

“War by Means of Peace”: Lucy E. Textor, the Czechoslovak Land Reform, and the Propaganda of the Interwar Castle

Kristýna Kaucká 

ABSTRACT

The article examines the propaganda strategies of the “Castle” group in interwar Czechoslovakia through the example of the promotion of American professor Lucy E. Textor. In 1923, she wrote the book *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*, the first detailed analysis of the issue in English. Textor’s publication reflects the propaganda efforts of the “Castle,” which includes the activities of the President of the Republic, the Office of the President of the Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of its goals was to shape the image of Czechoslovakia abroad.

To investigate the land reform, Textor visited Czechoslovakia, where she was warmly received by President Tomáš G. Masaryk and his entourage. Her publication was used to present Czechoslovakia’s democratic ideals and to refute objections to the land reform. Although the book was not intended for a wider audience outside intellectual circles interested in Central Europe, it influenced the international discourse on the topics of Czechoslovakia and its land reform.

Overall, Textor was important to the “Castle” group, which sought to promote Czechoslovakia’s achievements in the West. Until today, her book continues to influence how the Czechoslovak land reform is viewed. The story behind this English publication, intended to be written with a detachment from the events it describes, actually involves political games and propaganda by the “Castle” group.

KEYWORDS: Czechoslovakia, political parties, land reform, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Vasil Kaprálek Škrach, Lucy E. Textor

Declaration on Possible Conflicts of Interest

The author has declared that no conflicts of interest exist.

Funding Statement

This article has been written as part of the grant project 22-15915S by the Czech Science Foundation entitled “The ‘Castle’ as the Center of Power, Administration, and Ideology in Interwar Czechoslovakia (1918-1938)”.

Kristýna Kaucká, PhD, Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences, kaucka@mua.cas.cz,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5492-7774>

“War by Means of Peace”: Lucy E. Textor, the Czechoslovak Land Reform, and the Propaganda of the Interwar Castle –
 ZfO / JECES 73/2024/2

(received 2023-07-24; accepted 2023-11-28)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25627/202473211499> – eISSN 2701-0449, ISSN 0948-8294



The Czechoslovak Republic was founded in 1918 on the ruins of the Habsburg Monarchy. When the former crown lands (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Upper Hungary) were transformed into a compact state, the new elites decided to reorganize the ownership of agricultural and forest property through a land reform. This reform, which was carried out in interwar Czechoslovakia, still attracts the attention of researchers one hundred years later. Ardent discussions are raging concerning the consequences of this ambitious attempt at redistributing almost one third of all the land in the state. Some researchers highlight the importance of the reform, while others criticize it or directly condemn it.¹ Early in the initial stages of the reform, a struggle was fought over how it should be presented to the public at home and abroad, from ordinary citizens to the highest diplomatic echelons. These debates serve as a descriptive example of the propaganda machinery of the first Czechoslovak president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937, in office 1918–1935), who tirelessly sent news abroad about the newly established and at that time still unknown state in the middle of Europe.

Masaryk and his entourage, referred to as the “Castle” in the Czechoslovak internal political context drew on their experience in the resistance movement against the Habsburg Monarchy during World War I when executing power.² Purposeful propaganda, carried out, whenever possible, in a concealed manner and with no direct links to official institutions, was their key tool.³ This was

¹ The current critics of how the land reform was carried out include economic historian Antonie Doležalová, who articulates her idea of the “stolen reform,” i.e., a reform that was stolen from the Czechoslovak population. For details, cf.: ANTONIE DOLEŽALOVÁ: A Stolen Revolution: The Political Economy of the Land Reform in Interwar Czechoslovakia, in: *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 69 (2021), 3, pp. 278–300. A positive assessment of the reform has been given by Antonín Kubačák, who states that “compared to similar moves in Central and Eastern Europe, this was one of the most extensive and most democratic, including the relevant legislation, as in its consequences it gave rise to tens of thousands of new owners and strengthened the role of the small and medium-sized farmer.” For details, cf.: ANTONÍN KUBAČÁK: Pozemková reforma v období první republiky [The Land Reform during the First Czechoslovak Republic], in: *Historický obzor* 4 (1993), pp. 84–87, here p. 84.

² EDUARD KUBŮ, JIŘÍ ŠOUŠA: T. G. Masaryk a jeho c. k. protivníci: Československá zahraniční akce ženevského období v zápase s rakousko-uherskou diplomacií, zpravodajskými službami a propagandou (1915–1916) [T. G. Masaryk and His Royal Imperial Enemies: Czechoslovak Foreign Action of the Geneva Period in Its Struggle against the Austro-Hungarian Diplomacy, Intelligence Services and Propaganda (1915–1916)], Praha 2015, p. 118; DAGMAR HÁJKOVÁ: Role propagandy ve válečných aktivitách T. G. Masaryka od vypuknutí války do ledna 1917 [The Role of Propaganda in the Wartime Activities of T. G. Masaryk from the Outbreak of the War to January 1917], in: *Historie a vojenství* 49 (2000), 1, pp. 14–37.

³ Organizace nakladatelské společnosti [Organization of the Publishing Company], by Jan Hájek, in: Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR Masaryk [Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences], Archiv Ústavu T. G. Masaryka (AUTGM) [Archives of the T. G. Masaryk Institute], Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (TGM) collection, sign. R-27-3c, box 444.

aptly characterized by Masaryk's "literary secretary" Vasil Kaprálek Škrach (1891–1943) in November 1932—for Masaryk and the "Castle," propaganda was nothing other than a "war by means of peace"⁴ waged in order to guarantee security for the state.

The phenomenon of the Castle has long attracted scholarly attention. It was first introduced into historiography by Czechoslovak Marxist historians in the early 1950s.⁵ The turning point came in 1996, when a synthesis by Antonín Klimek was published, outlining the next direction of research on the Castle.⁶ His critical perception prompted other historians to oppose⁷ or build on his theses.⁸ Andrea Orzoff, partly inspired by Klimek, analyzes the media and foreign policy propaganda of the Castle, which is closely related to this article.⁹ She is interested in the creation of the so-called "Czechoslovak national myth," through which the Czechs emphasized that their interwar Republic was democratic, tolerant and peaceful. According to Orzoff, the identity of the contemporary Czech Republic is also based on this myth. She argues that it was the Castle who originally disseminated this myth, hence her interest in the topic, but she doesn't focus on the social networks of the Castle and its associated actorship. It is this gap in knowledge that this case study fills by analyzing the circumstances of the emergence of the Castle's propaganda networks and reflecting on their strategies, actors, and effectiveness using the example of land reform. The term "propaganda" is used in this article in its interwar meaning, untainted by the experience of authoritarian regimes. It is to be understood as a form of public relations in a democratic society aimed at creating a positive international image of Czechoslovakia.¹⁰

⁴ Notes by Vasil Kaprálek Škrach, November 1932, in: AÚTGM, Ústav T. G. Masaryka 1 (ÚTGM 1) collection, box 168.

⁵ For example: VÁCLAV KRÁL: O Masarykově a Benešově kontrarevoluční protisovětské politice [On Masaryk's and Beneš's Counterrevolutionary Anti-Soviet Policy], Praha 1953.

⁶ ANTONÍN KLIMEK: Boj o Hrad: Vnitropolitický vývoj Československa 1918–1926 na půdorysu zápasu o prezidentské nástupnictví. Díl 1: Hrad a Pětka [Struggle for the Castle: The Internal Political Development of Czechoslovakia in 1918–1926 against the Background of the Struggle for the Successor President. Vol. 1: The Castle and the Five], Praha 1996.

⁷ ALAIN SOUBIGOU: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Praha 2004; ZDENĚK KÁRNÍK: České země v éře První republiky (1918–1938). Díl 1: Vznik, budování a zlatá léta republiky (1918–1929) [The Czech Lands during the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938). Vol. 1: The Establishment, Building and Golden Years of the Republic (1918–1929)], 2nd ed., Praha 2003.

⁸ BRUCE R. BERGLUND: Castle and Cathedral in Modern Prague: Longing for the Sacred in a Skeptical Age, Budapest 2017; PETER BUGGE: Czech Democracy 1918–1938: Paragon or Parody, in: Bohemia 47 (2007), 1, pp. 17–25.

⁹ ANDREA ORZOFF: Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948, New York 2009.

¹⁰ VÁCLAV PRÁGNER, JIŘÍ SOLAR: Potřebuje demokracie soustavné propagandy? [Does Democracy Need Systematic Propaganda?], Praha 1934.

This article analyzes the methods employed by the actors around the Castle in promoting the Czechoslovak land reform on an international scale. It illustrates the topic drawing on the example of the scholar Lucy Elizabeth Textor (1871–1958), who in 1923 published a book entitled *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*.¹¹ In the Anglo-American academic discourse, the publication gradually became one of the most influential works on this topic. This article explores the context in which this publication was prepared, and the influence of the Castle's collective actorship on Textor's interpretation. It is based on the hypothesis that, in some cultural circuits, the Castle was able to shape the discourse on selected political topics for decades to come. This was done in a very subtle manner, through concealed and inexpensive methods of using symbolism and the building up of intellectual networks. The article will show that although the specific practice of the Castle's actors may, at a casual glance, seem somewhat amateurish and appear to lack the systematic anchorage typical of great power propaganda, in some cases, such as that of Textor, it proved quite effective.

The arguments presented here at first outline the institutional background and propaganda networks available to the Castle. The article introduces in detail what the term "Castle" means and what actorship was developed by this group. It therefore offers a view into the propaganda mindset of the actors linked to the Castle, including their financial and symbolic background. This is followed by an explanation of the land reform, emphasizing the international lobbyism and influential role played by the Castle. The next subchapters show the circumstances of Textor's arrival in Czechoslovakia, her career and academic work. The book *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*, the creation of which was greatly helped by President Masaryk and his entourage, is also analyzed. The article concludes with an explanation of how this work was received by the international academic and journalistic community under the direction of the Castle.

The article is based on two key documents about Textor, the Castle, and the Czechoslovak land reform. One is a letter from the Czechoslovak embassy in Washington by the agricultural attaché Rudolf Kuráž (1888–1958) to the head of the presidential office, Přemysl Šámal,¹² and the other is a letter from Masaryk's secretary, John Crane, to Textor.¹³ These documents briefly but clearly describe why Textor came to Czechoslovakia in 1922, what she wanted to research, and how the Castle used her work as a propaganda tool. In order to understand the context of these key documents, which are kept in the Archive of the Office of the President (Archiv Kanceláře prezidenta republiky, AKPR) and the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the CAS (Masarykův ústav a Archiv

¹¹ LUCY ELIZABETH TEXTOR: *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*, London 1923.

¹² Letter from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington to Přemysl Šámal, 1922-06-06, in: Archiv Kanceláře prezidenta republiky (AKPR) [Archive of the Office of the President], Přemysl Šámal collection, sign. 655-22, box 15.

¹³ Letter from John Crane to Lucy E. Textor, 1922-12-26, in: AÚTGM, TGM, sign. R, box 349.

AV ČR, MÚA), research was conducted in archives located in the Czech Republic, Germany, and Switzerland. Textor's motivations were also analyzed using the archives of her home institution, the Vassar College Digital Library.

