

INTRODUCTION



Iron Landscapes

I daresay that the railways have raised nations in the same way as schools.

—Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *Jak pracovat? Přednášky z roku 1898*

As Berlin correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1924, the Austrian novelist and journalist Joseph Roth (1894–1939) wrote an ambivalent hymn to modern technology entitled *Bekanntnis zum Gleisdreieck* (Affirmation of the Triangular Railway Junction). In the form of a religious creed, he invoked the railway junction as the centre of the modern world:

I affirm the triangular railway junction. It is an emblem and a focus, a living organism and the fantastic product of a futuristic force.

It is a *center*. All the vital energies of its locus begin and end here, in the same way that the heart is both the point of departure and the destination of the blood as it flows through the body's veins and arteries. It's the heart of a world whose life is belt drive and clockwork, piston rhythm and siren scream. It is the heart of the world, which spins on its axis a thousand times faster than the alternation of day and night would have us believe; whose continuous and never-ending rotation looks like madness and is the product of mathematical calculation; whose dizzying velocity makes backward-looking sentimentalists fear the ruthless extermination of inner forces and healing balance but actually engenders healing warmth and the benediction of movement.

Roth's notion of the railway combined biological and mechanical images. He described the junction as a living being, even the heart of the world. At the same time, this is not an organic heart but the heart of a machine. The 'merciless regularity' of this machine, he continued, was inhuman. Indeed, the power of the machine devalued its very creators. In dystopian terms, Roth suggested that humans had passed on their power over nature to a machine that was now devouring its children, leaving in its wake a new world dominated by technology.

Landscape – what is a landscape? Meadow, forest, blade of grass, and leaf of tree. ‘Iron landscape’ might be an apt description for these playgrounds of machines. Iron landscape, magnificent temple of technology open to the air, to which the mile-high factory chimneys make their sacrifice of living, brooding, energizing smoke. Eternal worship of machines, in the wide arena of this landscape of iron and steel, whose end no human eye can see, in the horizon’s steely grip.

Roth presented Berlin as a mere vessel – an ‘arena’ or ‘playground’ – of technological progress that had gone out of control; or rather, operated independently and had discarded the need for human supervision. Technology had created a new geography marked not by rivers, mountains, seas and towns but by ‘great, shining iron rails’.¹ The triangular railway junction was the new centre of the universe.

Some have understood Roth’s text as a metaphorical criticism of technology in modern society.² Its metaphor was more specific than an uninitiated reader might expect, however, for Roth’s ‘Gleisdreieck’ was not just a symbol for the railway as such but also a specific junction and *U-Bahn* station in Berlin. Roth’s notion of centrality can thus be understood in two ways. The railway junction is not only the centre of a technological dystopia but more prosaically also the centre of Germany. After the First World War, the various provincial railway networks in Germany were merged into the single state-owned system of the *Deutsche Reichsbahn* (German imperial railways).³ As the capital of the Weimar Republic, Berlin became the natural centre of the national railway network. In Roth’s organic image, the body and heart of the railway system were, hence, also the body and heart of the nation-state. At the time, the use of organic imagery to describe technology was pervasive. With the parallel increase and popularization of medical knowledge, national activism and technology from the beginning of the nineteenth century, national activists increasingly identified the nation with a human body and put great expectations into the nascent railway system as the life-giving veins and arteries of the body politic. Roth’s essay is not just a dystopian portrayal of the dehumanization of the world by modern technology but also a manifestation of the impact of iron landscapes on society. Throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, railway discourses in Central Europe were shaped by, and in turn itself shaped, notions of modernity and nationhood.⁴

This study is about the development of these notions in one such discourse, that of interwar Czechoslovakia. Founded in 1918 following the fall of (and in opposition to the multinational character of) the Habsburg Empire, the First Czechoslovak Republic was intended to be

a nation-state. But the previously Austrian and Hungarian territories of which it comprised had little in common in terms of history, economic development, geography or culture. The state ideology of Czechoslovakism, which posited that Czech and Slovak were two dialects of the same language and Czechs and Slovaks therefore two branches of the same nation, aspired to create a narrative of national unity. The creation of a national railway network out of previously Habsburg fragments was one of the main tools through which this was to be achieved. At the same time, the discussions that accompanied this construction project revealed many of the problems that, in the late 1930s, came to haunt Czechoslovakia: the resistance to the state project by the numerous ethnic minorities, Slovak autonomism, and the contradictions involved in attempting to forge a unitary nation-state internally while portraying a sense of cosmopolitan openness externally.

It might seem curious to look for political and social meaning in an infrastructural system such as the railway network. However, at least since Wolfgang Schivelbusch's *The Railway Journey*, it has been clear that trains had a significant impact on human culture. Schivelbusch shows the extent to which the new technology transformed man's perception of the world. From the 1830s, trains made it possible to complete within a few hours journeys that had taken days on foot or by coach. Thus, they led to the subjective shrinkage of time and space among contemporaries and created a 'new, reduced geography'.⁵ In addition, the introduction of 'railway time', necessary for the smooth and safe running of trains on single-track lines, led to the penetration of society with time-keeping and unified time zones. *Greenwich Mean Time* was made the international norm at an international conference in Washington, DC in October 1884 and was accepted nearly everywhere by the early twentieth century. The experience of time and space, Schivelbusch suggests, was 'industrialized' by the railways. The publication of timetables and maps made all stations appear within easy reach in a clear and logical system.⁶ Unsurprisingly, this fundamental transformation did not always go smoothly and led to the rise in 'railway diseases' diagnosed from the late 1850s. The rattling and speed of the train, it was believed towards the end of the nineteenth century, was responsible for numerous nervous ailments. The public was fascinated by gory railway accidents, a frequent occurrence in the technology's early days. Schivelbusch notes that 'the early perception of the railways is characterized by a strangely ambivalent experience. The journey is experienced as incredibly smooth, light, and safe, like flying. ... At the same time, the railway journey conveys a feeling of violence and latent destruction.'⁷ His study demonstrates the profound

and ambivalent effect of technology not only on the physical landscape but also on human psychology and culture.

The notion of experience became a primary interpretive principle that made it possible to gauge the impact of technology on society. The approach of this book differs in two respects: first, it does not deal with the nineteenth century but with the interwar period. Second, it focuses on how the railways contributed to Czechoslovak nation-building rather than the experience of individual railway travellers. Apart from research on the Holocaust, studies of the railways in the twentieth century are largely confined to traditional technology-centred popular railway history. This comes as no surprise, considering that the iron landscape had been culturally assimilated by the 1880s.⁸ A Czech commentary published in 1890 calls it 'an age-old thing grown into the land, as self-explanatory as trees in a forest and houses in a city'.⁹ By this time, trains had displaced coaches or walking as the primary mode of transport in the larger part of Europe. Rather than dealing with the psychological impact of train travel, this book follows Dirk van Laak's call to study the history of infrastructures. Van Laak argues that infrastructures, as 'media of social integration', have 'snuck into the routines of our everyday life and ... structured it to an ever greater extent both in terms of senses and in terms of space'.¹⁰ Infrastructures are as much part of state power structures as of everyday life, and thus merit historiographical attention as an invisible but fundamental tool for the functioning of the modern state. Railways, roads, telephone and telegraph lines, sewage pipes and other amenities were essential to ensure the spatial homogeneity of modern nation-states – the territory reached as far as its infrastructure, but no further. Infrastructures thus became instruments of power. Who controlled them controlled the territory of state.¹¹

