

## Chapter 1

# Masaryk's 'Zone of Small Nations' in His Discourse during World War I

Tadayuki Hayashi

### Introduction

During the Cold War period, the geographical term 'Eastern Europe' was used to describe the area comprising the socialist countries located west of the Soviet Union: Poland, Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania. Since the socialist regimes of these countries collapsed like a set of dominos in 1989 and onward, the term 'Eastern Europe' has fallen into disuse in academic circles and journalism, replaced by 'Central and Eastern Europe', a term retaining less flavour of the socialist past.

However, 'Eastern Europe' has not been considered necessarily related to socialist regimes. For example, it means 'Slavic Europe' or Europe dominated by the Eastern Orthodox Churches or/and Islam. Here, however, I do not deal with this 'Eastern Europe' in the context of culture or religion.<sup>1</sup>

During the World War II period, the term 'Eastern Europe' was employed to describe the area including the territories of countries that would become socialist after the war. Hugh Seton-Watson published the

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<sup>1</sup> On the argument that 'Eastern Europe' was invented by the European Enlightenment in the seventeenth century, see Wolff (1994).

first edition of his masterpiece, *Eastern Europe between the Wars 1918–1941* in 1945. In its introduction, the author writes as follows:

The Subject of this book is the region lying between Germany and Russia, and particularly the States of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Jugoslavia [*sic*] and Bulgaria. Reference will be made in the chapters dealing with foreign policy to Greece, Turkey, Albania and Lithuania, but during the greater part of the work only the first six countries will be considered (H. Seton-Watson 1945: xiv).

And at the beginning of the first chapter, he defines the northern and southern boundaries of the region:

It is bounded on the north by the Baltic Sea, on the south by the Mediterranean—on the south-east by the Black Sea and the Aegean, and on the south-west by the Adriatic. The western and eastern borders of its northern section are less clearly marked (H. Seton-Watson 1945: 1).

Furthermore he explains why he uses the term ‘Eastern Europe’ to describe this area:

It is unfortunate that no single expression exists which satisfactorily describes the area in question. German publicists have invented a convenient word ‘Zwischeneuropa’, which does not lend itself to translation. Some British writers have begun to speak of the ‘Middle Zone’, but this expression has acquired a particular political connotation. ‘Central Europe’ usually means the Danube Basin, while ‘South-Eastern Europe’ describes the Balkan Peninsula. For lack of any better phrase, I have used in this ‘Eastern Europe’. If Britain and Russia, both marginal Powers vitally interested in the Continent yet not belonging to it, are put aside, the countries considered in this book may truly be described as ‘Eastern Europe’, since they constitute the eastern half of the European Continent in its strictest sense (H. Seton-Watson 1945: xiv).

The German concept of *Zwischeneuropa* or Hugh Seton-Watson’s ‘Eastern Europe’ was accepted by leading Japanese historians in the 1970s. For example, Minoru Saito and Hiroshi Momose defined their term ‘Eastern Europe’ as ‘small states located between Russia and Germany, namely *Zwischeneuropa*’, in their chapters of *Iwanami Koza Sekairekishi*, or *Iwanami World History* (Saito 1970: 207; Momose 1970: 207, footnote 7).

Although the result of the war in the area would be different from his expectations, Hugh Seton-Watson wrote the book during World War II considering the post-war international order of the region. Therefore, the book attracted many readers even during the Cold War period. Saito and Momose wrote of, in 1970, the 'East European' history of the early interwar period in terms of historical continuity between the interwar and the Cold War eras. This 'Eastern Europe' is convenient for historians for describing the history of European international relations and/or politics both of the interwar and the Cold War period, or 'the short twentieth century'.

The aim of this paper is to show that one of the origins of the spatial consciousness of the area that Hugh Seton-Watson named 'Eastern Europe', or that German publicists named *Zwischeneuropa*, was in the discourses of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, a Czech philosopher and the first Czechoslovak president, in exile during World War I, as well as to trace the process of the development of his spatial consciousness, although he calls this area 'a peculiar zone of small nations' or 'Central Zone'. I do not claim that Masaryk was its sole originator. Although this area was variously labelled, this spatial consciousness of the area was shared with those who advocated dissolving Austria-Hungary according to 'the principle of nationality'. Masaryk was only one of them. However, he left many memoranda, lectures and essays advocating the independence of the Czechoslovak state during World War I, and most of them have been published. Therefore, we can trace in detail the process of the formation of the concept of the area through these abundant resources.

