

# Theoretische beschouwingen

## A comparative study of the problem of multi-lingualism\*)

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Cultural heterogeneity may involve differences in language, religion, or both. It is the purpose of this study to present observations regarding the emergence of conflict between language groups within political systems, and to analyze salient aspects of problems that confront political systems when they have to cope with requests for official recognition of more than one official language. The comparative recency of the phenomenon of conflict between language groups within common political systems facilitates the formulation of propositions regarding the roots and the evolution of this problem.

### *Propositions Regarding Multi-lingualism*

Historical analysis suggests that multi-lingualism only becomes an issue in a political system where urbanization and industrialization is advanced by and advances a public school system that prepares for entry into government and other forms of public service. A pre-industrial, rural, and predominantly illiterate society can easily accommodate peacefully any number of language groups as long as the members of its educated elite share a lingua franca. Thus we find that Europe's political systems could readily accommodate extensive changes even in the composition of their language groups within ever-changing boundaries as long as Europe's small and well-knit educated elite communicated in Latin and then in French.

The developments among the post-colonial new nations also illustrate our point: conflict between language groups does not appear as long as predominantly agrarian illiterate language groups follow their elites who have been educated in the languages of their one-time colonial powers. All developing multi-lingual new nations experience strife between language groups proportionate to their increase in literacy that accompanies modernization. It is precisely among the most advanced multi-lingual new countries that the political systems are threatened by conflicting claims advanced by language groups. India, Ceylon, and Nigeria have appeared initially as stable new nations but we now find all three confronted by conflict over language

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that is reminiscent of the language conflict that disrupted the peace and the political systems of Eastern and Central Europe.

Language conflict is related to proximity. As long as language groups are territorially separated they may be served by their own mono-lingual institutions. But urbanization and industrialization induce diverse people to live and work together. Tensions are bound to arise if they cannot speak to one another. These tensions will be compounded if the diverse language groups advance conflicting claims for official recognition. Conversely, these tensions will be attenuated in the absence of conflicting claims for official recognition. This explains why the United States and other mono-lingual countries were able to absorb multi-lingual immigrant groups in large numbers: In the absence of competing claims for official recognition of alternate languages, voluntary assimilation proceeded smoothly.

Conflict over language is bound to become ever more serious in many parts of the world under the impact of rapid modernization. A comparative study of the problem of multi-lingualism should contribute significantly to our understanding of what is involved here. The contrast between political systems that have failed to resolve language and those that have succeeded to accommodate conflicting claims suggests further propositions.

Among the failures, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and some of its successor states stand out as instances of political systems that have been disrupted by unresolved conflict between language groups. These failures indicate that conflict over language within political systems is aggravated when members of language groups are under unequal pressures to learn the language of the others. Such inequality of pressures is enhanced when the most important language within the political system is also the most important abroad. Tensions are further exacerbated when the direction and/or intensity of pressures to learn the languages of the other groups is changing. Finally, tensions over official recognition of languages may be influenced decisively by foreign relations that involve pressures from across borders.

Our understanding of explosive tensions and unresolved problems may be deepened by scrutiny of contrasting instances of successful peaceful solutions. We shall therefore pay attention to the noteworthy enduring harmony between different language groups in Switzerland, Alsace-Lorraine, and Northern-Schleswig. Here we find political systems that have accommodated bi- or tri-lingual conflicts remarkably well. These instances suggest that disputes over language stand a good chance for peaceful and equitable solutions within political systems when at least the well educated members of all language groups know the languages of their fellow citizens. It seems that this is likely when the languages in question are of comparable rank.

Other things being equal, a well balanced multi-lingualism may also be expected where the language of higher rank within the political system is of lesser rank abroad. This type of disparity may result in balanced pressures upon members of all language groups to learn one another's language. The balance of such diversified pressure is however delicate and subject to upset when language conflict is aggravated by class conflict, religious differences, or by interfering foreign relations.

