

THE CZECH GOVERNMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST „MACHTERGREIFUNG“ IN 1933

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Little attention has heretofore been paid to the question whether the political leadership of Czechoslovakia recognized the National Socialist danger in time and what priority was given in 1933 to staving off the German danger, as compared with other threats. Up to 1933 the Czechoslovak government saw the main danger to its country in the revisionist policy of Hungary which Italy supported, and in a possible restoration of the Hapsburg monarchy. A threat from National Socialist Germany first seems to have been perceived only in April 1933. The underestimation of this danger was evident in the attitude of the Czechoslovak government to the Four-Power Pact, to a new economic order in East-Central Europe, and to supporting Austria against Hitler's Germany. It can be demonstrated that Beneš had farsighted views of National Socialist foreign policy in the fall of 1933, but they did not issue in any change of priorities in Prague's security policies. Differences with Italy over the problems of East-Central Europe prevented any cooperation against the Reich. The ČSR persisted in seeing Austrian *Anschluss* with National Socialist Germany as a lesser evil than an Austrian monarchy under the Hapsburgs. This can be explained by the fact that the Prague leadership believed there was a considerable degree of continuity between the foreign policy goals of the Third Reich and those of the Weimar Republic.