Before World War I, the 'Polish question' lying across the three empires and the 'Eastern question' or 'Balkan question' were separate in the common view. These two problems could be combined when it was accepted that Poland should be unified and independent, as well as the view that Austria-Hungary should be dissolved into several nation-states according to 'the principle of nationality'. Advocators of such a reconstruction of Europe had to explain how to bring international order out of new small states because most leaders of the Allies considered the integrity of Austria-Hungary to be indispensable to the stability of Europe. Therefore, Masaryk had to repeatedly state his concept that his idea of the post-war regional international order would bring stability to all of Europe. In consequence, he left abundant statements on this matter. Using these materials, although they have been well used by contemporary historians, I discuss Masaryk's spatial consciousness of the World War I period.

## 1. Masaryk and the Independence Movement of Czechoslovakia Abroad

Here, I only sketch, very briefly, a history of the independence movement led by Masaryk during World War I.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after the outbreak of World War I, Masaryk visited Holland twice, in September and October 1914, to make contact with his British and French friends. In December, he went to Italy to gather information on the war. On the way, however, he had to abandon plans to return home because he was warned that he would be immediately arrested if he returned home. Masaryk stayed abroad and set about creating his independence movement for Czechoslovakia. By the end of 1916, he achieved political leadership among Czech and Slovak emigrant organisations overcoming opposition from Russophile groups. He established, with Edvard Beneš and Milan Rastislav Štefánik, the headquarters of their independence movement in Paris, which would be known later as the Czecho-Slovak National Council (*Československá národní rada*).

Masaryk inferred that prolonged war would compel all of Europe to be reorganised and the defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary would make it possible to establish a Czechoslovak state composed of the Czech lands (Masaryk described them as ‘Bohemia’ for the sake of convenience) and the Slovaks’ homeland of Northern Hungary (Slovakia).

In the early stage of the war, the Russian army invaded Eastern Galicia (Austrian territory). Under this military situation, the Russophile groups of Czech political leaders, Karel Kramář and his supporters, expected the Czech lands to be liberated by the Russian army and achieve autonomy under the protection of the Russian Empire. Masaryk could not deny this scenario, although he was a well-known vigorous opponent of Russian Czarism. Masaryk probably tried to arouse the interest of West European leaders in the national problems of Austria-Hungary in order to counteract the Russian influence in the area.

During the war period to the spring of 1918, the British and French leaders assumed that their main enemy was Germany, but not Austria-Hungary. They considered that the Danube Empire was necessary to maintain the balance of power in Europe. In opposition to this, Masaryk

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<sup>2</sup> On the independence movement of Masaryk, see Pichlík (1968) and Kalvoda (1986).

insisted that Austria-Hungary had been in total subjugation to Germany and had become an instrument of German '*Drang nach Osten*'. To prevent German aggression toward the Middle East under the watchword: 'Berlin-Baghdad', he claimed that Austria-Hungary should be dissolved according to 'the principle of nationality' and democratic new states, including Czechoslovakia, in the region constituting a barrier against Pan-Germanism.

Masaryk had assumed his leadership in the Czechoslovak independence movement in Western Europe by the end of 1916, but he failed to realise the anticipated results in diplomacy with the Allied governments through 1917. In a note on 18 December 1916, President Woodrow Wilson called for the belligerents to state their war aims. The Allies answered Wilson's note with a note of their own on 10 January 1917 and declared that one of their war aims was 'the liberation of Italians, Slavs, Romanians and Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination'. The mention of 'Czecho-Slovaks', who had been unknown in Western Europe, was a remarkable success for Masaryk; however, the expression 'liberation from foreign domination' was susceptible to various interpretations (Kalvoda 1986: 131).

