

Border of Conflict: The Czech Lands and Collective Violence in the Crisis Year of 1938 and the Initial Period of Nazi Rule

Jaromír MRŇKA

The article introduces the Czechoslovak events of 1938 to 1939 with a broader analytical comparison. The author uses Charles Tilly's typology of collective violence to reveal the more general connection between the disruption of state power and the escalation of violence. He captures the general characteristics and constructs ideal types of violent interactions occurring in the observed period in the Czech lands. The analysis concludes that acts of collective violence from the spring of 1938 to the summer of 1939 appeared most often in the form that Tilly typologically refers to as broken negotiations and scattered attacks. Violent acts primarily correlated with periods of power instability. The work of violence specialists was crucial. It was coordinated by political leaders who mobilized the public against the alleged acute danger. At the same time, politicians were using rumors that spread very quickly in an atmosphere of uncertainty. Public leaders used collective violence as a tool of political struggle, gaining broad support for their political intentions.

Keywords: collective violence; crisis; Munich 1938; Nazi Occupation; Czechoslovakia; Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia

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Jaromír Mrňka is a junior research fellow at the Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, jaromir.mrnka@gmail.com

In analysing the Czechoslovak events of 1938, the “border of conflict” has several meanings. Firstly, it is the actual border of the Czechoslovak Republic, which, like the entire Versailles peace system, became the target of Nazi Germany's aggressive foreign policy. The Sudeten German Party (Sudetendeutsche Partei – SdP), headed by Konrad Henlein, played a coercive role in Hitler's political game on Czechoslovakia's internal political scene. Henlein skilfully took advantage of the growing social and nationalistic tensions that emerged around another border of conflict between the Czech and German communities in the border re-

gions of the Czech lands. At the same time, this particular border, activated by political entrepreneurs (see below), is crucial to non-violent conflicts escalating into acts of collective violence.¹

On the one hand, since the rise of modern nationalism in the second half of the 19th century, there was a long tradition of ethnic struggles in the Czech lands where signs of difference between the groups were visible – and pronounced. As a result, it was easy to activate a border between these groups. In a conflict situation, cultural differences between communities facilitate the intensification of disputes and the polarization of collective identification. This means that all of a sudden, we no longer speak of neighbours, acquaintances, and even of friends standing against one another, but in the case of the Czech lands in 1938, these were Czechs and Germans, representatives of state power and their opponents, etc. On the other hand, the actors in ritualized ethnic conflict (e.g., officials in national and gymnastics organizations or other associations defined along ethnic lines) had long mastered instruments that helped ease tensions (e.g., various forms of ritualized competition) that made living side by side possible amid regular contact and discord. This issue already became a subject of intensive research in the previous decades.² However, these long-term mechanisms were to change rapidly in the time to come. In 1938, violence became an acceptable option on the palette of human behaviour.

The key question in this study is why this was the case.³ The article also sets out to put the Czechoslovak practice in a broader international

¹ CHARLES TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Cambridge-New York 2003, pp. 20–22; RANDALL COLLINS, *Violence, A Micro-sociological Theory*, Princeton 2008, p. 11.

² DAVID SMRČEK, *Grabenbommel, Národní souboj o Prahu na přelomu 19. a 20. století [The National Struggle for Prague at the turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries]*, Praha 2022; MARK CORNWALL, *The Devil's Wall, The Nationalist Youth Mission of Heinz Rutha*, Cambridge (MA) 2012; TARA ZAHRA, *Kidnapped Souls, National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948*, Ithaca 2008; NANCY M. WINGFIELD, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints, How the Bohemian Lands became Czech*, Cambridge (MA) 2007; PETER M. JUDSON, *Guardians of the Nation Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*, Cambridge (MA) 2006; JEREMY KING, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948*, Princeton 2002; GARY B. COHEN, *Politics of Ethnic Survival, Germans in Prague, 1861–1914*, Princeton 1981.

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context. An outline of specific events is combined with a general typology of collective violence. The conclusions of the analysis open up events in the Czech lands to further analytical comparison while at the same time uncovering broader connections between the disruption of state authority and the escalation of violence. I explore how ethnically differentiated communities and specific actors responded to the interruption of the system of government, i.e., the inability of the state to execute power in an international crisis. It analyses acts of violence in the Czech lands, i.e., in the geographic whole of the historical territories of Bohemia, Moravia, and the Czech part of Silesia 1938.

In conclusion, I offer a brief overview of the first years of existence of the Sudeten areas (Reichsgau Sudetenland) and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (until the arrival of Reinhard Heydrich in September 1941). I do my best to adhere to a unified view of the entire period, from the destabilization of authority with the Munich crisis to its repeated stabilization under new political regimes. The typology lays the groundwork for further comparison of the situation in the Czech lands from the deep crisis of statehood to the start of WWII. My analysis is based on sources, particularly position reports in the National Archive's collections from the presidium of the Provincial Office, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Office of the Reich Protector. I concentrate on the most important general characteristics. I have selected individual cases representing model forms of violent interaction that occurred in the public arena in the Czech lands in the relevant period. I have used detailed descriptions to understand the mechanisms better and characterize the interaction.

Typology of collective violence and Czechoslovak case

The theoretical basis stems from the typology of the American sociologist Charles Tilly who has been exploring the subject of collective violence for decades. It is based on thoroughly analysing many historical instances which he has synthesized and universalized. With Tilly, I define collective violence as acts in which at least two persons physically harm others or their belongings (in this, I also include the forcible seizure of objects and restraint of individuals) in a coordinated and rapid manner.⁴

⁴ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 3–4.

Tilly regards collective violence as a particular category of “contentious politics.” In his view, this involves “discontinuous, public, collective claims-making in which one of the parties is a government,” with the government being a “substantial, durable, bounded organisation that exercises control over the major concentrated means of coercion within some territory.”⁵ He also refers to exploitation and opportunity hoarding mechanisms, which create inequality more effectively as they follow the everyday borders between social groups (defined in ethnic, racial, religious, gender, etc., terms).⁶ The divergent ratios between the “significance of the immediate damage and the degree of coordination between actors in violence” establish types defined by repeated small-scale mechanisms.⁷ Alongside the key actors constituting a political regime⁸, Tilly regards “political entrepreneurs” and “specialists in violence” as leading movers. Through activation, connection, coordination, and representation, political entrepreneurs “hoard opportunities,” by which they create new inequalities or deepen existing ones. Political entrepreneurs “specialize in activating boundaries, stories, and relations, connecting groups and networks, and coordinating joint action.” Specialists in violence are distinguished by their status, under which they “control the means of inflicting damage on persons and objects.”⁹ Individual political regimes differ in the degree of state (“ability to govern”) and collective (“democracy”) controls, which also influences the general level of collective violence.¹⁰

In the following analysis, I mainly work with types of collective violence that Tilly defines as coordinated destruction, broken negotiations,

⁵ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 8–9.

⁶ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 8–9.

⁷ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 13–20.

⁸ According to Tilly, political actors are government officers, members of the political establishment, challengers, citizens, and internal political actors. Transactions between government officers, members of the political establishment, challengers, and citizens constitute a political regime. CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 37–39.

⁹ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 34–36.

¹⁰ A high level of violence is characteristic of undemocratic regimes with low ability to rule (e.g., Somalia, Congo) while a medium level is the mark of undemocratic regimes with a high ability to rule (China, Iran) as well as for democratic regimes with a low ability to rule (Belgium, Jamaica). Democratic regimes with a high ability to rule (Germany, Japan) display low violence. CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 41–53.

scattered attacks, and opportunism. During coordinated destruction, “persons or organizations that specialize in the deployment of coercive means undertake a program of damage to persons and/or objects.”¹¹ Broken negotiations are violent interactions in that “various forms of collective action generate resistance or rivalry to which one or more parties respond by actions that damage persons and/or objects.”¹² If, “in the course of widespread small-scale and generally non-violent interaction, a number of participants respond to obstacles, challenges or restraints by means of damaging acts,” Tilly defines this occurrence of collective violence as scattered attacks.¹³ The last type, opportunism, happens when “as a consequence of shielding from routine surveillance and repression, individuals or clusters of individuals use immediately damaging means to pursue generally forbidden ends.”¹⁴ Further, according to Tilly’s typology, opportunism and scattered attacks share a relatively mediocre level of coordination among violent actors, while opportunism has a comparatively higher salience of short-run damage. Broken negotiations have a higher level of coordination than the previous two types, while their salience is comparable to scattered attacks. Coordinated destruction has the highest level of coordination and salience of all mentioned types.¹⁵

Until September 1938, the interwar Czechoslovak Republic had most in common with democratic regimes with a high ability to govern, in which actors in contentious politics could draw on a relatively broad palette of non-violent actions to advance their demands. However, in the second half of the 1930s, the regime came under increasing pressure and, before the so-called Munich crisis in 1938, lost the ability to govern in many places. In areas where the Sudeten German Party had mass support, a rivalry was felt in most interactions between political actors, with the SdP creating a parallel and competitive power structure to the state.¹⁶ Entirely in line with Tilly’s concept of contentious politics, the

¹¹ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 14, 102–104.

¹² CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 16, 194–197.

¹³ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 15, 170–173.

¹⁴ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 14, 130–136.

¹⁵ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 13–16.

¹⁶ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 48–50. VOLKER ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě: Politika a nálada obyvatelstva v říšské župě Sudety (1938–1945) [The Sudeten Germans in the Nazi State: Politics and the Public Mood in the Reich’s Sudeten Areas (1938–1945)]*, Prague 2001, pp. 33–40, 51–58.

