



Separatist Currents in Moravian Fascism and National Socialism

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Abstract

The article deals with separatism within Moravian fascism and National Socialism. It identifies fundamental links between ethnic nationalism and fascism, and describes the development of the 'Moravian question' within the context of Central European history. The separatist tendencies of Moravian fascism and National Socialism are examined in the context of the interwar history, the period of occupation of the Czech lands, and postwar developments, including contemporary tendencies. It also identifies similarities with and differences from some other ethno-national fascisms in Europe. The author concludes that although marginal, Moravian fascism and National Socialism have enjoyed a long existence.

Keywords

Moravia; fascism; National Socialism; ethnic extremism; separatism; Central Europe

Introduction

Since they first came into being, fascism and National Socialism have been the ideological basis of certain separatist movements. This is also true of part of the Moravian movement that has been active on the territory of today's Czech Republic. This article identifies the basic forms in which fascism and National Socialism became intertwined with Moravian separatism, and traces their development. A comparative framework for the whole issue is also provided.

The issue of separatist tendencies within Moravian fascism and National Socialism has not been analyzed by historians to the extent of fully engaging

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with the period since the 1920s. Studies exist in the Czech language about Slavic fascism in Moravia during the interwar period and the war years, and separatist currents are mentioned in them.¹ The issue is tangentially touched upon in works that deal with fascism as it unfolded on the territory of the Czech lands during the period, and some of this scholarship is in English.² In their chapters on Czechoslovakia, synoptic works about European fascism do not mention the issue due to its marginality.³ The following are available in Czech: a study of pro-Slovak irredentism and collaborationism in Moravian Slovakia;⁴ a consideration of the Moravian extreme right during the 1990s, including its links with separatism, within an article on the broader question of Moravian extremism;⁵ and a Bachelor's thesis that provides a brief summary of Moravianism's connection with the Czech far right from the end of Communism to the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century.⁶ There has not yet been a specialist study of the most recent developments. This article provides an overall view of the development of this phenomenon and its various forms, and compares it internationally.

Fascism and ethno-regional movements: basic conceptualization

Although Moravia is one of the traditional lands of the Bohemian crown, a small number of Moravians incline toward separatism. In studying Moravian separatism, one has to bear in mind several dimensions of this phenomenon as it is perceived and promoted by the individual actors. A first group of Moravian separatists understands Moravians as a distinct Slavic nation and demands the creation of a separate Moravian state independent of Bohemia. In the past, a small part of Moravian Slovakia's representatives understood Moravians as an *ethnie* (as defined by Anthony D. Smith) within the Slovak

¹ Marek Suchánek, *Organizace a aktivity českých fašistů na Moravě v letech 1922–1945* [Organizations and Activities of Czech Fascists in Moravia Between 1922 and 1945] (PhD diss., Filosofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity, 2010).

² David Donald Kelly, *The Czech fascist movement 1922–1942* (PhD diss., University of Nebraska, 1994), accessed November 14, 2012, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dissertations/AAI19425288>.

³ Jerzy W. Borejsza, *Schulen des Hasses: Faschistische Systeme in Europa* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999); 309–10; Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914–1945* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

⁴ František Mezihorák, *Hry o Moravu: Separatisté, irredentisté a kolaboranti 1938–1945* [Moravian Games: Separatists, Irredentists and Collaborationists 1938–45] (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1997).

⁵ Miroslav Mareš, 'Moravismus a extremismus' [Moravianism and Extremism], *Středoevropské politické studie/Central European Political Studies Review*, 3 (2011), accessed April 28, 2012, <http://www.cepsr.com/clanek.php?ID=66>.

⁶ Petr Bednář, *Moravská identita v české krajní pravici po roce 1989* [Moravian Identity in the Czech Far Right after 1989] (Bachelor's thesis, Fakulta sociálních studií Masarykovy univerzity, 2006), accessed April 28, 2012, http://is.muni.cz/th/65340/fss_b/bak.prace.uco65340.pdf?lang=en.

nation, and sought a union with Slovakia.⁷ Some Moravians similarly understand their community as an *ethnie* within the Czech nation. Other activists and inhabitants of Moravia conceive of themselves as part of the Czech nation, without a national or ethnic identity, but with certain regional particularities (this is therefore a case of non-nationalist regional patriotism). This has led, and continues to lead, some of them to demand autonomy within the states of which Moravia has been a part. Germans who settled in Moravia understood their Moravian identity similarly, namely as a regional identity without ethnic or nationalist elements. They sometimes promoted Moravian self-government on a multi-ethnic basis, usually within states that were under German or Austrian domination. All of the above-mentioned currents interacted on the Moravian territory with fascism and National Socialism. The focus of this article is the intertwining of these phenomena.

One of fascism's basic ideological components is nationalism or, in Roger Griffin's understanding, 'palingenesis.'⁸ This is also true of National Socialism, which is treated in this article as a specific sub-variant of fascism (despite the ongoing debate whether such an understanding is appropriate).⁹ Political movements that have embraced fascism include those that have asserted the interests of existing states (and that, in some cases, have become the main force of the regime), and those that conceived of themselves as representing nations without states, and thus sought the creation of new nation-states in which the nation represented by them would dominate. Some of them were at least temporarily successful in this endeavor (e.g., the Ustashi in Croatia).¹⁰

At times, two or more fascist movements, each representing its nation, competed with each other within one state. During the period of Nazi occupation, this rivalry was sometimes translated into vying for the support of Nazi Germany, in terms of establishing one's position in the New Order of Europe; an example of this was the contest between certain Polish and Galician collaborationists within the *Generalgouvernement*.¹¹ Some movements operated in the borderland between autonomism and patriotism without territorial

⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 14.

⁸ Roger Griffin, 'Fascism's new faces (and new facelessness) in the "post-fascist" epoch,' in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East: An International Debate on Concepts and Cases in the Comparative Study of the Extreme Right*, ed. Roger Griffin, Werner Loh, Andreas Umland (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2006), 29–67.

⁹ Walter Laqueur, *Faschismus: Gestern, Heute, Morgen* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1997), 14.

¹⁰ Wolfgang Wippermann, *Europäischer Faschismus im Vergleich (1922–1982)* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 103–09.

¹¹ David Littlejohn, *Foreign Legions of the Third Reich. Vol. 4. Poland, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Free India, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Russia* (San Jose: R. James Bender Publishing, 1994), 24, Miroslav Tejchman, *Ve službách Třetí říše: Hitlerovy zahraniční jednotky* [In Service of the Third Reich: Hitler's Foreign Troops] (Praha: Mladá fronta 1999), 156–63.

demands, or were loyal to the occupying power (for example, a minority of Breton nationalists collaborated with the Nazis).¹²

Moreover, elements of regional patriotism have appeared in fascism, stressing particularities of certain regions without seeking separation. This particularly concerned regions that nationalist forces conquered from other nationalists at the time the Versailles System was constituting itself (e.g., the extreme right in Carinthia).¹³ Around one sixth of fascist and National Socialist movements emphasized regional identity linked with states or tribal communities from the distant past, without actually seeking their renewal (e.g., the Bajuwar Liberation Army).¹⁴

A specific theme intertwined with the history of fascism is irredentism, that is, attempts to reunite a particular territory with a large national whole, supported by minority movements in the states whose territory would be annexed (a typical example is Sudeten German National Socialist irredentism).¹⁵ In the various instances of separatism and irredentism, it is not always national identity that plays the main role, and indeed there have been cases in which confessional identity combined with national consciousness was key (for example, in the case of the Slovak clero-fascist autonomist and separatist movement and regime).¹⁶

In concluding this introductory conceptual section, it is necessary to stress that nationalism, ethnic-nationalism, and regional patriotism are not necessarily connected *a priori* with a fascist and National Socialist background. This is a consequence of nationalism's weak character, and the fact that it needs other ideologies to support it. Some long-established ethno-nationalist movements emphasize their leftist identities, even if they sometimes display their hatred of other ethnic groups. For example, the ETA organization in the Basque country is Marxist, but it shows hatred toward immigrants from other regions.¹⁷

¹²⁾ Daniel Leach and Bezen Perrot, 'The Breton nationalist unit of the SS, 1943–5,' *E-Keltoi. Journal of Interdisciplinary Celtic Studies*, 4 (2008): 1–38, accessed April 22, 2012, http://www4.uwm.edu/celtic/ekeltoi/volumes/vol4/4_1/leach_4_1.pdf.

¹³⁾ Kurt Langbein, 'Organisationen', in *Rechtsextremismus in Österreich nach 1945*, ed. Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1979), 128–72.

¹⁴⁾ Kurt Tozer and Günter Zelsacher, *Bombenspuren: Briefbomben und politischer Terror* (Wien: Verlag Holzhausen, 1995), 129–34.

