Abstracts of papers for the international conference

Main papers

MIROSLAV SABOL – ĽUDOVÍT HALLON – ANNA FALISOVÁ
Restoration of the Slovak economy after the Second World War

The Czechoslovak economy found itself in a troubled situation at the end of the war: the currency undermined by inflation, and the state not having a stockpile of valuable currencies for foreign trade to bring in the raw materials required for domestic industry, in the main reliant on their import. Before the war, Czechoslovakia as a whole had only been self-sufficient in coal mining, and Slovakia not even in that. The state debt became a long-term burden. Assets in finance and banking were held in bad debts in the German Reich, and all that remained of the primary sector and energy industry was degraded land, destroyed forest, looted and flooded mines, neglected mining equipment, and worn-out and broken power plants and gas plants. As far as secondary industry was concerned, the Czechoslovak economy was struggling with destroyed factories, machinery having been towed away, the depletion of raw materials and supplies, and neglected investments. The singular focus of wartime industry had to be transformed into peacetime production. As for transport, there was a catastrophic shortage of locomotives, wagons, and cars, destroyed tunnels and bridges and neglected roads had to be repaired, and the lack of fuel and coal was a massive issue. Moreover, damage was caused to the labour market by frail workers with a poor work ethic and a bloated administrative apparatus. Of course, Slovak territory had not been evenly affected by the war as a whole and had not been destroyed by the war as much as had the European part of the Soviet Union, Poland, or Yugoslavia. Some parts of Kysuce, Orava, Liptov, and mainly eastern Slovakia, with its direct consequences of wartime operations there, might have been comparable to some of the areas destroyed in those states mentioned. The extent of damage to industry, to transport, and to residential and farm buildings in eastern Slovakia clearly showed that this was the area of Czechoslovakia affected the most during the war. The Battle of Dukla Pass was one of many large offensive operations under the strategic direction of the Soviet army against the defending fascist troops in Europe. It is known that 85% of Czechoslovakia's industrial capacity was concentrated in Czech regions, and since the war caused more serious damage in Slovakia, the industrial base of the Czechoslovak economy remained relatively intact. Czechoslovakia was therefore one of only a few frontline states that was able to reconstruct its war-torn country on its own, and it was able to complete the post-war consolidation of its economy faster than its neighbours.

BOHUMIL JIROUŠEK
Normalization as a way of solving the crisis. Oldřich Říha as the Normalization Director of the Institute of Czechoslovak and World History of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences

With hindsight, post-crisis recovery can be evaluated both positively in history and negatively, depending on the events that we term "crisis" and any further consideration in the future. Post-crisis recovery is sometimes spoken of in surprising contexts, which in our own history (leaving aside the creation of the protectorate) primarily involves the normalization/consolidation of the early 1970s, on which the Czech and Slovak views of post-August events again differ. One other way of looking at the communist consolidation of relations is through the looking glass of events at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. This paper specifically considers transformations in the historical sciences. Historian Oldřich Říha (1911–1974) was a prominent figure in Czech science during the era of Marxism-Leninism. In the 1950s, he was Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and History at Charles' University, later serving as Head of the Department of General History at the reunified Faculty of Arts, Charles' University. In 1970, however, he was entrusted, as an external director, with the management of the newly-established Institute of Czechoslovak and World History at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The paper looks at how – like many other social-science institutions at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences after the August occupation of Warsaw-Pact forces (1968) – the Institute of History of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences became part of the new Institute of Czechoslovak and World History at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences at the instigation of Oldřich Říha, an established communist and member-correspondent of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, by developing the concept of a new institute and handling personnel issues in line with the requirements of the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and the "statutory measures" of the time. For this work, Oldřich Říha was awarded the highest scientific rank of the time – the position of academic at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences – shortly before his death.

PÉTER BENCSIK
A double fresh start: Hungarian–Czechoslovak relations in and after 1956
Although a 'friendship treaty' was signed between Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1949, this relation was frozen during the Stalin era, with sporadic economic and minimal state security cooperation only. The first summit took place on the eve of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, in early 1956. Both countries have undergone a process of destalinisation, which has also affected relations between them. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 disrupted the cooperation that had just begun. On the Czechoslovak side, a number of military, state security and propaganda measures were taken to counter the challenges posed by the revolution. After the Soviet military intervention and the formation of the Kádár government, relations had to be restarted. The very first foreign government delegation to arrive in Hungary after the suppression of the revolution was a Czechoslovak one led by Viliam Široký. Czechoslovakia played a major role in helping the Kádár government. As part of this, credit and commodity aid, including substantial amounts of electricity, coal, state security operational equipment, weapons and truncheons, were sent to Hungary. In addition, the Czechoslovak side – backing the Soviets in doing so – interfered in Hungarian domestic politics, because of which Kádár shifted steadily to the left. Based on extensive archival research in Prague, Bratislava and Budapest, the presentation will also cover the evolution of the disputes between the two countries, including the ideas of building hydroelectric power plants on the Danube and the problems of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia.

ROBERT SCHMIDTCHEN
From Ruins to Structures: The Equalisation of Burdens and the Stabilization of the Federal Republic (1946–1960)
After the collapse of the Nazi state, Germans were faced with the ruins of Nazi rule in more ways than one: the Reich had been defeated militarily and politically destroyed, its cities, infrastructure, and industries lay in ruins. The already tense social situation was further exacerbated by the nearly eight million refugees and displaced persons in the federal territory by 1949. All in all, the young Federal Republic faced a gigantic political and social challenge, the successful mastery of which directly determined its internal legitimacy and stabilization. As early as the summer of 1948, in connection with the currency reform, the Western occupying powers had tasked the Germans with designing and implementing a system of equalization of burdens by the end of the year. However, it was not until four years later that the Federal Republic created the legal basis for this task with the Law on Equalisation of Burdens. The matter was highly political: in terms of foreign policy, the Federal Republic was striving for sovereignty, and both the London Debt Conference on reparations and the Luxembourg Agreement on compensation for Nazi injustices against Jewish victims were of central importance in this regard. The fact that Jewish Germans had not been taken into account in the Equalisation of Burdens legislation made legal amendments necessary. In terms of domestic policy, a procedure for implementing burden sharing had to be found. In this context, the question arose as to eligibility, compensation methods, and financing for the compensation of assets lost as a result of the war. This was linked to expectations and opinions, not least domestic political views, which in turn were partly based on the foreign policy approach of the Adenauer government.
This article deals with burden of sharing a crisis-mitigating and crisis-preventing social policy measure. To this end, it examines its origins, implementation, and impact in the context of German history between 1946 and 1960.