In Austria-Hungary, Frantz Josef I died in November 1916 and was succeeded by Karl. With the enthronement of the new monarch, expectations of separate peace with Austria-Hungary grew among the Allies. Therefore, the Allies took a cautious attitude towards the national problems of Austria-Hungary. On 5 January 1918, British Premier David Lloyd George claimed, 'Nor are we fighting to destroy Austria-Hungary'. Three days later, Wilson published his famous 'Fourteen Points'. However, the tenth point only mentioned that the peoples of Austria-Hungary be accorded the freest opportunity to pursue 'autonomous development'.

In the spring of 1918, the Allied government finally changed their policy towards the nations of Austria-Hungary and began to support Anti-Habsburg national movements abroad, including Masaryk's organisation. After that, step by step, the Czechoslovak National Council was officially recognised by the Allies, and it was regarded as a *de facto* government by the end of the War.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> On wartime diplomacy, see Hovi (1975), Calder (1976), Fest (1978), Shanafelt (1985).

The headquarters of the National Council was in Paris, but Masaryk was based in London. The Russian February Revolution posed to him the possibility of starting his activities in Russia. He moved from London to Russia in May 1917. He devoted himself to organising Czech and Slovak prisoners of war into a volunteer army, the Czechoslovak Legion, which entered the war against the Central Powers on the behalf of the future Czechoslovak state. By the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty of March 1918 between the Soviet government and the Central Powers, however, the Legion lost their battlefield on the Eastern Front. Masaryk decided to transfer the Legion to the Western Front through Siberia, the Pacific, North America and the Atlantic, or through the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. He moved to the United States to seek support for the transfer of the Legion. On his way to the US, Masaryk stayed for a dozen days in Japan.<sup>4</sup>

The Legion started a revolt against the Bolsheviks in May 1918. This revolt was followed by the Siberian expedition of the US and Japan in August. Consequently, Masaryk attracted Wilson's attention. During his stay in the US, Czechoslovakia's independence was declared in Prague on 28 October 1918 and Masaryk was elected as the first president of Czechoslovakia by the provisional parliament in November. He returned home as the head of the new state in December 1918.

## **2. Masaryk's 'Zone of Small Nations'**

In April 1915, Masaryk wrote a memorandum entitled 'Independent Bohemia' to distribute among limited circles in England (R. W. Seton-Watson 1943: 61–4). He expressed his notion about the geographic West-East division of Europe:

There is a striking difference between the west and east of Europe in regard to the composition of states and the number of small nations. The west has four (five) great nations and only five small ones, whereas the east has only one great nation and a great number of small ones. In the west the states are formed by one dominant race, in the east they are nationally mixed.

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<sup>4</sup> On Masaryk in Japan, see Hayashi (1995: 89–95).

He also made a list of the nations in the 'West' and commented on the nations of the 'East' as follows:

*West*

- |            |                                      |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. England | 1. Portugal                          |
| 2. France  | 2. Holland (and Flemings of Belgium) |
| 3. Germany | 3. Denmark                           |
| 4. Italy   | 4. Norway                            |
| 5. Spain   | 5. Sweden                            |

*East*

Russia, who herself includes many small nations, while Austria-Hungary is composed of nine nations, and the Balkans of seven nations (Masaryk 1915a: 118).

Masaryk divided Europe into 'the West' and 'the East'. Using current terminology, he considered that 'the West' was composed of large and small 'nation-states', but that 'the East' was not. Masaryk's notion of 'nation' seems arbitrary from our present point of view, and, additionally, he did not distinguish 'civic nation' from 'ethnic nation'. However, I will not discuss this topic further. It is important here that his 'East' consisted of Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, which should be reorganised according to 'the principle of nationality'. Masaryk thereafter also called this area 'the east' or the 'East of Europe'. In 'Independent Bohemia', however, he had not yet mentioned 'the zone of small nations' that would be a key concept in his arguments.

This memorandum of April 1915 had already expressed his persistent wartime claims that Germany entirely dominated Austria-Hungary, pursuing her ambition to extend her sphere of influence through the Balkans to the Middle East under the slogan '*Drang nach Osten*', and, therefore, that Austria-Hungary should be dissolved to prevent Germany from realising her ambition.