The existing literature on the cultural impact of the railway acknowledges this only incidentally. Schivelbusch describes how it contributed to democratization and the development of mass culture.¹² As a relatively inexpensive means of transport open to all, trains not only necessitated social contacts that crossed class boundaries while on board but also provided the means for millions of rural dwellers to move to the cities. Manfred Riedel quips that 'the masses are advancing, as Hegel called it, and in their railways they are overtaking the coaches of the aristocrats'.¹³ Early conservative opponents of railway construction were wary of the railway's popular effects, warning that too much mobility could make 'unstable people even more unstable'.¹⁴ Also the central argument of *The Railway Journey* – that the railways transformed the subjective experience of landscape and

time – indicates its significance for nationalism. Using categories introduced by the psychiatrist Erwin Straus, Schivelbusch argues that for the early railway traveller, space that had been experienced as landscape became geographical space when observed from a railway carriage. Instead of walking through a succession of towns and villages, the railway traveller is always on his way between his point of departure and arrival, merely watching the landscape ‘fly’ by through the window. This led to the development of a ‘panoramic vision’, which regarded territory not as lived landscape but a closed geography in which ‘every point ... is determined by its location in the whole’.¹⁵ This was the beginning of an organized landscape that was mapped by geographers and soon marked by fixed and policed boundaries.¹⁶ Such a landscape invited national interpretations and appropriations. The railway maps that decorated stations made clear to the passengers that the territorial extension of their country corresponded to the territorial extension of their railway networks. The language spoken by railway employees, the signage and symbols in stations and carriages, and the architecture of station buildings symbolically integrated space into the nation. In many minority areas of Czechoslovakia, railway officials were the only Czechs, and *nolens volens* became representatives of the ruling nation. Hence, the railways reproduced a national view of the world analogous to Michael Billig’s notion of ‘banal nationalism’. Billig argues that ‘daily, the nation is indicated, or “flagged”, in the lives of its citizenry’. Nationalism, he writes, is so embedded in the everyday life of the Western world that it has become an unconscious part of existence. ‘As a nation-state becomes established in its sovereignty, ... the symbols of nationhood, which might have been consciously displayed, do not disappear from sight, but instead become absorbed into the environment of the established homeland.’¹⁷ From railway stations to signage and the language spoken by staff, the ever-present infrastructure of the railways provided some of the most visible symbols of nationhood.

The railways were not granted centre stage in the classic theories of nationalism, even though they clearly belong to the main forces of industrialization that, as Ernest Gellner has argued, brought about the rise of national ideologies. Industrialized society, Gellner writes, is ‘based on high-powered technology and the expectancy of sustained growth, which required both a mobile division of labour, and sustained, frequent and precise communication between strangers involving a sharing of explicit meaning, transmitted in a standard idiom and in writing when required’.¹⁸ Although Benedict Anderson criticizes Gellner for suggesting that the nation is invented and thus in a certain

sense 'false', Anderson also subscribes to the view that nationalism is a product of modernity. He argues that the development of a new sense of time and space was a precondition for the 'imagined political community' of the nation. Due to the primacy of religion in pre-modern societies, time had been experienced as cyclical simultaneity with mythic religious events, and space as an equation of the local with the transcendent. Modern technology made time measurable and space mappable, which allowed for a new experience of simultaneity. Referring to the modern 'mass ceremony' of reading a newspaper, Anderson writes: 'Each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. ... What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned?'¹⁹

Why does neither Gellner nor Anderson mention the railway's impact on this modern imagination? Perhaps the railways, as a spatial system, could not easily be included in the dominant scholarship of nationalism, which has focused on language as the main medium of national ideologization.²⁰ Both Anderson and Gellner assert that 'imagined national communities' were made possible chiefly by an academically codified common language. While the codification of vernaculars into national languages was undoubtedly necessary for the rise of the national idea, every linguistic codification was followed by territorialization, a codification of space. The creation of an official national language out of disparate dialects is mirrored in the creation of an official national territory out of disparate and often disconnected geographies. Such territorialization was achieved through spatial representation, which engendered the creation of a national landscape. Representational strategies of this kind have received deserved attention recently, primarily regarding the symbolic appropriations of urban space in a national context. Aleida Assmann's view of urban space as a palimpsest hiding layers of meaning to be excavated by the historian and Pierre Nora's conception of *lieux de mémoire* have served as inspirations for these approaches.²¹ Nora suggests that with the advent of modernity, spaces that had previously been 'milieux de mémoire', landscapes whose meaning was deeply ingrained in the local culture and did not need explanation, transformed into spaces whose history had to be written in order to be understood. The divergence of history and memory was the outcome of the 'increasingly rapid slippage of the present into the historical past', which in his view characterizes our age.²² The receding power of spatially grounded public memory

opened the doors for the reinterpretation of *lieux de mémoire*, both in discourse and in the physical landscape.

Such *lieux de mémoire* are in abundant supply in the highly politicized spaces of East-Central Europe. Territorial discourses changed in the course of the nineteenth century to designate some regions of Bohemia as 'German', creating a national geography that included linguistic borders, walls and islands. Pieter Judson argues that in this period spatial metaphors became prevalent, which attached contested national identities to the very landscape itself.²³ Scholars have described spatial codification in Prague and other towns that became Czech, Slovak or Hungarian.²⁴ The naming of and signage on streets and squares and the erection of national monuments have been singled out as the primary instances of this process.²⁵ Railway lines gave the impetus to add more of these national markers to the landscape, and busts of the first Czechoslovak President Tomáš G. Masaryk (1850–1937) and other national heroes soon adorned many railway stations. Peter Haslinger demonstrates that by the late nineteenth century, the notion of the Czech territory as coextensive with the historical Lands of the Bohemian Crown – i.e. Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia – had become universal in Czech elite discourse, which demanded its administrative unification within the Habsburg Empire on a national basis.²⁶ These instances of spatial codification demonstrate that, more than ever before, space had become an object of discursive production in the age of nationalism.²⁷ At the same time, space was never produced along just one model of territorialization. Complementary and competing models of spatiality marked Czechoslovakia and East-Central Europe as a whole.²⁸ It is an aim of this book to demonstrate how diverse the understanding of Czechoslovak space was even within the national railway discourse.

Although the link between nationalism and the railway system has received remarkably little academic attention, national activists in the nineteenth century explicitly acknowledged it.²⁹ Masaryk himself stressed the importance of infrastructural politics:

An effective railway politics must rectify the flaws we have inherited from the centralization drive of Vienna and Budapest. In particular, the railway network of Slovakia and Ruthenia needs to be forcefully expanded and improved. We must adapt our railways to those of the neighbouring states and the new world railways.³⁰

Masaryk's belief in the political power of the railways was nothing new. In 1898, he gave a lecture entitled *Jak pracovat?* (How to work), in

which he claimed that 'the railways have raised nations in the same way as schools'.³¹ The lecture discussed his notion of 'drobná práce' (work in small steps) and the way technological modernization had influenced attitudes towards work. Masaryk rejected any distinction between manual labour and scholarly work and then discussed the state of academia in Bohemia, which he compared negatively to the situation in Germany. He singled out accuracy (*přesnost*) as the defining characteristic of modern academic work, a quality that had also made an impact on society through industrialization. The railways for Masaryk were the main means of popularizing a modern sense of time and space (though not the only one: he also points to 'modern factories, modern industry'). Masaryk shared the notion that the railways revolutionized time and space.

