SECURING POLITICAL RULE IN THE PERIPHERY:
THE TRANSFORMATION OF MUNICIPALISM IN EUPEN
AND ZNOJMO/ZNAIM AFTER WORLD WAR I (1918-1922)

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The article deals with the change of sovereignty as experienced in two towns which ended up in another country after the end of World War I: Eupen switching from Germany to Belgium and Znojmo/Znaim from Imperial Austria to newly established Czechoslovakia. Whereas the Belgian government set up a special administration for the single purpose of dealing with Eupen, in Znojmo/Znaim the former community parliament was supplanted by a committee under the auspices of the administration of the federal state of Moravia. Thus, in both places a superior administrative level came to control matters that had been the prerogative of community self-rule until then. But these new bodies acted differently: In Eupen, the special administration increasingly intervened in the prerogative of the town administration, finally replacing the mayor with a candidate of its own choice, whereas in Znojmo/Znaim the regional government of Moravia sought to mediate between parties. In both towns, these mechanisms for conflict solving proved to be trend-setting for the further development of communal politics. In the former case, they contributed to an aggravation of antagonisms which had surfaced after the world war ended, in the latter case they facilitated their being overcome.

COMMEMORATIVE CONUNDRUMS: THE CREATION
OF NATIONAL DAY CALENDARS IN INTERWAR
CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY

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A primary function of national days is to legitimise the existence of the nation-state and strengthen the collective identity. This comparative study on the creation of national days in interwar Czechoslovakia and Hungary asks to what extent national days could unify these newly-independent countries. This question is answered through an analysis of the debates and conflicts that surrounded the construction of the national day calendars. The attitudes of the various, often competing, groups are analysed and special attention is paid to the views of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia towards Hungarian and Czechoslovak national days. In interwar Hungary the commemorations of St Stephen and the 1848-49 revolution, both of which had a commemorative tradition before 1918, were “multi-vocal” symbols, which could be interpreted in multiple ways, thus making them successful unifying symbols for the state. In contrast, in Czechoslovakia the national day calendar consisted mainly of newly created national days that lacked a tradition, and controversial commemorations, such as Jan Hus Day. Rather than being “multi-vocal” these cultural symbols exemplified the rigid ideological positions of competing groups, exacerbating the cleavages within society. They thus failed to provide a comprehensively unifying narrative for the new state.