
- pork, 48, 93, 105, 185, 261
- posters, 119, 203, 212, 245
- potatoes, 46, 48, 51, 53–54, 61, 65, 70, 74, 76, 85, 93, 95, 106, 108, 110, 145, 147, 156–58, 197, 207, 244, 259, 287

- Prague, 22, 29, 33, 44, 54, 59, 61–64, 71–72, 75–80, 83, 85, 89–90, 93, 95, 101–5, 108, 110–14, 116–18, 123, 130, 137–39, 142–43, 148, 150, 152, 162–63, 168–69, 171, 173–74, 181, 183–84, 193, 195, 197–98, 200–1, 206, 210, 213, 217, 232–34, 237, 247, 274, 280, 282–84
- Prekmurje/Muravidék, 28–29, 41, 221–30, 248–50, 253–76, 283–84
- Prepeluh, Albin, 221–22, 258, 261
- Přerov/Prerau, 143
- Příkryl, Ondřej, 55–57, 72
- prisoners, 21, 47, 64, 73, 77, 101, 116, 118, 263
- private provisioning, 50, 70, 89, 91, 93, 95
- Procházka, Ladislav Prokop, 75, 286
- profiteers, 50, 52, 56, 59–60, 79, 80, 86, 88, 93, 100, 105, 125, 128, 136–40, 143–46, 284
- propaganda, 41, 51, 113, 131, 134, 166, 179, 187–88, 203, 212, 221, 228, 231, 234, 241, 244–248, 250, 252, 264–267, 276, 283–84
- Prostějov/Proßnitz, 55–58, 72, 79, 94, 127–28, 289
- Protection of Mothers and Infants (Bohemian Lands), 193, 210
- Protestantism, 180
- protests, *see* demonstrations
- Protić, Stojan, 160
- Provincial Association of Municipal Teachers in Prague, 206
- Provincial Economy Office in Moravská Ostrava, 240
- in Brno, 140
- Provincial Grain Institute in Brno, 56, 127, 140
- Prussia, 241, 243
- Ptuj/Pettau, 80, 119, 134, 158–59, 188–89
- Puńców/Puncov/Punzau, 230
- railway, 50–51, 93, 100, 111, 152, 158–59, 167, 174, 184–87, 200, 203, 213–15, 223, 227, 234, 240–42, 244, 256–57, 272–73
- Rajhenburg/Reichenburg, *see* Brestanica
- Rašín, Alois, 95
- rationing, 23, 30, 36, 40, 45–46, 48–49, 50–55, 60, 70, 135–36, 147, 153, 191, 197, 253
- reception law (Czechoslovakia), 128
- Reisman, Avguštin, 49, 81
- Republic of Mura, *see* Mura
- requisitioning system, 50, 55, 100, 141, 143–44, 159, 246
- resistance, anti-Habsburg 35, 55, 74, 88, 94, 136, 142, 163, 166, 217, 284
- Revolutionary Governing Soviet (Hungarian), 253, 270
- rice, 184, 190–91, 198, 205, 235
- Rijeka/Fiume, 110
- Ringland, Arthur C., 207, 212
- riots, 33, 40, 54, 58, 71, 86, 120, 126, 136, 147, 151, 241, 247, 279, 289
- in Pohořelice in February 1920, 135, 141–44
- in Prostějov in April 1917, 58, 289
- in the Bohemian Lands in May 1919, 135, 140
- Rockefeller Foundation, 285–86
- Rokycany/Rokitzan, 148, 199, 212
- Romania, 21, 35, 78, 171, 181, 192
- Rucksackverkehr*, *see* private provisioning
- Russia, 21, 47, 86, 96, 108, 111, 182, 281
- salt, 107, 133, 156–60, 222, 254–57
- Sarajevo, 176
- Saxony, 64, 70, 115
- Schiff, Arthur, 62–65
- Schmiderer, Johann, 96, 120
- seasonal migration, 225, 249, 266–69, 271–73
- self-determination, 110, 118, 227–28, 232, 251, 254, 268
- self-sufficiency, 45, 50, 55, 93, 172, 257, 279, 281, 288–89
- Seliger, Josef, 112
- Sen, Amartya, 44
- Serbia, 75, 108, 158, 165–66, 168, 171, 177, 181–82, 216, 251, 261, 268, 273
- Serbian Relief Fund, 166
- Seton-Watson, Robert William, 166, 178
- Sever, Božidar, 263
- Sevnica/Lichtenwald, 99
- Shafroth, Will, 205
- Shaw, J. T., 193, 212
- ships of love, 184
- Siberia, 178
- Silesia
- Austrian, 19, 28, 87, 194, 224, 232, 240, 243
- Prussian, 225
- Teschen, 41, 222–25, 227, 229–31, 323–39, 241–46, 248, 273–76, 283–84
- Upper, 241, 244, 246
- Silesian People's Party, 225, 232, 236, 246
- Skopje/Skoplje/Ŭsküp, 166
- Slavophones of Prekmurje (Vends), 226, 250–53, 266, 275
- Slovácko Brigade, 115
- Slovak League in America, 178, 185
- Slovakia, 30, 39, 172, 179, 195, 209, 227, 240, 247, 280–81, 287
- Slovene Heart, 82, 281
- Slovene People's Party, 160, 259, 283
- Šluknov/Schluckenau, 148
- Slunzaks, 225, 232, 245–48, 283
- smallholding, 248, 250, 270, 273
- smuggling, 51, 70, 90, 99, 101, 132, 144–46, 154, 156, 159, 162, 164, 232, 236, 252–54, 260–64, 274–75, 284
- social class, 33, 37, 52, 54, 75, 77, 90–91, 94, 100, 134–35, 139, 155, 169, 206, 208, 280–81
- middle class, 75, 134, 155, 206, 280–81
- upper class, 75, 90
- working class, 37, 54, 64, 94, 97, 120, 134, 158, 188, 195
- Social Democrats
- in Slovenia, 96, 134, 154–55, 159, 211