SdP organized a social and later political movement built on accumulated grievances, social ties, and previous histories of a national struggle that pursued a more or less antidemocratic program. In the spring of 1938, the party published a political program in Karlovy Vary, the primary demand of which was the broadly conceived self-government of the Sudeten German territories. Such a concept was unacceptable for the Czechoslovak unitary state even though the political representation later recognized it under international pressure. This contradiction created the essential basis for escalating political conflict entangled with collective violence.¹⁷

Until September 1938, Czechoslovakia transitioned from a high- to low-capacity democratic regime, especially in the borderlands whereas after the Munich agreement, high-capacity undemocratic regimes were gradually established in both territories. According to Tilly's typology, a medium level of collective violence corresponds to both of these types of regimes. While Tilly does not focus in detail on the transition period from one political regime to another, I feel it is essential here to refer to his expectation that the more unstable the political regime, the higher the intensity of collective violence, given that this study is focused primarily on the transitions between political regimes.¹⁸

An increased level of collective violence also characterized the subsequent period after 1938 or respectively 1939, when both in Sudeten areas and the rest of the Czech lands, non-democratic regimes with a high ability to govern were installed in parallel. Government officers did their utmost to minimize contentious politics by prohibiting the most

¹⁷ CHARLES TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650–2000*, Cambridge 2003, p. 63; CHARLES TILLY, *Social Movements, 1768–2004*, Boulder (Col.) 2004, p. 126; JAN TESAŘ, *Mnichovský komplex, Jeho příčiny a důsledky [The Munich Complex, Its Causes and Consequences]*, Praha 2014, p. 88–90; DETLEF BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938 [Sudeten Germans in the Crisis Year of 1938]*, Prague 2012, pp. 90–115; Cf. ADAM HUDEK, MICHAL KOPEČEK, JAN MERVART, *Czechoslovakism*, London-New York 2022.

¹⁸ Similar results to the transition to a political regime with different structural characteristics can be derived analogously to the impact of democratization, about which Tilly says the following: “Surges of democratisation often follow violent inter-state wars, civil wars and revolutions. Cases in point include the partial democratisation of Switzerland after the Sonderbund civil war of 1847, of the United States after the Civil War, of France after the Commune of 1871, and of Japan and Germany after World War II. Struggle both precedes and accompanies democratisation.” CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 44; further pp. 51–52.

available means of advancing demands (gatherings, the press, etc.) that did not align with the ruling order or even resisted it.¹⁹ Such an approach typified both the regime in the National Socialist German Reich and the so-called Second Republic. In each case, a political competition was suppressed through an appeal to national unity that led to either total (Nazi Germany) or partial (Czechoslovakia) elimination of the opposition.²⁰ The wave of violence in the Czech lands culminated in several weeks around the end of September 1938, which can be seen as confirming a direct relationship between the disruption of political power and a rise in incidences of violence.

Collective violence in a critical period of 1938 (from May to September)

Instability in Central Europe from the Anschluss of Austria at the start of March 1938 until a period of intensifying international political pressure to Czechoslovak statehood in September 1938 had an increasingly negative impact on a tense domestic political situation. The rise in tensions led to an increased activity on the part of supporters of various political movements, who held frequent mass gatherings in the streets, and to more significant action on the part of the police and other security services attempting to maintain public order. The escalation of initially non-violent gatherings, whose participants were brought together by a shared interest or demand, into incidents of public collective violence

¹⁹ CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 48–50.

²⁰ In both cases the approach to political foes was also accompanied by repression of members of population groups who did not fall under the concept of a unified nation (in the case of Nazi Germany this is analogous to the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*) – in Czechoslovakia, this included alongside political opponents Jews, Romanies and the workshy. CLAUDIA KOONZ, *The Nazi Conscience*, Cambridge 2003, p. 73; RICHARD J. EVANS, *The Third Reich in Power*, New York 2005, p. 14; V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, pp. 103–110, 120–123, 155–157; JAN RATAJ, *O autoritativní národní stát, ideologické proměny české politiky v druhé republice 1938–1939 [On the Authoritarian Nation State, Ideological Transformations of Czech Politics in the Second Republic (1938–1939)]*, Prague 1997, pp. 24–35, 209–218, 229–235; CHRISTOPHER R. BROWNING, LEWIS H. SIEGELBAUM, Frameworks for Social Engineering, Stalinist Schema of Identification and the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*, in: *Beyond Totalitarianism, Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, SHEILA FITZPATRICK, MICHAEL GEYER eds., New York 2009, pp. 231–232, 237–240, 245–248.

was typical of ethnically mixed parts of the Czech lands, particularly the borderlands. The border of conflict came under attack most often from proponents of the political demands of the SdP and those they regarded as opponents or enemies, meaning not necessarily representatives of the Czechoslovak state but also supporters of left-wing parties or Jews. The Henleinists increasingly framed this mutual conflict along the border of collective national identity as a conflict between Czechs and Germans.²¹

The atmosphere became very tense in May and June 1938 with the announcement of extraordinary military measures referred to as partial mobilization and the holding of local elections. This period saw the first marked wave of collective violence in the form of scattered attacks or broken negotiations – i.e., acts with a low degree of damage and mutual coordination.²² In that period, the essential condition for the inception of collective violence was a relatively high number of large gatherings in public places. The escalation of such situations into acts of collective violence was, to a marked degree, dependent on the role of local authorities, particularly from the ranks of functionaries of the SdP and other political parties. They assumed the role of mediators between the crowds and the security services and could, partially or wholly, subdue conflicts or, by contrast, further spur them.

In the preceding years, ethnic tensions in Žatec in North Bohemia had been alleviated by vandalism and occasional skirmishes between individuals or small groups.²³ The situations leading to the abovementioned

²¹ Tensions had been rising distinctly between members of Henlein's movement and those the Henleinists regarded as their enemies since the turn of 1938. The targets of various forms of pressure were both workers from industrial plants and business-people – Social Democrats, Communists, Czechs or Jews, it didn't matter. Non-violent boycotts and verbal exchanges came close to spilling over into vandalism and physical attacks as early as in the first half of 1938. Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 79–90; V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, pp. 53–54.

²² CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 171–172, 196–197.

²³ The police investigated many such cases. One example came on 28. 10. 1937 when a Czechoslovak flag was torn down and demeaned in Žatec. At the start of January 1938 an attack on a Czech social care home was investigated. Czech female students were evidently the target of disorderly behaviour, but the only result was broken windows. The investigation found that the culprits were eighth grade leaving exam students at the Žatec German grammar school, who said they had thrown the “pebbles” so as to wake the girls and invite them to a dance. NA, f. Presidium of the Provincial Office in Prague (hereinafter only PZÚ), former collection AMV 207, coll. 937, sign. 207-937-2, Memorandum from the Presidium of the Ministry

tioned collective violence occurred in early May 1938. Apart from supporters of the Sudeten German Party, many Ordnersgruppe members (or Ordners) often became involved in violent clashes as an armed party organization.²⁴ The first case occurred on 5 March 1938, when Arnošt Klier and Rudolf Čtvrtěčka were hauled into the Žatec police station. The pair were unemployed and were earning money by producing and selling swastika flags and armbands.

While they were being questioned, several hundred people assembled on the town square before 6 pm, demanding their release. Despite appeals from the present SdP senator Karl Bock, who was negotiating with the police and had been assured of the pair's imminent release, people refused to leave, and the first clashes occurred at around 7 pm. Guards attempting to drive the crowd out of Edvard Beneš Square were attacked, and one was threatened with an iron bar. In the end, they were forced to call for reinforcements from gendarme emergency units in Kadaň and Most, who didn't manage to bring the situation under control until around 10 pm.²⁵

A similar scene took place in Žatec on 16 May 1938 during the arrest of 19-year-old bakery assistant, Jan Krátký, who was questioned on suspicion of smashing a display case. Soon after his release, a rumour spread in the early evening alleging that guards had beaten him during

of the Interior (hereinafter only PMV) to the PZÚ regarding the tearing down of the state flag on 15. 1. 1938, fol. 1–15; NA, f. Presidium of the Provincial Office in Prague (hereinafter only PZÚ), former collection AMV 207, coll. 937, sign. 207-937-2, Memorandum of the State Police Office in Žatec to PZÚ on 9. 3. 1938, fol. 36–39.

²⁴ The Ordnersgruppe were initially an unofficial unit of the SdP that kept order. However, in the course of 1938 the organisation gradually assumed a paramilitary character. See STEFAN DÖLLING, *Henleins Bürgerkrieger, Das Sudetendeutsche Freikorps zwischen Eigenmobilisierung und Fremdsteuerung durch 3. Reich*, Diploma thesis, Humboldt Universität, Berlin 2010, p. 12–13.

