

FOREIGN REPRESENTATION OF THE STATE AND ITS VETERANS



In her acclaimed international history of post-1918 Europe, American historian Zara Steiner characterizes the reconstruction of Eastern and Central Europe in terms of ‘the primacy of nationalism’.¹ If this description justly emphasizes the imprint of new nation states on the region and the mind-set among leading government figures, WWI nonetheless left a complex transnational legacy for the continent as a whole, which required international negotiations and cross-border exchanges on a range of issues. These included matters already mentioned above, such as pensions for ex-soldiers and welfare payments for invalids, but also the up-keep of war graves and other questions. At the same time, the war provoked transnational responses aimed at international reconciliation and peace, alongside national revisionism.²

The tension between these two poles presented a challenge for Austria and Czechoslovakia, too, and this chapter addresses how their segmented veterans scenes responded to it. It explores the transnational dimension to the veterans question and how ex-combatants sought to establish multilateral contacts and represent their interests, from the establishment of the post-war international order through to the turning point in international politics at the start of the 1930s. We follow developments in five selected contexts: the cross-border aspects of veterans policy and welfare provision between Austria and Czechoslovakia; the early attempt to bring about communist veterans internationalism; efforts to establish a common platform for veterans from the victorious and defeated states in the late 1920s; the difficult route for Czechoslovak legionnaires towards full membership of the *Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants* (FIDAC);

and Austria's wavering between refusal and acceptance of the political order, which was evident in veterans' involvement in the *Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants* (CIAMAC).

In general, multilateral relationships and transnational platforms were of greater importance for the formation of veterans internationalism, as well as for foreign representations of the state, than bilateral foreign contacts between associations. These internationalisms were represented primarily by two large organizations: the conservative and anti-communist FIDAC, which in 1920 brought together veterans associations from the victorious states, and CIAMAC, established in 1925 for disabled veterans associations from both victorious and defeated states, following the principles of the League of Nations and their specialized agencies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO).³ As noted by Ángel Alcalde, veterans internationalism did not constitute merely a form of 'positive opposition' to veterans nationalism. Rather, its 'four shades' reflected the competing ideologies in international politics, including communism and fascism.⁴

One of the key questions in international veterans politics was the cooperation between veterans from the defeated and victorious states. Although FIDAC eventually cooperated with veterans from Germany and Austria, its meetings still 'echoed the old diplomacy and the pre-war system of alliances' and its ranks never opened to former enemies.⁵ At the same time, CIAMAC was built from the very beginning on disabled veterans' desire to solve practical social problems. Hence, it accepted veterans associations from both victorious and defeated powers, provided they agreed with the principles of the League of Nations. In practice, as this chapter shows, this meant that FIDAC was more relevant to Czechoslovak legionnaires, while CIAMAC resonated more among Austrian and Czechoslovak war victims organizations.

Unlike in well-established states in Western Europe, the Central European forms of veterans internationalism bore ideological traits that potentially included anti-system attitudes, in the sense of calling for a fundamental reordering of the international order and state borders. For Czechoslovak and Austrian veterans, the outcomes of the peace treaties and their respective positions within the international order thus impacted directly on their international activism. As a new state in Central Europe, Czechoslovakia exerted great efforts at building up its image, both internationally and nationally, as a victorious pro-Western democracy that provided stability in Central Europe and brought cultural progress to underdeveloped parts of the region.⁶ However, the Czechoslovak veterans scene only partially went along with this positive narrative, given that non-legionnaire veterans possessed a complicated relationship towards 'official' Czechoslovakia. Throughout the 1920s, therefore, various representations of the 'Czechoslovak veteran' clashed on the international stage, more or less competing with the idea of the Czechoslovaks as members of the victorious allied coalition. Within this environment, official 'Prague' was rivalled by 'Reichenberg' (Liberec) as the

unrecognized capital of German-Bohemia and the seat of many veterans associations of the German-speaking minority. At the same time, the question of international cooperation between victors and defeated was an important issue, not just for Czechoslovak foreign policy, but also for the internal structure of the state.

By contrast, Austria's position was, at first glance, simpler. While many in the Alpine republic longed to be part of a larger homeland, be it a Greater Germany, some sort of Central European federation or even the old monarchy, former enemies held firm on the country's status as a defeated power and the ban on *Anschluss*. The British Foreign Office and representatives of the Western powers at the League of Nations confirmed the terms of the Treaty of Saint-Germain in subsequent agreements over financial aid, such as the loan agreement of 1922. Nevertheless, the fact that Paris and London supported the recovery of the troubled Austrian economy and recommended the restoration of mutual trade in the Danube basin, showed a different level of treatment when compared to Germany. British proposals that the capital Vienna could serve as a transportation and commercial hub, as well as a conference venue, offered the possibility of reintegration into the international community.⁷ Certain sections of the Austrian veterans scene sought to utilize such opportunities, particularly disabled veterans. Yet, at the same time, Austria's position was affected by the complex rivalry between the former Allied Powers, France and Italy. While the former acted as patron state to the new Czechoslovakia, Austrian rapprochement with Italy became evident from the mid-1920s onwards, which produced conflicting emotions among former veterans of the South-West Front, when it came to cooperation in the international arena or support for militia groups.

Veterans and Cross-Border Concerns

The global nature of WWI and, above all, the internationalization of struggles for independence on the part of Central European national movements had repercussions for the successor states. In the case of Czechoslovak veterans, a primary issue was the clarification of benefit rights. Czech and Slovak migrants had been living not just in different parts of Austria-Hungary, but also abroad. In particular, there was a large diaspora in the United States, where around 650,000 Czechs and Slovaks lived. Many of these supported and helped to finance Masaryk's independence campaign, while official US statistics recorded that 42,404 Czechs and Slovaks from Austria-Hungary enlisted in the US army; a further 3,002 men joined the legions destined for the Western Front (2,390 of whom actually went to France).⁸ By contrast, migrant veterans from the Alpine provinces constituted, numerically speaking, less of an issue for the post-1918 Austrian state; nor had 'German-Austria' been part of a transnational independence struggle. At the same

time, the number of veterans with Czechoslovak citizenship living in Austria was substantially greater than vice-versa.

After 1918, there were several dimensions to transnational welfare. In 1919 and 1920, some Czechoslovak legionnaires returned to the United States, where they had lived before the war. Those who had suffered injuries and proven their loyalty to Czechoslovakia were eligible to apply for government help. After lengthy negotiations, this was also possible for legionnaires of other nationalities (e.g. former citizens of Habsburg Austria or Hungary who had obtained US citizenship later on), as long as they had fought exclusively in the Czechoslovak legions during WWI.⁹ Three years after the cessation of hostilities, legionnaires in these two categories received a pension from the Czechoslovak government.¹⁰

Nevertheless, long-term or permanent residence beyond state borders created enormous problems for the distribution of pensions and food subsidies. For example, Czechoslovak invalids living in neighbouring countries suffered due to economic hardship and high inflation. It proved difficult for Czechoslovak embassies to provide accurate information and adequate assistance, as noticed by a representative of the German Association of War Wounded in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia after a trip to visit fellow veterans in Germany in April 1920.¹¹ The relevant offices lacked sufficient information about the valid legal regulations at home, but were also often ignorant about the needs of local invalids. The situation was especially critical in Germany, where the Czechoslovak government estimated that around 17,000 of its citizens entitled to pensions lived.¹² The German Mark's rapid loss of value obliged the Czechoslovak government to try and bypass foreign currency speculation by paying pensioners in Germany in Czechoslovak Crowns through their embassies and consulates.¹³ Amid fears of renewed revolution in Germany in autumn 1923, officials deemed that the only way to ensure safe payments was to export bills to the amount of 1.1 million ČSK, in order to cover the monthly pensions of veterans in Germany. Veterans had to pick up their pensions in person.¹⁴ After Germany, Czechoslovak veterans in Austria were most at risk: in 1921, there were 9,000 pensioners awaiting payments, half of whom were living in truly dire circumstances.¹⁵

This was not just a matter of locating and registering eligible veterans. The authorities had to arrange socio-medical examinations and reports for the Provincial Examination Board, as well as providing assistance with filling out applications. For many Czechoslovaks, the situation became so critical that the Ministry of Social Welfare exceptionally approved benefits on a case-by-case basis and pensions were paid in advance from June 1921 onwards.¹⁶ Officials felt it was not appropriate to rely temporarily on institutions in Germany and Austria and in any case preferred to 'emancipate ourselves fully from Austro-Hungarian organizations that are social and charitable in nature'.¹⁷ This was a logical decision, given that Czechoslovakia presented itself as an independent state, but problematic in terms of providing emergency aid, for which no structures yet existed.

The largest number of veterans affected by this situation resided in Austria, which is why the Czechoslovak embassy in Vienna opened a special department for war victims in August 1920.¹⁸ In order to provide them with adequate welfare services, it was necessary to examine each case individually and eliminate potential conflicts if, for example, an applicant for a Czechoslovak pension had opted for the Austrian Republic in accordance with the peace treaties. In fact, it was frequently the case that individuals held both a Czechoslovak and Austrian certificate of domicile and filed claims in both countries.¹⁹ For the Czechoslovak authorities, the decisive factor was confirmation from the district administration or conscription office, which were supposed to eliminate parallel claims.

From the Czechoslovak perspective, at least, cooperation functioned satisfactorily. In 1920, the two governments signed a convention on bilateral welfare, medical examinations and treatment for invalids, which applied to persons of the other citizenship residing or permanently living within their borders. The agreement was valid for a year, with the possibility of extending it to 1921.²⁰ Also under discussion was the admission of Czechoslovak war invalids to Viennese hospitals and of tuberculosis patients to special sanatoriums in Vienna and Lower Austria.²¹ Regular meetings in Prague and Vienna accompanied this partnership between officials from the Czechoslovak Ministry of Social Welfare and the Austrian State Office for Social Administration, thereby providing an example of practical diplomacy in the turbulent post-war period. Undoubtedly, a contributing factor was the fact that both governments were led at the time by Social Democratic parties. Civil servants worked within the common framework inherited from Austria-Hungary, which led to effective cooperation. Austria concluded similar reciprocal agreements with other neighboring countries, such as Germany, following recommendations by the International Labour Organization.²² In Czechoslovakia, however, the 1920 convention proved a limit to further engagement, mostly due to the unequal ratio of Czechoslovak victims in Austria (around 10,000 in 1924) to Austrian victims in Czechoslovakia (approximately 400).²³

At the same time, the Czechoslovak authorities faced difficulties because invalids living in border regions closely followed or even personally experienced developments in neighbouring countries. That was the case with war victims in the Hlučín / Hultschin region in Silesia, which – following Article 83 of the Treaty of Versailles – was transferred from Germany to Czechoslovakia in early 1920. Following this alteration, war victims in the Hlučín region demanded from the Czechoslovak government the same high level of benefits as their counterparts in Germany. They formulated a series of resolutions expressing dissatisfaction with their relative poverty compared to the generous allowance for German veterans, who received 200 percent of their pension in April 1920 in order to meet immediate needs, followed by lower supplements in the following months. This added to growing discontent in a politically sensitive region. Agitators reportedly used the issue to ‘arouse resentment’, but ultimately, the complexity of the local

situation played into the hands of veterans. The official in charge of war victims could only describe the demand for a 200 percent supplement as 'fair' and 'worth granting for political reasons alone'.²⁴ Similarly, the lack of resources available to consular offices created tensions on the other side of the frontier. In February 1922, the Czechoslovak consul in Breslau, Germany (today Wrocław, Poland) faced 'the anger of local [Czechoslovak] expatriates', which he believed would lead to public demonstrations sooner or later.²⁵

In Austria, for much of the 1920s, ethnic questions were generally of marginal importance among veterans, even if government policy at a general level placed pressure on the minorities to integrate (as evident in the dwindling number of Carinthian Slovenes).²⁶ Nonetheless, the parallel presence of a – German-speaking – League of War Wounded, Widows and Orphans of the Czechoslovak Republic in Austria (*Bund der Kriegsverletzten, Witwen und Waisen der tschechoslowakischen Republik in Österreich*) and the Union of Czechoslovak War Disabled in Austria (*Svaz československých válečných invalidů v Rakousku*) sometimes reflected the national tensions within its northern neighbour. In 1926, for example, a speaker from Liberec criticized Czech invalids associations at one meeting and suggested direct cooperation with the government in Prague. The Union placed its trust in the Bohemian-German ministers present in the cabinet and expected improvements in the legislation on war victims.²⁷ By contrast, a meeting of the Czechoslovak War Disabled in 1932 indicated possible commonalities between Germans and Czechs, but an emissary from Bratislava commented 'in a derogatory way' on Prague's plan to cut disability pensions.²⁸

Generally, the two governments maintained their cooperation, even if occasional irritations arose. In 1928, for example, the press office of the Czechoslovak embassy in Vienna asked the city police headquarters for detailed information about the existence of Czechoslovak 'shooting clubs' that had existed from the time of the monarchy.²⁹ While the police compiled a list of the respective organizations present in Vienna, Austrian diplomats reacted angrily to this bypassing of the usual channels of communication and seeming interference in internal matters.³⁰ On balance, however, a conciliatory mood prevailed on the official stage. The same year, in Graz, the 'Czechoslovak colony' in the city, represented principally by the consul and the charitable societies *Praha* (Prague) and *České Srdce* (Czech Heart), celebrated the tenth anniversary of their 'country's liberation' from Habsburg rule. Alongside diplomats from other countries and Yugoslav and Ukrainian associations, quite a few notables from the town attended, as did members of the provincial government and Austrian parliament. In the spirit of the Treaty of Lány between Prague and Vienna of December 1921, both organizers and guests stressed the importance of economic cooperation and peaceful coexistence in Central Europe.³¹

