

Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis

This year at Christmas I convinced my father to dig up some old family letters. My grandfather, a Jewish taxi driver from New York, served in the U.S. army in Germany during the Second World War. He wrote weekly letters home to my grandmother, and I hoped they might serve as a source for my new research project. At the very least, I was curious about what my grandfather had to say about Nazi Germany. I opened those letters with anticipation and the guilty feeling of voyeurism that comes with snooping on dead grandparents. But the family archive let me down. It turns out that my grandfather was far more interested in declaring his undying love to his “fatty” and promising gifts of silk stockings than in describing social conditions in wartime Europe. The letters might as well have been written from Brooklyn as Bavaria. The only proof I have that my grandfather set foot on German soil at all is a photo of him leaning against a wall in Bubenheim, in the Rhineland (population 446) in 1945. He wrote on the back of the photo: “Bubenheim, Germany. Plenty close to hell.”

My grandfather passed away when I was eight, so I have no way of knowing if he was really “indifferent” to the historical events unfolding around him. Reading those letters nonetheless helped me to think about seeming indifference to politics and the broader issues it poses for historians. It raises particular challenges for social and cultural historians – those of us who are explicitly interested in uncovering the experiences and worlds of non-elites, and are convinced that ordinary lives have something important to tell us about society, politics, culture, and historical change. What if our subjects seem to shrug their shoulders at the very questions that most interest us? Does it mean we need to

ask different questions? Or can apparent indifference itself be a significant clue about the past?

These questions are particularly relevant in the fields of Central and East European history, where so much historical research centers precisely on political and ideological extremism. The nationalist, fascist, and Communist movements that so dramatically swept across Habsburg Central Europe in the twentieth century seem to have left little space for indifference, aside from indifference to the suffering of others. Focusing on indifference as a category of analysis, however, may offer new possibilities for understanding the relations between state, society, and the individual under regimes with ambitions to politicize every aspect of daily life.

Twenty-five years ago, anthropologists began to expose the colonialist origins of their discipline. In a seminal 1973 article, Diane Lewis wrote, “Since anthropology emerged along with the expansion of Europe and the colonization of the non-Western world, anthropologists found themselves participants in the colonial system which organized relationships between Westerners and non-Westerners.”<sup>i</sup> This now-familiar critique provoked several decades of soul-searching, through which anthropologists sought to de-colonize both their research strategies and theoretical assumptions. Many historians are currently in the midst of a similar process, as we face up our discipline’s record as a faithful accomplice to nation-building projects. Nowhere is the imperative to denationalize history more pressing than in the field of East European history.

This effort to “rescue History from the Nation” (to use Prasenjit Duara’s phrase) has inspired several overlapping research strategies.<sup>ii</sup> In East European history the campaign to rescue history from the nation can be dated at least back to Gary Cohen’s

pioneering 1981 history of the German community in Prague, which demonstrated the social dimensions of the choice to identify as a German or Czech. Cohen challenged the prevailing assumption that German-speakers and Czech-speakers teleologically crystallized into organized German and Czech national communities in nineteenth century Prague. In fact, many working-class and lower-middle class German-speakers ultimately identified as Czechs. National identification in nineteenth century Prague was thus far more situational (and tenuous) than traditional narratives of “national awakening” let on.<sup>iii</sup>

More recently, many historians have attempted to shift the scale of historical analysis. Rather than considering nation-states as the vessels of History and nations as the subjects and agents of historical change, they are writing histories that play out in local, regional, international, global, or transnational settings. Historians of Eastern and Central Europe have also begun to rethink periodization- tracing continuities and changes across the temporal boundaries that mark the rise and fall of nation-states. These approaches both strive to put the nation in a broader relational and spatial context.<sup>iv</sup>

A related and equally important strategy is to scrutinize the history of individual consciousness and subjectivity, asking ourselves to what extent people actually felt national, when, and why, and by extension, to what extent they did *not* feel national.<sup>v</sup> Over the past twenty years, Benedict Anderson’s “Imagined Communities” have become so ubiquitous in historical research on nationalism that we may have become blind to those individuals who remained aloof to the nation’s appeal. In his essay “Ethnicity without Groups,” Rogers Brubaker has suggested that analyzing groupness as an “event” rather than analyzing nations as static social categories enables us to remain attune to the

possibility that groupness “may not happen, that high levels of groupness may fail to crystallize, despite the group-making efforts of ethno-political entrepreneurs, and even in situations of intense elite-level ethnic conflict.”<sup>vi</sup>

What does it mean to historicize failed groupness? These dogs that didn't bark pose deep challenges to many of the basic assumptions that have structured the history of East Central Europe in recent years. In particular, cultural and social historians of nationalism have largely devoted themselves to demonstrating that nationalists in East Central Europe successfully infused every realm of daily life with nationalist significance, breaking down distinctions between putative public and private spheres. Brubaker, however, paints a very different picture of life in post-Communist Cluj. In spite of the highly ethnicized rhetoric that frames political discourse there, he suggests, “most Hungarians, like most Romanians, are largely indifferent to politics, and preoccupied with problems of everyday life- problems that are not interpreted in ethnic terms.”<sup>vii</sup>

Here, Brubaker uses the term politics as a shorthand for high, national politics. His critical point is that we cannot simply assume that the nationalization of elite political discourse reflects the intensity of individual national allegiances or polarization in daily life. But this implicit contrast between the realms of high politics and “everyday life” raises an important question for historians. If we discover that non-elites were not national or indifferent to nationalism, is it because they were not politicized at all? This view seems to reinforce a binary opposition between “high politics” and “everyday life” that social and cultural historians, historians of gender in particular, have worked hard to undermine in the past thirty years. The goal of this essay is therefore to historicize

national indifference, and explore its potential as a category of analysis, without reinscribing imagined boundaries between the public (political) sphere and the private (apolitical) world of “everyday life,” and without evacuating non-elites from the political realm. Rather, I suggest that tensions between nationalists’ aspirations and popular responses to their totalizing demands often drove political, social, and institutional change in East Central Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The remainder of this essay addresses three related questions: 1) What is national indifference and does it have a history? 2) What historical and historiographical forces have conspired to obscure national indifference and 3) How does the category of national indifference intersect with or complicate the theoretical agenda of transnational history?

### **Defining Indifference**

Indifference to nationalism is not a new discovery in East European history. It is rather a new perspective on or label for themes that have attracted historians’ attention for many years. What we might call indifference has gone by many other names (often derogatory) in the past: regionalism, cosmopolitanism, localism, bilingualism, intermarriage, dynasticism, opportunism, immorality, betrayal, collaboration, ignorance, dependence, backwardness, stubbornness, stupidity, and false consciousness (to name a few). Nor is national indifference a perfect term, since “indifference” also carries a somewhat pejorative connotation. Alternatives, such as national apathy, ambivalence, lability, or binationalism, hardly seem better. The absence of a suitable term to describe nonnational populations reflects the extent to which nationalist assumptions have shaped the vocabulary of social scientists.