- in the Bohemian Lands, 35, 56–57, 90–91,
 94, 104, 112, 135, 138, 140, 143, 163, 170, 196
 Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, 190, 192
 Sokolov/Falkenau an der Eger, 116
 Soukup, František, 138, 140,
 soup, 51, 70, 73, 80, 89, 179, 183, 197–98, 201
 South Africa, 63
 Soviet of the Vend District, 253
 Spanish flu, 62, 99
 Spiš/Szepesség/Spisz/Zips, 241
 Staaij, Ad van de, 166
 Stará Paka/Altpaka, 150
 starvation, 22, 40, 44, 52, 60–80, 89–90, 93–94,
 100–1, 112–13, 119, 121, 136, 148, 170–1, 174, 211,
 214–15, 218, 247, 266, 278–79, 283, 288–89
 State Grain Institute (Prague, after 1918), 140
 State Labor Agency (Yugoslav), 272–73
 State of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, *see*
 Yugoslavia
 state subsidies, 51, 78, 80, 85, 234–35, 259
 stock cubes, 52
 Stretti, Karel, 54
 Stretti, Karel, junior, 90
 Strettiová, Marie, 54
 Styria, 64, 85, 93, 109, 119–20, 160, 252, 255
 Lower, 28, 80–82, 99, 109–10, 119–21, 163,
 211, 272
 sugar, 48, 51, 89, 107–8, 111, 117, 133, 145, 150,
 152–53, 155–56, 158–60, 170, 174, 186, 190–91,
 198, 208, 222–23, 235, 242, 251–56
 Sum, Antonín, 200
 Svatobor Literary Association, 206
 Švehla, Antonín, 87, 95, 123
 Svobodová, Růžena, 75
 Switzerland, 169, 171, 284
 Synáček, František, 166

 Tavčar, Ivan, 96, 107, 132, 153, 168
 Teplice/Teplitz, 89, 138, 174, 194
 Terezín/Theresienstadt, 77
 territorial disputes
 in Prekmurje, 41, 221–276, 283
 in Teschen Silesia, 41, 221–276, 283
 in the Bohemian borderlands, 109–118
 in Lower Styria, 119–121
 Tins, Karl, 110
 Tkálec, Vilmos, 254
 tobacco, 48, 70, 142, 251, 254
 Transleithania, *see* Hungary
 transport, 21, 27, 42, 47, 50, 65, 72, 76, 92, 93, 111,
 114, 151–52, 157–159, 171, 176, 178, 182, 184, 186,
 200, 213–14, 217–18, 223, 236, 243–44, 252–53,
 261, 264, 267–68, 271, 273, 275, 279–80
 Trbovlje/Trifail, 156, 188
 Trdkova (before Tvrdkova/Türke), 268
 Treaty
 of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 157
 of Trianon, 228, 265, 272
 of Versailles, 184, 243

