

<b>Institution: University of Strathclyde</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 30</b>
<b>Title of case study: Launching debate and changing public understanding of Czechoslovakia's treatment of minorities.</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)          Heimann's research findings reveal that the Czechoslovak state, throughout successive political regimes, consistently discriminated against, and often persecuted, its minority populations. Her book launched public discussion about nationalist (ethno-linguistic) chauvinism in Central Europe. Her research has changed perceptions of the Czechoslovak state as having been more liberal and tolerant than its Central European neighbours. The research was disseminated through: book sales (three editions); internet serialisation; a Czech World Service documentary; newspaper and magazine feature articles; blogs; radio and press interviews; public lectures (e.g. at the Slovak Embassy and to Czech and Slovak charities); public policy symposia (e.g. with the Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish and Slovenian ambassadors to Britain and a former US Secretary of State); internet discussion groups; a BBC Radio 4 play; book reviews; discussion in the National Theatre in Prague as part of the Prague Writers' Festival 2013; and 2-hour panel discussion with the former Prime Minister in the Czech Parliament (Senate) shown live on Czech TV.</p> <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)          Heimann spent two years based in Prague, funded by a Leverhulme Fellowship, to undertake original research in Czechoslovak archives. This involved working in the State Central Archives, the National Library (Klementinum), the Masaryk Institute, the Institute for Contemporary History, Prague City Library, Comenius University Library and the Ministry of Interior. It included 8 months' research in the previously inaccessible StB (secret police) archives.</p> <p>This archival research led to innumerable new findings, including e.g. Ministry of Interior reports detailing the post-war German expulsions, secret police reports detailing the routine surveillance of foreigners and minority language-speakers, evidence concerning persecution of Jews and Roma, the extent and use of labour and prison camps, anti-Church initiatives and much else besides.</p> <p>The principal research output was <i>Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed</i> (Yale University Press, 2009; 2011). The book went into three editions and sold around 4,000 copies. It attracted approximately 100 reviews in 7 languages across a dozen countries. Excerpts are published on the Prague Writers' Festival website (2013).</p> <p><b>Key Research Insights</b>          The research findings are essentially that Czechoslovakia, a state that has long enjoyed a reputation for liberal, democratic values and the decent treatment of its minorities, in fact consistently pursued Czech and Bohemian-centred policies that excluded and alienated the other nationalities and regions in the state. Persistent favouritism shown to Czechs by successive regimes gradually led to the removal or extinction of all other nationalities within what had been originally conceived as a liberal multinational state.</p> <p>The research shows how Jews and Gypsies began to be persecuted by the Czechoslovak authorities before the Second World War and had been virtually eliminated by its end; how Ruthenia, with its Ukrainian/Rusyn/Russian-speaking inhabitants, was given to the Soviet Union at the instigation of President Beneš in 1943; how Hungarian and German speakers, mostly women and children, were forcibly expelled after the War; how anti-Semitism was revived, most notably in the 1950s. The process of removing the last minorities from what became the Czech Republic in 1992 was completed with the separation of Czechoslovakia into two separate republics during the 'Velvet Divorce'. Czechoslovakia's remaining Hungarian and Rusyn populations, together with most of its Roma, were left within Slovak national borders. Today's Czech Republic is among the most ethnically homogenous states in the world.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

The research findings overturn conventional understandings of the Czechoslovak state as having been more liberal and tolerant than its Central European neighbours. They complicate simplistic notions of Czechoslovakia as a 'victim' country, showing Czechoslovakia to have been a perpetrator, as well as a victim, of the state-sponsored persecution of minorities.

### Key Researchers

The underpinning research was undertaken solely by Lecturer/Senior Lecturer Mary Heimann at the University of Strathclyde. It was supported by Leverhulme Study Abroad Fellowship to undertake original research in Prague (2001-2003) and an AHRC grant to complete the book manuscript.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed* (2009; reprinted 2010; paperback edn. 2011). ISBN 978-0-300-17242-3. Single-authored monograph (406 + xvii pp.)

**Notes on output quality:** The book underwent a scrupulous peer review process in Britain and the USA before being accepted for publication by Yale University Press. It underwent an analogous peer-review process in the Czech Republic before being offered publication in a Czech edition by Karolinum, the academic press of Charles University in Prague. It was noted in the Czech Academy of Science's published report for 2010 of the most significant books to have been published in the Humanities in the past 20 years.