In this way, it was possible to reconstruct the motivations of the actors involved and the individual steps of the Castle propaganda machine. Textor's work is a valuable resource here, as it describes, in detail, the whole propaganda trajectory of the Castle directed abroad, from the legitimizing backstage of its promotional activities, through specific steps leading to the cultivation of propaganda contacts, to assistance in ensuring the work was well received so as to strengthen the positive image of the state abroad. This focus makes the article beneficial for a historian specializing in Central Europe, and especially for researchers with an interest in propaganda and intelligence games as an inseparable part of "soft" power and cultural diplomacy.¹⁴

1 The Castle and Its Propaganda Networks: The Office of the President of the Republic, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers

Interwar Czechoslovakia was a parliamentary democracy in which the presidential office played a strong role. From the establishment of the state until his abdication (1935), Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk was repeatedly elected president. The Office of the President of the Republic (*Kancelář prezidenta republiky*, KPR) was supported by the presidential chancellery, headed by Přemysl Šámal (1867–1941), an influential figure in the domestic resistance against the Habsburg Monarchy during World War I.¹⁵ Masaryk possessed enormous symbolic power, stemming from his personal charisma and the role he had played in the establishment of Czechoslovakia while in the foreign resistance during the war. The domestic political representatives who drew on the Cisleithanian traditions of parliamentarism found themselves repeatedly in a latent conflict with the president. In the very early days of the new state, a struggle was fought for the president's constitutional powers, while it was correctly assumed that besides his official competences, Masaryk would also hold a considerable symbolic influence.¹⁶ Conflicts over power also occurred concerning the KPR, as

¹⁴ The study is relevant, for example, to the recently published monograph on Elizabeth Wiskemann (1899–1971), who visited Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 1930s to research the situation in the Sudetenland. GEOFFREY FIELD: *Elizabeth Wiskemann: Scholar, Journalist, Secret Agent*, Oxford 2023.

¹⁵ JAN HÁLEK: *Maffisté v politickém životě prvorepublikového Československa (1919–1921)—role Přemysla Šámala* [The "Maffie" Members in the Political Life of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1919–1921)—The Role of Přemysl Šámal], in: *Historie—otázky—problémy* 6 (2014), 1, pp. 152–156.

¹⁶ ANTONÍN KLIMEK: *Počátky parlamentní demokracie v Československu* [The Beginnings of Parliamentary Democracy in Czechoslovakia], in: JAROSLAV VALENTA, EMIL VORÁ-

its strong position was not welcome in political circles.¹⁷ Despite that, the KPR became an influential administrative, intelligence and, last but not least, also propaganda apparatus.

In official terms, the president and the KPR had their seats at the Prague Castle, which is primarily why Masaryk and his entourage were referred to as the Castle. However, other institutions also had their seats at the Castle for some time until they found their own premises, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, MZV) and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers (Předsednictvo ministerské rady, PMR). Extensive literature is available on the function of the Castle, yet this phenomenon remains the subject of lively historiographic as well as journalistic debate.¹⁸ In spite of a certain degree of abstraction, the term Castle is a useful analytical as well as theoretical means of understanding the apparent as well as concealed projection of influence in the president's broader environs. To put it simply, it can be said that this group included not only close allies of T. G. Masaryk and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Edvard Beneš (1884–1948), but also his supporters, more distant in terms of power, from media, cultural, and administrative circles, as well as other figures from, for instance, business and finance, or political parties. It is no coincidence that the literature sometimes presents a view that the Castle was an elite group striving to ideologically steer the state through "political engineering"¹⁹ or "managed democracy."²⁰ An unconstrained, yet apt description of the Castle's symbolism was given by the historian Antonín Klimek when he wrote that "the phenomenon of the Castle also involved the atmosphere, and that was unique and inseparable."²¹ Apart from this, we should not overlook the fact that, in the interwar context, the notion of Castle was originally used by those who stood in opposition to T. G. Masaryk and his entourage. During the 1920s, Masaryk gradually and carefully came to identify with the reference of the Castle.

ČEK et al. (eds.): *Československo 1918–1938: Osudy demokracie ve střední Evropě*, Praha 1999, pp. 111–122, here pp. 115–117.

¹⁷ EMIL SOBOTA, JAROSLAV VOREL, RUDOLF KŘOVÁK, ANTONÍN SCHENK: *Československý prezident republiky: Státoprávní instituce a její život* [The Czechoslovak President of the Republic: The State Law Institution and Its Life], Praha 1934, pp. 69–71; DAGMAR HÁJKOVÁ: *Počátky prezidentské kanceláře* [The Beginnings of the Office of the President], in: JAN HÁJEK, DAGMAR HÁJKOVÁ, FRANTIŠEK KOLÁŘ, VLASTISLAV LACINA, ZDENKO MARŠÁLEK, IVAN ŠEDIVÝ: *Moc, vliv a autorita v procesu vzniku a utváření meziválečné ČSR*, Praha 2008, pp. 163–180.

¹⁸ For details concerning the discussion of the power and symbolic role of the Castle, cf.: BERGLUND, pp. 217–218; ORZOFF; SOUBIGOU, pp. 268–270; KLIMEK, *Boj*, pp. 163–179; KARL BOSL (ed.): *Die "Burg": Einflußreiche politische Kräfte um Masaryk und Beneš*, vol. 1–2, München—Wien 1973–1974; KÁRNÍK, pp. 407–416.

¹⁹ BUGGE, pp. 17–25.

²⁰ ORZOFF, p. 59; BERGLUND, pp. 178–181.

²¹ KLIMEK, *Boj*, p. 165.

The collective actorship of the Castle, considering the personal and institutional diversity and multi-directionality of this informal institution, was manifold. Its manifestation differed between the domestic and foreign policy context. The KPR and the MZV formed the institutional core of the Castle. It is symptomatic that institutions that would have otherwise been rivals of the president as regards domestic policy provided financial assistance for the international propaganda activities of the Castle. These especially included the PMR, which was occasionally in opposition to Masaryk as regards domestic policy. The Prime Minister granted the president huge amounts of funding for foreign propaganda. The money came from the Prime Minister's discretionary fund, i.e. the state budget item for the PMR, which was not subject to audits. It is no coincidence that still back in Cisleithanian times, the Prime Minister's discretionary fund was thought of as a "corruption" fund that was used for bribes.²²

The Castle's foreign policy strategy was characterized by the use of intellectual and academic networks for its propaganda.²³ The KPR built up the image of Czechoslovakia by, for instance, inviting interesting or influential figures to audiences at the presidential chancellery or directly with the president.²⁴ The PMR helped out through its press department, which also governed the Czechoslovak Press Agency (Československá tisková kancelář, CTK) as a state news agency. Despite occasional conflicts of interest with the propaganda machinery of the MZV,²⁵ the "official (state)" press agenda of the PMR was usually well able to complement the "unofficial (semi-private)" propaganda activities of President Masaryk as well as those of the MZV. This was especially true in relation to foreign countries. One of the departments of the MZV was the so-called Section 3: Intelligence Section (3. sekce zpravodajská), tasked with open as well as covert propaganda abroad.²⁶ The MZV even went so far as to instigate the establishment of a private publishing house (Orbis) set up to publish

²² MARIE ČERVINKOVÁ-RIEGROVÁ: *Zápisky*. Díl 1: 1880–1884 [Notes. Vol. 1: 1880–1884], ed. by MILAN VOJÁČEK, LUBOŠ VELEK et al., Praha 2009, p. 36.

²³ ELISABETH VAN MEER: The Transatlantic Pursuit of a World Engineering Federation: For the Profession, the Nation, and International Peace, 1918–48, in: *Technology and Culture* 53 (2012), 1, pp. 120–145, here pp. 122–123.

²⁴ CARLOS REIJNEN: A Castle in the Center: The First Czechoslovak Republic and European Cooperation, 1918–1938, in: REBECCA LETTEVALL, GEERT SOMSEN et al. (eds.): *Neutrality in Twentieth-Century Europe: Intersections of Science, Culture, and Politics after the First World War*, New York 2012, pp. 181–206, here pp. 181–182.

²⁵ Reasons against Reducing Items for the Intelligence Service, [1933], in: AÚTGM, Edvard Beneš, oddíl 1—veřejná činnost 1918–1938 (EB 1) collection, box 74, inv. no. 372, sign. R 186 A-14.

²⁶ ORZOFF, pp. 145–173; JINDŘICH DEJMEK: Pražské ministerstvo zahraničí a sebeprezentace Československa mezi světovými válkami [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague and Czechoslovakia's Self-Presentation between the World Wars], in: *Věre Olivové ad honorem: Sborník příspěvků k novodobým československým dějinám*, Praha 2006, pp. 82–102.

foreign-language materials. In reality, the publishing house constituted part of the MZV's capital ownership.

The MZV had vast finances available for similar activities, a portion of which came under a special accounting regime, i.e., it was subject to the minimum of accounting controls to maintain the anonymity of cash flows.²⁷ A far from negligible portion of these funds was transferred—as was money from the PMR—directly to President Masaryk's unofficial “discretionary fund”²⁸ which was used for foreign activities, amongst other things.²⁹

Even though the leading representatives of the Castle did not openly admit this in public, one of the primary stimuli for the establishment of this informal association was the desire, on the part of Masaryk and his close colleagues, to create a positive media image of Czechoslovakia abroad. Without at least a modicum of control over domestic political institutions, this intention would have been unthinkable. The Castle mobilized actors across the whole intellectual spectrum, with varying goals and working methods. In the name of the head of the state, on more than one occasion they deliberately accumulated symbolic power and influence in pursuit of their own gain. The existing democratic institutions generally accepted this interference, even though there was considerable tension between those around the president and the parliamentary parties, as has been explored in detail in the academic literature on interwar Czechoslovakia. Masaryk's intention to control the propaganda directed abroad was, in any case, fulfilled so effectively that the Castle eventually earned the support of associations in positions of latent rivalry, such as prime ministers and the PMR.

The launch of any official state propaganda event to shape a positive media image of the Czechoslovak land reform abroad was therefore almost unthinkable, given the interwar context, other than as envisaged by the Castle and with the approval of its representatives. Even if there had been a group that would plan to launch a similar event, initiative would probably have quickly been passed through the existing social and institutional milieu into the Castle's sphere of influence. The example of Lucy E. Textor is proof of this—her intention to carry out academic research into Czechoslovakia's land reform was detected by the Castle's information channels quite early on, and its representatives immediately seized on the opportunity for propaganda. The fact that the Castle networks were only just being set up at the time of Textor's visit could change nothing of this, because they maintained a very similar character in the following years. They continued to be marked by provisionality and amateurism throughout the period between the wars, as this article will clarify.

²⁷ Letter from Edvard Beneš to Eduard Koerner, 1927-10-28, in: AÚTGM, EB 1, inv. no. 467, sign. R 8-6, box 93.

²⁸ Subsidies for the Fund Available to the President of the Republic, ref. Dr. Strnad, in: AÚTGM, EB 1, inv. no. 469, sign. R 8-8 (R9), box 93.

²⁹ Public Fund in the Živnobanka Bank, in: AÚTGM, TGM, inv. no. 86, sign. O-6-22, box 535.