²⁵ NA, f. PZÚ, coll. 937, sign. 207-937-2, Copy of a proposal of remand from the State Police Office in Žatec at the District Court in Žatec of 18. 6. 1938, l. 183–185. See NA, f. PZÚ, coll. 937, sign. 207-937-2, State Police Office in Žatec at the Ministry of the Interior of the Czechoslovak Republic (hereinafter only MV ČSR) 6. 5. 1938, l. 42. There was a similar gathering in Žatec as early as 2. 5. 1938, when the police arrested a woman who had used the "German greeting" Heil! with a raised right arm. Senator Karl Bock complained to the police that the greeting was permitted, which was untrue. All transgressions were investigated based on the provisions of law no. 50/1923 Coll., on the defence of the republic. The Henleinist senator further teaches the state police. *Národní politika*, 5. 5. 1938, p. 4.

his interrogation. A crowd of between 1,500 and 2,000 again began gathering in front of the police station and refusing to heed calls from SdP representatives to move along. Contrary to the previous event, the crowd – with marked support from present Ordners – began attacking passing Czechs, who were brutally beaten together with the intervening guards of German nationality. The uncontrollable spread of rumours played a significant role in escalating violence. They caused the crowd to lose all contact with reality, and merely speaking Czech became a trigger to get beaten. The Ordners wrapped the action up around 8 pm by forcing the crowd into surrounding streets and breaking it up.²⁶

Extraordinary military measures were announced at the end of May 1938. Based on central SdP instructions, the Ordners were withdrawn from the streets to avoid unnecessary provocations, and such incidents temporarily ceased to occur. By contrast, at the time, more activity was seen by Czechoslovak army soldiers deployed to the borderlands. Together with long-standing Czech residents, they provoked and harassed SdP supporters, for instance, by trying to pull down their white stockings or tear the insignias from their lapels. On the night of 20 March 1938, a military patrol shot dead two SdP members in Cheb. The pair were returning by motorcycle from a pre-election meeting and ignored orders to halt. The SdP immediately exploited their “martyrs’ deaths” in pre-election agitation.²⁷ Another wave of collective violence was felt during the local elections. Fast-spreading rumours and disinformation played an essential role in non-violent provocations and demonstrations of strength turning into acts of violence. There were clashes in the border areas between the SdP’s supporters and opponents, whose Ordnersgruppe, alongside blocking pre-election meetings of the Social Democrats, harassed functionaries in various ways. However, opponents of the SdP didn’t hold back during skirmishes. For instance, in Podmokly, Czechs destroyed the SdP’s pre-election decorations with an iron bar injuring

²⁶ NA, f. PZÚ, coll. 937, sign. 207-937-2, Criminal notification at the State Prosecutor’s Office in Most from 24. 5. 1938, fol. 145–151 and NA, f. PZÚ, coll. 937, sign. 207-937-2, Phonogram of the State Police Office in Žatec from 16. 5. 1938, fol. 121–125.

²⁷ Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 148–150 and NA, f. PMV, former collection of AMV 225, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-3, Memoranda of MV ČSR to PZÚ in Prague from 23. and 24. 5. 1938, no. j. 526/38, fol. 254–274.

a German attempting to stop them.²⁸ There were also violent clashes between various paramilitary groups and security units. On 11 June 1938, street fighting broke out in Trutnov in North Bohemia between Ordners and local Czech National Guard members, requiring police intervention. In the Na Svobodě district, around 60 to 70 members of the SdP armed with sticks clashed with seven members of the town's local Czech National Guard attempting to maintain order on their initiative.

During several fights in the area, a Czech student Gustav Žid suffered severe injuries in front of the Modrý Dunaj pub. Intervening police agents also received blows from whips and sticks but succeeded in arresting three SdP members. The crowd only dispersed with the firing of warning shots.²⁹ The situation was also tense in North Moravia's Šumperk, where on 11 June 1938, the Ordners took over a hall where Wenzel Jaksch (1896–1966), the chairman of Germany's Social Democrats, was due to speak. Though the Ordners withdrew on the orders of SdP functionaries from the celebrations of electoral success on the square, the following evening escalated into violent clashes with the police. A rumour that police officers had beaten up German women in a suburb intensified the situation. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people gathered on Šumperk's square by 9 pm, while on the other side of the centre, another 800 came together, intending to set off for the square. Police used truncheons to disperse them. While a report lists only light injuries to nine demonstrators, one man and one woman ended up in hospital with broken ribs. The harms incurred by the intervening police also indicated that the clashes intensified following the deployment of truncheons.³⁰

Following the municipal elections, the Sudeten German Party more or less controlled most German areas, particularly in the borderlands, where the training of FS (Freiwilliger Schutzdienst) paramilitary units gathered further steam. Amid never-ending negotiations, political tensions between the Czechoslovak government and the SdP grew in the summer months. The Sudeten German Party, with ample international political support from Hitler's Third Reich, continually increased their

²⁸ Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 152–153.

²⁹ NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-3, Zpráva referátu C (Report from observer C) MV ČSR no. 847/38 "Events in Trutnov 11. 6. 1938", fol. 125–127.

³⁰ NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-3, Zpráva referátu C MV ČSR no. 849/38 "Demonstration in Šumperk 12. 6. 1938", fol. 121–122 and 160–161. For additional cases, see NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-3, coll. 1304, sign. 225-1304-1, from fol. 49.

demands for autonomy. Nevertheless, during the summer months of 1938, open violent confrontations almost disappeared.³¹

This made their return to the public arena in September 1938 stark. Broken negotiations and scattered attacks led to lethal contests in which specialists in violence – regular armed units and paramilitary squads – assumed a central role.³² As early as 7 September 1938, police clashed with a crowd of around 250 who had gathered to support an SdP delegation demanding the release of 83 fellow party members accused of arms smuggling. It later came to light that the smugglers had been beaten at the police station, which the SdP used as an excuse to break off talks. Instead, SdP members began on 9 September 1938 to carry out a series of attacks on political opponents and other provocations of the state security forces. Gatherings in Karlovy Vary, Cheb, Český Krumlov, and the Bruntál area spilled into violent clashes and savage attacks on police officers, Czechs, and Jews.³³ A speech by Adolf Hitler on 12 September 1938 at an NSDAP congress in Nuremberg, in which he criticized at length the status of Germans in Czechoslovakia, also sparked an escalation in violence.³⁴ The radio relayed speech led to a thousand-strong

³¹ In three rounds of elections, the Sudeten Party managed to get between 81 % and 90 % of the votes of German voters, giving them comfortable majorities on most municipal councils. They used this position to advance power politics based on the Nazi leadership principle. At this time also FS units started to be transformed with military training into strike forces along the Nazi model. See D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 170–180, 217–231. Negotiations between the Czechoslovak government and the SdP threatened to spill over into military conflict. This prompted a mission in August by Lord Walter Runciman, who of course failed to secure a desirable solution or a calming of the situation. See D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 180–213. Pressure was increasingly placed on local Czechs and Jews in mixed ethnic areas in summer 1938. Disturbances occurred in Český Krumlov, Cheb, Falknov (Sokolov), Chomutov, Varnsdorf, Frývaldov (Jeseník) and Opava. Cf. JAN BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939* [Escapes and Expulsions from the Border Areas of the Czech Lands, 1938–1939], Prague 2013, p. 43–47.

³² Tilly defines lethal contest as a subtype of coordinated destruction in that “at least two groups of specialists in coercion confront each other, each one using harm to reduce or contain the other’s capacity to inflict harm.” CH. TILLY, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 104.

³³ Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 231–239.

³⁴ Among other things, Hitler stated that the “oppressed Germans” were increasingly intimidated by shows of brutal violence. He referred to May’s extraordinary military measures, which he said were introduced under the mendacious pretext of a possible military invasion from Germany. Hitler’s final message to Czechoslova-

showing of SdP members on the streets that evening. Their demonstration escalated into attacks on state offices, companies, and dwellings of local Czechs, Jews, and known anti-fascists from the ranks of the Social Democrats and the Communists.³⁵

Rising tensions in the Czech borderlands were also reflected in the atmosphere in the capital. Since the turn of the 20th century, and ever more palpably after 1918, the German minority was forced out of dominant positions.³⁶ Before the June crisis surrounding the municipal elections and September's attempted putsch, cases of spontaneous assaults on Germans in the streets were recorded in Prague. On 11 June 1938, German medicine student Adolf Ilchmann, wearing a short green jacket, a green hat, and white stockings, was attacked on the street in Vinohrady. His clothing, regarded as foreign and provocative, sparked the assault. Others who joined the mob may not have known whom they were pursuing. The crowd followed him to his apartment, where a guard was forced to "gently disperse them." According to a doctor's examination, Ilchmann had demonstrably had a tooth knocked out and suffered bruising. A similar case occurred a month later when on 14 September 1938, guards in central Prague detained two young men fleeing a jeering mob. During questioning, the mob had set upon them for speaking German. One had a broken nose, while a medical examination found no signs of beating on the second.³⁷

The security forces in the borderlands had received orders to refrain from using force in September 1938, so most armed clashes occurred between members of paramilitary organizations – the FS on the one hand

kia was: "Germans in Czecho-Slovakia are neither unarmed nor abandoned. Let everybody kindly be aware of this." ADOLF HITLER, *Die Reden des Führers am Parteitag Großdeutschland 1938*, München 1939, pp. 58–88. Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, p. 241.

³⁵ Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 241–243; J. BENDA, *Útěk a vyhnání z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, p. 47.

³⁶ Street clashes occurred just months after Prague became the capital of the new Czechoslovak state. Cf. ALFONS ADAM, *Die Unsichtbare Mauern, Die Deutschen in der Prager Gesellschaft zwischen Abkapselung und Interaktion*, Essen 2013, pp. 35–57, 89–91.

³⁷ NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-3, Hlášení MV referát C, no. 509/38, undated, fol. 171. NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-2, Supplement to Police Directorate report in Prague of 15. 9. 1938, fol. 40–42.

and members of the social democratic RW (Republikanische Wehr) and communist A-W (Antifaschistische Wehr) on the other.³⁸ The most significant violence was witnessed in western, northern western, and northern Bohemia, where the most brutal attacks were aimed at gendarmerie stations in today's Sokolov area (Habersbirk – Habartov, Schwaderbach – Bublava, Gössengrün – Krajková).³⁹ The out-of-control situation in the border areas led the Czechoslovak government to declare martial law in selected northern and western Bohemia districts on 13 September 1938. However, violence continued until 15 September 1938. Approximately 21–27 people died, and dozens were seriously injured.⁴⁰ The final collapse of talks, Henlein's escape to the Reich, the prohibition of the SdP, and in particular, the establishment of the Sudeten German Free Corps (Sudetendeutsches Freikorps – SFK) on 17 September 1938 resulted in fighting in the following days which in many places in the Czech borderlands resembled civil war. On 20 September 1938, SFK members, on Henlein's orders, began shooting at Czechoslovak customs offices. These were guarded only by the State Defence Guard, the state police, and the gendarmerie. The government's acceptance of a French-British ultimatum calling for the secession of the border areas to the Reich, understood as capitulation, sparked extensive penetration beyond the state border and the occupation of territory. Based on an order by Hitler of 22 September 1938, SFK units began crossing the Czechoslovak state border at full force to occupy the abandoned territory. They took over

³⁸ Cf. J. BENDA, *Útěk a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, p. 47.