He does not, however, discuss how railways raised nations. In its approach to the expression of nationalism, this book follows Rogers Brubaker's useful concept of nations as contingent events. Like Anderson, he does not deny the reality of nationhood but does not see this reality as a useful category of analysis. Rather, he suggests, a nation is a category of practice and should thus be treated 'not as substance but as institutionalized form; not as collectivity but as practical category; not as entity but as contingent event'.³² Let me illustrate this by describing some approaches to railways in the Bohemia Lands. Many Czech nationalists considered the first lines as a dangerous measure of Germanization. In 1881, the nationalist writer Svatopluk Čech (1846–1908) made a pilgrimage to Velehrad, a religious site in Moravia famous for its association with the medieval Greater Moravian Empire and with the missionary Saints Cyril and Methodius. On the train, Čech was dismayed that the conductors spoke only German, even with passengers dressed in Czech national costume.

Whoever has but a spark of Czech feeling and even the tiniest of tempers will not fight the sense of fury and shame about the malicious, breeding hatred that is allowed under the sign of the winged wheel in this purely Slav area. ... You feel the glowing breath of stubborn national hatred everywhere. Indeed, it seems that the Moravian railways are a network of artificial canals that are intended to channel Germanness into this Slav land. They are all but military tracks of an aggressive foreign sentiment [*cizáctví*]: every station is its fortress and every employee, from the manager to the last porter ..., is its warrior.³³

Not all national activists in the Bohemian Lands were so shrill about the dangers of train travel to the nation. But even statements in favour of railways, such as a travelogue of the Slovak national activist Jozef

Miloslav Hurban (1817–1886), are testament to how widespread this sentiment was. Hurban travelled on the *Kaiser Ferdinands-Nordbahn* from Vienna to Brunn (Brno) a day after it opened in 1839:

Since the arrival of the railway has made Brno into, as it were, a suburb of Vienna, I understand many fear that the town will become more Viennese, and the Viennese element will predominate over the Slav one. But these apprehensions are groundless; for the railways do not belong to any nationality, but are the fruit of all nationalities – of mankind. Hence they will be a link also for the Slavs!³⁴

From the Bohemian German nationalist perspective, the significance of the railways for the subjective experience of interwar Czechoslovak national space was demonstrated by the Austrian geographer Hugo Hassinger (1877–1952). He describes what he regards as the de-Germanization of the Czechoslovak borderland (peppered with misspellings of the Czech place names).

A traveller who hastily rushes past the border towards the capital without encountering the autochthonous population will meet only Czech customs officials, conductors, soldiers, station pub landlords and waiters, who mostly do understand some German. He will read Czech names on the station buildings and think that the state border he just crossed was also the language border. But centuries of German inhabitants never knew the south-western border town of 'Horní Dvořiště' by any other name than Oberhaid, and Czechs were only settled here in 1919. In the west, 'Železná Ruda' has always been known as Eisenstein. Coming from the north-west, our traveller will find the designation Cheb next to the name of the old German imperial city Eger on the station building. From the north, he will be surprised to find a 'Děčín-Podmokly' [sic] in the ancient German [urdeutsch] Tetschen-Bodenbach, or a Liberec-Reichenberg. In the north-east, his train now enters the border station Bohumin [sic], which always used to be Oderberg. His through carriage might run to Mariánské Lázně [sic] or Karoly Vary [sic], names that hardly anyone might suspect to denote the universally known Marienbad and Karlsbad. As many a spa guest will know, no Czechs lived in these towns or their surroundings before 1918. Another train speeds to Bratislava, the German-Magyar Preßburg with the newly invented name. These names were decreed by the state, and the people transplanted by the state to the border and the railway stations form the masks that hide the landscape's true features.³⁵

For Hassinger, the representation of the railway network amounted to fraud, an iron landscape hiding the true one. Čech, Hurban and Hassinger were travellers who experienced landscape anew on the

train. They demonstrate how through the institution of railways and the practice of travelling on the train, through encounters in compartments and the changing languages of station signage, the landscape acquired an 'iron mask' and railway space became national space.³⁶

The point that space can be discursively shaped has not always been appreciated. Michel Foucault, who himself has come under attack for disregarding the heuristic significance of space in his writings, criticized the 'devaluation of space that has prevailed for generations': 'Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectic, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic.'³⁷ The increased value attached to space by scholars is indebted to a Marxist strain of geography that, drawing on Henri Lefebvre, viewed space as a product of social relations and hence of politics. In Lefebvre's words, 'space has been shaped and molded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies.'³⁸ In many ways, the present study is concerned with a Lefebvrian production of space by railway systems. Politics creates space and space is thus a category accessible to history.³⁹ Some scholars have characterized the increasing appreciation of this point as a 'spatial turn', although this expression has itself come under criticism. Frithjof Benjamin Schenk reminds us that the French historical tradition around the *Annales* school has a long history of cooperation with neighbouring spatial disciplines such as geography. 'In an international perspective, then, there never was a comprehensive "loss" or "return of space".'⁴⁰ Like history, geography has always been man-made.⁴¹ Nevertheless, it is evident that space as an analytical category has received increased academic attention in recent years. The constant transformation of the appreciation of space has made clear the relativity of a concept that historians often took for granted. As Wolfgang Kaschuba writes, 'the space-time nexus is organized into cognitive landscapes and perspectives whose mountains and valleys, dates and epochs are created and determined by us. It is the result of our authority over interpretation and, as such, always subject to re-interpretation and change.'⁴² However, not many historical studies have taken up the challenge of empirical research into the specifics of this change. This is what this book attempts.

Given the academic neglect of the impact of the railways on the development of nationalist ideology, until recently, railway history has predominantly operated from a national perspective and included only very sparse comparative and transnational aspects.⁴³ The paradoxical nature of this national perspective on railway history has rightfully been pointed out recently, considering the internationality of most

railway systems.⁴⁴ There is, however, no lack of technical and popular literature on the development of the railways within interwar Czechoslovakia. Most recent work draws on a 1958 study by Miloslav Štěpán, which, although quick to blame any delay to technological progress on the bourgeois-capitalist system, is a reliable overview of railway construction.⁴⁵ In addition, several pamphlets were published during the interwar period, primarily collections of facts and statistics written by former railway employees or published by the government.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, these works neglect the fact that from the very beginnings, railways had also had a profound international aspect. Indeed, they played a key role in the development of a cosmopolitan consciousness that looked beyond national borders. Especially in the early days of the new technology, before the First World War revealed the immense destructive potential of the railways in war, railways were expected to become a motor of universal understanding and peace.⁴⁷ The German economist, national activist and railway enthusiast Friedrich List (1789–1846) believed that the railways would be equally beneficial for all:

