

THE NOBILITY AND THE LAND REFORM IN THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC (1918–1938)

Positions, strategies, identities

Dita Homolová

With the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, the nobility lost the exclusive status and privileges it had enjoyed under the Habsburg Monarchy. The new elite clearly indicated that members of the noble ranks would not be playing an important role in the new republic – in politics as well as in public life. Particularly painful for the noble families was the comprehensive land reform that resulted in many of them losing large parts of the estates they had often owned for centuries. In her study, the author reconstructs the strategies resorted to by representatives of the nobility in Czechoslovakia in hopes of protecting at least some of their property from confiscation. On the one hand, she shows how some noble families attempted to employ legal means or use their connections to influential politicians to effect exemptions from the land reform. On the other hand, she investigates the networks that nobles forged to advocate their interests – including at the League of Nations. The study ends with the year 1938, when the nobility's hopes for a return to the “old ways” were destroyed for good with the Munich Agreement.