It was especially Masaryk's propaganda in the form of subsidizing the domestic and foreign press, and the generous remuneration of journalists' fees, that made its way into the historiography. It was, however, no less usual for the Castle's propaganda to take the form of social activities combined with networking that served a useful purpose for Czechoslovakia. Whenever necessary, Masaryk was not afraid to pay for such activities from his discretionary fund, hugely subsidized by the MPR and the MZV (totaling almost 70 million CZK in 1926–1935, while the overall amount of the fund was even greater). In its budget for 1933, for instance, the MZV set aside 2.1 million CZK for the president for foreign expenses.³⁰ It included items such as "Foreign guests in the Czechoslovak Republic" and "Support for academic work about the Czechoslovak Republic other than by foreign Russian scientists." In this way, Masaryk funded, for instance, Henry Wickham Steed (1871–1956) and Robert William Seton-Watson (1879–1951) as Czechoslovakia's propaganda supporters.³¹ Steed and Seton-Watson were Masaryk's most important pre-war contacts in Great Britain. Together with Masaryk, they often discussed politics and the fate of the Habsburg Monarchy. Seton-Watson even planned to co-edit the Central European intellectual journal *European Review* with Masaryk. A similar project was carried out during World War I under the name "The New Europe." It was through these British contacts that Masaryk's name became better known to the European public.³² Masaryk was also a close collaborator with both of them during the interwar period. For example, Masaryk financially sponsored Steed's translation of his war memoirs.³³

Female intellectuals were also important players in Masaryk's propaganda games.³⁴ A detailed analysis of his international correspondence before 1918 shows that Masaryk deliberately cultivated his relationships with women. His network included the American social worker Mary McDowell (1854–1936), the physician Rosina Wistein (1867–1937), the Irish writer Ethel Lilian Voynich (1864–1960), and the Irish historian Alice Stopford Green (1847–

³⁰ The President's Budget for Foreign Expenditure for 1933, in: AÚTGM, ÚTGM 2, box 101; notes by Vasil Kaprálek Škrach, 1932-12-13, *ibid*.

³¹ JAN RYCHLÍK, THOMAS D. MRZIK et al. (eds.): R. W. Seton-Watson and His Relations with the Czechs and Slovaks, vol. 1–2, Praha 1995–1996; RUDOLF URBAN: Tajné fondy III. sekce: Z archivů ministerstva zahraničí republiky Česko-Slovenské [Secret Funds of Section III: From the Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Czecho-Slovak Republic], Praha 1943, p. 92.

³² DAGMAR HÁJKOVÁ, SVAOTOPLUK HERC (eds.): Korespondence T. G. Masaryk—Velká Británie, sv. 1 (1881–1915) [T. G. Masaryk Correspondence—Great Britain, vol. 1 (1881–1915)], Praha 2021, pp. 13–15.

³³ KPR Recording from 1927-12-19, in: AKPR, Tajné (KPR-T) [Classified] collection, 1921–1944, sign. T 12-24, box 5; TOMÁŠ GARRIGUE MASARYK: The Making of a State: Memories and Observations, 1914–1918, London 1927.

³⁴ FRANTIŠKA PLAMÍNKOVÁ: Masaryk a ženy [Masaryk and the Women], Praha 1930.

1927).³⁵ Masaryk was particularly interested in English-speaking suffragettes, social workers, and writers. The women in his family also played an important role in his life. His American wife Charlotte Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1923) supported his political activities. Before the KPR was fully established, his daughter Olga (1891–1978) was the unofficial administrator of the President of the Republic.³⁶ After Charlotte's death, his daughter Alice (1879–1966), the first chairwoman of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, assumed the role of unofficial first lady.

Textor was by no means the only English-speaking woman who came to Czechoslovakia to study during the interwar period. We can also mention Elizabeth Wiskemann, an English journalist who reported from Czechoslovakia on the eve of World War II. Similarly to Textor, she established contacts with the Castle, represented by the then president Edvard Beneš. Her main concern was Czech-German relations in Czechoslovakia. She was also interested in land reform and met with former aristocratic landowners such as Maximilian Lobkowicz (1888–1967) and Wilhelm Lichnowsky (1905–1944). Her engagement, however, took place in a different context, that of a decaying state facing, and eventually succumbing to, a series of internal and external threats.³⁷ Wiskemann based her assessment of the land reform on a publication by Textor.³⁸ Similarly, Shiela Grant Duff (1913–2004), a correspondent for *The Observer*, worked in Prague during Beneš's presidency. In 1937 she published the successful book *Europe and the Czechs*.³⁹

It should not remain undisclosed that the foreign propaganda was carried out by official institutions (KPR, MZV and PMR) just as much as through informal networks and relationships. This is what makes the term "Castle" useful as an analytical tool to help understand the activities of Masaryk's entourage. His confidants, although not officially included in the structures of the KPR and the MZV (or only formally assigned to some of the authorities for salary reasons), were indispensable. Foreign propaganda, for instance, was the domain of Masaryk's "literary secretary," Vasil Kaprálek Škrach (who sometimes signed documents as his personal secretary).⁴⁰ He was seen as a rival by the leading officials of the KPR, an inconvenient wedge between the president and his office. This was probably a well-founded concern, as Škrach established his

³⁵ TOMÁŠ GECKO (ed.): Mezinárodní korespondenční sítě T. G. Masaryka a vznik Československa v roce 1918 [International Correspondence Networks of T. G. Masaryk and the Establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918], Praha 2021, <https://www.mua.cas.cz/cs/projekt/specializovana-mapa-s-odbornym-obsahem-mezinarodni-korespondencni-site-t-g-masaryka-a-vznik-Ceskoslovenska-v-roce-1918> (2024-01-03).

³⁶ KLIMEK, Boj, p. 175.

³⁷ FIELD, pp. 51–81.

³⁸ ELIZABETH WISKEMANN: *Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia*, London [1938].

³⁹ SHIELA GRANT DUFF: *Europe and the Czechs*, Harmondsworth 1938.

⁴⁰ SOUBIGOU, pp. 266–267.

own intelligence networks around himself that operated in parallel (and in competition) with the gathering of information by the KPR and the MZV. Škrach had the advantage that his wife was an academician in English studies, and he himself was very open to the Anglo-American environment, which was somewhat unusual in Czechoslovakia.⁴¹ This was enough to make him interesting for Masaryk as an anglophone. The degree of trust that Masaryk placed in Škrach can be seen in the funding made available to him. Škrach controlled millions designated by the MZV to Masaryk's discretionary fund for foreign propaganda.⁴² In person and through correspondence, he took care of Masaryk's contacts abroad and coordinated the president's propaganda with the MZV.⁴³

Škrach identified with Masaryk's ideal of the intellectual (and practical) transfer of ideas of civil society to Czechoslovakia following the US model, as outlined by the historian Bruce R. Berglund.⁴⁴ It was in this spirit that Škrach welcomed internship-based cooperation with Vassar College, the home university of Textor, who was to come to Czechoslovakia to study the land reform. In his letter to Henry MacCracken (1840–1918), the director of Vassar College, Škrach noted, amongst other things: "Vassar College will have the great merit to have trained the first Czech social workers destined to bring the American methods to our country."⁴⁵

The overview above only outlines the reach of the Castle's foreign propaganda networks, rather than analyzing them in detail as attempted, for instance, by Orzoff with regard to media propaganda.⁴⁶ In general, the topic of the foreign propaganda carried out by the president, his office, and the Castle has only been touched upon by historiography up to now. Uncovering the axes along which the individual propaganda channels worked and were set up has yet to be more systematically studied. Despite this, it may be said that in creating the media image of the land reform, the Castle group functioned as an ambitious actor, albeit with many goals that were more or less mutually compatible.

The increased attention paid to the land reform by the Castle was logical. Many foreign estate⁴⁷ holders strove to raise the question of the expropriation of their property within the reform at the international level and sought support from diplomatic missions of various states. And it was there that the field of action opened up for Masaryk and the Castle. Given the complexity of affairs in Central Europe and the nationality mix of interwar Czechoslovakia, it was

⁴¹ KLÍMEK, Boj, p. 169; Chapter II: The "Castle" and Who Its Rivals Were, June 1965, pp. 62–65, in: National Archives in Prague (NA Praha), Antonín Schenk collection, box 1.

⁴² Payment confirmation: 3,412,312.06 CZK, Hájek—Škrach—Strnad, in: AÚTGM, EB 1, inv. no. 466, sign. R 8-5, box 93.

⁴³ URBAN, pp. 221–222.

⁴⁴ BERGLUND, pp. 218–220.

⁴⁵ Letter from Vasil Kaprálek Škrach to Henry MacCracken, in: AÚTGM, TGM, sign. R-1-37, box 352.

⁴⁶ A large section of her book focuses on foreign propaganda.

⁴⁷ By estate we mean economic units covering more than 100 hectares of land.

necessary to carefully monitor what information was reaching foreign countries. If an opportunity arose to present the Czechoslovak land reform to the international community in a positive light, the Castle did not hesitate to take it.

2 The Land Reform: The Transformation of the Monarchy into a Republic

Czechoslovakia was one of the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy. The government's first steps included the launching of an extensive land redistribution process that went down in history as the first Czechoslovak land reform, to distinguish it from the transfers after World War II. The essence of this reform was the transfer of land ownership from the former aristocracy and the Church to the citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic. The process as a whole gradually came under the control of the Agrarian Party as the most influential political association in interwar Czechoslovakia. It determined to whom and under what conditions the land would be allocated, and from whom it would be expropriated. The law stipulated that a single owner could own no more than 150 hectares of farmland and 250 hectares of land altogether. Anything above that was to be expropriated from the original owner for remuneration and assigned to new owners.⁴⁸ After World War I, changes in land ownership structures also took place in other European countries.⁴⁹ Although there is no comparative research on this phenomenon, the Czechoslovak land reform is generally considered a moderate project. The Czechoslovak state paid financial compensation for confiscated land, and the reform was not completed during the interwar period. As a result, much of the land remained in the hands of its original owners.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, a feeling of bitterness remained among the people, either because they were partially excluded from the redistribution of property, as was the case with the Germans, or because the project was not fully completed, as was pointed out by the Czechs.

There were many actors involved in the land reform. On the one hand, there were state institutions, on the other, landowners, with the applicants for land somewhere in between. Each of these groups created their own media image of the reform, defending their interests. As the entire process was very complex in legislative terms, it was administered by the State Land Office (Státní

⁴⁸ Act 215/1919 Coll. from 1919-04-16, on Expropriation of Extensive Land Property.

⁴⁹ JAN RYCHLÍK: Pozemková reforma v Československu 1919–1938 [Land Reform in Czechoslovakia, 1919–1938], in: Vědecké práce zemědělského muzea 27 (1987–1988), pp. 127–147.

⁵⁰ VÁCLAV PRŮCHA: Hospodářské a sociální dějiny Československa 1918–1992. 2. díl: 1945–1992 [Economic and Social History of Czechoslovakia 1918–1992. Volume 2: 1945–1992], Praha 2009.

pozemkový úřad, SPÚ), formally part of the PMR.⁵¹ The officials employed at the SPÚ had extensive powers when deciding on the land. Their agenda also included the promotion of the reform. The publications of the leading SPÚ officials, who played a major role in shaping the image of the reform, were, however, designed for domestic readers with only a few exceptions.⁵² The more comprehensive appeal to the international community was lacking, and that was the weak spot that the Castle soon began to occupy.

For the Castle group, the land reform was a topic of principal importance which had the potential to damage the image of the young Czechoslovakia that had up to then been shaped so precisely. It was also a volatile matter in terms of domestic policy. The crucial question was determining the remuneration for the expropriated estates. The land reform applied to approximately one third of all land in the whole of Czechoslovakia.⁵³ If the buyout were to be made under the rules of the market economy, the Czechoslovak state would have been unable to cover the transaction. However, the economic, social, and political circumstances made the reform necessary. According to Masaryk, "other than the [Czechoslovak] coup d'état [of 1918 against the Habsburg Monarchy], the land reform is the greatest action of the new Republic, the culmination and actual realization of the coup d'état."⁵⁴

The reform had a major impact on the citizens of German and Hungarian nationalities, who were among the largest landowners in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Act 330/1919 Coll. from 1919-06-11, on the Land Office.

