

POSITION AND IMPORTANCE
OF THE BOHEMIAN-MORAVIAN INDUSTRY
WITHIN THE AUSTRIAN-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY

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Despite the still underdeveloped industrial statistics of the Danube Monarchy the economic importance and progressive industrialization of the Bohemia-Moravia and Austrian-Silesia group of countries is shown by the fact that in 1910 the proportion of the working population occupied in industry was 35% while in Cisleithania it was only 23%, and in the whole monarchy was a still smaller proportion. This region was more thickly populated than the rest of the Monarchy, since in 1918 Czechoslovakia took over approximately one quarter (27,4%) of the whole population, though only one fifth of the land. Through the expulsion of the Sudeten-Germans after 1945 however, the much more industrialized west of the C.S.R. lost so many people that the proportion of its population compared with that of the whole C.S.R. dropped from 77% (1920) to 70% (1959). By the policy of systematic industrialization the formerly insignificant share of Slovakia in the industrial output of the C.S.R. will be increased, for in the plans of

the "Council for reciprocal economic aid" (COMECON) important tasks are assigned to Slovakia. (The construction of the foundries near Kaschau).

As a result of the high employment rate of industrial workers in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (43%) the pattern of employment is not so different from that in the German Reich, whereas the rest of the Monarchy, with the exception of the Eastern Alpine countries, could be called underdeveloped. It can therefore be concluded that before the First World War the Sudeten Countries (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) had a share of at least 40%—50%, perhaps even 60%, of the whole industrial output of the whole monarchy. Were we to add the insignificant industrial production of Slovakia the C.S.R. assumes 55%—65% of the production of the Old Monarchy.

Within the newly formed C.S.R. the historical countries (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) held, at the founding of the New State, approximately 90%—92% of its industrial capacity, but because of the growing Slovakian potentialities its share dropped after 1945 to 83% in 1957 and still decreases.

Bohemia-Moravia-Silesia had a far greater share in the industrial capacity and the production and population (52%) of Cisleithania, than its population suggested. These countries formed the leading industrial region of the monarchy, while in modern Austria industry was concentrated in the Eastern region around Vienna, and therefore the Alpine countries (with 36% of the working population) were left behind in the industrialization of the Sudeten countries. However, the disposal of the capital working in the Sudeten countries was in many cases in Viennese hands, in 1912 only 20% of the capital of all Austrian Stock Companies was controlled by those with offices in the Sudeten countries, while Vienna had 68% (Lower Austria). It was only after the First World War, and in particular as a result of the world economic crisis, that the high percentage of Viennese capital and German control in the industry of Bohemia-Moravia-Silesia decreased; however, in the Sudeten-German region it was until the end of the Second World War, almost completely in German hands.

Supported by the rich coal supplies the industry in Bohemia-Moravia-Silesia had been developed early and completely, though it was concentrated in the industrial branches known nowadays as Consumer-Goods-Industries, and which was the particular domain of the German economy. Thus 79% of all Old Austrian textile workers (excluding homeworkers) were occupied in the Sudeten countries, and 50% were employed in the completely German commercial districts of Reichenberg and Eger. 75%—90% of the productivity of the individual textile branches were to be found in these districts, which in addition to the glass- and porcelain-manufacture was also predominantly in German hands. Since at least half of the Bohemia-Moravia-Silesia exports before the First World War went to the Hungarian half of the monarchy, the disolution of the „Common Market“, to use an expression of today, meant the end of an integration and a large economically united area in which the Sudeten Countries flourished and the economic power of Hungary was strengthened. After 1918 the position of the

Sudeten-German controllers and their working personnel deteriorated not only on political grounds, but also as a result of great economic difficulties, since they had to look for new markets. In this they were only partly successful. Thus already then began a decline of the importance of German industry in the C.S.R. The share of textiles in the export of the C.S.R., for instance, dropped from 14% in 1927 to 8% in 1937. Through the expulsion of the Germans, who despite all these difficulties managed to produce 41% of the industrial output of the C.S.R., whole branches of industries lost their workers; according to official Czech information the number of Germans in the C.S.R. dropped from 3,3 million in 1930 to 163 000 in 1958.

The expulsion of the Germans meant a complete change in the economic build-up of the C.S.R., which for political reasons is still being promoted. The share of Group A (machine-producing industry) in the total output increased from 40% to 57%. Through the proposed extensions of the steel and machinery industry it will increase still further. As a result the C.S.R. will depend in its imports of raw materials, and in its exports, still more on the Soviet Union and the countries where there is Soviet control.