

11-E-180

Jaroslav Papoušek

THE CZECHOSLOVAK
NATION'S STRUGGLE
FOR INDEPENDENCE



SEMINÁRNÍ

Státevěd.



PRÁVNICKÁ

oddělení

1 9 2 8

“ORBIS” LIBRARY PRAGUE

FOCHOVA 62

FOREWORD.

At the time when the World War ended there appeared on the stage of Central Europe the new Czechoslovak State. For a large part of the world's population this was certainly a surprising fact; for the territory now occupied by Czechoslovakia had up till then been a constituent part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which not only before the War but even for quite a considerable period during the War was regarded by the European Powers as a permanent factor in the equilibrium of Europe. We know from the Memoirs of President Poincarè that, in 1913 and probably also later, France considered Austria-Hungary to be a State, the existence of which was in the interests of France. Likewise England had no reasons for being hostile in any way to Austria-Hungary. Russia was often spoken of as the centre of subversive Pan-Slav propaganda, yet even after the crisis connected with the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina and despite her strained relations with the Habsburg Empire, Russia never ceased to see in the Dual Monarchy one of the bulwarks of the monarchical principle. And Italy, up to the World War, was an ally of Austria-Hungary.

All these circumstances bore witness, indeed, to the fact that the consent of the Allies to the formation of the new order in Central Europe could not be dictated merely by a temporary mood caused

by the exasperation felt against the Central Powers. They indicated that the causes of the origin of the Czechoslovak State were necessarily of a deeper character. The explanation, however, of the radical change in the views of the Great Powers was lacking, for the participants in the World War had their attention concentrated on the events relating to their own countries and were unable, owing to the paucity of information, to arrive at a clear idea regarding the events which led to the creation of the Czechoslovak State. A contributory cause of the impossibility of arriving at a clear idea on this question was, of course, the faulty historical perspective, which led to the observation and study in Central and Eastern Europe of the development of States, whereas the development of affairs in these regions was, since the beginning of the 19th century, determined more by the evolution of the life of the individual peoples. The reason why due attention was not paid to this evolution is that, with rare exceptions, the various nations concerned, the Czechoslovak nation included, strove more after internal consolidation and cultural and economic development, than a change in the existing States. During the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, the more attentive observers did not fail to notice, of course, that the development of the individual peoples would lead to a crisis in the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires. Nevertheless

these reflections produced the impression of being interesting theories rather than deductions from the real state of affairs, for the various nations in Central and Eastern Europe undertook no action against the existence of the States in which they lived. This applies also to the Czechs and Slovaks, although there were obvious attempts on the part of the ruling German-Magyar minority to hold back their cultural and economic development.

A further reason why world opinion did not attribute any political significance to the growth of the Czechoslovak nation lay in the orientation of Czech politicians who, with few exceptions, took for granted the existence of the Habsburg Empire and were even ready to be reconciled to this fact, in the hope that the Czechoslovak people would attain a position such as would enable it to have a deciding influence on the future fortunes of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It is not surprising that in the period 1908—1914, years of great political tension in Europe, world opinion did not notice that the increasing dependence of Austria-Hungary on Germany, its aggressive policy towards the Balkan States and Russia, and its incapacity to solve the problem of its subject nationalities, led to a substantial change in these moods and to a radicalization of powerful Czech political groups. But before this new political situation could appear in clear outline there took place the assassination of

the Archduke at Sarajevo and the outbreak of the World War which drew the attention of everyone to the theatres of war. Hence it remained, on the whole, an unnoticed truth that the World War had altered the factors governing the attitude of the Czechoslovak people towards Austria-Hungary.

I.

Preparations.

The World War brought Czechoslovak politics to the crossroads of destiny. The force of circumstances compelled the Czechoslovak nation to decide whether it would go with Austria-Hungary or move in the direction of the Allies and join its future fortunes with theirs. To make a decision was not very difficult. Not only the history of the Czechoslovak people spoke against Austria, but also the evident fact that the future of Czechoslovak national existence depended on the result of the World War. The aggressive action of Austria in the Balkans, approved and supported by Berlin, indicated that there was going to be a new and still closer German-Austrian alliance, the direct consequence of which would be a further strengthening of the German-Magyar ascendancy over the Slav-Latin majority. It was not, however, merely reasons of healthy national egoism which caused the Czechoslovak people to oppose the Central Powers; it was not only memories of the numerous humiliations which it had

been obliged to endure during the previous centuries. An important part in this decision was played also by ideological considerations, a sense of right and justice which had so callously been ignored by the harsh action of Austria towards Serbia and of Germany with regard to Belgium. A powerful factor, finally, was the Slavonic sympathies of the Czech people who could not but feel that the Austrian attack on Serbia was also an attack on the conception of Slavdom which was one of the creative ideas that had facilitated the Czechoslovak national rebirth.

Under these circumstances it was natural that the Czechs immediately began to consider what should be their policy towards the H a b s b u r g E m p i r e. Before, however, the politicians could agree on a definite line of action, before the Czechoslovak masses could make known their decision, the Czechoslovak troops, who were leaving for the front, and the Czechoslovaks living abroad (and therefore able to speak freely) spontaneously demonstrated on whose side were the sympathies of the Czechoslovak nation. This clear manifestation of anti-Austrian feeling by the troops of Czechoslovak and Slavonic origin determined the direction of Czech policy and caused the Austrian Government to refrain from summoning Parliament and asking its consent to the War.

One of the politicians who formed concrete political conclusions from the impression made by the

mood of the masses of the people was Professor Masaryk. He was led to this by his previous work as a philosopher, an educationalist, a journalist and a politician. For several years prior to the War he had been definitely in opposition to Austria-Hungary not only because he saw in the Habsburg State a survival of mediaeval feudalism, but also because he feared its foreign policy which, owing to its methods (the annexation of Bosnia, the Zagreb Trial, etc.), was clearly threatening peace. Hence from the first moment of the world crisis he was in no doubt as to which side claimed his sympathies. Hence also the deduction he made from the given situation was that he should place himself openly on the side of the Entente. Others also, of course, held the same view — it was not in vain that he had educated several generations of students, a large number of whom, whether they were his direct political adherents or not, always continued to admire him. This view was shared, for example, by the editorial staff of Masaryk's journal "Čas", by Dr. Beneš, a pupil of Masaryk's, and by Dr. Šámal and others who played an important part in the subsequent course of events. Such was the opinion also of the circle of Radicals which for the purpose of entering into contact with influential circles of the Entente sent abroad, during the first month of the War, Dr. Sychrava and numerous other men from the various political parties, especially Dr. Rašín.

To arrive at the conclusion from the standpoints of history and the given situation that it was necessary to take the side of the Entente was not, however, so difficult as to fulfil this decision. The mood of the masses was indeed evident. But the masses were not organized; they possessed no arms and financial resources; they had no universally recognized leader, for the official party representatives, as is always the case in such moments, were not prepared and proved absolutely of no use. Hence it was left to Professor Masaryk and others of the same opinion to start work from the foundations, to build up gradually a secret revolutionary organization and to link it up with the circles of the Entente. For various reasons this was no easy task. It was necessary to go from politician to politician, to concert agreements with them regarding the matter of tactics and programme, to organize a secret reports service and to undertake journeys to foreign countries for the purpose of propaganda.

Despite all these difficulties which were increased still further by the military régime, the war censorship, and the persecution of the politicians suspected by the Austrian authorities (M. Klofáč, the leader of the National Socialist party, was arrested in September, 1914), Professor Masaryk succeeded in bringing about the establishment of a central secret organ which was gradually supplemented and extended by the representatives of individual po-

litical groups and parties. It was likewise found possible soon to organize a reports service and finally to enter into relations with the countries of the Entente (first of all with England) through the medium of a messenger sent by Prof. Masaryk to Mr. Wickham Steed, then Foreign Editor of "The Times", and a little later through Prof. Masaryk himself who travelled to Holland where he met Dr. Seton Watson and renewed his correspondence with Prof. Ernest Denis.

But events after these first successes and despite the fact that all the sympathies of the masses were with the adversaries of the Central Powers, the situation was not yet ripe for decisive action in Bohemia. The military régime rendered impossible any kind of public agitation; there was no hope that any assistance from outside could be obtained in case of a rising; a large part of the Czech troops mobilized for active service had been despatched immediately after the outbreak of the War either to the Serbian and Russian fronts or to towns with a non-Czech and non-Slovak population; and there was no mutual agreement among the leaders of the political parties as to the question of tactics. Some of the political leaders pointed out that the Entente Powers did not know the Czechoslovak people, and that its liberation was not part of their plans, even if the nation itself were to attempt to gain its emancipation; others considered it preferable to follow a waiting policy and trusted in a speedy victory of

Russia over Austria and in the arrival of Russian troops.

All these considerations determined the further action of Professor Masaryk and his collaborators. Hence he set out on a new propaganda journey abroad; having entrusted the organization of the preparations for revolution to his friends, especially Dr. Beneš, he departed this time for Italy. Whilst this work was being done, the masses of the population mostly continued their passive resistance to Austria-Hungary. Individual Czech soldiers and also whole groups demonstratively surrendered on the Russian front, and a number of civilians at the rear attempted to incite the nation to action. Starting, therefore, with the month of September 1914, there began mass arrests and even executions, especially for the illegal dissemination of the Russian commander-in-chief's manifesto to the peoples of Austria-Hungary. Under pressure of the Austrian Military Command the civil authorities commenced a systematic suppression of Czechoslovak political life. The newspapers "České Slovo" and "Samostatnost" were ordered to cease publication, and owing to censorship regulations the ability of the remaining journals to propagate the national idea, not only openly but also "between the lines", was restricted.

By a coincidence the departure of Masaryk to Italy marked the inauguration of a new scheme, the significance of which only subsequently became

clear. The Austrian Intelligence Service had succeeded in finding out certain details relating to Masaryk's sojourn in Rome, and it was decided that he should be arrested on his return. Having obtained information of this, Masaryk's friends sent a messenger warning him not to return. A little later Dr. Beneš went himself in consequence of a fear lest the report transmitted by the messenger (who had left before precise information could be gained regarding the trap set for Professor Masaryk) might seem to Professor Masaryk to be exaggerated.

