

THE ECONOMY OF ETHNIC CLEANSING

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE GERMAN-CZECH BORDERLANDS AFTER WORLD WAR II

DAVID W. GERLACH

"The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing is timely and essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the dynamics of forced migration in the modern world. The need for labor determined who would stay and who would go; Czechs raced to claim German homes, businesses, and property; and the expulsions formed a key part of the transition to a Socialist economy. This deeply researched and highly original work will change the way we understand the violent aftermath of the Second World War."

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*The Transformation of the German-Czech
Borderlands after World War II*

David W. Gerlach

Saint Peter's University, New Jersey



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The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing

In the wake of World War II the Sudetenland became the scene of ethnic cleansing, witnessing not only the expulsion of nearly 3 million German speakers, but also the influx of nearly 2 million resettlers. Yet mob violence and nationalist hatred were not the driving forces of ethnic cleansing; instead, greed, the search for power and property, and the general dislocation of post-war Central and Eastern Europe facilitated these expulsions and the transformation of the German-Czech borderlands. These overlapping migrations produced conflict among Czechs, hardship for Germans and facilitated the Communist Party's rise to power. Drawing on a wide range of materials from local and central archives, as well as expellee accounts, David Gerlach demonstrates how the lure of property and social mobility, as well as economic necessities, shaped the course and consequences of ethnic cleansing.

David W. Gerlach is Associate Professor at Saint Peter's University, New Jersey. He was awarded the R. John Rath Prize for Best Article in the 2007 Austrian History Yearbook and the 2006–2007 Best Dissertation by the Austrian Cultural Forum. His most recent publication is "Toward a Material Culture of Jewish Loss," in the journal *Jewish Culture and History*. He was awarded a Richard M. Hunt Fellowship for the Study of German Politics, Society, and Culture by the American Council on Germany in 2017. In addition to the study of forced migration, his current research explores restitution, reparation, and other compensation programs stemming from World War II.

Acknowledgments

Books are also journeys. This one began at the University of Pittsburgh in a seminar on nationalism led by the late Dennison Rusinow. Its deeper roots lay in a semester spent abroad in Prague in 1992, when I first experienced a fascination with Central Europe at a most exhilarating time. My interest in the region and the topic returned as I began graduate school, which happened to coincide with the war in Kosovo and a conference on ethnic cleansing at nearby Duquesne University. Such are the vagaries of history. I thank Bob Donnorummo, not only for his ongoing support, but also for getting this trip started by giving me the opportunity to present my earliest findings at the Center for Russian and East European Studies under the very title of this book. The hard work of the dissertation came much later, and I had the good fortune of being guided by Irina Livezeanu. Her dedication to my project, keen editorial skills and ongoing enthusiasm helped ensure that the book reached its final destination. The rest of my dissertation committee – Bill Chase, Ilya Prizel, Werner Troesken and Christian Gerlach (no relation) – deserves much credit for their insight, critiques and support.

Nancy Wingfield served as an outside reader for the dissertation, and has been a constant companion ever since. I thank her for her advice and assistance over the past several years. Pieter Judson and Gregor Thum each read portions of the manuscript and offered valuable observations and suggestions, for which I am very grateful. Ben Frommer joined the trip near its completion and he, along with a still anonymous reader, provided much needed comments and queries for further fine-tuning and improvement. They made a world of difference. I would also like to thank Lew Bateman at Cambridge University Press for seeing the potential in this project, and Michael Watson for skillfully shepherding it to its conclusion. The shortcomings that still exist in this book remain mine alone.

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2010 was supported by a fellowship from the Conference Group for Central European History. Saint Peter's University, through the Professional Development of Faculty Committee, provided additional support. Chapter 4 is an expanded and revised version of an article I published in the 2007 *Austrian History Yearbook*. Certain portions of Chapters 2 and 5 derive from my article "Beyond Expulsion: The Emergence of 'Unwanted Elements' in the Czech Borderlands, 1945–1950," *East European Politics and Society* 24 no. 2 (May, 2010): 269–93. I visited many archives during my research and enjoyed meeting and working with many different archivists across the borderlands. They all deserve my heartfelt thanks for their help.

