

"NATION BY MYTH AND HISTORY".
GERMAN-SLAV RELATIONS ACCORDING TO
FRIEDRICH NAUMANN AND T. G. MASARYK

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This contribution examines two concepts for a new order in Europe after World War I: "Nová Evropa" (The New Europe) published in 1917 by the Czech T. G. Masaryk and "Mitteleuropa" (Central Europe) published in 1915 by the German Friedrich Naumann. Both these books, having an effect that reaches far beyond the period, set forth positions which have formed the two main tendencies in the debate about a European union up to this very day. On one hand, there is the formation of supranational political entities, on the other, protection of small peoples' identities and their right to self-determination. With the help of illustrative quotations from both books, the author extracts facets of stereotypical perceptions of the own and the alien and demonstrates how, by means of stereotypically ascribing certain qualities (and aspirations) to certain peoples, old anxieties and old notions of superiority were reactivated and utilized, in the wartime situation, for the attainment of national goals. Of specific interest is what role, in fostering a sense of purpose and identity, Naumann and Masaryk ascribe to history. There is, that conclusion may be drawn, a paradigm of how historical stereotypes amalgamate the past and the present, with long-term and often fatal consequences.