 Trieste/Trst, 31, 64, 93, 97, 154, 184–86, 190, 211, 215
 Triller, Karel, 168
 Tržič/Neumarkt, 133, 158, 189–90, 192, 208
 tuberculosis, 62, 148
 Tusar, Vlastimil, 141

 Uhlig, Karl, 70–72
 Ukraine, 78, 166, 241
 United Czechoslovak Relief, 178, 184
 United Kingdom, 39, 169, 179, 181–82, 284
 United States Food Administration, 170
 United States Grain Corporation, 207
 United States, 39, 42, 98, 154–55, 168–79,
 181–90, 193, 198–99, 201–4, 208–17, 225, 249,
 277, 284–85
 Ústí nad Labem/Aussig, 110, 112, 117–18, 200

 Varnsdorf/Warnsdorf, 66, 195
 Vas County, 226, 249–51, 253–54
 Vejprty/Weipert, 64, 70, 115
 Vend District, 253–54
 Vends, *see* Slavophones of Prekmurje
 Verstovšek, Karel, 119–20
 Veselá, Milada, 195
 Veselý, František, 195
 Vesnić, Milenko, 216–17
 Vienna, 24, 32, 55, 59, 63–64, 74, 76, 79, 85–90,
 93–95, 102, 110–11, 113, 119, 122–23, 127, 131,
 171, 174, 178, 185, 204, 245, 282–83
 Viennese Children in the Country, 74
 Vilnius/Wilno/Vil'na, 241
 Vlkos/Wilkosch, 143
 Vltava, river, 103
Volkswehr, 115–18
 Vraný, Josef, 76
 Vrbenský, Bohuslav, 112
 Vrchlabí/Hohenelbe, 151
 Vrhnika/Oberlaibach, 145, 152
 Vysoké Mýto/Hohenmauth, 129

 War Grain Institute
 in Brno, 56
 in Ljubljana, 132, 155, 186
 in Prague, 95, 104, 111, 112, *see also* State
 Grain Institute
 in Vienna, 48, 55
 war
 Anglo-Boer, 63
 in Teschen Silesia, 227
 Second World, 277–79
 wars, bidding, 239, 242
 Wheeler, R. A., 193
 wild plants, 51
 Wilson (ship), 184
 Wilson, Woodrow, 43–44, 101, 103, 169–70, 173,
 175, 214–15, 217
 Women's Association (Benešov), 195
 Women's Society (Maribor), 192
 wood, 46, 148, 192, 280

- YMCA, 179–80, 205
 Young, Robert, 178
 Yugoslav army, 29, 121, 159, 228–29
 Yugoslav Club, 82, 97
 Yugoslav Committee, 216, 288
 Yugoslav National Defense (Chile), 177
 Yugoslav-Hungarian Boundary Commission, *see* Boundary Commission, Yugoslav-Hungarian
 Yugoslavia, 21, 23, 25–32, 40–41, 43–44, 106, 109, 119, 131–32, 153–54, 157–58, 167–68, 171, 174, 176–77, 181–82, 185–86, 188, 191, 201, 204, 208–9, 211, 214–16, 218–19, 222–24, 226, 228, 243, 252, 254–56, 261, 264–65, 267–75, 278, 280, 282–85, 289
 YWCA, 179–80, 205,
 Zagorje/Sagor, 156, 188
 Zagreb/Agram/Zágráb, 110, 168, 176, 182
 Zala County, 226, 249–50, 252, 254, 272
 Žamberk/Senftenberg, 128
 Zamorski, Jan, 247
 Žandov/Sandau, 73
 Zápotocký, Antonín, 125
 Žatec/Saaz, 110
 Zbiroh/Sbirow, 199
 Zichy Estate, 270
 Znojmo/Znaim, 143