### Other evidence for quality of research (grants, patents etc.).

Awarding body: The Leverhulme Trust. Grant title: Leverhulme Study Abroad Fellowship. Awarded to: Mary Heimann 'for research towards a history of Czechoslovakia'. Period of the grant: 2001-2002 Value of the grant: £17,350.

Awarding body: Arts and Humanities Research Council. Grant title: AHRC Research Leave. Awarded to: Mary Heimann. Period: 1 February 2007 to 31 May 2007. Value of the grant: £27,257.

Awarding body: Czech government. Grant title: scholarships to participate in Czech language summer schools. Awarded to: Mary Heimann. Period of grant: July 1999 (Charles University, Podybrady); July 2000 (Charles University, Prague); July 2001 (Masaryk, University, Brno). Value: all language tuition and Czech language summer school accommodation fees waived.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

#### Process from research to impact

##### Media interest

From its publication date in 2009, Heimann's book attracted widespread interest in non-academic circles. The day after publication, the book appeared on the front page of *Literární noviny* (the Czech equivalent of the *TLS* or *New York Review of Books*) under the banner headline 'Can this shocking reflection really be us?' It was condemned as 'anti-Czechoslovak' in a public speech by the Czech Consul-General in Los Angeles. 'US historian provokes the Czechs' appeared on the cover of *Respekt*, the glossy Czech current affairs weekly. The weekend Arts section of *Lidové noviny*, (the Czech *Guardian*), featured it under the caption 'Heimann turns twentieth-century Czech history on its head. What will the consequences be?'

The book attracted about 100 reviews from around the world. It was picked up by diplomats and policy-makers via *Foreign Affairs*, *Le Monde Diplomatique* and the *US Foreign Service Journal*. It was made known to the business sector as the first featured book in the Books and Arts section of *The Economist* (1.5 million readers) and had articles in the *Financial Times* and *Hospodářské noviny*. It was singled out as literature of general interest in many places, including the Campaign for the American Reader, the *TLS*, *Atlantic magazine* and the 23<sup>rd</sup> international Prague Writers' Festival.

##### Public engagement

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

The author was interviewed by the Czech Press Agency, the current affairs magazine *Respekt*, the Czech World Service, BBC Radio 4, the *Times Higher Education*, *The Prague Post*, Radio Wave, the Czech equivalent of *The Guardian* (*Právo*) and the *Financial Times* (*Hospodářské noviny*). She spoke about her research findings and their reception to a public audience of several hundred at the Slovak Embassy [SOURCE 1] and to about a hundred Czech and Slovak émigrés in Edinburgh (April 2012). She met with Czech, Austrian, Russian, and German readers, corresponded with Australians, Canadians, Poles, Hungarians, Americans and others; and responded to a formal request to publish a reply to internet discussion about her work on H-Net.

Heimann was included in a special symposium of leading Central European diplomats, scholars and policy-makers held at the Czech Embassy in London in September 2010 [SOURCE 2], at which passages from the book were read aloud by the Czech Ambassador and debated by those present, including former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Heimann was one of 7 writers from around the world chosen for the international Writers' Festival held in Prague (13-18 April 2013) on the theme 'The Birth of Nations'. This involved book signings in the National Theatre, press interviews, on-air conversation on Radio Wave, meetings with the Friends of the Festival, the Mayor of Prague, Egyptian Ambassador, President of the Czech Senate, and the Czech Minister for Culture. The visit involved discussions with the other invited writers including Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk from Turkey and bestselling fiction writers from Egypt, Algeria and Portugal. [SOURCE 3]

Heimann took part in a two-hour panel discussion, held in the Czech Parliament (Senate) in front of a live audience, on 'The Birth and Death of Czechoslovakia' (18 April 2013). The public discussion, which centred around Heimann's research findings lasted 2 hours, was broadcast live on Czech Television and was reported in many newspapers. It is available to download from the Czech Television 24 website. The importance of Heimann's work for the Czech nation was specifically commented upon by the former Prime Minister in the television broadcast. [SOURCE 4]

**Type of Impact**

The research findings have changed public perceptions of Czechoslovak history and increased understanding and raised awareness of current attitudes towards minorities in the Czech Republic.