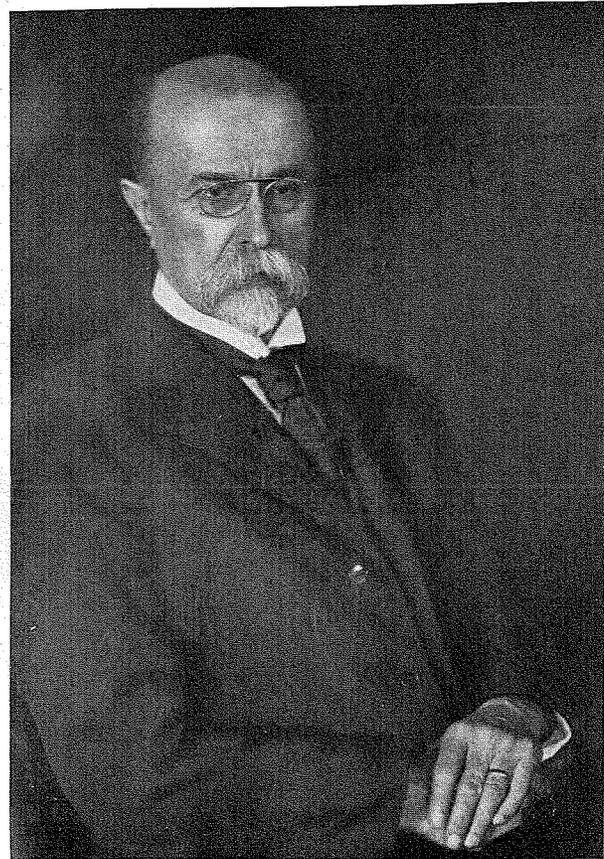
The journey of Dr. Beneš to Switzerland was of historical importance, for the centre of the revolutionary organization was in this way transferred abroad where it remained during the entire subsequent course of the War. After Masaryk's departure the secret organization known as "Maffie" continued, of course, to work on the lines agreed upon by Dr. Beneš and Professor Masaryk. Its activities, although never discovered by the Austrian authorities, were, however, gradually crippled, particularly when certain Czech political leaders, such as Dr. Rašín, Dr. Scheiner and Dr. Kramář, were arrested and imprisoned at the instigation of the Austrian Military Command. When, therefore, Dr. Beneš, Masaryk's chief collaborator, was obliged, owing to fear of arrest, to transfer his activities abroad, the members of "Maffie" had necessarily to restrict the scope of their political work; all they

could now do was to see that the individual Czech political parties did not disturb the general tendency of Czech war-time politics which had been based on the principle that the Austrian Government should not receive parliamentary consent to the War and the securing of war credits. Although the views of the political leaders of some parties (particularly the Catholic party) diverged from the policy drawn up by Prof. Masaryk in agreement with "Maffie", although there were also some who desired by at least an apparent loyalty to divert from the Czech nation the danger of a still harsher persecution (e. g., a section of the leaders of the Social Democrat party and after the arrest of Rašín also individuals in the Young Czech party), the Austrian Government failed to obtain from the representatives of the Czech people a statement repudiating Professor Masaryk's work for the liberation of the nation.

The Czechoslovak movement against the Austro-Hungarian Empire did not originate and develop only at home. It originated spontaneously and in an elemental manner also in all the countries in which Czechs and Slovaks were living and had freedom of utterance. This was the case not only in Russia, France and England but also in America, although the neutrality of the United States made it difficult for the Czech colony to give utterance to its opinions in as radical a manner as was possible in France and Russia where a number of Czechs and Slovaks immedia-

tely joined the ranks of the Allied armies as volunteers. It was the movement in Russia which in the course of time became the most important, not only because the Czechoslovak colony there was numerically strong but also, and mainly, because that colony was soon increased by thousands of Czech and Slovak prisoners of war.

The organization of the Czechoslovak movement abroad met from the beginning, of course, with no less difficulties than in Bohemia. The situation was, indeed, more favourable for it in that the Czechs and Slovaks had freedom of utterance and relative liberty for organization, but they did not possess for this purpose sufficient financial resources; they also lacked experienced political leaders, a centre for their organization, and even a united political front. In the first moments the Czechoslovak communities advocated the adoption of the type of government of the particular State in which they had originated. Stress was laid in France on the advantages of an independent republic. The community in Russia desired a revival of the old Kingdom of Bohemia. The Czechoslovaks abroad succeeded in overcoming these difficulties much more easily than their brothers at home, especially after the appearance abroad of Professor Masaryk who was sufficiently well known through his pre-War activities and who by his departure abroad at once gained the unconditional confidence of the great



T. G. Masaryk.

majority of the leading men in the various communities.

In the person of Masaryk the Czechoslovak foreign movement obtained a political leader, and so it was possible to form a regular central organization which was called at first the Foreign Committee and later the National Council of the Czech lands (among its members were Dr. Beneš who had been compelled in August, 1915, to flee abroad, Deputy Dürich who went abroad in the spring of 1915, and M. Štefánik, a Slovak by birth, who had lived in France before the War). Prof. Masaryk succeeded also in collecting money from the Czechoslovak-Americans to finance the movement and in organizing an effective propaganda of the Czechoslovak cause through the foundation of the Foreign Committee's central organ "Czechoslovak Independence" under the editorship of L. Sychrava, and of the review "La Nation Tchèque" which was edited first of all by Professor E. Denis and was published for the purpose of supplying information to the Allied and neutral countries.

It is evident from the above that the Czechs and Slovaks spent the first year of the War in preparations for an organized demonstration. This did not mean, of course, that everything accomplished by the Czechs and Slovaks was secret and that the postponement of a public demonstration in the name of the people was due to irresolution. Without waiting for a mandate from home, Professor Masaryk

submitted to the English and the other Allied Governments a memorandum on the Czech question, and in July, 1915, he spoke in public at Geneva. The Czechoslovak communities abroad acted in a similar way from the outset of the War, and they succeeded in attaining a number of successes, particularly in the matter of organization.

From the beginning the most favourable results were secured by the Czechoslovak movement in Russia owing to the fact that that State was directly interested in the weakening of the Austrian Empire, its immediate and most dangerous competitor in the Balkans. At the outset of the War Russia adopted a friendly attitude towards the efforts of the Czechs to organize their movement. At the end of August, 1914, Russia permitted the Czechs and Slovaks to form volunteer detachments consisting of 1-2 regiments, and at the end of 1914 Czech and Slovak war-prisoners taken by the Russian army were allowed to enter these detachments as volunteers. Russia also gave moral support to the anti-Austrian endeavours of the Czechoslovaks. The Tsar on August 20th, 1914, and September 16th, 1914, and M. Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, on September 15th, received Czech deputations and heard their desires and requests, although it was thought that the Habsburg Empire would continue to exist as a smaller formation (the so-called Little Austria) which would consist of three autonomous units: the Czech lands,

the Austrian lands, and Hungary. The further development of the military situation and the defeat of the Russian army in the spring of 1915 considerably diminished the possibilities of the continuation of activity under such favourable auspices. Nevertheless there was a positive and lasting gain in the shape of the strongly organized Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia, which was constituted in the spring of 1915 and became the backbone of the Czechoslovak movement in Russia.

There was a rather different situation in other Allied countries. France had no interest at the beginning in a destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; she was not sufficiently acquainted with the situation in Central Europe and hence regarded Germany as the sole cause of the War and as the immediate enemy. France did not realize that Austria-Hungary had really ceased to have an independent life and had become the vassal of Germany. Hence France not only counted on the possibility of a separate peace with Austria-Hungary which would weaken Germany and facilitate a speedier victory, but also desired a separate peace. Nevertheless France sympathized with the Czech efforts; she allowed Czechoslovaks, Austrian subjects, to join the Foreign Legion just as Russia did, and put Slavs on the same level as the citizens of the Allied countries in matters relating to property and in juridical affairs.

A similar attitude was maintained by England,

although she had still less interest than France in the weakening and destruction of Austria-Hungary. But even under these conditions Professor Masaryk and his friends were able, owing to their energetic work in French and English political circles, to increase considerably in the course of the first year the number of persons who reckoned with the possibility of the disintegration of the Austrian Empire into national States and worked towards this end.

Officially the Czechoslovak national liberation movement abroad was not commenced until the end of 1915 when Dr. Beneš escaped from Bohemia and there was no hope that further politicians and journalists whom Professor Masaryk desired to be sent out to him would escape from Bohemia. On the basis of the mandate which Dr. Beneš had brought with him from the representatives of the most important of the Czech political parties and after an agreement had been reached with the representatives of the Czech and Slovak communities in the various States, Professor Masaryk issued on behalf of the nation a manifesto announcing the life-and-death struggle of the Czechoslovak people against the Habsburgs for the independence of the State. On the whole it was a matter of small importance for the subsequent course of events that Allied public opinion, which was occupied by reverses at the fronts and particularly by the entry of Bulgaria into the War against Serbia, only super-

ficially noticed this manifesto which was published at a very unfavourable period for the Allies. It was important that the manifesto did not fail to attract the attention of Government circles in France, Russia and elsewhere and that after that time the fact of the Czechoslovak revolutionary movement began to be reckoned with.

II.

Organization and Propaganda.

The consequences of the decision of the Czechoslovak people to take the side of the Allies even under the most difficult circumstances soon manifested themselves. In France at the beginning of February, 1916, the Prime Minister, M. Briand, received Professor Masaryk in special audience and declared verbally and in a special communiqué that France had sympathies for the Czechoslovak nation and was willing to support its efforts towards emancipation. In Russia, as is proved by confidential documents of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M. Sazonov, the Foreign Minister, decided to take the initiative in Czechoslovak affairs and to summon, with this end in view, Deputy Dürich to Petrograd. In England the situation changed to the extent that influential circles, after having been informed of the state of affairs in Central Europe, the danger for future peace of the continued existence of Austria-

Hungary, and the desires and endeavours of the various subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary, commenced to deliberate on the means whereby Central Europe could be better organized. The same process took place in Italy and particularly in the United States where the leaders of the Czechoslovak organizations succeeded in 1915 in drawing the attention of Government circles to the Czechoslovak cause by systematically revealing the German intrigues and efforts to instigate strikes and to organize sabotage and espionage.

Whilst in 1915 Prof. Masaryk and his friends endeavoured to give the peoples of the Entente the general facts relating to the situation and aims of the Czechoslovak nation, he sought in 1916, in addition to this work, not only to further the Allied cause by every possible means but also to prepare the ground for the future international recognition of the Czechoslovak desires and aims. At the beginning of the War in 1914 the nation instinctively understood that it could attain independence only by its own efforts and sacrifices. Hence at the very outset hundreds of Czechs and Slovaks (Austrian subjects living in the Allied States) volunteered for service in the Allied armies; hence the leading men in the Czechoslovak communities abroad considered how to organize an armed resistance to Austria-Hungary; and hence also the politicians at home discussed, during the first months of the War, the

ways and means of organizing an insurrection or revolution. The general international and military situations, the original lack of organization of the entire Czechoslovak movement, and sometimes also the peculiar conditions in the individual Allied countries where there were Czechoslovak communities, did not allow of an extensive military resistance to Austria-Hungary being successfully carried into effect at the very outset of the War.

The only country where this attempt could be made was Russia, for a relatively numerous Czechoslovak community was living there and also the general opinion in Russia was on the whole favourable to the realization of the idea of military resistance. Thus at the outbreak of the War there was formed in Russia a comparatively strong volunteer detachment which before long was supplemented and enlarged into a military body of considerable size. In the first months of the War, in 1914, thousands of Czechoslovak deserters and warprisoners found themselves in Russia and the question necessarily arose as to how to use them for the Czechoslovak national movement, seeing that they themselves expressed the desire, as soon as they found themselves in captivity, to assist in one way or another the Allied cause. But not even in Russia were any absolute successes achieved in the organizing of the Czechoslovak movement of military revolt. At the end of 1914 permission was indeed given for the supplementing of the vol-

unteer detachment by Czech and Slovak war-prisoners, but no really large detachments were formed. The obstacles were partly of a political character—Russia reckoned with the possibility of the continued existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was therefore unwilling to interest itself in the plan of organizing Czechoslovak military detachments to any greater extent than was required for the breaking of the military power of Austria-Hungary by the instigation of a revolt in the Czechs lands—and they were partly due to the local Czech leaders in Russia who asked not only for permission to organize an army but also for a political proclamation on the part of the Russian Government regarding the future Czech State. Subsequently difficulties arose from the Russian military situation which after the great victories of the first three months in 1915 visibly worsened up to the well-known retreat of the Russian army in consequence of the lack of munitions and supplies. Hence the request made on April 13th 1915 by the Czechoslovak organizations in Russia (they were associated for the time being in the Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia) that the Russian Government, should permit the creation of a Czechoslovak army and provide a sufficient financial grant for its formation, was categorically rejected by the Russian Government on the ground that this was contrary not only to

international law but also to the war aims of Russia.