PAVEL FOUSEK
The Emergence and Development of the West German Police after the Second World War
This paper deals with the issue of the formation of emergency services within the European context in the twentieth century. Specifically, it concerns the formation of the German police in the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War. The German police were complicit in Nazi crimes during the Second World War, and it was therefore necessary for the victorious powers administering German territory after the war to build this vital component of the state from the ground up, but this did not entirely succeed – each of the occupying powers approached the task differently. While in the Western occupation zones the police were often officers associated with the Nazi regime, in the Soviet occupation zone, by contrast, almost all police officers serving in the police force before 8th of May 1945 were dismissed. This was also the case in the newly established German states – the democratic Federal Republic of Germany and the communist German Democratic Republic. The emerging Cold War, coupled with the conflict on the Korean peninsula, played a crucial role. Part of the paper is to present the functioning of the East German police. The aim of the paper is to present the Federal Police in the time span from its inception to the 1970s. This time period includes three key phases in the development of the West German police – its formation in the post-war era, the 1960s associated with society-wide liberalization in the Federal Republic, and the 1970s in response to the rise of terrorism and the creation of special police unit GSG 9.

MARCELA HENNLICHOVÁ

The Energy Crisis as an Impetus for Innovation or a Return to Sustainability and Perhaps Even the Thinking of Our Ancestors?

The energy crisis has been a frequently discussed topic in recent years, whether in public discourse, media discourse or academic discourse. While some cases have already been intensively studied by academics – such as the recent 2022–2023 crisis or the oil crises and their global repercussions of the 1970s – other cases have not received nearly as much attention. For example, the energy crisis, or the coal crisis during the First World War, is a neglected topic in this regard. When France was hit by this crisis in late 1915–1916 and 1917–1918, various narratives gradually began to emerge in French media discourse that not only sought to identify the culprit for the hardship, but also sought to find solutions. In this respect, appeals for the introduction of a unified French energy policy and its sustainable direction in the future were prevalent. These narratives called, among other things, for the implementation of innovation in national energy policy. This paper aims to demonstrate – using the French example – that the crisis could not only serve as an impetus for innovation, but equally as an appeal for a return to sustainability and, in a way, to the thinking of our ancestors, in the sense of a return to renewable resources. The paper will show not only what specific narratives emerged in the French press in relation to the energy crisis, but also whether they had any pragmatic impact on the resulting developments, and in what ways and to what extent the crisis thus served as a catalyst for change in the post-war French energy policy.

VIKTÓRIA BÁBA

Postwar Traces: Hungarian Internees in France and the Recovery of Memory through Oral Testimonies and Press Narratives

This paper explores the postwar memory of Hungarian civilians – many of whom had emigrated to France through other Central European countries – and volunteers, who fought in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War and were subsequently interned in French camps between 1939 and 1942. The research examines how these experiences of exile, imprisonment and political marginalisation were later remembered, represented, and transmitted within Hungarian society, drawing on oral testimonies and Hungarian journalistic narratives from the postwar decades. The present study deviates from the conventional approach of providing a reconstruction of daily life in the internment camps. Instead, it focuses on the long-term aftermath of internment, with a particular emphasis on the manner in which memory functioned as a form of recovery, both on a personal and a collective level.

The study considers the ways in which internees' voices re-emerged in postwar public discourse, particularly through commemorative articles, interviews, and grassroots oral history initiatives. The presentation highlights how memory served to restore dignity, affirm political identity, and reclaim a marginalised chapter of Central European history.

The study, which lies at the nexus of memory studies, political history, and post-crisis reconstruction, contributes to our understanding of how societies cope with the effects of exile, repression and conflict. Furthermore, it reflects on the transnational aspect of rehabilitation, demonstrating how the historical connections between Hungary, France and Spain shaped the trajectories and memories of Hungarian internees across borders.

KRISZTIÁN BENE

From Axis Prisoners to French Soldiers. Central European Volunteers in the French Foreign Legion after WWII

The post-World War II period in Central Europe witnessed profound political dislocation, personal disillusionment, and humanitarian crisis. One of the lesser-known responses to this situation was the enlistment of thousands of Central European men – former Axis soldiers, displaced persons, or political outcasts – into the French Foreign Legion. This paper examines the recruitment, deployment, and post-service integration of these men between 1945 and 1954, highlighting their role in France's military recovery and postcolonial engagement, especially in Indochina.

The French Foreign Legion, weakened by wartime losses, urgently sought new manpower for its colonial conflicts. France turned to Central Europe, establishing recruitment posts and targeting German, Hungarian, Austrian, Czech, Polish and other former POWs, many of whom were offered a stark choice: prison or military service. This presentation analyses the socio-political circumstances behind this phenomenon, the institutional mechanisms that facilitated it, and the consequences for both the individuals and the Legion. Special attention is paid to the Indochina War, where Legionnaires from Central Europe made up a significant portion of France's expeditionary force.

Post-conflict recovery is explored from multiple angles: the transformation of stigmatized or stateless individuals into soldiers under a new identity; the utilization of foreign manpower in rebuilding French military capacity; and the challenges faced by veterans seeking reintegration – whether in France, where their war was largely unpopular, or in their home countries, where return often meant persecution. The paper sheds light on this complex aspect of post-crisis realignment, demonstrating how states and individuals redefined loyalties, identities, and futures amid the ruins of war.