Recently, historians of East Central Europe have begun to draw attention to national indifference in a more explicit (and less judgmental) way.<sup>viii</sup> And yet the term lacks precision. What I call national indifference refers to many kinds of behavior and people. This is because the possibilities for and forms of national indifference in Habsburg Central Europe have changed radically over time, shifting with the boundaries of states and the political, social, and legal structures in which people lived. It was not a premodern relic that was gradually wiped out by the forces of modernization, state-building, and mass politics. Rather, indifference to nationalism was very often a response to modern mass politics. National indifference in East Central Europe was therefore no more stable or consistent in its form or meaning than nationalism itself in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indifference itself must be historicized.

For some, particularly in Habsburg Austria, indifference to nationalism could entail the complete absence of national loyalties- a claim to be neither Czech nor German, neither Polish nor Ruthene, neither German nor Slovene. In the late nineteenth century, however, as Jeremy King has argued, the Austrian state itself began to “multinationalize,” acknowledging the so-called rights of national collectives in order to defuse national tensions.<sup>ix</sup> This made national agnosticism less viable, particularly in those regions affected by the so-called national Compromises of the early twentieth century (Moravia, Galicia, Bukovina). Once citizens were forced to register their nationality in order to exercise basic civil rights such as the right to vote or to a primary school education, it was no longer simple to remain on the national sidelines. The collapse of the Austrian Empire into self-declared nation-states in 1918 rendered the outright refusal of nationality nearly impossible. The Czechoslovak, Polish, and

Yugoslav governments all forcibly classified citizens, hoping to boost the legitimacy of their states domestically and internationally by reducing the number of people counted as members of minority groups.<sup>x</sup> Nationality became an explicit basis for citizenship rights, and for securing voting privileges, education, and social services in the Habsburg successor states. Nationalist activists themselves, meanwhile, gleefully celebrated the demise of national indifference in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1918. Hugo Heller, a German child welfare activist in Bohemia, recalled that in 1918 nationalist enthusiasm “rushed in like a fresh spring, awakening life throughout all of German Bohemia, melting the snow and ice of national ambivalence, dispersing the clouds which had paralyzed and depressed nationalist thought, feeling, and will... Those were the good times!”<sup>xi</sup>

Unfortunately for Heller and his friends, the good times didn't last. National indifference resurfaced in different forms after 1918. In the Bohemian Lands, many Czech-speakers continued to marry German-speakers and vice-versa, and in such families, bilingualism and fluid national loyalties were often the norm. Many other citizens remained on the fence when it came to national affiliation. These individuals switched sides depending on political and social circumstances. The number of German-speakers counted in Czechoslovakia in 1921 declined by 400,000, for example. In some towns such as Budějovice/Budweis, the number of people registering as Germans dropped by up to 50%.<sup>xii</sup> Where did all the Germans go? Some died in the war, some emigrated to Germany or Austria, some were pressured or forced to become Czechoslovaks, and some registered as members of the newly created Jewish nationality. Many others, however, were simply fence-sitters, who saw that membership in the state-nation could have its privileges. Ironically, nationalist competition for citizen's loyalties

in East Central Europe may have even encouraged flexibility and opportunism. For example, in the Bohemian Lands, Czech and German schools and welfare institutions offered parents generous welfare benefits to attract higher enrollments and to expand the ranks of the nation. When questioned about his national loyalties, one bilingual sugar factory worker in 1948 replied frankly, “It is a matter of who is giving more.”<sup>xiii</sup> Nationalists vehemently denounced such opportunism, but simultaneously encouraged it by engaging in a demographic bidding war to boost their census numbers and fill their schoolrooms.

Finally, even more individuals may have considered themselves nominally to be Czechs or Germans, Poles or Ruthenes, Hungarians or Romanians, but rejected the increasingly strident demands of nationalist politicians. They were indifferent to nationalist politics rather than ambivalent about which nation they belonged to. These individuals also attracted the scorn and pressure of nationalists. Nationalist organizers in the early twentieth-century worked tirelessly to educate citizens about the many duties that accompanied national belonging. Being a good German, for example, did not simply entail casting a ballot for nationalist politicians on election day. Loyal Germans were to shop exclusively in German-owned stores, decorate their homes with tasteful “German” furnishings, visit endangered German “language frontiers” on vacation, join German choral groups, fire companies, and nationalist associations (and regularly make financial contributions), speak only German at home, marry Germans, hire German domestic servants, and above all, send their children exclusively to German kindergartens, day care centers, welfare institutions, summer camps, and schools. Is it unsurprising that relatively few individuals embraced the exhausting demands of this nationalist lifestyle?



Given the diversity of behaviors and attitudes that can be described under the rubric of “national indifference,” is the term too broad to be useful? The coherence of the category, I believe, is ultimately a function of nationalists’ own use of it to mobilize their potential recruits. Regardless of diverse motivations and interests, nationally indifferent individuals were denounced, boycotted, and rallied for the national cause as though they belonged to a common species. To nationalists in Habsburg Austria and its successor states, these frustrating individuals were known as „hermaphrodites,“ „amphibians,“ „renegades,“ „utraquists“ and „borderland souls.“ The Nazi regime anointed them the „in-between Strata,“ and „me-too Germans.“ And after World War II they were finally denounced and sometimes expelled as “nationally-labile opportunists,“ or more simply, as traitors to the nation.

National indifference is therefore fundamentally a negative and nationalist category. Indifference only existed as such in the eyes of the nationalist beholder. It was, to use Anderson’s formulation, an Imagined Non-Community. Ironically, however, this non-community was brought to life and institutionalized through nationalists’ own persistent efforts to eradicate it. As historians, this means we need to proceed with caution lest we fall into the trap of using nationalist categories of practice as categories of analysis. This does not mean shunning the category of national indifference altogether, however, any more than we avoid the terms nation or nationalism. Once imagined, indifference to nationalism was as real and meaningful a category as the nation itself, and had significant social, cultural, and political consequences.

Not only did national indifference become a perceived social and political phenomenon through nationalist activism, but it was gradually acknowledged and

confronted by local, regional, national, imperial, and even international institutions. After 1918, for example, guarantees of minority rights in international treaties and in East European constitutions immediately raised bitter disputes about who belonged to those minorities and should be entitled to claim such rights. National indifference quickly became the source of international diplomatic disputes as well as smoldering domestic conflicts. A 1922 agreement between Poland and Germany regarding Upper Silesia specified that German children there were to enjoy the “minority right” to attend German-language elementary schools, for example. But which children were German and which were Polish? Disputes over the national affiliation of individual children ultimately reached the League of Nations, which ruled in 1927 that any child who understood German well enough to follow instruction should be allowed to enroll in German elementary schools. A League of Nations commission headed by a Swiss pedagogical expert, who administered language tests to the children, decided “doubtful” cases. There was continued disgruntlement on all sides, however, when the tests continued in 1927-28, 1928-29, and 1929-30, and the new League of Nations World Court ultimately adjudicated the issue.<sup>xiv</sup> The court was forced to concede that neither nationality nor language abilities were transparent facts in Silesia. While Polish officials claimed that the contested children were “Germanized” Poles, German minority rights activists held that they were “Polonized” Germans.<sup>xv</sup> World Court judges rejected both claims, acknowledging widespread national and linguistic ambiguity in Silesia, and warning of the dangers of forcible national classification:

There is reason to believe that in the conditions which exist in Upper Silesia, a multitude of cases occur in which the question whether a person belongs to a

minority particularly of race or language does not clearly appear from the facts. Such an uncertainty might for example exist, as regards language, where either a person does not speak literary German or literary Polish, or where he knows and makes use of several languages, and as regards race, in the case of mixed marriages. If the authorities wish to verify or dispute the substance of a declaration by a person, it is very unlikely that in such cases they would be able to reach a result more neatly corresponding to the actual state of facts. Such a proceeding on the part of the authorities would, moreover, very easily assume in public opinion the aspect of a vexatious measure that would inflame political passions and would counteract the aims of pacification which are also at the basis of the stipulations concerning the protection of minorities.<sup>xvi</sup>

This is just one example of how national indifference gradually became far more than a nationalist dilemma: in an age of nationalizing states and international minority-rights protections, indifference to nation became a focal point of both domestic and diplomatic conflicts.