¹⁵⁾ Ladislav Josef Beran, *Odepřená integrace: Systémová analýza sudetoněmecké politiky v Československé republice 1918–1938* [Integration Denied: A Systematic Analysis of Sudeten German politics in the Czechoslovak Republic 1918–38] (Praha: Pulchra, 2009), 308–11.

¹⁶⁾ Luboš Kopeček, *Demokracie, diktatury a politické stranictví na Slovensku* [Democracy, Dictatorships and Partisanship in Slovakia] (Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2006).

¹⁷⁾ Raphael Zariski, 'Ethnic Extremism among Ethnoterritorial Minorities in Western Europe: Dimensions, Causes, and Institutional Responses,' *Comparative Politics* 3 (1989): 253–72.

Fascist movements sometimes compete with other separatist political movements within one ethno-regional domain.¹⁸ In some cases, fascist regimes support nationalist movements that are left-leaning, with the aim of weakening their enemy (for example, Nazi Germany supported the Irish Republican Army), although rather than indicating a clear ideological affinity, these should be understood as instruments of foreign policy.¹⁹

Historical development of the 'Moravian question'

To understand the position of Moravian fascism and National Socialism, it is necessary to put these phenomena in the contexts of Moravian history and the emergence of a Moravian identity. In doing so, one needs to bear in mind the differing views of historians on the role of Moravia in certain historical periods, and also the fact that some books have contributed to the creation of historical myths about Moravia.²⁰ This historical overview is important, because it allows one to understand the claims that fascists and National Socialists have made vis-à-vis Moravia, as well as their different conceptions of Moravian identity (it also helps to explain the names of those Moravian organizations that refer to historical figures).

The roots of current Slavic Moravian national and regional consciousness must be sought in the state that is called by contemporary chroniclers 'Great Moravia,' whose exact location is a matter of controversy among historians. This state existed in the ninth and tenth centuries AD, and was governed by three powerful rulers whom the Moravian movement acknowledges to this day: Mojmir, Rostislav, and Svatopluk. During Rostislav's rule, Byzantine missionaries Cyril and Methodius (the patron saints of Moravia) Christianized the state.²¹ The present-day Czech and Slovak republics both recognize the traditions of Great Moravia.

¹⁸ This was the case in the Albanian movement in Kosovo, where at the beginning of the 1990s currents were apparent inspired by the legacy of collaboration with Nazism, but also those inspired by 'Enverism,' namely the Alban communist ideology. See Miroslav Mareš, 'The Extreme Right in Eastern Europe and Territorial Issues,' *Central European Political Studies Review* 2–3 (2009): 82–106, accessed April 22, 2012 <http://www.cepsr.com/dwnld/mares2009020301.pdf>; Věra Stojarová, *Současné bezpečnostní hrozby západního Balkánu: Kritická analýza konceptu bezpečnosti Kodaňské školy* [Contemporary Security Threats in Western Balkans: A Critical Analysis of the Copenhagen School Concept of Security] (Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2007), 86.

¹⁹ Mark M. Hull, *Irish Secrets: German Espionage in Wartime Ireland 1939–1945* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003).

²⁰ Lubomír E. Havlík, *Morava–k státoprávnímu postavení země v průběhu věků* [Moravia: its constitutional position during the ages] (Brno: Jota, 1993).

²¹ Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *Češi a země koruny české* [The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown] (Praha: Academia, 2008), 31–34.

From the middle of the tenth century, Moravia was part of the Bohemian²² state, in which it nevertheless held a specific status. Together with Bohemia proper and Silesia, it was part of the ‘Lands of the Bohemian Crown.’ Until 1806, the Bohemian state was part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and there had been fairly strong migration from Germany to Moravia. In 1182, Moravia obtained the status of margraviate, which enjoyed substantial autonomy at the beginning of the seventeenth century when its identity became partially intertwined with the Protestant faith.²³ A large wave of German settlers also arrived in Moravia.

Between 1620 and 1918, Moravia was a subordinate part of the Habsburg monarchy; however, it retained its independent diet and status as margraviate. When in the nineteenth century, under the influence of a wave of European nationalism, many Slavic nations experienced what is usually called a ‘national revival,’ an independent Moravian nation also began to constitute itself. Due to their contacts with the Czech nation, however, the Moravians fused with the Czechs, although they kept their particularities (though not language as such, only dialects). Importantly, Moravian identity was tied up with the land and was therefore also recognized by the Moravian Germans.²⁴

When Czechoslovakia was created in 1918, it became Central Europe’s first multinational democratic state, one in which the idea of the Czechoslovak nation as the main bearer of statehood dominated. For a short time in 1918, a separatist German province, Deutsch-Südmähren, existed in South Moravia, with a counterpart in North Moravia and partially in Silesia, namely the Sudetenland province. Both sought to be joined with the German Austria, but within a few weeks were occupied by the Czechoslovak army.²⁵

In Czechoslovakia, the Moravian–Silesian *Land* was created as an administrative unit covering the territory of the former margraviate. Only a small

²²) [Translator’s note:] In Czech there is only one adjective for the English terms ‘Bohemian’ and ‘Czech’: namely, ‘český.’ I could have rendered ‘český stát’ as ‘the Czech state,’ but decided to prefer the adjective ‘Bohemian’ when the historical lands are meant, and ‘Czech’ when the modern nation-state is meant. Things are not so simple when it comes to nouns. ‘Bohemia’ has Latin origins, whereas ‘Čechy,’ its Czech cognate, is derived from the name of the Slavic Czech tribe. The term ‘Bohemia’ is rarely used in Czech, presumably because of its reference to the territory rather than the Czech nation; however it is always used to translate ‘Čechy,’ even in modern contexts—as in ‘the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia.’ One strange exception to this exclusion of the word ‘Bohemia’ from the Czech language is ‘bohemista,’ a scholar of Czech language, and the discipline, ‘bohemistika.’

²³) František Honzák, Marek Pečenka, František Stellner and Jitka Vlčková, *Evropa v proměnách staletí* [Europe Through the Centuries] (Praha: Libri, 2001), 406–07.

²⁴) Miloš Řepa, *Moravané nebo Češi? Vývoj českého národního vědomí na Moravě v 19. století* [Moravians or Czechs? The Development of Czech National Consciousness in Moravia in Nineteenth Century] (Brno: Doplněk, 2002).

²⁵) Josef Tomeš, *Slovník k politickým dějinám Československa 1918–1992* [Dictionary of Czechoslovak Political History 1918–1992] (Prague: Budka, 1994), 45.

number of Moravian fascists exhibited tendencies toward Moravian autonomy (see below). Inter-ethnic relations in Czechoslovakia were nevertheless tense, albeit for different reasons. Disputes with the representatives of the German minority (supported by Nazi Germany, among others) and the Slovak disapproval of Czech domination, eventually led to the disintegration of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, the occupation of the Czech lands (including Moravia), and the establishment of independent Slovakia.²⁶

The so called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, dominated by Nazis, was constituted on part of the territory of the Czech lands, but some of South and North Moravia became direct parts of the German Reich. In 1945, the territory of Moravia was liberated by the Red Army and most of the German population was subsequently expelled.²⁷ From 1945, Czechoslovakia once again existed as an independent country, and the Moravian–Silesian *Land* was likewise reintroduced as an administrative unit. Following the communist seizure of power in 1948, the *Land* was abolished. From 1960 onward, two Moravian regions existed as administrative units. In the atmosphere of thaw toward the end of the 1960s, when the power grip was loosened, a Society for Moravia and Silesia was founded with the aim of re-establishing the *Land*, but the communists suspended its activities.²⁸

The Moravian movement began to form itself anew in the Christian anti-communist dissent of the 1980s. Its greatest blossoming so far occurred after the fall of communism, when the idea of Moravian regionalism and partially also nationalism was carried forward by the centrist *Hnutí za samosprávnou demokracii—Společnost pro Moravu a Slezsko* [Movement for Self-Governing Democracy—Society for Moravia and Silesia]. In the first free elections (in 1990), it polled ten percent of the vote. Internal disputes within the movement led to its gradual marginalization, however, and it has lacked parliamentary representation since 1996.²⁹

The Moravian movement was not successful in its bid to renew the Moravian–Silesian *Land*, not even after the disintegration of Czechoslovakia in 1992. In 1997, regions were instituted in the Czech Republic that do not respect the historical boundaries of Moravia. Moravian regional and ethnic

²⁶ Pavel Maršálek, *Protektorát Čechy a Morava* [Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia] (Praha: Karolinum, 2002), 13–15.

²⁷ Tomáš Staněk, *Perzekuce 1945* [Persecution 1945] (Praha: Institut pro středoevropskou politiku a kulturu, 1996).