Under these circumstances nothing was left to the Czechoslovak organizations but to widen and improve the existing organization of the Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia and to prepare for the time when the conditions for the formation of an army would be more favourable. It was an important and deciding factor for the future that at this moment a considerable section of the Czechoslovak masses were concentrated in prisoner-of-war camps and were appearing on the stage of the Czechoslovak national revolution. Taking as their watchword "Down with Austria-Hungary", these war-prisoners and deserters organized themselves into groups which entered into relations with the Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia and thus gradually formed a body of revolutionaries, many thousands strong, who urgently requested to be enabled to fight side by side with the Russian army for their own cause and for that of the Allies. Thus, although permission was not given by the Russian Government for the formation of a Czechoslovak army, its future cadres were already in existence. Together with this, the original volunteer detachment increased in the course of 1915 to the size of a regiment and in the following spring to that of a brigade.

In the Spring of 1916, when the general international and military situation of Russia had sub-

stantially improved and when, as has been mentioned above, Sazonov wished to take up the Czechoslovak cause, the negotiations for the creation of a Czechoslovak army were revived. By this time, however, the question of the Czechoslovak military organization had entered the sphere of practical politics not merely in Russia. Action began to be taken with regard to it also in France where the conversation of Professor Masaryk with M. Briand and the growth of sympathy for the Czechoslovak movement created a favourable atmosphere for these plans. The situation in France was, of course, different from that in Russia. The Czechoslovak community in France was small in numbers, and in as far as it was able to take an active part in the War it had done so from the very outset, for it had voluntarily joined the Foreign Legion, in which it formed a special company that very soon gained distinction in the battles of Targette and Neuville Saint Vaast. Unlike Russia, there were no Czechoslovak war-prisoners in France. The leaders of the Czechoslovak central revolutionary organization concentrated their attention, therefore, on the places where there was a sufficiency of Czechs and Slovaks; they considered in what ways it would be possible to use the many thousands of Czechoslovak prisoners-of-war, who were determined to fight against Austria-Hungary, not only in Russia but also in France, where their participation would be of considerable mili-

tary and political importance. This plan was supported not only by the argument that Russia had a surplus of soldiers whereas France suffered from not having enough men and by the circumstance arising therefrom that France and Russia had entered into negotiations regarding the transference of several hundreds or thousands of Russian troops to the French front, but also by the consideration that Czechoslovak military participation on the Western front would at once increase the interest of the Entente in the Czechoslovak question.

Thus arose the plan of negotiating with the Russian Government for allowing the voluntary departure to France of a part of the Czechoslovak war-prisoners (about 30,000), who could be formed, by agreement with the French Government, into Czechoslovak volunteer detachments. With this object in view Deputy Dürich travelled to Russia, and shortly afterwards he was followed by Milán Štefánik, another member of the Czechoslovak National Council.

But before the negotiations could be commenced with the Russian Government regarding the transport of the Czechoslovak war-prisoners to France, a new scheme for the formation of a Czechoslovak army was started in Russia itself, as has been mentioned above, on the initiative of the Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia. At first it appeared that a substantial success would be achieved, for the Federation of

Czechoslovak Societies in Russia was able to win for this idea the support not only of influential higher officers in the Russian army, notably of General Alekseyev, but also of the Tsar himself. On April 21st, 1916, the Tsar consented in principle to the release of the Slav prisoners-of-war whose good conduct was guaranteed by the Slavonic organizations existing in Russia. In June, 1916, on the basis of a report of Shuvayev, the War Minister, the Tsar consented in principle also to the formation of a Czechoslovak army.

Owing to various circumstances, however, these promises by the Tsar were never fulfilled. The chief cause for this lay in the peculiar internal political conditions in Russia. Stürmer succeeded Goremeykin as Prime Minister in February, 1916, and he became Foreign Minister in the following July in succession to Sazonov. The rapid growth of reaction, the strengthening of Germanophil tendencies in influential circles, and the increase of chauvinism which made itself felt in all directions in connection with the question of prestige led to the revision not only of the relations between Russia and Allies, but also of the attitude of the Russian Government towards the Czechoslovak question. The Stürmer Government began to view with distrust the Czechoslovak movement directed by the Czechoslovak National Council from London and Paris, and endeavoured to stop all communi-

cations between the Czechoslovak organizations in Russia and the Czechoslovak National Council. It did this owing to its fear lest the moral support given to the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav movements by French and English political and Government circles might divert from Russia the sympathies of these movements and cause the national States, which were likely to arise if the Allies won the War, to be the tools of the West against Russia. Thus almost at the same time as the Tsar agreed to the creation of a Czechoslovak army, a plan was made to form under the patronage of the Russian Government a second National Council in Russia, which would act solely in accordance with the wishes and directions of the Russian Government and would also be financially dependent on the Russian Government. In spite of the opposition of the Czechoslovak community, this plan was put into execution. At the end of 1916 it was decided in principle that the new Czechoslovak National Council would alone have the right to organize the Czechoslovak war-prisoners for the struggle against Austria-Hungary.

These events necessarily produced an unfavourable effect on the development of the Czechoslovak military movement which had begun with so much promise, especially after the Brusilov offensive that had brought to Russia further tens of thousands of Czechoslovak prisoners-of-war who spontane-

ously joined the revolutionary movement. The consequences of the distrust shown by influential Petrograd circles towards the leading Czechoslovak organizations, the National Council and the Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia, were now felt by these detachments; in the summer of 1916, not long after the Tsar gave his "consent" to the formation of a Czechoslovak army, the enrolment of volunteers was stopped under the pretext that the departure of the war-prisoners would be harmful to the interests of Russian agriculture which would be deprived of labour at the time of harvesting. The situation was rendered complicated also by several mistakes which the Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia made in connection with the organizing of the detachments. This was the reason why General Alekseyev, who was in favour of the formation of a Czechoslovak army, said he preferred another method of organizing the Czechoslovak army to that proposed by the Federation of Czechoslovak Societies in Russia. The negotiations for the creation of a Czechoslovak army were thus postponed until a period when they were rendered difficult also by the opposition of Czechoslovak public opinion to the separatist National Council.

Yet even in this unfavourable situation the Czechoslovak military movement achieved some fairly considerable concrete results. At the end of the spring

of 1916, i. e., at the time when temporary permission was given to those who had joined the army to proceed to the supplementary detachment in Kiev, the number of Czechoslovak volunteers increased to such an extent that the question arose of a suitable moment for the formation of the first division. In addition to this, in the course of the year 1916 the movement amongst the war-prisoners for enrolment in the Czechoslovak army became, thanks to the energetic work of the Federation and the Czech newspapers published in Kiev (e. g. the "Čechoslovan", together with the "Čechoslovák" which was published in Petrograd), so popular that the number of enrolments at the end of 1916 brought within the range of possibility the establishment of an army corps.

It was no fault of the newly-enrolled Czechoslovak volunteers that in the course of 1916 full use was not made of their keen hostility towards Austria and that those who had joined the Czechoslovak Brigade were used, throughout 1916 as in the previous years, solely for purposes of reconnaissance. Yet even under these conditions the Czechoslovak reconnoitring groups gave evidence not only of their capacity but also of their heroism which was recognized in numerous Orders issued by divisional and army commanders as well as in an Order issued by the commander-in-chief who incorporated in his official daily bulletins the report on the successful reconnaissance carried out

by the detachment commanded by Lieut. Syrový. But the original Order on the employment of the Czechoslovak military detachments for reconnaissance purposes still remained in effect, although the Czech unit attached to the Serbian volunteer division on the Rumanian front in the Dobruzha, proved the capacity of the Czech volunteers for fighting in open warfare.

The unfavourable attitude of the Russian Government circles towards the Czechoslovak movement directed from London by Professor Masaryk, the President of the Czechoslovak National Council, their desire that a new National Council should be established in Russia under the control of the Russian Government, and their increasing bias against the Western Allies, rendered difficult also the negotiations for the transport of the Czechoslovak prisoners-of-war to France. This plan, therefore, which had been brought to Russia in the first instance by Deputy Dürich and a little later by Milan Štefánik, another member of the Czechoslovak National Council, was accepted by Russian Government circles with such coolness that the National Council postponed further negotiations until a later date; and when Deputy Dürich yielded to the pressure of the Petrograd Government and adopted with relation to Professor Masaryk an attitude which was in accordance with the views of the reactionary Government circles in Petrograd, there was nothing



*Mr. M. R. Štefánik,
the first Minister of the War.*

left for the National Council but to abandon the scheme entirely. The agreement which M. Štefánik made with the Roumanian Government on the occasion of his visit to Roumania in October, 1916, could scarcely, of course, replace the agreement with Russia. The number of Czechoslovak war-prisoners in Roumania was very much smaller than that in Russia, and owing to the fact that they were scattered and cut off from sources of information, the conditions for recruiting them in the Czechoslovak military detachments were much worse. Yet in spite of this Štefánik succeeded in organizing in Roumania some 300 volunteers who expressed the desire to travel to France, and this fact was of importance even if only a very small reinforcement could be sent to France to join the Czechoslovak detachment which had been decimated in the fighting in 1915 and 1916.

While the negotiations were being conducted in Russia regarding the formation of large volunteer units, Professor Masaryk and Dr. Beneš were concentrating their energies in intensive propaganda in France, England and Italy. They acquainted the public in these three countries with the position of the Czechoslovak people in Central Europe and explained the importance of the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak State for the future peace of Europe. In the process many prejudices had to be overcome. Austria-Hungary was still regarded as a State which had

been deceived by Germany, and in certain Allied circles it even aroused sympathies on the ground that it might be won over to the side of the Entente. Also there was no longer a predominating conviction that the continued existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire constituted a danger for Europe owing to the fact that German-Magyar supremacy enabled Germany to exploit to the disadvantage of the Allies the non-German and non-Magyar peoples inhabiting the Habsburg Empire and to use Austria as a German bridge to the Balkans and to Asia. It was only by energetic and systematic work that Professor Masaryk and Dr. Beneš together with their English and French friends were able to break down these prejudices, spread a knowledge of Central Europe in the countries of the Entente, and thereby gain new supporters for the idea of the necessity of reorganizing Central Europe, and new wellwishers for the idea of Czechoslovak independence.

The National Council was effectively helped, of course, in this work by the military situation (the victorious offensive of Brusilov in Russia, the successes of the Allied arms on the Western front, and the bringing of the Austrian offensive in Italy to a halt) and by Roumania's entry into the War. The development of events led to reflection on the rôle of Austria-Hungary, for the latter's alliance with Germany directly compelled an ex-

amination of recent history, a revision of the views regarding the causes of Austria-Hungary's participation in the War, and a disbelief in the possibility of a change in her foreign policy such as would be favourable to the Allies. The death in December, 1916, of the Emperor Francis Joseph symbolized the situation: in the eyes of the peoples of the Entente it was the decease not only of the Emperor but also of Austria-Hungary.

The Emperor Francis Joseph died at a moment when the Central Powers were attempting by means of a peace offer to gain the favour of international opinion and so to wipe out the impression produced by their ruthless provocation of the World War. In December, 1917, Germany addressed a formal peace offer to the United States and shortly afterwards the United States called upon the belligerent Powers to state publicly their peace conditions. The Allies agreed to a publication of peace conditions. Thus the question had to be considered, for the time being theoretically, as to whether the Allied Powers would include in their peace conditions the problem of the reorganization of Central Europe and together with it the Czechoslovak problem.