### **Hidden Indifference**

Paradoxically, nationalists both invented national indifference and obscured it. The exorcism of indifference from the historical record was remarkably successful. In the East European context, national indifference has long been effaced by the nationalist frameworks, narratives, and categories that dominate both historical analysis and the sources historians rely on: censuses that denied the existence of bilingualism, color-coded ethnic maps, sensationalist newspaper accounts that transformed drunken bar brawls and children's games into fierce battles for national survival.<sup>xvii</sup>

There are other practical challenges to studying an imagined non-community, however. Indifferent people rarely are well organized. Unlike nationalism, national indifference did not leave many concrete traces in state archives, since most are devoted precisely to documenting the history of nation-states. The exception that proves the rule is the archive of the Habsburg state itself; but this state too increasingly acknowledged and institutionalized the claims of nationalists in the late nineteenth century. National indifference was not memorialized with public monuments, or celebrated with festivals, costumes and songs. There was no Association for the Protection of National Hermaphrodites or Nonnational Peoples' Party. Attempts to create such parties, such as the Moravian *Mittelpartei* of great landowners at the turn of the century, ultimately failed.<sup>xviii</sup> Those institutions that explicitly claimed to transcend divisions of nationality or language in the late Austrian Empire, such as the Social Democratic Party, the nobility, the Catholic Church, the army, and the civil service, represented diverse constituencies and were unlikely to unite in defense of national indifference.

A wealth of recent research has demonstrated that Socialist and Communist authorities in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union even deserve considerable credit for the eradication of national indifference. Socialist policymakers strategically consolidated national communities in the twentieth century, often cutting them from whole cloth through practices of forcible classification, along with nationalizing linguistic, cultural, and education policies. In the long-run, they hoped to domesticate and transcend political nationalism by encouraging cultural nationalism.<sup>xix</sup> In the twentieth century, therefore, many supranational institutions were also increasingly nationalized, if not nationalist. It is

no coincidence, therefore, that national indifference appears most clearly at the moments that nationalists struggled to eliminate it.

As a result, it is extremely challenging to quantify indifference, much as we might like to know whether the “indifferent” constituted a significant mass or an exotic fringe group. The very systems devised for counting and classifying populations in the nineteenth century were shaped by nationalist assumptions and goals, with an eye to eliminating or obscuring indifference. Occasionally, there have been official efforts to track national indifference in East Central Europe, but these typically met considerable resistance. In one unusual concession to the nationally-indifferent population, in 1930 the Czechoslovak State Statistical Office proposed that citizens should be permitted to declare themselves “without nationality” (*bez národnosti*) or “of unknown nationality” (*národnost neznáma*) on the decennial census, just as it was possible to register one’s lack of religious affiliation. “Not all people have national feelings or consciousness, or the desire to belong to a specific national community,” officials in the Statistical Office conceded. But Czech nationalists harshly rejected this view, not least because of fears that it would strengthen Communist agitation. Activists in the Czech National Council, an umbrella organization for Czech voluntary associations and political parties, warned that allowing citizens to opt out of the nation on the census would “make it impossible to obtain a clear overview of the national composition of the state, wearing away at its borders.”<sup>xx</sup> Their viewpoint prevailed, and the indifferent were denied their chance to be counted. Instead, the Czechoslovak census law ratified in June 1930 included the most precise guidelines for national classification to date. “Nationality is determined based on maternal language. A different nationality, other than that which corresponds to an

individual's maternal language, may be declared only in cases in which the person counted does not speak his maternal language with his family or in his household and is also completely fluent in the language of the declared nationality," the law stipulated.<sup>xxi</sup>

Nonetheless, it is possible to use certain statistical measures to (imperfectly) estimate the number of nationally ambivalent people in a given time or place. In the Bohemian Lands for example, one demographer found that in Prague in 1900, 16.6% of schoolchildren were bilingual. In Budějovice/Budweis, the percentage of bilingual children reached 16.2%, in Liberec/Reichenberg, 16.1%, and in Most/Brüx, 22.4%.<sup>xxii</sup> These statistics must be used with caution, as there were considerable political pressures to underreport bilingualism. Bilingualism, moreover, has no intrinsic relationship to national indifference. Many of the early Czech nationalist "awakeners" were famously bilingual, for example.<sup>xxiii</sup> But by the late nineteenth century in Habsburg Central Europe, many nationalist education experts and pedagogues began to denounce bilingualism, especially among children, because they feared that individuals who spoke more than one language fluently could too easily be won over to the "wrong" national camp. Nationalists themselves therefore interpreted bilingualism as a symptom of national indifference. Shortly after the 1880 Austrian census asked citizens to report their "language of everyday use" for the first time, for example, Jan Kapras, a Czech Gymnasium teacher in Brno/Brünn, denounced what he called a disturbing "Moravian specialty" in child-rearing. Many Moravian parents apparently registered different languages for different children in their households, claiming that one child spoke German and another Czech if both languages were spoken at home. These parents, according to Kapras, either "don't know what a mother tongue is or they don't know the

educational principles which should be followed from a child's first breath." Such families ultimately produced children whose ambiguous loyalties threatened the very social order. He warned, "They educate children without any national individuality, who sway like reeds in the wind, who do not join any actual society at all, who trespass everywhere they go and are very dangerous to everyone. This is the class of linguistically neutral hermaphrodites, who sail to any wind, calling themselves Czech here, German there, and are educated to constantly go back on their word."<sup>xxiv</sup>

Fluctuations in census numbers offer another possible numerical measure of national lability: the loss of 400,000 German-speakers in the Bohemian Lands between 1910 and 1921 certainly suggests that side-switchers were not isolated eccentrics. In 1946, meanwhile, Ministry of Interior officials in Czechoslovakia estimated that at least 300,000 Czechs had "become German" during the Nazi occupation in the Bohemian Lands.<sup>xxv</sup> The so-called "Zwischenschicht" of nationally ambivalent people was a near-obsession of Nazi officials in the occupied Bohemian Lands. In 1940, for example, many German-speakers in the Protectorate were reluctant to register as Germans, whether out of ideological opposition to the Nazis or (more likely) a fear of being drafted into the Wehrmacht. "Through the proven work of National Socialist education there is no doubt that the offspring of today's indecisive, madly-behaving Volksdeutsche will become the most valuable members of the German citizenry," Protectorate officials reassured themselves.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Regardless of the numbers, national indifference was significant because of its extraordinary prominence in nationalist rhetoric and its role in shaping nationalist activism and institutions in East Central Europe. From the mid-nineteenth century until

after World War II, nationalists obsessed over the problem of national indifference and devised new (and often increasingly radical) strategies to eradicate it. They tried bribery and persuasion, seeking to awaken the loyalties of nationally indifferent citizens with generous offers of welfare benefits and calls to conscience. But when gentler methods failed, nationalists (and later state officials) resorted to more disciplinary tactics, including legal classification in interwar Czechoslovakia and in Nazi-occupied East Central Europe.