³⁹ Open street fighting took place in for instance Český Krumlov, Kraslice, Chodov near Karlovy Vary, Karlovy Vary, Česká Lípa and Ústí nad Labem – Krásné Březno. According to Brandes a typical example was seen in Bezručovice, West Bohemia, where local gendarmes attempted to disperse a crowd of 350–400 but were forced to retreat to their station after being hit by stones and beaten by sticks. In the meantime, the railway station was occupied, and the manager abused. An emergency unit summoned from Stříbro had to enter the village in a fighting formation as they had come under bombardment immediately on arrival. Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, p. 243–251; J. BENDA, *Útěk a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, pp. 47–48; SYDNEY MORRELL, *Viděl jsem ukřižování, Události v Československu v roce 1938 očima anglického novináře [I Saw the Crucifixion]*, Brno 2002.

⁴⁰ Cf. J. BENDA, *Útěk a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, p. 49; V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, p. 55; D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 255–258.

a good deal of the protruding area at Aš and also made significant inroads into the Šluknov, Javorník, and Osoblažsko areas.⁴¹

Members of paramilitary units (SFK) that penetrated Czechoslovak territory inflicted gross violence on their ideological opponents (in particular Communists) and representatives of the Czechoslovak state, whom, in many cases, they captured and kidnapped to German Reich territory. Following further deepening of the international crisis, the Czechoslovak government announced a general mobilization on 23 September 1938, and clashes occurred between the SFK and regular army units. A genuine war broke out in the Czech borderlands. From the perspective of the structure of violent interaction, this was defined under Tilly's typology as a lethal contest between two groups of specialists in violence. By 30 September, the Sudeten German Free Corps had carried out 164 attacks. These resulted in 52 deaths on their side. Some 110 deaths occurred on the Czech side, while 50 people were seriously injured, and over 2,000 were carted off.⁴²

The signing of the Munich Agreement on 30 September 1938 brought neither immediate calming of the turbulent situation in the borderlands nor long-term cessation of violence and brutality. With the withdrawal of Czechoslovak troops, the SFK pressure intensified. Alongside attacks on state offices and isolated clashes with the regular army on the same day, other paramilitary squads entered the borderlands, continuing the persecution of ideological opponents. In the days before 30 September 1938, the situation was critical around Český Krumlov and Kaplice, where the State Defence Guard lost control of many territories. In the north-western border area, the army attempted to regain control of the

⁴¹ The Czechoslovak authorities lost control of the area of Aš protruding into Germany as early as 21. 9. 1938. Similar situations occurred on 22. 9. 1938 in Cheb, Vejprty and Mariánské Lázně. The same day Czechoslovak security forces pulled out of Šluknov, Rumburk, and Varnsdorf, the SdP also assumed power in Podmokly. In Moravia things were similar in the north in Javorník, Albrechtice, Osoblaha, Jindřichov, Vidnava and Cukmantl (Zlaté Hory). D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 266–274; J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, pp. 50–51.

⁴² On 24. 9. 1938 the SFK took control of Aš, Vejprty, Varnsdorf, Šluknov, Rumburk and Vyšší Brod. The Cheb district was under long-term SFK control. Open clashes with the army took place, for instance, in Bruntál on 25. 9. 1938. Fighting raged in the Kaplice district on 29. 9. 1938, etc. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 274–281; V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, pp. 55–56; J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, p. 50.

border zone between Hora sv. Kateřiny and Cínovec. On 30 September, representatives of the state authorities in Český Krumlov, Cheb, Planá near Mariánské Lázně and Broumov rushed to central offices to be allowed to evacuate with the army. On the first day of October, the reports claim that the situation is almost completely calm. Nevertheless, there were isolated incidents – e.g., the persecution of Social Democrats was reported in Broumov.⁴³

German anti-fascists, Czechs and Jews became the target of both continued acute violence in the form of beatings, harassment, expulsions, and arrests linked to structural violence. With the Third Reich's gradual seizure of former Czechoslovak territory, Nazi security institutions went into operation. This limited opportunistic violence in which members of paramilitary units grabbed the chance to employ violence to their benefit (e.g., looting, rape) with impunity. At the same time, however, they launched arrests and further repression. Cases of violent assault are recorded in the first days after 30 September 1938. In Jirkov, for instance, Communists and Social Democrats were forced to sweep the streets while being cuffed on the head. The involvement of women, both as victims and perpetrators of violence, was notable in this case.

A member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was led around the streets in Šternberk wearing the sign "I'm a traitor to the SdP." SFK members searched for opponents of the SdP, whom they dragged out of their homes and savagely beat up. The German armed forces prevented violence in some places. By contrast, from the beginning, the Ordnersgruppe (SFK) began cooperating with the Gestapo, for instance, in arresting members of the Republikanische Wehr. However, the unpredictable and wilful behaviour of the Ordners proved troublesome to the Nazi security forces, leading to the dissolution of the SFK on 9 October 1938. Regular Nazi institutions were very quickly established on the occupied territory.

Along with the Wehrmacht, operational groups (Einsatzgruppen) comprised of members of secret, riot, and security police (Gestapo,

⁴³ Cf. D. BRANDES, *Sudetští Němci v krizovém roce 1938*, pp. 281–282 a J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, p. 52. There were also expressions of outrage that included calls to violence prosecuted by the police. In Pilsen, a demonstration participant who called for Henleinists to be beaten with truncheons was detained. NA, f. PZÚ, coll. 1575, sign. 207-1575-1, Situational reports on situation in occupied territory, Phonogram from the Police Directorate in Pilsen to the PZÚ in Prague, fol. 10. 1938, fol. 35.

Orpo, Sipo) began to operate. In cooperation with the security service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD), they launched the first significant wave of arrests, placing people in so-called protective custody. Along with persons already captured in September 1938 by the SFK, this may have concerned several thousand people, of whom a considerable number were deported to concentration camps.⁴⁴

The rejection and return of refugees on the captured territory severely complicated the lives of many after 30 September 1938. This was linked to voluntary or forced resettlement from the borderlands to the interior, seen sporadically from the spring of 1938 and more massively from the start of September 1938. Czechs, Jews, and German anti-fascists fled from the ongoing brutality, the danger of arrest, and difficult living conditions. Most refugees were leaving out of fear of future developments. However, the waves of violence in May and September 1938 also played a part. Forced displacement did not take place in any organized manner. Instead, radical SdP supporters arbitrarily adopted this approach at the end of October 1938. In such cases, selected persons or families were attacked and forced to abandon their homes within a few hours.⁴⁵ From November to December 1938, people considered inconvenient were expelled on a decision of the security forces, particularly the Gestapo. These were chiefly concerned with individuals active in Czech nationalistic organizations (nationalist groups, gymnastics, educational associations, etc.) or persons who moved to the borderlands after 1918.

The Czechoslovak authorities were unwilling to accept refugees from a security perspective. For instance, Jews banished from Austria in April 1938 were turned back from Czechoslovakia and remained in unbearable conditions on anchored boats on the Danube. They found themselves

⁴⁴ See V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, pp. 71–73, 79–85. For more details on individual cases of SFK violence see J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, pp. 66–70, 76–79. For more details on the occupation of Czechoslovak border areas see DALIBOR KRČMÁR, PETR KAŇÁK, JAN VAJSKEBR, *S jasným cílem a plnou silou, Nasazení německých policejních složek při rozbití Československa [With a Clear Target and Full Force: The Deployment of German Police Units During the Breakup of Czechoslovakia]*, Terezín 2014, pp. 49–99.

⁴⁵ See V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, pp. 85–87; J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, pp. 72–74, 93–97. See Report by Marie Schmolka about her visit to Jews expelled from Burgenland who had to live on a ship anchored at the Danube, July 1938 – see <https://visualisationp.ehri-project.eu/items/show/16> (accessed 18 October 2018).

in unimaginably dire straits. In connection with the mass exodus from the borderlands, the relevant authorities issued an order as early as 16 September 1938 to prevent “the materially unjustified mass abandonment of homes by residents of border areas by all means.”⁴⁶ The security forces followed the policy after 30 September 1938, when they cautiously approached Communists and German-speaking Jews. Nevertheless, many people had returned to the annexed zone. For instance, up to 200 German Communists arrived in Turnov on 1 October. In their case, the interior minister issued an order that “they should be, by all means, returned to their original homes and should under no account be allowed to enter the interior further.”⁴⁷ At the end of October, military bodies stated that “persons of German ethnicity and Jews were reluctant to heed calls to return to the occupied territory [...]. Some refugees returned and reported they were not allowed into the occupied territory.”⁴⁸ Refugees were meant to be further screened regarding citizenship, ethnicity, and mother tongue to prevent the abuse of social assistance intended for ethnic Czechs. The commander of the 1st Corps of the Czechoslovak Army also proposed that “the efforts of district offices must be supported by further measures from higher authorities in the form of the concentration of refugees in camps, which should bring better results from the nationwide perspective,” which meant their eviction.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, p. 144.

⁴⁷ NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-1, Phonogram of a telephone call from the district office in Turnov to the MV from 1. 10. 1938, fol. 196.

⁴⁸ NA, f. PZÚ, coll. 1568, sign. 207-1568-1, Report of the 2nd directorate of the command department of the 1st corps from 24. 10. 1938, no. j. 124/I secret report 1938, fol. 135–136.