Thanks to the preceding revolutionary activity of the Czechoslovaks, to the previous work of the National Council, and to the skilful appeals of Dr. Beneš to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Czechoslovak endeavours met with a substan-

tial success. In their reply to President Wilson's Note, the Allies included in the programme for the reorganization of Europe the Czechoslovak request for emancipation. This success not only meant that the Czechoslovak question had ceased to be a purely internal affair of Austria-Hungary but also that it was recognized as a problem meriting international attention. The Allies' reply to the Wilson Note did not, of course, solve the problem but merely formulated it; for the reply contained only the request of the Czechs and Slovaks for emancipation and did not indicate the character of the emancipation intended. The reply could not be regarded as a document declaring the necessity for the dividing of Austria-Hungary into national States. Yet it constituted the first deliberate gesture of the Allies in favour of the demand for the reorganization of the life of the nationalities in Central Europe. The Allied Powers officially indicated in this way that their attitude towards Austria-Hungary had changed and that the endeavours by means of conciliatory methods to detach the Habsburg Empire from Germany and induce it to conclude a separate peace were yielding place to the view that a lasting peace was not possible without changes in Central Europe.

III.

Military Organization.

The Allies' reply to the Wilson Note documented the fact that the problems of the different nationalities in Central Europe had come to the forefront of international political discussion. To what an extent this is correct is shown by the events which about three months later began to take place in Russia and Austria. Under the Stürmer régime the internal political tension in Russia had grown unusually severe and this together with extreme war weariness led to a violent and unavoidable crisis which culminated in the March revolution that with its watchword of the self-determination of nations made the solution of the national question a problem of immediate urgency, above all in Russia itself. If the most centralized State formation in Eastern Europe began to crumble and a new one that was more just to its individual peoples were created in its place, the Habsburg Empire could scarcely remain unaffected, seeing that its rulers had been laboriously endeavouring for whole decades to hold back its disintegration. Moreover by the deposition of the Romanovs the Russian revolution had shaken the power of the dynastic principle which had been the unifying element in the existence of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Finally, after the Russian revolution which in its first period had strengthened the ideal

of pure democracy it was not possible for Austria-Hungary, which had entered the War without asking for the consent of Parliament, to continue in the War and not to provide the elected representatives of the people with an opportunity to collaborate in the government of the Empire. It was necessary also to alleviate the sharp persecution of the subject nationalities, a persecution which had been carried, particularly in the year 1916, to absurd lengths (the introduction of German, the ruthless confiscation of literature, including even school readers printed before the War, and the imprisonment of leading representatives of the Czechoslovak people, some of whom, particularly Dr. Kramář, were to be punished by death). Finally it was necessary to give the individual nationalities in Austria-Hungary a greater measure of free utterance of opinion. Nearly three months after the time when Count Czernin, the Foreign Minister, extracted from the leaders of the Czech Union (in which were associated the most important political parties) by means of pressure and promises a declaration against the Allies' reply to the Wilson Note, there began to be manifested ever more clearly in the Czech lands an elemental revolutionary mass movement which had been driven underground by the persecutions of 1915 and 1916. There was a revival, also, of the activity of the old circles which had arisen at the beginning of the War. New circles

commenced to appear. The first clear indication of this revolutionary process was the movement started by the Czech writers who endeavoured to give public expression to their disagreement with the policy of the leading politicians who after the arrest and imprisonment of a number of bold, revolutionary leaders in 1915 had come to the front in Czech political life. The result of this movement was the so-called "Writer's Manifesto" (May, 1917) which urged the Czech deputies in the Austrian Parliament to make a determined demand for the application of Bohemian constitutional law and the unification of the Czechoslovak people in a juridical whole. An equally clear indication of the fundamental change was the radicalization of the working classes whose resolutions, particularly that of the metal workers on May 17th, 1917, showed that an end had come to the passivity of the nation. The consequences of this movement were very soon manifested. On the occasion of the opening of Parliament at the end of May, 1917, the majority of the Czech deputies in the Reichsrat issued a proclamation in which, although not yet renouncing the dynasty publicly, they formulated a demand for Czechoslovak independence and unity. A minority of the deputies made a declaration which announced the end of all connections with the Habsburgs and their Empire. The declaration of the Czech deputies in the Reichsrat was of fundamental importance, although its

wording was not as radical as the political attitude of the Czech people demanded, since it bore witness only to the nation's unanimity of opinion at home and abroad. The Czech declaration in the Reichsrat did not remain an isolated utterance; analogous proclamations were made by the representatives of the remaining non-German and non-Magyar nationalities. In other words there began at this time in Austria-Hungary a co-operation of all the Slavonic and Latin nationalities. Before the War and at the beginning of the War their attempts at collaboration had miscarried owing to the variety of interests of the individual nationalities, and particularly owing to the divergence of interests of the Poles who from the outset of the War sympathized with Austria on account of the fact that Austria's policy was most favourable towards them, until the Russian revolution inaugurated Polish independence.

Despite its profound influence on the course of events, the Russian revolution was not strong enough to deal the Central Powers a mortal blow. It shook Austria-Hungary very seriously indeed, but on the other hand it aroused in the West justified fears that it would not overcome the military pressure of the Central Powers and therefore it revived in the Western Powers the old tendencies to induce Austria to come to an agreement with them and to conclude a separate peace. The hopes in the possibility

of a separate peace were fed by Austria herself who pretended that she was ready to enter into peace negotiations. Under these circumstances one of the chief tasks of the leaders of the Czechoslovak movement abroad was to paralyse the feelers for a separate peace, to provide the public of Western Europe with detailed information as to insincerity of the Habsburg Empire, and to convince the same public that Austria could not break away from the German alliance. This was no easy or attractive task. It meant destroying the hopes that the hardships of the War might soon come to an end. It meant also creating the impression that the Czechs desired to prolong the catastrophic World War for their own justifiable but too special aims. If in addition to this we realize that the destruction of Austria-Hungary, which the Czechoslovaks were endeavouring to compass, seemed to be a task beyond the strength of the Allies, we can see how ungrateful was the task that the Czechoslovak National Council undertook. The National Council did so with the necessary deliberation and absence of excitement. It did not stir up public opinion but merely intensified its efforts to provide information, endeavouring in the pages of the new reviews entitled "Le Monde Slave" and "The New Europe" to throw light on the past, to explain the current situation, and to analyse the perspectives of the further development of Central Europe; the obvious deduction from this was that not only

would the hopes placed in a separate peace bring about a prolongation of the War but also a lasting peace would be impossible without a thoroughgoing reorganization of Central Europe. One cannot say exactly to what extent this work influenced the subsequent course of events. If, however, it was not effective at the times when the attempts at a separate peace were made, yet its results manifested themselves later when it was seen that these attempts had failed, for it now became apparent that the National Council had formed a correct judgment of the situation because it had arrived at its conclusions on the basis of a correct analysis of conditions.

Although the Russian revolution supported through its ideals the revolutionary movement in Austria-Hungary and thereby rendered assistance to the Allies, it nevertheless weakened at the same time the total military strength of the latter. The economic chaos and exhaustion which led to the revolution were also the cause of the difficulties that finally proved too great for the success of the March revolution. The longing for peace increased, and the Russian soldier became a victim of the illusion that revolution meant also peace. Fraternization with the enemy took place on the Russian front. There arose the justified fear that France might be threatened if Russia's passivity allowed a part of the enemy forces concentrated on the Eastern front to be transferred to the Wes-

tern front. It was therefore a substantial gain for the Allied Powers that Germany's obstinacy in the diplomatic struggle over the submarine question brought the United States into the War. This event was important not merely for the Allies; it was also a new nail in the coffin of Austria-Hungary, although neither the U. S. Government nor President Wilson at first thought in the least of a reorganization of Central Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Yet the principles of democracy and the self-determination of nations, which were emblazoned on the war shield of the United States, necessarily meant the end of the Habsburg Empire, even although insufficient information as to conditions in Central Europe was the reason why the ruling circles in the United States did not draw from them immediately the correct conclusions.

On the other hand the entry of the United States into the War was of considerable importance for the Czechoslovaks also from another point of view. It enabled the Czechoslovak community living in the United States to participate publicly in the Czechoslovak revolution and to start a movement which in the past years it had been unable to organize in view of the neutrality of the State in which it was living. Previous to this, of course, the Czechoslovak community in America had accomplished a great deal for the common cause of the Allies and particularly the Czechoslovak cause. It sup-

plied Professor Masaryk with his financial resources and thereby ensured financial independence for Czechoslovak political work; it paralysed sabotage in the munition factories working for the Allies and revealed German espionage (the activity of the journalist Archibald, the Austrian Ambassador Dumba, and the Military Attaché, Von Pappen). It could rightly be expected that after the entry of the United States into the War, the American Czechoslovaks would participate effectively also in the Czechoslovak military movement. And indeed this expectation was not disappointed; the peculiar conditions of State life in the United States made it impossible, of course, for special Czechoslovak detachments to be organized, as was the case in Russia or in France.

In 1917 the United States was not the only country where an opportunity was given for the extension of the Czechoslovak military movement; this was true also for Italy where the view was beginning to gain ground that Italian aspirations could be fully satisfied only if the map of Central Europe were radically changed. Thus an opportunity was given for the organization of an energetic Czechoslovak national movement in Italy. In January, 1917, in the ranks of the Czechoslovak war-prisoners in Italy there arose quite spontaneously a plan for the formation of volunteer detachments similar to those which already existed in Russia and France. The possibility of a more ef-

fective military movement in Russia and the prospect of the possibility of organizing Czechoslovak military detachments in Italy and perhaps later also in the United States led the Czechoslovak National Council to begin to occupy itself very intensively with the idea of a large, unified Czechoslovak army. The realization of such a plan depended, of course, in the first place on the course of events in Russia where there was the greatest number of volunteers and where the large supply of Czechoslovak prisoners-of-war rendered possible the task which the National Council had undertaken. The Russian revolution considerably lightened this task by ridding the Czechoslovak revolutionary movement of the danger of disunion which the Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior had endeavoured to bring about in the days of the Tsar. It gave the Czechoslovak movement complete freedom of organization. In addition the fulfilment of this task was facilitated by the arrival in Russia of Professor Masaryk, the leader of the Czechoslovak movement. In the stormy times of the revolution the many thousands of Czechoslovak ex-prisoner volunteers obtained a reliable director of the entire policy and at the same time a representative who by reason of his pre-War activity was best qualified to act as their delegate in dealings with the new rulers of Russia.

Not all the difficulties, of course, were over-

come through the instrumentality of the Russian revolution. The growing shortage of labour increased still further the tendency of employers to oppose the departure of the Czechoslovak war-prisoners to the volunteer detachments. On the other hand the Government circles were disturbed by the Polish, Ukrainian and Lettish national movements, and owing also to certain other reasons viewed with unfavourable eyes the formation of the Czechoslovak detachments; in consequence of ignorance, these circles imagined that it was a question of a movement organized by Czechs and Slovaks who were State citizens of Russia.

Despite all obstacles, however, the Czechoslovak military movement in Russia now developed rapidly. The Czechoslovak Brigade, which hitherto had been attached in small groups to individual Russian armies, was gradually concentrated into a single unit which in course of time attained the dimensions of a division. The number of volunteers finally made possible the formation of a second division also. Under these circumstances Professor Masaryk was concerned with the settlement of two questions: 1. the establishment of an independent army corps for the definitive and formal regulation of the development of the military movement, and 2. the transport of at least a section of the military detachments to France, where their presence would play an important part from the political and military points of view. Profes-

or Masaryk succeeded first in settling the question of the transference of the volunteers to France. With the effective assistance of M. Albert Thomas who was then in Russia, a formal agreement was concluded in June 1917, with the consent of the Russian Government, for the transport of the Czechoslovak war-prisoners to France. The negotiations on the formation of an independent Czechoslovak army corps encountered much greater difficulties. It was necessary to overcome the distrust of the Russian revolutionary leaders who owing to their lack of information feared that the Czechoslovak military detachments might be used by the counter-revolutionaries. After the victory at the battle of Zborov (July 2nd) which was fought on the occasion of Kerensky's attempt to start a great Russian offensive (at the battle of Zborov the Czechoslovak Brigade distinguished itself by taking in prisoners a number larger than its own strength), the negotiations for the creation of a Czechoslovak army were rendered difficult only by the frequent changing of the Russian commanders-in-chief; after this battle Kerensky not only recognized with enthusiasm the merits of the Brigade but also gave his consent to its unrestricted enlargement. Nevertheless Prof. Masaryk only just succeeded on October 9th, 1917 in obtaining the approval by the commander-in-chief of all his requests. Thus was created the independent Czechoslovak army corps with in-

dependent leadership and independent supplementary detachments; politically it was placed under the control of the Czechoslovak National Council which secured also the right to have its military representative attached to the Army General Staff and its political commissary to the Corps Headquarters.