Indifference was central to the development of modern nationalism in East Central Europe not only because nationalists reacted strongly to it, but because it forced nationalist movements to define the boundaries of the national community more precisely. Was the nation a voluntary association of all those who believed themselves to be Czechs, Slovenes, Poles or Germans, or who learned to speak a language? Or was the nation defined by descent and blood? Was national belonging an expression of political commitments (for example to Nazism or to democracy?) Or of cultural and economic status? The answers to these questions were always contested, but often developed precisely through nationalist confrontations with indifferent populations. For example, Czech nationalists gradually adopted policies of forced inclusion or ascription in order to prevent indifferent or opportunist “Czechs” from joining the German camp. Under the Nazi occupation, German nationalists insisted that the German nation was defined by race or blood, at least rhetorically. In practice, however, Nazi officials also took liberal advantage of national indifference in East Central Europe, keeping the doors of the *Volksgemeinschaft* open to many non-Jews who professed to Nazi ideals. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that local German officials complained that many students in



German schools in the Protectorate as well as children enrolled in the Hitler Youth could not speak a word of German.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Broader historiographical and theoretical trends well outside the field of East Central European history have also conspired to efface national indifference. For the last twenty years, many social and cultural historians have focused precisely on the historical construction of identities, especially race, gender, sexuality, and nation. The concept of national indifference owes a great deal to this constructivist scholarship, since it rests on the assumption that national belonging is a state of mind rather than an “ethnic” or biological fact. Although the concept of national indifference rests on a constructivist foundation, however, constructivist approaches have also inadvertently obscured national indifference. In spite of work critiquing the more essentialist claims of identity politics, a basic assumption behind much of this work has been that identities (race, gender, nation) matter, that everyone has (and had) them, that they profoundly shape individual experience, political culture, and historical change.<sup>xxviii</sup> While historians have amply documented the ways in which gender, racial, and national categories have transformed and been subverted or destabilized over time, they have paid less attention to individuals who altogether refused or remained apathetic to the demands of modern identity politics. Identity matters so much in our current political and cultural landscape that it is truly challenging to imagine a time when it might not have mattered as much, or in the same ways.

In an essay entitled “Beyond Identity,” Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper have argued that we should eschew the term “identity” altogether. Identity, they suggest, is too torn between its “hard” and “soft” meanings to be useful. In its “hard” form

identity essentializes and reifies people by assuming they belong to rigidly defined groups. In its “soft” form, diluted by a string of qualifications (that it is “multiple,” “fluid,” “contested,” and “constructed”) identity is so ambiguous that it is meaningless. “If identity is everywhere, it is nowhere,” they maintain.<sup>xxix</sup> Many scholars have recently begun to substitute less reductionist terms, such as “loyalty,” “affiliation,” “identification,” “self-understanding,” and “subject position.” While this is a welcome step, we have not really escaped the basic assumption that everyone in East Central Europe had a national identity in the twentieth century, even if we are now more aware, as Robert Musil famously observed, that they might have boasted “a professional, a civic, a class, a geographic, a sexual, a conscious, an unconscious, and possibly even a private character to boot.”<sup>xxx</sup> Recent research on nationalism has thus focused more on the multiplicity of identities, or the ways in which national belonging intersected and overlapped with religious, local, or regional loyalties, than on indifference as such. Perhaps the explicit study of national indifference will help to finally loosen identity’s grip on our historical imagination.

As we seek to challenge nationalist narratives and categories, we should therefore avoid the pitfall of substituting one reductionist view of identity with another. In highlighting national indifference, we should not seek to replace the nation with something else, assuming that other forms of identification were more authentic, real, compelling or genuine than nationality. So-called national hermaphrodites were not really Catholics, regionalists, Jews, Austrian patriots, cosmopolitans, or Socialists. Nor should we be searching for an underlying hierarchy of identities, ranking religion, class,

race, or region above nation or gender, insisting that bilingual people were really Czechs, Germans were really Jews, the indifferent really Catholics or Socialists.

In addition to a post-1968 focus on identity and identity politics in the United States, indifference to nationalism has been effaced in part by the cultural and linguistic turns that have energized the study of nation, gender, and race as categories of analysis. In the 1960s and 70s, the working-class often played the starring role in social histories which sought to understand the relationship between class experience and political agency. Thatcherism and the fall of Communism largely displaced the working-class from its heroic role as the agents of History in the late 80s, and many historians borrowed new methodologies from literary studies. They shifted their focus from class and social experience to the broader realms of culture and politics. In some of the theory war's most divisive moments, practitioners of the new cultural history were accused of evacuating politics from history altogether. In fact, the appeal of textual analysis and Foucauldian theory to many social historians was precisely that it located politics and power everywhere, and not just in the words and actions of elites. The blossoming fields of gender and sexuality history, post-colonial history, and nationalism studies since the early 1990s are perhaps the most important products of this insight. It is not always easy to find women in the history of elite politics, for example; but, as Joan Scott famously noted, gender structures the political and social order itself. Gender is everywhere, even where women are scarce.<sup>xxxii</sup>

The nation, like gender and race, became ubiquitous thanks in part to the focus on textual sources. It was never a challenge to find nationalism in the halls of parliament or provincial diets of the late Austrian Empire and its successor states, but in the past twenty

years we have located nationalism in every nook and cranny of daily life and culture. Scholars have sniffed it out in literature, newspapers, and pamphlets, in maps, exhibitions, architecture, advertisements, films, postcards, schoolbooks, leaflets, child-rearing manuals, cookbooks, censuses, railroad stations, breweries, travel guides, calendars, almanacs, and matchbooks. Thanks to Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernst Gellner, and company, moreover, we have twenty years of research confirming that the nation is a product of modern politics, culture, and industry. But the very focus on the nation as a modern cultural construct has inadvertently reinforced the notion that every modern man, woman, and child is a card-carrying member of a national community. Too often, we remain imprisoned within nationalists' own discursive universe, analyzing the content of nationalist ideologies and cultures without questioning the extent to which those ideologies resonated.