²⁸ Jiří Pernes, 'Příliš nebezpečná Morava? Moravský patriotismus v poválečném Československu (1945–1969)' [Moravia, too dangerous? Moravian patriotism in post-war Czechoslovakia (1945–1969)], *Soudobé dějiny*, 3 (2010): 392–420.

²⁹ Vít Hloušek and Lubomír Kopeček, *Konfliktní demokracie: Moderní masová politika ve střední Evropě* [Conflict Democracy: Modern Mass Politics in Central Europe] (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2004), 91.

identity persists, however, as shown by the 2011 census: Of the Czech Republic's ten million inhabitants, about six hundred thousand claimed Moravian nationality.³⁰

A strong Moravian patriotism has therefore been apparent since the mid-nineteenth century, and for a certain part of the population it has occasionally turned into nationalism and even separatism. The Moravian question has been, and continues to be, an issue on which various political currents attempt to establish themselves, including the neo-fascists and the neo-Nazis.

Moravian fascism of the 1920s and 1930s

Fascism in the Czech lands has important roots in Central Moravia, where a group that called itself the *Českoslovenští fašisté* [Czechoslovak Fascists] was founded in the town of Holešov in 1922, inspired by contemporary events in Italy. As its name suggests, this group did not have a distinctively Moravian identity, and it spread to other places in Czechoslovakia. Together with the mostly Prague-based *Národní hnutí* [National Movement] and *Červenobílí* [Red–Whites], it stood at the inception of the *Národní obec fašistická* [NOF; National Fascist Community], the latter being the most important Czech fascist party in Czechoslovakia between the wars.³¹

The National Fascist Community was created by a merger of several groupuscules in March 1926, and in 1927 it became a political party. It was led by Radola Gajda, formerly a general of the Czechoslovak Legion in Siberia, who was mired in controversy with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the president of the Czechoslovak republic at the time. The NOF was anti-Semitic, anti-communist, and until the end of the 1930s, mostly anti-German, something that was connected with the nationalist disputes of the time. The party polled between 0.9 and 2 percent countrywide; its position in the party system was therefore weak.³²

Radola Gajda had disputes with local functionaries, which led to some splintering within the party. Although the new parties that emerged were entirely marginal, some of them are interesting in terms of their promotion of Moravian identity.

³⁰ Český statistický úřad [Czech Statistical Office], *Vývoj v zrcadle výsledků sčítání lidu, domů a bytů 2011* [Development in the Mirror of the Results of the Census of People, Houses and Apartments 2011], accessed April 23, 2012, [http://www.czso.cz/sldb2011/redakce.nsf/i/plakat_s_predbeznymi_vysledky_slbd_2011/\\$File/CSU%20CR.pdf](http://www.czso.cz/sldb2011/redakce.nsf/i/plakat_s_predbeznymi_vysledky_slbd_2011/$File/CSU%20CR.pdf).

³¹ Pavel Baloun, *Vznik českého fašismu (1921–1926)* [Birth of Czech Fascism (1921–26)], *Historie–otázky–problémy* [History–Questions–Problems], 1 (2010): 44–83.

³² Věra Olivová, *Dějiny první republiky* [History of the First Czechoslovak Republic] (Prague: Karolinum, 2000).

Chief among these is the small group *Rodobrana* [Defense of the Fatherland], which was established in 1926 and had twenty members. This organization supported the renewal of the Great Moravian Empire, which would join together Moravia and Slovakia; Bohemia was to be granted autonomy.³³ *Rodobrana* was strongly anti-Semitic and Catholic. The influence of Catholicism was fairly strong in Moravian fascism generally, but not in Bohemia, where strong anticlerical tendencies existed, drawing on the legacy of the fifteenth-century Hussite movement. *Rodobrana* had narrow links with the *Slovenská lidová strana* [Slovak People's Party], which had obvious clero-fascist tendencies. *Rodobrana* even became an independent association within this Slovak autonomist party,³⁴ but disbanded after a few months.

Rodobrana cooperated and later partially merged with the *Moravská národní obec fašistická* [MNOF; Moravian National Fascist Community], which itself split from NOF in 1926. Headed by Jan Navrátil, this party—which had around five hundred members—was not focused on Moravian separatism or the imperialist project of renewing the Great Moravian Empire; rather, the ‘Moravian’ in its name denoted the territoriality of its activity. Moreover, it was not active for very long; it re-merged with NOF in 1927. Disputes appeared within the student movement, too, where the *Zemské fašistické studentské sdružení pro Moravu a Slezsko* [Provincial Fascist Student Association for Moravia and Silesia] operated briefly in 1927 (it had several dozen members). The strong position of Moravian organizations (around thirty percent of members in the whole of Czechoslovakia)³⁵ also led to dissension in the subsequent period, but these organizations no longer featured elements of Moravian regionalism or separatism.³⁶ At the turn of the 1930s, the identity of Great Moravia was promoted only by the tiny *Legie Svatoplukova* [Svatopluk's Legion] in Uherské Hradiště, headed by former *Rodobrana* leader Štěpán Slavotínek and boasting only between ten and twenty members.³⁷

As indicated above, in Moravia a strong foundation (around nine thousand members)³⁸ was created for the fascist movement, which was partially

³³ Suchánek, *Organizace*, 18.

³⁴ Pavel Kotlán, *Gajdova (ne)věrná Morava* [Gajda's (un)faithful Moravia] (Brno: Institut vzdělávání Sokrates, 2009), 46.

³⁵ Adam Krumník, *Komparace české Národní obce fašistické a polského Národně-radikálního tábora* [Comparison of the Czech National Fascist Community and the Polish Radical National Camp] (Master's thesis, Univerzita Palackého, 2011), 36, accessed January 25, 2013, http://theses.cz/id/cx8kjr/diplomov_prce_Adam_Krumnikl.pdf; Suchánek, *Organizace*, 46–47.

³⁶ Eva Fargašová, ‘Nástin vývoje organizací českého fašistického hnutí v letech 1921–1929’ [Outline of the Organizational Development of Czech Fascism in the Years 1919–29], in *Sborník k dějinám 19. a 20. století* [An Anthology of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History], ed. Josef Harna (Praha: Ústav československých a světových dějin ČSAV, 1989), 135–61.

³⁷ Suchánek, *Organizace*, 18.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

intertwined with Catholic clerical fascism. A great proportion of the fascists did not seek disputes with the Czech section of the NOF. Indeed Moravia, specifically its capital Brno, was to be the starting point of the Czech equivalent of the March on Rome. In 1933, a group of fascists led by a Moravian activist of NOF for many years, army officer Ladislav Kobsinek, decided to attack the Brno-Židenice barracks and elicit a military mutiny that they hoped would quickly spread throughout Czechoslovakia. The plan failed and the putsch was quickly defeated.³⁹

In addition to the fascism of Slavic provenance (whether its identity was Moravian or Czech), German National Socialism also appeared in Moravia, but it was primarily pan-German in character and did not contain significant elements of identity tied up with the Moravian land. This was also true of the policy of the strong Sudeten German Party, which was connected with the Sudeten territory and German culture. The aim of those Germans oriented toward National Socialism was unification with Germany; either of areas close to the borders (the so-called Sudetenland) or the whole area of Bohemia and Moravia. In 1938, following the Munich Agreement, the borderlands of Bohemia and Moravia were ceded to Germany without a fight.⁴⁰

Pro-Slovak irredentism in Moravian Slovakia

From October 1938 to March 1939, the so-called Second Czechoslovak Republic existed on what remained of the Czechoslovak territory. Given Slovakia's autonomy, the official name was Czecho-Slovakia; yet, unlike the First Republic that had preceded it, this was not a democratic state. It was an authoritarian system in which only two parties were permitted in the Czech lands (NOF was integrated into the *Strana národní jednoty* [Party of National Unity]).⁴¹ In Slovakia, Hlinka's Slovak People's Party and parties of the Hungarian and German minorities operated.

The increasing Slovak desire for complete independence, the main flag-bearer of which was the clero-fascist People's Party, had specific consequences for one movement in Moravia, namely the folklore movement, which until then had not been active in fascism. Its main representative became the *Moravsko-Slovenská společnost* [Moravian–Slovak Society], which was created in 1936 but exhibited fascist tendencies only from the fall of 1938, when a NOF

³⁹ Ivo Pejčoch, 'Židenický puč' [Židenice putsch], *Historie a vojenství*, 4 (2006): 20–36.

⁴⁰ Václav Kural and František Vašek, *Hitlerova odložená válka za zničení ČSR* [Hitler's Delayed War to Destroy Czechoslovakia] (Praha: Academia, 2008).