JONATHAN PARKER

Establishing the Czechoslovak Security Services in Slovakia and the Struggle for a Unitary State, 1918–1924

The proposed paper examines the difficulties that the Czechoslovak government encountered in establishing a functioning security service (i.e. State police and gendarmerie) in Slovakia in the wake of the republic's founding. It shows that despite the preferences of the government, officials were compelled to adopt a pragmatically differentiating approach to Slovakia which inadvertently undermined the unitary character of the new state and created the impression of an "imperial republic." This dynamic was partially driven by the concept of "national reliability," which asserted that some nationalities were more politically reliable than others. Most obviously this meant a pattern of discrimination against Hungarians, but the question remained how Slovak personnel would be incorporated into the new state administration. While there was a definite effort to include Slovaks as equal partners with Czechs, they were often dismissed as too poorly educated for employment in the security services. There were also not enough of them available to fill all positions, and so the authorities turned to supposedly temporary reassignments from Bohemia and Moravia. These were almost all Czech, which reinforced the impression of Czech "colonialism" in Slovakia. However, many of them quickly decided they did not want to remain in Slovakia where service conditions were generally much harsher than further west. While the Bohemian lands were able to repurpose their security infrastructure, Slovakia and Subcarpathia were disrupted by war and communist revolution in such a way that their security structures had to be effectively rebuilt from scratch. The security services' leadership therefore had to contend with a high number of requests to return west. The strategies they used to stem this exodus unfortunately also tended to institutionalize the differences between east and west, in a way that undermined the goal of building a unitary state and gave it instead a more imperial, differentiated structure.

BERENIKA ZELLER

Housing Scarcity and Everyday Realities in 1920s Carpathian Ruthenia

One of the pressing challenges the newly founded Czechoslovak Republic faced after World War I was an acute housing shortage. This crisis was rooted in wartime construction stagnation, the return of demobilized soldiers (Říha et al. 2022), persistent unemployment, and the general instability of the postwar years. In search of employment, many individuals from the Czech and Slovak lands moved to the eastern periphery of the republic – Podkarpatská Rus/Carpathian Ruthenia – where qualified and loyal civil servants, police officers (Hubený 2024; Boisserie 2024), and teachers were in high demand.

Upon arrival, many encountered a severe "housing crisis." A 1922 report from Perečín noted: "The situation is so dire that Mr. Zíma, an official of the hlavnoslužnovský úřad, had to store his furniture on a stage in the local inn called 'Künstler'." (DAZO, f. 37, op. 1, d. 59). Similar cases were reported throughout the region.

While existing scholarship has addressed architectural policy (Říha et al. 2022) and Czech officials in the region (Rychlík 2016; Hubený 2024), little is known about their everyday housing realities. This article explores how civil servants and teachers searched for accommodation, how locals were sometimes forced to house them, or used the situation for profit.

Drawing on archival sources from Czech and Ukrainian state and regional archives, newspapers, and periodicals, the article offers a microhistorical perspective on housing as a space of tension, negotiation, and cohabitation between state actors and local society.

By framing housing as a key element of postwar (re)construction, the article argues that it was not merely a logistical concern, but a contested site of authority, identity, and adaptation in the reordering of state-society relations.

MICHAL FALAT

Participation of Rusyn intelligence in public administration on the territory of the Carpathian Ruthenia

In late 1918, a new Czechoslovak state was established, which also included territory inhabited by the Rusyn population. According to paragraph 12 of the treaty between the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Czechoslovakia, signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on September 10th, 1919, the newly formed state agreed that officials in the Rusyn territory would be chosen as far as possible from the inhabitants of this territory. Application of this rule in practice, however, brought an internal strife between Czechoslovak politicians and Rusyn intelligence. The author analyzes efforts of Ruthenian intelligentsia to participate in state and public administration of Carpathian Ruthenia and subsequent internal political issues.

ADAM DITTRICH – JIŘÍ RYTINA

Currency Realignment as Post-Crisis Recovery: A Case Study of Czechoslovakia's 1934 Devaluation

This paper evaluates the 1934 devaluation of the Czechoslovak crown as a late-stage adjustment mechanism in response to the external and internal distortions of the Great Depression. While several countries exited the gold standard by 1931, Czechoslovakia maintained its parity within the gold bloc until macroeconomic imbalances and prolonged deflationary pressures necessitated a policy reversal. The decision was strongly advanced by Finance Minister Karel Engliš, over objections from the central bank and segments of the political leadership.

We investigate the impact of this monetary shift on Czechoslovakia's export performance between 1932 and 1936. Using a panel dataset of bilateral exports by destination country, linked to exchange rates and partner-country devaluation status, we estimate a series of gravity-based trade models using Poisson Pseudo-Maximum Likelihood (PPML). This empirical strategy allows us to evaluate whether the devaluation improved export competitiveness, how its effects varied across trade partners, and whether countries that retained currency stability responded differently than those that had already devalued.

Preliminary findings suggest that the 1934 devaluation led to a statistically significant and economically relevant increase in exports, particularly toward non-devaluing trade partners. The evidence indicates that even a delayed exit from the gold standard could yield substantial trade benefits under certain conditions.

The paper also serves as a pilot for a broader research program that will utilize a three-dimensional panel (product × country × year) covering 1930 to 1938. This future work will enable dynamic estimation of trade responses to both the 1934 and 1936 devaluations. More broadly, the study contributes to the literature on interwar macroeconomic adjustment by offering causal identification of exchange rate effects and highlighting the political economy of delayed monetary realignment in small open economies.