Through the new means of transportation, man will become an infinitely happy, wealthy, perfect being. ... National prejudices, national hatred, and national self-interest [will disappear] when the individuals of different nations are bound to one another through the ties of science and art, trade and industry, friendship and family. How will it even be possible for cultivated nations to wage war with one another?⁴⁸

Similarly, the Czech historian and leader of the National Revival František Palacký asserted that through the railways, 'the old dams between countries and nations are disappearing ever more quickly, and all tribes, all races of humanity are converging, touching and depending on one another'.⁴⁹ Even contemporary poetry anticipated the railways as harbingers of peace.⁵⁰

In view of this abundant literature, the essential paradox regarding railways and nationalism is striking: as soon as the railway tracks crossed the border, they facilitated not national cohesion but international contact. Despite the fact that railways were used as a means towards national unification, they were also inherently international. Indeed, the railways soon offered prestigious international connections; from 1883, for instance, well-to-do Europeans could travel non-stop from Paris to Constantinople on the *Orient Express*. The first Habsburg railways stayed within the empire but often crossed the borders of territories that were codified as 'national' soon after: the *Kaiser Ferdinands-Nordbahn* ran from Vienna to Brünn from 1839 and was later extended to

Krakow, and the *Südbahn* went from Vienna to Trieste from 1857. In addition, many railway lines were planned and built by transnationally active investors whose interest certainly did not lie in national homogenization. The Rothschild family financed numerous railway projects throughout Europe.⁵¹ In the interwar period, as well, railways were included in ever more grandiose international transport plans, such as a direct Paris–Dakar railway line with a tunnel through the Strait of Gibraltar.⁵² As Irene Anastasiadou has argued, the hope that ‘the political unification of Europe could be achieved through the construction of international railway arteries’ lasted throughout the 1920s and 1930s and thereafter.⁵³ Given the contradiction between national and international railways, the new technology of the railways was perceived ambiguously in the nineteenth and even the twentieth century. They were used to justify ideologies that, on first sight, had little in common. The railways were equally central to narratives of exclusive national unification as of inclusive bourgeois globalization.⁵⁴ This became abundantly clear only a few years after the *Orient Express* reached its zenith of political and cultural importance in the 1930s – frequented by nobility, politicians and diplomats, the train offered three different routes to travel between Paris and Istanbul/Athens and featured luxurious facilities.⁵⁵ Trains of a rather different type played an essential role in the violent apogee of nationalism. The complicity of the *Deutsche Reichsbahn* in the extermination of European Jews has been established by historians such as Raul Hilberg, and the picture of the tracks leading into Birkenau has become a powerful symbol of the Holocaust.⁵⁶ It is clear that ‘the murder of millions of European Jews would not have been possible without the railways’.⁵⁷ Hence, the railways remained a central tool of modernity even in the twentieth century, both constructively and destructively.

The Habsburg elites only gradually became aware of the potential political significance of the railways. The first major freight line on the European continent, the horse-drawn railway between Budweis (České Budějovice) and Linz (built 1824–1832), had an economic imperative: it transported salt to Bohemia.⁵⁸ Steam railways appeared soon thereafter. At the beginning of the railway era in Austria, private companies built those railways they expected to be most profitable with little government influence. In its early stages from 1836, the banker Salomon Rothschild (1774–1855) largely financed the *Nordbahn*, and it remained a private enterprise until 1906.⁵⁹ However, the Habsburgs soon realized that the control of their routing was politically and strategically valuable. The prominent statesman Carl Friedrich Kübeck (1780–1855) declared in 1841 that only the state administration

was in a position to develop a railway system 'in accordance with the interests of traffic and hence with due regard for all purposes of the state'.⁶⁰ The first comprehensive railway programme of 1841 featured a network of planned state railways (most importantly Vienna–Prague and Vienna–Trieste). A combination of economic, strategic and political factors influenced the routing of the lines. 'In planning the system', a prominent *Nordbahn* official noted in 1898,

the greatest concern was given to the direction of world trade from the North Sea to the Adriatic. At the same time, there was an effort to connect the individual parts of the Empire closer to one another, especially with Vienna as the centre of the Empire. Therefore, strategic concerns were taken into account, as well.⁶¹

Even though private enterprise continued to play an important part in the development of the Habsburg railway system throughout the nineteenth century, the state administration ensured that lines it deemed important were constructed. Utilizing part of the already completed *Nordbahn*, the construction of the line from Vienna to Prague via Olmütz (Olomouc) was finished in 1845 and opened for traffic with 'rare pomp' on 19 and 20 August.⁶² It was extended to Dresden in 1850. A direct connection between Vienna and Pest via Pressburg opened in April 1851, and the *Südbahn* from Vienna to Trieste followed in July 1857.⁶³ In 1850 and 1851, the Austrian army carried out several major troop manoeuvres on the new railways, proving the military value of the new technology to the initially sceptical state authorities.⁶⁴ The 1867 Compromise gave Hungary complete autonomy in matters of transport, and a railway construction boom followed in the 1870s.⁶⁵ The privately owned line between Kassa (Košice, Kaschau) and Oderberg (Bohumín) in Silesia, which later became essential as an east–west link in Czechoslovakia, opened in March 1872. It had been built primarily to connect the Upper Hungarian iron and copper industries to the Moravian and Silesian coal mines and further on to Prussia, but it also became instrumental in turning the High Tatras into a tourist destination.⁶⁶ By the 1880s, most of the important main lines in both parts of the Empire had been completed.⁶⁷

Karl Schlögel has written that in the course of the nineteenth century 'the monarchy, a collection of diverse lands joined initially by power politics, prudence and dynastic marriages, increasingly became one territory, one space. ... Kakanía grew in the rhythm of railway kilometres laid in the Danube Monarchy'.⁶⁸ The Habsburg dynasty identified this type of modernization with themselves and named lines after members of the imperial family (such as the *Kaiser Ferdinands-Nordbahn*). Open-

ing ceremonies such as the Prague railway in 1845 were conscious celebrations of the Empire and its rulers, who brought technology and progress. Travel guides such as the *Baedeker* offered itineraries through the whole of the empire, always following the railway lines. The standard history of Austrian railways, published in 1898 in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of Emperor Francis Joseph's ascent to the throne, ended with a patriotic appeal to coming generations of railway workers:

May the young fondly preserve and administer what the old have created, may they vigorously develop it by chaining one rail to another and one line to another, until the iron routes reach the farthest corners of our dear fatherland, carrying everywhere the blessings of culture, wealth and satisfaction under the protective wings of the glorious Austrian double-headed eagle.⁶⁹

The railways combined territorialization with economic and cultural modernization. By the end of the nineteenth century, Austria-Hungary had become a railway empire.