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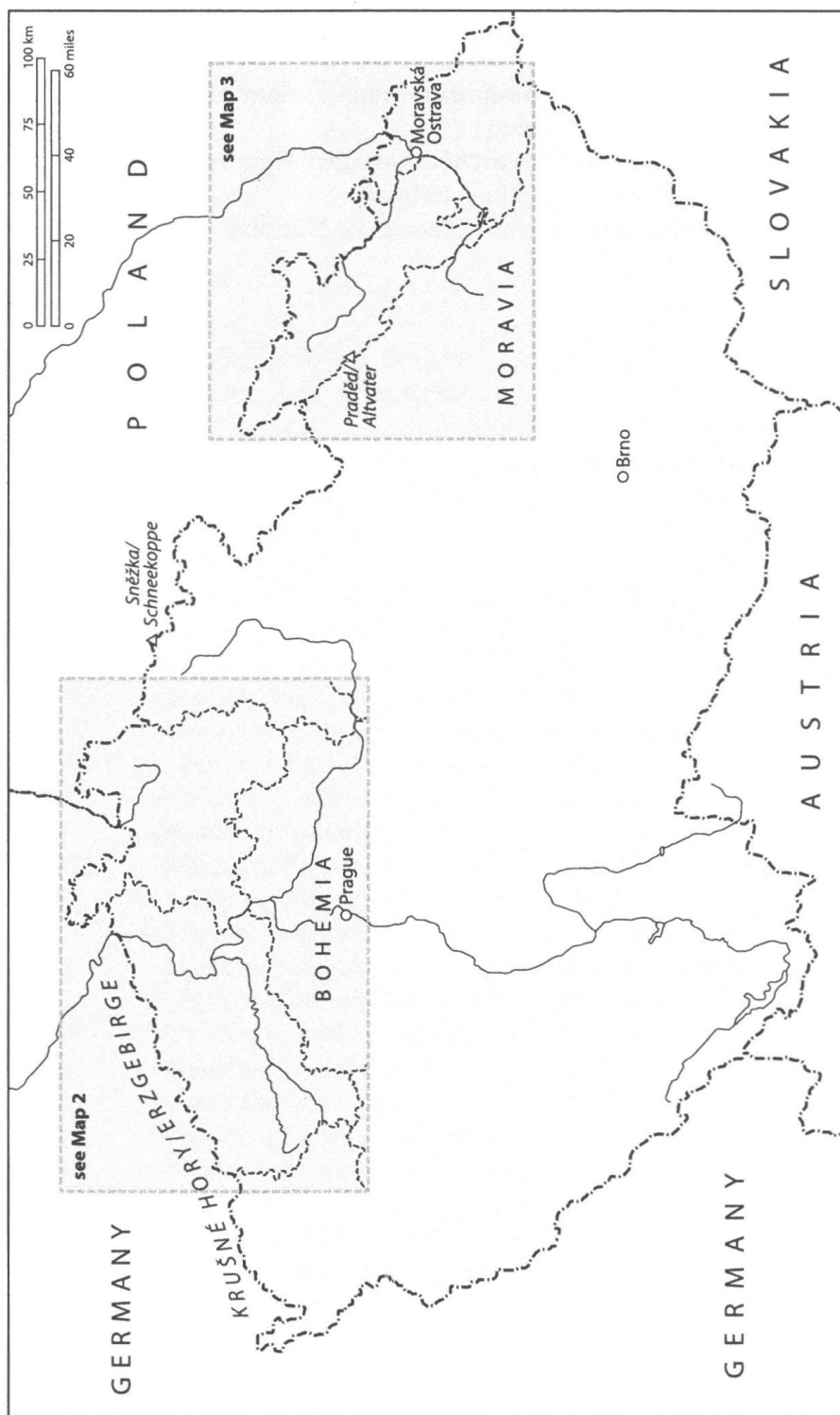
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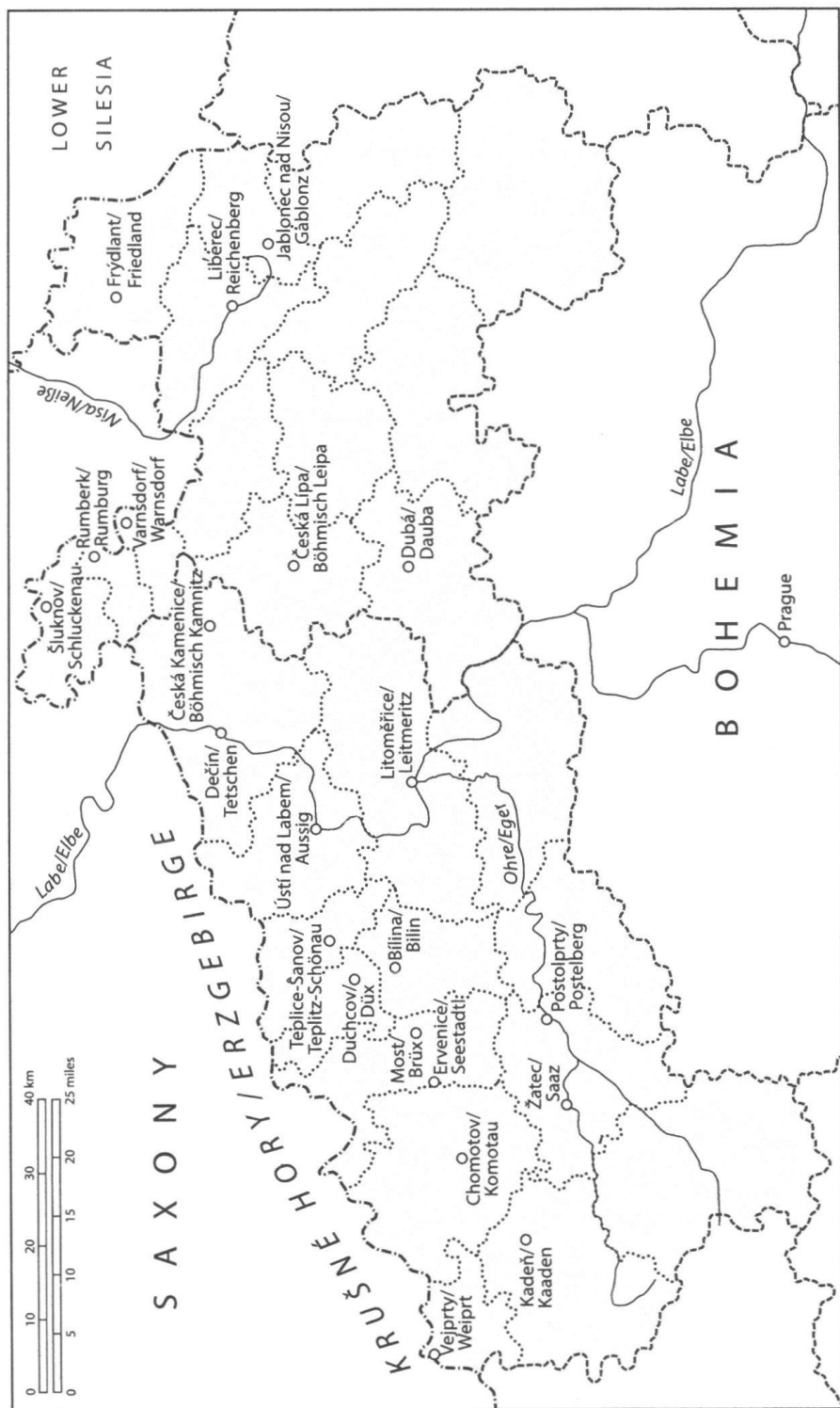
Abbreviations