⁵² For instance: Československá pozemková reforma v číslicích a diagramech [Czechoslovak Land Reform in Figures and Diagrams], Praha 1925; ANTONÍN PAVEL: Pozemková reforma Československá [Czechoslovak Land Reform], Praha 1937; EDUARD VONDRUŠKA: Czechoslovak Land Reform, Prague 1924; JAN VOŽENÍLEK: O rozdělení velkostatků k účelu vnitřní kolonizace v Československé republice [On the Division of Estates for the Purposes of Internal Colonization in the Czechoslovak Republic], Praha 1919; JAN VOŽENÍLEK: Předběžné výsledky československé pozemkové reformy: Země Česká a Moravská [Preliminary Results of the Czechoslovak Land Reform: Bohemian and Moravian Lands], Praha 1930; JAN VOŽENÍLEK: Výsledky československé pozemkové reformy [Results of the Czechoslovak Land Reform], Praha 1930.

⁵³ Statistická příručka království českého [Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdom of Bohemia], Praha 1913, p. 184. It involved farms covering an area of more than 500 hectares, owned by 0.03 percent of owners.

⁵⁴ Deset let Československé republiky [Ten Years of the Czechoslovak Republic], vol. 3, Praha 1928, p. 550.

⁵⁵ ANTONÍN KUBAČÁK: Provádění pozemkové reformy na majetku cizích státních příslušníků v době první republiky [Executing the Land Reform on the Property of Foreign Nationals during the First Czechoslovak Republic], in: Vědecké práce Národního zemědělského muzea 29 (1991–1992), pp. 33–69; VÁCLAV HORČÍČKA et al.: Cizí páni na české půdě: Pozemková reforma v meziválečném Československu na statcích cizích státních příslušníků [Foreign Landlords on Czech Soil: The Land Reform in Interwar Czechoslovakia on the Estates of Foreign Nationals], Praha 2021. The reform also affected nationals of other states; the story of a British citizen, for instance, is elaborated on in: PAVEL DUFEK: Zaměstnanci Státního pozemkového úřadu v "minovém poli" zahraniční politiky a pastí politiky domácí—případová studie [Employees of the State

Some of them were foreign nationals and strove for an international process to challenge the reform. They found a suitable platform in the League of Nations.⁵⁶ The reform became a topic for diplomatic debates, while foreign countries received unfavorable news about Czechoslovakia and its democracy from the aggrieved estate holders and unsuccessful applicants for land.

The land reform was an important part of the Castle's propaganda agenda, especially in the early post-war years. Any accusations of autocracy or the violation of ownership rights were seen by the president's entourage as a risk for the young Republic. The president cared greatly how the reform would be put through, and about its media image. Last but not least, the KPR and some of its staff directly profited from the reform. Although both Masaryk and Minister for Foreign Affairs Beneš declined offers to gain lucrative real estate (Masaryk allegedly followed the advice of the head of the KPR Přemysl Šámal, who was concerned about the low yield of the land and the costly investments in real estate damaged by the war),⁵⁷ those around them assisted in transferring attractive property to allied individuals. This included, for instance, the transfer of land to the family of Julius Kovanda (b. 1881), the former head of the Administration of the Presidential House (*Správa domu prezidenta*, in fact, Masaryk's household). The KPR lobbied the Ministry of Agriculture, amongst others with Minister Milan Hodža (1878–1944), in order for Kovanda to be assigned lucrative land including a residual estate near Topolčianky, Slovakia. Přemysl Šámal was also involved. It is worth noting that Kovanda had collaborated with Šámal since the times of the domestic resistance.⁵⁸ Besides this, many estate holders sought help from the KPR in dealing with the SPÚ officials.⁵⁹ With the assistance of high-ranking KPR staff, the owners of estates

Land Office in the "Minefield" of Foreign Policy and Traps of Domestic Policy—Case Study], in: BLANKA RAŠTICOVÁ (ed.): *Agrární strany ve vládních a samosprávných strukturách mezi světovými válkami*, Uherské Hradiště 2008, pp. 161–168. The reform was also the reason for breaking off diplomatic relations with Liechtenstein, for details, cf.: ONDŘEJ HORÁK: *Liechtensteinové mezi konfiskací a vyvlastněním: Příspěvek k poválečným zásahům do pozemkového vlastnictví v Československu v první polovině dvacátého století* [The House of Liechtenstein between Confiscation and Expropriation: A Paper on Post-War Interventions into Land Ownership in Czechoslovakia in the Early Twentieth Century], Praha 2010.

⁵⁶ UN Archives Geneva, Section des Commissions administratives et des questions de minorités, boxes 1620–1624.

⁵⁷ KPR Memorandum, 1921-09-09, in: AKPR, coll. KPR-T, 1921–1944, sign. T 355-21, box 1.

⁵⁸ KPR Recordings from 1925-12-10, 1926-06-22, in: AKPR, personální spisy zaměstnanců [Personal Files of Employees] collection, 1919–1970, no. 2744, sign. T 1358-48, box 81.

⁵⁹ Land Office, in: AKPR, coll. KPR-T, Land Reform, box 139, sign. T 24/25; Land Reform, in: AKPR, coll. KPR-T, T 153/25, box 144. Making a political issue of the land reform and the pressure on allocating the residual estates was seen by the German Ministry of Justice internally as one of the causes of the economic failure of some residual

were sometimes able to bypass the complicated legislation related to the land reform.

The reform was beneficial to the KPR, if only by legitimizing its growth. The process was so demanding in legislative terms that the KPR lobbied the Ministry of Finance to extend its legal staff for the legislative department.⁶⁰ What particularly made the reform substantial, however, was the fact that it enabled the KPR to take over the administration of the Lány Chateau from the House of Fürstenberg.⁶¹ It became a favorite summer seat of President Masaryk, who often stayed there. Rather than the president's apartment at Prague Castle, which was not particularly comfortable for Masaryk, Lány became his unofficial home.⁶² In dealing with foreign guests, Masaryk wanted to avoid accusations that the chateau had been "confiscated" and the president was living in a "stolen" property.⁶³ In purchasing the chateau, the KPR acted in an unconventional yet circumspect manner. Through the state, it made a direct agreement with the House of Fürstenberg in 1919–1921 to acquire the chateau and the adjacent farm and game reserve (the property in Lány included a game reserve for diplomatic purposes and arable land with logging forests, altogether constituting a KPR-administered state farm covering almost 5,000 hectares).⁶⁴ This went through outside the ordinary allocation procedure carried out by the SPÚ. In reward for this transaction, the state unofficially promised the House of Fürstenberg "benefits" in the further reform process concerning their estate. The agreement to buy the Lány Chateau was signed in July 1921.⁶⁵

Amidst the atmosphere of volatile domestic political debates on how to carry out the land reform, Textor came from America to Czechoslovakia to conduct an academic study into this topic. Her journey to Prague (1922) became a welcome opportunity for the Castle to achieve, in its struggle to legitimize the land

estates, cf.: *Deutsches Wirtschaftsjahrbuch für die Tschechoslowakei 1932*, in: Bundesarchiv Berlin, Reichsjustizministerium, sign. R3001/22891.

⁶⁰ Explanatory notes. State expenditure: Chapter 2 (1920); Reasoning, in: AKPR, Osobní (KPR-O) [personal] collection, inv. no. 11, sign. O 947, box 2.

⁶¹ For details, cf.: KRISTÝNA KAUCKÁ: "Taková tlačénice na jednom dvorečku!" aneb První pozemková reforma na velkostatech Křivoklát, Plasy a Radnice (1918–1938) ["Such a Crowd in a Small Yard!" or The First Land Reform in the Estates of Křivoklát, Plasy and Radnice (1918–1938)], Praha 2018, pp. 75–79.

⁶² JAROSLAV SOUKUP, DAGMARA ŠVIHLOVÁ: *Prezident o prezidentství v roce 1934: Jedna z posledních prací TGM* [The President on Presidency in 1934: One of the Last Works by TGM], in: Masarykův sborník 9 (1993–1995 [1997]), pp. 177–192, here p. 181; Chapter I: Office of the President of the Republic, October 1964, pp. 82–84, in: NA Praha, Antonín Schenk collection, box 1.

⁶³ KPR Recordings from 1921-02-25, 1922-08-12, in: AKPR, coll. KPR-T, 1921–1944, sign. T 23-21, box 19.

⁶⁴ Chapter 1 form of the State Budget, 1929, in: AKPR, coll. KPR-O, inv. no. 11, sign. O 947, box 3.

⁶⁵ Contract for the Sale of Lány: Resolution of the Land's Civil Court in Prague, čj. F 51/98/1483, in: Státní oblastní archiv Praha [Prague State Regional Archives], Velkostatek Křivoklát—Nový archiv collection, inv. č. 2546, sign. G 9342.

reform, an easy propaganda victory on the hitherto neglected international scene.

3 An American Professor on Her Journey to Knowledge

Lucy Elizabeth Textor was a historian focused on research into Russia and Eastern Europe in the early twentieth century, “when such studies in the United States were mainly limited to a few large universities.”⁶⁶ Her career was connected to Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, where she started to work in 1905. At this private university white women of the Protestant elite were educated. Textor’s interest in Europe was stimulated by the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918. Her research became focused on topical subjects, namely the Czechoslovak land reform. Her main scope of research, however, continued to be Eastern Europe and Russia as a whole. She established strong contacts in Poland and stayed in Russia several times.

Vassar College had contacts with Czechoslovakia from as early as 1919. Much of the cooperation was intermediated by Tomáš G. Masaryk and his family. As *chargé d’affaires* in Washington, his son Jan (1886–1948) called for international cooperation and maintaining contacts with the university.⁶⁷ The president’s daughter Alice received a Vassar College graduate, Ruth Crawford Mitchell (1890–1984), for social work in Czechoslovakia; she arrived in Prague in 1919. Together, they organized exchanges in which two Czechoslovak girls were able to obtain a two-year internship at Vassar College every year. The first students joined the exchange in 1920.⁶⁸ The exchanges also went the other way and American girls regularly came to Czechoslovakia.⁶⁹ Between the wars, most foreign students who came to Vassar College were from Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁷⁰

These internships were beneficial for the promotion of the state and the dissemination of the “myth” of the socially and democratically developed Czechoslovakia. This was carried out exactly within the intentions outlined by Orzoff—in the media world, the figures around the Castle were involved in the

⁶⁶ Textor, Lucy Elizabeth, 1870–1957: Memorial Minute, in: Vassar College Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.vassar.edu/collections/other-collections/vassar-college-memorial-minutes/textor-lucy-elizabeth-1870-1958> (2023-02-28).

⁶⁷ October 8, 1920, in: A Documentary Chronicle of Vassar College, <https://chronology.vassarspaces.net/1920-10-08-masaryk-lecture/> (2024-01-22).

⁶⁸ Ruth Crawford Mitchell, in: Vassar Encyclopedia, <https://vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/distinguished-alumni/ruth-crawford-mitchell/> (2023-03-14); April 12, 1919, in: A Documentary Chronicle of Vassar College, <https://chronology.vassarspaces.net/1919-04-12-czech-scholarships/> (2024-01-22).

⁶⁹ ELIZABETH R. BROWNELL: Alumna Tells of Prague Student Life, in: The Vassar Miscellany News from 1924-10-25, pp. 2, 7–8.

