

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

Czechoslovak lobby in America

January 26, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

Brett Stevens' favorite lamenting of "trace admixture", especially his recent and as usual quite formulaic reminder How Irish Immigration Destroyed America (<http://www.amerika.org/politics/how-irish-immigration-destroyed-america/>) got me thinking about other less-than-Nordic immigrants offered as explanations for America's identity crisis, and there's one that deserves more opprobrium than the micks: the goddamned Czechs.

Bohemia actually seems to just fit right at the outermost western boundary of the Hajnal line, so the "shared Nordic-Germanic root" may/may not have been present. Whether or not their "cultures, values, religions, and philosophies were more similar than not" with the Nords is disputable, but Glorious President-Liberator Tom Masaryk (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom%C3%A1%C5%A1_Garrigue_Masaryk) certainly thought so. Indeed, Bohemia was the most European of all, for according to him it was the Taborites and Jan Žižka who really got the democratic humanist revolution going. And if those aren't shared values, what are?

Brett tends to rewrite the same six essays over and over again, but here we learn that the paddies have quite the record: not only urban machines, but also Reconstruction, affirmative action, Hart-Celler and by far the most odious of all: National Review conservatism.

He forgot to mention Irish American aid to the IRA. But it could have been worse. It could have been Czech American aid to the Czechoslovak Legion.

Why, the Bohemian National Alliance in fact proclaimed their impartiality (<https://web.archive.org/web/20121111165419/query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0D10FD345B17738DDDA00994D8415B868DF1D3>) by exhorting their coethnics not to follow the "mischievous example of mixing our natural election for the country which gave us birth with the politics of the country of our adoption" in the 1916 presidential election, unlike the krauts and their support of disloyal antiwar candidate... Woodrow Wilson. At the time, he was.

In Nebraska alone (<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ne/topic/ethnic/czechs/cz-pg363.html>), the Czechs had a sizable footprint in WWI aid. Figures cited include the Czech Fund, collected by the Hospodar and Osveta Americka (published by the National Printing Company) from its readers, \$8,345.96; the amount collected in the state by the members of the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association, \$5,000; National

Alliance of Bohemian Catholics, \$65,000.00; the proceeds of a bazaar held in Omaha in September, 1918, \$65,109.20, or a total of \$293,809.66. Individual unmarked dominations likely amounted to an additional \$100k.

A woman's auxiliary of the Bohemian National Alliance, "The Bees," knitted clothing and sent tobacco to Czechoslovak legionnaires, which according to Miroslav Rechci, Jr., amounted to about \$3 million in value in total counting all such Czech women's orgs throughout the country. "When the question arose how to best help the Czech lads on the French front or in Siberia, Czech women in America painstakingly knitted, washed laundry, and provided tobacco, needles, thread, soap – simply everything our soldiers needed," he gushes. (<https://www.svu2000.org/cs-america/for-czechoslovakia/>).

Bazaars also netted good revenue. On Masaryk's orders that "This is our revolution, and we must pay for it with our own money," bazaars organized between 1916 and 1918 in New York, Cleveland, Chicago and Taylor (TX) earned \$22,250, \$25,000, \$40,000 and \$50,000, respectively. At one point 1 million francs were cabled to the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris for purchase of food ostensibly.

On July 6, 1915, in commemoration of Jan Hus' burning 500 years prior, Masaryk boldly proclaimed (<https://archive.org/stream/cechsbohemiansin00capeuoft#page/266/mode/2up>) in Geneva: "Every Czech must now elect whether or not he is in favor of reformation or anti-reformation; must now say whether or not he is in favor of the Czech idea or the Austrian idea. Austria is the mouthpiece in Europe of anti-reformation and reaction."

Hence, to many of them, the knitting housewives included, this was a holy war.

Newspapers galore. The ethnic press was a fairly ubiquitous phenomenon in decaying imperial Europe. The Czechoslovaks started paper in Russia, which they called simply the "Czechoslovak." It printed articles in Czech, Slovak, and Russian. Professor Ernest Denis, of the Sorbonne, brought out in Paris, May, 1915, *La Nation Tchèque*. A few months later appeared the *Ceskoslovenska Samostatnost* (Czechoslovak Independence), also in the French capital. The New Europe, with Masaryk among its collaborators, came out in London, October, 1916. The Bohemian National Alliance started publishing the Bohemian Review in Chicago in February, 1917; since November, 1918, it has appeared under the corrected title, Czechoslovak Review. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books printed in French, English, Russian, Italian, and Czech were turned out unstintingly and sent to college libraries, clubs, to men of affairs, men influential in politics and literature.