PETER VANEK

The chemical industry in Slovakia from the end of the Great Depression to the Munich Agreement

The paper considers the chemical industry in Slovakia in the years 1934 to 1938. It was in 1934 that the Czechoslovak economy overcame its greatest critical decline and found itself in a protracted phase of depression. This period was characterized by a different quality of economic policy than before, seen in the mass use of state intervention. Economic recovery arrived two years later, and the chemical industry even surpassed pre-crisis production levels. To overcome the depression, enterprises resorted to organizational and rationalization measures. The improved situation in the economy also resulted in a significant drop in unemployment. Until the Munich Agreement, the situation in the sector under consideration is considered to have been stabilized, despite the renewed depression that began at the end of 1937. The period of time at issue came to an end in September 1938. How the Munich Agreement impacted on the industry under consideration is not, however, the subject of the paper. The primary goal is to identify the measures applied by chemical entities or companies after 1933 to overcome the Great Depression. Another aim is to characterize developmental trends and structural changes in the industry, and its overall position and limits within the construction of industrialization in the Czechoslovak Republic at that time. I do not look at the situation in the industry in relation to complex production processes themselves, neither do I generally pay attention to the development of technical facilities in enterprises. In the paper, I mainly consider changes in the supply, production, and sales capabilities of individual entities, and their general economic conditions. Within the narrower definition of the industry of the time, the chemical industry consisted of four "units": the inorganic and organic chemistry industries, the production of viscose fibres, and the rubber industry.

MAREK KREJČÍ

YES, it will get better! The preparation of reconstruction plans versus populist proposals to solve the post-Munich crisis in the Second Republic

The adoption of the Munich dictate and the forced surrender of a portion of state territory brought about political, economic, and social crisis. A number of proposals appeared at the watershed moment, whether based on a deeper, substantive analysis of the problems at hand, or expressing more the ambitions of their submitters, while representatives of commercial and industrial capital also made efforts to assert their own managerial ideas about the reconstruction of the economy and to influence the onward political direction of the state. Many supported the ANO movement (Action of National Revival), which radically positioned itself against the traditional political parties and used a feeling of national threat to offer seemingly simple solutions (for example, anti-Semitism) to the complex problems of the day. This rise of populism was an accompanying manifestation of the crisis of democratic values during the Second Republic. The norm-setting work carried out by the government and the intensive activities of the new Ministry of Social and Health Administration and specialized bodies such as the Institute for the Care of Refugees were therefore primarily aimed at reducing social tension and dealing with the ongoing task of integrating refugees from the occupied territory. The newly-created Ministry of Transport, managed by General

Alois Eliáš, was to ensure the reconstruction of transport infrastructure disrupted by new state borders, including the construction of a motorway to connect the historical countries of the Republic. Eliáš was not the only non-political senior officer in a ministerial position: General František Nosál and later General Karel Husárek acted as Head of the Ministry of Public Works in the government of General Syrový.

FRANTIŠEK VAVERA
**Fire in Měděnec, impact on legislation
and the functioning of the fire brigade**
Crisis takes many forms – economic crisis, flood, storm, or even catastrophic fire. The paper looks at a specific case from history – a serious fire – so as to be able to subsequently compare previous and current legislation and the functioning of the fire brigade. The worst fire on the territory of what is now the Czech Republic as far as human loss is concerned occurred in 1984, at an institute of social services in the village of Měděnec. The fundamental objective is to analyze and describe the fire in detail (from the historical context) and to describe the legislation (previous, and subsequently adopted in 1985), in particular the impact on the amendment to the Fire Protection Act under preparation and approved at that time.

Panel VI.
Solving the housing crisis in interwar Czechoslovakia

MARTIN DOLEJSKÝ – SVATOPLUK HERC – MARTIN JEMELKA
**The housing issue in Greater Prague and Greater Ostrava
in the interwar period. Vision – Policies – Reality**
One of the most pressing issues which the Czechoslovak state and local governments had to solve after World War I was housing. Investment in new construction and in the repair of the existing housing stock fell during the war. The housing crisis was mainly manifested in large and industrial cities, such as Greater Prague or Greater Ostrava, where the expansion of the territory and the migration of the population for work encountered the limitations of a lack of suitable and cheap accommodation. The housing crisis in both cities was handled from the very outset at the national level (by issuing the Act on Building Relief of 23 April 1919) and by the relevant city governments. For example, in projects for the construction of housing for employees. However, not even this was enough to meet demand, leading to wretched conditions such as overcrowding in apartments or, in the case of Greater Prague, the creation of emergency forms of housing.
The paper considers the visions, political goals, and reality of the municipal, enterprise-based, and private housing policies of Greater Prague and Greater Ostrava during the interwar period. It presents a comparative view of the form, points of contact, differences, and effectiveness of solutions in the housing crisis, as a byproduct of the emergence of modern cities and an issue tied to the political, the social, and the urban aspects of city development.

HELENA KUNCOVÁ
Underlying conditions for the urban development of the city of Brno in the interwar period
The onset of modernization was an essential element of the transformation process in many European countries after World War I, which did not bypass the First Czechoslovak Republic. The trends of modernization (whether of a technical or cultural and social nature) culminated, particularly in the urban environment. Most Czechoslovak towns, however, had to deal with multiple challenges, mainly relating to the material and economic damage caused by the First World War. Another problem emerged from the transformation of town identities within the formation of the new state, stemming mainly from ethnic tradition and from existing Czech-German and Slovak-Hungarian coexistence. The city of Brno had several specifics in this regard, and one of the most important milestones in its post-war development can be considered the creation of Greater Brno, as a result of which 21 other municipalities became part of Brno. This amalgamation increased the area and the Czech population of the city and demanded the compilation of a regulatory plan and urban format, as a result of which, for example, a regulatory advisory board was established. The aim of the paper is to analyze the impact of the emergence of Greater Brno on the strategic planning of its urban development with regard to the development of public infrastructure within the spatial and temporal framework of the First Czechoslovak Republic. The paper pays particular attention to the development of the urban structure of Greater Brno, with an emphasis on the economic, social, and cultural-institutional needs of the population. Another important aspect in the field of strategic planning was the issue of road transport and the interconnection of individual parts of the city. In addition, I will touch on the housing crisis, which was another key element in the transformation of the character of the city under consideration (and others).

Panel VII.
Restoration of Czechoslovakia after the Second World War. Part I.