Nationalism's apparent ubiquity in the realms of culture and discourse also has the tendency to reinforce totalitarian frameworks for understanding East Central European politics and society. The nation can start to appear to be a kind of behemoth, with tentacles reaching into every aspect of "private" life. The rise of nationalist and mass political movements in the late nineteenth century has often been linked by historians to the so-called "destruction" or "invasion" of the private sphere, beginning a slippery slope towards totalitarianism in nationalist, fascist, and communist forms. This narrative is based on an idealized vision of the liberal nineteenth century and earlier eras. So-called private life, after all, was always subject to various modes of reformist intervention or disciplinary regulation, whether social norms were created and enforced by local communities, religious authorities, patriarchal heads of household, employers

and guildsmen, or local elites. Nationalists (and other agents of mass political movements and modern states) simply sought to replace traditional moral authorities with their own political authority in the late nineteenth century. From a feminist perspective, narratives linking the rise of mass politics to the destruction or invasion of the private sphere are problematic, since they typically reflect a misplaced nostalgia for a world in which middle-class men reigned sovereign. They also overestimate the institutional power and resonance of nationalist rhetoric and viewpoints. Until 1918 in East Central Europe, nationalists typically did not have state power at their disposal (except at the local or provincial levels). They were therefore limited in their abilities to impose their worldviews on others. Even very powerful states are limited in their ability to mold populations at will, as revisionist scholarship on both Nazism and Communism has suggested over the past several decades. This literature has persuasively highlighted the limits to state power in the Soviet bloc and in Nazi Germany, the extent to which so-called “totalitarian” states sought to actively negotiate the consent of the governed, the role of denunciation and popular participation in policing, and the agency of citizens within both Socialist and fascist societies. Surprisingly, scholars have been slower to apply these insights to the history of nationalism and nationalizing states in the modern era.<sup>xxxii</sup>

From a contemporary perspective it is of course difficult to give up a view of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an exceptionally politicized and nationalized epoch. Standard accounts of European history hold that the early twentieth century was the age of ideology: of mass politics, utopian state planning, and the rise of interventionist welfare-states, all of which fed off of nationalism and were justified in the

name of the nation's collective health and welfare. Many historians have argued that after 1945, by contrast, politics itself were displaced by the market in the West, as the individualist ethics of capitalism, consumerism, domesticity, and human rights triumphed over collectivist ideals. Self-realization took place in the shopping mall and kitchen rather than in the union hall, nationalist association, or on the streets.<sup>xxxiii</sup> But perhaps it is worth considering whether this narrative actually overestimates the political consciousness and commitments of ordinary people in an earlier era, as well as the absence of ideology after the Second World War.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Historians tend to focus on politics and political commitments, even to assume them (rather than prove them), because the one thing uniting us methodologically is an interest in change. We operate on the assumption (or perhaps the hope) that change is a product of commitment and agency, particularly since it is no longer typically seen as a product of dialectic class conflict or anonymous forces of "modernization." The study of indifference hardly seems to get us anywhere- where is the agency in apathy? But the solution is not to resurrect imagined divides between the public and private. Nor should we draw the conclusion that non-elites were indifferent to nationalism because they were altogether indifferent to politics. Rather, it seems more productive to consider indifference as an explicitly or implicitly political subject position, to analyze inaction, evasion, and indifference as potential forms of agency.<sup>xxxv</sup> In East Central Europe in the twentieth century, I have found, it was precisely the tension between widespread apathy to nationalist demands and the frustration of committed nationalists that often drove and shaped the radicalization of nationalist projects in the Bohemian Lands, including the development of new practices of national classification, nationally-segregated welfare

systems, and policies of Germanization (and resistance to them) under Nazi rule. Increasingly, the assertion of national ambivalence, flexibility, or even indifference became a powerful form of agency, a political statement in a nationalized world.

Research on daily life under Nazism and Communism may offer some useful comparative insights on the potential political meanings and consequences of indifference. What should we make, for example, of the oft-cited appearance of “normality” in daily life during World War II in Germany? Few historians would argue that Germans living “normal” lives in 1943 were not implicated in a political system or relevant to its functioning.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Under what circumstances was seeming indifference to politics a form of accommodation to (and even support for) a political regime, and under what circumstances was indifference an act of active or passive resistance?<sup>xxxvii</sup> A conscious retreat into private life or an outward rejection of politics might well be interpreted as a political statement under any regime that demands unwavering allegiance. Indifference, like silence, is nonetheless challenging to interpret, and can only be understood situationally. It does not belong to the Left or the Right, to women or men, to cowardly collaborators or a heroic Resistance. It did not belong to religiously devout peasants, materialistic workers, or Jewish “cosmopolitans,” though such stereotypes and prejudices flourished in the nationalist press. It was not a mark of innocence. During and after World War II in Germany, for example, indifference may have signaled a desire for “normality” and privacy in the aftermath of Total War, ambivalence about Nazi policies, or a conscious or unconscious decision to turn a blind eye to the persecution of others while benefiting from the regime’s racial plunder.<sup>xxxviii</sup> The example of Nazi Germany is

extreme, but in twentieth century Europe, indifference to politics has rarely been entirely apolitical, even if it carried multiple possible political meanings.

This means resisting the temptation to either romanticize or pathologize nationally-indifferent populations. It would be easy to transform so-called hermaphrodites or amphibians from the enemies of nationalist pedagogues to the heroes of multicultural fantasies. But in a world of national hierarchies, identity cards, and national ascription, many were simply asserting their agency within the limits of their own power, talking back to nationalists in nationalist terms. The more states and nationalist movements obsessed over fixing and ranking national communities, making such affiliation the basis for citizenship and social rights, the more individuals stood to gain by being able to move between those communities easily.

Nationalists themselves were quick to judge indifference as a deep-rooted character flaw, a symptom of immorality, ignorance, dependence, backwardness, or irrationality. These tropes themselves represent an important chapter in the history of indifference. It was for this reason that Gustav Adolf Schulte-Schomberg, leader of the Nazi Liaison Office in the Reichsprotektor's Office in Prague, famously declared in 1942 "the child of one of the fanatical Czechs from the past twenty years is more valuable for Germanization than any of characterless lumps who changed his view point from one day to the next."<sup>xxxix</sup> Such rhetoric was loaded with liberal hierarchies of class and gender. Nationalists often accused working-class parents who sent their children to German schools of ruthlessly selling their children's souls to the highest bidder, for example, depicting such parents as selfish and shortsighted materialists. "Germans used their respectability and their economic power to entice our poor people with the status and



value of the German language. When that didn't work, they opened their purses. The Germans began to buy children. And however we may deny it, poverty triumphed among our spiritually plain comrades, and they succeeded," observed one Czech writer in the teacher's journal Menšinový učitel in 1913. "Now we can do nothing without a parade....From voluntary collections we've created a duty, and support for the poor has become support for notorious lazybones, self-interested parents, a traffic in children," he lamented.<sup>xl</sup>

Middle-class nationalists often insisted that they simply could not trust working-class parents to remain loyal to their authentic national communities, or to be honest about their nationalities. They were too easily pressured or hoodwinked by wealthy landlords and employers, or seduced by promises of Christmas gifts and clothing for their children. Both German and Czech nationalists shared these condescending views of their conationals, in spite of their polemical claims to represent popular will. Long after the end of Second World War, German expellees thus continued to remember German-speaking parents who sent their children to Czech schools in interwar Czechoslovakia as immoral opportunists or as victims of economic pressure. Anton David, a former Sudeten German Party leader in Lázně Kynžvart/Bad Königswart recalled in a 1958 report that a Czech minority school had been erected in his town in 1927. Half of the children who attended the school were German, he insisted, "and came partly from asocial families or supporters of Communism. The children were extravagantly provided for by the Czechs, got all their school supplies for free, clothing and a big Christmas gift. Since the parents also got financial support, more and more children registered, until there were twenty."<sup>xli</sup>