Nevertheless, another participant at the gathering pleaded for the preservation of the Czech minority in the Alpine republic. This contradicted official policy

in Vienna and indicated one potential point of friction. Another remained in the form of the already mentioned milieu of former officers and other members of the old imperial army, who continued to consider Czechs as ‘traitors’ years after the armistice of 1918.³² Indeed, after 1930, signs emerged that the bilateral relationship was increasingly fragile beneath the surface. In 1933, publications by former soldiers and comradeship organizations in Austria mocked the lack of interest in military defence among the younger generation in Czechoslovakia. Austrian veterans even claimed that many Czechs spoke of the ‘better’ situation under the Habsburg Monarchy.³³

With the overall increase in international tensions after the turn of the decade (see also Chapter 5), the situation in Austria’s border regions possessed the potential to become volatile, mainly in the East and South. In October 1933, for example, Magyar notables and ‘front fighters’ celebrated the fact that several communities had voted to stay in Hungary at the start of the 1920s, and some planned festivities threatened to affect neighbouring Burgenland. The local police expected riots, but the majority of the regional population ultimately paid little attention to the activities. Aside from a few Hungarian complaints about intensified border controls and the different treatment of uniformed front fighters in Austria, everything remained calm.³⁴ The situation on the Yugoslav border, however, appeared more tense, although the Austrian authorities again saw this as deriving from foreign affairs rather than internal issues. In 1932/33 several police reports referred to the Yugoslav state’s attempts to stir up Slavic feelings in Carinthia, and government information pointed to the initiative coming from ‘nationalist circles’ in Ljubljana and Belgrade.³⁵ Around the same time, comradeship organizations in the region portrayed the ‘Carinthian homeland defence’ of 1919/20 primarily as a conflict against external aggressors.³⁶

If these examples show how memories of WWI and its aftermath gained renewed significance in multi-ethnic border regions in the early 1930s, for Austrian veterans the fighting on the South-West Front left the weightiest legacy. Italy loomed large for three reasons: its entry into the conflict in May 1915 after renouncing its alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary; the acquisition of South Tyrol under the Treaty of Saint-Germain; and its seeming resurgence as a political power under the fascist regime. Already in December 1923, for example, a letter from the Styrian section of the Khevenhüller Union concerning a regimental commemoration day revealed the true feelings of some ex-servicemen. It questioned a suggestion by some Carinthian colleagues to commemorate a battle on the Eastern Front: ‘Why do we stress successes against the Russians, against this poor, good-natured people, who did not know why it had to fight at all!’ Rather, the Styrians continued, the ‘arch-enemy’ lay in the south, in the shape of ‘treacherous’ Italy. Hence, the heroic defence against the latter should take centre stage in all remembrance activities.³⁷ A second letter from 1926 reiterated this standpoint. The Khevenhüller Union had erected a memorial

chapel on the Plöcken mountain pass. Ahead of its consecration, the Styrians voiced their resentments again, emphasizing that the celebration should be an exclusively domestic one, with no guests from Yugoslavia or Italy. Eschewing the idea of reconciliation, the veterans focused on the 'inhumane, outrageous and criminal oppression' and the 'daily violation' of their 'brothers' in South Tyrol. Moreover, with reference to the Carinthian Slovenes, they asserted that the 'brave warriors of Slavic nationality', who had defended the Plöcken pass and died a heroic death there, had fought as 'Austrians' not as 'South Slavs'. Inviting a representative from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes would only offend the 'good soldiers' who lost their lives for the 'great Austrian idea'. Embittered also by the 1919/20 conflict in Carinthia, the Khevenhüller members contemptuously dismissed any interest in 'hypocritical pacifism', leaving such rhetoric to 'stateless, enterprising, international Marxists' with their slogan, 'no more war!'³⁸

If this combination of coded antisemitism and open anti-Marxism was typical of national-conservative circles and ex-officers, the attitude of Austrian veterans towards Italy was, in certain respects, ambivalent, just as the relationship between Vienna and Rome was among the most complicated in European interwar diplomacy. For example, the Austrian press closely covered Mussolini's striving for total control in domestic politics, including the Italian veterans movement. The fate of the National Association of Combatants (*Associazione Nazionale Combattenti*) attracted particular attention, because at its congress in Assisi in 1924 it promulgated a resolution in favour of organizational independence from fascism. Mussolini responded by replacing the association's executive committee with a triumvirate of his close supporters, which Austrian journalists described as an ominous muzzling of Italy's ex-soldiers.³⁹ Moreover, the intensified 'Italianization' of South Tyrol caused permanent discord between the two countries and tensions were palpable at the foundation-stone laying ceremony for a 'victory arch' in the regional capital, Bozen / Bolzano, in July 1926. The North Tyrolean newspaper, *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, noted that the event included a congress of ex-servicemen, but stressed that only Italian veterans participated. German-speaking veterans and the local population were nevertheless obliged to parade for the visiting Italian king, under the supervision of regime-appointed mayors and led by fascist 'black-shirts'.⁴⁰ Even more critical commentary accompanied the monument's unveiling in 1928.⁴¹

However, despite these profound differences over the experience of the war, there were also clear affinities in political terms. Anti-Marxist and authoritarian forces in Austria sympathized with Mussolini's fascism, admired his personal achievements and relied especially on his regime for support from the mid-1920s to mid-1930s. This constellation became increasingly visible by the end of the 1920s in the international veterans landscape, although this was not necessarily foreseeable at the start of the decade.

The Failure of International Veterans Bolshevism

For governments and considerable sections of society across Europe, one of the biggest concerns regarding the internal consolidation of states exhausted by war was that the Bolshevik revolution might spill over the Russian borders. Yet, as we have seen in previous chapters, many demobilizing and homecoming soldiers in Central Europe found the Bolshevik message appealing, and this was evident in the international arena, too. The first multilateral platform, the Veterans International (*Internationale des anciens combattants*, IAC), was established on the initiative of the French *Association républicaine des anciens combattants*, and its chairman, the writer and communist activist Henri Barbusse. At its first congress, held in Geneva at the end of April / beginning of May 1920 in the presence of representatives from veterans organizations from France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy, Barbusse formulated its primary objective as the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system.⁴² Contrary to the Paris treaties, Barbusse did not attribute blame for the war to Germany or any other particular state. Rather, he asserted that international capitalism turned workers and ordinary people across all nations into the losers from every war, while the rich classes ended up as winners because their profits soared.⁴³ This kind of revolutionary fervour, anti-war rhetoric and emphasis on the poverty of war victims all made a communist programme potentially attractive to radicalized former soldiers shortly after the war. However, when the Bolshevik revolution failed to spread further and European states gradually consolidated internally, IAC's pro-communist focus became more of a hindrance than an advantage. The concept of the veteran as a non-national proletarian, pacifist and anti-militarist who, irrespective of the conflict's outcome, actually lost the war and needed to carry out a communist revolution in order to achieve true victory by establishing a new social and political order, did not meet with a particularly enthusiastic response amongst ex-soldiers.

In Czechoslovakia, Barbusse was known for his book *Le Feu*, a Czech translation of which was published as early as 1917.⁴⁴ Yet, this did not help him gain any great support among veterans and IAC did not invite any Czechoslovak representatives to its first congress in 1920. However, representatives of the German-speaking *League of War Wounded* from Liberec attended the second congress, held in Vienna from 29 September to 2 October 1921.⁴⁵ There, the lengthy discussions were more concerned with clarifying ideological positions than practical work to improve the status of war victims. This did little to persuade them that membership in IAC would be beneficial, so they returned to Czechoslovakia before the congress ended.⁴⁶ While the *League* defended its members' interests with sharp rhetoric against Czechoslovakia, it simultaneously declared itself a non-party organization for all German-speaking war victims. Considering adherence to one particular political direction as detrimental to its wider remit, it continued to cooperate solely with the ILO in Geneva, which offered practical advice

on advocating the interests of war victims vis-à-vis their home states.⁴⁷ Although the IAC directory still included associations of war victims from Czechoslovakia, none of them acceded to the organization and their representatives maintained little or no contact with it.⁴⁸

By contrast, there was initially a more positive reception in Austria, evident in favourable newspaper reports about efforts to improve compensation for war victims through international legislation.⁴⁹ Several articles in the early 1920s referred to Henri Barbusse and the speeches he addressed to former soldiers from Austria-Hungary and Imperial Germany.⁵⁰ Moreover, the Social Democrats had already laid out their credentials as an anti-war movement earlier in the year, when the International Socialists Congress met in Vienna in March, with thousands of workers joining in to 'condemn the war that the domestic imperialists started'.⁵¹ Barbusse and his adherents subsequently received a warm welcome from Social Democrats led by Vienna mayor Jakob Reumann, when IAC held its above-mentioned second meeting in the Austrian capital in 1921.⁵² Nevertheless, most of the comments and speeches during the conference contradicted Barbusse's plea to reject party politics. He himself acted inconsistently when he branded the 'capitalists' as the real instigators of the war, and Italian, Belgian and German delegates spoke in a similar vein. In particular, envoys from veterans in the Weimar republic condemned IAC's anti-democratic currents (just as they criticized the militaristic circles of ex-servicemen under the influence of Erich Ludendorff, a key figure in the German High Command from 1916 to 1918).⁵³ Characteristic of the tense atmosphere during the event was the reception of Friedrich Adler, son of Victor Adler (co-founder of the Austrian Social Democratic Party). The former had murdered Austrian Prime Minister Karl Stürgkh in October 1916, subsequently becoming an idol of the revolutionary movement and one of the great hopes of Lenin's Bolsheviks. To the latter's annoyance, Adler stayed loyal to the Social Democrats and turned against the 'pro-Russian forces', which decisively weakened the nascent communist movement (especially in Vienna). Thus, when he entered the IAC meeting room, his appearance immediately divided the audience: Social Democrats cheered, while Communists booed him.⁵⁴ Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that international veterans organizations recalled the Viennese meeting of 1921 as a manifestation of the constant struggle between socialist and communist elements.⁵⁵

Notably, the main Austrian disabled war victims organization, the *Zentralverband* (see Chapter 2), became an important member of IAC in 1921, even though Social Democrats formed a majority among the Austrian group. However, according to ILO official Adrien Tixier, the *Zentralverband* expected that IAC would eventually focus more on practical issues facing war victims, as well as hoping that other German and French associations might join IAC and thereby weaken its communist standpoint.⁵⁶ However, this did not happen and IAC neither gained new members nor moderated its political line, as indicated

by the organ of the Austrian Communist Party in 1923 continuing to praise Henri Barbusse for being the true advocate of proletarians.⁵⁷ The *Zentralverband* therefore maintained parallel contacts with the ILO and attended its conferences for disabled veterans. Barbusse returned to Austria in 1925, speaking in Vienna about the ‘White terror’ in the Balkans (especially Bulgaria and Yugoslavia) and concluding with a warning about militaristic ex-servicemen and cheers for the Soviet Union.⁵⁸

By this point, however, Barbusse’s appeal in Austria had clearly diminished. Disillusioned, most of the delegates at the *Zentralverband*’s congress in Klagenfurt in February 1926 voted to withdraw from IAC.⁵⁹ However, the meeting caught the public’s attention for other reasons, when an ‘armed troupe’ attacked a group of participating invalids (an event that led to questions in parliament).⁶⁰ At the same time, the *Zentralverband* was the object of polemical attacks from Christian Social homecomers and invalids, while the communist invalids movement faded into the background. Although a communist cell emerged within the Viennese section of the *Zentralverband*, along with a separate party-linked association of war damaged and widows in 1927, neither of these groups exercised any meaningful influence.⁶¹

If this development was in line with the rapid decline of support for the Communist Party in Austria after 1920, the failure of communist agitation among disabled veterans in Czechoslovakia was all the more surprising given that the Communist Party continued to exist between 1921 and 1938. It regularly gained 10–13 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections (a substantial proportion, considering the highly fragmented party system), but remained in opposition and was under constant observation from the authorities. Moreover, an internal putsch occurred in the party in 1929, which resulted in its ‘Bolshevization’ and a sharp decline in membership. Communists failed to gain positions in state institutions and only slowly developed their own associations. The party did not manage to establish a veterans association of its own and the mobilization of former soldiers for revolutionary change using the myth of the communist veteran did not meet with any broader response.⁶²

The Czechoslovak communists were well aware of this, as indicated in a mid-1920s report to the Moscow International.⁶³ Nevertheless, communists did manage to gain a stronger position within the Union of Czechoslovak War Victims for Slovakia (*Družina československých poškozenců pro Slovensko*), of which communist MP Jozef Kopsz was elected chairman in 1924. However, the communists among the Union leadership feared that accession to IAC would lead to repression by the Czechoslovak authorities. If the Union faced dissolution, they surmised, its members might switch to another political party (most likely, the Social Democrats), meaning the Communists would lose their position in the one disabled veterans organization that they had successfully penetrated.⁶⁴ Hence, communists sought to organize more tightly the pro-communist faction within

the association, to strengthen their influence in elected positions, and to promote communist aims among other members.⁶⁵ Yet, these activities only had a limited impact on the direction of the Union. Communists joined other Czechoslovak disabled veterans associations in declaring support for the 1926 CIAMAC resolution criticizing the lack of provision for war victims in Czechoslovakia, but distanced themselves from CIAMAC itself at the Union's October 1927 congress in Brno.⁶⁶ They suggested that the Union abandon its membership of CIAMAC, which they called an enduring tool of the international bourgeoisie that betrayed the interests of war victims. However, the communist proposal did not even make its way onto the formal congress agenda.⁶⁷