KAREL ŘEHÁČEK
Restoration of the Czechoslovak borderland after 1945 – an institutional perspective
The paper deals with the work of the specialized institutions that ensured the restoration of the Czechoslovak border area after 1945, particularly in connection with the displacement and resettlement of Germans and Hungarians and the repopulation

of those areas. It primarily focuses on the activities of the Settlement Office and the National Reconstruction Fund, the National Land Fund, the Central Liquidator of Financial Institutes and Enterprises, and the Nationalized Economy Fund, and on their importance in the reconstruction of the post-war Czechoslovak borderland.

MARIUSZ FORNAGIEL
Voices from below. Letters from the inhabitants of Slovakia as testimony to rural post-war problems

The transformation of property ownership in the Slovak countryside was one of the main problems that the new state elites tried to solve after the Second World War. One that fast became the subject of sharp conflict between the Communist Party and the Democratic Party. These two, very different visions were embodied by Czechoslovak Minister of Agriculture Július Ďuriš and Slovak Commissioner for Agriculture and Land Reform Martin Kvetko. The paper analyzes letters addressed to these politicians by the inhabitants of Slovakia in the first years after the war. These documents constitute a valuable, as yet little-explored historical source, revealing the complex relations between central government and rural society at a time of political, economic, and social transformation. The letters include pleas for help, complaints about injustice, and comments on land policy, collectivization, and the redistribution of resources. Analysis of this correspondence makes it possible to reconstruct everyday concerns, survival strategies, and ways of expressing what was expected of the state. The paper shows how, through private communication, citizens tried to negotiate their place in the new social order. The research is set into the broader context of recovery and political transformation in Central Europe after 1945.

Panel VII.
Restoration of Czechoslovakia after the Second World War. Part II.

PAVEL DUFEK – FRANTIŠEK FRŇKA
Putting energy into the restoration of the Republic: the generation and supply of electricity in the years 1945–1947.

While the end of World War II in Europe brought an end to the Nazi-organized liquidation of peoples and the destruction of material and cultural values, the crisis in supplies caused by their deeds continued.

Making sure there was enough food for the population, supplying the necessary raw materials to key industries, and replacing losses in agriculture and transport were tasks that were largely taken on by UNRRA. Without this, the Czechoslovak economy would have experienced massive difficulties, both in terms of the supply of necessary raw materials and machines and in terms of providing the population with food and consumer goods. However, not even UNRRA, whose work was moreover of limited duration, would have been able to ensure the smooth operation of its entire organization without a functioning energy sector.

Electricity had powered much industrial and agricultural machinery in the 1920s, helping provide basic living conditions in large cities and becoming indispensable in so many ways in passenger and freight transport, and it was therefore necessary to restore the domestic generation and distribution of electricity. However, the events of the war had greatly damaged the energy sector, disrupted it in many ways. Without being able to start up power plants, ensure sufficient coal reserves, and repair and gradually increase the transmission capacity of the distribution network, economic recovery would essentially have been impossible. The paper describes how Czechoslovakia overcame this crisis.

MICHAL PLAVEC
The unification of the aerospace industry. The Aeronautical Advisory Council and the revival of production in Czechoslovakia (1945–1950)

An advisory commission for civil aviation was established by the government in exile in London at the end of 1943, mainly to deal with the post-war reconstruction of aerospace companies. The Aeronautical Advisory Council was then established by the Czechoslovak government as a council of experts from the areas of transport, trade, finance, and national defence on 12 March 1946. Its primary objective being to unify the Czechoslovak aerospace industry and, with the cooperation of all experts, to solve acute problems and look for ways to develop the Czechoslovak aerospace industry.

The aerospace industry experienced an unprecedented boom during the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939–1945, and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia reached the highest peak in its history at the beginning of 1945. The number of people employed in the industry stood at 120,399. Understandably, this level of employment made no sense in the newly-established Czechoslovakia after World War II. The market was oversaturated with surplus aircraft, some of which could be cheaply bought and easily adapted to the needs of air carriers (for example, the Douglas C-47 Dakota). The number of employees in the Czechoslovak aerospace industry had fallen to 3,866 by May 1947, although there were attempts by the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Transport to give the Czechoslovak aerospace industry contracts to build the aircraft they needed. This dismal situation almost led to the end of the Czechoslovak aerospace industry, but the poor state of health was eventually reversed with the unification of all aircraft manufacturers under a single concern.

IVAN JAKUBEC – JAN ŠTEMBERK

To the glories of tomorrow. Troubles in restoring rail transport in the Czech lands after the Second World War.

The paper focuses on the issue of restoring transport on railways in the Czech lands after the end of the Second World War. The economic interest of the recovering Czechoslovak state lay in the speedy resumption of railway operations. The authors look at the technical difficulties that held back the renewal of railway operations (the condition of the lines, of the locomotives, of the signalling) and at political complications caused by relations between the allied armies and their relation to the restored Czechoslovak state power. The paper is primarily based on the archival materials of central state authorities (Ministry of Transport), selected directorates of state railways, and on insights from the station records of individual stations. This source base makes it possible to look at the topic at different levels, from central issues to regional difficulties at station level.

LUBOŠ MAREK

The restoration of the post-war railway network in Czechoslovakia on film

This paper presents (projects) selected digitized film stock that documents the post-war reconstruction of the railway network in Czechoslovakia. We will move in time from 1945 to 1950.

The paper focuses mainly on three documentary films: *Hrdinové okřídleného kola* (Heroes of the Winged Wheel, 1949), *Vlak číslo 101* (Train No. 101, 1950), and *Reportáž z trati mládeže Slovensko* (Reportage from the Branch Line Slovakia, 1949). Each of these films thematizes a different aspect of railway infrastructure renewal and its importance to post-war society. The first documents the repair of locomotives and wagons in railway workshops damaged by the war, and shows the reconstruction of the railways as a technical and moral act of state reconstruction. The film entitled Vlak číslo 101 focuses on the daily operation of the railway system, monitors the working procedures of employees and the movement of passengers, and introduces the railway as a functional and living organism. The third film, on the other hand, reflects the construction of a new Slovak track as part of the "Trať mládeže" and strongly emphasizes ideological motives.