In contrast to his clear insistence about Austria-Hungary, Masaryk was very cautious about commenting on Russia and Poland. Masaryk was afraid that Russian Czarism might extend its influence westward. Therefore, he decided to organise his movement in Western Europe, particularly in France and Britain. However, needless to say, France and Britain were allied with Russia. Furthermore, the Russian army still occupied Eastern Galicia when he wrote this memorandum. He would have been unable to ignore these political and military circumstances.

He did not refer to Russian Czarism. Far from it, he even accepted Russian influence in 'the East'. He wrote, 'The Bohemian politicians hope that the final reconstruction of the Balkans will be solved in accordance with Russia and her Allies'; 'For Bohemia and the Balkan Slavs, the friendship and help of Russia is essential'; and 'At any rate, the Bohemian politicians wish the establishment of the kingdom of Bohemia in full accordance with Russia' (Masaryk 1915*a*: 131–2). It was not an outright fabrication. As mentioned above, the Czech Russophile politicians, such as Karel Kramář, expected that the Czech lands would acquire autonomy under the protection of Russia. However, Masaryk himself hoped rather to place a Dane or Belgian prince on the throne, if the new state were a kingdom (R. W. Seton-Watson 1943: 45). In addition, he was critical of Russian Czarism, but he consistently deemed that good relations with Russia would be essential for the new state to achieve security against Pan-Germanism.

It is clear that he recognised the Polish problem as a difficult issue to be solved in Europe. He wrote:

The difficulties of reconstructing Independent Bohemia will be smaller if we take the problem in its connection with the other difficulties, i.e. with the construction and reconstruction of Poland and Serbo-Croatia, and of course with the liberation of the French and Danes in Germany, with all questions agitating the world in this war. The attempt to solve these questions is the very aim of regenerating Europe. All these questions together form the European problem (Masaryk 1915*a*: 128).

However, in this memorandum, he did not refer to the future of Poland more concretely. He had to refrain from explicit remarks concerning Poland, for the Russian government insisted that it came under her internal affairs. Therefore, at this time, there was no spatial allowance for 'the Central Zone' between Germany and Russia in his argument.

In May 1915, just after publishing the memorandum 'Independent Bohemia', the Central Powers launched a broad counteroffensive against the Russian army. They recaptured Eastern Galicia in July and occupied the Russian territory of Poland by September (Stone 1975: 165–93). Thereafter, Masaryk remained cautious about criticising Russian policy. However, as Russian military influence over the area diminished, his statements on Russia and Poland became more frank.



In October 1915, Masaryk was appointed Professor of the School of Slavonic Studies, King's College, University of London, through the good offices of R. W. Seton-Watson (Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson 1981). He delivered his inaugural lecture under the title 'The Problem of Small Nations in European Crisis'. In this lecture, Masaryk referred to 'a peculiar ethnological zone':

Speaking of the East and West of Europe and saying that both halves are not sharply cut, we find a peculiar ethnological zone in what is often called Central Europe. From Trieste—Salonica—Constantinople, up north to Danzig—Petrograd in a line not straight, but curved in the direction of Berlin, in whose neighbourhood live the Slav Sorbs, is a greater number of smaller nations, which were, and still are, under the dominion of Germany, Austria, Turkey and Russia. This zone, composed of East Prussia, Austria-Hungary, Balkans and the West of Russia, is the real and proper centre of national antagonism (Masaryk 1915*b*: 140).

In a document entitled 'At the Eleventh Hour: A Memorandum on the Military Situation', distributed in April 1916, this zone was mentioned in relation to the Allies' war aims:

The Allies must meet the German plan of Central Europe controlled by Germany, by the plan of Central Europe freed from German control. In my lecture on the Small Nations I have attempted to show that Central Europe contains a peculiar zone of smaller, unfree or half free nations, and that the political organisation of this zone is the real task of the present war (Masaryk 1916*a*: 193).

Masaryk stated here also:

Central Europe comprises the East of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Balkans and the Western part of Russia (Poland). The restoration and liberation of Poland, of Bohemia comprising the Slovak country of North Hungary, and the organisation of Greater Serbia is the first and essential task of the Allies; all other questions will be solved easily if the Allies perform this task (Masaryk 1916*a*: 194).