Kopasz and other party members still maintained private contacts with IAC, and the latter's press occasionally reported on the situation of war victims in Czechoslovakia.⁶⁸ However, IAC had long been in crisis, as Kopasz himself witnessed at the Brussels congress in June 1927. Not only did it have few members, the organization was also paralysed internally by arguments over the correct political line and the recent schism in the German communist organization of disabled veterans. Kopasz summarized his impressions of this fragmentation and organizational weakness in his public statements at the congress, as did representatives from the Saarland and the association of French colonial soldiers. They criticized the lengthy discussions over personal disputes, arguing that this distracted from relevant issues. For example, they pointed to the fact that IAC almost forgot to invite Russian disabled veterans to the meeting.⁶⁹

Ultimately, the main weakness of communist anti-militarism was that it promulgated the figure of the 'anti-veteran', who renounces his military past as well as his national affiliation and civil loyalty in order to become a revolutionary fighter. However, even workers often displayed a greater affinity for the national heroic approach to veteranship as promoted by FIDAC. Above all, the ILO was more successful in focusing on social issues related to the reintegration of war victims in the victorious as well as defeated states. It organized a series of international conferences for associations of war victims, which dealt with technical issues and practical concerns. Indeed, these conferences paved the way for the establishment of CIAMAC in 1925. This step helped channel the radicalism of war victims into constructive participation in the formulation of international standards of social care for war victims and their implementation in individual states.⁷⁰

Internationalism and FIDAC's Luxembourg Congresses

After the marginalization of the communist veterans movement, a major issue for international relationships between veterans was the establishment of contacts between the former opposing sides from the war. In the first half-decade after the war, this took place in an especially tense atmosphere, where the gap between

victors and defeated seemed potentially unsurmountable. As one Austrian paper reported in 1922, French Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré warned the former enemy states on the occasion of a veterans' conference that the 'creators of victory' were watching carefully over the peace stipulations. With a view to the situation in Alsace-Lorraine, returned to France under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, he stated that Pan-German activities could not be ignored; arms caches were being discovered every day.⁷¹

Nevertheless, after the Locarno Treaties of 1925 ended Germany's international isolation and allowed its accession to the League of Nations a year later, a first round of attempts at bridging the divide began.⁷² Given that Germany was the most important defeated state, the 'normalization' of Germany's international position enabled the aforementioned creation of CIAMAC in 1925, in which German-speaking associations were most numerous and German was the second working language after French. However, only some of the array of veterans from Germany joined CIAMAC, notably the left-wing disabled veterans associations, the *Reichsbund*, and the pro-Republican *Reichsbanner*.

Austria's direct involvement in the establishment of CIAMAC came via the already mentioned *Zentralverband* and the Association of War-Blind (*Verband der Kriegsblinden*).⁷³ A key role in these organizations was played by two men originally of Jewish background, but who expressed no religious affiliation. Hans Hirsch, just twenty years old at the end of the war, had suffered the loss of his eyesight and both hands. He was always dependent on care, a severe restriction that did not prevent his vigorous engagement for war victims (nor hefty criticism from Christian Social invalids, widows and orphans associations).⁷⁴ For the war victims service organization of the International Labour Office (the permanent secretariat of the ILO), Hirsch chaired the section for the war blind, while its president was his fellow Viennese, Maximilian Brandeisz, who had been severely wounded on the Eastern Front. Brandeisz was a major figure in international veterans activism in interwar Europe, cultivating a wide network of contacts and utilizing his excellent French language skills. On the national level, he never acted as head of the *Zentralverband*, but exercised enormous influence as head of its Viennese section and his international activities. A regular attender of international meetings, he consistently concerned himself with the needs and demands of war victims, including at CIAMAC's foundation in Geneva. In 1930, Brandeisz became the youngest member of the upper house in the Austrian Parliament, the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), sitting for the Social Democrats.⁷⁵

However, the majority of veterans from the defeated countries, not just Germany and Austria, but also Hungary and Bulgaria, remained outside this international veterans' network. Thus, as circumstances changed, FIDAC tentatively reached out to 'defeated veterans'. After years of hegemony in the international environment, FIDAC saw CIAMAC as an unwanted rival, whose main competitive advantage was the ability to gain support from veterans from both

victorious and defeated states.⁷⁶ For FIDAC, the question of establishing links with former enemies was a recurrent topic, yet one that never gained unanimous support. Its annual congress in Warsaw in September 1926 failed to push through a formal change in the association's character from 'inter-allied' to 'international' or to approve an invitation to defeated parties to become ordinary members of the federation. Yet, this did not mean there was unanimity on all issues among those gathered there. Belgian delegates, for example, criticized US demands to repay war debts, suggesting that Washington was going for the throats of its friends while showing understanding towards former enemies such as Germany over reparations.⁷⁷ This was a sign that not all were prepared to uphold the dividing lines from the war forever, which was reflected in the decision to convene the first all-veterans congress on 9–10 July 1927 in Luxembourg.⁷⁸ By addressing the greatest possible number of veterans associations, especially those hitherto inactive at the international level, FIDAC aimed to expand its activities and to assert its position as leader of the international veterans community.

Somewhat to their surprise, FIDAC representatives initially found that veterans from defeated states showed scant interest in participating in a joint congress. None of the invited organizations from Hungary or Bulgaria – three apiece – replied, leaving these countries without representation in Luxembourg. FIDAC invited thirteen veterans organizations from Germany, but only four accepted; in Austria, it contacted seven organizations and likewise four accepted. While many veterans in both countries had criticized the terms of the peace treaties, there was a degree of openness to FIDAC among sections of Austrian society. In 1924, the specialist periodical, *Der österreichische Volkswirt (The Austrian Economist)* paid tribute to FIDAC as a movement borne by Christian, conservative and moderate national forces.⁷⁹ From a different direction, the Social Democrats argued that it was necessary to distinguish FIDAC from Germany's and Austria's front fighter organizations, which perpetrated an 'unspiritual militarism' and wished for a new war. FIDAC, on the other hand, was motivated by 'a different spirit' and favoured peace.⁸⁰ Aside from such statements, however, there was little sustained interest in the organization in Austria, which was doubtless influenced by FIDAC's cautious stance towards the defeated powers. Its 1926 congress in Warsaw only found a very modest echo in the press, suggesting that most Austrian veterans had little trust in the enterprise. The Christian Social paper, the *Reichspost*, led the criticism, suggesting that FIDAC was playing politics and was not focused solely on the 'interests of front fighters', but on 'war debts' and 'a new distribution of colonial mandates'. It further complained that only 'those associations from the former enemy states would be invited to Luxembourg who made a prior declaration to respect all treaties and to fulfil all obligations entered into since the end of the war'.⁸¹

Nonetheless, although not all the Austrian veterans had responded to the direct invitation, some were prepared to enter into dialogue with their former

enemies.⁸² Principal among these were the *Zentralverband*, including Maximilian Brandeis and the Federal Union of Former Austrian POWs (*Bundesvereinigung ehemaliger österreichischer Kriegsgefangener*, BEÖK).⁸³ Despite this joint willingness for discussion, however, the associations represented differing or even opposing political positions. In the German case, for example, as well as the already mentioned *Reichsbund* and *Reichsbanner*, representatives of the conservative Young German Order (*Jungdeutscher Orden*) and the nationalist association of POWs attended the congress. Czechoslovakia was represented only by the association of German POWs from Liberec.⁸⁴ Different ideological sympathies were present among the Austrian participants, too, with the liberal leftist Brandeis on the one hand and the national-conservative BEÖK on the other. Keen to make its mark, the latter's journal, *Der Plenny*, announced in July 1927 a number of promising joint projects with veterans associations from other countries, focused on areas where BEÖK was already active.⁸⁵ In Luxembourg, FIDAC invited veterans from vanquished countries to discuss the creation of a new international agreement on the treatment of POWs. The International Committee of the Red Cross had already published draft statements on the issue, and work on drawing up a new POW code was well underway.⁸⁶ *Der Plenny* reported extensively on the preliminary meetings that took place in 1927 in Luxembourg, as well as on further negotiations at the main congress and in Geneva, while the daily press in Austria also paid the matter some attention and viewed developments positively.⁸⁷

The BEÖK delegate, Hans Baumgartner, met with members of POW associations from Germany and German-speaking districts in Czechoslovakia before travelling to Luxembourg in order to coordinate their approach. There, the preliminary meetings dealt with the fate and repatriation of still existing POWs, along with their legal status and the tending of war graves abroad.⁸⁸ One contentious issue concerned the application of the principle of reciprocity upon which the POW regime ultimately relied. In practice, this principle also enabled a policy of retaliation, often to POWs' disadvantage. After the war, accusations of mistreatment of POWs, the violation of the Hague Convention and the abuse of reprisals were predominantly directed against Germany.⁸⁹ During the meetings in Luxembourg and subsequent talks in Switzerland, BEÖK put forward its idea for the formation of a new international 'Blue Cross' as a neutral instrument exclusively focused on ensuring the rights of POWs during a future conflict. According to Baumgartner's report, this initiative gained wide approval and its realization only seemed to be a matter of time.⁹⁰

In practice, both Germany and Austria were represented at Luxembourg by a combination of disabled veterans, whose disposition towards international contacts was determined by their sense of being part of a 'fateful community' of war victims, and POWs, who were struggling against the stigma of 'capitulationism' and hovered between recognition as victims or full-fledged participants

in the war. At the same time, the invitation to Luxembourg appeared almost contradictory for convinced nationalists from both sides. For example, the next year the German *Stahlhelm* association wrote to FIDAC to turn down an invitation to the follow-up meeting in Paris, stating that until the 'dictated peace' of Versailles was revised, they were unable to participate in such events for reasons of 'national dignity'.⁹¹ A motivation from the opposite direction existed for nationally minded Czechoslovak legionnaires, who seemingly feared that participation at such a congress would legitimize veterans from defeated countries as equal partners and allow their revisionist demands to become a topic for discussion.⁹²

Three commissions carried out the work of the congress, on the questions of disabled veterans, POWs and peace. As expected, the most controversial discussions occurred in the peace commission, where veterans from the victorious states insisted on the validity of the Paris peace treaties as a guarantee of security, while veterans from Austria and Germany saw them as a threat to peace. Josef Foscht from the Austrian *Zentralverband* argued that allowing Austria to join Germany would strengthen the alliance between pacifist veterans, as well as the forces for peace in Central Europe. Maximilian Brandeis uttered similar comments in criticizing the *Anschluss* veto.⁹³ The Italian representative, Mario Dessaulles, opposed this argument, stating that *Anschluss* would render the war meaningless. Paul Crohn, from the German *Reichsbanner*, mentioned his country's membership of the League of Nations and its signature of the Locarno Treaties as proof of its adherence to peace, only for Kazimierz Smogorzewski of Poland to counter that Germany's current eastern policy actually demonstrated the opposite.⁹⁴

Aside from the openly contradictory statements by the press and from national organizations, long and heated negotiations accompanied the text of the peace resolution, which was meant to provide a joint outcome and to lay a foundation for further work. Yet, when the resolution was almost finished, German and Austrian delegates demanded a change in the wording, from 'the respect for treaties be the basis of international relations' to 'the respect for treaties and the honour of peoples be the basis of international relations'. After further discussion and opposition from the Allies, the proponents ceased insisting on this change and the congress unanimously approved the resolution. Nevertheless, before negotiations over the next resolution began, the French delegate Mairhoffer who, probably owing to his Alsatian origins, spoke perfect German, noted the different meaning of the German translation of the resolution's key sentence. While in French and English, the phrase related to the already existing treaties, the German translation only offered a general interpretation of the binding character of the treaties ('nothing but treaties can form the basis of international relations'). The dispute over this formulation prolonged the meeting by several hours and threatened to ruin the whole congress, until a compromise formulation was approved, stating that 'international relations must be founded on the respect for treaties'.⁹⁵

Despite the tense atmosphere and the difficulty in achieving results, FIDAC decided to follow the Luxembourg congress with another in 1928. However, in the light of previous experience, both organizers and participants paid greater attention to its preparation, and new structures were set up in order to guarantee it went smoothly. Thus, a Mixed Commission of representatives from all the invited associations held a preliminary meeting in Paris at the end of March 1928. This manufactured a consensus over the agenda for each commission: the Peace Commission was supposed to deal with veterans' international activity and the education of young people. The Advocacy Commission was to disseminate the outcome of the congress and to counter what it viewed as biased reporting, while the War Victims Commission was tasked with comparing legislation and the care of war graves. Lastly, the POW Committee's agenda included the legal status of POWs and the completion of repatriation from Russia. Moreover, the Mixed Commission agreed that the congress would avoid issues concerning peace treaties, as the 1927 resolution on the subject already existed. Nor would it discuss another sensitive topic, responsibility for the war.⁹⁶

A new 'Study Office' drew on the Joint Committee's work to prepare the congress. It consisted of two representatives each from FIDAC and CIAMAC, two delegates from the former Central Powers and a member of the non-affiliated Czechoslovak associations, Vladimír Vaněk, a legionnaire and diplomat at the Czechoslovak embassy in Paris. Vaněk represented the government rather than his ČSOL, although neither he nor other legionnaires then participated in the congress. Presumably, his task was to work behind the scenes and to mitigate any anti-Czechoslovak tendencies on the part of German-speaking veterans from Czechoslovakia.⁹⁷

At the same time, veterans from the defeated states made their own preparations. Hence, the Luxembourg congresses unintentionally resulted in the establishment of organizational links between POW associations from states containing German-speakers. They held their first formal meeting at the international congress of POWs organized by FIDAC in Luxembourg on 21–22 May 1927, as a prelude to the FIDAC congress in July.⁹⁸ From this point on, the Austrian, German and Czechoslovak German-speaking POW associations established permanent working groups.⁹⁹ The initiative led to the establishment of the German League of POWs (*Deutsche Kriegsgefangenenliga*, DKL) on 1 April 1928, during the seventh congress of POW associations in Vienna. It brought together organizations from Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Free City of Danzig (today Gdańsk in Poland), and Germany but, tellingly, not leftist organizations such as the German *Reichsbanner*, which had also advocated POWs' demands.¹⁰⁰ In May 1928, Baron Wilhelm von Lersner, from the German POW union, used the BEÖK annual conference to underline the close ties between the newly conjoined partners.¹⁰¹ *Der Plenny* also published the statutes of the new association, which contained a clear statement in favour of *Anschluss*.¹⁰²