⁴⁹ NA, f. PZÚ, coll. 1568, sign. 207-1568-1, Report of the 2nd directorate of the command department of the 1st corps from 24. 10. 1938, no. j. 124/I secret report 1938, fol. 135–136. The commander of the 1st corps, listed in the document as Dalibor 5, was General Jan Šípek (1886–1953), a WWI Russian legionnaire who in 1949 was sentenced to eight years for alleged activities against the new Communist regime in Czechoslovakia and died in prison. For more see J. BENDA, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, p. 173. For an overall evaluation of the displacement and expulsions see pp. 471–472.

Collective violence in the Czech lands from the Munich Agreement to the first years of the Protectorate

The demarcation of the new state border was not spare of violence either, with numerous conflicts between the Czechoslovak and Reich security forces. There was also occasional cross-border fire, taking place primarily in the disputed territories taken over during the fifth phase of the occupation.⁵⁰ However, there were also cases of forced occupation of entire villages on the Czechoslovak territory. Before the final establishment of the border, the best-known case occurred on the Bohemian-Moravian border in Moravská Chrastová, which was seized by several hundred armed members of the Sudeten German Party at 2:30 am on 31 October 1938. The SdP leadership in the Svitavy district was prompted to attack by unverified reports of a new demarcation line. Members of the local armed forces were disarmed and some of them taken to Moravská Třebová. With the support of a gendarmerie emergency unit, the Czechoslovak army regained control of the village between 10 and 11 am, forcing the SdP men back across the demarcation line. There were deaths and severe injuries on both sides.⁵¹ A similar case occurred on 19 January 1939

⁵⁰ The first four occupation zones set at the Munich Conference were annexed between 1 and 7 October 1938. The extent of the remaining occupation in the fifth zone was to be established by an international committee sitting in the evening hours of 30 September 1938. Agreement was reached to detach territory with over 50 percent German population according to the 1910 census. Commonplace, low-harm violence (pub fights, etc.) occurred on the occupied territory. Cf. e.g., NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-2, l. 144; sign. 225-1460-3 to fol. 43 and sign. 225-1460-4, to fol. 39.

⁵¹ Moravská Chrastová is today part of the village of Brněnec, around 15 km south of Svitavy. A Provincial Office [hereinafter only ZÚ] report in Brno said the following of events there: "At 2.30 on 31 October 1938 armed Ordners of the SdP Svitavy, Čtyřicet Lánů, Gráňdorf, Brněnec and environs, supported by Schupo, and according to a report by the commander of the gendarmerie station in Moravská Chrastová also around four SS members – numbering around 360–400 in total – occupied by force the village of Moravská Chrastová and the settlement of Chrastová Lhota from the former Moravská Třebová district with the aim of annexing them to Germany." 8 gendarmes were disarmed (5 taken away), 10 State Defence Guards (9 taken away), 10 customs officers (all taken away), 2 officers, and 34 men of the 13th infantry regiment, while 9 civilians were also taken away. During the village takeover, 2 soldiers and 1 civilian were killed on the Czech side. 6 soldiers were injured. The gendarmerie subsequently detained 15 persons. See *AKPR*, f. Office of the President of the Republic 1919–1947 (OPR 1919–1947), coll. 163, inv. no. 1110, sign. D 5832, Situational report, Hlášení MV referát C, Reports on

in the village of Hamry, just a few kilometers away, when the residents of Jedlová, armed with clubs and pistols, ceremonially marched behind their mayor and took over the village. There was no clash with Czechoslovak security forces but two young local Czechs, who were armed, were captured at the customs houses and then taken into the forest and beaten. The following day German security forces cleared out the occupied territory without any incident.⁵² Such occurrences reflected the ambivalent relationship between individual Nazi organizations. From the typological perspective, members of these organizations fall into the category of specialists in violence. While some tensions existed between

the matter of the overstepping of demarcation lines in Moravská Chrástová, quoted report of ZÚ in Brno from 31. 10. 1938 22.50, no page number. The involvement of SS officers was unsurprising; a similar case had occurred on the night of 17. and 18. 10. 1938 in the village of Hlínoviště near Bělá pod Bezdězem. SS men from Bezděz searched Czech homes, looting and brutally beating those present. See NA, f. PMV, coll. 1460, sign. 225-1460-5, Report of PZÚ in Prague 18. 10. 1938 2.3., fol. 3; Report of ZÚ in Prague 18. 10. 1938 20.45, fol. 27.

- ⁵² Intervening gendarmes from Bystré near Polička said in a report: “I report that on 19 January 1939 at around 2 pm, around 400 persons of both genders, in plain clothes, gathered in the ceded territory in the village of Jedlová and arbitrarily seized part of the village of Hamry. They moved the border pegs and established a barrier by the general public school in Hamr which they are still guarding. [...] The Jedlová residents give as a reason for the arbitrary moving of the border pegs that they are only confiscating the original territory of the village of Jedlová, which had been wrongly pegged during the demarcation of the border.” Miroslav Krejčí, who called the young Germans “German bastards,” and Josef Lefler, who protested against the search of his home and protected himself with a non-functioning hunting pistol, were captured. After briefly being held in a German border booth, they were taken to the forest by Ordners. “When the Ordners left the group of young men, the leaders asked the detained whether they would like to be in the Reich, a concentration camp, or Bohemia or whether they wanted their faces smashed. When Lefler said he wanted to be in Bohemia, one of the young men attacked him, punching him in the face. A second hit him on the back with a stick, whereupon they ordered them [the detained] to scarp and drove them away.” The subsequent investigation established that the main motivation for the incident appeared to be the re-occupation of a Czech minority school in Hamry which, before the occupation, belonged to the Schulverein association. See NA, f. PZU, coll. 1575, unprocessed part of collection following sign. 207, sign. D-426-all, 8/1/73/20, Situational reports on the situation in the occupied territory, Copy of memorandum of Provincial Gendarmerie Command (hereinafter only ZČV) from 8. 2. 1939 on the incident in Hamry, n; Report of gendarmerie station in Bystrá near Polička to the ZČV in Prague 21. 1. 1939, no page number (quotation p. 2); Report of gendarmerie station in Bystrá near Polička to the ZČV in Prague 19. fol. 1939, no page number (quotation p. 1). For more see V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, pp. 87–88.

regular security forces and party paramilitary organizations before the latter's complete dissolution, their members were equally involved in collective violence.

In the following months, the situation in ceded parts of the Czech borderlands (newly formed Reichsgau Sudenland) significantly differed from that in the interior. In the autumn of 1938, the most extensive act of collective violence in the Czech lands was "Kristallnacht," which took place on the night of 11 to 12 November 1938 and spread from Reich territory into the recently annexed Czech borderlands. While Nazi propaganda portrayed those events as a spontaneous expression of popular rage, organized specialists in violence played a crucial role in them.⁵³ During this coordinated pogrom, local Nazis, for the most part, took the initiative in Czech border areas, sparking various responses in the population. Expressions of support or protest were rare, with predominating indifference. Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth, HJ) members in Karlovy Vary chased Jewish residents across the city, insulting, spitting at, and otherwise maltreating them. In many places, synagogues were set on fire, shop windows were smashed, and looting and maltreatment resulted in death.⁵⁴ In effect, Sudeten German guerrilla fighters (ex-SFK) just carried on with the familiar terror, so it is not surprising that in Duchcov, their anger was also directed at Czech long-term residents. The following report reached the Provincial Office from Louny on 12 November 1938: "On the night of 11. to 12.11.1938, the Ordners carried out a pogrom of all Czech shops and many private apartments, while shop windows were smashed, and company signs and windows were broken. A dairy vehicle in which the administrator [from Louny] arrived was stopped because it had Czech plates. The administrator was warned not to dare enter Sudeten German territory in a vehicle with Czech plates again. The despondency of the Czechs and concerns over tonight have resulted

⁵³ Cf. WOLFGANG BENZ, The November Pogrom of 1938, Participation, Applause, Disapproval, in: *Exclusionary Violence, Anti-Semitic Riots in Modern German History*, CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN, WERNER BERGMANN, HELMUT WALSER SMITH eds., Michigan 2002, pp. 141–159.

⁵⁴ Synagogues were set alight in Mariánské Lázně, Falknov (Sokolov), Most, Teplice, Krnov, Opava, and other places. The 21 remaining Jews in Chomutov were arrested, handed over to the Gestapo, and evicted to the interior. Young SA and SS officers are generally given as being actively involved. I expect that in the case of Czech Germans, this mainly concerned former SFK members. However, in the absence of detailed research, this is pure speculation. See V. ZIMMERMANN, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, pp. 89–93.

in the great majority of the Czech population preparing to relocate to Czechoslovak territory.”⁵⁵

Reports from the Czech lands’ interior from October 1938 to March 1939 portray the situation as generally calm. Intent on pursuing an authoritarian policy and maintaining public order and national unity, the security forces kept tabs on Jews, Germans, and Communists. The overall mood in society and conditions of approval of collective violence against certain social groups are illustrated by the following February 1939 report from the Poděbrady district governor: “I again report that the population wish that the law be used to set up concentration camps for gypsies along the German model as soon as possible. There is such a large amount of theft and burglary caused by gypsies in the Polabí area that all local inhabitants urgently demand that the gypsy question be radically solved. There is much talk about the prepared laws with regard to the Jews. The majority of people feel sorry for the Jews, but all agree that it is necessary that the Jewish question also be resolved in our country because of our neighbourhood with surrounding states.”⁵⁶

The final break-up of the Czechoslovak state and the establishment of the occupation system in March 1939 was not a fundamental turning point as far as collective violence was concerned. Some contemporaries may have initially perceived it as an attempt to calm the tensions which had been apparent for almost a year. Alongside feelings of anger and despair, one possible reaction was captured in an article by Czech journalist from the multicultural world of the Prague literary elite, Milena Jesenská (1896–1944), who was arrested by the Nazis in the autumn of 1939 and died after a long imprisonment in a concentration camp: “At 7:30 am the children left for school, as usual. Workers and office workers set off for work, as usual. The trams were full, as usual. Only the people were different. They were standing silent. I had never heard so many people being silent. There were no groups on the streets. People didn’t hold discussions at all.” Jesenská also recorded how a soldier comforted a crying Czech girl with the words: “But miss, we’re not to blame for it after

⁵⁵ AKPR, f. KPR 1919–1947, coll. 163, inv. no. 1110, sign. D 5832, Report of ZÚ in Prague on the pogrom of Czechs in Duchcov from 12. 11. 1938, no. 2497/38, no page number.