Between the autumn of 1915 and the spring of 1916, when the war came to a standstill on the Western and Eastern fronts, Masaryk began to claim that the solution to national problems lay in a framework of a 'zone

of small nations' or 'Central Europe', which was almost the same area as Hugh Seton-Watson's 'Eastern Europe'. More, he came to explicitly insist on the 'restoration and liberation of Poland'.

From October to December, 1916, a chain of occurrences, which marked a watershed in the history of World War I, took place; Austrian Prime Minister Karl Stürgkh was assassinated on 21 October and the new government was formed in December; Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary died on 21 November and was succeeded by new Emperor Karl; and British Prime Minister Asquith resigned on 5 December and was replaced two days later by David Lloyd George. In diplomacy, the Central Powers issued their peace note on 12 December, which was followed by Woodrow Wilson's peace note of 18 December and the Allied note to Wilson of 10 January 1917.

In 14 December 1916 Masaryk published an essay entitled 'Pangermanism and the Zone of Small Nations' in the journal, *New Europe*, which was edited by R. W. Seton-Watson. In statements issued up to the spring of 1916, Masaryk called for the independence of Czechoslovakia, the unification and independence of Poland, and the attainment of 'Greater Serbia', but he did not refer to the future of other parts of the zone. However, in this essay, Masaryk concretely mentioned other nations in the area:

Ethnographically and politically there are three divisions in Europe: the Western, the Eastern (Russia), and the Central. Our interest is here drawn chiefly to the central part, which consists of a peculiar zone of small nations, extending from the North Cape to Cape Matapan. Side by side we here find the Laplanders, Swedes, Norwegians and Danes, Finns, Estonians, Letts, Lithuanians, Poles, Lusatians, Czechs and Slovaks, Magyars, Serbo-Croats and Slovenes, Roumanians, Bulgars, Albanians, Turks and Greeks. The largest of these nations are Poles; next to them come the Czechs and Slovaks, Serbo-Croats, Roumanians, and Magyars: the others are smaller. If the Little-Russians (Ruthenes, Ukrainians) were considered a separate nation, as distinct from Great-Russians, they would be the largest nation of this zone (Masaryk 1916*b*: 272).

In this essay, he called the area 'the Central Zone' (Masaryk 1916*b*: 274, footnote), probably conscious of Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* published in November 1915. The geographical extent of 'the Central Zone' had enlarged to the area from the North Cape to Cape Matapan. He

enumerated the nations of the area including the Nordic and Baltic nations. He also hinted that 'Little Russia' could be a candidate member of this area. However, he did not insist that all these nations be fully independent. He distinguished two categories of these nations: those demanding national autonomy, and those demanding independence:

It is none the less true that the nations of the Central Zone have resisted and still resist German, Austrian, Magyar and Turkish expansion, and they are fighting for their liberty. All these nations (with the exception of the Lapps) have their political aspirations, which are of two kinds. Some of the smaller among them would be content with national autonomy within a bigger state; this applies especially to the small nations of Russia. The Estonians, Letts, Lithuanians, have not as yet demanded their independence, although the latter have adopted during the war a more radical policy, which has been partly fostered by the Germans. Even the Finns do not desire to be separated from Russia, for they know that they would only succumb again to the influence of Sweden, from which they are at present protected. Russia, indeed, has only one serious nationalist question—namely, Poland. On the other hand, the subject-nations of Austria-Hungary and Prussia do demand their independence (Masaryk 1916*b*: 275).

Masaryk still showed careful consideration of Russia's position on her national problems except for the Poland question. Allied governments began to examine their war aims, and wartime diplomacy among the Allied powers, as well as between Germany and Austria-Hungary, became active in the second half of 1916. After the Central Powers occupied the territory of Congress Poland, they began discussing how to deal with it. In August, they decided to make it a constitutional monarchy tied to the Central Powers in order to mobilise Polish soldiers for the war against Russia. Consequently, Germany and Austria-Hungary officially proclaimed 'the independence of Poland' on 5 November 1916. At the same time, the British and French governments came to admit that Poland should acquire at least autonomy and pressured Russia to grant it. As a result, on 2 December, the Russian prime minister made a statement that united Poland would enjoy autonomy within the Russian Empire.

