

EDVARD BENEŠ AND THE SOFT SELL:

Czechoslovak Diplomacy toward Lusatia, 1918-1919

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At the end of the First World War, a significant segment of the Czechoslovak elite sought to annex Lusatia, seeing potential co-nationals in the Lusatian Sorbian population. When Czech diplomat Edvard Beneš argued for a Czechoslovak Lusatia at the Paris Peace Conference, he showed great restraint. The rhetoric for a Czechoslovak Lusatia shows that Wilsonian idealism coexisted with notions of historic precedent and legal right. Czechoslovakia's diplomatic arguments, finally, illustrate the lackadaisical quality of Czech desires and Beneš's own skill as a diplomat.