

The thesis is looking into the establishment of Czechoslovakia from the perspective of territorial claims of Czech (or more precisely Czechoslovak) policy. It deals with the period of time during World War I when the Czech politicians officially – first through Masaryk's resistance movement abroad and later (in the Spring 1917) on a domestic political scene (Austrian-Hungarian) declared their goal – to achieve independence. The end of the thesis then deals with the negotiations held at the post-war conference in Paris where it was definitely decided about fulfilment (or the opposite) of Czech territorial claims.

Czech politicians aspired to establish an independent state which would be territorially larger than the actual territory inhabited by ethnic Czechs. During World War I a certain consensus was achieved as far as the basic territorial claims were concerned – Slovakia, Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, Serbian Luzice, Czech Land within its historical borders (i.e. even the territories that were populated by Germans and mostly Polish Tesin).

As for Slovakia, Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia and Serbian Luzice, these territories were populated by Slavs (therefore inhabitants ethnically close to Czechs). However, this territory was formed by non-Slavic states (Hungary and Germany) and a strong nation-liberation movement that would be able to fight for an own independent state was there more or less nonexistent. That is why Czech politicians defended this claim on an ethnical basis. It was being very strongly emphasised that only an independent Czechoslovakian state would guarantee an independent development of these Slavic nations.

As far as Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia are concerned the Czech territorial claims were supported by the local inhabitants as well. At the same time support was expressed by great powers, namely France (as she tried to gain strong and stable allies in the East). France also supported Czech military occupation of these areas. With Serbian Luzice it was different. Luzice's nation-liberalization movement was not formed before the end of World War I, moreover, the leaders were not able to gain mass support for a closer alliance with Czechoslovakia. Eventually such alliance was rejected at the conference in Paris.

Czechoslovakia also claimed the historical Czech lands, i.e. those areas (mostly around the borders) that were ethnically mostly German. Gaining these areas was

defended on the basis of historical state law. As World War I (generally a period of time of turbulent changes) did not have much understanding for historical continuity, Czech politicians supported their view by many other arguments. They claimed that historical borders could not be amended as the borders were formed by nature – they enclosed an economic, political and administrative entity.

Nevertheless, Germans who lived in the Czech historical lands did not recognize the authority of an independent Czechoslovakia. In the areas where their population formed a majority they established their own governments and intended to incorporate themselves into the German state. During January 1919 the existence of these would-be governments was terminated by the Czechoslovak Army. Incorporation of the area into Czechoslovakia was then confirmed at the conference. Strangely enough, not only did the Germans not receive much support from the victors of the war, more surprisingly they didn't get much from Berlin or Vienna either.

The thesis then deals with the definition of Czechoslovakian-Hungarian and Czechoslovakian-Polish (in case of Tesin, Orava and Spis) borders and the problem of the Slavic corridor. Czech politicians were able to defend their claims mostly on the basis of geopolitical arguments.

The Czechoslovakian-Hungarian border was changed many times before the final draft. In the end a compromise was accepted – Czechoslovakian delegation was mainly satisfied with the Danube border. The central and east sector of the border was placed 20-30 km north contrary to the original proposal.

As to the Czech-Polish border Czechoslovakia had to give up on the historical border, nonetheless the most important part of Tesin remained for Czechoslovakia regardless of the ethnicity of the inhabitants (coal field, Kosice-Bohumin railway). To gain this parts of Orava and Spis were sacrificed (inhabitants here would prefer to join Czechoslovakia, not Poland).

The Slavic corridor should have had, according to the Czech politicians, a crucial geopolitical significance. A direct connection between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia could have possibly been of a great importance – it would have simplified economic relations and guaranteed access to the sea. Nevertheless at the conference such a demand was rejected, the only country that would have approved of it was France.