In addition to this news footage, the audience will also have the opportunity to watch other film recordings created as part of weekly newsreels.

IVAN HALÁSZ

The crisis of statehood and building a new political system in Hungary in 1918-1920 with the assistance of international actors.

The end of the First World War brought with it the disintegration and partial disappearance of the Kingdom of Hungary, which had until then been part of the dualist monarchy. At the same time, a civic-democratic revolution began in Budapest at the end of October 1918, becoming an attempt to build the Hungarian Soviet Republic in March. This project ended unsuccessfully after 133 days of existence and was followed by a period of counter-revolution, or "restoration of the traditional order" under the leadership of Admiral Miklós Horthy and his small National Army. At that time, Hungary showed most of the signs of a post-war crisis zone. Most of the country was occupied by the Romanian army, and the Allied Agreement Commission was located in Budapest. Various militias and terrorist groups of whites operated in part of the territory. In addition, there were several power groups and centres that all wanted to enforce their ideas. These were the relatively weak governments with a radius of action in Budapest, the Szeged counter-revolutionary government, Horthy's military centre in Siófok, Colonel Antal Lehár's legitimist armed group, and the Anti-Bolshevik Committee, having influence in the west of the country. The last King Carol II. was also waiting for his chance. Intense discussions were ongoing between aristocratic legitimists and nationalist supporters of the free election of a new king. Neither could there be any underestimation of the tradition of parliamentarism, supported in the process of consolidation by traditional political parties and allied missions. It was therefore impossible at that time to talk of a unified power centre or concept for several months. The permanent establishment of a military dictatorship or the restoration of a parliamentary system with a strong executive centre was also possible. The talk will deal with these issues, dilemmas and, above all, the gradual process of consolidation and restoration of traditional statehood (state infrastructure), which seemingly stood on the position of continuity of the state and law with pre-war Hungary, but at the same time showed the emergence of new, mostly far-right forces, middle-class social groups, and a new so-called Christian-National (counter-revolutionary) understanding of the state with authoritarian features. Allied missions, foreign control delegations investigating, for example, white terror, as well as the gradual transfer of power by the Romanian army to the Hungarian authorities, also played an important role in the whole process.

JAN KOBER

Labour law in post-crisis recovery

The paper deals with a set of tasks that labour law is able to deal with in post-crisis recovery, particularly in post-war situations. Using the example of Czechoslovakia and considering

selected solutions in other Central European countries, the paper outlines the fundamental characteristics of the possibilities and limits of labour-law institutes and tools as they were used in post-war reconstruction after the First and Second World Wars. At the same time, attention is paid to the ambivalence of the instruments of labour law, since relatively similar instruments of labour mobilization and discipline historically served both renewal and the escalation of war efforts or other crisis mobilization. In this context, attention is paid to the risk of conflict between labour law and civil rights. However, there is also consideration of room for legal change that a crisis, sometimes constituting a violation of previous political immobility or hegemony, might open up. In such cases, labour law becomes a tool for normalization and stabilization and a tool for transformation. As an example of such transformation, we examine the representation of employees in the form of employee or works councils or committees. Reforms are another somewhat neglected element of change in labour law under post-crisis conditions, carrying both substance and the importance of the political symbols of improving working conditions.

PETER MIČKO
The unemployment crisis in Slovakia and efforts to address it in the 1930s and 1940s

Following the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the Slovak part of the Republic tried to adapt to the new economic and political situation in the 1920s and 1930s, with varying degrees of success. The effects of the post-war economic crisis complicated these efforts to a significant extent. At the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, enterprises were once again hit by economic crisis, and this resulted in a high rate of unemployment, a long-term problem in Slovakia. For this reason, it was necessary to look for ways to address the difficult economic situation in Slovakia and reduce the high level of job shortages. The state was becoming more involved in overcoming the Great Depression, and there was a more significant wave of investment or increased activity among Slovak economists in Slovakia. Work on the construction of infrastructure, the transfer of certain production processes to Slovakia, and later the departure of workers abroad all escalated.

Panel X.
Restoration of public security in interwar Czechoslovakia

LYUBOV PAVLYSHYN
The establishment and work of Czechoslovak Red Cross Samaritans in Carpathian Ruthenia in the interwar period.

Czechoslovak Red Cross Samaritans provided an independent and voluntary first aid service during the First Czechoslovak Republic. The societies of the Red Cross attached great importance to and saw considerable potential for mobilization potential in nursing and Samaritanism during the post-war period. The slogan "*Dobrá pohotovost je nejlepší zárukou míru*" (Being prepared is the best guarantee of peace) clearly shows the organization's vision at the time. The idea of Samaritanism was that the Samaritan should provide first aid to anyone having been injured or suffering from a sudden illness and make sure they reach the nearest doctor. After the war, Samaritanism became more than an act of mercy, rather a social duty and an element of public health care. The Samaritan service began in Carpathian Ruthenia in 1926; preparatory work was carried out in the years leading up to this, and special first aid courses were organized. Samaritan platoons became an organizational part of the Czechoslovak Red Cross division for Carpathian Ruthenia, and local Czechoslovak Red Cross associations already had established Samaritan unions in place and themselves paid great attention to Samaritan operations. The core area of work was to organize courses and provide equipment. As in the other historical lands of Czechoslovakia, there was close cooperation with fire brigades in Carpathian Ruthenia, while a nationwide network of automobile rescue stations was created as part of the Czechoslovak Red Cross automobile operation: there were Czechoslovak Red Cross rescue automobile stations in Carpathian Ruthenia in Mukachevo, Uzhhorod, and Rakhiv. The Czechoslovak Red Cross in Carpathian Ruthenia mainly tried to get its Samaritanism into the Carpathian forests and dangerous enterprises and ensure the timely and proper provision of first aid, and the necessary special transport associated with this. To this end, Samaritan courses were organized for the employees and workers of forestry commissions, stone quarries, and steam-powered sawmills. All of the work described came to complement the provision of first aid to tourists in Carpathian Ruthenia.