⁴¹ Jan Rataj, *O autoritativní národní stát: Ideologické proměny české politiky v druhé republice 1938–1939* [For an Authoritarian Nation-state: Ideological Transformations of Czech Politics During the Second Republic 1938–39] (Praha: Karolinum, 1997).

member joined the society. From its midst emerged the irredentist *Národní výbor Moravského Slovácka* [National Committee of Moravian Slovakia].⁴² A small circle (around ten people) was active in Bratislava (Slovakia) under the leadership of Jan Ryba, who was a member of the Slovak paramilitary Hlinka Guard and planned to create its counterpart, the Moravian Guard.⁴³

Toward the end of 1938, Ryba's circle aimed to join the border region in South Moravia (the so-called Moravian Slovakia) to the autonomous Slovakia, and after March 1939, to the independent Slovak state (where a clerical fascist regime ruled). Ryba was supported by the Slovak clerical fascist circles and the *Vědecká společnost pro zahraniční Slováky* [Scholarly Society for Slovaks Abroad].⁴⁴ The arguments for the annexation were nationalist in character and drew partially on the traditions of the Great Moravian Empire. The goal was to unify the Slovak nation, of which the Moravian Slovaks were understood to constitute a part.

But during the existence of independent Czechoslovakia, these endeavors came to naught. When Bohemia and Moravia were occupied by German armies, a *Národní rada Moravských Slováků* [National Council of Moravian Slovaks] sought annexation of the territory so that it would become part of the new independent Slovak state, whose leadership likewise 'supported [the idea of] Great Slovakia.'⁴⁵ Nazi Germany briskly rejected the proposal, however, with SS Obergruppenführer Karl Hermann Frank even calling these Slovak efforts 'interference in matters internal to the Reich.'⁴⁶ It was for this reason that serious-minded proposals from both Slovaks and Moravians to annex Moravian Slovakia to Slovakia ceased in the spring of 1939. The 1938–39 events nevertheless confirmed the ideological proximity of at least some of the Moravian and Slovak fascists.

Moravian fascism and National Socialism, 1939–45

When the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established, the Czech and Moravians fascists took it as an opportunity to increase their influence.

⁴² Ivo Pejčoch, *Fašismus v českých zemích: Fašistické a nacionálně-socialistické strany a hnutí v Čechách a na Moravě 1922–1945* [Fascism in the Czech Lands: Fascist and National Socialist Parties and Movements in Bohemia and Moravia 1922–45] (Praha: Academia, 2011), 255–57.

⁴³ Suchánek, *Organizace*, 100.

⁴⁴ Tomáš Pasák, *Český fašismus 1922–1945 a kolaborace 1939–1945* [Czech Fascism 1922–45 and Collaboration 1939–45] (Praha: Práh, 1999), 287.

⁴⁵ Pejčoch, *Fašismus*, 258.

⁴⁶ Milan S. Ďurica, 'Vznik a trvanie prvého slovenského štátu: Slovenská republika v rokoch 1939–1945' [The Establishment and Duration of the First Slovak State: Slovak Republic Between 1939 and 1945], in *Slovenská republika (1939–1945)* [Slovak Republic (1939–45)], ed. Ján Bobák (Bratislava: Matica slovenská, 2000), 19–46.

They had already set up the Czech National Committee in Prague under the leadership of Radola Gajda on March 15, 1939, and made a claim on power.⁴⁷ But the German occupying forces refused to share their power with adventurers who lacked credibility in society and could easily disrupt the management of an area considered to be ‘the Reich’s armory.’ They therefore established a protectorate administration, in which Czech fascists played almost no role.

The latter took it very badly and organized a campaign against the main organization within the protectorate, the *Národní souručenství* [National Partnership]. The German occupying power used the Czech fascists to put pressure on Czech politicians and civil servants who were deemed insufficiently loyal. When the loyal administration of the protectorate had been secured, most of the fascist groupuscules in Bohemia and Moravia were done away with in 1942–43, and a system of organizations controlled by the government and serving the Nazi plans was created. The *Kuratorium pro výchovu mládeže v Čechách a na Moravě* [Council for the Education of Youth in Bohemia and Moravia] played an important role in this organization.⁴⁸

In Moravia, where the fascist movement was traditionally comparatively strong, opposition against Prague-based Gajda leadership appeared already in 1939, with Gajda being censured as incompetent. This led to the appearance of splinter groups, whose activities were limited to parts of Moravia, mainly around Brno and Ostrava. The most important of these was the *Národní tábor fašistický* [NTF; National Fascist Camp], which organized several anti-Semitic riots in the center of Brno between May and August 1939 (around a hundred Moravian fascists participated in them).⁴⁹

But personal and ideological disagreements arose within Moravian fascist circles, too. In the struggle with their political opponents, some activists, in particular Karel Mario, a NTF member, began to stress the Moravian identity and gradually even to embrace separatist anti-Czech positions.⁵⁰ They progressively abandoned the fascist identity and espoused Moravian National Socialism, understood as an ideology complementary to the Nazi New Order of Europe, and operated in Moravia alongside organizations that did not conceive of themselves as purely Moravian but enjoyed a strong base in the region, such as the *Národní hnutí* [National Movement] and its paramilitary branch *Černé šíky* [Black Formations], the National Fascist Community, the *Národní socialistická česká dělnická a rolnická strana—Strana zeleného hákového kříže*

⁴⁷ Antonín Klimek and Petr Hoffman, *Vítěz, který prohrál: Generál Radola Gajda* [The Victor who Lost: General Radola Gajda] (Praha: Paseka, 1995), 278–79.

⁴⁸ Vlastislav Kroupa, Zdeněk Huňáček, Jiří Jožák, and Jan Stříbrný, *Český antifašismus a odboj: Slovníková příručka* [Czech Anti-Fascism and Resistance: A Reference Book] (Praha: Naše vojsko, 1988), 53–54.

⁴⁹ Pejčoch, *Fašismus*, 210–11.

⁵⁰ Suchánek, *Organizace*, 65.

[National Socialist Czech Workers' and Agrarian Party—Party of the Green Swastika], the *České árijské hnutí* [Czech Aryan Movement], the *Národně socialistická garda slovenských aktivistů* [National Socialist Guard of Slovak Activists], and others.⁵¹

Moravian National Socialism began to take shape in an organization called the *Zemské vedení Moravských fašistů—Autonomní složka strany českých fašistů v Brně* [ZVMF–ASSČF; Provincial leadership of Moravian Fascists—Autonomous Unit of the Czech Fascist Party in Brno], which was founded on January 4, 1940, by Josef Miroslav Tichý and Eduard Pitlík, who were also the party leaders. Both men immediately began to cooperate with the Nazi authorities. The creation of the new party and its program were communicated to the Brno NSDAP leader without delay, and the party was duly granted three rooms in the clubhouse of the Nazi organization *Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrerkorps*.

The constitutive meeting of the ZVMF took place on February 10, 1940. About sixty sympathizers were present at the meeting, which was also a recruiting drive. Tichý declared several points of the program: the ZVMF's aims were, among other things, the 'complete destruction of freemasons, uncompromising elimination of corruptionists in politics and the economy, including confiscation of the property of all former politicians and rich businessmen ... elimination of Jewishness ... cooperation with NSDAP, German authorities, and the German nation ... rejection and eradication of emigration.'⁵² The ZVMF declared Moravia to be an autonomous part of the Third Reich, and that Adolf Hitler should be recognized as the *Führer*. The party's activities were limited to the environs of Brno and Tišnov. It had about 240 registered members, many of whom had previously been active in other fascist organizations.

Within two months, the ZVMF became embroiled in personal disputes, and Tichý left the organization. Under Pitlík's leadership, in March 1940 the organization renamed itself the *Moravští národní socialisté* [Moravian National Socialists], and later the *Moravská nacionální socialistická strana* [MNSS; Moravian National Socialist Party]. It had about three hundred members.⁵³

The aim of MNSS was to obtain autonomy for Moravia within the Third Reich and to introduce Moravian nationality as an alternative to the Czech one. Many of the party's materials speak directly about the 'Moravian nation' and 'National Socialist Moravia.' The party was strongly anti-Semitic. Only those of 'Aryan race, regardless of religion' could become members, who greeted each other with a raised right hand and said *Vůdci zdar!*, the Czech

⁵¹ Ibid., 54–113.

⁵² Miroslav Mareš, Marek Suchánek, 'Moravská nacionální socialistická strana' [Moravian National Socialist Party], *Středoevropské politické studie*, 2–3 (2003), accessed April 24, 2012, <http://www.cepsr.com/clanek.php?ID=171>.

