

THE ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN WEST GERMANY AND BOHEMIA-MORAVIA IN THE AGE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

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Great distances involved and great transport difficulties prevented an intensive direct trade between West Germany and Bohemia-Moravia up to the beginning of the industrial age; moreover, various intermediary centers, located closer by, such as Nürnberg, Leipzig, and Linz, offered trading fairs. In individual cases connections extended further west, to the Frankfurt fairs, Cologne, Aachen, and Wesel, and were able to obtain luxury goods from Belgium and France, English cloth, or metalware and weapons from the Lower Rhine. Later, as the process of industrialization advanced and the obstacles to transport diminished, and the machine factories of the Rhineland took their place alongside those of England and Belgium, machines and other metalware were procured from here. But not only this exchange of goods makes the relations between West Germany and the lands of Bohemia and Moravia in the age of industrialization interesting: above all, it is the men from the Rhineland and Swabia who contributed to pushing industrialization ahead in this area. Without doubt, the members of the higher nobility who resided in Moravia and Bohemia had a considerable share in the industrial development of this area; they had the workers at their disposal, they owned, above all, the estates with the mineral resources required. They were the owners of the flocks of sheep whose wool satisfied for the most part the needs of the Moravian cloth factories into the 1840's. However, though it was possible to manage in the manufactories to a large degree with unskilled or semi-skilled workers, the transition to the machine-run factory required special skilled labor. It had

to be brought in from the outside, from places where a certain tradition in the field of technology already existed. In West Germany such labor was furnished chiefly by the Rhenish textile area and by Württemberg, (watch makers, turners, locksmiths), a land with precision-tool trades. This generation, endowed with technical and entrepreneurial ability, knew how to take advantage of the opportunity offered; it was mobile and adaptable enough to change from the textile branch or watchmaking and turnery to engine-building, and from there to the sugar industry. The fact that it brought together the necessary capital for its enterprises, and that it without hesitation came to grips with the technical transport problems that emerged, especially railroad construction, constitutes another part of its achievement.

In the over-all picture of the achievements of foreigners who impelled the industrialization in Bohemia and Moravia, the men from the Rhineland and Swabia stand, of course, only in the same row with the sons of other lands. Englishmen, Belgians, Frenchmen, Italians, Swiss, Westphalians, Franconians, Bavarians, Saxons, and Berliners also took part in this work. A complete picture of the industrialization would have to appreciate their contribution, as well as that which was accomplished by young natives, e. g. Liebig from Braunau, and Škoda from Pilsen.