Czechoslovakia, in turn, was a railway republic. It sported one of the highest railway densities in Europe and the world, having inherited 13,316 kilometres of Austro-Hungarian track.⁷⁰ About 11,400 kilometres were publicly owned.⁷¹ The Czechoslovak railways corresponded to nearly 30 per cent of all Austro-Hungarian tracks, although Czechoslovakia only made up 21 per cent of the former Empire's territory. The state of the railway network reflected a clear east–west divide, and the bulk of the network was located in the Bohemian Lands. Its 9,578 kilometres corresponded to just under 42 per cent of all Cisleithanian tracks, while in terms of territory the Bohemian Lands made up only 26 per cent. Meanwhile, the railways in Slovakia and Ruthenia comprised 19 per cent of the Hungarian network, only marginally more than their territorial proportion in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁷² The railway's lower railway density in Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia mirrored the general economic situation of the country.⁷³ In addition to sheer density, the Czechoslovak authorities viewed the railways as a national asset from the outset, which mirrored the situation in the rest of Europe. The end of the war saw an unprecedented wave of railway nationalization. With the exception of the United Kingdom, which only followed in 1948, all European countries had nationalized their main lines by the late 1930s.⁷⁴ In a law passed in June 1919, the Czechoslovak government decided that the country's railways, with the exception of minor local railways, should be state-owned. Another law passed in December 1920 enabled the Ministry of Railways to take over the operation of passenger trains on private railways, and in May

1924, it began nationalizing all remaining private railways.⁷⁵ Ivan Jakubec has argued that 'after the First World War, the integrative function of transport as a stabilizing and consolidating element of the state and society exceeded the significance of its technical and economic functions'.⁷⁶ As an asset of the state, it was much easier to use the railways for the purpose of national unification. Instead of merely contributing to a burgeoning popular nationalism as in the nineteenth century, they became a tool in the process of nation-building that was actively controlled by the state.⁷⁷

The dichotomy between railway nationalism and cosmopolitanism was more acute for Czechoslovakia than for other Habsburg successor states. In aspiration and in foreign perception, Czechoslovaks were 'honorary' Westerners. French and British diplomats at the Paris Peace Conferences were impressed by the Czechs' 'unfailingly cooperative, reasonable and persuasive' attitude.⁷⁸ Masaryk laid down the new state's ideology in his 1918 treatise *The New Europe: The Slav Standpoint*.⁷⁹ It depicted the First World War as the battle between 'medieval theocracies' of the Central Powers on the one hand and the 'democratic, constitutional' Allies on the other. The Czechs, he argued, were the vanguard of a block of small nations between Germany and Russia that would check pan-German expansionism. The Czech nation (which implicitly included the Slovaks) had as much right as any of the great nations to independent statehood, since it was 'today culturally and economically one of the most progressive nations'. Especially in economic terms, he was not wrong: highly industrialized Czechoslovakia had more in common with Western Europe than with overwhelmingly agrarian Poland, Romania or Yugoslavia. The country inherited more than half of Austria-Hungary's industrial potential and nearly half of its workers, while it comprised only a fifth of Habsburg territory and a quarter of its former subjects.⁸⁰ This meant that in the interwar period, the Czechoslovak economy was among the fifteen largest economies in the world.⁸¹ Czechoslovakia's assertive presence on the international stage had much to do with this economic prowess.⁸² The Czechoslovak government represented by the so-called Castle – the propaganda machine around the first president Tomáš G. Masaryk and his foreign minister Edvard Beneš (1884–1948) – pursued two contradictory goals. On the one hand, they aimed to establish the myth of an inherent Czechoslovak democracy abroad and at home, and on the other, they aspired to create a unified and strong nation-state based around the uniqueness of the Czechoslovak nation.⁸³ Masaryk's notion of Czechoslovak statehood, which was based on the writings of the national historian František Palacký and was elevated to

official ideology after 1918, considered the Hussites to be founders of a Czech tradition of democracy that had found its renewed expression in the independent state.⁸⁴ In this narrative, Czechoslovakia became a beacon of peace and democracy in the centre of Europe, open to its neighbours and cosmopolitan in its outlook. The notion of Czechoslovakia as an 'international paragon' of democracy that was only destroyed by hostile external forces has continued to be strong, even in the historiography.⁸⁵ However, Czechoslovakia shared many structural problems with neighbouring countries in East-Central Europe, such as informal political practices that excluded many citizens from political participation (especially minorities) and thus failed to quell the expressions of disloyalty. It was a profoundly contradictory entity, 'the product of both power and principle', a geopolitical *cordon sanitaire* and an exercise in liberal democracy⁸⁶ – a cosmopolitan nation-state that offered its large minorities far-reaching rights but never accepted them as full citizens. The international situation left little room for the state to overcome these contradictions and prove its long-term viability.⁸⁷

The railways magnified this contradiction, since they could stand in both as symbols of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. This book addresses the national ambivalence of the railways by using the terms 'national railways' and 'cosmopolitan railways' as structuring principles that frame my investigation of both political developments and cultural representations of the Czechoslovak railways. I use the expression 'cosmopolitan' to denote a conceptualization of railway space that was not caught in the bounds of nationalism but that also did not limit itself to international train connections. Instead, I discuss how discourses of the railways contributed to representations of Czechoslovakia as an open, outward-looking and modern state, which was the main goal of the Castle. As such, the narrative of cosmopolitanism represented a vital ingredient to Czechoslovak nation-building that dialectically interacted with the nationalist impulse. The Ministry of Railways simultaneously pursued both sides of the paradox. It oversaw the construction and upgrading of lines to unify the nation, which is discussed in Chapter 1 of this book. Faced with the lack of a governmental body entrusted with the task of propagating Czechoslovakia internationally, it became an unofficial ministry of tourism, publishing brochures, timetables, guides and posters that advertised Czechoslovakia as attractive, modern and within easy reach by train from all over Europe, discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 turns to national conflict on trains, focusing on a prominent case study of a Czech school-teacher thrown off a train for refusing to speak German. Chapter 4

examines the built environment of the railway, particularly the contradictory representation of Czechness in the new station buildings of Hradec Králové and Uherské Hradiště. Finally, in Chapter 5 I discuss the high-speed train *Slovenská Strela*. The book thus examines the national railway narrative both 'from above' and 'from below', attempting to capture the various perspectives affected by this all-embracing infrastructural cobweb. It intends to contribute both to cultural studies of the railways, which have neglected Czechoslovakia in terms of geography and time frame, and to the infrastructural history of Czechoslovakia, which has approached railway building as a straightforward history of technical progress. Approaching the railway network as an infrastructure that codified space nationally, it intends to carve out the ambivalences of the railway discourse: the railways were simultaneously perceived as old-fashioned and modern, as national and international, and as an organic circulatory organ and an iron landscape.

Notes

1. All quotes in Joseph Roth, 'Affirmation of the Triangular Railway Junction', in *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin 1920–33*, trans. by Michael Hofmann (London, 2004), 105. Emphasis in the original.
2. See, e.g., Susanne Scharnowski, "Berlin ist schön, Berlin ist groß." Feuilletonistische Blicke auf Berlin: Alfred Kerr, Robert Walser, Joseph Roth und Bernard von Brentano', in Matthias Harder and Almut Hille (eds), *Weltfabrik Berlin: Eine Metropole als Sujet der Literatur* (Würzburg, 2006), 80.
3. Alfred C. Mierzejewski, *The Most Valuable Asset of the Reich: A History of the German National Railway. Volume 1: 1920–1932* (Chapel Hill, 1999), esp. 1–18.
4. The usage of the term 'Central Europe' was (and still is) highly politicized. The notion of being at the centre of Europe was a crucial part of the national mythology of Czechoslovakia, as well as other Habsburg successor states. At the same time, as Larry Wolff has shown, the Western construction of 'Eastern Europe' during the Enlightenment generally included the Slavonic-speaking Bohemian Lands (see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* [Stanford, 1994]). And of course, Czechoslovakia was part of the Eastern Bloc after 1948. The now common use of 'East-Central Europe' for the region between the German-speaking and Eastern Slavonic territories, the Baltic sea and Southeastern Europe (i.e. the four Visegrád countries Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, sometimes including the Baltic states and former Yugoslav republics) demonstrates this in-betweenness. In the period under consideration, Czechoslovakia could be regarded as central, eastern and east-central. Indeed, often different designations were applied for regions within the country; for example, when highly industrialized Bohemia was counted as west and Carpathian Ruthenia as east. The implications of such geographical constructivism are discussed in Chapter 2.

5. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise: Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, 5th edn (Frankfurt am Main, 2011), 35. Unless noted otherwise, all translations in this book are my own.
6. Steven Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880–1918: With a New Preface* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 12–13; Tim Robbins, *The Railway Age* (Manchester, 1998), 37–38; Oliver Zimmer, 'Die Ungeduld mit der Zeit: Britische und deutsche Bahnpassagiere im Eisenbahnzeitalter', *Historische Zeitschrift* 308(1) (2019), 46–80.
7. Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, 117.
8. *Ibid.*, 54.
9. Josef Janů, 'U kolébky železnic: Obraz z historie moderní dopravy', in *Světozor* 24 (1890), 279; quoted in Jaroslav Pacovský, *Lidé, vlaky, koleje* (Prague, 1982), 27.
10. Dirk van Laak, 'Infra-Strukturgeschichte', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27(3) (2001), 367. See also Dirk van Laak, *Alles im Fluss: Die Lebensadern unserer Gesellschaft – Geschichte und Zukunft der Infrastruktur* (Bonn, 2019).
11. Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), 352–53.
12. See especially Chapter 5 on 'the compartment' in Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, 67–83.
13. Manfred Riedel, 'Vom Biedermeier zum Maschinenzeitalter: Zur Kulturgeschichte der ersten Eisenbahnen in Deutschland', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 43 (1961), 119.
14. The Russian finance minister Georg von Kankrin's advice to Tsar Nicholas I in the 1840s, quoted in Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, "'This New Means of Transportation Will Make Unstable People Even More Unstable": Railways and Geographical Mobility in Tsarist Russia', in John Randolph and Eugene M. Avrutin (eds), *Russia in Motion: Cultures of Human Mobility since 1850* (Urbana, 2012), 220.
15. Erwin Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne* (Berlin, 1956), 319; quoted in Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, 52.
16. Wolfgang Kaschuba, *Die Überwindung der Distanz: Zeit und Raum in der europäischen Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004), 77.
17. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Los Angeles, 1995), 6, 41.
18. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2006), 33. In terms of nationalism theory, this book also draws on: Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London, 1977); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1992); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations* (New York, 2000); and *Národy nejsou dílem náhody: Příčiny a předpoklady utváření moderních evropských národů* (Prague, 2009).
19. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London, 1991), 35.
20. In his classic study of nationalism, Karl W. Deutsch identified communication as the primary building block of nationhood. However, he also regarded it as a linguistic and not a spatial system. See *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), esp. 87–103.

21. Aleida Assmann, *Geschichte im Gedächtnis: Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung* (Munich, 2007); Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*', *Representations* 26 (1989), 7–24.
22. Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 7.
23. Pieter Judson, 'Frontiers, Islands, Forests, Stones: Mapping the Geography of a German Identity in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1900', in Patricia Yaeger (ed.), *The Geography of Identity* (Ann Arbor, 1996), 382–406, and Pieter Judson, 'Every German visitor has a völkisch obligation he must fulfill': Nationalist Tourism in the Austrian Empire, 1880–1918', in Rudy Koshar (ed.), *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford, 2002), 147–68. See also Mark Cornwall, *The Devil's Wall: The Nationalist Youth Mission of Heinz Rutha* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).
24. Cynthia Paces, *Prague Panoramas: National Memory and Sacred Space in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh, 2009); Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands became Czech* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); Mark Cornwall, 'The Struggle on the Czech–German Language Border, 1880–1940', *The English Historical Review* 109(433) (September 1994), 914–51; Derek Sayer, 'The Language of Nationality and the Nationality of Language: Prague 1780–1920', *Past and Present* 153 (November 1996), 164–210; Jeremy King, *Czechs and Germans into Budweisers: A Local History of Bohemian Politics* (Princeton, 2002); Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); Eleonóra Babejová, *Fin-de-Siècle Pressburg: Conflict and Cultural Coexistence in Bratislava 1897–1914* (Boulder, 2003); Bálint Varga, *The Monumental Nation: Magyar Nationalism and Symbolic Politics in Fin-de-siècle Hungary* (New York, 2016); Scott Spector's *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley, 2000) is noteworthy in that it traces less the Czech national appropriation of Prague as the spatial depiction of the city by German-Jewish writers. Quoting a poem by Egon Erwin Kisch, which describes the Vltava flowing in a circle around the city, Spector writes (p. 9): 'It [the river] does not connect sources and destinations; it circumscribes and imprisons its inhabitants. The image of the Prague "island" is a persistent one, as is the corresponding metaphor of the circle. ... The above images of "Prague" inscribe a territory without continuity with other territories, geographical as well as temporal.'
25. In a characteristic example, Pavel Dvořák describes the twists and turns with which the (frequently renamed) square in front of the Municipal Theatre in Pressburg/Bratislava was nationally marked. In 1904, under pressure from the Hungarian nationalist lobby, the city council replaced a statue of the Pressburg German composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel with a monumental representation of the Hungarian national poet Sándor Petőfi. Immediately after the First World War, Petőfi was replaced by the Slovak poet Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav (see Pavel Dvořák, *Zlatá kniha Bratislavy* [Bratislava, 1993], 462–63).
26. Peter Haslinger, *Nation und Territorium im tschechischen politischen Diskurs 1880–1938* (Munich, 2010). Long before the 'spatial turn', D. Perman dealt with this discussion during the First World War in an informative and often neglected book: *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914–1920* (Leiden, 1962). In addition, Peter Bugge explores a similar question from the opposite perspective in a succinct essay – i.e. the discursive creation of 'Bohemia' abroad, especially in