Indeed, the League's unifying ideology was Pan-German nationalism. Important here was the formative experience of captivity, where POWs had no longer represented their army unit and state, but just their nationality (and the captor power had sorted them by nationality, irrespective of military ranking).¹⁰³ Some FIDAC members thus saw the DKL's summary of current threats to peace as a provocation, because it described the Treaty of Versailles as a 'dictated peace', which, if left unchanged, constituted the primary threat to stability. Other issues cited by the DKL included: the ongoing occupation of the Rhineland and Saarland; an article in the Treaty blaming Germany for starting the war; the inadequate protection of German minorities, especially in Italy's South Tyrol; the suppression of Austria's right to self-determination; the line of Germany's eastern border (separating East Prussia by the 'Polish corridor'); the armament of states neighbouring Germany (in contrast to German disarmament); confiscation of Germany's colonies; and 'overpopulation' as a result of taking in refugees from the 'lost territories'.¹⁰⁴ However, the League's proposals submitted to the second Luxembourg congress avoided such specific matters and were more cautiously formulated.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, German-speaking POWs from Czechoslovakia added in their own points, claiming that Germans in Czechoslovakia were denied the right to self-determination. Prior to any revision of the peace treaties, in the meantime they demanded for themselves 'full emancipation, protection of German schools, German settlements and German soil', as well as similar rights for the Hungarian, Ruthene and Polish minorities in Czechoslovakia.¹⁰⁶ This is where, according to Eduard Spatzek, a representative of German-speaking POWs from Czechoslovakia, the role of Vladimír Vaněk was visible, because he was allegedly tasked with ensuring that the Study Office did not include this on the agenda.¹⁰⁷ However, the proposal for the joint resolution by all POWs also underwent a major change. It no longer comprised a list of specific demands, but instead formulated general policy areas for veterans to focus on.

The proceedings of the second Luxembourg congress displayed a different dynamic to the first meeting. National delegations were better prepared for negotiations and restrained their emotions more effectively. A key result of the congress was the establishment of a permanent commission, whose main task was the organization of an annual congress in one of the neutral countries, and implementation and promotion of congress resolutions. Elected by the congress, the commission was to appoint members to the office in charge of the agenda. The meeting also voted members of the Joint Commission for the next year, tasking it with drawing up, within six months, new statutes and preparing the following year's congress, once again to be held in Luxembourg.¹⁰⁸ For many external observers, such as those from CIAMAC, it appeared that a new international veterans organization had just been established.¹⁰⁹

In a letter to the FIDAC congress in Bucharest, held a few days after the Luxembourg congress, the departing FIDAC chairman and Italian fascist Nicola

Sansanelli described the just finished meeting of veterans from victorious and defeated countries as a 'great and memorable success, with which FIDAC can be fully satisfied'. For him, the overt nationalism among delegates in Luxembourg constituted a response to the 'unsound internationalism' that was still splitting veterans associations into two camps.¹¹⁰ Italian fascists viewed the outcome all the more as a success when it transpired that veterans from other countries subscribed to the fascist image of the veteran as an antipode to the political and economic elites in liberal democracies and the Luxembourg congress as a counterweight to the League of Nations and its diplomacy.¹¹¹ For Hans Baumgartner and BEÖK in Austria, the momentum provided by the event clearly gave impetus to the nationalist cause. Reporting on another meeting of former combatants in Luxembourg in October 1928 involving the DKL, he stressed it was not merely an exercise in the recitation of 'hollow phrases' of pacifism, but an opportunity for delegates representing more than 16 million veterans to express their opinions on the obstacles to a peace without restrictions and 'diplomatic insidiousness'. Austrian delegates also used the opportunity to describe the country's difficult economic situation and to assert the fervent wish of the 'whole Austrian people', 'irrespective of party belonging', to unite with the German 'motherland'. They depicted current-day Austria as an 'oversized POW camp', hemmed in by its borders, defenceless and lacking freedom.¹¹²

Alongside this polemic, BEÖK and its German colleagues declared union with Germany to be a precondition for lasting peace. Claiming that former frontline fighters and, even more so, POWs were predestined to work towards the overcoming of mistrust and hate, they voiced doubts regarding their former enemies' real willingness to approach 'German' veterans without reservation.¹¹³ *Der Plenny* wrote about a German-speaking delegate from Czechoslovakia who was skeptical about the possibility of open dialogue. He alleged that the meetings in Luxembourg demonstrated familiar prejudices: French, British and American veterans had come together with German and Austrian ex-soldiers, yet still saw them as enemies. Ultimately, he concluded, there were still the victorious on the one side and the defeated on the other.¹¹⁴

In several respects, therefore, the Luxembourg congresses and accompanying meetings marked a turning point in veterans internationalism in Central Europe, as German-Nationalist groupings joined together and became more assertive. What is more, all this occurred before the global economic crisis beginning in 1929. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the FIDAC magazine admitted that responses were mixed in the individual states. A French newspaper titled its report on the Luxembourg meetings 'dangerous internationalism', hinting that the DKL already represented 'Greater Germany (*Großdeutschland*)'.¹¹⁵ Adverse comments also appeared in both ultra-nationalist and radical socialist newspapers, which did not view the joint veterans congress as a move towards strengthening peace.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the new FIDAC chairman, Achile Reisdorff

from Belgium, delivered a more sobering verdict one year later, at the annual congress in Belgrade. Admitting that FIDAC leaders had initially congratulated themselves on the outcome of the Luxembourg congress and that he, too, had welcomed the open expression of nationalist standpoints, the real benefit was actually different. For Reisdorff, the Luxembourg congresses had revealed the true German mentality and an 'exceptionally dangerous form of pacifism', both of which FIDAC should oppose. Even more concerning, in his view, was how German veterans had presented the congress outcomes in their press, as if allied veterans approved of their arguments about the need to revise the peace treaties and approved their false claims made about the violation of Belgium's neutrality in 1914.¹¹⁷

Certainly, German-speaking POWs from Czechoslovakia drew such a conclusion. In their own words, they went to Luxembourg as the defeated party and returned as the victorious side.¹¹⁸ They felt they had succeeded in presenting their views to the veterans' leadership and thwarted efforts by the Poles and Belgians to adopt anti-German resolutions. They had likewise explained to Italian delegates, ignorant of recent Central European history, why it had made no sense, for national reasons, for German-speaking POWs to join the Czechoslovak legion in Italy. Eduard Spatzek did not even regret an unsuccessful attempt to get a resolution on the right to self-determination onto the agenda, because he was able to present its contents during the plenary session. Spatzek promised that subsequent congresses would provide them with even greater opportunities to raise the Sudeten question before the international community of veterans.¹¹⁹

In contrast, Czechoslovak veterans did not pay especial attention to the Luxembourg congress. However, for the chairman of FIDAC's Czechoslovak section, Colonel Josef Vavroch, a legionnaire from the NJČsL, the congress confirmed his assumption that the mind-set of German ex-combatants had not changed sufficiently to safeguard peace in line with Czechoslovak national interests. Vavroch was particularly alarmed about mention of the peace treaties' validity, the Polish corridor to the Baltic Sea, and violation of Belgian neutrality. Although he lacked precise details on the congress activities of German-speaking ex-POW delegates from Czechoslovakia, he had no illusions regarding their anti-Czechoslovak sentiments: if practised in this manner, the ideas of 'pacifism' and 'internationalism' constituted a dangerous trend. At the same time, Vavroch acknowledged that it would not be in the national interest for the Czechoslovak section to boycott the next FIDAC congress, as had occurred in 1928. Czechoslovakia's continued absence would only weaken its position, as well as that of its allies, and open up opportunities for the 'intrigues' of the Germans and foreign 'Germanophiles'.¹²⁰

Around the end of the 1920s, the strict division between the victorious and defeated parties began to wane, as did the legitimacy of the existing interwar order. The defeated Germans slowly began to be less of an issue, and

their integration on equal terms was seen as necessary for the stabilization of the European international order. Conversely, states like Czechoslovakia, whose existence depended on the stability of the international environment, became an issue. The Luxembourg congresses thus demonstrated that veterans from both sides included those who were open to dialogue and felt that, in order to maintain peace in Europe, Germany would have to be included in its development. Although the Weimar Republic sought changes to the peace treaties, the German veterans still had no foreign political support from the state, which at this point did not seek to use veteran-related symbols, emotions and discourses to enhance its foreign political arguments.¹²¹

As for FIDAC itself, the leadership came to the interim conclusion that it was not yet possible to engage in dialogue with all veterans from the defeated countries. Rather than developing a new veterans' platform, the federation continued to seek closer relationships with associations from CIAMAC, who recognized international cooperation within the framework of the League of Nations.¹²² According to FIDAC representatives, another reason why the second Luxembourg congress failed was the fact that republican veterans organizations from Germany, such as the *Reichsbanner* and *Reichsbund*, had not attended, thereby leaving too much space for the nationalists. Cooperation between FIDAC and CIAMAC eventually led to a jointly organized mass rally of veterans in Geneva in 1933 to mark the culmination of the disarmament conference.¹²³ However, this cooperation did not diminish the mutual animosity, nor did it resolve the question of how to engage in international cooperation with other veterans from Germany, Austria and other former enemy countries. For the FIDAC chairman, the impulse towards further cooperation with defeated veterans should come from the Germans themselves.¹²⁴ This did indeed occur several years later, when Germany was already ruled by the Nazis, and the Luxembourg congresses became an important source of inspiration for the new Nazi-led 'veterans diplomacy' (see Chapter 5).

FIDAC's Long Journey to Prague

In looking more closely at the form of internationalism represented by FIDAC, we can home in on the activities of Czechoslovak veterans within it. Czechoslovakia was represented by legionnaire associations, even though the definition of a victorious country in the FIDAC statutes originally did not foresee the inclusion of veterans from states in Central and Eastern Europe that had not existed prior to 1918. In effect, this recreated in the international arena the tensions between veterans who had first fought against the Entente but then – as legionnaires – became allies, and those from the defeated army who held reservations about the new state.¹²⁵

At the constituent assembly of FIDAC in Paris on 28–29 November 1920, however, only delegates from the Association of Czechoslovak Legionnaires (DČL) attended, and the DČL therefore became the founding and, initially, the only member of the Czechoslovak section of FIDAC.¹²⁶ It remains unclear why the second most important association of Czechoslovak legionnaires, the Union of Czechoslovak Legionnaires (SČL), was not present at the congress. According to the DČL, it succeeded in persuading the ‘scared of the reds’ organizers of the Paris congress that the SČL possessed an extremely left-wing agenda, while the DČL was much closer to the emerging federation as an ‘apolitical’, militarist and nationalist association. According to the SČL, the British Colonel George Crosfield, who arrived in Czechoslovakia in 1919 to establish contact with allied veterans, had confirmed this interpretation after visits paid to the respective organizations.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, it is possible that the SČL was not particularly interested in participating at a congress dominated by veterans groups with nationalist and anti-Bolshevik inclinations, headed by army officers on active service.

Two months after FIDAC’s foundation, a unifying legionnaire congress was held, after which the DČL lost most of its roughly 30,000 members, who joined the newly established ČSOL. The rump DČL was left with some 1,500 radical right-wing legionnaires, who had lost most of their influence.¹²⁸ Yet, the DČL remained a FIDAC member, something it was not willing to renounce or share with its rivals from the ČSOL.¹²⁹ While other member states in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Poland and Romania, used veterans’ representation in FIDAC to promote their national interests, by contrast the DČL tried to exploit its FIDAC membership in its struggle against the legionnaire establishment and the Czechoslovak government.¹³⁰ In this respect, organizational fragmentation hampered the foreign representation of Czechoslovakia in the most important international platform for veterans.