⁷⁰ ALMA M. LUCKAU: Foreign Students at Vassar College, in: Vassar Alumnae Magazine (1950), December, pp. 8–10.

struggle to "mythologize" the state both at home and abroad, in which they were assisted by soft power tools, including educational policy and exchanges.⁷¹ In 1937, for instance, Jarmila Marvanová, an intern at Vassar College, presented the American students with her view on interwar Czechoslovakia by saying, "Czechoslovakia is an island of democracy in a sea of European dictatorship."⁷²

During his sabbatical semester, Henry MacCracken, the director of Vassar College, also visited Czechoslovakia.⁷³ As a result thereof, among other things, early in 1923 "at the instigation of Dr. MacCracken, the popular president of the American university, Vassar College," the American Committee for Educational and Cultural Relations with the United States was founded in Prague, through which many internships were organized.⁷⁴ The anglicist Vilém Matheusius (1882–1945) became the head of the institution. The initiative originated in Textor's home college. Over the following years, she maintained correspondence with the American Committee and was a regular subscriber to its bulletin.⁷⁵ Škrach was an internal member of the organization and arranged "coordination of the arrival of important guests from abroad to see the president."⁷⁶ Through this, the KPR gained the opportunity to influence research carried out by foreign nationals.

The motivations that led Textor to study Czechoslovak land reform are not entirely clear. However, given her interest in the history of agriculture, land tenure, and Eastern Europe, we can assume that she did not want to miss the opportunity to examine a major historical event in action. She spent her sabbatical semester working in her field of interest, observing the transformation of a monarchical society into a republican one, which included the abolition of the aristocracy and the redistribution of its land holdings. In preparation for her trip to Czechoslovakia, she spoke with the Czechoslovak agricultural attaché in Washington, D.C., who was promoting Czechoslovak agriculture in the US. It is possible that this meeting also confirmed her interest in land reform. When she met personally with the head of the KPR, Přemysl Šámal, at Prague Castle in January 1923, he noted that she was particularly interested in the Czechoslovak border forests.⁷⁷ It is therefore possible that her interest was also motivated by strategic considerations of national defense.

⁷¹ ORZOFF, pp. 11–17.

⁷² JARMILA MARANOVA: Talks About Her Native Country, in: *The Vassar Miscellany News* from 1937-11-03, p. 2.

⁷³ HENRY NOBLE MACCRACKEN: Education in Balkanized Europe, in: *Vassar Quarterly* 8 (1923), 3, pp. 75–82; American Committee, in: AÚTGM, ÚTGM 1, box 168.

⁷⁴ American Committee, in: AÚTGM, ÚTGM 1, box 168.

⁷⁵ See the list of subscribers: *Addresses for the Bulletin American Committee*, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Meeting of the Committee for Cultural Contacts with America, 1923-09-17, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Official Book 4, fol. 61, in: AKPR, coll. Přemysl Šámal.

In order to study the reform, Textor applied for a sabbatical year at her university.⁷⁸ It was customary in America that every seven years university professors were entitled to a full-year holiday on half pay, or a half-year holiday on a full salary.⁷⁹ Lucy E. Textor stayed in Czechoslovakia for seven months. She started preparing for her research when still in America after contacting the Czechoslovak diplomatic mission. The staff of the Washington-based embassy reported on Textor's interest in the reform to Šámal. They emphasized that "Textor is an honest friend of our nation and has decided to travel to the Republic solely for the purpose of studying the land reform carried out in our country."⁸⁰ The embassy did not omit to mention the potential for shaping a media image of the reform that would favor Czechoslovakia: "In the light of the ever-increasing hostile propaganda against our land reform, especially abroad, it is certainly not necessary to emphasize the importance of gaining Dr. Textor as a defender of the land reform in America."⁸¹ Another important factor it mentioned was that Textor could assist in gaining internships at Vassar College for Czechoslovak students.

The KPR staff moderated the general tone of the publication that Textor had intended to write. Czechoslovakia was not the only European country where land reforms were carried out after World War I.⁸² Still, the Czechoslovak model has always drawn the attention of foreign researchers.⁸³ What made the reform unique for the American historian was its goal of remedying historical injustice.⁸⁴ During the first years of the reform great emphasis was placed on the need to take land off the estate owners who often were of German or Hungarian nationality, and return it to the Czechs and Slovaks. The argumentation referred back to the Battle of White Mountain in 1620 in which the Czech Estates' Army was defeated by the Catholic League. The Habsburgs strength-

⁷⁸ Textor, Lucy Elizabeth, 1870–1957.

⁷⁹ Address by Dr. A. Sum at the information tea party held by the American and British Committee for the Cultivation of Educational and Cultural Links with the United States of America and Great Britain, 5 December 1923, in: AÚTGM, ÚTGM 1, box 168.

⁸⁰ Letter from the Czechoslovak Embassy (as in footnote 12).

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² RYCHLÍK, pp. 127–147.

⁸³ MARK CORNWALL: "National Reparation?": The Czech Land Reform and the Sudeten Germans 1918–1938, in: *The Slavonic and East European Review* 75 (1997), 2, pp. 259–280; JOACHIM VON PUTTKAMER: Die Tschechoslowakische Bodenreform von 1919: Soziale Umgestaltung als Fundament der Republik, in: *Bohemia* 46 (2005), 2, pp. 315–342; LUCIA DALLABONA: Die Bodenreform in der Tschechoslowakei nach dem 1. Weltkrieg unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des fürstlich-liechtensteinischen Besitzes, diploma thesis, Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, 1979; MARTIN DALLMEIER: Die Bodenreform und Einleitung des Großgrundbesitzes in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik aus der Sicht des Fürstenhauses Thurn und Taxis, in: *Setkání na hranici: 2. česko-hornofalcké archivní symposium*, Ústí nad Labem 1997, pp. 147–154; RAFFAEL PARZEFALL: Die tschechoslowakische Bodenreform und das Haus Thurn und Taxis, diploma thesis, Universität Regensburg, 2012.

⁸⁴ TEXTOR, Land Reform, p. 15.

ened their claims for the Czech royal throne, and extensive transfers of property in the Bohemian Lands followed.⁸⁵ Advocates of the land reform created a narrative, according to which the reform rectified this historical injustice against the Czech nation, thus "undoing the Battle of White Mountain." The reality, however, was much more complex, and there were many more transfers of property in the history of the Bohemian lands.

In researching the reform, Textor established links with various actors, from the owners of the expropriated estates, through SPÚ officials and members of government, to President Masaryk himself.⁸⁶ The Czechoslovak officers in Washington held the opinion that "it is in the interest of the matter that Dr. Textor encounter the most favorable impressions in the social sphere, too."⁸⁷ They therefore appealed for the KPR to hold an audience. Textor did indeed meet the president at his residence in Lány in September 1922.⁸⁸ Another meeting took place a few months later, after Christmas. This meeting was vividly covered by the daily press.⁸⁹ For Masaryk, such audiences were one of his usual means of propaganda, as he stated in the interview in 1934:

"It has become customary here that every important foreigner reports to me for an audience. The view of us abroad is still distorted, and our society has still not adapted enough to accept foreigners and give them a good insight into our system [...] This is why I perhaps pay more attention to these contacts with visiting foreign nationals than future presidents would."⁹⁰

⁸⁵ TOMÁŠ VÁCLAV BÍLEK: *Dějiny konfiskací v Čechách po r. 1618* [History of Confiscations in Bohemia after 1618], 2nd ed., Brno 2021.

⁸⁶ TEXTOR, Land Reform, p. 5.

⁸⁷ Letter from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington to Přemysl Šámal, 1922–6–6, in: AKPR, Přemysl Šámal collection, sign. 655-22, box 15.

⁸⁸ Pan president přijal včera v Lánech Miss. Textor, profesorku Vassar College [The President received Miss Textor, a professor of Vassar College, in Lány yesterday], in: Venkov: *Orgán České strany agrární* from 1922-09-28, p. 4.

⁸⁹ Dne 28. t. m. přijal pan president republiky [The President received on the 28th Day of This Month], in: *Československý denník: Ústřední orgán Československé strany živnostensko-středostavovské* from 1922-12-30, p. 2; *President republiky přijal ve čtvrtek* [The President Received on Thursday], in: *Moravská orlice* from 1922-12-31, p. 2; *Návštěvy u presidenta* [Visits to the President's Office], in: *Čech: Politický týdeník katolický* from 1922-12-30, p. 5; *Pozemková reforma v ČSR: Lucy Elizabeth Textorová* [Land Reform in CSR: Lucy Elizabeth Textor], in: *Čas* from 1922-12-30, p. 5; *Pan president přijal včera v Lánech Miss. Textor, profesorku Vassar College* [The President Received Miss Textor, a Professor at Vassar College, in Lány Yesterday], in: *Venkov: Orgán České strany agrární* from 1922-09-28, p. 5; *President republiky přijal dne 28. t. m.* [The President Received on the 28th day of This Month], in: *Tribuna* from 1922-12-30, p. 3; both her visits are also noted in the copy of Masaryk's diary made by his personal secretary Vladimír Kučera, in: AÚTGM, ÚTGM 1, box 69. Available also online: <http://tg-masaryk.cz/sd/novinky/hlavni-stranka/20192805-opis-diare-tgm.html> (2023-03-04).

⁹⁰ SOUKUP/ŠVIHLOVÁ, p. 187.

In the introduction to her book on the land reform, Textor admits to having consulted with Masaryk. She characterizes him as an actor “in the battle and still above it,”⁹¹ a man who influenced her with his calmness. This was not a very accurate characterization, as President Masaryk was personally involved in the topic of the land reform. He cared greatly about how the reform would be put through, and how it would be understood in general. It is therefore logical that he could not have been “above it,” although he may have pretended or believed himself to be.

It is indicative that although Textor was received by President Masaryk for an audience at Lány Chateau, the circumstances under which this historical monument and the adjacent land was purchased are not mentioned in her publication. We can only speculate whether Textor actually knew that the transaction had been related to the land reform, even if this topic was repeatedly voiced in the public space as well as in parliamentary debates.⁹² In any case, this was not a secret. For instance, when Karel Engliš (1880–1961), who had approved the purchase as the Minister of Finance, was in Lány, he always boasted of having been the one who had helped the president to acquire the luxurious residence.⁹³ Textor was probably not informed by the KPR about the circumstances of the purchase, which just shows that this was a somewhat sensitive matter for the president’s entourage. In formal terms, the transaction was all in order, but from a propaganda perspective, it was a risk. It certainly was not desirable for people abroad to learn about the details concerning the agreement between the Czechoslovak state and the House of Fürstenberg.

No details on the content of the meetings between Masaryk and Textor are available. However, Masaryk studied the initial manuscript of the book. John Crane, signed as the president’s secretary, sent a letter to Textor in which he informed her that the president had read the first two chapters of her manuscript and wished to discuss them with the author.⁹⁴ Just two days later, Textor consulted with the president regarding her publication.⁹⁵ Masaryk spoke perfect English, his wife was American, and he himself had stayed in the USA several times. In general, however, knowledge of English was far from common in Czechoslovakia at this time; dealings concerning a loan from England in the early 1920s, for instance, caused a social faux-pas due to poor communication. Czechoslovakia’s representatives, excellent financiers, were unable to actively communicate other than in German; although some of them also spoke French, English was definitely not an option. Masaryk was very well aware of the threat

⁹¹ TEXTOR, *Land Reform*, p. 7.

⁹² KPR Recording from 1921-12-03, in: AKPR, coll. KPR-O, inv. no. 11, sign. O 947, box 2.