⁵³ Kroupa, Huňáček, Jožák, and Stříbrný, *Český*, 229.

equivalent of ‘Hail Hitler!’ The party created from its members what it called the *Ochranné sbory* [Protective Corps], which was modeled on the SA, and the *Elitní sbory* [Elite Corps], which was to parallel the SS. These corps had uniforms that bore the Moravian Eagle rather than the Nazi symbolism. They were short-lived, however, as they were soon dissolved by the authorities and their uniforms were banned. The party ceased its activities in 1942;⁵⁴ Pitlík then adopted German nationality and joined the Wehrmacht. He died on the Eastern front on January 8, 1945.⁵⁵

The small organization *Hlavní vedení protektorátních fašistů* [Headquarters of the Protectorate’s Fascists], whose approximately fifty members sometimes called themselves the *Protektorátní fašisté* [Protectorate’s Fascists], were active in Brno in the summer of 1940. The organization likewise claimed Moravian identity, and specifically the tradition of the Great Moravian Empire. It advocated the re-establishment of this empire as a defensive measure against the Soviet Union. The territory of pre-war Czechoslovakia was to be included in this empire, with Brno as its capital. But the protectorate and occupation authorities enjoined this obscure organization from carrying out its propaganda activities.⁵⁶ The activities of other small (several-hundred-member) fascist and National Socialist groupings were similarly repressed by 1943, to the benefit of unified, protectorate-wide organizations created by the state.

An exception to this was the circle around the organization *Národopisná Morava* [NM; Ethnographic Moravia], which was active mainly in Moravian Slovakia and Central Moravia. Some of its activists had previously been engaged in irredentism from which Slovakia was to benefit, as described in the previous section. A few weeks into the German occupation, many of them changed their minds and became fully loyal to the Third Reich.

NM, which had been founded by Jan Uprka in June 1939, criticized the Czech authorities in the Protectorate, in particular the National Partnership, and intended to promote Moravian identity in terms of a pro-German orientation. But those politicians who openly professed separatism had already lost influence in the organization by the turn of 1940, and NM became loyal to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Its members were also active in other collaborationist groups, such as the *Liga proti bolševismu* [League against Bolshevism].⁵⁷

Until 1945, NM was used to provide the various events organized by the Protectorate and the occupation authorities with ethnographic coloring. In 1942, a delegation from NM dressed in Moravian Slovakian folk costumes stood

⁵⁴) Mareš and Suchánek, *Moravská*, 3.

⁵⁵) Pejčoch, *Fašismus*, 268.

⁵⁶) Suchánek, *Organizace*, 65

⁵⁷) Kroupa, Huňáček, Jožák, and Stříbrný, *Český*, 256–57.

by the bier of the assassinated Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich. NM also demanded the cleansing of Moravian Slovakia of Jews, even though only a small number (around five thousand) lived in the region.⁵⁸

NM's collaborationism is equally apparent from its 1941 letter to Adolf Hitler, in which the Moravian Slovakian nationalists pleaded with the *Führer* to 'accept them as volunteers for the struggle against the Jewish–Bolshevik Russia.' The occupation and protectorate authorities rejected this offer, however.⁵⁹ In 1945, several former functionaries of the Moravian fascist and National Socialists groups became involved in the *Svatováclavská dobrovolnická rota* [Voluntary Company of St. Wenceslas], which was permitted by the Nazis. But the Company was created in the Czech lands (from approximately eighty volunteers) and contained no elements of Moravian identity.⁶⁰

In April 1939, a small organization with no more than a dozen members—*Moravská rodobrana* [Defense of the Moravian Fatherland], a society for tradition, folkish particularity, and cottage industry—was created in Prostějov. In its constitutive memorandum, the organization criticized the neglect of Moravia by the Czechs and endeavored to have Moravia integrated into the Ostmark (i.e., the part of the Reich administered from Vienna). It espoused the principle of *Blut und Boden* [Blood and Soil] and demanded that the Reich's anti-Jewish measures be introduced. Hoping to cooperate closely with the NSDAP, it asked the occupying power for registration. The authorities did not recommend the designation 'Defense of the Moravian Fatherland,' however, and the organization ceased its activities.⁶¹

Nazi use of Moravian identity

The organization NM fit well with the Nazi's plans to weaken the Czech element in Moravia by supporting the identity of various Moravian tribes or regions (Moravian Slovakia, Horácko, Haná, Valašsko, etc.).⁶² The idea of establishing a separate 'Moravia Protectorate' was not realized, however (it was allegedly discussed with Adolf Hitler in 1939–41).⁶³ Although the occupying

⁵⁸ Pejšoch, *Fašismus*, 262.

⁵⁹ Mezihorák, *Hry*, 99–100.

⁶⁰ Ivo Pejšoch, *Armády českých politiků: České polovojenské jednotky 1918–1945* [Armies of the Czech Politicians: Czech Paramilitary Units 1918–45] (Cheb: Svět křídel, 2009), 152–61.

⁶¹ Mezihorák, *Hry*, 47–48.

⁶² Büro des Staatsekretärs beim Reichsprotektor in Böhmen und Mähren, *Stammliche Differenzierung der slawischen Bevölkerung Mährens*, 1941. Národní archiv [National Archive]. <http://www.badatelna.cz/>, accessed April 24, 2012.

⁶³ Jan Rychlík, 'Hnutí za připojení Slovácka ke Slovensku v letech 1938–1941' [Movement for the annexation of the Slovácko region to Slovakia in 1938–41], in *Slovácko XXXIII–XXIV*, ed. Ivo Frolec (Uherské Hradiště: Slovácké muzeum v Uherském Hradišti, 1992), 75–95.

power never openly admitted it to the Slavic Moravian activists, the overall goal was to Germanize Moravia, a demand that was also voiced by some Moravian Germans.⁶⁴ The ultimate goal was to be achieved by enlarging the German-speaking circles and, where the Slavic population was strong, supporting their tribal identity. A broader geopolitical goal was that Germanized Moravia would serve to interconnect the German element in the areas defined by the basins of the rivers Danube and Oder, that is, the Austrian and Silesian Germans.⁶⁵

One of the means of this Germanization was the creation of a large area for military exercises in the *Drahanská vrchovina* [Drahany Highlands], substantially enlarging the space used there for this purpose by the pre-war Czechoslovak army. Thirty-three Czech villages in the districts of Vyškov, Prostějov, and Boskovice were displaced; the move affected 4,785 households comprising 18,558 people.⁶⁶

When the front line began to approach the Moravian territory and the partisan movement began to strengthen in Moravia and Slovakia, the Nazis led by the Reich minister for Bohemia and Moravia, Karl Hermann Frank, sought to make use of Moravian identity to establish armed paramilitary forces composed of members of Moravia's Slavic population. The partisans demanded food and supplies from the local population, and some of them committed various excesses, and the authorities were quick to employ this in anti-partisan propaganda. The German occupying power generally described the struggle against partisans as *Bandenbekämpfung* [bandit fighting]. Anti-communist motives were also important, as many partisan units were led by Soviet soldiers or by communists.

On October 20, 1944, the *Mährische Heimatschutz* [Moravian Home Defense] was created on the orders of the Protectorate's minister of the Interior and the police commander-in-chief. Together with regular security forces, the *Heimatschutz* was to carry out sentry duty, on the lookout for partisans. Constituted from the Slavic civilian population, the *Mährische* in the organization's title referred to territory rather than an ethnic/national identity. The documents spoke of utilizing Czech inhabitants in the borderlands between Moravia and Slovakia.⁶⁷ Units were created in several districts where

⁶⁴ Josef Bartoš, Miloš Trapl, *Dějiny Moravy. Díl IV. Svobodný stát a okupace*. [History of Moravia. Part IV. Free State and Occupation] (Brno: Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost v Brně, 2004), 194–96.

⁶⁵ Václav Král, Karel Fremund, *Chtěli nás vyhubit* [They wanted to exterminate us], (Praha: Naše vojsko. Český svaz protifašistických bojovníků, 1961), 147.

⁶⁶ Bartoš, Trapl, *Dějiny*, 196.

⁶⁷ René Küpper, *Karl Hermann Frank (1898-1946): Politische Biographie eines sudetendeutsches Nationalsozialisten* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 336–37.

the partisan movement was strong, but suffered from weak efficiency and lack of engagement on the part of the locals.⁶⁸

To defend Moravia, *Kampfverband Mähren* was created in 1945 from the SS units. Sometimes also called *Panzergrenadier Regiment 3 'Siegmann'* [Siegmann 3rd Mechanized Infantry Regiment] after its commander, it was sent to fight on the front between Vienna and Brno.⁶⁹ The designation of these units was therefore related to the region and not to the national identity of their members. In April 1945, units of this *Kampfverband* were incorporated into the SS division *Böhmen und Mähren*. Although primarily intended for the *Volksdeutsche*, around one hundred Czech and Moravian collaborationists who had adopted German citizenship joined the division,⁷⁰ which was entirely obliterated in April 1945 during the fighting in Lower Austria and South Moravia.⁷¹

Moravian fascism and National Socialism in the postwar period

Immediately after fascism had been vanquished, the process of *národní očista* [national cleansing] began, the goal of which was to deal with so-called traitors and collaborationists. A number of collaborationists from Moravian fascist and Nazi organizations stood before extraordinary courts and received various sentences, including the death sentence. For instance, in 1947 one of the leaders of the Moravian fascists, J. M. Tichý, was executed, primarily because he had denounced people to the Gestapo.⁷² By contrast, ordinary functionaries and members of fascist movements whose activities had not directly caused the death or persecution of others were often acquitted.⁷³

The promotion of a Moravian identity that was linked with a fascist and National Socialist background ceased entirely after the war. Between 1945 and 1947, the German population was expelled from Czechoslovakia, and German land-based (as opposed to nation-based) Moravian patriotism with extreme right leanings was cultivated during the Cold War by some of the Sudeten German expellee organizations in Germany and Austria.