As a FIDAC member, the DČL sought to establish a coalition of Czechoslovak veterans organizations that opposed the dominant ČSOL. However, the attempt to consolidate within FIDAC non-legionnaire veterans who were supportive of the idea of ‘home resistance’ proved rather ephemeral. For example, on returning from FIDAC’s Brussels congress in September 1923, the DČL offered cooperation to the *Svaz příslušníků 21. střelecké divize* (Union of the 21st Rifle Division Members), an association promoting the ‘legend’ of Czechoslovak resistance within the Habsburg army. However, after only a few meetings, which representatives of the ‘mariner revolutionaries’ from the former Habsburg navy and disabled army veterans also attended, the cooperation came to an end.¹³¹ It is not quite clear why this happened, but it seems likely that FIDAC viewed the incorporation of Czechoslovak associations representing the home resistance from within Austria-Hungary (and thus allies of the Entente) as constituting too cumbersome a construct. Nevertheless, the DČL did succeed in gradually uniting some of the legionnaire opposition to ČSOL in the Czechoslovak section of FIDAC.¹³²

As the only Czechoslovak representatives in the first years of FIDAC, the DČL tried to become a partner to the Czechoslovak government and to promote its own agenda as being the same as FIDAC's, claiming that it had to inform its headquarters about the fulfilment of its aims.¹³³ In 1923, for example, the DČL demanded that the Czechoslovak government quantify how many 'foreigners' were employed in the state administration, improve the bureaucracy's efficiency and promote the legionnaires' agenda. It also called for better protection of Czech minorities in areas within Czechoslovakia where other languages predominated and for the declaration of 6 July as a national holiday, the day when medieval church reformer Jan Hus was burned at the stake.¹³⁴ However, the government refused to deal with the DČL until the Czechoslovak section of FIDAC became properly representative (i.e. until the ČSOL also became a member).¹³⁵ Hence, even after the NJČsL joined the Czechoslovak section of FIDAC in 1928, the government offered neither a subsidy nor support to the country's FIDAC members.¹³⁶

The effects of this standoff were most apparent regarding the FIDAC congress, held each year in a different member state. The DČL proposed that the congress take place in Prague, but its realization was postponed several times because, as the government repeatedly stated, it was unwilling to subsidize an event that did not represent the majority of legionnaires. In particular, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs found it unacceptable that legionnaires within the DČL, many of whom inclined towards fascism and had been pushed to the margins of the wider legionnaire community, represented Czechoslovakia by organizing the congress. Moreover, a conflict between the DČL and the key policy-making group known as 'The Castle' would not have gone down well in the allied states.¹³⁷ Hence, the DČL's 'occupation' of the Czechoslovak section of FIDAC prevented full participation in the movement throughout the 1920s. Yet, the DČL did not accrue much benefit from this situation, because after several years it realized its inability to strengthen its position within Czechoslovakia and continued to be a rather passive member of FIDAC. The latter's leadership was aware of the situation through their contacts with the ČSOL and Czechoslovak diplomats and politicians, but the only means they had of making the DČL change its behaviour was trying to exert pressure behind the scenes.¹³⁸ FIDAC's own by-laws did not give the leadership the authority to exclude members who had not requested this themselves.¹³⁹ As a result, the DČL's membership of FIDAC and the image of FIDAC that it promoted in Czechoslovakia damaged the latter's reputation among legionnaires from the ČSOL. They considered it to be a reactionary, nationalistic and militaristic platform, even though its members included organizations such as the French *Union fédérale*, which shared a similar ideology to the ČSOL and was itself critical of FIDAC.¹⁴⁰

The stalemate was not resolved until the DČL abandoned its FIDAC membership at the end of 1930, while the ČSOL joined the federation's Czechoslovak

section.¹⁴¹ Most likely, these developments were connected to the campaign launched by ‘The Castle’ against Czech fascists who, after the 1929 elections, began to infiltrate the DČL leadership.¹⁴² The demoted former Chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff and legionnaire Radola Gajda, against whom the Czechoslovak state conducted a trial, was scheduled to participate at the September 1930 FIDAC congress in the United States. The diplomatic service notified its American counterparts, asking that Gajda be denied an entry visa, but they countered that Czechoslovakia should not have issued him a passport.¹⁴³ In public, the DČL explained its withdrawal from FIDAC as a response to the internal transformation of FIDAC, in which left-wing associations such as the ČSOL allegedly prevailed over nationalist veterans. The DČL had threatened to leave the organization in 1927, when it erroneously learned from the Viennese *Arbeiter-Zeitung* that FIDAC was to become an international federation in connection with the Luxembourg congress, and would accept former enemies as members. According to the DČL, FIDAC would thus have ceased to be inter-allied, apolitical and national.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, it saw FIDAC’s supposed new agenda of pacifism and disarmament as a threat to the Czechoslovak state’s ability to defend itself against its enemies, especially Germans and Bolsheviks.¹⁴⁵ Where the DČL had once presented FIDAC as a powerful alliance of eight million allied soldiers, it now saw it merely as a powerless printer of ‘paper resolutions’, which it was right to abandon.¹⁴⁶

Shortly afterwards, at the end of summer 1931, Prague finally hosted FIDAC’s annual congress (see figure 4.1.), an event that thus far had been held at least once in every member state’s capital except for Portugal.¹⁴⁷ These congresses were notable for their opulence, thus placing great demands on the organizers, although the lavish hospitality bestowed on guests was supposed to be offset by the chance to promote the host country as an attractive destination for visitors. In short, the highly prestigious nature of the congress made it an expensive matter, which necessitated government subsidies. Initially estimated at almost one million Czechoslovak crowns, the congress budget had to be cut by half due to the ongoing economic crisis.¹⁴⁸ The organizers nevertheless argued that the congress at least had to equal the standard provided by smaller Entente states such as Romania and Yugoslavia, in 1928 and 1929, respectively.¹⁴⁹ Instead of cutting back the programme from ten to seven days and limiting trips outside Prague, the compromise plan consisted of nine days and a trip to Moravia.¹⁵⁰

Unlike that year’s CIAMAC congress, also held in Prague just a few weeks earlier, the 1931 FIDAC congress was internally harmonious, but it was all the more criticized from the outside. The meeting re-affirmed the resolution from the second congress in New Orleans in 1922, which stated that: firstly, treaties were legal agreements to be treated in good faith; secondly, amendments could only be made after joint approval; and thirdly, FIDAC would not tolerate a campaign of revisionism, which might jeopardize the consolidation of peace. However,



Figure 4.1. Presidium of the FIDAC congress in Prague in 1931. Narodní archiv, Prague.

a warning sign came with an abstention by the Italian delegates, who refused to accede to the resolution's third part. They argued that discussion over treaty changes did not pose a threat to peace, but rather, that friendly debate within the existing international treaty framework would help to strengthen peace.¹⁵¹

The Prague congress met with a hostile response in the local German-language papers. While the *Prager Presse*, siding with the government, wrote about the event in a similarly positive tone to that of most Czech papers, the German-Nationalist *Bohemia* interpreted it as a militaristic manifestation, characterized by the former allies' mutual expression of hatred towards the Germans. The paper labelled the victors' ideological presentation of the war as a fight for freedom, civilization and humanity, an obstacle to post-war reconciliation. With sarcastic exaggeration, *Bohemia* drew attention to the fact that nine out of ten Czechoslovak soldiers had fought for the Central Powers. In other words, the vast majority had been on the side of 'injustice, non-culture and barbarism' against 'the just cause', 'true civilization' and 'democracy'. *Bohemia* criticized FIDAC's notion of peace as merely maintaining the conditions established by the Paris treaties, which had brought about the disintegration of Central Europe, crippling reparations, mistrust between nations and the violation of national minorities, as well as the decay of democracy.¹⁵² The article headline in *Bohemia*, which stated that FIDAC 'was always yesterday's federation', was countered by the Czech Agrarian Party daily, *Věnkov*. It upped the ante by dismissing *Bohemia* as

'always a paper of the day before yesterday' and explained that the Czechs 'certainly prefer the conditions established by the war to those that existed before the war, under the Habsburgs'.¹⁵³ Despite this media conflict, which highlighted the weaknesses inherent in FIDAC's exclusivity, the organizers viewed the Prague congress as a success. Czechoslovak legionnaires became fully involved in the federation's work, the Czechoslovak section began to grow, and FIDAC acquired the character of a platform for the veterans of the victorious side in Czechoslovakia, too.

By contrast, the Austrian press only took sporadic notice of the meeting in Prague, but once again the Christian Social *Reichspost* adopted a notably critical stance. Picking up on a report from the Czechoslovak Press Office, the paper briefly mentioned that the initiators were mainly concerned with creating a 'tighter and closer organization, which 'should maintain the existing relations between the national sections of FIDAC'. Above all, the paper explained to its readership that the leaders of the 'allied front fighters congress' were unable to allow that, 'due to their greater political weight, former enemies would become arbiters and even take decisions against the former allies'.¹⁵⁴ In short, the article continued the logic of the war, wherein the Central Powers remained bound in competition with their opponents for international power and influence. In Linz, the German-Nationalist *Tages-Post* expressed similar sentiments. Functioning as a mouthpiece for racial (*völkisch*) ideas and the *Anschluss* movement in Upper Austria, it concluded with the wry comment, knowing the outrage it would stir amongst its readers, that FIDAC stood for the 'maintenance of the sanctity of the peace treaties and the fruits of the great victory'.¹⁵⁵ With the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* printing an identical piece, only the left-liberal organ, *Der Wiener Tag*, deviated from the general line. It cited a speech made by Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Beneš at a banquet held during the congress, in which he hailed the unshakeable 'true friendship' among the Allies. Yet, with an eye to the wider European perspective, he added: 'one must endeavour to extend these friendly relations to those peoples who stood outside the allied camp during the war'.¹⁵⁶

Where Austrian opinion remained critical, Czechoslovak interaction with FIDAC showed how former legionnaires commented upon and sometimes contributed to foreign policy. Their associations established links with veterans from the victorious states and sought to gain membership in multilateral platforms. Yet, these activities represented only one facet of the variegated veterans landscape, for Czech and German-speaking disabled veterans had cooperated with the Geneva-based ILO and its department for war victims from the beginning of the 1920s. In the mid-1920s, these associations were co-founders of CIAMAC, which constituted the other main protagonist on the international veterans' scene.

CIAMAC, Austrian Ambivalence and the Limits of Cooperation

With its focus on war victims, CIAMAC offered greater scope for international veterans' activism for ex-soldiers from Austria, notably disabled veterans, but especially ex-POWs, who played an important role in the organization (in the spring of 1927, CIAMAC also admitted Austria's Association of the War Blind into its membership).¹⁵⁷ While this activism contained features of a 'defeat culture', it also displayed elements of adaptation and the search for a new role after the break-up of the Habsburg Monarchy. Despite many Austrian politicians retaining an imperial mentality, some of them adjusted to the new situation after 1918/19 and sympathized with the idea of a neutral Austria serving as a mediator and bridge-builder in a world of animosities. Where Austro-Marxists endeavoured to reconcile the quarrelling factions of the labour movement since its split into communist and social democratic blocs, the conservative, bourgeois-dominated governments after 1922 drew on an idealistic, nostalgic view of the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15 to promote the metropolis on the Danube as a setting for cross-border dialogue. As a result, no less than thirty-two international conferences took place in Vienna in 1926 alone.¹⁵⁸ The veterans landscape both mirrored and contributed to this development, as the above discussion of the IAC meeting in 1921 has demonstrated. Once the latter movement failed to gain widespread support, Austrian veterans internationalism oriented itself primarily around CIAMAC from the mid-1920s (with the exception of BEÖK, as indicated above).

With Maximilian Brandeisz and the *Zentralverband* closely involved in CIAMAC from the start, Austria became an important location for its meetings, including its congress at the end of September / start of October 1927. In selecting the Austrian capital city, CIAMAC abandoned its original plan to hold the meeting in Geneva. According to official announcements, the aim was to encourage the exchange of ideas not just on neutral territory, but in a country 'substantially involved in the war'.¹⁵⁹ Yet, the event took place in the shadow of the bloody events in July that year, which decisively impaired the domestic political climate. The Social Democrat Brandeisz did not hesitate to remind participants about the victims of the recent incidents, repeating the polemics printed in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* against Christian Social Chancellor Ignaz Seipel.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the international cooperation implicit in the congress obliged Austrian politicians to try and put on a show of unity before the European public. Seipel himself welcomed the relocation of the meeting from Geneva to Vienna.¹⁶¹

The mayor of Vienna, Karl Seitz, acted as host to the congress and, with predominantly leftist representatives of veterans and war victims gathered in the city, he organized a programme of sightseeing and commemorations for the fallen of WWI at the city's main cemetery.¹⁶² However, it was not only exponents of the labour movement who participated in the rapprochement between former oppo-

nents. Interestingly, Hans Baumgartner, as a delegate from BEÖK, also gave a speech at the congress, having accepted a personal invitation from CIAMAC's leadership. He stressed the dual membership of 'many members of BEÖK', those who were both former POWs and disabled ex-servicemen, and he even promised on its behalf to support CIAMAC's work in favour of disabled veterans.¹⁶³

On the surface at least, this seemed like a striking example of BEÖK's apolitical credo, given that CIAMAC was dominated by leftist functionaries and that most of BEÖK's influential supporters came from the aristocracy, officer class and former civil servants of the monarchy. In practice, however, Baumgartner's fine words rang rather hollow when placed in relation to the association's anti-Marxist and increasingly nationalist and right-wing stance. Judging by the editorial policy of *Der Plenny*, BEÖK omitted reporting on disabled POWs and instead focused on the social needs of its own members; nor did it subsequently mention any further cooperation between CIAMAC and BEÖK. Moreover, there is no evidence that BEÖK cooperated at any time with the *Zentralverband*. On the contrary, BEÖK obviously had contacts with the Christian Social *Reichsbund der Kriegsofopfer Österreichs*, headed by Karl Drexel, a priest who had been a POW in Russia, regularly participated in BEÖK activities, and in 1940 published his memoirs on his time in captivity.¹⁶⁴ He was also a bitter personal enemy of Maximilian Brandeisz.¹⁶⁵

From an Austrian perspective, the CIAMAC gathering in Vienna turned out to be a mainly social democratic manifestation, despite well-wishers from conservative groupings. Leading Austrian Social Democrats were free to place their imprint on the conference. Apart from Karl Seitz, Julius Tandler, former Undersecretary of State for Public Health and now responsible for health care in the Vienna city government, campaigned forcefully for invalids' interests. Another key speaker was Julius Deutsch, who represented the *Schutzbund*.¹⁶⁶ Yet, for all their efforts at promoting the cause of war victims, the conference produced little in the way of substantial results, and the rather toothless resolutions garnered criticism. With a complete absence of delegates from the Soviet Union, the Austrian Communist Party stepped in to accuse the conference of not going far enough. Having long attacked Social Democrats as 'traitors' or 'social chauvinists', the party mouthpiece, *Die Rote Fahne (The Red Flag)*, blamed CIAMAC for defending the 'bourgeoisie', absorbing opponents of the communist veterans, and justifying military mobilization measures.¹⁶⁷ Certainly, Social Democrats subsequently made sure to keep up pressure on the Christian Social-led government to improve support for war victims, widows and orphans.¹⁶⁸