Masaryk was discontented with Russia's policy toward her Western territories. He claimed, in his essay, that Finland and the Baltic provinces should be autonomous in the Russian Empire. However, he distinguished

between Poland and the others; that is to say, he demanded implicitly that Poland be independent.

### **3. *New Europe and After***

During his stay in Russia, Masaryk wrote a manuscript in Czech in order to explain the significance of the independence of Czechoslovakia to the soldiers of the Czechoslovak Legion. The manuscript was published in *Československý denník*, a daily edited by the legionaries in Russia, from 16 April 1918. The revised English version of the manuscript was published under the title *New Europe (The Slav Standpoint)*, for private circulation in London at the end of the year, just after Czechoslovakia's independence was declared in Prague. A Czech version was also published the following year in Prague (Masaryk 1920). Here, I discuss Masaryk's view as of 1918 mainly based on the English version.

In this book, Masaryk defined 'the zone of small nations' as 'the territory between the East and the West, more particularly between the Germans and the Russians' and 'from the North, starting with Lapland, down to Greece' (Masaryk 1918: 15). This definition was almost the same as previous definitions, but he drew the Eastern and Western borders of the zone as ethnic borders between the Germans and the Russians. It was logical consequence of his claim that the zone be reorganised according to 'the principle of nationality'. However, it would create serious problems in the practical settlement of the borders of the new states, including Czechoslovakia, at the peace conference. For instance, Czechoslovakia would demand considerably large territories of German inhabitants as an integral part of the new republic.

Masaryk divided the territory of the Russian Empire, in the same way as in his previous statements, into the West of Russia and the other part:

The great majority of the peoples of Russia are uneducated and without national conscience: Russians themselves have not developed to the point of national conscience; the masses of the people have their religious viewpoint, and the intelligentsia, as far as it is Socialistic, does not feel nationally. The watchword of self-determination of nations is applied by the Russians to their various parts; hence the birth of so many republics, or rather communes; and, therefore, the solution of national and language questions in Russia is different from the European solution.

Consequently, except for 'the West of Russia', he wrote, 'the overwhelming majority of the Russian nations are united within the boundaries of the Empire' (Masaryk 1918: 42). Even in the period after the October Revolution, he regarded the integrity of the Russia without 'the West of Russia' as inevitable for the stability of 'the zone of small nations'.

In *New Europe*, Masaryk claimed without any reservation that independent and unified Czecho-Slovak, Polish and Yugoslavian states, which would be 'a barrier' against the Germans, the Austrians and the Magyars, should be formed although it would have 'a clearly defensive character' (Masaryk 1918: 58). In the lecture in October 1915, he stated that these states would be 'so-called buffer states' (Masaryk 1915b: 151). However, he wrote in this book, 'these three Slav States will not be buffer states', because 'this concept will have no meaning in a democratic non-militaristic Europe' (Masaryk 1918: 60). This change can be explained by the shift in the power balance of the area rather than by his idealistic account. It seems that he ceased regarding Russia as a threat to the stability of 'the zone of small nations' because of the Russian revolutions and internal disorder from 1917 to 1918.

Masaryk also referred to his perspective on the future international order of the area more concretely than before. He wrote that Romanians and Italians had joined the Slavs, therefore 'the barrier' was 'Slav and Latin', and 'the two races' formed 'a natural defensive league of nations against German aggression'. More, he stated, 'The chain of free nations, opposed to Pangermanism, extending from the Baltic to France, is given by history and geography', and 'Perhaps even the Magyars will . . . realise that the Slavs and Latins will not be hostile to them if they will only limit themselves to their own people.' Consequently, 'there will be no fear of German aggression to the West, as soon as Eastern Europe is organised politically along natural lines and as soon as Austria-Hungary, the Balkans and Turkey will taken away from Germany' (Masaryk 1918: 60).

This concept of future Europe was formed at the last stage of World War I. Therefore, naturally, his concept was still grounded in the friend-enemy paradigm. In *New Europe*, as well as other documents before it, he consistently attached importance to the league or the alliance of the three Slav states, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia that would be a core of the barrier against Pan-Germanism. Here, he did not refer to a confederation or federation of 'the zone of small nations'.