a.j.	– archivní jednotek (archive unit number)
AM	– Archiv města (City Archive)
f.	– fond (fund)
FNO	– Fond národní obnovy (National Renewal Fund)
inv. č.	– inventární číslo (inventory number)
k.	– karton (carton)
kn.	– kniha (book)
KSC	– Kommunistická strana Československu (Czechoslovak Communist Party)
LAA	– Lastenausgleich Archiv (Equalization of Burdens Archive)
MěNV	– Městský národní výbor (Municipal National Committee)
MNV	– Místní národní výbor (Local National Committee)
MOPSP	– Ministerstvo ochrany práce a sociální péče (Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Welfare)
MP	– Ministerstvo průmysl (Ministry of Industry)
MSK	– Místní správní komise (Local Administrative Commission)
MV	– Ministerstvo vnitra (Interior Ministry)
NA	– Národní archiv (National Archive of the Czech Republic)
NPF	– Národní pozemkový fond (National Land Fund)
OKD	– Ostrava-Karviná doly (Ostrava-Karviná Mines)
ONV	– Okresní národní výbor (District National Committee)
OSK	– Okresní správní komise (District Administrative Commission)
OÚ	– Osídlovací úřad (Settlement Office)
SHD	– Severočeský hnědouhelné doly (Northern Bohemian Brown Coal Mines)
sign.	– signatura (signature)
SOA	– státní oblastní archiv (state regional archive)
SOkA	– státní okresní archiv (state district archive)
ÚKVO	– Ústřední komise vnitřního osídlování (Central Commission for Interior Settlement)

ÚPV	– Úřad předsednictva vlády (Office of the Government Cabinet)
ÚVOD	– Ústřední vedení odboje domácího (Central Leadership of the Domestic Resistance)
VHA	– Vojenský historický archiv (Military History Archive)
ZA	– zemský archiv (regional archive)
ZNV	– Zemský národní výbor (Provincial National Committee)



Map 1 Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia



Map 2 North Bohemian borderlands



Map 3 Silesian borderlands

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