Despite criticism of the congress outcome, CIAMAC could still point to the achievement of finding a common denominator for veterans associations from the victorious as well as defeated states, thus partially overcoming the latter's international isolation. Nevertheless, as with the FIDAC meetings around the same time, tensions arose from confrontations between former combatants. Having

gone through comparable experiences, many Austrian veterans were on common ground on national issues, regardless of their political conviction, and leading members of the Social Democrats supported union with Germany during the 1920s. Envoys of the war disabled, including Maximilian Brandeisz, had spoken in favour of Austria's unification with Germany at a CIAMAC congress in Paris earlier in 1927. Delegates from the Western powers and their former allies protested sharply against Brandeisz and German emissaries, much in the way that their colleagues had reacted to Hans Baumgartner at the Luxembourg gatherings. In particular, Italian delegates strongly opposed the *Anschluss* idea and, not for the first time, they demanded unequivocal respect for the Paris peace treaties.¹⁶⁹

These tensions persisted over the next few years, when political issues arose that affected national interests. For example, whether or not in response to communist criticism of the Congress in Vienna, CIAMAC started to accuse the Soviet Union of oppressing minority rights, particularly among the Ukrainian and Georgian populations.¹⁷⁰ However, it was inevitably Germany's situation that caused most controversy. This was evident at the CIAMAC congress in Prague in July 1931, where an unpleasant conflict overshadowed shared values and ideas.¹⁷¹ Jan Karkoszka, a disabled veteran and Polish MP, accused the CIAMAC leadership of serving mainly Franco-German interests and overlooking those of the Poles, despite the fact that the latter found themselves in a disadvantageous geopolitical position between Russia and Germany. The German programme of agricultural subsidies for the eastern provinces (known as *Osthilfe*) was, according to him, an economic declaration of war against Poland, and deepened the mistrust between the two countries. He proposed a resolution stating that mutual trust could only be restored and the economy improved if a declaration was made not to amend the peace treaties (thus excluding the possibility of changes to the Polish borders). A representative of the Union of Czechoslovak Disabled Officers (*Svaz československých invalidních důstojníků*) supported Karkoszka, saying that Germany was sending agents to border regions to stir up trouble, and small states like Czechoslovakia must necessarily insist on no treaty alterations.¹⁷²

However, the proposed resolution met with opposition. Bernhard Leppin, chairman of the Czechoslovak German-speaking League of War Wounded, Widows and Orphans, replied that they would not allow anyone to provoke them. Germans had invoked the principle of self-determination when Czechoslovakia was established, as was their right, he argued. In now demanding their own local government, they were merely acting as Czechs, Poles and other nations had done.¹⁷³ In this heated atmosphere, even the French CIAMAC chairman, Henri Pichot, employed the national argument when stating that the smaller European states had been liberated by French blood. He also noted that economic support for Germany had recently been approved in a resolution by 3.5 million French veterans. The French part of CIAMAC's leadership thus made it clear that they were closer to the German position than that of Czechoslovakia or Poland, who



Figure 4.2. Representatives of CIAMAC in audience with President Edvard Beneš at a later meeting in Prague in 1936. Narodní archiv, Prague.

were both expected not to criticize French foreign policy. From the German perspective, support from a major French veteran organization was highly welcome and raised hopes that changes to the peace treaties might be part of the solution to the contemporary economic crisis.¹⁷⁴

The discussion further turned against the Polish position when Erich Roßmann, a Social Democratic German MP and chairman of the socialist State Union of War Damaged and War Participants (*Reichsbund der Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegsteilnehmer*), claimed that it was not the Germans, but the Poles, who were unwilling to respect the treaties. For Roßmann, the formulation used in the CIAMAC peace resolution was exactly in line with Article 19 of the League of Nations' Pact, which allowed changes to international treaties (an agreement also signed by Poland). Eventually, almost all the delegates voted for the resolution except for three Poles from the Disabled Veterans' Union, who left the hall. At the same time, German and French veterans accepted a resolution declaring the Franco-German relationship as the 'surest condition for peace in Europe and in the world'.¹⁷⁵ CIAMAC's opponents in Germany welcomed this overt dissension and delightedly described the meeting as a 'failure', while the Czech press tried to downplay the conflict.¹⁷⁶ The Polish delegation initially signalled its willingness to withdraw from CIAMAC if the negotiations failed, but in the end did not do so.¹⁷⁷ The congress thus revealed that consensus over issues of social policy towards war victims did not obviate differing national interests in foreign

policy, but Czechoslovakia still continued to engage with CIAMAC (compare figure 4.2).

These political rifts and cross-border confrontations also hampered Austrian efforts to establish Vienna as a conference metropolis, in which organizations such as CIAMAC were seen to play an important part. Although members of the elite sought to keep alive the notion of Austria's impartiality, political reality left little room for neutral positions. In this respect, the experience of negotiations in Vienna between the USSR and Romania during the 1920s is illustrative. When the two sides failed to reach agreement over border conflicts and territorial claims, Austria got caught in the crossfire of criticism. Bucharest complained about the presence of communist emigrants in Vienna, especially from the Balkans, while other pro-Entente forces likewise pilloried Austria's asylum policy, suspecting it of a pro-Soviet attitude and giving succour to the Communist International. Although anti-Marxist members of the federal government attacked Moscow for its 'burrowing activity' and revolutionary agitation, the internal political divide between 'Red Vienna' and the anti-Socialist provinces radically impinged on foreign policy.¹⁷⁸ International activities of veterans associations were clearly bound up with this development, because – for some observers both within and outside Austria – CIAMAC meetings strengthened the perception of an active 'Red Vienna' at the expense of an 'apolitical' bridge-building function for Austria as a whole.

Certainly, this is what a number of Austrian commentators had in mind when CIAMAC delegates gathered in Vienna again at the 1932 annual congress. Conservative and nationalist papers informed their readers that the primary goal was to bridge Franco-German differences and they continued to promote the idea of Vienna as a 'congress city'. Although Lake Geneva is not nearby, opined the Christian Social *Reichspost*, there are the Vienna Woods, the Danube, the theatres and the magnificent meeting rooms, with their imperial charm.¹⁷⁹ Yet, the renewed holding of a veterans' congress in Austria was undoubtedly the result of social democratic efforts. With *Zentralverband* representative Maximilian Brandeis affirming the party's full support, the CIAMAC leadership had accepted the proposal for Vienna to host the meeting.¹⁸⁰ In contrast to the FIDAC conferences, the Austrian press devoted much greater attention to the event and welcomed the development of international cooperation: where the 1927 congress in Vienna had attracted eighty-five delegates representing nineteen organizations, there were now 172 from thirty different associations in twelve countries.¹⁸¹

There was also a conscious attempt to present the conference to outside observers as an event that was above party politics. The sessions took place in the Lower Austrian provincial assembly (*Landhaus*) in Vienna city centre, and Christian Social provincial governor, Karl Buresch, until recently Federal Chancellor, welcomed the guests in the name of the Austrian people and government, now led by Engelbert Dollfuß. Nevertheless, it did not go unnoticed that

not a single member of the government was present in person at the opening, nor was another of Buresch's party colleagues, the Federal President, Wilhelm Miklas. However, a number of CIAMAC representatives subsequently held separate meetings with prominent ministers, such as the Christian Social Minister for Social Welfare, Josef Resch, who in 1923 had become chairman of the War Damaged Fund. He stated what a great honour it was for 'inconspicuous Austria' and the capital, Vienna, to host the congress, and in doing so, he also explicitly praised the work of the Social Democrat Brandeis. ¹⁸² Conversely, participants from the ranks of the workers movement honoured two key figures in the First Republic, the recently deceased Ignaz Seipel and Johannes Schober, although both former Chancellors were contested personalities and, above all, much detested in 'proletarian circles'. ¹⁸³

In this spirit of mutual public recognition, newspapers reported how the congress even brought open enemies to the negotiating table. Hermann Ach, who was closely associated with the *Heimatblock*, the political wing of the *Heimwehr*, was named among the guests at the event. As Minister for Public Security, there may have been other reasons for his presence, but that is only speculation. What is not in doubt is the fact that the most prominent figures in Austrian Social Democracy appeared at the congress, chief among them Karl Renner, at the time president of the parliament (*Nationalrat*), and Julius Deutsch, head of the republican *Schutzbund*. Most likely conscious of the increasingly delicate political situation in Central Europe, both Renner and Brandeis acted cautiously, reining in their rhetoric and speaking in general terms about educating youth towards peace, above all via the victims of the war. By contrast, Deutsch did not hold back and decisively demanded the rejection of 'fascism', which sections of the government and the *Heimwehr* had openly admired for some time. ¹⁸⁴

Behind the scenes, congress participants renounced fine dinners, in view of the global economic crisis, while they announced their unanimity on improving the lot of war victims. ¹⁸⁵ Most of the discussions were devoted to this topic, along with disarmament and conserving peace. ¹⁸⁶ Once again, countless resolutions were passed, which were followed by a mass gathering at the House of the Workers in the district of Favoriten. ¹⁸⁷ The congress officially ended with a ceremony in front of the memorial entitled, *War, never again!*, at Vienna's central cemetery. Originally, Social Democrat Julius Tandler was due to give a speech, but in the end, as the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* noted: 'Not much was said, only a few words of farewell'. ¹⁸⁸

The most visible result of the conference was a change at the top, as Maximilian Brandeis took over as CIAMAC chairman from Henri Pichot. ¹⁸⁹ In addition, as the socialist paper *Salzburger Wacht* announced a couple of months later, the German *Reichsbanner*, the veterans association that had enjoyed a friendly relationship with CIAMAC for years, officially became a member. ¹⁹⁰ At the same time, voices from the Weimar Republic again caused a degree of irritation, in

part because of their focus on relations between France and Germany, to the neglect of Central European concerns. While the above-mentioned advocate of invalids' interests Erich Roßmann complained about expenditure on armaments and the lack of money available for social and cultural programmes, a participant from Munich directly opposed the standpoint of the Allies and leading figures in FIDAC. The Paris Treaties had 'placed special shackles' on Austria, he claimed, such that 'one people lives in two states'. Whatever different opinions there may have been as to how to revise the peace terms, ultimately 'the right of peoples to self-determination' was to be respected.¹⁹¹

Here, as within Austria itself, there were clear signs that, behind the noble speeches and ambitious goals of the congress, national objectives, ideological programmes and international cooperation were growing increasingly incompatible. Among veterans, the attitudes and activities of BEÖK reflected these frictions. After the new Geneva convention on treatment of POWs was issued in 1929, *Der Plenny* more or less stopped reporting on BEÖK's internationalism in the early 1930s.¹⁹² Alongside BEÖK's dwindling readiness to foster contacts with former enemies, the paper showed no inclination to report on the Disarmament World Conference in Geneva or on cooperation between CIAMAC and FIDAC during the 1930s.¹⁹³ Moreover, the milieu that provided much of the BEÖK leadership demonstrated that it had in no way shaken off resentments fostered since the last decade of Habsburg rule. Senior employees in the ministerial bureaucracy in Vienna, many of them with strong pro-Habsburg sentiments, still kept lists of those who had criticized or opposed the imperial regime, and many former officers in Austria continued to view Czech legionnaires as traitors.¹⁹⁴

Conclusion

As the recent scholarly literature has emphasized, international veterans organizations reflected wider trends in interwar Europe. The development of FIDAC, perpetuating the victorious coalition of World War I, showed the long lasting influence of wartime alliances. In spite of repeated debates about opening its ranks to the defeated, FIDAC never reached consensus on this and remained an exclusive club of war victors. However, cooperation between the once defeated and victorious under the auspices of FIDAC yielded some achievements. This was evident in the involvement of Austrian POWs in FIDAC's efforts in the 1920s to improve the international legal situation of prisoners in future wars. Although CIAMAC's focus on the social welfare of war victims and the principles of the League of Nations made it more inclusive than FIDAC, it could not prevent occasional divergences between the victors and vanquished, either.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, representatives of the labour movement, who were often the driving force behind participation in war victims organizations, identified with national

interests. The defence or revision of peace treaties remained a constant theme in veteran discourses, whatever the competing ideological interests.

Seen from the perspective of 1931, Czechoslovakia could point to positive aspects of veterans' foreign relationships. That year, Prague presented itself as the host city of two large congresses, which demonstrated Czechoslovak veterans' integration into transnational movements. The events manifested the democratic plurality of veterans organizations, but also showed the limits to which the external representation of their interests could be orchestrated, given the segmented national veterans landscape. It took about a decade for the leading legionnaire organization, ČSOL, finally to assume control over the Czechoslovak section of FIDAC and thus to present Czechoslovakia to the Allies as one of the victorious democratic states. Generally, the representation of Czechoslovakia through the involvement of war victims in CIAMAC was somewhat easier. The shared interest in welfare policies normally managed to lessen conflicts, even if the Prague CIAMAC congress in 1931 was less successful in this regard.

In view of the prevailing mistrust between the former enemies, Austrian veterans could hardly become members of FIDAC. Only the more leftist CIAMAC offered full cooperation and relevant roles for delegates from the defeated countries, especially against the backdrop of tentative rapprochement between Germany and France. The two CIAMAC congresses in Vienna, in 1927 and 1932 respectively, demonstrated these general trends. For Austria, the hosting of these gatherings was an enormous boost to prestige, but particularly for those Social Democrats who dedicated themselves to the cause of veterans internationalism. Nevertheless, domestic political polarization somewhat undermined the attempt to promote reconciliation at the international level.