⁵⁶ See NA, f. PZU, coll. 1575, unprocessed part of collection following sign. 207, sign. D-426-vše, 8/1/73/20, Memorandum of OÚ in Poděbrady to PZU in Prague z 2. 2. 1939, no page number.

all.”⁵⁷ At that moment, the contemporaries didn't know what to expect. Wehrmacht soldiers also had misconceptions.

In a subsequent wartime radio talk, Wenzel Jaksch recalled how a postal clerk had shown him a postcard from a soldier bearing the words: “Dear Parents, thanks to our Fuehrer for bringing us to such a beautiful city [Prague] where we can eat and drink to our heart's content. I'll send another postcard from Romania.” Jaksch commented on this perception of war as a triumphal march from country to country with the omnipotent fuehrer making sure nobody dared to defend themselves as follows: “Was it young Nazis alone who were so blinded? Didn't plenty of older people also contribute to that brown dance of death? Your guilt is even more tremendous. You were familiar with war.”⁵⁸

It must be pointed out from today's perspective that this was an impending war, and the form of violence associated with it was to alter relations between Czechs and Germans fundamentally. The occupation and the Nazi policy of terror were not a break from normality that could allow a return to normal life. They created a new norm where the limits of possible negotiation shifted on both sides. At the same time, we can distinguish three basic developmental phases in the politics of occupation in which these patterns were created. These can be identified with their main originators as the Neurath period (1939–1941), the Heydrich period (1941–1942) and the Frank period (1942–1945). These periods featured varying degrees of structural violence – in the form of discrimination, physical tyranny or extermination in specialised locations – and acute violence, i.e., open physical violence in public. The representatives of occupation policy actively employed that violence to maintain calm and order – either through the direct exercising or threat of it.⁵⁹

According to historian Jan Tesař, the foundational phase of the existence of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was defined by a combination of elements of annexation with characteristics of limited autonomy, an illusion which the Nazi occupying authorities used effectively to enforce loyalty of the Protectorate government. There was also a hint

⁵⁷ MILENA JESENSKÁ, Praha, ráno 15. března 1939 [Prague, the morning of 15 March 1939], in: *Přítomnost*, 1939, XVI., no. 12 (22. 3. 1939), p. 185.

⁵⁸ Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BHSA), Sudetendeutsches Archiv (SdA), f. Nachlass (NL) Wenzel Jaksch, inv. no. 16, sign. C16, *Sudetenland, 3. Kriegsjahr*, undated, p. 2.

⁵⁹ See D. BRANDES, *Češi pod německým protektorátem. Okupační politika, kolaborace a odboj 1939–1945*. Prague 1999, pp. 26–28, 36–46.

of “colonial” elements, as the German population took Reich citizenship and did not fall under the Protectorate authorities. By contrast, autonomous government and administration served as very effective instruments for the occupiers to achieve their goals. Despite the duality of the autonomous Protectorate administration and parallel Reich administration, from 1939, all real executive and legislative power, and the ability to directly intervene in the judiciary, was concentrated in the hands of the Reich Protector. During subsequent developments, the “national” autonomy which he guaranteed gradually transformed into territorial autonomy – into an autonomous province in which K. H. Frank’s rule was virtually unlimited in the final period of the occupation.⁶⁰

The eradication of violent elements from the public sphere and the simultaneous omnipresent threat of the unleashing of terror stemmed from the specific foundation of the Protectorate and its further development in the initial period until 1941. At first glance, the magnanimous autonomy guaranteed to the Czech state under the protection of the Reich chiefly facilitated the increasingly refined exploitation and gradual annexation of that territory. The simultaneous Reich administration headed by Secretary K. H. Frank and Reich Protector Konstantin von Neurath could suspend the autonomous Protectorate administration and replace it with a military dictatorship. Both used this to skilfully threaten the Protectorate government.⁶¹

Though, in the first months, representatives of the Nazi occupying administration tempered expressions of violence from Czech fascists and Nazis in the streets, they, by contrast, activated them from the end of May 1939 in a power game with the Protectorate government.⁶² From July to September 1939, the police reported attacks on Jews and Jewish shops to the Reich administration authorities. From the typological perspective, these were scattered attacks accompanied by opportunistic violence. It can be deduced from the composition of actors and the execution that, as in the case of Kristallnacht, these were predominantly acts of violence provoked by Nazi party organizations and sympathetic Czech groups. It is highly likely that this involved members of the Vlajka organization, ideologically linked to German Nazism, from which

⁶⁰ J. TESAŘ, *Traktát o „záchraně národa“*, pp. 13–15, 16, 21, 25–26, 29, 65–67.

⁶¹ D. BRANDES, *Češi pod německým protektorátem*, pp. 36–39, 48–50.

⁶² J. TESAŘ, *Traktát o „záchraně národa“*, pp. 63–64 and D. BRANDES, *Češi pod německým protektorátem*, pp. 55–56.

they adopted a notably racist tone. Czech fascists of the Gajda type, who emphasized volatile Czech nationalism and were both anti-Jewish and anti-German oriented, had already been isolated in Czech society. Moreover, after March 1939, they quickly conflicted with the occupying powers. Therefore, their participation in such cases is doubtful, though it cannot be completely ruled out.⁶³

Interventions by uniformed Protectorate police complicated the approach of members of the occupying security forces. On the night of 21 to 22 July 1939, the windows of tens of Jewish businesses in parts of Vítkovice in Moravská Ostrava were smashed. Uniformed SS and others in civilian clothing, probably Czech Nazis from Vlastka, demolished them further and carried out some looting. The arrest of the perpetrators was prevented by the intervention of the protection police (Schupo), whose officers ordered the local police to mind their business.⁶⁴ The oberlandrat⁶⁵ of Moravská Ostrava complained that the “Czech police” had been reprimanded for being overly lenient. Still, they were prevented when they tried to intervene on one occasion. He also reported that cameras had been stolen during the looting, with the culprits able to escape due to the intervention of the “German police” (Schupo). Officer Vlastimil Stavinoha testified that after the arrest of the perpetrators, he was halted by a group of 18 men, SS and Schupo officers. However, he did not respond to their admonitions. A German policeman grabbed him around the arms from behind while the detainee fled. Stavinoha was prevented from re-arresting him or calling for reinforcements.

The names of the SS and Schupo members present were ascertained, but during the interrogation, they blamed “Czech fascists.” Though it was a common excuse, further investigation was halted.⁶⁶ An even more organized case occurred a day later in Příbram, where two buses carrying around 80 Vlastka members arrived from Prague on the evening of 22 July

⁶³ See J. TESAŘ, *Traktát o „záchrance národa“*, pp. 53, 115–116.

⁶⁴ NA, f. Úřad říšského protektora (Office of the Reich Protector, hereinafter only ÚŘP), former collection of AMV 114, coll. 324, sign. 114-325-5, Reports of German authorities 1939–1940, Der Oberlandrat in Mähr. Ostrau an den Herrn Reichsprotektor in Böhmen und Mähren, 24. 7. 1939, fol. 5–11.

⁶⁵ Literally translated as “supreme provincial council,” he was the supreme official of the Nazi occupying administration and typically had several former political districts beneath him.

⁶⁶ NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 324, sign. 114-325-5, Reports of German authorities 1939–1940, Der Oberlandrat in Mähr. Ostrau an den Herrn Reichsprotektor in Böhmen und Mähren, 24. 7. 1939, fol. 5–11.

1939. As well as smashing the windows of Jewish shops, they drove Jews out of cafés onto the streets, beating them brutally with rubber truncheons between 8 and 10 pm. According to a report from the Oberlandrat in Tábor, the local people were shocked by these actions and did not join in. As officers of the “municipal police and gendarmerie” could not secure order, a Wehrmacht riot unit was summoned. However, the culprits had left the town before they arrived. Local Vlastka members linked the event to a case in which their leader in the area had allegedly been attacked by Jews some months earlier.⁶⁷

Unlike in Příbram, where the public was a mere audience, reports on similar cases show that they didn't remain on the sidelines in, for instance, cities in Moravia. Jews in Brno came under attack at the Esplanade café on 15 August 1939. By the time the police arrived, a mob of up to 800 mainly Czech Germans had gathered and, along with the present order police (Orpo), watched the brutal attacks with interest. Alongside uniformed “Moravian fascists” (Vala group) and other groups (National Fascists Camp), these were carried out mainly by the members of the Nazi party's SS and SA and low-ranking officers and soldiers from the Wehrmacht. Upon arrival, the Protectorate police were greeted with shouts of “Disgusting!” and “Beneš's bastards!”⁶⁸

When individual officers attempted to intervene, they were set upon and brutally beaten. Several Jews and intervening Protectorate officers were seriously injured. The abuse of the Jewish patrons must have been ferocious, as one died of heart failure during the afternoon. Another was stripped naked and driven through the streets, finally escaping into a police station. The rampage spread to other restaurants and distant streets, where Czechs were beaten. Cases were even recorded of the mob forcing their way into Jewish apartments.⁶⁹ From August to September 1939,

⁶⁷ NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 324, sign. 114-325-5, Reports of German authorities 1939–1940, Der Oberlandrat in Tábor an den Herrn Reichsprotector in Böhmen und Mähren, 28. 7. 1939, fol. 15.