Masaryk's arrival to Chicago circa April 1918 attracted a crowd of over 150,000 people, continuing in New York, Baltimore, Cleveland and other destinations, and ultimately securing Allied recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovak_National_Council), as provisional government.

As Thomas Capek, among the most prolific spokesmen of the Czech emigres put it: "But the principle of self-determination of nations — that government must rest upon the consent of the governed — was by this time rapidly gaining converts in America. The statesmen of Austria and Hungary knew that the principle of self-determination would mark the doom of the Hapsburg Empire."

How much Masaryk and Beneš' maneuvering directly contributed to American recognition of Czechoslovakia is disputed e.g. by revisionists like Josef Kalvoda. In any event, elite opinion gave their cause favorable circumstances, as Kalvoda notes regarding Secretary of State Robert Lansing:

According to Lansing, the consequences of the Sixtus affair, the submission of the Austrian Emperor, Charles, to the will of Germany, and his concluding the treaty of military alliance with Germany on May 12, 1918, removed “all possibility of separating the two empires.” If Austria would be permitted to remain in possession of the territory then within her borders, wrote Lansing, “the German Emperor will control millions of people utterly hostile to the Germans, who will be in a state of servitude.” When Charles “showed that a separate peace was in vain and when he became a vassal of Germany,” a revision of U.S. policy became necessary. In Lansing’s view, “Austria-Hungary lost its right to exist as an Empire” ; it should not exist as a great power; and the Czechs, Poles and other peoples who long for independence should not be forced to live “under the Prussian yoke.” He was in favor of promising these peoples independence “when the Central Powers are defeated if that would induce them to revolt against German-owned Austria-Hungary.

With the emigres’ victory in dismembering Austria-Hungary came a democratic leader cult orchestrated by the Czechoslovak deep state, known as the “Castle” ([Hrad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hrad_%28politics%29) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hrad_%28politics%29)).

None other than a writer as renowned as Karel Čapek declared in 1934 that “Masaryk is a *principle*. Masaryk is for us and for the entire educated world the embodiment of certain moral and political ideals, which can be called democracy.”

You could even smoke your fags over a Masaryk-plated ashtray (p. 128). (https://www.academia.edu/11061582/The_Husbandman_Tom%C3%A1%C5%A1_Masaryks_Leader_Cult_in_Interwar_Czechoslovakia):

Both the Castle and private citizens promoted and produced Masarykiana. Czechs could buy books, pamphlets, brochures, commemorative plates, cups, and ashtrays bearing the president’s likeness, and of course portraits abounded. Many publishers hastened to produce short, cheap works on the president for a mass public. One such piece was Arnošt Caha’s 1921 brochure *Tatíček Masaryk — Osoboditel* (*Daddy Masaryk — Liberator*), part of a series titled *S vědomím českých dějin: Sbíрка rozprav pro nejširší vrstvy lidové* (*With an Awareness of Czech History: A Collection of Treatises for People from All Walks of Life*). Printed quickly on a low-quality printing machine (many letters are unclear or almost doubled), the pamphlet provides many pictures of Masaryk from his early years as well as Moravské Slovácko, the region where he grew up. Words of Western derivation are defined in the margins — for example, *akademický* as opposed to *vysokoškolský*. Also, ordinary citizens crafted presidential folk art for Masaryk’s birthday or for other symbolic occasions.

Now since this was openly a propositional nation, the proposition had to be given some concrete weight. Land reform — a revolutionary’s favorite tool — played a role.

“With but a few exceptions the present nobility of Bohemia—holding almost 50 per cent, of the land— is of foreign origin. The Colloredos, Piccolominis, Wallis, Gallas, Millesimos, Lichtensteins, Goltz Trautmansdorffs, Villanis, Defours, Buquois, Maradas, Huertas, Yasquez and a number of other “Bohemian nobles” are the descendants of military adventurers from Spain, Italy, Germany and Holland, who had acquired landed property in Bohemia during the turmoils of the Thirty Years’ War,” complained the Bohemian Voice in its January 1894 issue.