This was a substantial and important success by virtue of the fact that the granting of an independent army corps was accompanied by the recognition of its political independence. Although it was created in Russia and in the framework of the Russian army, it was able to introduce the French disciplinary regulations, and the Russian Military Command recognized also the principle that this corps was not to be used in Russia's internal fighting. A month after this event there broke out in Russia the new Soviet revolution which by the peace negotiations with the Central Powers led the development of Russia on to other paths. The Czechoslovak military movement was not threatened, however, by this change, for the creation of an independent army corps in Russia had made it possible to regulate the Czechoslovak military movement on an international basis which came about not long after the Soviet revolution. This was due to the agreements which Dr. Beneš, the general secretary of the Czechoslovak National Council, had succeeded in concluding at Paris when the army corps in Russia was being constituted.

At the beginning of August, 1917, as soon as the news reached Paris of Masaryk's agreement with A. Thomas regarding the transport of the Czechoslovak volunteers to France, Dr. Beneš obtained the French Government's consent to the establishment in France of an autonomous Czechoslovak army formed from all the Czechoslovak detachments existing in the other States. On August 17th, 1917, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was signed a preliminary agreement for which Dr. Beneš had begun negotiate as soon as, in accordance with the Masaryk-Thomas agreement, the first contingents of Czechoslovak volunteers began to arrive from Russia. Owing to the fact that the main details were settled at the time of signing the agreement, all the formal questions were easily disposed of, so that on December 19th, 1917, the French Government was able to issue a decree permitting the formation of a Czechoslovak army in France. The Czechoslovak National Council thus secured what it had been endeavouring to obtain in military matters. The decree recognized the autonomy of the Czechoslovak military detachments and at the same time made it possible to bring the Czechoslovak military detachments scattered in various countries under one political and military leadership. At the moment when the day of peace between the Central Powers and Russia and the Ukraine was approaching, the National Council made use, on February

18th, 1918, of this decree and the preceding agreement on the transport of the Czechoslovak volunteers to France, and declared that the Czechoslovak army corps was a component part of the autonomous army in France and that if peace were concluded this corps would proceed to France. All these decisions were of great importance for the future of the army corps; they lightened the negotiations with the Soviet authorities regarding the transport of the Czechoslovak detachments to France. They also made easier the situation of the Czechoslovak army corps in the revolutionary chaos, for they facilitated the carrying out of the principle of neutrality in the internal conflicts of Russia, not only on the basis of the clause of the agreement concluded in 1917 with the commander-in-chief, General Dukhonin, but also on the basis of the army corps' political independence which was strengthened by virtue of the fact that the army corps formed a constituent part of the foreign army. In addition to its practical importance, the French decree, which was supplemented on February 7th, 1918 by an agreement regarding the principles to be adopted in the formation of the army (this agreement was signed in Paris by Dr. Beneš and M. Clémenceau), was of far-reaching political importance. It proved that France had ceased to vacillate in regard to Austro-Hungarian affairs and to rely on the possibility of a separate peace with the Habsburg Empire; it showed that France had

definitively decided to support to the end the struggle of the Austro-Hungarian peoples for freedom and independence.

The decree on the autonomous Czechoslovak army had an undoubted influence also on the attitude of other Allied Powers, and particularly on that of Italy in regard to the question of the Czechoslovak military movement. We have already mentioned that this became an urgent question in Italy at the beginning of 1917 when the Czechoslovak war-prisoners in the internment camps declared their desire to serve as volunteers in the ranks of the Italian army in order to fight for the victory of the Allied cause and for Czechoslovak independence. As in Russia and France, so also in Italy, these requests were not immediately granted. Here also it was necessary to overcome obstacles of a political character: the Italian Government did not wish to bind itself for the future as long as the victory of the Allies was still in doubt, and on the other hand the Italian Government had a special interest in Yugoslav affairs, an interest which prevented it from adopting towards the Czechoslovak cause a radical attitude before it did so in regard to the Yugoslavs. Yet even under these circumstances the conditions for the Czechoslovak military movement rapidly improved in consequence of the personal relations of M. Štefánik and Dr. Beneš, leading members of the Czechoslovak National Council, with influential Italian

circles. The result of the negotiations conducted by Štefánik in April, 1917 (Štefánik had been in Italy also in 1916) and by Dr. Beneš in January, 1917 and particularly in the autumn of the same year, was at first an agreement that there should be formed semi-military organizations. The change in the general political situation and also the success of the Czechoslovak negotiations in France caused Italy, however, to abandon her vacillating attitude towards the Czechoslovak cause and to act, in the matter of the Czechoslovak military movement, as resolutely as France. On the occasion of a further visit of Štefánik to Italy in February, 1918, the Prime Minister, Signor Orlando, expressed the consent of Italy to the formation of Czechoslovak military units.

The Czechoslovak military movement did not gain successes, at the turn of the years 1917 and 1918, only in France and Italy. Not only abroad but also at home there were indications that the struggle for independence was entering upon its last and decisive stage. In the course of 1917 a number of imprisoned radical politicians (Rašín, Kramář, Klofáč and others) were amnestied, partly on account of the view that harsh treatment only intensifies national conflicts and partly owing to reasons of foreign policy. At the head of the Czech political parties there thus reappeared radical-minded men who imbued the official Czech policy with a new and more radical spirit.

Moreover in the autumn of 1917 the radical wing (led by Habrman) of the Social Democrat party won the upperhand over the opportunistic tendency represented by Šmeral. The Czech official policy was thus brought into harmony with the desires and mood of the masses. For the further internal political development of Austria-Hungary this change had far-reaching consequences. It complicated the already difficult internal situation, and shook very seriously the authority of Austria-Hungary abroad, for it was an obvious sign of the process of disintegration which was taking place in the Habsburg Empire. Towards the beginning of the year 1918 the tension in the political situation reached its culminating point; the Czech political leaders, who at Christmas 1917 received information about the decree by which was constituted the Czechoslovak army in France, decided to formulate clearly the aims and demands of the Czechoslovak people in a new and special declaration. With this object in view they summoned on January 6th, 1918 (Epiphany) a general Diet of the Czech lands which was attended by all the Czech deputies who represented the nation in the Reichsrat and in the Diets of the individual lands. The manifesto which was issued by this Diet and is known as the "Epiphany Declaration", announced, in effect the end of Austria. In deference to the Czech conservative circles it differed from the theses of the Czechoslovak National Council in

that it accepted the proclamation made by the Czech politicians on the occasion of the opening of the Austrian Parliament on January 30 th, 1917 (a proclamation which formulated the relations to the Habsburgs in vague terms), but it contained a definite demand for the complete union of the Czechs and Slovaks in an absolutely independent Czechoslovak State.

It was very characteristic of the situation that the Austrian Government was no longer strong enough to suppress this declaration; after a certain amount of indecision on the part of the Austrian censors, permission was given for its publication.

IV.

The Diplomatic Struggle.

By the beginning of 1918, then, everything tended to show that Austria-Hungary was hastening to its end. The Czechoslovak National Council started a diplomatic struggle for the juridical recognition of Czechoslovak independence, and its hopes of success were fully justified in view of the results already obtained. Briefly, these results had been: the agreement on the transport of volunteers to France; the independent army corps in Russia; the decree allowing the constitution of an autonomous Czechoslovak army in France; the agreement (dated February 7th, 1917) on the instructions for the formation of the Czechoslovak army;

the agreement of the Czechoslovak National Council with the Soviet Government on the departure of the Czechoslovak army corps to France; and Orlando's consent to the formation of a Czechoslovak army in Italy. The hopes in the success of this struggle were justified also by the international situation which in the early months of 1918 was characterized by a radical change in the views regarding the future of Austria-Hungary. At this time it clearly became apparent that the assertions made by Prof. Masaryk and Dr. Beneš concerning the futility of the belief in Austria-Hungary's sincerity were true to the last letter. This was proved by the falsity of Austria-Hungary in connection with the negotiations for a separate peace. General support began to be given to the conviction expressed by Clémenceau when he spoke of "the rotten conscience of the Austrian Court" on the occasion of his reply to Czernin's attempt to deceive the public opinion of Europe with his lying description of the endeavours to conclude a separate peace. In a word, people ceased to reckon with Austria and the Habsburgs, even although the fate of the Empire was not yet decided. The German offensive, which was opened at the end of March, 1918, could not produce any change in this situation. In spite of the difficult position in which the Allied armies found themselves owing to the conclusion of a separate peace by Russia and Roumania with the Central Powers, the situation of the

Allies was, thanks to the support provided by the United States, on the whole good. The position of the Allies remained unshaken, and indeed faith grew in the final success of the Allied cause. Under such circumstances the never-flagging work of Dr. Beneš was considerably lightened, so that the diplomatic struggle developed rapidly and successfully. At this period Italy was abandoning the reserve which was dictated by the fear that the forces of the Allies would not be sufficient to bring about a definite solution of the national question in Central Europe; further, Italy began to change her attitude towards the Yugoslav question which had been the obstacle to her taking up a definite position in regard to the Czechoslovak question. The Italian Government gave a clear indication of the change of view on the occasion of the Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities of Austria-Hungary which was held in Rome on April 9th—12th and manifested in favour of their independence. The Italian Government not only extended hospitality to the congress but also provided it with moral support which caused it to be an important international event. The Congress of Oppressed Nationalities was important not merely in this respect; by the impression which it created among Italian circles it aided also the Czechoslovak-Italian negotiations regarding the organization of a Czechoslovak army. It strengthened in Italy the conviction that the right course had been taken when in

February the Italian Government promised permission for the organization of Czechoslovak military detachments. A fortnight after the congress, on April 21st, Dr. Štefánik and Dr. Sychrava signed on behalf of the Czechoslovak National Council the agreement with Italy. After that event Italy regarded the settlement of the Czechoslovak question as a matter which necessarily involved the recognition of Czechoslovak independence; as Orlando later explained, by this agreement the Czechoslovak National Council was recognized as being, in effect, the de facto Government.