⁶⁸ Vladimír Fic, 'Protipartyzánská opatření fašistických okupantů na východní Moravě a ve Slezsku v letech 1944–1945' [Anti-Partisan Measures of the Fascist Occupiers in East Moravia and Silesia in the Years 1944–45], in *Morava v boji proti fašismu II* [Moravia in the Struggle Against Fascism II] (Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum Oddělení novodobých dějin, 1990), 77–100.

⁶⁹ Franz Jordan, *April 1945: Die Kämpfe im nordöstlichen Niederösterreich* (Salzburg: Österreichischer Miliz-Verlag, 2003), 117.

⁷⁰ Beax, *Válečné nálezy–Česko* [War Finds in the Czech Republic] (Praha: Libro Nero, 2011), 65.

⁷¹ Jordan, *April*, 117–18.

⁷² Pejčoch, *Fašismus*, 268–69.

⁷³ Suchánek, *Organizace*, 116.

During the era of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia (1948–89), no manifestations of fascism or Nazism featuring Moravian identity were visible although some youth gangs espousing neo-Nazism were active in Moravia: in the 1960s, the Czechoslovak Nazi Party,⁷⁴ and in the 1980s, *Totenkopf* [Skull].⁷⁵ Some of the Catholic dissent, however, was close to the extreme right.

As indicated, since 1989 there has been a substantial increase in Moravian political awareness, the mainstream of which did not have any fascist tendencies whatsoever at the time of its greatest successes in 1990. The strongest Moravian party, the *Hnutí za samosprávnou demokracii – Společnost pro Moravu a Slezsko* [Movement for Self-Governing Democracy—Society for Moravia and Silesia], combined Moravian regional and ethnic/national identity with a center-left political program.

But the rise of ‘Moravianness’ also provided opportunities for more radical parties, such as the *Moravská národní strana* [MNS; Moravian National Party] and the *Moravskoslezské hnutí* [MSH; Moravian–Silesian Movement]. Although not espousing a specific ideology in the case of the latter, and claiming the traditions of democratic conservative right in the case of the former,⁷⁶ these parties have cooperated with extreme right groupings.

Moreover, the growing awareness of a Moravian identity was also noticed by the extreme right *Sdružení pro republiku–Republikánská strana Československa* [SPR–RSČ; Association for the Republic–Republican Party of Czechoslovakia], led by the populist Miroslav Sládek. This countrywide party had begun to support Moravian demands for the equal standing of Moravia in the Czechoslovak federation, and after the demise of the federation, it continued to do so in the independent Czech Republic. The party even moved its official seat from Prague to Brno. Between 1992 and 1998, SPR–RSČ enjoyed parliamentary representation.⁷⁷

When it became apparent at the end of 1992 that the Moravian–Silesian *Land* would not be renewed as an administrative unit within the Czech Republic, the radical Moravians of the MNS, MSH, and SPR–RSČ responded resolutely by creating a Moravian–Silesian diet and a Moravian–Silesian government. These institutions had no legal standing whatsoever, and as such elicited sharp dismissal by the government as well as by the centrist current of

⁷⁴ Czech translation: *Československá nacistická strana*, but the name in English was used.

⁷⁵ Miroslav Mareš, *Pravicový extremismus a radikalismus v České republice* [Right Wing Extremism and Radicalism in the Czech Republic] (Brno: Barrister & Principal, Centrum strategických studií, 2003), 164–65.

⁷⁶ Lubomír Kopeček, *Éra nevinnosti: Česká politika 1989–1997* [The Age of Innocence: Czech Politics 1989–97] (Brno: Barrister & Principal, 2011), 106.

⁷⁷ Josef Smolík, ‘Far right-wing political parties in the Czech Republic: heterogeneity, cooperation, competition,’ *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences*, 2 (2011): 99–111, accessed April 28, 2012, http://revue.kpol.ff.ucm.sk/rocnik-11/cislo-2/smolik_studia.pdf.

the Moravian movement. Already by mid-1993, the diet and government were inactive,⁷⁸ and discord had arisen between Sládek and the representatives of the two Moravian parties.

Yet, the SPR–RSC continued to play the Moravian card until the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, when it reduced its activities. It must be stressed that the activities of the Moravian–Silesian diet and government did not avow the historical tradition of Moravian fascism. The same is true of the discussions of the ‘Moravian question’ on the pages of the extreme right Catholic periodicals *Dnešek* [*Today*] and *Nový dnešek* [*New Today*] in the 1990s, in which members of the MNS and the *Moravské a slezské informační centrum* [MaSIC; Moravian and Silesian Information Center] took part. The leading figure of these anti-Semitic periodicals, František Kašpárek, had described the Moravian calls for autonomy or independence and their anti-Czech diatribes as useless, ‘trifling disputes.’⁷⁹

Although small groups have appeared that wished to promote the ideas of Moravian independence by violent means, they have not been fascist in character. However, the *Moravsko-slezská osvobozenecká armáda* [MSOA; Moravian–Silesian Liberation Army] did espouse rightist views, criticizing communism and the left in general. Supposedly initiated by former SPR–RSC members in North and Central Moravia, its activities did not go beyond letter threats to opponents of the Moravian idea. The same is true for its successors, the *Moravská zemská armáda* [MZA; Moravian Land Army] and the *Moravská osvobozenecká armáda* [MOA; Moravian Liberation Army]. The latter even rejected pan-Germanism and called for the suppression of Czech fascist groups.⁸⁰ It was not therefore heir to either traditional Moravian fascism or Nazism.

Elements of traditional Czech fascism with a Moravian regional awareness were present, however, in the Moravian section of the *Hnutí národního sjednocení* [HNS; Movement for National Unity], which was founded in 1995 by Brno-based individuals with clero-fascist views, and had around thirty members. The movement claimed the tradition of Gajda’s fascism during the First Czechoslovak Republic. Although it temporarily had a branch in Bohemia, it carried out most of its activities in Moravia. It even intended to approach Catholic skinheads (skinheads with a Czech or Moravian Slavic nationalist and Catholic ideological background) but, unlike in Poland, these are almost non-existent in the Czech Republic. Even in its heyday, the HNS had only about fifty

⁷⁸ Pavlína Springerová, *Analýza vývoje a činnosti moravistických politických subjektů v letech 1989–2005* [Analysis of Development and Activity of Moravian Political Subjects in the Years 1989–2005] (Brno: Centro pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2010) 116–18.

⁷⁹ Mareš, *Moravismus*, 4.

⁸⁰ Miroslav Mareš, *Terorismus v ČR* [Terrorism in the Czech Republic] (Brno: Centrum strategických studií, 2005), 215–17.

members. Moravian flags often appeared at its events at the turn of the twenty-first century. At that time, a group of activists from around Blansko strengthened its ranks, sometimes shifting their position from Moravian regionalism to Moravian nationalism, and also emphasizing the traditions of Great Moravia. Since the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, the HNS has reduced its activities substantially.⁸¹

A small group seceded from the HNS in 1997, calling itself the *Hnutí korporativistické demokracie Čech, Moravy a Slezska* [HKDČMS; Movement for Corporatist Democracy in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia], and in 1999 joined the obscure circle *Sjednocená fronta* [SF; Unified Front]. Headed by Alena Ovčáčíková, formerly an MP for the HSD–SMS, the Unified Front brought together several marginal Moravian organizations. Yet the Stalinists of the *Strana československých komunistů* [SČK; Party of Czechoslovak Communists]⁸² also had a strong position within the organization, and as such it cannot be said that the SF was drawing on the historic traditions of fascism.