These narratives built on long-standing liberal views of workers and children as

dependent and immature populations requiring protection and supervision. The trope of the immoral, dependent, nationally indifferent parent served, in turn, to justify disciplinary practices of forcible national classification. Some citizens, in this view, were incapable of remaining true to their authentic national origins. Decisions about national belonging were therefore best entrusted to more rational and objective “experts,” like teachers, census-takers, judges, and other state officials. By the mid-1930s both the German Social Democrats and the Sudeten German Party alike in Czechoslovakia had created proposals for mandatory national cadastres, which would have required citizens to register a single, official nationality, often based on “objective characteristics” or “maternal language.”<sup>xlii</sup>

Similar gender and class hierarchies permeated nationalist debates about the role of women and mothers in the nationalist struggle. On the one hand, German and Czech child welfare experts and educators elevated the role of women as national guardians in the home. They charged women with the holy duty of protecting their children from the threat of Germanization or Czechification by their nannies, playmates, or family members. Good German mothers were to sing their children German lullabies, feed them German foods, send them to German kindergartens, read them German fairy tales (and breast feed, of course). But nationalist activists also constantly betrayed a profound distrust of women’s national loyalties, and promoted strategies for nationalizing children outside the family through collective education, in order to counter a perceived menace of national indifference at home.

In 1911, for example, Theodor Altschul, a leading Austrian official for public health, proposed that the German Provincial Commission for Child Welfare in Bohemia

recruit “trustworthy women” to take in German foundlings from the industrial regions of Northern Bohemia and Prague, in order to prevent the “frequent denationalization of foundlings with German mothers through the emergency accommodation of children of German descent with Czech foster parents.”<sup>xliii</sup> The problem was that such “trustworthy women” were in short supply. Some German-speaking foster parents even contributed to the denationalization of orphans, German nationalists complained. The Bund der Deutschen lamented: “Where could we find the degree of understanding which we required, when a strictly national upbringing was a near miracle even among our own erstwhile national comrades?”<sup>xliv</sup> Activists in the German nationalist association Südmark shared these concerns. Foster parents, they argued, “often fail for the national purpose, or are at the very least insufficient. And it is around this end that all of child-rearing should be oriented.” Nationalist child welfare activists therefore came to see collective education in orphanages and orphan colonies as an attractive alternative to family placement. The Südmark concluded in 1918, “Institutions which can take in a greater number of heads and be run in a unified nationalist spirit are necessary, so that völkisch concerns are not neglected.”<sup>xlv</sup>

Ultimately, nationalist pedagogical and child welfare activists never fully trusted working-class mothers to cultivate children’s national loyalties properly. They therefore sought to supercede the authority of parents, to guarantee that children were not “lost” to the national community due to parents’ persistent indifference to nationalist priorities. In this spirit, German and Czech child welfare activists in the Bohemian Lands constructed an ambitious network of nationally-segregated institutions for child care and welfare that

supported working mothers and challenged the very ideal of the family as the preferred setting for the education and socialization of children.<sup>xlvi</sup>

### **Transnational Indifference**

Transnational history has recently captured the imagination of many historians of Modern Europe and the United States, including East Central Europe. The rise of transnational history among Europeanists reflects current political concerns about globalization, imperialism, and the expansion of international forms of governance, as well as a genuine desire to transcend the limitations of national histories. How does the concept of national indifference intersect with or complicate the theoretical agenda of transnational history?

Transnationality seems to have defined the modern history of Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been an ample source of migrants and refugees, a source of raw materials and a market for European goods, occupied by several different regimes, and part of several different empires and states. Countless individuals who lived between Germany and Russia spoke more than one language, were citizens of more than one state, and identified with more than one national community over the course of their own lifetimes. Many historians of East Central Europe have therefore long been thinking transnationally and comparatively about topics such as empire, borderlands, occupations, and ethnic cleansing. Transnational history also seems to offer the seductive possibility of writing about something *other* than nationalism- the ideas, people, goods, religious and political movements, and international organizations that circulated in Eastern Europe with little attention to the borders of nation-states. In this respect, it seems like a welcome alternative to the concept

of national indifference. After all, while claiming to subvert or challenge national categories, national indifference ultimately puts the nation right back at the center of the agenda, albeit in a negative form. Transnational history, by contrast, appears to offer a new set of thematic concerns and a new window on old concerns.

In fact, the concept of national indifference is a necessary starting-point or baseline for writing productive transnational histories. Challenging the nationalist assumptions that shape the history and memory of Europe will require more than simply changing scale, or seeking out institutions, identities, or processes that appear to float above or below or across the borders of nation-states (migration, trade, empire-building, war and occupation, tourism, religion, localism, regionalism, hybridity, and cosmopolitanism, to name a few). It would be extremely difficult to write transnational histories without reifying the nation, unless we first take national indifference seriously.

Historians of Germany, for example, are increasingly interested in the history of Germany's fraught relations with Eastern Europe and in the history of Germans in the East. This *Drang nach Osten* in German historiography has several sources. In addition to a broader interest in transnational history, it reflects efforts to situate the Holocaust in the context of radicalization on the eastern front during the Second World War. Thanks to the broader influence of colonial and post-colonial studies, Germanists have also begun to confront Germany's more long-term "civilizing" and imperialist agendas in East Central Europe. Looking eastward has produced fresh perspectives on the transnational dimensions of German history, the shifting contours of German nationalism and citizenship, and the origins and dynamics of Nazi racial politics. But the turn eastward also contains several potential pitfalls. Specifically, it would be a mistake to assume that

German-speakers in East Central Europe 1) were a bounded, clearly-identified group 2) had a common German interest 3) necessarily oppressed or dominated their Slavic neighbors and 4) necessarily saw themselves as somehow different from those neighbors. We cannot write history from multiple “sides,” without questioning how those “sides” were first constituted and defined. We cannot speak of German-Slav relations without first problematizing the question of who was a German and who was a Slav.<sup>xlvii</sup>

An interest in transnational history has also inspired a revival of diplomatic and international history, much of which has helpfully situated nationalism and nation-states in their broader global context, and shifted historians’ focus away from nation-states and toward the history of international organizations and NGOs.<sup>xlviii</sup> Here too, however, expanding the scale of historical analysis (by multiplying countries) carries the risk of reifying nation-states as unitary agents and/or homogenizing their populations. It also threatens to push us away from the realms of social and cultural history and everyday life, and back to the history of elite politics and statecraft, simply because of the practical challenges of doing deep historical research in multiple languages and contexts.

The concept of national indifference could nonetheless contribute to the broader project of writing transnational history. While national indifference is particularly relevant in the East Central European context it may also be useful in other regions and fields that explore movement across borders, particularly migration studies and the history of colonialism. Debates about the experiences of immigrants, for example, might be reconceptualized using the concept of national indifference rather than terms such as “assimilation,” “acculturation,” or “hybridity” that assume preexisting national and cultural loyalties and groups. If we abandon the assumption that people (necessarily) had

authentic nationalities of origin, it is no longer obvious that migration or displacement entails the exchange of one national culture or affiliation for another- that Poles or Jews became “Americanized,” that Italians, Spanish, and Algerians “Frenchified” or Turks “Germanized.” This is not to deny that people’s lifestyles often changed profoundly when displaced into new social and cultural contexts, but did they always understand those changes in specifically national terms?