⁹³ Chapter XX: Birthdays, June 1966 (80th birthday, April 1964), p. 29, in: NA Praha, Antonín Schenk collection, box 1.

⁹⁴ Letter from John Crane to Lucy E. Textor, 1922-12-26, in: AÚTGM, TGM, sign. R, box 349.

⁹⁵ Dne 28. t. m. přijal pan prezident republiky.

that this provinciality posed to the young state.⁹⁶ This was probably one of the reasons why he went to so much trouble to make the best possible impression on influential foreign guests through his own initiative. Neither himself nor his entourage wanted to leave matters to take their own course.

It is not true, however, that Textor was kept in a "golden cage" during her visit to Czechoslovakia. Besides meeting Masaryk, she consulted on the topic of the reform on various official as well as unofficial occasions. It may be assumed that some of her debates were in Russian. She was an expert in Russian history and visited Russia numerous times, and the ability to speak Russian was more common in Czechoslovak society than knowledge of English. The circles she met were diverse and not confined to those linked to the "Castle." They also included Wilhelm Medinger (1878–1943), an estate holder and member of parliament of German nationality, who persistently criticized the reform at an international forum through the *Deutsche Liga für Volkerbund und Völkerverständigung*.⁹⁷

MacCracken visited Prague during her stay. A reception was held in his honor at the office of Antonín Sum (1877–1947) who was a social attaché at the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington. He worked with the American Relief Administration, helping to provide American economic aid for Czechoslovakia.⁹⁸ It was at this reception that Textor met, for instance, Jiří Guth-Jarkovský (1861–1943) who was briefly Masaryk's master of ceremonies.⁹⁹ However, she was also able to talk to other people who shared her interest in the reform, such as the Social Democrat Josef Macek (1887–1972) and SPÚ officer Eduard Vondruška (1883–ca. 1951).¹⁰⁰ She explicitly mentions them both in the credits section of her publication.¹⁰¹

Overall, Textor's arrival in Czechoslovakia is an example of a successful propaganda game played by the Castle in spreading signals indicating how

⁹⁶ EDUARD KUBŮ, JIŘÍ ŠOUSA: Československá půjčka v Londýně 1922: Pole setkávání českých a britských finančních elit [A Czechoslovak Loan in London in 1922: The Meeting Ground of the Czech and British Financial Elites], in: JIŘÍ ŠOUSA: Mezi brázdou a bankovním úvěrem: O agrárních a peněžních dějinách 19. a 20. století. Výbor prací k 60. Narozeninám, ed. by JAN KAHUDA, EDUARD KUBŮ et al., Praha—Pelhřimov 2012, pp. 551–577, here pp. 574–576.

⁹⁷ WILHELM MEDINGER: Großgrundbesitz, Fideikommiss und Agrarreform, Wien—Leipzig 1919.

⁹⁸ ANTONÍN SUM: Hooverova akce ve prospěch dětí československých a američtí Čechoslováci [Hoover's Scheme in Support of Czechoslovak Children, and the American Czechoslovaks], Washington 1921.

⁹⁹ JIŘÍ STANISLAV GUTH-JARKOVSKÝ: Paměti, díl 3: Na dvoře republikánském 1919–1925. Vzpomínky a dojmy (výpisky z deníku) [Memoirs, volume 3: At the Republican Court 1919–1925. Memories and impressions (diary extracts)], Praha 1929, pp. 89–90.

¹⁰⁰ Reception in Honor of the Chairman of Vassar College in America, Mr. O. Henry Noble McCracken, in: Světozor: Světová kronika současná slovem i obrazem from 1923–01–18, p. 226.

¹⁰¹ TEXTOR, Land Reform, pp. 6–7.

democratic interwar Czechoslovakia was. There was, however, a certain provisionality in the interaction with Textor. The Castle's access to influential foreign guests was slowly becoming institutionalized, yet many amateur features, apparent in Textor's case, remained. The foreign propaganda carried out by Masaryk's entourage was random rather than based on a concept. They skillfully (and often highly effectively) responded to any opportunity that arose, but did not systematically work to create them. This does not mean that the Castle's propaganda was ineffective; it only lacked the background necessary for steadier campaigns. There were MZV strategies led by Beneš, and there were other strategies drawn up by Masaryk and his entourage, even though they were all part of the symbolical Castle, the conduct of which was free of bitter power disputes. Evidence of the lack of professionalism can be seen in the fact that the president deputized, complemented and subsidized the communication and propaganda channels that would have otherwise been under the sole control of the MZV. This was to some degree the result of the novelty value of the Republic and the absence of domestic policy traditions; however, the president's approach also reflected his personal preferences, including a lack of concept in working with the official structures of state power.¹⁰²

The propaganda activities of the Castle were unsystematic, overly ambitious, and in some cases met with great success. However, they lacked the sense of routine that was so crucial for long-term stability. The symbolical influence of Masaryk's entourage was not enshrined in the constitution, and any of his activities would be hard to reproduce in the future. It would be inaccurate to follow the same argumentation as that used by Peter Bugge when he draws attention to the continuity (or similarity) between the Castle's propaganda, including subsidizing and espionage, and the intelligence activities of the Czechoslovak Communist Party after 1945, i.e. prior to the 1948 February coup d'état.¹⁰³ Despite that, Textor's study makes it difficult not to notice how the success of propaganda depended on the mobilizing ability of Masaryk's entourage in involving a wide variety of social networks to provide comfortable working conditions for Textor in Czechoslovakia. These steps were unsystematic, and although they were in line with the official structures (Masaryk's foreign propaganda enjoyed support from the MZV as well as the PMR), they also expressed Masaryk's unwillingness to leave the standard institutions of a democratic state unattended. In characterizing the Castle's influence on democracy, Orzoff is not afraid to use the term "oligarchy,"¹⁰⁴ while Zdeněk Kárník, for instance, emphasizes that the young state was excessively navigated by the elites. He adds that if the Castle had not done so, the vacuum would have been filled by someone else.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² BERGLUND, pp. 178–181.

¹⁰³ BUGGE, pp. 19–20.

¹⁰⁴ ORZOFF, p. 238.

¹⁰⁵ KÁRNÍK, pp. 415–416.

The following passages will show how this "elite" coordination of foreign propaganda, directed by the Castle, proved useful as regards Textor. To what extent did the Castle help to make her interpretation of the land reform consistent with the official statements of the Czechoslovak Republic? And what were the ways in which Masaryk's entourage worked to ensure that her book would be favorably received abroad?

4 The Land Reform in Textor's Writings

The US political representatives, just like humanitarian associations, were interested in the newly established Czechoslovakia after 1918 primarily from the viewpoint of the state's self-sufficiency in farming and the production of food.¹⁰⁶ However, *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia* is not involved in any of these debates, which implies that Textor's interest was mostly academic and theoretical. When the reform was discussed, the elites from the West were concerned about the bolshevization of Europe. It is possible that this atmosphere could have also been in the background of Textor's interest. She was aware of the fact that the Czechoslovak land reform was a complicated process, rife with pitfalls, and the only reliable source for academic research were in fact the adopted laws. In interpreting the legislation, she relied on SPÚ officers, especially Vondruška, who had published many texts about the reform (for instance, encyclopedic entries and interpretations of the legislation).¹⁰⁷ The consultations with Textor were what probably prompted Vondruška to publish a book on the land reform in English in 1924.¹⁰⁸ As texts on the land reform were published mainly in Czech and German, the publications in English and French were important contributions to the international debates on the reform.

Textor's publication is divided up into ten chapters, including the epilogue. The author first describes the historical and economic circumstances of the reform. After that, the reader is acquainted with the Czechoslovak political parties that influenced the reform, which is followed by an analysis of some of its aspects, such as the activities of the SPÚ, financial compensations to the origi-

¹⁰⁶ The topic of hunger after World War I is generally elaborated on in the project entitled "Hunger Draws the Map," <https://hungerdrawsthemap.history.ox.ac.uk/hunger-during-and-after-first-world-war> (2023-02-14). A detailed view of the Americans' interest in Czechoslovakia and the activities of the American Relief Administration (ARA) is given by: HALINA PARAFIANOWICZ: *Americký mýtus a amerikanizace Československa po první světové válce* [The American Myth and the Americanization of Czechoslovakia after World War I], in: *Lidé města* 5 (2003), 9, <https://lidemesta.cuni.cz/LM-484.html> (2023-02-27); cf. also: SUDA LORENA BANE, RALPH HASWELL LUTZ (eds.): *Organization of American Relief in Europe 1918–1919*, London 1943; ANTONÍN SUM: *Československá péče o dítě 1919–1920* [Czechoslovak Childcare 1919–1920], Praha 1920.

¹⁰⁷ EDUARD VONDRUŠKA: *Pozemková reforma* [Land Reform], in: EMIL HÁCHA (ed.): *Slovník veřejného práva československého*. Vol. 3: P až Ř, Brno 1932–1934, p. 332.

¹⁰⁸ VONDRUŠKA, *Czechoslovak*.

nal landowners, expropriation and allocation laws, and the opinions of estate holders, whom she classifies as “The Opposition.” Textor also added graphic summaries. The book’s one major weakness lies in its schematic approach. The work is structured as an overview of the major topics of the reform, and does not strive to venture beyond this official framework, determined especially by the legislation and its implementation.

In her book, Textor notes that during her stay in Czechoslovakia and the preparation of the publication, no text about the reform was available in English.¹⁰⁹ The only exception was, to some degree, an article by the economist, politician and political theorist Josef Macek, who greatly encouraged Textor.¹¹⁰ He had already considered the land reform and its practical implementation during the time of the Habsburg Monarchy.¹¹¹ He was an active speaker of English, and in 1920 published an essay on land ownership in Czechoslovakia.¹¹²

Textor was precise in her theoretical preparation, acquainting herself with the historical and cultural context of the newly established Czechoslovakia. In her publication she, amongst other things, references texts by the French historian Ernest Denis (1849–1921), then highly renowned in Czechoslovak society. It is therefore possible that Textor was referred to Denis during her stay in Czechoslovakia. Denis’s publication *La Bohême depuis la Montagne-Blanche*, which she mentions, analyzes the relationship between Czech society and the Thirty Years’ War as well as the Bohemian Revolt in 1620. The significance of this historical event for the legitimacy of the land reform is aptly summarized by Textor in the following passage:

“They [Czechs in general] never forget that the great estates, which are now for the most part in alien hands, were theirs before 1620. Every Czech child knows that when the Emperor Ferdinand conquered the Bohemian Protestant nobility only a few short miles from Prague, that event ushered in a whole series of wrongs against his people.”¹¹³

The author was also acquainted with the work of the conservative Czech historian Josef Pekař (1870–1937), one of the fiercest opponents of linking the land reform to the events connected with the Battle of White Mountain: “Professor Jos. Pekař [...] has published [...] a study which proves that the confiscations after the Battle of White Mountain touched also many German nobles, and that it is not correct to suppose that the land was taken only from Czechs.”¹¹⁴ It is, however, remarkable that Textor does not cite *The Story of*

¹⁰⁹ TEXTOR, Land Reform, p. 10.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹¹ PETR ŠTĚBRA: Josef Macek a první československá pozemková reforma [Josef Macek and the First Czechoslovak Land Reform], diploma thesis, Univerzita Karlova, Praha 2019.

¹¹² JOSEF MACEK: The Land Question, Prague 1920.