That the programme of the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities produced an enthusiastic response amongst the Czechoslovaks is shown by the fact that within three weeks after the signing of the agreement of April 21st some 10,000 volunteers announced their desire to join the fighting forces; this naturally created an effect not only on Italian opinion but also on the rest of the world. Amongst other things, the congress showed how strong had become the conviction that common action on the part of the subject nationalities of Austria-Hungary was sufficient to change the conditions in Central Europe. Indeed this idea could be practically realized only during the War when the common danger lessened or removed the obstacles which had previously been created owing to variety of interests. But even during the War the idea did not immediately acquire real force. At

the beginning it was a question merely of the co-operation of the Czechoslovaks with the Yugoslavs and the Ententophil Poles; the entry of Italy and Roumania into the War brought in the Austrian Italians and the Transylvanian Roumanians; finally the Russian revolution, by the manifesto declaring the independence of Poland, brought in the remaining Poles. The first and most consistent enthusiasts for this co-operation lived abroad. Professor Masaryk, Dr. Beneš and others worked in this direction from the outset. In 1915 and 1916 a considerable number of the Czechs and Slovaks captured by the Russian forces voluntarily entered the Serbian army; in 1917 concrete attempts were made to organize a common political front amongst the Czechoslovaks, Yugoslavs, Poles and Roumanians. Professor Masaryk, who was in constant communication with the Yugoslavs, discussed these matters in the summer of 1917 at Moscow with the Poles (Grabski) and a little later, on the occasion of his visit to Roumania in October, 1917, with the Roumanians. At Kiev in November, 1917, under the chairmanship of Prof. T. G. Masaryk, there was organized the first demonstration of representatives of all the Austro-Hungarian nationalities. At the beginning of 1918 attention was given to a plan to unite the Czechoslovak army corps with Polish and Ukrainian detachments and with the Roumanian army so as to form a whole which could take over the rôle of the Russian

army and restore the Allied front in Eastern Europe. Similarly, greater support was given to the idea of a united front of the Austro-Hungarian nationalities within the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire. Here also there had been, since the beginning of the War, an exchange of views on the question of a common programme and common tactics; at the opening of the session of the Austro-Hungarian Parliament on May 30th the representatives of the various oppressed nationalities submitted declarations that contained almost identical demands. The result of this united action was unmistakable. The disintegration of Austria-Hungary had clearly set in. After this moment the idea of common action was regarded as the best method for the attainment of final success and as the best weapon against the centralism of Vienna. This was demonstratively manifested on April 13th, 1918 on the occasion of the taking of the "Prague Oath" and on May 24th, 1919 (at the celebrations in commemoration of the foundation of the National Theatre in Prague) when representatives of the various nationalities of Austria-Hungary unanimously expressed the desire to realize fully by common endeavours their national aims.

This development of events was, amongst other things, the reason why the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities held at Rome produced such a powerful impression throughout the whole world, and particularly in the United States which from

the moment of its entry into the War regarded the self-determination of nations as essential to a lasting peace. Hence under the influence of the resolutions passed at the congress the United States revised its stand-point with regard to the Austro-Hungarian problem and adopted the view that in the coming peace negotiations the opportunity for autonomous development should be given to the individual nationalities of Austria-Hungary. On May 29th State Secretary Lansing indicated this change of opinion of the United States in a special declaration; he informed all the Allies of the impression produced by the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities held in Rome, and he added that the United States sympathized with the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav struggle for freedom. While the representatives of the Czechoslovak National Council were establishing in Italy the new Czechoslovak military detachments on the basis of the agreement of April 21, 1918, and while the combined efforts of all the oppressed nationalities were convincing the United States that the end of Austria-Hungary was approaching, Dr. Beneš, the general secretary of the National Council, was systematically continuing the diplomatic struggle which had commenced at the beginning of 1918. In the spring of 1918 he started negotiations with France regarding a formal recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council as a *de facto* Govern-

ment and regarding a recognition of the Czechoslovak army as an Allied and belligerent army. He succeeded, on the whole without difficulty, in securing from French Government a promise that at a convenient moment it would announce its decision in a public declaration. At the beginning of May there followed the negotiations with England. Although England for comprehensible reasons was more reserved than France, Dr. Beneš succeeded also there in securing a promise that at a convenient moment England would recognize the National Council as a *de facto* Government and like France would support the efforts of the National Council to have recognition proclaimed by all the Allies collectively. Italy was prevented by its interests from predetermining, by any kind of announcement regarding the Czechoslovak question, the settlement of the Yugoslav question, and consequently did not associate itself with this collective declaration. Hence the declaration of the Allies at the Versailles Conference of June 2nd, 1918, contained only the demand of Poland for independence and made a promise only of emancipation to the Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs, without indicating the form in which this would take place. Nevertheless this formulation signified that the Allied States accepted in principle the programme of Czechoslovak independence and had decided to recognize, before the end of the War, the Czecho-

slovak National Council as a de facto Government and the Czechoslovak army as an Allied and belligerent army. Although the Inter-Allied Conference at Versailles did not formulate its standpoint in regard to the Czechoslovak question in accordance with the actual views of the Allied Powers, there could be no doubt as to its real meaning. This was proved by the collective declaration of the representatives of the Allies where the situation immediately required it. Such was the case in Russia two days after the Allied Conference at Versailles.

The Czechoslovak independent army corps, which on February 7th, 1918 became a constituent part of the army in France, found itself in a difficult and delicate situation. It was to leave Russia and proceed to France as soon as a separate peace was concluded between Russia and the Central Powers. During the negotiations for this peace, it endeavoured, in accordance with the directions of Professor Masaryk, to maintain neutrality in the internal conflicts of Russia, to complete its equipments and to safeguard for itself regular supplies. When the Soviet Government was compelled to accept the peace conditions of the Central Powers, the Czechoslovak army corps set out on its long pilgrimage through Russia to France. The departure of the Czechoslovak troops from the Ukraine and Russia was carried out at first by agreement with the com-

mander-in-chief of the Soviet armies; detachments of the Czechoslovak army corps even stopped, together with the Soviet troops, the advance of the German army. A little later these detachments voluntarily handed over a superfluous part of their equipment to the Soviet army, for which act they received the warm thanks of the then commander-in-chief, Antonov-Ovseyenko who said that the arms handed over were the gift of brothers who had fought heroically at Kiev, Zhitomir and Bakhmach against the armies of German Imperialism. Thus in the course of two months the National Council succeeded in sending only the smaller part of the army corps (12,000 men) as far as Vladivostok and in distributing the remainder of the army corps between Rytishchev and Vladivostok.

The National Council failed in its efforts to despatch the army corps to France. The causes of the failure were not the technical difficulties which the National Council feared originally but the special conditions in which the army corps found itself. The separate peace of the Ukraine with the Central Powers accelerated the conclusion of a separate peace between Russia on the one hand and Germany and Austria on the other. It therefore brought within the sphere of actuality the question of the departure of the Czechoslovak army corps from

to move eastwards not as a military unit but as a transport body of free citizens who were taking with them a certain number of weapons for protection against attacks by counter-revolutionaries.

This agreement did not, of course, remove all obstacles. Regardless of the agreement concluded in Penza, individual local Soviets again and again demanded further reductions in the arms which the Czechoslovak transport bodies took with them. This could scarcely strengthen the trust of the Czechoslovak volunteers in the Soviet Government or calm the apprehensions called forth in the troops by the handing over of arms on the basis of the Penza agreement. Nevertheless these difficulties also would evidently have been overcome—a section of the army corps managed to reach Vladivostok even under the prevailing conditions—if the further course of events had not been unexpectedly complicated by the Japanese occupation of Vladivostok. This caused the Soviet Government now to inform the Czechoslovak échelons which were to the west of Omsk that they could not be allowed to proceed further east but would be obliged to go to Archangel; hence for technical reasons and also on account of a decision of the Inter-Allied Conference at Abbeville, a section of the Czechoslovak army corps changed its route to Archangel and Mur-

mansk. In regard to this matter an agreement was arrived at between the Allies and the Soviets. Unfortunately neither side gave timely information of this to the responsible Czechoslovak leaders, so that the Czechoslovak troops suddenly found themselves faced by an inexplicable circumstance.

The result was that the distrust caused by the constant holding back of the transport bodies grew exceedingly and that the decree of the Soviet Government was alleged to be connected with German intrigues. Such a view was the more comprehensible seeing that a small group of Czechoslovak Communists, which had been formed a few months previously from a number of former Social Democrats, had begun, owing to lack of information and to political inexperience and out of a desire to canvass their comrades to spread reports to this effect in their journal "Průkopník" ("Pioneer"). A tenseness arose, which the Branch of the National Council found great difficulty in dispelling and which began to increase still further when news arrived from Moscow that at the beginning of May the Czechoslovak Communists were requisitioning in a provocative manner the office premises of the National Council in Moscow. Also the Soviet Government commenced to look at the state of affairs with increased fears, having been incorrectly

informed by the Czechoslovak Communists that the Czechoslovak National Council was preparing plans of counter-revolution.

On May 14th, 1918 occurred the incident at Chelyabinsk caused by the provocative behaviour of a Magyar war-prisoner who hurled a stone at a train containing Czechoslovak volunteers. The war-prisoner was killed by an angry crowd of volunteers. The Soviet authorities intervened but being unable to discover the culprit they wrongfully arrested the Czechoslovak station guard sent by the commander of a Czechoslovak regiment to investigate the matter. Angered by this incident, the Czechoslovak volunteers thereupon proceeded to the town, occupied it and released the station guard. After this they returned to the train and by peaceful investigation the matter might have been liquidated in the ordinary way. The Soviet Government, however, decided to use this incident as an excuse for taking measures against the Czechoslovak troops. It ordered the arrest in Moscow of the leaders of the Branch of the National Council for Russia and sent by telegram an order signed by Aralov requiring the disarming of the Czechoslovak detachments and their transformation into labour corps. Exasperated by the never-ending obstacles placed in the way of their journey, the Czechoslovak detachments determined that

they would no longer obey the decrees of the Soviet authorities and disregarded the order that the first division should proceed to Archangel. They decided to continue their journey eastwards to France in defiance of the Soviets.

The execution of this plan was entrusted to an executive committee elected by the representatives of the troops and furnished with plenipotentiary powers (the plenipotentiary powers of the Branch of the National Council for Russia were abolished by this decision). The Soviets, however, replied with the brutal order of Trotsky that every Czechoslovak found in the possessions of weapons should be shot on the spot. Thus the conflict which had already started in some places as a result of Aralov's telegram could not now be stopped, for the Czechoslovak volunteers saw in Trotsky's order to disarm not only an insult to their national pride and revolutionary honour but also the intention of the Soviet Government to prevent the departure of the Czechoslovak army to France.

There was only one way to stop the terrible struggle which was beginning to develop. This was to give the Czechoslovak army the opportunity to proceed on its journey eastwards without depriving it of the remainder of the arms which two months previously the Soviet Government itself had allowed it to retain for defence against

the counter-revolutionaries. The Soviet Government did not, however, accept this condition and decided to compel the obedience of the Czechoslovaks by force. For reasons of prestige it neither cancelled nor modified the order given by Trotsky and instituted against the Czechoslovak army a regular military campaign.

The Czechoslovaks met the attack by counter-attack, although the Allied representatives, chiefly the French who had an interest in the departure of the army to France, insisted at first that the army should retire from the conflict and if necessary hand over its arms. Thus along the whole of the line from Rtyshchev through Penza, Chelyabinsk, Omsk and Irkutsk to Vladivostok there arose a struggle, the result of which was unexpected for the Soviet Government and for the Allies alike. Unable to endure the idea of an ignominious life in concentration camps instead of a victorious march to their native country, the Czechoslovak volunteers took possession, practically at one blow, of all the important places on the above-mentioned line. Thus they not only ensured for themselves the possibility of combining the greater part of the scattered units in one whole but they also secured the opportun-

ity for an effective counter-offensive if the threat of danger continued.

At first it seemed to them that their departure to Vladivostok and France had been safeguarded by this first counter-attack. They therefore did not think of exploiting their victory for an attack on the existence of the Soviet Government. It was only when they ascertained that the communications between the first division and the detachments in Vladivostok had been broken and that the Soviet troops were continuing to advance, that they decided to stop the advance of the Soviet forces until the Vladivostok group had cleared the route to the east. This, however, did not take place until much later. Insufficiently informed as to what was happening in the west, the Vladivostok group did not begin these operations until some weeks had elapsed, so that the first division was obliged to continue fighting. Meanwhile its position became easier because in the rear a new Russian administration had been established in place of the Soviets.