In his war memoir published in 1925, he wrote that the foundation of the Little Entente, an alliance formed by Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia against the revisionism of Hungary at the beginning of the 1920s, had been built by cooperation during World War I (Masaryk 1925: 445–6, 1927: 330). He was also negative about unifying the whole of ‘the zone of small nations’ in the middle of the 1920s:

It is not to be expected that all the small nations will be united with each other, since (their) interests are too various. Under the given situation, it can be only expected that some groups of small nations will be formed, such as the Little Entente. In addition to it, it is already observed that the Northern States—the Finns, the Ests, the Latvians and the Lithuanians and even the Poles—discuss their common interests . . . In any case it is expedient to remember that, this zone of small nations has more than 100 million inhabitants if the Poles want to resist themselves in these small nations. But, geographically, this zone stretches from the North to the South of Europe, and it causes considerable difficulty in unification. The Finns and the Greeks, for instance, might hardly perceive, at first sight, the community of their interests (Masaryk 1925: 505; 1927: 372).

In another part of his war memoir, Masaryk expressed his hope for future European integration. He wrote, ‘The “United States of Europe” ceased to be a Utopia’ (Masaryk 1925: 436, 1927: 326), and ‘All difficulties notwithstanding, it is possible to detect the beginning of a free federalisation of Europe in place of the absolutist mastery of one Great Power or of alliances of Great Powers, over the Continent’ (Masaryk 1925: 503, 1927: 371). He expected that all of Europe would be federalised in the distant future. In this sense, he was an idealist and a prophet. However, when he talked about concrete international relations in the ‘zone of small nations’, he was a consistent realist.

## **Conclusions**

This paper traced how Masaryk came to imagine the ‘zone of small nations’ located ‘between the Germans and the Russians’ and from the Baltic Sea to the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. A geographic outline of the area and its construction were made step by step in his statements according to the process of the war itself and strategic needs of Masaryk’s struggle for the independence of the Czechoslovakia.

The purpose of his statements was to draw the attention of Allies to this area. In this sense, the spatial consciousness of the area was made through strategic thinking. Masaryk presented this area particularly to the Western European leaders and people as a place dominated by Pan-Germanism, which harboured ambition to invade the Middle East through the area, as well as a place with a number of national problems to be solved. Later, he proposed that a barrier against Pan-Germanism would be formed by the small nations of the area, especially three Slav nations: the Poles, the Czechoslovaks, and the Yugoslavs. This area of small nations was, for him, a region that had common problems. However, he did not expect the area to be unified into a federation or confederation. In this sense, this 'zone of small nations' was a product of his strategic thinking. In other words, it was a product of World War I. In considering unification or federalisation in the future, he always referred to all of Europe, not 'the zone of small nations'. Therefore, it seems that he failed to give it a consistent name.

This concept of the area was by no means unique to Masaryk. This spatial consciousness was shared among his contemporaries, but the area did not have a consistent name. For example, intellectuals involved in the journal *New Europe* edited by R. W. Seton-Watson shared a spatial consciousness similar to Masaryk's 'zone of small nations'. Lewis B. Namier published a small book entitled *Germany and Eastern Europe* in 1915. In this book, Namier invented a peculiar name 'the European Middle East' for 'the region of small linguistic groups' (Namier 1915: 75). The outline and composition of the region were almost same as Masaryk's 'zone of small nations'. Roman Dmowski, a Polish nationalist leader, concluded his book published in 1917 as follows:

Given close intellectual, economic and political communion with Western countries, non-German Central Europe will be the most efficient guarantee of European equilibrium and of future peace (Dmowski 1917: 89).

The geographical extent of Dmowski's 'non-German Central Europe' was not different from Masaryk's 'zone of small nations' or Naimier's 'European Middle East'. Their spatial consciousness was probably formed through mutual relations among them during the war. However, further details of the relations among them, as well as how this spatial

consciousness was handed over to the following generation, to which Hugh Seton-Watson belonged, remain open for future investigation.

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