**Reach within Czech Republic:** The book's impact is particularly clear in the Czech Republic, where an initially hostile reception gave way to a period of dialogue that led to acceptance of the research findings articulated in the book. It sparked debate and discussion in the Czech Parliament (Senate), in the press, media, and on the internet.

The book was first discussed in the Czech Senate (Parliament) in 2010 [SOURCE 5] as a work whose interpretations and research findings ought to be explored through a series of radio programmes and conferences. It was made the subject of a half-hour panel discussion programme on the Czech World Service [SOURCE 6]. The research was discussed at a conference held by Czech émigrés in Tábor in July 2010 and Heimann was one of 7 writers from around the world chosen for the International Prague Writers' Festival (April 2013). This included appearing in the National Theatre (Nová Scena), speaking in the Czech Senate, and being interviewed by the press (television, radio and newspaper) about her research.

**International reach:** Media interest has been widespread in Europe, USA and Canada. The research findings also informed a BBC Radio 4 'Friday Play', for example, and are referred to in unexpected places, such as a Gay website, expatriate blogs, literary magazines, and in-house parliamentary newspapers, in explanation for current Czech attitudes towards minorities. It has been discussed by the Austrian Institute of Conflict Research, among Visegrad policy-makers, and chosen as a prize by the UN Secondary Schools Conference in Quebec. It has been picked up by book club and library blogs such as the Campaign for the Public Reader, the Scottish Review of Books, and New Books in History. It launched major internet discussions, for example the Czech internet newspaper *Britské listy* alone published 45 new articles on the subject [SOURCE 7].

## Impact case study (REF3b)

**Significance:** The book launched an entirely new debate and sparked widespread public and private discussion about Czechoslovakia's past. It is very widely cited and is continuing to change public perceptions of the minorities question in Central Europe. *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed* was noted in the Chairman of the Czech Academy of Science's published report for 2010 of the most significant books to have been published in the Humanities in the past 20 years [SOURCE 8]. It led to the author's invitation to appear at the 23<sup>rd</sup> international Prague Writers' Festival, an honour usually reserved for Nobel, Pulitzer, Booker, Man and Goncourt prize winners, and to speak in a televised panel discussion in the Czech Parliament (Senate) [SOURCE 9].

The book has overturned conventional public understanding of the Czechoslovak state as having been more liberal and tolerant than its neighbours. It complicates simplistic notions of Czechoslovakia as a 'victim' country, showing Czechoslovakia to have been a perpetrator, as well as a victim, of state-sponsored persecution of minorities. It has begun a process of widespread discussion and debate.

As Petr Pithart, former Czech Prime Minister, said in the televised panel discussion held in the Czech Parliament (Senate) on 18 April 2013: 'Your book has helped by sparking our conscience... We can't go back and rectify things, but we can make our understanding more precise. We will always need to grapple with national myths and superstitions. Some of them are impossible to uproot. I believe that your book will contribute to a certain cleansing of the atmosphere in this country. But it is going to be painful'. [SOURCE 10]

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. <http://london.czechcentres.cz/programme/travel-events/czechoslovak-on-history-rough-seas-around-bohemia/>
2. <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.152996438123668.34760.147060568717255&type=1>
3. <http://www.pwf.cz/rubriky/pwf-2013/authors/>
4. <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/kultura/223138-diskuse-z-festivalu-spisovatelu-zrozeni-a-smrt-ceskoslovenska/>
5. <http://www.krajane.net/articleDetail.view?id=1891> Czech World Service reports that 'The State that Failed' was discussed in the Czech Parliament (Senate) in March 2010.
6. <http://www.radio.cz/cz/rubrika/otazniky/americka-historicka-mary-heimannova-ve-sve-krize-kritizuje-ceskoslovensky-nacionalismus> (Half-hour expert panel discussion as part of the series 'Questions of History' broadcast by the Czech World Service (Český rozhlas 7) on 22 May 2010.
7. <http://blisty.cz/list.rb?id=320&page=all>
8. See *Akademický bulletin* of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic (AV ČR) Nov 2010.
9. Invitation from the President of the Prague Writers' Festival, document available upon request. See Prague Writers' Festival website/Wikipedia for list of past participants (Nobel, Booker, Man, Goncourt and other prizewinners listed separately under 'Festival Laureates' at [www.pwf.cz](http://www.pwf.cz)
10. <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/kultura/223138-diskuse-z-festivalu-spisovatelu-zrozeni-a-smrt-ceskoslovenska/>