⁶⁸ Edvard Beneš (1884–1948) served as president of Czechoslovakia from 1935–1938 and 1945–1948 and occupied the post of president in exile in London from 1940–1945.

⁶⁹ The disturbances began around 3 pm and lasted until at least 7 pm when heavy rain broke the attacking mob into smaller groups. They roamed the streets and pubs until the late-night hours, continuing to attack Jews who were present. The Protectorate police were informed about the violence by an anonymous phone call before 5 pm. When officers were assaulted on the spot, they gave up on further interventions and stuck to redirecting traffic (sic!). The German police (Schupo) did not

attacks on the Jewish community, businesses, and shops increased. Suspicion again fell on Czech fascist groups, who had taken part in the torching of synagogues in Olomouc in March 1939. The first arrests were of two local German long-term residents motivated by uncorroborated newspaper reports about the murder of Germans by Jews in Bratislava, which they said they believed. When the cases continued, the initiators were, in the end, revealed to be members of the HJ and SS, whose leader linked the attacks to the Jewish role in the UK's declaration of war.⁷⁰

In the pre-war period, regular contact between Czechs and the occupying authorities, the Wehrmacht, and fanatical Nazis was full of minor conflicts, though these maintained a legal form. However, there were also acts of violence that crossed that boundary. Reich Protector von Neurath was informed in detail about punches, pub brawls, and isolated firing up to 1941. He did not hesitate to reproach the Protectorate government if the representatives complained about limited autonomy.⁷¹ One of the most severe cases concerned shooting dead of a chief officer of the German police (Schupo), Wilhelm Kniest, in Kladno in June 1939. Though he could have been killed by anybody on the night of 8 to 9 June 1938, his colleagues blamed local Czechs, the "Czech authorities," and the Protectorate police. Stringent security and repressive measures were

arrive until most attackers left. The dead man was managing clerk Paul Drexler, who was attacked at the café and fell unconscious on the ground after running just a few meters. He had significant bruising on his back from sticks and legs, most likely from kicks. A police doctor gave heart failure as the cause of death. A Czech woman suffered several blows to the head with a blunt object for wearing a National Partnership badge on her lapel. The assailants entered at least 10 Establishments, injuring at least 20 people in various ways. NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 324, sign. 114-325-5, Reports of German authorities 1939–1940, Der Oberlandrat in Brünn an den Herrn Reichsprotector in Böhmen und Mähren, Telex from 16. 8. 1939, fol. 17–19; Copy of a report by the police presidium in Brno on the incident of 15. 8. 1939, fol. 21–24 and a Copy of a report by a court doctor regarding Dr. Paul Drexler from 16. 8. 1939, fol. 26.

⁷⁰ NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 324, sign. 114-325-5, Reports of German authorities 1939–1940, Der Oberlandrat in Olmütz an den Herrn Reichsprotector in Böhmen und Mähren, 3. 9. 1939, fol. 27–31 and Der Oberlandrat in Olmütz an den Herrn Reichsprotector in Böhmen und Mähren, 6. 9. 1939, fol. 32–36.

⁷¹ In connection with these cases, see NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 324, sign. 114-325-5, Reports of German authorities 1939–1940, coll. 326, sign. 114-327-5, Incidents and various assaults; NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 324, sign. 114-325-5, Reports of German authorities 1939–1940, coll. 281, sign. 114-283-3–7, Written materials relating to disputes between Czechs and Germans 1939–1944. Also see J. TESÁŘ, *Traktát o „záchráně národa“*, pp. 63–67.

introduced in Kladno (including a ban on assembly, night curfews, and the closure of schools), though these proved fruitless. Adolf Hitler himself was informed about the case and ordered an immediate transfer of those detained to a concentration camp (Mauthausen, according to a command from Heinrich Himmler). In the end, 93 prisoners were taken on 11 June 1939 to the police prison at Špilberk in Brno, and the following day the extraordinary measures were lifted in Kladno. It was later proven that the culprits were Jan Smudek and František Petr, who were linked to the newly forming resistance group Obrana národa.⁷²

In the initial months, the Reich Protector and the subordinate occupying authorities took a benevolent view of demonstrations. These were a relatively widespread expressions of “national resistance,” with the biggest taking place on 7 May 1939, linked to the transfer of the remains of Karel Hynek Mácha from Litoměřice, in the Reich, to Prague, in the Protectorate.⁷³ There was a turning point following the outbreak of war in the autumn of 1939. During the celebrations of St. Wenceslas’ Day on 28 September 1939, the Protectorate police clamped down forcefully on protesters. A demonstration on the anniversary of the foundation of the Czechoslovak state a month later, attended mostly by young people, was violently quelled by German police (Sipo) with a strong support from the Protectorate police. The shooting dead of apprentice baker (also listed as a miner, his original profession) Václav Sedláček and death of student Jan Opletal on 11 November 1939 as a result of complications following a shooting injury foreshadowed a fundamental shift in the occupying authorities’ approach to public displays of resistance. At that time, behaviour on both sides was agitated, and K.H. Frank, who di-

⁷² See NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 338, sign. 114-338-14, Bekanntmachung des Oberlandrats Kladno, 8. 6. 1939, fol. 3; Der Reichsprotektor für Böhmen und Mähren an den Herrn Ministerpräsidenten Ing. Eliáš, 8. 6. 1939, fol. 5–7; Fernschreiben der Gestapo Kladno an den Herrn Reichsprotektor in Böhmen und Mähren, 8. 6. 1939, fol. 9. Also see JIŘÍ PLACHÝ, Druhá aféra „Nepolapitelného Jana“, nezdařená provokace tajných služeb proti Janu Smudkovi v roce 1947 [The second affair of “Elusive Jan”: The secret services’ unsuccessful provocation against Jan Smudek in 1947], in: *Securitas Imperii*, 2010, no. 17, p. 49.

⁷³ A previously banned demonstration on 1. 5. 1938, thousands gathered at a monument to K.H. Mácha at Petřín, which grew into a massive display of “national unity” with pronounced nationalist elements that were understandable from the perspective of that time. Several similar demonstrations, with a repeated turnout of tens of thousands, followed until September. See J. TESÁŘ, *Traktát o „záchrane národa“*, pp. 39–40, 125–127.

rected the provocations during the 28 October demonstrations, received a highly personal “message” on 15 November; when he went to see for himself the disturbances that followed the funeral of Jan Opletal. His driver was brutally beaten on the corner of today’s Spálená and Národní streets. The Nazis showed what violent occupation looked like by closing universities, carrying out executions, and sending 1,200 students to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.⁷⁴

By the autumn of 1939, people had lost the illusion that the Nazi occupation was, a generation later, a revived version of the famous Austrian “oppression”, in which minor concessions could be achieved by gentle pressure. For the first time, the previously held progressive values of “national unity”, such as discipline and the maintenance of peace and conscientious work, turned out to be a tool of the occupiers. At the same time, November 1939 saw the start of a gradual undermining of the legitimacy of the Protectorate government, which distanced itself from demonstrators’ actions, offering implicit approval of the violent measures. Following 17 November 1939, the Protectorate system of rule was consolidated in the form it maintained in the following years: resistance was broken, loyalty was reinforced, government collaboration deepened, and a functioning Czech administration ran the economy. In addition, the gap widened between ever more loyal collaborators and more aggressive and persecuted resistance groups, with a broad space for a neutral grey zone between them.⁷⁵ The demonstrations on 28 October 1939 expressed dissatisfaction on the part of the “republican generation” with the loyal politics of those who remembered old Austria, which they idealistically projected onto Hitler’s “Protectorate.” The reprisals of 17 November made it clear that the previous moderation of the occupation was not a sign of weakness but rather leniency intended to buy obedience.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Wholly unsurprisingly, the investigative agencies regarded the intervention of 28. 10. 1939 as being entirely legitimate. In his report on the case of Václav Sedláček, the supreme state attorney said: It is necessary to admit that he lost his life under police fire. This was official and, therefore, justified behavior. NA, f. ÚŘP, coll. 26, sign. 114-327-5, Der Generalstaatsanwalt an den Herrn Reichsprotector in Böhmen und Mähren, 11. 12. 1939, fol. 50.

⁷⁵ J. TESAŘ, *Traktát o „záchrane národa“*, pp. 41–42, 128–132, 139–143, 151. Cf. D. KRČMÁŘ, P. KAŇÁK, J. VAJSKEBR, *S jasným cílem a plnou silou*, pp. 99–140.

⁷⁶ J. TESAŘ, *Traktát o „záchrane národa“*, p. 37, 131. Cf. CHAD BRYANT, *Praha v černém. Nacistická vláda a český nacionalismus [Prague in Black – Nazi Rule and*

The establishment of Nazi terror in the form of a conglomerate of security services occurred immediately after the arrival of occupying troops and the declaration of a temporary military administration when, on 15 March 1939, a so-called Einsatzkommando⁷⁷ began operating on the future Protectorate territory. Operational units tasked with securing territory in the rear later became involved in murder campaigns on the Eastern Front, when they became a terrifyingly effective apparatus for “cleansing” conquered part of the Reich’s enemies. They did not return in that form to the Czech territory until the autumn of 1944, when they attempted to stamp out the partisan activity. Regular security institutions were very quickly put in place in March 1939. The most important body was the secret state police (Gestapo), formed in the summer of 1939. In essence, all Protectorate and Reich authorities were subordinate to its decision-making, and in the first months, it carried out significant interventions in the workings of the Protectorate police. Working with the Reich security services and the SS, headed by K. H. Frank, it carried out the first wave of arrests.⁷⁸ “Preventative” arrests, known as Aktion Gitter, were launched immediately on 15 March 1939, with those detained later gradually released. The main focus of arrests in the initial months were ideological opponents of Nazism, especially Reich citizens who had fled, refugees from the Sudetenland Reich County, and those with contacts abroad. Interrogations were violent and very challenging mentally and physically, as was the uncertainty that followed the release.⁷⁹

Czech Nationalism], Prague 2012, pp. 64–65; D. BRANDES, *Češi pod německým protektorátem*, pp. 101–113.