EVA LEDWOŇOVÁ
Prague far away and Lord God up on high.
Restoring order and security through the eyes of police stations in the region against the backdrop of the dispute over Cieszyn Silesia.

In the first part of the paper, I outline the issue of Cieszyn Silesia as an ethnically-diverse region to which Czechoslovakia and Poland laid claim after World War I. Cieszyn Silesia became the subject of dispute between two newly-created states because of its rich coal deposits and the Košice-Bohumín railway, which was the only railway connection between Prague and Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia. The new state was reliant on the foundation of a functioning security apparatus. During the dispute over Cieszyn Silesia, the police/gendarmerie in the area under consideration was subordinated not only to the Provincial Gendarmerie Headquarters in Opava, but also to the International Administrative Commission and the Polish administration. This fragmented command was reflected in the provision of service and in the social and societal status of the police/gendarmerie, and it is this that the subsequent section of the paper considers.

Then, in the third part of the paper, I focus on the national disputes in the region from which the tense security situation stemmed. I present selected cases of attacks on civilians, whether teachers, mayors or peasants who played no part in public life. I also deal with attacks on police patrols and police stations. Finally, I evaluate the security situation and the restoration of order in the area under consideration, or more accurately in the Czech part of the area.

DAVID HUBENÝ
The Czechoslovak Military Police in Mukachevo 1919–1921

In order to deal with social and economic disruption and the related decline in respect for life and property, it was necessary to permit the existence of extraordinary means of support to enforce public order for some time after World War I. Such means included the military police, which temporarily intervened against civilians until the standard security forces of the interior had been strengthened. This extraordinary institution had a longer life in Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia, where the state police and gendarmerie had to be built from scratch. The problematic nature of this temporary solution was shown at the Mukachevo Department of the Military Police, which suffered from cadres not having a sufficient level of training and from difficulties involving discipline in its own ranks.

FILIP KŘÍŽEK
Finding ammunition and disposing of dangerous explosives after World War I

The dangers of ammunition left in the Czech lands after the end of World War II are well known. However, the risk associated with the explosives and ammunition manufactured here or brought here during or immediately after the First World War is not currently attracting a great deal of academic attention. Clearly the only case on which the media and researchers focused was the explosion of a munitions factory in Bolevec near Pilsen in 1917 which caused the death and injury of hundreds if not thousands of people. However, this extreme case was joined by many minor accidents that were accompanied by injuries, deaths, and property damage.

In many cases, soldiers took ammunition with them when they returned from military service. Hand grenades, for example, were sometimes kept as an interesting souvenir. However, when they decided to get rid of them, they often did not return them to the military warehouse as they should have, but instead threw them into rivers or ponds, sometimes into public space. On top of that, the army gathered a large amount of ammunition for which it had no use at the time, together with defective or looted ammunition. Damaged artillery shells and foreign ammunition of which little was known posed a particularly high risk during disposal.

The author focuses on mapping the occurrence of potentially-dangerous ammunition from the time of the Great War, from its discovery (or designation as intended for disposal) to its removal. The author puts forward the thesis that there was no effective and integrated system between the two world wars like the one that developed after the Second World War. Security forces were able to mitigate this problem (and nothing more) as they did not have the capacities to resolve it. Only the army had experts in its ranks who could professionally dispose of ammunition and explosives. However, the unstable conditions and the lack of a comprehensive system meant that even such professional pyrotechnicians could not guarantee the safe disposal of explosives.

MARCEL DEMČÁK
The cultural and educational activities of the gendarmerie in interwar Czechoslovak society.

Interwar Czechoslovak society found itself in an economic and social rut in the first years of Czechoslovakia's very existence. This was mainly due to the devastating consequences of the First World War and the disruption of the economic and industrial manufacturing system of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which had been diversified throughout the monarchy. This crisis required the restoration and building of conditions that would stabilize the situation in society. Unstable economic conditions and complex national conditions resulted in an increase in criminal activity. The situation having arisen was to be controlled by building the Czechoslovak gendarmerie throughout the territory of Czechoslovakia, but it was mostly the territory of Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia that this move affected. Gendarmerie structures already existed in the Czech lands, and the main issues being dealt with there concerned personnel – gendarmes of German nationality. The organizational structures of the gendarmerie were established by experienced gendarmes from the Czech lands, disciplined and educated people with a broad general outlook. And this was primarily tied to the elaborated system of hiring, education, and awareness-raising. The high-quality education of gendarmes was the reason why gendarmes, if necessary, spread culture and education in their service district, in turn helping to build a morally and culturally more advanced society in interwar Czechoslovakia.

RÓBERT ARPÁŠ – ADRIANA KIČKOVÁ
Building national education after a coup d ,état. Language and textbook policy in Slovakia after 1918.

The paper focuses on the formation of Slovak textbook policy and language education in the period after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic. It draws on the context of previous Magyarization policy, which led to the almost complete exclusion of the Slovak language from the school system. Slovak education found itself in a state of crisis after 1918, struggling with a shortage of teachers, the absence of mother-tongue textbooks, and a weak language infrastructure. The paper analyzes the steps taken by the Czechoslovak authorities, which tried to resolve this situation through language courses, the accelerated creation of handbooks, and the transfer of Czech teachers to Slovakia. Particular emphasis is placed on textbooks as tools for teaching and for linguistic cultivation and national identity.