- Great Britain, France and Germany. See Peter Bugge, "Land und Volk" – oder: Wo liegt Böhmen?, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28(3) (2002), 404–34.
27. For a recent synthesis of these developments in East-Central Europe, see Steffi Marung, Matthias Middell and Uwe Müller, 'Territorialisierung in Ostmitteleuropa bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg', in Frank Hadler and Matthias Middell (eds), *Handbuch einer transnationalen Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas: Band I. Von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 2017), 37–130. The effects of these developments are evident even today. In English-language literature, the Lands of the Bohemian Crown (or Bohemian Lands for short) are often referred to as 'Czech Lands' – a mistranslation of *české země*, which does not differentiate between Bohemian (a geographic term) and Czech (an ethnolinguistic one). Although the Bohemian Lands were by no means entirely Czech, the label stuck and contributed to the area's national codification. Similarly, the term 'Slovakia' (*Slovensko*) for the predominantly Slovak-speaking northern part of the former Kingdom of Hungary ethnicized a space that had traditionally been described in geographic terms as 'Upper Hungary'.
 28. Steffi Marung and Katja Naumann, 'Einleitung', in Steffi Marung and Katja Naumann (eds), *Vergessene Vielfalt: Territorialität und Internationalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 2014), 11.
 29. For instance, no article published in the *Journal of Transport History* until 1993 dealt with this topic (see Terry Gourvish, 'What Kind of Railway History Did We Get? Forty Years of Research', *Journal of Transport History* 14 [1993], 111–25). The few exceptions include Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne: Mobilität und sozialer Raum im Eisenbahnzeitalter* (Stuttgart, 2014); A. Kim Clark, *The Redemptive Work: Railway and the Nation in Ecuador, 1895–1930* (Wilmington, DE, 1998); Albert Schram, *Railways and the Formation of the Italian State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1997); Sarah H. Gordon, *Passage to Union: How the Railroads transformed American Life, 1829–1929* (Chicago, 1996); and Laura Bear, *Lines of the Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy, and the Intimate Historical Self* (New York, 2007).
 30. Quoted in Jindřich Rybák, *Naše železnice v prvném roce státní samostatnosti* (Prague, 1919), 13.
 31. Masaryk, *Jak pracovat?*, 32.
 32. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, 1996), 16.
 33. Svatopluk Čech, 'Velehradská pouť', in *Vzpomínky z cest a života I: Sebrané spisy, díl V* (Prague, 1908 [1881]), 48–49. I am grateful to Robert B. Pynsent for pointing this text out to me.
 34. Jozef Miloslav Hurban, *Cesta Slováků ku bratrům slavenským na Moravě a v Čechách* (Žilina, 1929 [1841]), 49. On the *Nordbahn*, see Chad Bryant, 'Into an Uncertain Future: Railroads and Vormärz Liberalism in Brno, Vienna, and Prague', *Austrian History Yearbook* 40 (2009), 183–201.
 35. Hugo Hassinger, *Die Tschechoslowakei: Ein geographisches, politisches und wirtschaftliches Handbuch* (Vienna, 1925), 103–4.
 36. Joseph Roth, 'Affirmation of the Triangular Railway Junction', 108.
 37. Michel Foucault, 'Questions on Geography', in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (Brighton, 1980), 70.
 38. Henri Lefebvre, 'Reflections on the Politics of Space', trans. by Michael J. Enders, *Antipode* 8(2) (May 1976), 31. It is noteworthy that Lefebvre does not prob-

- lematize the unit of spatial production, which he simply posits as 'society' or 'mode of production'. In *The Production of Space*, he writes that 'every society – and hence every mode of production ... – produces a space, its own space' (Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith [Oxford, 1991], 31).
39. See esp. Schlögel, *Im Raume*.
 40. Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, 'Der spatial turn und die Osteuropäische Geschichte', *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2006), <https://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1374> [accessed 18 February 2020].
 41. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1995), 5.
 42. Kaschuba, *Die Überwindung der Distanz*, 13.
 43. Of all the literature on the Czechoslovak railways known to me, only Ivan Jakubec's study on interwar transport in Czechoslovakia, Germany and Austria takes a comparative perspective.
 44. Ralf Roth, 'Die Entwicklung der Kommunikationsnetze und ihre Beziehung zur europäischen Städtelandschaft', in Ralf Roth (ed.), *Städte im europäischen Raum: Verkehr, Kommunikation und Urbanität im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 2009), 29; Ralf Roth and Karl Schlögel, 'Einleitung: Geschichte und Verkehr im 20. Jahrhundert', in Ralf Roth and Karl Schlögel (eds), *Neue Wege in ein neues Europa: Geschichte und Verkehr im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 13–14. See also the contributions to the volume Monika Burri, Kilian T. Elsasser and David Gugerli (eds), *Die Internationalität der Eisenbahn 1850–1970* (Zurich, 2003).
 45. Miloslav Štěpán, *Přehledné dějiny československých železnic, 1824–1948* (Prague, 1958). Štěpán was head of the Czechoslovak Railway Archives from 1942 until his death in 1956 (see Miroslav Kunt, 'Vývoj dopravního archivnictví v Československu se zvláštním zřetelem k archivům železničním', *Paginae Historiae* 4 [1996], 233). For further technical or popular science works on the topic, see Ivan Jakubec, 'The Transport Problems of a New State: Czechoslovak Railways and Rivers, 1918–38', *The Journal of Transport History* 17(2) (1996), 116–132; Ivan Jakubec, *Eisenbahn und Elbeschiffahrt in Mitteleuropa 1918–1938: Die Neuordnung der verkehrspolitischen Beziehungen zwischen der Tschechoslowakei, dem Deutschen Reich und Österreich in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Stuttgart, 2001); Pavel Schreier, *Naše dráhy ve 20. století: Pohledy do železniční historie* (Prague, 2010); Mojmír Krejčířík, *Po stopách našich železnic* (Prague, 1991) and *Železniční móda: Dějiny železničního stejno kroje v Českých zemích a na Slovensku* (Prague, 2003); Josef Hons, *Dejiny dopravy na území ČSSR* (Bratislava, 1975); Stanislav Pavlíček, *Naše lokálky: Místní dráhy v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku* (Prague, 2002); Paul Catchpole, *Steam and Rail in Slovakia* (Birmingham, 1998).
 46. Ctibor Fiala, *Železnice v republice Československé: Historie a vývoj železnic v zemích československých* (Prague, 1932); Zoltán Berger, *Die Eisenbahnpolitik der tschechoslovakischen Republik seit ihrem Bestehen* (Strasbourg, 1928); Robert Burian, *Co vykonaly ČSD na Slovensku v prvých 15 letech po převratu* (Bratislava, 1934); *O vývoji a úkolech československého železničnictví* (Prague, 1921); see also *Ročenka státních a soukromých drah Československé republiky* published annually by the Ministry of Railways from 1920 to 1933.
 47. See Christopher Kopper, 'Der erste Weltkrieg als Eisenbahnkrieg', in Ralf Roth and Karl Schlögel (eds), *Neue Wege in ein neues Europa: Geschichte und Verkehr im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 222–34.