Recent work on post-World War II displacement and on refugees has focused precisely on the ways in which experiences of displacement actually furthered nationalization, sometimes through official categorization by international authorities and humanitarian workers, who organized refugees along national lines in order to facilitate repatriation and avoid conflicts.<sup>xlix</sup> Hannah Arendt observed in The Origins of Totalitarianism that “not a single group of refugees or Displaced Persons has failed to develop a fierce, violent, group consciousness and to clamor for rights as- and only as- Poles or Jews or Germans, etc.”<sup>l</sup> These DPs were responding to their own experiences of persecution or displacement during World War II as well as the legal structures created by the Allies after the war. The right to asylum, to repatriate or resettle abroad, and to food rations and housing were all distributed hierarchically based on nationality. As Arendt herself famously noted, so-called human rights were really only national rights in disguise. “The conception of human rights, based upon the assumed existence of human beings as such, broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships- except that they were still human,” she maintained.<sup>li</sup> National indeterminacy and fluidity did not disappear in Europe’s DP camps, however, as many

refugees deliberately obscured or falsified their nationality in order to escape repatriation to the Soviet Union, evade imprisonment for collaboration or desertion, or simply to gain a favored status for emigration, housing, or food rations.

Meanwhile, when faced with unidentified displaced children after World War II, international humanitarian workers conducted extensive psychological investigations in order to classify the children according to their “correct” nationality. One UN social worker elaborated in a 1946 report, “The question of nationality is most perplexing in the cases of children coming from Silesia because of the mixed German and Polish population in that area before the war. In the absence of identity papers less dependable factors must be relied upon in determining nationality... Our most skillful interviewers report the children’s psychological reactions to questions about nationality are significant. The unquestionably German child usually replies freely and promptly. The response of the non-German child, though he says he is German, is often characterized by embarrassment, hesitation, confusion, or frantic appeal to a member of the staff for help in making reply.”<sup>lii</sup> No one considered the possibility that a Silesian child might have been genuinely confused about his or her national affiliation. The history of displacement may therefore be another chapter in the history of national indifference (and its eradication through classification) in twentieth-century Europe.

National indifference has a long and colorful history in modern Europe. It appeared on the historical scene as an imagined non-Community in the mid-nineteenth century, called into being by nationalists themselves through their own paranoia. Like the imagined community of the nation, the imagined non-community of the nationally indifferent is best understood in its local contexts, since both its form and meaning



transformed dramatically across time and space. Indifference has its own history. But national indifference may ultimately be most productive as a starting-point for historical research rather than as something requiring explanation. Why does indifference need to be explained? The burden of proof should be laid instead on those historians who claim that people were nationalist. Rather than assuming that people in Europe belonged to nations, perhaps we should simply assume indifference (until proven otherwise), and investigate how and why people allied themselves politically and socially from the ground up. Indifference thus offers us a way of problematizing preconceived relationships between individual subjectivity and collective affiliation. It may also help social historians to write the political history of individuals who seem to be on the margins of political life. In Kate Brown's words, "This is the sad fact; some people live hardly leaving a trace, yet that does not mean that they had no historical importance or political power."<sup>liii</sup> Indifference, far from being the binary opposite of political engagement, was often understood as a political statement and had important political and social consequences. As historians, we cannot be indifferent to the nation-state and its impact on modern history; but we can attempt to capture those moments when its grip on both the individual and society was less than absolute. In the process, perhaps we can finally rescue the citizens of Habsburg Central Europe from the "prison of nations" once and for all.

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<sup>i</sup> Diane Lewis “Anthropology and Colonialism,” Current Anthropology, 14 (5) 1973, 581-602. For an early critique of anthropology’s relationship to colonialism, see Talal Asad, ed. Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (New York: 1973).

<sup>ii</sup> This phrase comes from Duara’s 1996 book, Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China (Chicago, 1996)

<sup>iii</sup> Gary Cohen, The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914 (Princeton, 1981).

<sup>iv</sup> On the theoretical concerns of transnationalism, see Jürgen Osterhammel and Sebastian Conrad, eds. Das Kaiserreich Transnational: Deutschland in der Welt, 1871-1914 (Göttingen, 2004); Thomas Bender, ed. Rethinking America in a Global Age (Berkeley, 2002); Phillip Ther, “Beyond the Nation. The Relational Basis of a Comparative History of Germany and Europe,” Central European History 36 (2003): 45-74; Ute Frevert, “Europeanizing Germany’s Twentieth Century,” History and Memory: Studies in Representation of the Past 17, nr. 1 (Fall 2005), 87-116; Patricia Clavin, “Defining Transnationalism,” Contemporary European History, 14 (2005), 421-39; David Blackbourn, “Europeanizing German History: A Comment,” Bulletin of the German Historical Institute 36 (Spring 2005), 25-32.

<sup>v</sup> For a critique of the “ethnicist” presumptions dominating the history of East Central Europe, see Jeremy King, “The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond” in Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present (Purdue, 2001), 112-152.

<sup>vi</sup> Rogers Brubaker, Ethnicity Without Groups (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 12.

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<sup>vii</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>viii</sup> See for example Cohen, The Politics of Ethnic Survival; Jeremy King, Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948 (Princeton, 2003); Eagle Glassheim, Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy (Cambridge, MA, 2005); Chad Bryant, Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism (Cambridge, MA, 2007); Pieter Judson, Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria (Cambridge, MA, 2007); Robert Luft, "Nationale Utraquisten in Böhmen: zur Problematik nationaler Zwischenstellungen am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts," in Allemands, Juifs et Tchèques a Prague, 1890-1924, ed. Maurice Godé, et. al. (Montpellier, 1994), 37-54; Timothy Snyder, The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999 (New Haven, 2003); Theodora Dragostinova, „Speaking National: Nationalizing the Greeks of Bulgaria,“ Slavic Review 67 (Spring 2008), 154-181; Tatjana Liechtenstein, "Making Jews at Home: Zionism and the Construction of Jewish Nationality in Interwar Czechoslovakia," East European Jewish Affairs 36 (June 2006), 49-71; Tara Zahra, Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-48 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

<sup>ix</sup> King, Budweisers, 114-53.

<sup>x</sup> See Tara Zahra, "The 'Minority Problem' and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands," Contemporary European History 17 (May 2006), 117-65.

<sup>xi</sup> Hugo Heller, Die Erziehung zu deutschen Wesen (Prague, 1936).

<sup>xii</sup> King, Budweisers, 164-66.

<sup>xiii</sup> Josef Hůrský, Zjistování národnosti (Prague, 1947), 92-94.

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<sup>xiv</sup> For the details of the case, see Hudson, Manley O. ed. World Court Reports. A Collection of the Judgments, Orders and Opinions of the Permanent Court of International Justice. vol. 2, 1927-1932 (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1935), 268-320, 690-91.

<sup>xv</sup> Hudson, World Court Reports, 292.

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid. For more on the issue of Silesian schools, see Carol Fink, Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Christian Raitz von Frenzt, A Lesson Forgotten: Minority Protection under the League of Nations: the Case of the German Minority in Poland (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Georges Kaeckenbeeck, The International Experiment of Upper Silesia: A Study in the Working of the Upper Silesian Settlement (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942).

<sup>xvii</sup> See Judson, Guardians of the Nation, esp. 1-18.