MIROSLAVA GALLOVÁ
The specialized education of girls and women during the First Czechoslovak Republic, with an emphasis on business schools

Changes in the education of girls and women occurred gradually from the second half of the 19th century. Their study options broadened even more significantly after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, when the school system underwent gradual transformation in line with the needs of the new state. Different types of educational institutions were established, and it became possible for girls and boys to be educated together. The proposed paper addresses the specialized education of girls and women in the years 1918–1938, particularly at business schools, meaning in this case business academies, public business schools, mercantile colleges, and one-year business courses. The paper presents how girls' opportunities to study at educational institutions that prepared their pupils (both male and female) for future employment in the field of trade, at banks, savings banks, insurance companies, authorities, courts, private enterprises and factories, etc., changed after 1918. From a geographical perspective, the paper focus on the education of girls and women at schools existing in the territory of today's Slovakia.

JULIIA DELIBALTOVÁ
Primary schools and Bürgerschule during the Czechoslovak Republic

School administration in Czechoslovakia was regulated by Act No. 292/1920 Sb. of 9 April 1920, according to which the Ministry of Education assumed some of the responsibilities that had hitherto pertained to the provincial school council and political administration. The powers of the Ministry of Education were extensive indeed. As far as legislation was concerned, it prepared government outlines of laws and government regulations, issued general guidelines relating to education within the framework of valid laws, approved standards issued by subordinate institutions and institutes (e.g. rules of procedure for academic senates and university faculties), decided on the budget, and decided on the systemization of school places. The Ministry issued examination regulations, decided on the honorary names of schools, and appointed inspectors.

School inspectors oversaw direct supervision of the elementary schools (two types of elementary schools "obecná" and "měšťanská") and the educational institutions pertaining to the Ministry. Despite the emergence of counties, county school committees were actually never established; instead, provincial school councils and district school committees remained in place, and only the powers of local school committees for minority matters were defined in more detail.

There is no doubt that several measures were taken in relation to elementary education in the first decade of the Republic and that a great deal of work was done. Compulsory subjects included civic education and manual work, and for girls compulsory physical education and home economics. Religion remained a compulsory subject for all children, with the exception of children of no faith.

Rapid development can also be observed in the case of elementary school, in that the number of schools increased by 75% in Bohemia, 62% in Moravia, and 92.6% in Slovakia in the first five years of the Republic. It is therefore not surprising that a high number of specialized articles were published about this type of school in Škola měšťanská magazine (School City Magazine) in the first years of independence.

KOSTIANTYN KUTSOV
Specifics of the formation of the first organizations of Ukrainian (Ruthenian) Carpathian university students in interwar Czechoslovakia 1920–1926

One of the positive consequences of Carpathian Ruthenia becoming part of the Czechoslovak Republic was the opportunity that local young people had a chance to obtain education at the universities of the young state. During the 1920s, Prague was practically the only study centre for Ukrainian (Ruthenian) students from Carpathian Ruthenia and Prešov, and it was in Prague that their first professional associations were established in the 1920/21 academic year:

1) The "Vozroždĕnije" Carpatho-Russian student club (4 November 1920), which soon after its establishment adopted Russophile national and linguistic orientation;
2) The Social Student Union of Carpathian Ruthenians (later the Union of Social

Assistance of Ruthenian Students of Carpathian Ruthenia, 24 April 1921), which in the first years of its existence oscillated between autochthonous Ruthenism and Ukrainophilia.

It was the confrontation in the field of national and linguistic identity established in 1920–1926 that remained the main obstacle to the consolidation of Carpathian students in Czechoslovakia throughout the period that followed.

VIKTOR KICHERA

State and Greek Catholic education in Carpathian Ruthenia in the era of Czechoslovakia 1919–1939

This context is necessary for the study, because ever since the times of Austria-Hungary, primary education had been in the hands of Greek Catholic communities and schools themselves belonged to the diocese. With the transition to Czechoslovakia, education in Carpathian Ruthenia underwent state modernization, one measure being reform of the Ministry of Education and the National Enlightenment in Prague. In general, this also caused conflicts, which the authorities tried to resolve by renting schools from the church and appointing state teachers with appropriate salaries, sometimes even by building new state schools in the region. Archive documents contain interesting information about the methods used by the authorities to restrict church education, from administrative and financial restrictions to the complete abolition of Greek Catholic schools and their transformation into state schools, as well as plenty of information about the construction of new schools.

JURIJ DANILEC

The Orthodox Church in Transcarpathia during the post-war crisis of the second half of the 1940s

The Orthodox Church in Transcarpathia found itself in a complex institutional and moral crisis at the end of World War II. The Hungarian government deepened the institutional division between Orthodox Christians and tried to create an independent autocephalous church. Bishop Volodymyr Rajic was exiled to Yugoslavia in 1941. The Mukachevo-Prešov eparchy was divided into two parts, and Prešov became part of independent Slovakia. The parishes of the Prague Archdiocese were also leaderless, because Archbishop Savvatij had been interned in the Dachau concentration camp for baptizing Prague Jews. After the liberation of Carpathian Ruthenia, the Red Army and the Soviet leadership began an immediate process to take this territory under the wing of the USSR. They put pressure on Edvard Beneš to sign the relevant treaty and surrender the Carpathian Ruthenians to Soviet Ukraine. In October 1944, representatives of the Orthodox Church and local Russophiles organized a trip to Moscow, where they demanded the annexation of Transcarpathia to the USSR in the form of an independent republic and the

integration of local Orthodox Christians under the Russian Orthodox Church. A significant part of the Orthodox clergy adopted Russophile positions and actively participated in the Sovietization of the region. After the Soviet authorities took the Orthodox Christians under their control, they used them to liquidate the Greek Catholic Church. They took most of the churches, and half of the Greek Catholic priests converted to Orthodoxy. The second half was mostly suppressed. Opposition within the Orthodox Church was eliminated by repression: the episcopal vicar, Abbot Feofan Sabov, was killed by Soviet soldiers, and around 10 priests were sent to camps. Bishop Nestor Sidoruk, who was an agent of the Soviet secret service, was appointed from Moscow. Most monastic and parish lands were confiscated as part of Sovietization. The clergy were evicted from church buildings, and the church environment was filled with the fear of arrest, the prohibition of worship, and accusations of anti-Soviet activity.