During these battles, in which the Czechoslovak volunteers were always victorious, the idea arose among the Czechs of restoring the eastern front against Germany. This idea won adherents not only because the Soviet Government was regarded, owing to its harsh attitude, as a secret ally of

Germany, but also because there were hopes of Allied assistance. The change in the views of the Allies concerning the course of events in Russia and the rôle of the Czechoslovak army corps definitely strengthened this idea. The Allies expressed their consent to the plan of restoring the front in Russia and commenced making preparations for intervention in Russia. The Czechoslovak army corps, whose battles had been followed with close attention in the West, thus found itself in the centre of world politics; it became one of the important factors, as was expressly stated in a telegram of Lloyd George to Professor Masaryk when he said: "... the story of the adventures and triumph of this little army is truly one of the greatest epics of history... Your nation has rendered an inestimable service to Russia and the Allies in their struggle for the liberation of the world from despotism. We shall never forget this..."

These events confirmed in an entirely unexpected manner all the arguments brought forward by Dr. Beneš in his negotiations with France and England concerning the recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council as a *de facto* Government and of the Czechoslovak army as an Allied and belligerent army. They proved to the Western Powers that the will of the Czechoslovak people

for freedom was unbroken and that the Czechoslovak nation was capable of deciding its own destiny, seeing that an important part of the nation—the Czechoslovak army corps in Russia—had given so clear a proof of national discipline and self-government. They finally justified the far-sightedness of the Allies who had believed Dr. Beneš's arguments at an early period; and they caused the Allies to carry out, at least in part, the promise given shortly before to Dr. Beneš that they would publish collectively a declaration in favour of the independence of the Czechoslovak nation and would recognize its army as an Allied army. This was done in the first days of the conflict of the Czechoslovak army corps with the Soviets, when after the issue of the above-mentioned orders by Aralov and Trotsky the frequent visits of Count Mirbach, the German Ambassador, to the Commissariat at Foreign Affairs indicated that the German Government was endeavouring to exert pressure on the Soviets. Under these circumstances the Allied representatives proclaimed the Czechoslovak army corps to be an Allied force and every act against it to be a hostile act against the Allies.

V.

The Origin of the Czechoslovak State.

While the Czechoslovak army corps in Russia was fighting for existence, Dr. Beneš in Paris was endeavouring to bring about the fulfilment of at least the main part of what he had arranged with the Allied Powers in the month of May. It was a question, mostly, of the fixing of the day when the French Government was to make an official declaration on the attitude of France towards the Czechoslovak question. At the beginning of June the date was settled. The text of the declaration was drafted, and the circumstances were arranged under which the declaration was to be made. On June 29th, 1918, therefore, at the presentation of the colours to the 21st Czechoslovak Rifle Regiment, a letter was sent by M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, to Dr. Beneš containing not only the declaration of the right of the Czechoslovak nation to independence and the official recognition of the National Council as the supreme organ for the administration of all the nation's affairs and as the basis of the future Czechoslovak Government, but also a promise that the French Government would do its utmost to secure the fulfilment of the desires of the Czechoslovak people for independence within its his-

torical frontiers. In connection with the official presentation of the colours, President Poincaré made, on June 30th, 1918, an extensive pronouncement in which he gave historical and political reasons for this decision on the part of France. If we read carefully this speech and follow the further rapid development of the Czechoslovak diplomatic struggle, it can rightly be said that June 29th was really the day of Czechoslovak victory. The decisive word which on that day was spoken by France in regard to the destiny of the Czechoslovak nation was of such a character that expectations were justly raised that within a short period similar declarations would be made by the other Allied Powers. Testimony to this was given not only by the telegram in which the English Foreign Secretary, Balfour, took cognisance of Pichon's telegraphic report on the French declaration and also by the additional convention signed on June 30th, 1918 by the Czechoslovak National Council and Italy on the Czechoslovak army, but also by the declaration of State Secretary Lansing, of July 2nd, 1918, which supplemented and explained the announcement of the United States of May 9th 1918 to the effect that "all the members of the Slavonic family must be completely liberated from the Austro-Hungarian yoke".

The breakdown of the German offensive in the West naturally accelerated the further course of events, for it created the right atmosphere for the new negotiations of Beneš with England and the other Allied Powers. The result of these negotiations was, above all, the declaration of the British Government on August 9th which recognized the Czechoslovaks as an Allied nation, the Czechoslovak army as an Allied and belligerent army and the National Council as the trustee of the future Czechoslovak Government. The other declarations followed soon afterwards: the declarations of the United States (September 2nd, 1918) and Japan (shortly afterwards) which were analogous to the British declaration, and finally the declaration of Premier Orlando in the Italian Parliament that the convention concluded between the Czechoslovak National Council and Italy on April 21st, 1918 was "equivalent to the recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council as a de facto Government".

These declarations were supplemented by the agreements between the Czechoslovak National Council and England (September 3rd, 1918) and the Czechoslovak National Council and France (September

28th, 1918), in which the principles of the above-mentioned declarations were expounded in detail and a guarantee was given to the Czechoslovak National Council of participation in all the conferences discussing affairs that affected the interests of the Czechoslovaks. In this way the fate of Austria-Hungary was sealed. Such was the conviction not only of the Allied countries but also of the Governments and the public of the Central Powers, especially Austria-Hungary, which from the moment of the publication of the British declaration, in particular, began to grow reconciled to the idea that the reorganization of Central Europe was a historical necessity.

Thus the struggle of the Czechoslovak nation for independence reached the final stage. The only thing now remaining was to secure juridical recognition for a Czechoslovak independent State and its Government and to free the State territory from the troops of the Central Powers.

The general military situation accelerated the settlement of these two questions, the solution of which had been prepared for a later period. On September 5th Bulgaria made to the Entente the offer of an armistice, and on October 5th the same course was taken by the other Powers. The end of the War was ap-

proaching, and it was no longer possible to postpone further the moment for the last and decisive diplomatic attack on Austria-Hungary. Professor Masaryk and Dr. Beneš put forth all their energies so that the effort might be crowned with final success. While Dr. Beneš was drafting in company with the Allied representatives and Ministers the texts of the declarations and agreements recognizing the National Council as the Government of the Czechoslovak nation, Professor Masaryk, who had travelled through Japan to America at the end of April, concentrated all his attention and efforts on winning the support of American public opinion and American Government circles for the Czechoslovak cause. This task, which was connected not only with the diplomatic struggle for the recognition of a Czechoslovak State but with the endeavours to safeguard the position of the Czechoslovak army in Siberia, was accomplished after a few months' work. At the decisive moment, therefore, when the Central Powers requested the United States to arrange an armistice, the ground was already prepared for the final spurt in the diplomatic struggle for Czechoslovak independence. On October 14th Dr. Beneš notified the Allied Governments of the decision of the Czechoslovak National Council regarding the

constituting of a provisional Czechoslovak Government, and on October 18th Professor Masaryk proclaimed at Washington the independence of the Czechoslovak State. From that moment the independence of the Czechoslovak State was a juridical fact, for the Allied Powers immediately recognized *de jure* the existence of the Czechoslovak State and of its provisional Government. France did so on the day following the notification by Dr. Beneš of the constituting of the Czechoslovak Government; England did so on October 23rd, and the other Powers soon afterwards. Nothing remained now but the fulfilment of the second part of the programme: the evacuation of the Austro-Hungarian forces from the State territory. This task fell to the nation at home.

As has been mentioned above, after the Epiphany declaration of the General Diet of the Czech lands and after the demonstrations of April 13th and May 16th, 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Government could no longer be in any doubt that the Czechoslovak people would not be satisfied any more with half-hearted concessions. The Austro-Hungarian Government hoped only that it would succeed in keeping the Czechoslovak people within the frame-

work of a federalized Austro-Hungarian Empire or at least under Habsburg rule. It was in these two directions that it exerted all its diplomatic and tactical efforts. Nevertheless it very soon became apparent that the hopes of the Austro-Hungarian Government were vain in both directions and that the moment had long passed when the Czechoslovak people would have been reconciled, perhaps for a certain period, with similar concessions, seeing that since the summer of 1918 individual Czech deputies had publicly proclaimed in Parliament their solidarity with the Allies. On the other hand, the existence of the National Committee, which had been formed in Prague in the summer of 1918 by an agreement of all the Czech political parties and had been entrusted with the task of directing the political affairs of the Czechoslovak nation, had necessarily to deprive the Austro-Hungarian Government of the hope that it would be able to exploit to its own advantage any dissensions in the Czech camp. The rapid course of events abroad, especially the breakdown of the German offensive and the declarations of France, England and the other Allied Powers in favour of Czechoslovak independence, enabled the leaders of the National Committee to announce to the world from the tribune of Parlia-

ment at the beginning of October, not only that they supported with unshakable determination the principles proclaimed in the Epiphany declaration which demanded an independent Czechoslovak State but also that they were in wholehearted sympathy with the Allies and with the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris and that they desired the National Council to represent the Czechoslovak nation at the approaching Peace Conference. Under these circumstances, and particularly in view of the mood of the masses of the Czechoslovak nation which had from the outset been radically anti-Austrian and anti-Habsburg, all the attempts of the Austrian Government to win over Czechoslovak public opinion by any kind of concessions were necessarily doomed to failure. The attempt of the Emperor Charles, who promised autonomy to the individual peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was therefore abruptly rejected and he was clearly given to understand that there could be no more talk of any kind of compromise. Just as the attempts of the Austrian Government to save what could be saved by means of concessions met with failure in the internal policy of the Empire, so also failure was the result in the case of its endeavours to deceive by various diplomatic intrigues the general public and also official circles in the countries of the Entente. The

reply of the Austrian Government to the British declaration of August 9th, 1918 produced no effect on the public opinion of the Allies, and the manifesto of the Emperor Charles promising autonomy to the individual peoples of Austria-Hungary necessarily misfired when the United States, which as late as the beginning of 1918 had not envisaged the desintegration of Austria-Hungary, had proclaimed on July 2nd, 1918 through the mouth of Lansing, the necessity for the complete emancipation of the oppressed nationalities of Austria-Hungary. Hence the Austro-Hungarian peace offer, which sought by an appeal to the Fourteen Points of President Wilson to preserve the unity of the Habsburg Empire, was rejected by the United States a few hours after Professor Masaryk had made his declaration of Czechoslovak independence at Washington. In reply to the Austro-Hungarian offer the United States President declared that he "could not accept the mere autonomy of these nations as a basis for peace and was obliged to insist that they and not he were the judges in any undertaking of the Austro-Hungarian Government".

Thus the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic intrigues were fruitless, and as the military situation had become untenable in consequence of the collapse of Bulgaria and of the disorganization of the Italian front, the Habsburgs were

compelled to accept this condition of President Wilson. On October 28th, 1918, Andrassy's Note notifying the United States of this fact was published and the Czechoslovak nation used the moment not only to manifest its will to live in an independent State of its own but also to prove by means of a demonstration that it was in agreement with the action of the leader of the revolution, Professor Masaryk, and his collaborators, Dr. Beneš and Štefánik, who had already formed a Government recognized by the Allies. Without any difficulties and dissensions a Czechoslovak Government was formed in Prague by the National Committee on the same day, and it amalgamated immediately with the Government established at Paris, in order to form a single whole.