48. Quoted in Todd Samuel Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York, 2007), 160.
49. Quoted in Vladimír Macura, 'Vlak jako symbol 19. století', in Vladimír Macura and Rudolf Pohl (eds), *Osudový vlak: Sborník příspěvků stejnojmenné vědecké konference k 150. výročí přiježdu prvního vlaku do Prahy* (Prague, 1995), 60.
50. Florian Cebulla cites a German poem of the Vormärz: 'Ja, alle Ketten, Fesseln, Wehr und Waffen, | aus roher harter Zeit, | sie werden einst in Schienen umgeschaffen, | zum Preis der Menschlichkeit! - | Mit Schienen, Freunde, webet ohne Bangen | ein Netz von Pol zu Pol! | Sieht sich Europa einst darin gefangen, | dann wird es ihr erst wohl.' See Florian Cebulla, 'Grenzüberschreitender Schienenverkehr: Problemstellungen – Methoden – Forschungsüberblick', in Monika Burri, Kilian T. Elsasser and David Gugerli (eds), *Die Internationalität der Eisenbahn 1850–1970* (Zurich, 2003), 23.
51. Melanie Aspey, 'Making Tracks: Promoting The Rothschild Archive as a Source for Railway History', in Ralf Roth and Günter Dinohobl (eds), *Across the Borders: Financing the World's Railways in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Aldershot, 2008), 3–12. The other contributions to this volume discuss numerous other examples.
52. Irene Anastasiadou, 'Networks of Power: Railway Visions in Inter-war Europe', *The Journal of Transport History* 28(2) (2007), 172–91; Dirk van Laak, 'Verkehr und Infrastruktur in der Zeit der beiden Weltkriege', in Ralf Roth and Karl Schlögel (eds), *Neue Wege in ein neues Europa: Geschichte und Verkehr im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 141–55.
53. Irene Anastasiadou, *Constructing Iron Europe: Transnationalism and Railways in the Interbellum* (Amsterdam, 2011), 12.
54. This paradox is also pointed out by Kaschuba, *Die Überwindung der Distanz*, 84.
55. Werner Sölch, *Orient-Express: Glanzzeit und Niedergang eines Luxuszugs* (Düsseldorf, 1998), 43–45.
56. Raul Hilberg, *Sonderzüge nach Auschwitz* (Mainz, 1981). See also Alfred C. Mierzejewski, *The Most Valuable Asset of the Reich*; Simone Gigliotti, *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing the Holocaust* (New York, 2009); and Marie-Noëlle Polino, 'Der Zusammenhang von Transport und Vernichtung – ein ungelöstes Problem für Historiker', in Ralf Roth and Karl Schlögel (eds), *Neue Wege in ein neues Europa: Geschichte und Verkehr im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 281–300.
57. Alfred Gottwaldt, 'Die "Logistik des Holocaust" als mörderische Aufgabe der Deutschen Reichsbahn im europäischen Raum', in Ralf Roth and Karl Schlögel (eds), *Neue Wege in ein neues Europa: Geschichte und Verkehr im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 261.
58. Karl Bachinger, 'Das Verkehrswesen', in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, ed. by Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, vol. 1, *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung*, ed. by Alois Brusatti (Vienna, 1973), 278.
59. *Ibid.*, 278, 295.
60. Hermann Strach, 'Geschichte der Eisenbahnen Oesterreich-Ungarns von den ersten Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1867', in Hermann Strach (ed.), *Geschichte der Eisenbahnen der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*, vol. 1, part 1 (Vienna, 1898), 197.
61. *Ibid.*, 198.
62. *Ibid.*, 222–26.

63. János Majdán, *A közlekedés története Magyarországon (1700–2000)* (Pécs, 2014), 48; Strach, 'Geschichte', 283.
64. Martin Kvizda, 'Czech Military Railways – History and a Comparative Analysis of the Czech Railway Network's Efficiency', in Ralf Roth and Henry Jacolin (eds), *Eastern European Railways in Transition: Nineteenth to Twenty-first Centuries* (Farnham, 2013), 103–5.
65. Markus Klenner, *Eisenbahn und Politik 1758–1914: Vom Verhältnis der europäischen Staaten zu ihren Eisenbahnen* (Vienna, 2002), 183.
66. Josef Gonda, 'Geschichte der Eisenbahnen in Ungarn: Vom Jahre 1867 bis zur Gegenwart', in Hermann Strach (ed.), *Geschichte der Eisenbahnen der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*, vol. 3 (Vienna, 1898), 375, 414; Bianca Hoenig, *Geteilte Berge: Eine Konfliktgeschichte der Naturnutzung in der Tatra* (Göttingen, 2018), 38.
67. Bachinger, 'Das Verkehrswesen', 298.
68. *Ibid.*, 374–75.
69. Ignaz Konta, 'Geschichte der Eisenbahnen Oesterreichs: Vom Jahre 1867 bis zur Gegenwart', in Hermann Strach (ed.), *Geschichte der Eisenbahnen der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*, vol. 1, part 2 (Vienna, 1898), 426.
70. Creating a precise ranking is difficult considering the imprecision of the relevant League of Nations statistics. Based on the 1920 figure of 13,634 km of track, Czechoslovakia had a density of 97 km per 1,000 km² of territory. Belgium (309), Great Britain (142), Switzerland (130), Germany (123) and the Netherlands (108) were among the few countries that had higher densities. See *League of Nations: International Statistical Year-Book 1926* (Geneva, 1927), 10–16 and 121–24.
71. Ivan Smolka (ed.), *Studie o technice v českých zemích V.: 1918–1945 (1. část)* (Prague, 1995), 391.
72. *Statistika československých drah za rok 1919* (Prague, 1922) and Bachinger, 'Das Verkehrswesen', 301–3.
73. Ivan Jakubec, 'Transport Problems of a New State', 123.
74. Klenner, *Eisenbahn und Politik 1758–1914*, 195.
75. Jiří Kubáček et al., *Dejiny železnic na území Slovenska*, 2nd edn (Bratislava, 2007), 123. However, this process was not completed by the end of the interwar period, and several railways remained officially in private hands until the end of the Second World War, including the Košice–Bohumín Railway.
76. Jakubec, *Eisenbahn und Elbeschiffahrt*, 15.
77. This process has been studied in impressive fashion by Dietmar Neutatz in his work on the Moscow metro's role in the consolidation of the Soviet system. He argues that the Soviet obsession with technology represented a surrogate religion, and posters propagating the metro were used as modern versions of Orthodox icons. See Dietmar Neutatz, *Die Moskauer Metro: Von den ersten Plänen bis zur Großbaustelle des Stalinismus (1897–1935)* (Cologne, 2001).
78. Margaret Macmillian, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and its Attempt to End War* (London, 2001), 241, 246, quoted in Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca, NY, 2008), 109.
79. Given that the text was mainly intended to win favour with the Allies, it is not surprising that it was first published in English: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *The New Europe: The Slav Standpoint* (London, 1918).
80. Alice Teichova, *The Czechoslovak Economy 1918–1980* (London, 1988), 3.

81. Alice Teichova, *Kleinststaaten im Spannungsfeld der Großmächte: Wirtschaft und Politik in Mittel- und Südosteuropa in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Vienna, n.d.), 18–19.
82. Sarah Lemmen, *Tschechen auf Reisen: Repräsentationen der außereuropäischen Welt und nationale Identität in Ostmitteleuropa 1890–1938* (Cologne, 2018), 100.
83. Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe* (Oxford, 2009), 16.
84. Petr Drulák, 'Between Geopolitics and Anti-Geopolitics: Czech Political Thought', *Geopolitics* 11(3) (2006), 420–38.
85. This was prominently claimed by the playwright and first post-communist president Václav Havel (1936–2011). See Peter Bugge, 'Czech Democracy 1918–1938 – Paragon or Parody?', *Bohemia* 47(1) (2007), 4.
86. Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740–1985: Feudalism to Communism* (London, 1986), 157.
87. Ota Konrád, 'Widersprüchlich und unvollendet: Die Demokratie der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik 1918 bis 1938', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66(2) (2018), 346.