<sup>xviii</sup> On the Mittelpartei in Moravia, Robert R. Luft, "Die Mittelpartei des mährischen Grossgrundbesites 1879-1918," in. Ferdinand Seibt, ed., Die Chance der Verständigung: Absichten und Ansätze zu übernationaler Zusammenarbeit in den böhmischen Ländern 1848-1918 (Munich: Collegium Carolinum, 1987), 218-36.

<sup>xix</sup> See Terry Martin, Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-39 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Rogers Brubaker, Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 23-55; Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic

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Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53 (Summer 1994), 414-452. For the classic history of Austro-marxism, see Hans Mommsen, Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage im habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat (Vienna, 1963).

<sup>xx</sup> Sčítání lidu 1930, Memo from the NŘČ to the State Statistical Office and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, 16 May 1930, carton 183, Národní rada česká, Národní archiv (NA).

<sup>xxi</sup> Vládní nařízení ze dne 26 června 1930 o sčítání lidu v roce 1930, Sbíрка zákonů a nařízení států československého (Prague, Státní nakladatelství, 1930), 480.

<sup>xxii</sup> Heinrich Rauchberg, Der nationale Besitzstand in Böhmen (Leipzig, 1905), 435.

<sup>xxiii</sup> On early Czech nationalists, see Peter Bugge, “Czech Nation-Building, National Self-Perception and Politics, 1780–1914,” PhD diss., University of Aarhus, 1994.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Jan Kapras, Řeč matešská orgánem školy obecné a znakem národnosti (Prague, 1883), 9-10.

<sup>xxv</sup> Benjamin Frommer, National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia (Cambridge, 2005), 18.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Generalreferat für politische Angelegenheiten, Prague, 12 August 1939. carton 520, Úřad říšského protektora, NA.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Zahra, Kidnapped Souls, 193.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Brubaker, Ethnicity without Groups, 3.

<sup>xxix</sup> Rogers Brubaker and Fred Cooper, “Beyond Identity,” Theory and Society 29 (February 2000), 1-47, quotation, 1.

<sup>xxx</sup> Robert Musil, The Man Without Qualities trans. Sophie Wilkins (New York, 1995), 30.

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," American Historical Review 91, No. 5 (December 1986), 1053-75.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> For a recent reflection on revisionism in Soviet historiography, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, Stalinism: New Directions (Routledge, 2000); Fitzpatrick, „Revisionism in Soviet History," History and Theory 46 (December 2007), 77-91. Some examples of this approach in the historiography of Nazi Germany include Robert Gellately, Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany (Oxford, 2000); Delev Peukert, Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

<sup>xxxiiii</sup> On the triumph of individualism in postwar West European politics and human rights activism, see Tony Judt, Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945 (New York, 2005), 564-65; Paul Lauren, The Evolution of International Human Rights (Philadelphia, 1996); Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933-1950," The Historical Journal 47, nr. 2 (2004), 386-88; A.W. Brian Simpson, Human Rights and the End of Empire: Britain and the Genesis of the European Convention (Oxford, 2001), 157-220; Elizabeth Borgwardt, A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 59; Mark Mazower, Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century (New York, 1998), 191.

<sup>xxxv</sup> For an argument contesting the apolitical nature of postwar Europe, see Mary Nolan, "Utopian Visions in a Post Utopian Era: Human Rights, Americanism, Market Fundamentalism," Keynote Address for conference on "Utopia, Gender, and Human Rights," Vienna, December 12, 2007.

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<sup>xxxv</sup> For reflections on the agency exercised by peasants through evasion or inaction see James Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven, 1987).

<sup>xxxvi</sup> On “normality” and Nazism, see Ian Kershaw, “‘Normality’ and Genocide: The Problem of Historicization,” in The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation (London, 1993); Detlev Peukert, Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life (New Haven, 1987); Elizabeth Harvey, Women in the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization (New Haven, 2003).

<sup>xxxvii</sup> See Klaus Michel Mallman and Gerhard Paul, "Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society, and Resistance," in Nazism and German Society. ed. David Crew (New York, 1994); Robert Gellately, Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>xxxviii</sup> On a desire for “normality” after World War II, see Richard Bessel and Dirk Schuman, eds. Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s (New York: Cambridge University Press), 2003.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Letter from Schomberg to Reinhard Heydrich, 11 March 1942, in Miroslav Kárný et al., eds., Deutsche Politik im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren unter Reinhard Heydrich, 1941–42 (Berlin, 1997) 242-44.

<sup>xl</sup> “Stíny menšin,” Menšinový učitel (1913-14), 42. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>xli</sup> Ost Doc. 20/29, Anton David, Bad Königswart, 1 August 1960, Bundesarchiv Bayreuth.

<sup>xlii</sup> Zahra, Kidnapped Souls, 163.

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<sup>xliii</sup> “Vortrag, gehalten am I. Delegiertentage von K.K. Obersanitätsra MUDr. Theodor Altschul,” Jahrbuch der Deutschen Jugendfürsorge in Böhmen (1911), 147.

<sup>xliv</sup> “Dr. Karl Schücker Waisenheim des Bundes der Deutschen in Böhmen,” Jahrbuch der Deutschen Jugendfürsorge in Böhmen 2 (1909), 21.

<sup>xlv</sup> “Deutschvölkische Waisenhäuser und Kriegswaisenfürsorge,” Mittlung des Vereins Südmark (1918), 156.

<sup>xlvi</sup> See Zahra, Kidnapped Souls, 49-106.

<sup>xlvii</sup> For more on the turn eastward in German history, see Tara Zahra, Looking East: East Central European Borderlands in German History and Historiography,” History Compass 3 (2005) EU 175, 1-23

<sup>xlviii</sup> See for example Matthew Connelly, Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population (Cambridge, MA, 2008); James Vernon, Hunger: A Modern History (Cambridge, MA, 2007); Erez Manela, The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>xlix</sup> For more on the nationalization of Displaced Persons and refugees, see Gerard Daniel Cohen, “The Politics of Recognition: Jewish Refugees in Relief Policies and Human Rights Debates, 1945-50,” Immigrants and Minorities 24, nr. 2 (July 2006), 125-43; Dan Diner, “Elemente des Subjektwerdung: Jüdische DPs in historischen Kontext,” Jahrbuch zur Geschichte und Wirkung des Holocaust (1997), 229-48; Pamela Ballinger, “Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship: Repatriation and the Definition of National Identity after World War II,” Comparative Studies in Society and History 49 (2007): 713-41; Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum Heimatlösen Ausländer. Die Displaced



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Persons in Westdeutschland 1945-51 (Göttingen, 1985); Zeev W. Mankowitz, Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany (New York, 2002); Lisa Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania (Chicago, 1995); Jessica Rheinisch, “‘We shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation’: UNNRA, Internationalism, and National Reconstruction in Poland,” Journal of Contemporary History 43 (July 2008), 451-76.

<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York, 1951), 292.

<sup>ii</sup> Arendt, Origins, 299.

<sup>iii</sup> Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Joseph’s Kinderheim, 14 October 1946, File 16, S-0437- 0013, United Nations Archive; See also W.C. Huyssoon, “Who is this Child,” Sample of an Interview with an Unaccompanied Child, File 11, S-0437- 0013, United Nations Archive.

<sup>liii</sup> Kate Brown, A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 13.