The task of the revolution was not yet entirely completed either by the Washington declaration or by the proclamation of the independent State in Prague. It was still necessary for the newly formed State to settle the question of the form of government and also the question of the frontiers. In both cases decisions had been taken abroad which formed the basis for a solution. The leaders of the Czechoslovak movement abroad had consistently demanded from the outset the deposition of the Habsburgs and had undertaken no obligations which would in any way have predetermined

the form of government. Nevertheless this question was really settled by the very fact of the Russian revolution. The joy with which the principles of democracy proclaimed by the March revolution in Russia were welcomed by the Czechoslovak people both at home and abroad testified unmistakably that the form of government of the future State could be only that of a democratic republic. It was in this sense that the Washington declaration proclaimed the independent State; the question was also agreed upon without difficulty by the representatives of the Czechoslovak National Council and the Prague National Committee at a meeting held in Geneva at the end of October, 1918. Hence the Prague revolutionary National Assembly, which opened its session on November 14th, unanimously declared the independent Czechoslovak State to be a Republic with Professor Masaryk, the chairman of the Czechoslovak National Council, as its first President.

Also the second question, which related to the frontiers of Czechoslovakia, was virtually settled or at least prepared for settlement, during the War not only by the agreement with France that the future Czechoslovakia should have its historical frontiers but also by the recognition of the principle that Czechoslovak delegates should be admitted to all conferences

dealing with questions relating to the Czechoslovak people. Dr. Beneš took part as a delegate of the Allies at the negotiations for the armistice with Germany, and later he took part, together with Dr. Kramář, at the Peace Conference which discussed the question of the reconstruction of Europe and the principles of the future peace. The delimitation of the frontiers was, of course, not merely a juridical question but also one of organization and power. The practical execution of what the Czechoslovak National Council at Paris had arranged during the War was the work of the politicians at home. For this purpose, immediately after the proclamation of Czechoslovak independence on October 28th, 1918, the Czechoslovak army was organized and it gradually occupied all the territories belonging to the new State. This work was carried out without special difficulties not only in Bohemia but also in Slovakia which associated itself with the proclamation of independence by a special declaration on October 30th. During November and December, 1918, the new Czechoslovakia was organized in its main features, so that it was able with full trust in the future to undertake creative work, especially when on December 21st, 1918, Professor T. G. Masaryk, the leader of its revolution and its first President, returned amidst memorable scenes of the greatest enthusiasm.

CONTENTS:

<i>Foreword</i>	5
I. <i>Preparations</i>	8
II. <i>Organization and Propaganda</i>	21
III. <i>Military Organization</i>	37
IV. <i>The Diplomatic Struggle</i>	54
V. <i>The Origin of the Czechoslovak State</i>	73

JAROSLAV PAPOUŠEK
THE STRUGGLE
FOR CZECHOSLOVAK
INDEPENDENCE

Edition of two thousand

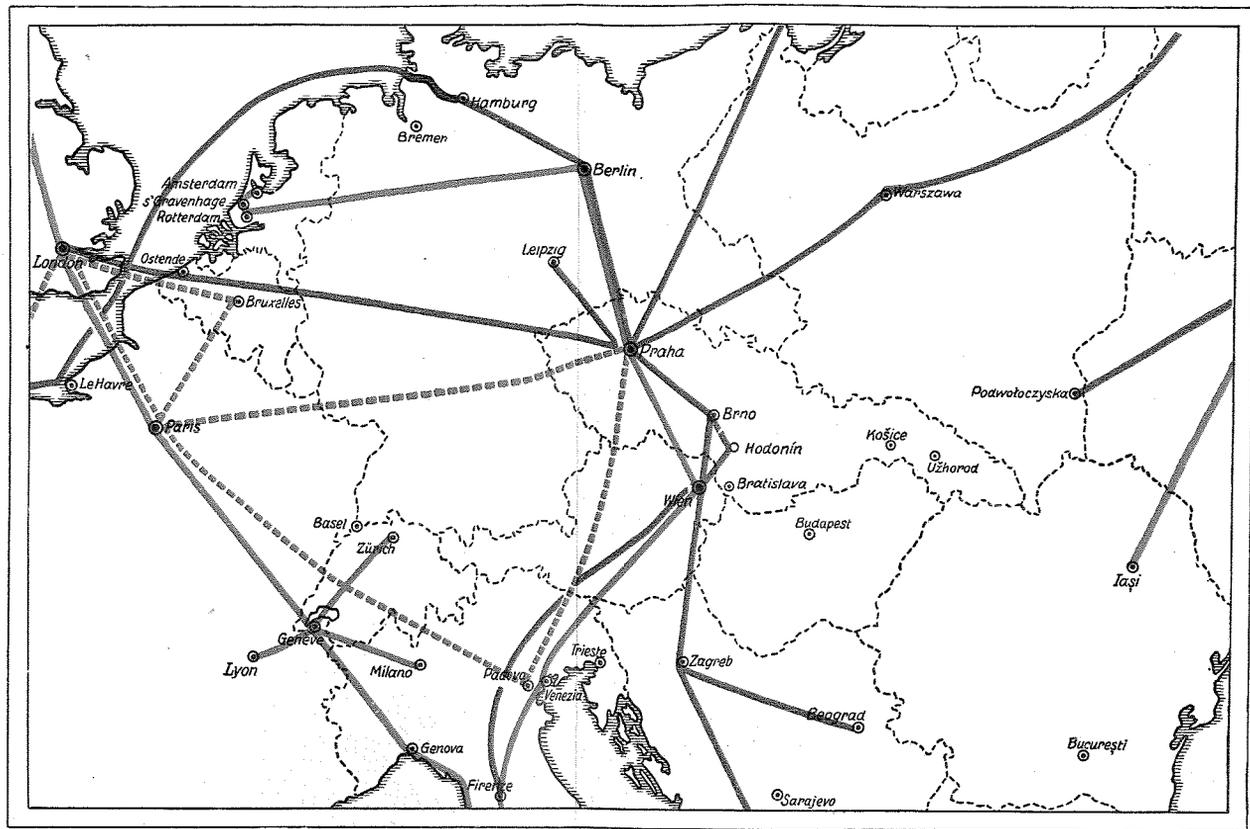
*Printed by the
Orbis Printing Press for the Orbis
Publishing Co. Prague XII.*

Fochova 62

August 1928

Printed
in Ronaldson Type

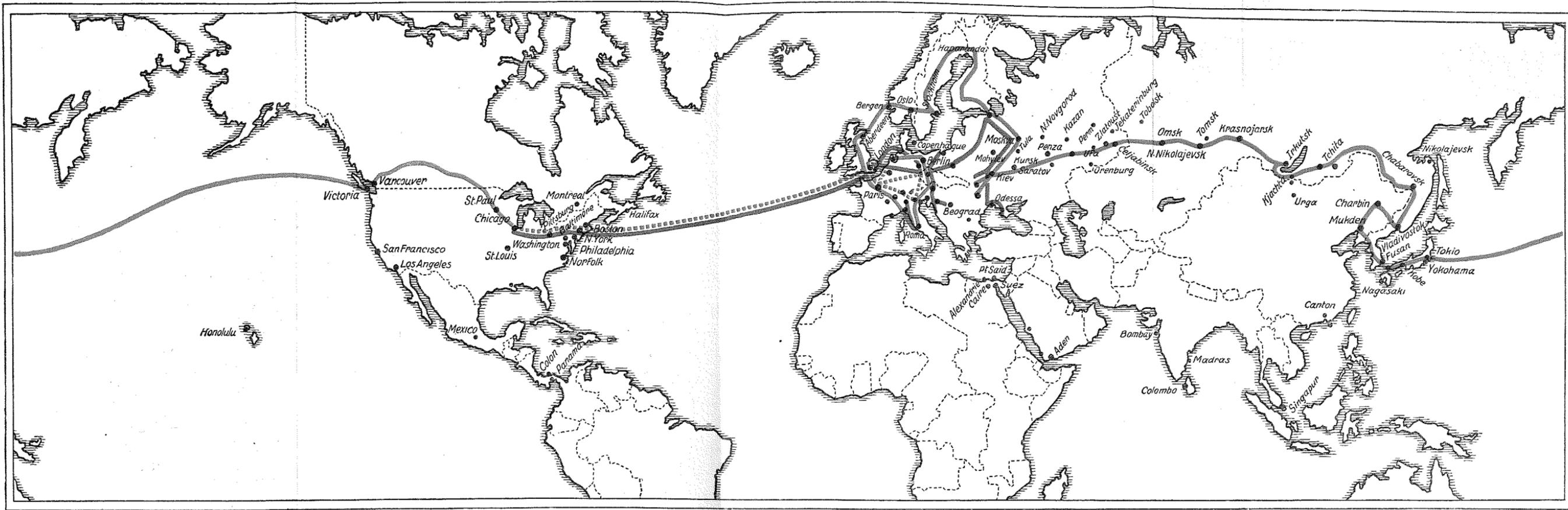
THE JOURNEYS OF T. G. MASARYK IN EUROPE.



The journeys before the war

The journeys during the war and subsequently

THE JOURNEYS OF T. G. MASARYK

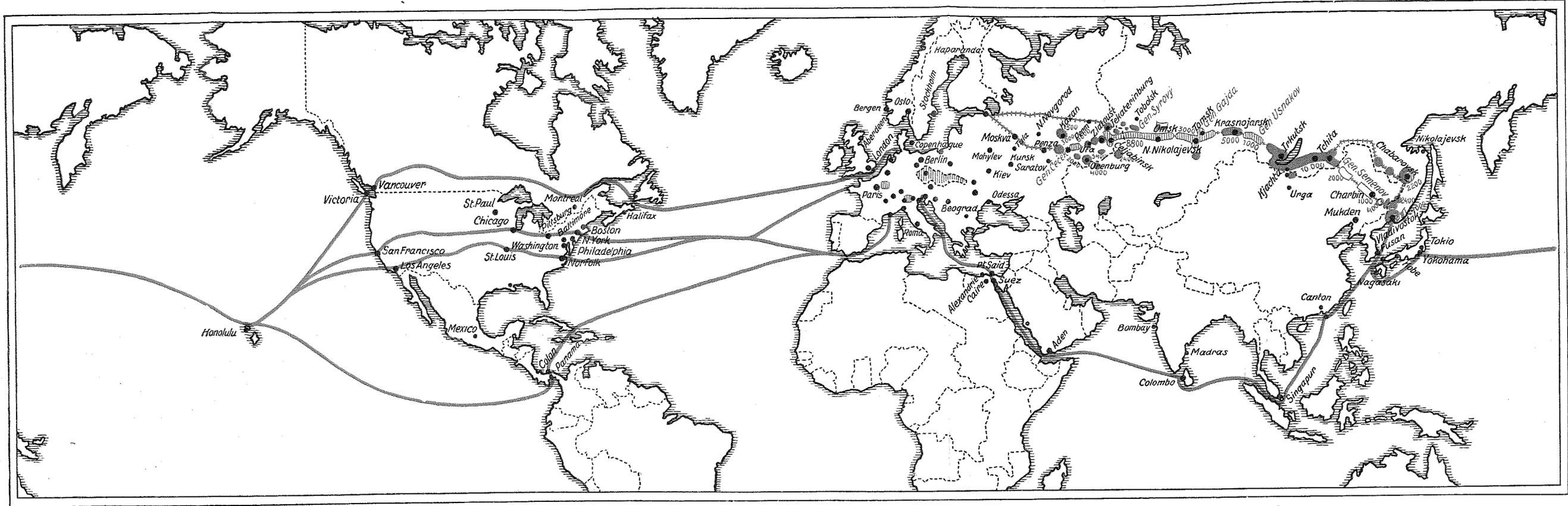


The journeys before the war ■■■

The journeys during the war - - -

The journeys after the war ———

THE MARCHES AND JOURNEYS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEGIONS



The marches and journeys of the Legions

The Bolshevik-positions