Moravian regional identity expressed in names and symbolism was also characteristic of the neo-Nazi subculture, especially in Brno and environs. But these neo-Nazis did not claim the tradition of Moravian collaborationism during the Second World War; indeed, they probably did not even know about it. A rock band called *Moravská jednota* [Moravian Unity] was also briefly active in Moravia. The second half of the 1990s saw the foundation of the Moravian section of the 'Blood & Honour Division Bohemia,' the Czech branch of the transnational neo-Nazi network. It was not focused on Moravian nationalism, however, and in fact published the magazine *Bohemia*. Finally, racist football hooligans of FC Brno used references to Great Moravia in their chanting.⁸³

Attempts to renew Slovak and German fascist and Nazi links with Moravia were very limited. In the post-communist period, part of the Slovak extreme right recognized the tradition of Great Moravia, which it viewed as a Slovak 'ur-state'; yet unlike their predecessors in the 1930s, these contemporary extremists did not lay down an openly irredentist claim against the Czech Republic.⁸⁴ In the 1990s, the German extreme right *Deutsche Volkunion* attempted to agitate amongst the few Moravian Germans, but did not play the Moravian regional card and was generally unsuccessful.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Bednář, *Moravská identita*, 24–25.

⁸² Martin Bastl, Miroslav Mareš, Josef Smolík, Petra Vejvodová, *Krajní pravice a krajní levice v České republice* [Extreme Right and Extreme Left in the Czech Republic] (Prague: Grada, 2011), 39.

⁸³ Mareš, *Moravismus*, 4.

⁸⁴ Bednář, *Moravská*, 29–30.

⁸⁵ Mareš, *Pravicový*, 183.

Contemporary Moravian neo-fascism and neo-Nazism

The political representation of Moravianism is now weak, although regional and national awareness persists in Moravia. Moravianism is supported in the long term by the strongest extreme right party, the *Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti* [DSSS; Workers' Party of Social Justice]. Although founded under a different name back in 2004, it only gained actual influence in 2010 when members of the banned Workers' Party joined its ranks. (The Workers' Party was founded in 2002 by certain former SPR–RSČ members, and was banned in 2010 because of its racism and neo-Nazi connections). In the 2010 election of the Czech Parliament's Chamber of Deputies, the DSSS polled 1.14 percent of the vote.⁸⁶

Some regional organizations of the DSSS in Moravia and also certain sections of its youth organization *Dělnická mládež* [Workers' Youth] profess Moravian autonomism, especially those in Brno, Znojmo, Kroměříž, and around Zlín. Alena Ovčáčková, a Moravian activist for many years with both extreme left and extreme right tendencies, has stood on a DSSS ticket. Supporters of the Moravian cause use the region's symbolism at DSSS rallies. The party also initiated the campaign *Moje srdce pro Moravu* [My Heart for Moravia], and in 2010 it organized the first *Pochod pro Moravu* [March for Moravia] as part of this campaign, which is to establish a tradition of demonstrating Moravian ideas.⁸⁷ Around a hundred people marched, of whom about half were members of the extreme right.

The militant neo-Nazi spectrum also honors Moravian identity. The most important Czech neo-Nazi network, *Národní odpor* [National Resistance], which has been built up since 1999 on the model of German *Freie Kameradschaften* [Free comradeships], has created a Moravian section, *Národní odpor Morava*. Since about 2008, adherents of a new neo-Nazi movement, *Moravští autonomní nacionalisté* [MAN; Moravian Autonomous Nationalists], have likewise taken their inspiration from Germany and have also begun to claim Moravian regional identity. The organization counts among its ranks certain former Moravian members of the neo-fascist Movement for National Unity, which has about thirty activists. It must be emphasized, however, that MAN exists alongside other regional and local cells of the National Resistance that do not espouse Moravian identity.

Some neo-Nazis are inspired by Moravian pagan heavy metal music, which claims the region's pagan traditions.⁸⁸ This trend is spearheaded by the

⁸⁶ Miroslav Mareš, 'Czech extreme right parties an unsuccessful story,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 4 (2011): 283–98.

⁸⁷ 'Srdce pro Moravu,' last modified November 27, 2012, <http://srdcepromoravu.cz/>.

⁸⁸ Recenze Moravská zima, Bratrstvo, last modified March 22, 2008, <http://www.bratrstvo.bravehost.com/recenze/moravska%20zima.htm>.

Moravian Hordes, consisting of *Moravská zima* [Moravian Winter] and *Žrec* [Pagan Priest]. Although these bands disavow Nazism,⁸⁹ in the case of *Moravská zima* at least the proclaimed distance is questionable and the band has been classified as a National Socialist black metal band.⁹⁰ It is not known whether Moravian pagan metal or National Socialist black metal bands use references to the historical forms of Moravian fascism and collaborationism. The *Bruderschaft Brünn* and the *Bruderschaft* are two small Moravian pagan organizations that were active in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

However, in 2012 one organization did claim the legacy of the Second World War Moravian collaborationism: The *Prozatimní moravská armáda* [PMA; Provisional Moravian Army], which calls itself the nucleus of independent Moravia's future armed forces. It appeared in 2008 allegedly as a result of a merger between the Moravian Liberation Army and the Moravian Land Army, and publishes on the internet footage of paramilitary exercises, in which about a dozen unidentifiable individuals can be seen taking part. The PMA claims to be inspired by the Irish Republican Army.⁹¹ In June 2011, the PMA published on the website of the Free Moravia group a video in which it acknowledges the legacy of the collaborationist *Moravská nacionální sociální strana* [Moravian National Socialist Party] of the early 1940s. Eduard Pitlík is appreciated for having fallen in the struggle against the 'red plague,' and J. M. Tichý is described as a victim of the Czech regime; both are hailed as heroes.⁹² The *Moravská domobrana*⁹³ [Moravian Home Defense] also spreads its propaganda on the internet in the form of footage of paramilitary exercises, but it is not known whether its name refers to the Nazi-inspired anti-partisan organization from the last days of the Second World War. Indeed, it cannot be ruled out that the whole thing is a practical joke; there is in fact a sham Moravian Liberation Army website,⁹⁴ which the 'true Moravian fighters' vehemently repudiate.

⁸⁹ 'Žrec - Když si člověk vyřeže flétničku' [Pagan Priest – When the man cut small flute], *Fobia Zine*, last modified May 9, 2009, <http://www.fobiazine.net/article/3358/zrec---kdyz-si-clovek-vyreze-fletnicku/>.

⁹⁰ Josef Smolík, 'Metalová hudba a krajní pravice' [Heavy Metal and the Far Right], in *Náboženské kořeny pravicového extremismu* [Religious Roots of Right-Wing Extremism], ed. Lucia Grešková (Bratislava: Ústav pre vzťahy štátu a cirkví, 2010), 85–98.

⁹¹ Provizorní moravská armáda, 'Free Moravia', last modified October 31, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDB1D9oAB1oE89295&feature=plcp>.

⁹² 'Svobodná Morava—Moravští radikálové, Dokumentární film o Moravské Nacionální Sociální Straně [Documentary film about the Moravian National Socialist Party]; last modified June 12, 2011, <http://svobodnamorava.blog.cz/1106>.

⁹³ 'Moravská domobrana, Výcvk č. 1 [Training No. 1]; last modified July 20, 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVFmU8zHjfg>.

⁹⁴ 'Moravská osvobozená armáda,' last modified December 31, 2006, <http://moa.xf.cz/>.

Moravian fascism and National Socialism in an international comparison

In terms of the development of European fascism, Moravian fascism and National Socialism are marginal phenomena, which makes a meaningful comparison difficult. One needs to bear in mind that Slavic (though not German!) fascism and National Socialism in the Czech lands (not just in Moravia) were viewed as insignificant instances of fascism in the first half of the twentieth century.⁹⁵ In the post-communist period, the position of the extreme right in the Czech Republic has not been important either, with the exception of the SPR–RSČ successes in the 1990s.⁹⁶

The historian Marek Suchánek attempts to find parallels between Croatian and Moravian fascisms.⁹⁷ In terms of ideology, there is an affinity in certain manifestations of clero-fascism, and also in that both of these fascisms sought to make use of the new Nazi arrangements in Europe for their ethno-national interests. But in Moravia, fascism that stressed Moravian identity always operated alongside groups that did not. Moravian fascism was also unsuccessful, in that it did not achieve the goal of establishing an independent state.

There was ideological proximity between parts of Moravian and Slovak clerical fascism, and this led to cooperation between them. In comparison with Slovakia, however, Moravian fascism was on a much smaller scale. Some partial parallels could also be sought between Galician and Moravian fascisms, but Galician nationalism's basic identity spanned the whole of Ukraine and secessionist tendencies have appeared only gradually.⁹⁸

There is apparently a greater similarity between Moravian and Breton fascism. Both were marginal phenomena and, despite occasional separatist tendencies, they cooperated with the fascists of the dominant nationality (French and Czech) that operated in their region. There is also similarity in their attempts to use Celtic or Slavic identity, respectively, and to become involved in the construction of Nazi 'New Europe.' Yet another analogy lies in the creation of paramilitary units for the anti-partisan struggle,⁹⁹ which were active within the wider circles of armed forces led by Nazi Germany. These fascisms still manifest themselves today, whether or not they use the historical link to the first half of the twentieth century.