### *Multi-Lingualism in Central Europe*<sup>1)</sup>

George Orwell's work has been inspired by his despairing doubt about man's capacity to cope with his own history. The history of language strife in Central Europe certainly illustrates and confirms the doubt that haunted Orwell.

The empire of the Habsburgs as well as the successor states of their empire foundered on the question of official language recognition in the school system and in public service.

The Germans were by far the most numerous among the Habsburg empire's eleven officially recognized language groups. They accounted for about a third of the population of imperial Austria that was represented in the *Reichsrat* in Vienna. German-speaking Vienna was also the residence of the German-speaking Habsburg dynasty that reigned over the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Consequently, German outranked the other languages within the empire. Among the languages spoken in the Danube basin German also ranked as the most important abroad. It is therefore not surprising that all educated subjects of the Habsburg monarchy acquired a fluent command of German as a matter of course, especially since a command of German was of the essence for a successful career in the empire's far-flung government services.

Since the government also served monolingual non-Germans, languages other than German received official recognition as well. The Habsburg regime endeavored to work out equitable solutions that were meant to satisfy the moderates on all sides since it was impossible to meet the demands put forth by the extremists.

Wherever official recognition was granted to languages other than German the predominantly mono-lingual German-speaking found themselves at a distinct disadvantage vis-a-vis the predominantly bilingual non-Germans. The question of official recognition of different languages became therefore a bread-and-butter question of career contingencies. Beyond this it soon became an issue of national prestige with strong emotional undertones that rendered equitable accommodation next to impossible. Consequently, the unsettled issues of multi-lingualism disrupted parliamentary government in imperial Austria in 1913 and in the successor states between the two world wars. Most historians agree that unresolved language conflicts had been prominent among the precipitant causes of the first world war and contributed similarly to the outbreak of the second.

Efforts to resolve the language problems in Central Europe equitably were as countless as they were futile. Efforts to achieve conciliatory compromises were attempted through autocratically imposed arbitration as well as through efforts in accordance with democratic values. Chauvinist extremism prevailed in the form of "final solutions" that were designed to impose the will of victors unilaterally upon the vanquished.

The following brief example should illustrate how the language problem appeared at the grass roots level, and how chauvinist pettiness obstructed rational solutions: railroad stations in mixed language areas stood without names because no agreement could be reached as to which language was to come first on the signs. Thus the rail-

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographic sources on Austria's language problems in: *The Austrian History Yearbook* published by Rice University, Houston.

way station of the city of G. was identified no further because agreement could be reached on the sequence of the German "Goerz", the Italian "Gorizia", and Slovenian "Gorice". Problems of greater consequence and complexity, such as use of languages in schools and courts, were of course even more difficult to resolve. The Habsburg regime endeavored to hold the multi-lingual empire together primarily by autocratic imposition of compromise solutions. The regime did succeed in providing the polyglot empire with an effective multi-lingual administration, including an equitable system of justice, that served the empire well. Ultimately, the Habsburg regime's efforts failed where no other succeeded. Neither the democratic nor the autocratic successor states of the Habsburg monarchy were able to cope with the language problems they inherited.

Czechoslovakia, the only democratic successor state, might have succeeded had it not been for formidable outside pressures from across the border, but these pressures in turn, were effective primarily because of wide-spread dissaffection among Germans within Czechoslovak borders, primarily among the Sudeten-Germans who predominated on the Czechoslovakian side of the border.

From among the tangled web of Central-European language groups, German-Czech relations deserve special attention.

Before 1914, the government in Vienna had endeavored to accommodate conflicting claims by Czechs and Germans in a spirit of conciliatory compromise that satisfied neither side but kept the peace. Within the Austro-Hungarian empire as well as in the world at large most Czechs learned German as a matter of course while Germans did not readily learn Czech. As a consequence, Czechs were at an advantage over Germans whenever positions in the government service gave preference to those fluent in both languages.

