

CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE RUHR OCCUPATION, 1923

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Examines the attitude of the Czechoslovak government to the questions of German reparations under the Versailles Peace Treaty and of the sanctions threatened or applied to enforce these reparations. The author's starting point is the thesis that France, and in particular the Poincaré government, presented French security as closely linked with the reparations question and considered reparations demands and the threat of sanctions as a means of asserting the French security policy vis-à-vis Germany. From this viewpoint he examines the position of Czechoslovakia within the French system of alliances in eastern Central Europe, with emphasis on how the German Foreign Office viewed the problem and incorporated its assessment in considerations of political options.

The conclusion is that the Czechoslovak government did not succumb to any of the French attempts to press it into some form of participation in the Ruhr occupation in 1923. This stand, however, was only reluctantly acknowledged by the German side, especially by the German regions bordering on Czechoslovakia. The author surveys German-Czechoslovak relations from 1921 to the spring of 1923 in their international context. Their most striking feature was that, despite the Czechoslovak endeavors to preserve neutrality toward Germany, the feeling persisted on the German side that Prague, as an ally of France, represented a latent threat. In short, German mistrust of Czechoslovakia was lessened by the latter's neutral stand, but not eliminated.