⁹⁵ Borejsza, *Schulen des Hasses*, 199–201.

⁹⁶ Florian Feger, *Tschechische Neonazis: Ursachen rechter Einstellungen und faschistische Semantiken in Zeiten schnellen sozialen Wandels* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2011), 236.

⁹⁷ Suchánek, *Organizace*, 118–31.

⁹⁸ Taras Wosnjak, 'Die Phantome des galizischen Separatismus und Ultrationalismus,' *Ukraine-Nachrichten.de*, last modified November 19, 2011, http://ukraine-nachrichten.de/phantome-galizischen-separatismus-ultranationalismus_3393_meinungen-analysen.

⁹⁹ Perry Biddiscombe, 'The Last White Terror: The White Maquis and Its Impact in Liberated France, 1944–1945,' *The Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001), 81–61.

Explaining separatist Moravian fascism and National Socialism

In examining how Moravian separatism has historically interacted with fascist and National Socialist ideologies, it becomes apparent that the phenomenon is insignificant compared with other similar, yet much stronger, phenomena in Europe. Moravian fascist and National Socialist separatism has not played a noticeable role in the history of the Czech lands, because it failed to fulfill the objectives it set for itself, and its ability to mobilize activists has been weak. It has thus never posed a significant threat to security in this area.

Moravian separatism emerged in various forms, with differing foreign political support, and within several political regimes that have appeared in this area. Despite the decline of its earlier forms, new fascist and National Socialist activists have repeatedly emerged and sought to promote the idea of Moravian separatism. This process has been going on for almost a century. Why does this separatism exist, and why does it appear at various points in history?

Fascist and National Socialist separatism bring together two parts of the political spectrum in the Czech lands: the Moravian separatist spectrum and the extreme right spectrum. Neither is a strong current in Czech and Moravian politics, which means that their intersection will not be strong either. Significantly, Moravian separatism or irredentism had been strengthened by assistance from countries where fascism or National Socialism gained major influence, namely Slovakia and Germany in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

Moravian separatism in general (i.e., not only its fascist or National Socialist variants) has appeared in a stronger form only in certain historical periods. It was strongest in the early 1990s, but at the time its links with the extreme right were minimal (only when its decline began in 1992 did the extreme right party SPR–RSCŽ seek to make use of it). The rising wave of Moravian feeling in 1968 was likewise without extremist elements. In the 1920s to 1940s, however, it were the fascists and National Socialists who championed the Moravian identity.

Moravian identity, both by activists themselves and in the scholarly debate, has been likened to the Moravian Punkva river. The river runs through the Moravian Karst, which is riddled large-scale cave systems. At multiple points it disappears from the surface and runs underground. This is what inspired the comparisons with Moravian identity, which sometimes ‘makes a strong appearance on the surface of political life,’ and sometimes disappears, but nevertheless enjoys stable existence at least ‘under the surface.’¹⁰⁰

As indicated above, Moravian separatism appears in various forms. It can be linked with the region’s Slavic inhabitants and it expresses their demands,

¹⁰⁰ David Uher, ‘Moravská národnost jako politický problém,’ [Moravian Nationality as Political Problem], *Deník Referendum*, last modified March 3, 2011, <http://www.denikreferendum.cz/clanek/tisk/9335-moravska-narodnost-jako-politicky-problem>.

articulated in terms of a discrete national identity; it can also provide a perspective on these inhabitants as part of another (Slovak) nation; or it can be co-opted by its non-Slavic inhabitants (the Germans) with the aim of using the Moravian territory to benefit themselves.

Moravian politics, including its separatist streaks, have been accompanied by confessional disputes. Catholicism is strong in Moravia and often becomes contrasted with atheism or anti-clericalism (the latter two trends arriving from Bohemia). Some Moravians are Protestants, and it is a historical paradox that after the demise of Great Moravia, the region enjoyed its greatest autonomy in the early sixteenth century thanks to Protestant politicians. This fact is underlined today not only by the Protestant contemporary advocates of Moravian separatism, but also by other proponents of this ideology. A small section of the Moravian movement embraces neo-paganism.

Only a part of the Moravian movement has had links with fascism or National Socialism, however, and the intensity of their interactions has varied over time. When in the 1920s the fascist movement was generally on the ascent and a self-governing Moravian–Silesian *Land* existed within Czechoslovakia, the ideas of Moravian separatism were mostly seized upon by fascist adventurers. When they detected that support could be obtained from abroad, they embraced conceptions that suited these external fascist and Nazi currents: Slovak clero-fascism and German Nazism. Following the fall of communism, some neo-fascist and neo-Nazi activists take their inspiration from historical models, but they adjust their Moravian separatist demands both to the overall situation of the Moravian political movement (as testified to by their participation in the Marches for Moravia in recent years) and to the current trends within the global neo-Nazi spectrum (as exemplified by Moravian Autonomous Nationalists, Moravian National Socialist black metal, etc.).

Who among the Moravian separatists can be classified as a fascist or a neo-Nazi? The distinction can be made both on the basis of the activists' self-identification and by tracing the line of development of certain organizations. In the 1920s, the organizations emphasizing Moravian identity either openly espoused fascism (Moravian National Fascist Community) or emerged within the fascist movement, by breaking away from the National Fascist Community and similar organizations (*Rodobrana*, Svatopluk's legion). Toward the end of the 1930s, the organizations of Moravian Slovaks initially presented themselves non-ideologically, even though they were made up of fascists and National Socialists; they have all gradually acknowledged their affiliation with the National Socialist ideology (this is true even of the Ethnographic Moravia group). The self-identification of certain organizations from the 1940s, the 1990s, and the present day is also unambiguous (Moravian National Socialist Party, Moravian Autonomous Nationalists, etc.). With some separatists, the ideological affiliation is difficult to decide, due to the multiplicity of sources

whose legacy they claim (an example of this is the Provisional Moravian Army, which began to claim its allegiance to the historical Nazi separatism only in recent years).

In explaining the weakness of separatist Moravian fascists and neo-Nazis, one has to consider that in Czechoslovakia's political spectrum fascism was generally feeble, as are neo-fascism and neo-Nazism in the Czech Republic. In comparative studies that focus on the European space as a whole, the interwar Czech fascist movement is classified as weak,¹⁰¹ and the Sudeten German movement, which had links with Nazism, did not make use of Moravian identity in articulating its demands. With the exception of the 1990s, the extreme right has also been weak throughout the post-communist period. In many cases, Moravian separatism is constituted by specific factions within extreme right groups that are active countrywide, and this further contributes to its overall weakness. Only some fascists and Nazis/neo-Nazis in Moravia had, or still have, separatist tendencies. Moravian identity is variously defined and the concept is rather nebulous.

When external support for Moravian separatism appears, its form swiftly mutates. For example, when the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was created, Moravian fascists transformed themselves into National Socialists. Within a few months, the individuals and groups who promoted the annexation of Moravian Slovakia by the clero-fascist Slovak state, were able to change their stance to that of promoting Moravian Slovakia's strong position within the Protectorate and the Third Reich.

The social makeup of Moravian fascist and National Socialist activists is difficult to describe, not least because their numbers have been relatively small. Nevertheless, one has to acknowledge the strong role of adventurous intellectuals, and in some cases (in Ethnographic Moravia) also of artists, who have been active alongside members of the general population. Young males have dominated the movement throughout its history. Both the Moravian separatist spectrum, and the fascists and Nazis/neo-Nazis in the region, have been characterized by the involvement of strong, ambitious personalities. This has resulted in fragmentation, a lack of cooperation between the various groups, and a general weakening of this political movement.

Conclusion

In the course of the twentieth century, political formations appeared in Moravia that espoused fascism, National Socialism, or ideologies that

¹⁰¹ Payne, *A history of Fascism*, 309–310.

succeeded them, and they continue to appear in the twenty-first century. Some of them have not felt a very close connection with their region, demanding only a change in its administrative status, while others have sought autonomy or even independence. There were temporary external influences, too: Slovak clero-fascism with its irredentist tendencies, and German National Socialism, which supported Moravian regionalism and sub-regionalism. Although the organizational continuity of Moravian fascism and National Socialism was broken during the Cold War, the fascist and National Socialist spectrum in Moravia has since renewed itself and a part of it has claimed allegiance to historical predecessors. Although marginal in the European context, the Moravian fascist and National Socialist movement has been developing for almost a hundred years now, and it exhibits some interesting features comparable with more important fascist and National Socialist ethnic and nationalist movements.