¹¹³ TEXTOR, Land Reform, p. 18.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

Bohemia, an English-language work published in 1896 as part of the series of editions on the histories of European nations.¹¹⁵ Textor also does not draw on texts by other English-speaking authors, such as Steed, William Seymour Monroe (1863–1939)¹¹⁶ and František Lützow (1849–1916).¹¹⁷

The laws governing the implementation of the land reform were complex. They allowed a number of exceptions. The SPÚ officers therefore had extensive powers which they frequently employed in their practical work. Such practices soon met with justified criticism. That was also another reason why Textor dedicated a greater part of her book to the analysis of the reform's legislative framework. The critical passages in her book mostly deal with the politicization of the SPÚ and the party-based approach to the reform. Some of the topics related to the SPÚ that were often reflected upon by her contemporaries, however, were overlooked by Textor. The reason for this was that the author visited Czechoslovakia in the early 1920s, when the reform had only just been launched, and she focused her academic interest on the pioneering stages of the process. It is still surprising that she sidelined the topics that had already been reflected upon at that point and which later became even more relevant such as nepotism, clientelism, and corruption, which affected the land redistribution process. When reading Textor's publication, historians today are surprised how these practices, then frequently criticized, may have escaped her attention.¹¹⁸ On the contrary, in Austria, for which the Czechoslovak land reform was a much more sensitive issue than for the more remote Anglo-American countries, nepotism connected to the reform was often condemned.¹¹⁹ The question undoubtedly arises as to what extent this is the result of the propaganda influence of the Castle and the SPÚ officers on the final version of *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*.

Textor's general interpretation is relatively in favor of the land reform. She also discusses it with the estate holders it affected. Although their arguments appear in some chapters, especially regarding financial compensation for the expropriated land, the final version maintains the pro-Castle line. It is highly probable that, in this respect, the people from Masaryk's entourage were care-

¹¹⁵ C. EDMUND MAURICE: *The Story of Bohemia*, London 1896.

¹¹⁶ WILL SEYMOUR MONROE: *Bohemia and the Čechs: The History, People, Institutions, and the Geography of the Kingdom, together with Accounts of Moravia and Silesia*, Boston 1910.

¹¹⁷ FRANTIŠEK LÜTZOW: *Lectures on the Historians of Bohemia*, London 1905.

¹¹⁸ JANA PŠENÍČKOVÁ: Aféry agrární strany související s prováděním pozemkové reformy [Affairs of the Agrarian Party Related to the Implementation of the Land Reform], in: *Paginae historiae* 8 (2000), pp. 101–117; PAVEL DUFEK: Příděly v první pozemkové reformě v Československu: Podpora státotvornosti nebo korupční odměňování klientů? [Allocations in the First Land Reform in Czechoslovakia: Support for Statehood, or Corruption in the Remuneration of Clients?], in: LÁSZLÓ VÖROS et al.: *Politická korupcia na území Slovenska a Čiech v 19. a 20. storočí*, Bratislava 2020, pp. 247–265.

¹¹⁹ DETEKTOR [PAUL DEUTSCH]: *Die tschechoslowakische Bodenreform, eine mitteleuropäische Gefahr*, Wien 1925.

fully consulted regarding the manuscript, their view being more important for Textor than that of the estate holders. According to Textor, the estate holders would have done better if they had cooperated with President Masaryk. The fact that they did not do so regarding, for instance, nominations to the SPÚ “was a tactical mistake.”¹²⁰

Land Reform in Czechoslovakia was not Textor’s sole publication on this topic. She returned to it in a 1945 text published in a prestigious collective monograph entitled *Czechoslovakia*. The symbolic reasons for publishing this work are aptly explained in the closing passages of its preface:

“The collaboration of twenty distinguished and able scholars and writers has made it possible to present a volume which is an honest, unprejudiced, and frank appraisal of the important contribution which the Czechoslovak nation made to the history of our time in its two short decades of independence between two world wars. Few nations, if any, can show such a record. Few, if any, have a better right to live. The Czechoslovaks have earned the right to freedom and independence by their achievements in the past and by the indomitable spirit with which they face the future.”¹²¹

Textor’s contribution is focused on the changes in the Czechoslovak agrarian sector. She gives a general summary of the land reform, including statistical data from the 1930s. She makes an interesting comment, i.e. that the land reform—which she later began to consider an agrarian reform—affected approximately 11 percent of land in the state in the interwar period.¹²² She notes that Czechoslovak party interests played an important role; still, the main principles of the reform were guided by the needs of ordinary people: “But it must be acknowledged that if now and then party patronage played a part in the distribution of parcels the need of the people was always the guiding principle.”¹²³ This quote reflects the way in which Textor considered the reform more than 20 years after her stay in Czechoslovakia. Her experiences from her journey and the favorable impression she got from being accepted in the highest echelons of society made her a lasting sympathizer of this state.

Textor also used the contacts she had established in Czechoslovakia to support interns. Her obituary gives us a glimpse of some of these activities: “Several scholars from Czechoslovakia were introduced to academic circles in this country [USA] through her efforts.”¹²⁴ During World War II, she also lobbied in America to resolve the issues affecting Czechoslovakia, which raised “sympathy for the Czechs and later for the Poles in their suffering under Nazi domination.”¹²⁵

¹²⁰ TEXTOR, *Land Reform*, p. 120.

¹²¹ ROBERT JOSEPH KERNER (ed.): *Czechoslovakia*, 2nd ed., Berkeley—Los Angeles 1945, p. VIII.

¹²² LUCY ELIZABETH TEXTOR: *Agriculture and Agrarian Reform*, in: KERNER, pp. 219–239, here p. 226.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 226–227.

¹²⁴ Textor, *Lucy Elizabeth, 1870–1957*.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

The main reason for this was probably the influence of the Castle, whose representatives systematically cultivated contacts with intellectuals abroad who were interested in Czechoslovakia. We can only speculate today about the personal impression Textor had from her meeting with the charismatic anglophone president in the grand premises of the Láňy Chateau or Prague Castle. For Masaryk, meetings like this were quite time-consuming, but in the minds of influential figures with an intellectual reach, a positive image of Czechoslovakia was shaped at relatively low cost. It cannot be denied that these audiences were held on an ad-hoc basis, following information received by the intelligence networks of the KPR, MZV or Masaryk's closest entourage. The impression of *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia* shows, however, that even this rather amateur approach (or, to put it better, the particular procedure employed by the actors of the Castle for propaganda purposes, acquired in the resistance movement during World War I) could have done a good job in disseminating the influence of the newly established state to the international community.

5 Reception of the Work under the Castle's Control

Land Reform in Czechoslovakia was published in 1923 with George Allen & Unwin, a London-based publisher focused on foreign and translated literature, with whom Masaryk had been in contact during World War I.¹²⁶ Edvard Beneš published *Bohemia's Case for Independence*¹²⁷ with them. The publisher also issued two volumes of Masaryk's *The Spirit of Russia* in 1919.¹²⁸ The Castle therefore kept in constant contact with them, drawing on its good experience. Masaryk received small author's fees in the 1920s and 1930s.¹²⁹ The cooperation continued during World War II, when George Allen & Unwin published Karel Čapek's *Talks to T. G. Masaryk*.¹³⁰ It is probable that it was the Castle that helped to put Textor in touch with the publisher.

Textor's monograph was the very first comprehensive text about the Czechoslovak land reform in English. Macek had published his essay *The Land Question* several years earlier (1920); however, it was very general in scope.

¹²⁶ Letters from Stanley Unwin to Tomáš G. Masaryk from 1916-04-17; 1917-03-27; 1917-03-31, in: AÚTGM, TGM, sign. V-VII-41, box 284; DAGMAR HÁJKOVÁ, JITKA JINDŘÍŠKOVÁ (eds.): Korespondence T. G. Masaryk: Velká Británie, sv. 2 (1916) [T. G. Masaryk Correspondence: Great Britain, vol. 2 (1916)], Praha 2021, pp. 104–105.

¹²⁷ EDVARD BENEŠ: *Bohemia's Case for Independence*, London 1917.

¹²⁸ TOMÁŠ GARRIGUE MASARYK: *The Spirit of Russia: Studies in History, Literature and Philosophy*, London 1919.

¹²⁹ For example: Settlement of accounts from George Allen & Unwin for 1925, in: AÚTGM, TGM, sign. O-23-48/k, inv. no. 311, box 552, document no. 499; Živnostenská banka, 1925, in: AÚTGM, TGM, sign. O-10-31, inv. no. 1937, box 539.

¹³⁰ KAREL ČAPEK, TOMÁŠ G. MASARYK: *Hovory s T. G. Masarykem: President Masaryk Tells His Story*, London 1941; the circumstances of the publication are recalled in: JULIUS FIRT: *Knihy a osudy* [Books and Destinies], Purley 1988, p. 257.

Textor's book raised interest in Czechoslovakia. It was included in Masaryk's personal library,¹³¹ where five copies are still stored today.¹³² Their original owners included some of the KPR staff whose personal collections were incorporated into Masaryk's library over time, and one copy includes an ex-libris bookplate from Škrach. Another copy was originally in the collection of Rudolf Hirsch, which became part of the library in the 1930s.¹³³

As knowledge of English was not commonplace in Czechoslovakia, at least the closing chapter of the book was published in a Czech translation by Jaroslav Novák in *Čas*.¹³⁴ It is fitting that the main ideas of the publication were presented to the Czechoslovak public by this pro-Castle periodical. It was founded in 1886 by Jan Herben (1857–1936), Masaryk's close friend. The periodical served as the press organ of the Realistic Party, whose representative in the Habsburg Monarchy was Masaryk. He also made frequent contributions as an author. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, he signed his texts with various pseudonyms. The periodical presented its readers with Textor's "discerning observations" in an "excellent book," adjectives used by the editors of *Čas* in 1923.

It is also apt that a review on her publication was published in *Naše doba*, whose initial editor (1895–1915) had been Masaryk. The author of the review was Macek, editor from the 1920s, who summarizes his overall impression as follows: "[The author] acknowledges the need for the land reform even though she does not conceal her objections against some of the methods it uses."¹³⁵ He also comments upon the circumstances under which the publication was written, saying that "the author cannot speak Czech, but she spared no effort or money in having newspaper articles, various memoranda, and elaborations translated." He considers her nationality to be an advantage in her research into the reform:

"As an 'unbiased foreigner,' she was able to access materials that would have been unavailable to a Czech researcher. Although some of those involved tried to mislead

¹³¹ For details on Masaryk's library, see O knihovně [About the Library], <https://www.mua.cas.cz/cs/vice-o-knihovne-107> (2023-02-17).

¹³² Books stored in MÚA, T. G. Masaryk Library, sign. Čp905, Čp906, Čp907, Č120, and X10539.

¹³³ Hirsch's library was purchased in 1934 by the T. G. Masaryk's Institute, which was also the custodian of Masaryk's personal archive and library, and in the spring of 1939 the books were relocated from Plzeň to Prague. EVA BROKLOVÁ, DAGMARA HÁJKOVÁ et al. (eds.): *Mám jen knihy a skripta, cenná práce životní: 70 let Masarykova ústavu. Studie a dokumenty* [I Only Have Books and Textbooks, the Valuable Lifelong Work: 70 Years of the Masaryk Institute. Studies and Documents], Praha 2002, p. 19.

¹³⁴ *Pozemková reforma v ČSR*: Lucy Elizabeth Textorová [Land Reform in Czechoslovakia: Lucy Elizabeth Textor], in: *Čas* from 1923-12-01, pp. 2–3.