Generally speaking, Austrian and Czechoslovak veterans' engagement in transnational activities contributed to the vitality of civil society in the international sphere during the 1920s. Yet, there were also veterans who began to test its limits and to question the basis of the post-war order in the international arena. Once the challenge from the communist IAC faded in the early 1920s, this questioning came primarily from nationalist-conservative wings of the veterans movement. This applies all the more to Austria, since many ex-soldiers, and among them former imperial officers, together with the majority of the republic's population, defended the right of self-determination. This manifested itself in widespread sympathy for Austrian unification with Germany, a commitment especially clear in the case of former POWs, who strengthened the ties between their respective associations in Austria, Germany and the German-speaking regions of Czechoslovakia. The Luxemburg congresses in 1927 and 1928, which aimed to bring together diverse veterans groups from both defeated and victorious countries in closer international cooperation, clearly showed the conflicting potential of victorious and defeated veterans' nationalisms. While both sides finally concluded that further meetings did not make sense for the time being, the idea of

such collaboration remained on the table until it was seized by fascists during the rise of revisionism and remobilization in the 1930s.

Notes

1. Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History 1919–1933* (Oxford, 2005), 256–60.
2. John Horne, ‘The Living’, in *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Vol. III, Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, 2014), 592–617.
3. Eichenberg, ‘Veterans’ Associations’; Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman, ‘Introduction: The Great War and Veterans’ Internationalism’, in *The Great War and Veterans’ Internationalism*, eds Eichenberg and Newman, 1–15. NB: In its own documents, CIAMAC dates its foundation to the year 1925 (*CIAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 2/1934, 37). Pawlowsky and Wendelin, by contrast, argue for 1926 as the real foundation, on the basis that the relevant meeting took place in Geneva at the end of September / start of October that year (Pawlowsky and Wendelin, *Die Wunden des Staates*, 441).
4. Alcalde, ‘War Veterans as Transnational Actors’.
5. *Ibid.*, 497.
6. Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948* (Oxford-New York, 2009); see also, Stanislav Holubec, “‘We Bring Order, Discipline, Western European Democracy, and Culture to this Land of Former Oriental Chaos and Disorder.’ Czech Perceptions of Sub-Carpathian Rus and its Modernisation in the 1920s’, in *Mastery and Lost Illusions: Space and Time in the Modernization of Eastern and Central Europe*, eds Joachim von Puttkamer, Włodzimierz Borodziej and Stanislav Holubec (Munich, 2014), 223–50.
7. The National Archives, London (TNA), Foreign Office (FO) 371/10662, Annual Report, 1924, 11.
8. VÚA-VHA, MNO pres., box 32, inv. no. 39, Memorandum o pomocné agendě Svazu československých legionářů v Americe, Cleveland, Ohio 1922.
9. *Ibid.*, Act No. 76/1922 Sb. z. a n. from 17 February 1922, here §81.
10. Further details in Šustrová, ‘Struggle for Respect’, 121.
11. NA, MSP, box 497, Bund der Kriegsverletzten für Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien, Sitz Reichenberg na Ministerstvu sociální péče, 16.4.1920.
12. NA, PMR, box 3093, Záznam z vnitrosortní konference konané dne 29.9.1923 na Ministerstvu sociální péče, 19.
13. NA, PMR, box 3094, Ministerstvo sociální péče Zemskému úřadu pro válečné poškozenec v Karlíně, 3.10.1923.
14. NA, PMR, box 3094, Záznam z meziresortní konference konané dne 29.9.1923 na Ministerstvu sociální péče, 3.
15. NA, MSP, box 498, Československé velvyslanectví ve Vídni Ministerstvu sociální péče v Praze, 19.1.1921.
16. NA, MSP, box 497, Ministerstvo sociální péče ČSR, odbor B, čj. 16601/1920, 19.12.1920.
17. NA, MSP, box 497, Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí předsednictvu Ministerstva sociální péče v Praze, 4.12.1920.
18. NA, MSP, box 497, Zemský úřad pro péči o válečné poškozenec v Čechách Ministerstvu sociální péče v Praze, 6.12.1920.

19. NA, MSP, box 498, Československé velvyslanectví ve Vídni Ministerstvu sociální péče, 19.01.1921.
20. NA, MSP, box 497, Znění úmluvy, February 1920.
21. NA, MSP, box 497, Zpráva o cestě do Vídne za účelem zřízení invalidního oddělení na čsl. velvyslanectví, 25.8.1920.
22. Österreichisches R.G.Bl., no. 256/1922, Vertrag zwischen der Republik Österreich und dem Deutschen Reich in den Angelegenheiten Kriegsbeschädigter und Kriegshinterbliebener, 17.8.1921.
23. NA, MSP, box 564, Generální konzulát ve Vídni Ministerstvu sociální péče v Praze, 14.5.1924.
24. NA, PMR, box 3093, Zmocněnec pro Ratibořicko Ministerstvu sociální péče v Praze, 7.12.1920.
25. NA, MSP, box 499, Úřad Zástupce Československé Republiky ve Vratislavi Ministerstvu sociální péče, Urgence fondu, 16.2.1922.
26. Augustin Malle, 'Die Lage der Slowenen in der Zwischenkriegszeit', in: *Die Deportation slowenischer Familien aus Kärnten 1942: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Kärntner Slowenen im 20. Jahrhundert mit ausgewählter Thematik anlässlich der gleichnamigen Ausstellung im 60. Gedenkjahr*, ed. Feliks Bister (Vienna, 2003), 2–34.
27. ÖStA, AdR, BKA AAng, NPA, box 287, Liasse Österreich 19/20–19/29, Polizeidirektion Wien betr. Generalversammlung des Bundes der Kriegsverletzten, Witwen und Waisen der tschechoslowakischen Republik in Österreich, 30.11.1928.
28. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Inneres, box 2443, 15/3, 1932, Zl. 150579 Polizeidirektion Wien betr. Generalversammlung des Verbandes der tschechoslowakischen Kriegsinvaliden in Österreich am 10. April 1932.
29. Morelon, 'Respectable Citizens'.
30. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, AAng, NPA, box 289, Liasse Österreich 19/55, 1927–1932, Zl. 23830/Fra/1928 Österreichisches Schützenwesen – Anfrage der Tschechoslowakischen Gesandtschaft.
31. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Inneres, box 5131, 22, 1918–1928, Zl. 177204/28 Polizeidirektion Graz betr. der Grazer tschechoslowakischen Kolonien anlässlich des 10. Jahrestages der Errichtung der tschechoslowakischen Republik, 26. and 30.10.1928. On the relations between Czechoslovakia and Austria in the interwar period, see Ota Konrád, *Nevyvážené vztahy: Československo a Rakousko 1918–1933* (Prague, 2012).
32. Moritz, Leidinger and Jagschitz, *Im Zentrum der Macht*, 247–49.
33. *Österreichischer Soldaten- und Kameradschaftsruf* (1933), 78.
34. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Inneres, box 4879, 22, 1932, Zl. 230288/33 Sicherheitsdirektor für das Burgenland über Denkmalenthüllung und Zehnjahresfeier für die nach Ungarn zurückgefallenen ehemaligen burgenländischen Gemeinden, 25.10.1933.
35. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Inneres, box 4879, 22, 1932, Zl. 233159/33, Bundeskanzleramt/Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit betr. Bestrebungen in Slowenien für eine Erneuerung des jugoslawischen Staates, 26.10.1933; ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Inneres, box 5051, 22, 1931–1932, Bundespolizeikommissariat Villach betr. Südslawische Propagandatätigkeit in Kärnten, 20.7.1932.
36. *Der Kamerad*, Folge 6 (1930/31), 2–3; Folge 7 (1930/31) 1 and 3–4; Folge 8 (1930/31) 5–6; Folge 9 (1930/31) 1 and 7, and 10 (1930/31) 1 and 3–4.
37. KLA, Khevenhüllerbund, box 1, Mappe 1-1, Steirische Gruppe an die Bundesleitung des Khevenhüller-(Siebener-)Bundes, 9.12.1923.
38. KLA, Khevenhüllerbund, box 2, Mappe 2-5, Steirische Gruppe an die Bundesleitung des Khevenhüller-(Siebener-)Bundes, 28.9.1926.
39. *Der österreichische Volkswirt*, 21.3.1925, 675.

40. *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 14.7.1926, 5.
41. Cole, 'Divided Land, Diverging Narratives', 269–70.
42. International Labour Organization Archives, Geneva, MU 10/2/1, L'Internationale des anciens combattants, 1–3.
43. Henri Barbusse, *Paroles d'un combattant: Articles et Discours (1917–1920)* (Paris, 1920), 213–18.
44. Henri Barbusse, *Obeň* (Prague, 1917).
45. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, AAng, NPA, box 276, Liasse Österreich 15/39–15/52, Polizeidirektion Wien betr. den Zweiten Internationalen Kongress der Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegesopfer in Wien, 30.9. bis 2.10.1921.
46. *Der Kriegsverletzte*, 10.10.1921, 4.
47. *Ibid.*, 3–4.
48. BArch, RY 10/1, Kongress der IAC vom 1. bis 3. Juli in Paris; Attachment to the letter from KPD to Bauerninternationale, 8.9.1925.
49. For example, see *Kärntner Tagblatt*, 7.5.1920, 1.
50. *Tagblatt: Organ für die Interessen des werktätigen Volkes* (Linz), 26.2.1920, 7; *Die Rote Fahne*, 26.10.1923, 5.
51. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 14.3.1921, 1.
52. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 20.9.1921, 5; *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 2.10.1921, 7; *Die Rote Fahne*, 8.9.1921, 6.
53. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, AAng, NPA, box 276, Liasse Österreich 15/39–15/52, Polizeidirektion Wien betr. den Zweiten Internationalen Kongress der Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegesopfer in Wien, 30.9. bis 2.10.1921.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *CIAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 2/1934, 28–29.
56. M. A. Tixier, 'L'évolution des relations internationales entre les associations de mutilés et d'anciens combattants', in *FIDAC: Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants*, 6–7/1926, 6–8.
57. *Die Rote Fahne*, 26.10.1923, 5.
58. *Der Tag*, 11.12.1925, 4.
59. Tixier, 'L'évolution des relations internationales'.
60. *Arbeiterwille*, 20.2.1926, 7–8.
61. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 28.2.1926, 10; *Der Invalide*, 5–6/1927, 6 und 3/1928, 6.
62. Pavel Marek, 'Komunistická strana Československa', in *Politické strany: Vývoj politických stran a hnutí v českých zemích a Československu v letech 1861–2004*, sv. 1, eds Jiří Malíř, Pavel Marek et al. (Brno, 2005), 711–46, here 721–24; Jacques Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque: Des origines à la prise de pouvoir* (Paris, 1981).
63. SNA, Zbierka dokumentov o Komunistickej internacionále, box 28, item 720, Organizační a politická zpráva o organizaci válečných poškozených v ČSR. The communist faction in the Union of War Victims also sent its delegates to Moscow; see SNA, Policajné riaditeľstvo v Bratislave, box 146, Družina čl. válečných poškodených, Sjezd komunistických váleč. poškozených invalidů a vdov v Moskvě, 17.3.1927.
64. SNA, Zbierka dokumentov o Komunistickej internacionále, box 28, item 720, Organizační a politická zpráva o organizaci válečných poškozených v ČSR.
65. SNA, Policajné riaditeľstvo, box 146, Družina čl. válečných poškodených, Směrnice pro frakční práci v organizacích válečných poškozených.
66. VÚA-VHA, KLEG, box 3, Dopis vojenského atašé ČSR ve Francii Vladimíra Klecandy Ministerstvu národní obrany, 7.12.1926; Resoluce týkající se postavení válečných obětí

- v Československu; SNA, Policajné riaditeľstvo, box 146, Družina čl. válečných poškodencov, Komun. strana. Družina válečných poškodzenců – mezinárodní sjezd v Ženevě, 15.10.1926.
67. *Rudé právo*, 9.11.1927, 4.
 68. *Bulletin Internationale des Victimes de la Guerre*, December 1926, 9.
 69. *Rudé právo*, 17.6.1927, 3; *FIDAC: Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération interalliée des Anciens Combattants*, 7/1927, 15.
 70. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *René Cassin and Human Rights: From the Great War to the Universal Declaration* (Cambridge, 2013), 58–63; Eichenberg and Stegmann, ‘Divided by War’.
 71. *Tagblatt*, 23.5.1922.
 72. For Czechoslovakia, see Radko Břach, *Die Tschechoslowakei und Locarno: Europäische Variationen* (Munich, 2011).
 73. *CIAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 1–2/1932, 49–50.
 74. Pawlowsky and Wendelin, *Die Wunden des Staates*, 446.
 75. *Ibid.*, 440–41. On the early international organization of war victims, see Gildas Brégain, ‘Un problème national, interallié ou international? La difficile gestion transnationale des mutilés de guerre (1917–1923)’, *Revue d’histoire de la protection sociale* 9 no. 1 (2016): 110–32.
 76. For the establishment of CIAMAC, see Alcalde, ‘War Veterans as Transnational Actors’, 497–98.
 77. *Reichspost*, 26.9.1926, 3.
 78. *The Allied Legions: Warsaw Convention September 6th–11th 1926* (Paris, 1926), 26–27.
 79. *Der österreichische Volkswirt*, 4.10.1924, 13.
 80. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 19.9.1924, 2.
 81. *Reichspost*, 26.9.1926, 3.
 82. *FIDAC: Rapport du Huitième Congrès Annuel, Londres, 8 et 9 Octobre 1927* (Paris, 1927), 8–9.
 83. *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, 14.7.1927, 2.
 84. *FIDAC: Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération interalliée des Anciens Combattants*, 8/1927, 1.
 85. *Der Plenny*, no. 7, 1927, 77–79.
 86. Timothy L. Schroer, ‘The Emergence and Early Demise of Codified Racial Segregation of Prisoners of War under the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949’, *Journal of the History of International Law* 15 (2013): 53–76; Heather Jones, ‘Revising the Laws of War on Prisoners of War in the Twentieth Century: Introduction’, *War in History* 3 (2016): 408–15.
 87. Among others, *Reichspost*, 3.6.1927, 7.
 88. *Der Plenny*, no. 6, 1927, 66.
 89. See Neville Wylie, ‘The 1929 Prisoner of War Convention and the Building of the Inter-War Prisoner of War Regime’, in *Prisoners in War*, ed. Sybille Scheipers (Oxford, 2010), 91–108, here 93–94.
 90. *Ibid.*
 91. BAArch, R 72/1178, *Der Alte Dessauer*, 10.3.1928, 1; see also *Österreichische Wehrzeitung*, 9.3.1928, 2 and *Reichspost*, 7.3.1928, 2.
 92. *Legie*, 6.12.1928, 1.
 93. *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, 14.7.1927, 2.
 94. *FIDAC: Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération interalliée des Anciens Combattants*, 8/1927, 5.
 95. *Ibid.*, 7–9.
 96. Archives de la Société des Nations, Geneva (ASdN), R 3565, Commission mixte d’anciens combattants créée à Paris le 31 mars 1928, 6.
 97. Jindřich Dejmek, *Diplomacie Československa. Díl II, Biografický slovník československých diplomatů (1918–1992)* (Prague, 2013), 252–53.

