

REAL-LIFE POLITICS: THE NATIONALITIES' QUESTION  
IN THE CHAMBERS OF TRADE AND COMMERCE  
OF FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

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The conflict between the nationalities in the First Czechoslovak Republic extended to the chambers of trade and commerce. A long-term reduction in the numbers of Germans in their leading bodies, however, was not due to any systematic Czech policy of seeking to gain influence at their expense. Electing these leading bodies was a complicated process of consultations and quid-pro-quo with many pressure groups, factions and comparable groups of like-minded people participating; national affiliation being only one of a number of factors that had to be taken into account. Main argument in the present article is that Czech economy was fostered within the chambers not because it was *Czech*, but because it was largely *middle-class*, and the chambers vigorously and decisively advocated middle-class interests. In contrast, German economy was at a disadvantage not because it was *German*, but because it was largely *industrial*.