

ABS, Panel 23 Imagination for Borderlands: Czech Nation-Building and Body Culture in 19th Century

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Key Messages

- How Czech borderlands were imagined by *Sokol* gymnastic association before WWI?
- Basic Questions
 - What are imagined borderlands?
cf. B. Anderson, *Imagined Community* (Verso Books, 2006), Revised.
 - What is “Sudetenland” ?
 - What is *Sokol*?

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Czech Lands & “Sudetenland”

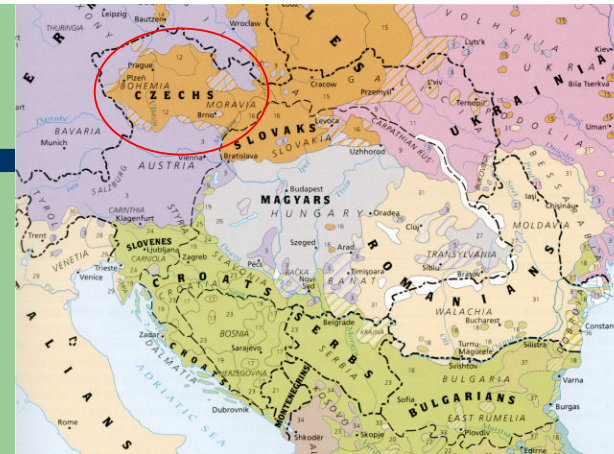


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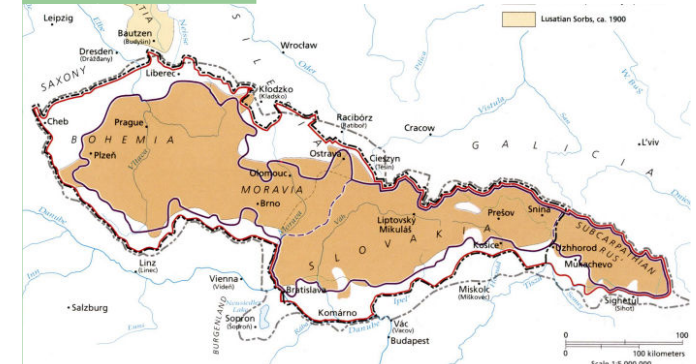
Source: Die Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung
http://www.bwbs.de/bwbs_biografie/Signing_of_the_Munich_Accord_B1454.html



4 Austria-Hungary, 1910. Source: P.R.Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Seattle, 2002), no.36.



5 Ethnolinguistic Distribution, ca. 1900. Source: P.R.Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Seattle, 2002), no.30.



6 Czechoslovakia in the 20th Century. Source: P.R.Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Seattle, 2002), no.41a.

What is Sokol?



Sokol Fest in 1948:
16,000 ladies' exercise



Sokol Fest in 1938:
Parade in Prague

What is Sokol? (basic data in 1912)

- Founded at 1862 (*sokol* = falcon in Czech)
- Membership: 168,260
(incl. underage members)
- Number of Affiliates: 1,156
- Public Exercises: 720
- Excursions and Outings: 4,059
- Libraries and Reading Rooms: 1,021
- Books: 241,501
- Seminars: 3,587

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9 Sokol in Ostrava 1902. Source: Šechtřl & Voseček Museum of Photography
<http://sechtl-vosecek.ucw.cz/en/cml/desky/deska3958.html>

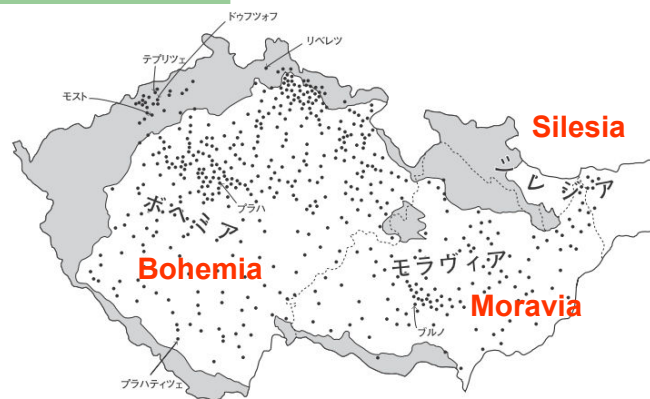
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How *Sokol* activated the imagination?

1. Narration by a devoted *Sokol* member
Rescue our countrymen & homeland !!
2. Branches in predominantly German districts
Network between Czech & German districts
3. Festivals and Excursions in German districts
Demonstration and Provocation
4. Confrontation with “International”
Overlap with Class Conflicts

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Sokol Branches in Czech Lands, 1901. Source: *IV slet Všesokolský v Praze 1901* (Praha, n.d.), n.p.

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1. Narration for “our Homeland”

A devoted member, Václav Kukaň (1859-1925)
“Pilgrimage” in whole borderlands
“Rediscovery” of flowers, trees, rocks,
fond memories of our homeland, etc.

But....

Our friends are in danger of “Germanization”
Pressure from landlords, manufacturers...
Wake up fellow countrymen !!

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2. Making Branches in German Districts

- A Letter from Duchcov in 1896
SOS from “enclosed districts”
- Pairing branch in Czech districts with one in German districts. Ex. Teplice & Praha-Žižkov
Give Christmas presents!
- Making Public Sphere and Leaders
Gymnasia (not gasthauses!!) & Libraries
→ to be proud of being Czech nation!

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3. Festivals and Excursions

Stop German Festivals and Excursions!
ex. a fake application for a *Sokol* excursion
at Prachatice in 1896
German *Liedertafelfest* on the same day !
Authorities had to ban the both events
Political debate at the Diet in Vienna
Making a local affair the major incident !

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4. Confrontations with “International”

- Coal mining region & Textile region
Czech workers in German districts
- Bourgeoisie vs. Social Democrats
Sokol = Young Czech Party
Limited manhood suffrage from 1897
Young Czech Party vs. Social Democrats
DTJ (Workers’ gymnastic club) vs. *Sokol*

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Conclusion

- *Sokol’s* activity was not perfect...
Sokol did not cover whole borderlands.
Its activity had ideological character.
- Other associations went ahead...
Matice školská (School Foundation)
Národní Jednota (National Union)
- Nonetheless *Sokol* was the flagship promoter
and an aggravator of national conflicts.

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