98. *Der Kriegsgefangene*, 1.6.1927, 5; *FIDAC: Rapport du Huitième Congrès Annuel, Londres, 8 et 9 Octobre 1927* (Paris, 1927), 16.
99. *Der Plenny*, no. 4–5, 1929, 49.
100. *Der Plenny*, no. 5, 1928, 60 and 130; no. 11, 1928, 130.
101. *Der Plenny*, no. 5, 1928, 61.
102. *Der Plenny*, no. 10, 1928, 128–29. See further Brian Feltman, *The Stigma of Surrender: German Prisoners, British Captors, and Manhood in the Great War and Beyond* (Chapel Hill, 2014), 136–64.
103. *Der Kriegsgefangene*, 1.6.1928, 2; *In Feindeshand: Die Gefangenschaft im Weltkriege in Einzeldarstellungen*, Vol. 2, eds Hans Weiland and Leopold Kern (Vienna, 1931), 424–25; Verena Moritz, ‘Half-Hearted Reconciliation: The “Federal Association of Former Austrian POWs” and the Question of Veterans’ Internationalism in Interwar Austria’, *Zeitgeschichte* 47 no. 1 (2020): 33–57.
104. *Der Kriegsgefangene*, 1.6.1928, 4.
105. ASdN, R 3565, Anträge für den Luxemburger Kongress gestellt durch die Deutsche Kriegsgefangenenliga.
106. ASdN, R 3565, V, Sonderwünsche der Kriegsgefangenen deutscher Nationalität im Tschechoslowakischen Staate; *Der Kriegsgefangene*, 1.8.1928, 6.
107. *Der Kriegsgefangene*, 6.1.1929, 5.
108. *Compte-rendu du Congrès d’Anciens Combattants de la Grande Guerre* (Luxembourg, 1928), 37.
109. *CLAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 6/1928, 177.
110. *FIDAC: Rapports du Neuvième Congrès Annuel* (Paris, 1928), 9.
111. Alcalde, ‘War Veterans as Transnational Actors’, 186.
112. *Der Plenny*, no. 10, 1928, 111–12.
113. *Der Plenny*, no. 4–5, 1929, 49–50.
114. *Der Plenny*, no. 5, 1928, 58. Compare William Mulligan, ‘German Veterans’ Associations and the Culture of Peace: The Case of the *Reichsbanner*’, in *The Great War and Veterans’ Internationalism*, eds Eichenberg and Newman, 139–61, here 153.
115. *Der Plenny*, no. 11, 1928, 128.
116. *FIDAC: Revue mensuelle de la Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants*, 11/1928, 8–10.
117. *FIDAC: Rapports et Résolutions du Dixième Congrès Annuel* (Paris, 1929), 10.
118. *Der Kriegsgefangene*, 1.11.1928, 2–6, here 2.
119. *Ibid.*, 6.1.1929, 5–6.
120. *Legie*, 6.12.1928, 1.
121. Mulligan, ‘German Veterans’ Associations’.
122. *FIDAC: Rapports et Résolutions du Dixième Congrès Annuel* (Paris, 1929), 9 and 11.
123. Eichenberg, *Kämpfen für Frieden*, 210–17; ASdN, R 4224, International Assembly of Ex-Servicemen and War Victims in Geneva – Official Report.
124. ASdN, R 3565, Record of conversation with Colonel Abbot and Crosfield, 18.11.1929.
125. FIDAC Constitution, Art. 1 precluded membership of associations from countries that ‘took up arms against an allied nation’; see VÚA-VHA, FIDAC, box 1, *FIDAC. 1938. Historique. Status. Règlement intérieur. Carte d’Identité FIDAC. Médaille Scolaire FIDAC* (Paris, 1938), 10.
126. *Družina*, 9.12.1920, 1.
127. *Ibid.*, 17.4.1921, 1.
128. *1919–1929, 10leté výročí první a nejstarší organizace ‘Družiny’* (Prague, 1929), 44.
129. *Ibid.*, 30–32.

130. For Romania, see Blasco Scarrino, ‘“Soldiers of Peace”: The Transnational Activism of Romanian Great War Veterans, 1920–1939’, *Radovi – Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 50/1 (2018): 205–24; for Poland, see Eichenberg, *Kämpfen für Frieden*, 99.
131. NA, PMV (255), box 559, Protokol sepsaný dne 8. ledna 1925 s Aloisem Dobrým.
132. *FIDAC: Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération interalliée des Anciens Combattants*, February 1927, 14; *Legie*, 1.2.1927, 3.
133. NA, PMR, box 85, Federation interalliée [sic] des anciens combattants, Section: tchécoslovaque Předsednictvu ministerské rady, 7.6.1923.
134. NA, PMR, box 85, Družina čs. legionářů – memorandum prezidentu čs. republiky, 25.5.1923.
135. Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, Prague, Archiv Ústavu Tomáše Garrigue Masaryka, Edvard Beneš I, box 62, Vojenská kancelář presidenta republiky Ministerstvu zahraničních věcí, 25.5.1923.
136. NA, PMR, box 85, Vojenská kancelář presidenta republiky Presidiu Ministerské Rady, 25.5.1923; Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants. Výroční kongres, 13.7.1925; AHMP, NJČsL, box 7, Rozmluva s p. ministerským předsedou dne 2. června 1930, 3.
137. NA, PMR, box 85, Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants. Výroční kongres 1925, 23.8.1924.
138. VÚA-VHA, KLEG, box 3, Dopis vojenského atašé ČSR ve Francii Vladimíra Klecandy Ministerstvu národní obrany, 7.12.1926.
139. VÚA-VHA, FIDAC, box 1, *FIDAC. 1938. Historique. Status. Règlement intérieur. Carte d'Identité FIDAC. Médaille Scolaire FIDAC* (Paris, 1938), 15.
140. *Národní osvobození*, 4.8.1927, 2. On the *Union fédérale* and its rival, *Union nationale des combattants*, see Millington, *From Victory to Vichy*, 25–51.
141. *Družina*, 28.6.1930, 1–2, and 3.1.1931, 5.
142. Antonín Klimek and Petr Hofman, *Vítěz, který prohrál: Generál Radola Gajda* (Prague, 1995); Antonín Klimek, *Boj o Hrad, Sv. 2. Kdo po Masarykovi? Vnitropolitický vývoj Československa 1926–1935 na půdorysu zápasu o prezidentské nástupnictví* (Buková u Příbramě, 2017), 233–49.
143. Milada Polišenská, *Diplomatické vztahy Československa a USA 1918–1968. Díl 1, 1918–1938, 2. sv. Priority, diplomatická praxe a politický kontext* (Prague, 2014), 479–80.
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145. *Družina*, 4.8.1931, 3.
146. *Ibid.*, 24.9.1931, 4.
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148. NA, PMR, box 85, Rozpočet na výdaje spojené s XII. Kongresem FIDACU v Praze 1931.
149. NA, PMR, box 85, FIDAC – Section tchécoslovaque ministerskému předsedovi, 10.4. 1931; Sciarino, ‘Soldiers of Peace’, 212–13; Newman, *Yugoslavia*, 220–21.
150. *FIDAC: Revue interalliée des cinq parties du monde*, October 1931, 8.
151. *Ibid.*, 5.
152. *Bohemia*, 1.9.1931.
153. *Venkov*, 2.9.1931.
154. *Reichspost*, 1.9.1931, 3.
155. *Tages-Post*, 1.9.1931, 1. See further, Hannes Leidinger and Christian Rapp, *Hitler-Prägende Jahre: Kindheit und Jugend 1889–1914* (Salzburg-Wien, 2020), 77–94.
156. *Der Wiener Tag*, 3.9.1931, 2.

157. *Vorarlberger Tagblatt*, 27.5.1927, 4.
158. Hannes Leidinger, 'Raumverluste: Österreichs Rolle in der Geschichte Europas zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen', in *1938: Der 'Anschluss' im internationalen Kontext*, eds Stefan Karner and Peter Ruggenthaler (Graz-Wien, 2020), 39–57, here 41–42 and 48.
159. *Vorarlberger Volksblatt*, 4.10.1927, 3.
160. ÖStA, AdR, BKA Inneres, box 2437, 15/3, 1926–1927, Zl. IV-4749/27 Polizeidirektion Wien an das BKA (Abt. 8) betr. III. Konferenz der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegsteilnehmer in Wien, 8.10.1927.
161. *Vorarlberger Volksblatt*, 4.10.1927, 3; *Kleine Volks-Zeitung*, 1.10.1927, 3.
162. ÖStA, AdR, BKA Inneres, box 2437, 15/3, 1926–1927, Zl. IV-4749/27 Polizeidirektion Wien an das BKA (Abt. 8) betr. III. Konferenz der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegsteilnehmer in Wien, 8.10.1927. See also *Die Stunde*, 30.9.1927, 5; *Kleine Volks-Zeitung*, 1.10.1927, 3.
163. *Der Plenny*, no. 11/1927, 126–27.
164. Karl Drexel, *Feldkurat in Sibirien* (Innsbruck, 1940).
165. Pawlowsky and Wendelin, *Die Wunden des Staates*, 438–45.
166. ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Inneres, box 2437, 15/3, 1926–1927, Zl. IV-4749/27 Polizeidirektion Wien betr. III. Konferenz der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegsteilnehmer in Wien, 8.10.1927.
167. *Die Rote Fahne*, 30.9.1927, 5 and 4.10.1927, 5.
168. *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 11.9.1928, 7; *Tagblatt*, 18.9.1929, 2–3 and 31.8.1930, 2.
169. *Neues Wiener Journal*, 11.7.1927, 1.
170. *Tagblatt*, 18.9.1929, 2.
171. Stegmann, 'Social Benefits and the Rhetoric of Peace'.
172. *CIAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 4–5/1931, 144–45.
173. *Der Kriegsverletzte*, 10.10.1931, 2.
174. *Ibid.*
175. *Ibid.*
176. BArch, R 72/1181, clipping 'Krach in der CIAMAC', *FAZ*, 4.8.1931; *Nový život*, 29.8.1931, 1.
177. Paweł Letko, 'Stosunki wzajemne między polskimi i niemieckimi organizacjami kombatantów w okresie międzywojennym', *Echa Przeszłości* 5 (2004): 135–54, here 141.
178. Leidinger, 'Raumverluste', 49–50.
179. *Reichspost*, 12.7.1932, 5; *Tages-Post*, 27.8.1932, 5.
180. *CIAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 1–2/1932, 42–43, 3/1932, 70–71 and 5/1932, 183.
181. *CIAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 5/1932, 184. The *Tages-Post* (27.8.1932, 5) spoke of twenty-seven participating organizations; the *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung* (2.9.1932, 4) of twenty-six, comprising 160 delegates from eleven countries. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (2.9.1932, 3) claimed 200 delegates were present.
182. *Kleine Volks-Zeitung*, 2.9.1932, 3.
183. *Tagblatt*, 6.9.1932, 2.
184. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 2.9.1932, 3; *Tagblatt*, 3.9.1932, 2.
185. *CIAMAC: Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 1–2/1932, 42–43.
186. *Ibid.*, 4/1932, 112–27. See also *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 2.9.1932, 3 and 3.9.1932, 5; *Tages-Post*, 27.8.1932, 5; *Prager Tagblatt*, 4.9.1932, 6.

187. CIAMAC: *Bulletin de la Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et Anciens Combattants*, 5/1932, 214–55; *Das Kleine Blatt*, 2.9.1932, 8; *Kleine Volks-Zeitung*, 2.9.1932, 3.
188. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 3.9.1932, 5; 4.9.1932, 3.
189. *Ibid.*, 2.9.1932, 3.
190. *Salzburger Wacht*, 2.11.1932, 2.
191. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 4.9.1932, 3; *Tagblatt*, 6.9.1932, 2.
192. Although BEÖK was proud of its contribution to the Geneva convention, *Der Plenny* only referred to this issue again in connection with its pending ratification by the Austrian government, something that only happened in 1936.
193. Thomas Richard Davies, 'International Veterans' Organizations and the Promotion of Disarmament Between the Two World Wars', in *The Great War and Veterans' Internationalism*, eds Eichenberg and Newman, 187–206; ASdN, R 4224, International Assembly of Ex-Service Men and War Victims, Geneva 1933, Official Report published by the CIAMAC and the FIDAC.
194. Moritz, Leidinger and Jagschitz, *Im Zentrum der Macht*, 247–48.
195. Eichenberg, 'Veterans' Associations'.