The narrative of the Czech nation victimized since the Battle of White Mountain in 1620 was a central one in all nationalist efforts. The sly trickery of the Czechoslovak state and its supporters was to present this episode as somehow having been an assault on the peasant class and by extension its descendants in

the common people of the newly established Czechoslovak state, with the breaking up of the Schwarzenbergs, Sternbergs and Thuns thus being the culmination of the “People’s” Reformation that was aborted by Austrian despotism supposedly.

Now, the Bohemian nobility after the Ausgleich were largely divided into two factions, the Verfassungstreuer Großgrundbesitz (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verfassungstreuer_Gro%C3%9Fgrundbesitz), who were essentially Viennese centralists and Germanophilic, versus the so-called “Feudal-Konservativen” who defended the Bohemian state-right and its legal autonomy, but not its nationhood. Count Josef Mathias Thun, an adherent of the latter, is said to have written that “I am neither a Czech nor a German, but only a Bohemian,” thus signifying his allegiance to a pre-modern corporate patriotism of freeholding Landesherren. They also had a paper entitled *Vaterland*, which the more hardline Bohemian nationalists didn’t like.

Leo Thun wrote in a letter to Count Anton Auersperg in 1866 expressing his provincialism: “I respect German culture, but in politics I can not accept it as a source of wisdom, and the effort of giving politics in Austria a German national character seems completely unwarranted, arrogant and unpatriotic to me. The possibility of the future existence of Austria is dependent on the question, if the political men are able to soar above national positions.”

Accordingly, it was necessary to eliminate this “disloyal” class.

Masaryk as late as 1915 was promising (https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/1451/Masaryk_Bohemia_1915.pdf?sequence=1) that independent Bohemia would be a monarchy, and that “a Bohemian Republic is only advocated by a few Radical politicians.” He declared the Bohemian people to be Russophile, and that some Romanov branch would be optimal to take the throne. Nothing came out of this. He did, however end his pamphlet with a reassurance that “Liberated Bohemia certainly will act in accordance with the Entente, and will always be a loyal ally to them.” Which was indeed the point.

And so, the hard-working Czech Americans aided the establishment of an artificial state hampered by Hungarian, Slovak and Sudeten German territorial claims, ending in the expulsions and death of millions of Germans after WWII, followed by its founding father Beneš capitulating in 1948 for 41 years of Marxist-Leninist domination.

But, hey, let’s go back to bashing the paddies, I suppose. Ruined America, I tell you!

This entry was posted in Historical insights, Nationalism. Bookmark the permalink.

4 thoughts on “Czechoslovak lobby in America”

1. Pingback: Czechoslovak lobby in America | Reaction Times

2. slumlord says:

January 27, 2018 at 9:30 am

Very very good.

Reply.

3. fjwawak says:

January 27, 2018 at 9:12 pm

Stevens also wrote that Merkel's Polish Grandfather made her more prone to invite foreigners to Germany or something like that.

That irony is that nationalist's job seems to be proclaiming formerly non-existent nations. The nation of Czechoslovaks is a good example. Another irony is that the new state of Czechoslovakia could not endure more than 20 years ever since. We won independence only to become part of Third Reich, Ostblock or, recently, the EU.

Ad Hrad's involvement in politics. Václav Havel tried to do the same and eventually lost. Fortunately for his case he died "in time". There still is a group of humanist intellectuals who follow his concept of apolitical politics and have considerable influence on public life through culture and media. They try to put together sort of cult of VH if something like that is possible in the beginning of the 21st century. Today, Hrad is not a center of "havelism" anymore but the beast lives and is well.

Basically, you are also right about Masaryk. As far as I know he understood the meaning of history of Czech nation to be an avantgarde of humanism and democracy in Central Europe (beginning with the Hussites). It's not the only attempt to discover meaning of our history, as you probably know, but it is the one widely rooted in national consciousness. It got more or less incorporated to communist ideology so it is a basic education for large part of our nation.

Anyway, great essay.

Reply.

4. Oscar C. says:

January 28, 2018 at 1:33 pm

I concur, great essay. I really enjoy finding nuggets of forgotten history such as this one.

Reply.

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