¹³⁵ JOSEF MACEK: Lucy E. Textor: Land Reform in Czechoslovakia, in: *Naše doba: Revue pro vědu, umění a život sociální* 31 (1923), 2, p. 122.

the author by confusing the facts and bewildering her with half-truths, we can say that this book generally gives an unbiased presentation of our reform."¹³⁶

Macek also mentions Masaryk who, according to Macek as well as to Textor, was an unbiased observer.

"The estate holders also played a tricky game from the beginning: When they saw there was no other way, they declared themselves in favor of the land reform, but when they also had to tell the unbiased President Masaryk how they imagined it, they had nothing reasonable to say, and they actually confined themselves to impeding the actions taken by the Land Office [SPÚ], whether good or bad."¹³⁷

Macek mentions that Textor identifies the problems with the reform and "discreetly criticizes our Land Office."¹³⁸ His review closes with the statement that "Miss Textor's book is a memento to remind our people to take greater interest in a topic to which a foreigner from a distant country has dedicated so much time and made a great sacrifice." Again, however, it is necessary to remember the personal affinity between the reviewer and the author. Textor in fact had consulted with Macek during her research and also drawn from his work *The Land Question*.

Textor's publication about the Czechoslovak land reform raised interest abroad, too, among the Czech expatriate communities that profited themselves as allies of Masaryk's foreign policy during World War I. What is crucial is that Czech expatriate communities in the USA, with funds raised from public donations and similar events held during the war and immediately after it, provided Masaryk with finance for his discretionary fund, which was also used to finance foreign propaganda (the president stated the American contribution to be approximately 20 million CZK, a very high amount at the time).¹³⁹ The publication of Textor's book was announced by the *Czechoslovak Review*, a magazine published in Chicago with close ties to the Castle. The review was shared by *Venkov*, a Czech agrarian periodical. The journalist Karel Pelant (1874–1925) described it as a "carefully prepared work" showing that "its intention is to present an unbiased assessment of the work that has been done".¹⁴⁰ The editor praised the international significance of the publication by saying:

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ In a letter to the chairman of the Czechoslovak National Alliance in Cleveland from January 1922, Masaryk gave a general statement that the amount received from the Czechoslovak National Alliance alone was 15 million CZK, but that was not all the money he had received; he later mentioned even higher amounts. For further details, cf.: DAGMAR HÁJKOVÁ, VLASTA QUAGLIATOVA et al. (eds.): *Korespondence T. G. Masaryk—Edvard Beneš 1918–1937* [Correspondence between T. G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, 1918–1937], Praha 2013, pp. 83, 95; KPR Recording from 1927-03-15, in: AKPR, coll. KPR-T, 1921–1944, sign. T 12-24, box 5.

¹⁴⁰ An English Book on the Czechoslovak Land Reform, in: *Venkov: Orgán České strany agrární* from 1924-04-01, pp. 2–3.

“The book is going to set the basis for the study of land reform in countries where such reforms are also knocking at the gates of politics and where there is no experience like that which we have gained and from which the world can learn. In England itself, in Yugoslavia, and elsewhere, problems are arising with land reforms—the nations that have to resolve them will come to us to gain experience, just as the world always has to turn to Komenský’s basic guidelines when it comes to education.”

A certain memento for the author’s academic work was her inclusion in Masaryk’s 1933 encyclopedia under the headword “Textor, Lucy Elizabeth.”¹⁴¹ In ideological terms, the encyclopedia was supposed to reflect on Masaryk’s worldview.¹⁴² The entry emphasizes that she was an American writer and professor of history at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, who published *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*.

On the other hand, it is somewhat bewildering that Textor’s visit and her publication were not covered by *Prager Presse*, a German-language daily published from March 1921 by Orbis, a publishing house financed by the pro-Castle MZV.¹⁴³ We can only speculate about the reasons for this. It is, for instance, possible that it was not desirable to spread the news on research into the reform among German-speaking readers. It also may have been an oversight on the part of the editor, which only weakened the book’s propaganda potential.

Questions are also raised as to why the response to the book was not published too much outside the pro-Castle periodicals. It is possible that the opponents to the land reform, often aggrieved German or Hungarian estate holders, did not want too much attention to be drawn to a publication that promoted the reform. Moreover, we cannot preclude that German or Austrian journalists who otherwise often criticized the reform were, in linguistic terms and mentally, seated mainly in the Central European discourse, and were therefore unfamiliar with the English-speaking academic and journalistic milieu.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to reconstruct sales of the publication. However, it is known to be in more than 150 leading libraries around the world, excluding those in the former Czechoslovakia.¹⁴⁴ For example, it was reviewed by Mary Shine in *The Journal of Land & Public Utility Economics*.¹⁴⁵ The review was favorable, but because of the date of publication (1926), she repeatedly noted that Textor’s book unfortunately recapitulated land reform only up

¹⁴¹ Textor, Lucy Elizabeth, in: Masarykův slovník naučný: Lidová encyklopedie všeobecných vědomostí. Díl 7: Š–Ž [Masaryk’s Encyclopedia: A Popular Encyclopedia of General Knowledge. Vol. 7: Š–Ž], Praha 1933, p. 227.

¹⁴² DAGMAR HARTMANOVÁ: Historie československé encyklopedistiky do roku 1945 [History of Czechoslovak Encyclopedism before 1945], in: Národní knihovna: knihovnická revue (2000), 1, pp. 15–21.

¹⁴³ DEJMEK, p. 94.

¹⁴⁴ <https://search.worldcat.org/title/6102877> (2024-01-02).

¹⁴⁵ MARY L. SHINE: Land Reform in Czechoslovakia by Lucy Elizabeth Textor, in: *The Journal of Land & Public Utility Economics* 2 (1926), 4, pp. 472–473.

to 1922, when the process was just beginning. The book was neutrally mentioned in the London-based magazine *Land & Liberty*.¹⁴⁶ Josef Macek contributed an English-language review to *The Slavonic Review*, noting the unbiased nature of the work and the acclaim the publication received, especially in Czechoslovak journals.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, Wilhelm Medinger, one of the affected landowners whom Textor had met during her stay in Czechoslovakia, gave the publication a negative review in German. He argued that the publication presented a Czech view of the reform:

"One gets the impression that the author, despite her best efforts, has not grasped Eastern nationalism in its effect on the formation of states and in its dominant influence on all the actions of the new states. These things are probably too far removed from the American mentality."¹⁴⁸

As for the reception of the book in English-speaking countries, it was cited in many publications referring to Czechoslovakia, such as *The Statesman's Year Book*.¹⁴⁹ In bibliographies on the subject of Czechoslovakia, the book was and still is actively mentioned.¹⁵⁰ It continues to be an extensively cited work on interwar Czechoslovakia in both domestic and foreign publications.¹⁵¹

Textor's publication is still widely referenced to this day. It provides researchers studying the land reform with a source reflecting the atmosphere of the early 1920s in Czechoslovakia. It has been reprinted many times, for example by Tertulia publishers in 2018, who state: "This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it."¹⁵² The most recent reproduction is from 2023.¹⁵³ It

¹⁴⁶ Textor, in: *Land & Liberty* (1923), 354, p. 199.

¹⁴⁷ JOSEF MACEK: Land Reform in Czechoslovakia, in: *The Slavonic Review* 2 (1923), 5, p. 463.

¹⁴⁸ WILHELM MEDINGER: Land Reform in Czechoslovakia by Lucy Elizabeth Textor, in: *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 21 (1925), pp. 151–153.

¹⁴⁹ *The Statesman's Year Book* (1924), p. 781; IFOR EVANS: Agrarian Reform in the Danubian Countries. II: Czechoslovakia, in: *The Slavonic and East European Review* 8 (1930), 24, pp. 601–611.

¹⁵⁰ GEORGE J. KOVTUN (ed.): *Czech and Slovak History: An American Bibliography*, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/european/cash/cash12.html> (2024-01-05); EMILY L. DAY: *Valuation of Real Estate: With Special Reference to Farm Real Estate*, Washington 1929, p. 287; LOUISE O. BERCAW, A. M. HANNAY, ESTHER M. COLVIN: *Bibliography on Land Settlement with Particular Reference to Small Holdings and Subsistence Homesteads*, Washington 1934, p. 248.

¹⁵¹ ANTAL BERKES: The League of Nations and the Optants' Dispute in the Hungarian Borderlands: Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, in: PETER BECKER, NATASHA WHEATLEY (eds.): *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, Oxford 2020, pp. 285–316; ROBERT BIDELEUX: *Communism and Development*, [London] 2014; DANIEL E. MILLER: Colonizing the Hungarian and German Border Areas during the Czechoslovak Land Reform: 1918–1938, in: *Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003), pp. 303–317; CORNWALL.

¹⁵² <https://tertulia.com/book/land-reform-in-czechoslovakia-lucy-elizabeth-textor/9781378111963> (2023-03-01).

¹⁵³ LUCY ELIZABETH TEXTOR: *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*, [London] 2023.

should not be overlooked, however, that the present reader has access to a book that offered the public an unconstrained insight into the Castle's opinion on the land reform. The context in which the book was written, and the author's arguments, indicate that for the Castle, Textor was a useful means of promotion. Investing symbolical capital into ensuring that her visit to Czechoslovakia went as smoothly as possible, as well as providing publicity for her book, was a small price for such an achievement of the Castle's propaganda.

6 Conclusion

The shaping of the media image of Czechoslovakia abroad was one of the priorities of the Castle, a group consisting especially of the president of the Republic, the Office of the President of the Republic, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, but which also included their supporters across the whole spectrum of society, especially amongst the intelligentsia. First and foremost, the Castle wanted to remain in the favor of the Entente powers that had helped establish Czechoslovakia. As an extensive infringement on private property, the land reform could detract from the credibility of the democratic ideals that Czechoslovakia claimed to promote. When Textor, motivated by the arguments declaring the land reform a means of remedying the historical injustice, decided to study it in Czechoslovakia itself, the circles around the Castle could not have passed up on that opportunity. The researcher received a warm welcome in Czechoslovakia. The story of Textor and her book on the land reform reveals the initial stage of the formation of the Castle's propaganda network. Sophisticated propaganda platforms did not yet exist, and meetings with foreign intellectuals were based mainly on intuition. Despite that, through Textor the Castle succeeded in influencing the views on the land reform in the international discourse.

In this case, the propaganda reach of the Castle was limited, and probably did not extend beyond the narrow intellectual circles with an interest in Central Europe. The essence, however, lay not in how broad the reception was, but in the ability to transmit news abroad. Eventually there were dozens or perhaps hundreds of small-scale propaganda events on a wide variety of topics that, altogether, brought information about Czechoslovakia into the academic discourse as well as journalism, and indicated that the developments in this country could be seen in a positive light.

Textor's visit falls within the broader context of American cultural diplomacy in the newly established Czechoslovakia. The young Republic was visited by academicians, cultural officials, interns and businessmen, among whom Textor, as an American professor, was in no way an anomaly. In her research, she could draw on her American citizenship that, in many cases, opened the door for her, both among the defenders of the land reform and those adversely affected by the process. Her English publication was a message to the international community concerning the land reform in Czechoslovakia. The overall

tone of the publication was moderated by the Castle's apparatus. The key figures around the Castle wanted foreign countries to be informed about the achievements of the democratic Czechoslovakia. Through cultural diplomacy and soft-diplomacy tools, they contributed to the preparation of a publication that still shapes the way we see the land reform even today. But the story behind this English publication on the land reform is not generally known, giving the impression that the work was written with the appropriate detachment from the events. In actual fact, however, the researcher from America was entangled, even before her departure, in the complex political situation in Czechoslovakia, of which the propaganda and intelligence games played by the Castle formed an integral part.

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