⁷⁷ In connection with the formation of Nazis security forces and preparations to invade Czechoslovakia see, e.g., OLDŘICH SLÁDEK, *Zločinná role gestapa. Nacistická bezpečnostní policie v českých zemích 1938–1945 [The Criminal Role of the Gestapo: The Nazi Security Police in the Czech Lands, 1938–1945]*, Prague 1986, pp. 12–20, 27–32, 38–42.

⁷⁸ J. TESAŘ, *Traktát o „záchrane národa“*, pp. 19–21. Cf. VÁCLAV KURAL, *Místo společnosti – konflikt! Češi a Němci ve Velkoněmecké říši a cesta k odsunu (1938–1945) [Instead of Community – Conflict! Czechs and Germans in the Great German Reich and the Path to the Expulsions (1938–1945)]*, Prague 1994, pp. 52–56; D. BRANDES, *Češi pod německým protektorátem*, pp. 46–48; O. SLÁDEK, *Zločinná role gestapa*, pp. 57–76.

⁷⁹ The extensive arrests of Social Democrats on 12. 5. 1939 affected trade unionist Franz Macoun, who was released after 14 days. He was arrested again and faced intensified interrogations over international contacts from 14. 6. to 20. 7. 1939. In post-war correspondence, Macoun’s daughter described her mother’s implacable battles with the Nazi authorities when her husband was due to be placed in so-

The character of the Nazi occupation rule in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was, however, directly dependent on changes in the Reich and war policy of Nazi Germany. Its security policies fundamentally changed from 1939 to 1943 on the Eastern Front. During the so-called final solution to the Jewish question, it established extremely violent practices. The transformation of the security apparatus into an independently functioning instrument of Nazi policy launched in 1933 reached a climax with the foundation of the Reich Main Security Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt – RSHA) at the end September 1939. As one of 12 prominent SS organizations created strictly in line with the Führerprinzip (leader principle), this new type of institution, comprising the security police (Sipo) and the security service (SD), combined state and party powers in a specific manner. It was headed by SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, with an extensive clerical apparatus comprised largely of academically educated young men. In Heydrich's conception, the office was to become the "decisive element in the radicalization of National Socialist politics." Under Heydrich's leadership, SS-Einsatzgruppen (deployment groups) underwent a fundamental change. Following the launch of the war, these were tasked as mobile RSHA units with "national purges" in the rear and became the main instrument of mass deportations and massacres. They also played a vital role in the initial phases of the murder of Jewish populations, the next stage of which was the "final solution" outlined by Heydrich at the Wannsee conference in January 1942. At that time, the Einsatzgruppen had, on Heydrich's orders, shot down over half a million people on conquered Soviet territory. Besides Heinrich Himmler, Heydrich was the chief architect of the horrifically effective Nazi killing machine.⁸⁰

When Heydrich was appointed acting Reich Protector, all signs of a potential uprising had been put down in the Czech lands, a strategically important hinterland to the Eastern Front. Therefore, the fundamental

called "protective custody" in a concentration camp after the outbreak of war in September 1939. In the end Macoun was not imprisoned. However, he was regularly called in by the Gestapo until the beginning of 1945. However, this was probably an exceptional case. BHSA, SdA, f. NL, Karl Kern, inv. no. 105. See also J. TESAR, *Traktát o „záchráně národa“*, p. 35.

⁸⁰ MICHAEL WILDT, *Generation des Unbedingten, Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes*. Hamburg 2003, pp. 203–206, 415; ROBERT GERWARTH, *Reinhard Heydrich, Biographie*, Munich 2011, pp. 245–317. Cf. O. SLÁDEK, *Zločinná role gestapa*, pp. 151–154.

transformation of the occupation regime between 1941 and 1942 is just as unsurprising as Heydrich's period in office saw the zenith of a policy of violent occupation and a peak in the number of arrests and executions. Therefore, this chapter of collective violence was utterly different from the initial phase of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

Conclusion

In the course of intensifying domestic political tension between March and September 1938, collective violence in the Czech lands became a crucial instrument in the political battle between representatives of Czechoslovak state power and those who would undermine it. These chiefly concerned representatives of the Sudeten German Party, who framed long unresolved (and in part irresolvable) socio-economic disputes, intensified by the 1930s financial crisis resulting from ethnic conflicts. The question of the so-called Sudeten Germans became definitively connected with the power interests of Hitler's Third Reich following the Anschluss of Austria. From March 1938, Konrad Henlein began to pursue a program of autonomy within which, in the following months, he repeatedly stepped-up demands on the government for a broad coalition headed by Slovak Agrarian Milan Hodža. The leaders of the Sudeten German Party skilfully encouraged tensions between the Czech and German communities, which led to the polarization of society in the ethnically diverse regions. The triggering of conflict surrounding the border laid the conditions for escalating acts of violence, which became an instrument of political struggle. It stems from the structure of the collective violence that occurred in two large waves in ethnically mixed regions, primarily in the Czech borderlands, in May and again in September 1938. Local political leaders and party paramilitary organizations played a central role, initially in spontaneous and partially organized popular gatherings and demonstrations. Spontaneous violence involving randomly formed mobs was, to a significant degree, sparked and spurred on further by such political entrepreneurs. For a time, most of those present did not participate in the violence but their passive attitude granted it legitimacy. Alongside political entrepreneurs, they shifted the parameters of the acceptable use of force and violence in the political struggle.

As a result of long-term training, members of paramilitary organizations became de facto specialists in violence, which became fully evident

during the so-called Munich Crisis in September 1938. In this period, fighting that may be deemed civil war from the structural perspective raged in many Czech border areas. Paramilitary units clashed with similar groups of ideological opponents and regular Czechoslovak armed forces. Uniformed armed men in the service of the Sudeten German Party carried out numerous acts of opportunistic violence. For instance, they chased and savagely beat ideological opponents, broke into their homes, arrested them, and drove them out. Organized political terror from Sudeten German fighters directed at Czechs, Social Democrats, Communists, and Jews continued in the part of the border area, hacked off in the months following the signing of the Munich Agreement. In the newly created Sudeten areas, this was carried out by formally different NSDAP armed units and other Nazi organizations, whose actions culminated in November 1938 with the events of Kristallnacht. Though these were officially presented as spontaneous expressions of popular rage, the primary initiators were members of Nazi organizations, most likely from the Sudeten German Party, who used violence more or less continuously and were the core of the participants.

In the interior of the Czech lands, the representatives of state security policy, led by the Beran government, created the conditions for structural violence under the authoritarian regime of the so-called Second Republic from September 1938 to March 1939. The flip side of the national unity that took shape before the occupation and the Protectorate was the persecution of variously defined social groups whose place in society was disputed (e.g., Jews, Germans, Communists, Roma, and the so-called work-shy). Acts of collective violence carried out by members of different paramilitary organizations and armed NSDAP units in the summer of 1939 were also recorded on Protectorate territory. Nevertheless, in the concluding phase of the consolidation of the occupation system of government, collective violence once again became part of the Nazi state monopoly. This was seen in opportunistic violence and responses to expressions of civic unrest and opposition to the occupation, which peaked in the autumn of 1939.

From the spring 1938 to summer 1939, acts of collective violence in the public in the Czech lands most frequently occurred in a form that Charles Tilly referred to as broken negotiations and scattered attacks. The acts in question tended to involve a low to medium degree of immediate damage and, if anything, an average degree of coordination between participants, who were members of Sudeten German, or

respectively later Nazi, armed detachments and other paramilitary organizations (e.g., various fascist groups). The actions of these specialists in violence were coordinated to a considerable degree by political leaders, who simultaneously mobilized members of the public against an alleged acute threat. To achieve this, they used a broad range of disinformation that, in an atmosphere of uncertainty, spread like wildfire in the form of rumours. They acquired general support by employing acts of collective violence as an instrument of political contest and presented them as spontaneous expressions of widespread anger. The occurrence of such acts of violence overlapped very closely with periods of instability as regards power. They occurred in the crisis months of 1938 when the Czechoslovak state's ability to execute power was breached and again when the Nazi domain was imposed, most intensely in Sudeten areas in the autumn of 1938 and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in the summer of 1939. In transitional (the so-called Second Republic from October 1938 to March 1939) and long-term periods (the Sudetenland from March 1939 and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia from November 1939) of consolidation of state power, collective violence became an element of state security policy aimed at eliminating social groups regarded as hostile or potentially dangerous. The triggering of conflict between communities in the border region was a primary mechanism enabling the use of collective violence as an instrument of policy and power. It was seen in the Czech borderlands before the so-called Munich Agreement but made its presence felt by establishing a Nazi domain in central Europe before WWII.

Periodization of the occurrence of collective violence according to Tilly's typology

Territory		Czechoslovakia	Sudetengau	Protectorate
Period	Major Events			
May/June 1938	Elections	scattered attacks broken negotiations		
August 1938	International Mission	retreat of violence		
September 1938	International Crisis	lethal contests opportunism		
October–November 1938	New Border Kristallnacht		scattered attacks opportunism	
May–September 1939	Nazi Occupation			scattered attacks
November 1939	Demonstrations			broken negotiations