Immediately after 1918, the government of the newly established Czechoslovak republic temporarily condoned Czech chauvinist excesses. To offer just one illustration: All incorporated communities were given Czech names and the German names of such world-famous predominantly German towns as Marienbad, Karlsbad, and Eger were denied official standing even as mailing addresses. Such exercises in infantile chauvinism were of short duration but they left bitter memories that were to add vigor to German counter-chauvinism in years to come.

From the mid-twenties on, that is, long before the rise of Nazism in Germany, the Czechoslovakian government in Prague pursued a conciliatory language policy democratically much like the Habsburg regime before had attempted autocratically and with the same ultimate futility. At the time the Third Reich emerged it seemed that the multi-lingual Czechoslovakian democracy was about to achieve enduring stability. From 1929 on, most German-speaking parties were represented in coalition governments in Prague. With Czech the more important language within Czechoslovakian borders and German the more important language abroad, the pressure for bilingualism upon Germans and Czechs appeared sufficiently well balanced to facilitate an equitable solution of the language problem. The spokesmen of the German-speaking Czechoslovakians in the Prague government had a clear mandate from their constituents to make the Czech-German partnership work. The Sudeten Germans withdrew this mandate for the advancement of Czech-German partnership.

ship when the Third Reich emerged as a world power. In the mid-thirties they defected from the parties that represented them in the government in Prague and went over to the Hitlerite *Sudeten-deutsche Partei*.

In the fall of 1938 Hitler's troops occupied the predominantly German-speaking border provinces, known as the Sudetenland, and in the spring of 1939 the major part of Czechoslovakia including the capital Prague. Efforts to achieve a "final solution" through forced Germanization under a reign of terror came to an end with Germany's defeat. This was followed by the "final solution" of the mass expulsion of the whole German-speaking population of over three millions.

The imperial government in Vienna before 1918 and then the republican government in Prague were not without a great deal of popular support from conciliatory forces among Czechs and Germans.

The House of Habsburg had long been identified with the supranational Roman Catholic Church, and the proclerical parties, German as well as Czech, took conciliatory positions under the imperial Austrian monarchy as well as under the Czechoslovakian republic.

The labor movement, socialist and international in outlook, likewise opposed nationalist chauvinism. Yet the socialists were no more able than the proclerical forces to rally in one party. The German and the Czech socialist parties as well as their proclerical counterparts had, as a matter of fact, difficulties in keeping to a moderate position in language questions whenever nationalistic feelings were running high over specific measures.

The chauvinists were outnumbered by the moderates among the Germans and among the Czechs. They were able to disturb but not to disrupt the peace of the bi-lingual political system. Yet they prevailed in setting their indelible stamp upon history not only through temporary triumphs of their programs for "final solutions". Also, the involvement of the chauvinists with pan-German nationalism on one side and pan-Slavism on the other endowed these with history-making potency.

The chauvinist extremists were outnumbered but their strength was concentrated where it mattered — among the intelligentsia of both language groups. Especially mono-lingual Germans (hardly any Czechs were mono-lingual) had, of course, a vested interest in the solutions of language questions that affected their career chances. The popularity of chauvinist extremism among militant students did not suffice to overthrow the hated political systems that rested upon compromise but intermittent student riots did disturb the peace.

On the Czech side, extremist chauvinism contributed considerably to pan-Slavism that enjoyed greater popularity among the Czechs than among any other Slavic nation. This Czech pan-Slavism encouraged westward aspirations of Tsarist Russia before 1914, and helped to make Czechoslovakia the most solid outpost of Stalinism after 1945.

On the German side, extremist chauvinism spawned the ideology that was to provide the name and the program for Hitler's party and that left its mark upon history through the Third Reich: As early as 1907 we find among the German-speaking Bohemians a "German national-socialist workers party" whose program was identical with the subsequent program of Hitler's party of the same name.

No other constituency in Germany or in Austria ever approached the Sudeten Germans of Bohemia and Moravia in their support of Hitler and his cause. Thus Hitler's party polled less than a third of the vote in Germany's last free election in November 1932, and failed to gain a majority in elections held in March 1933 after Hitler's regime had already muzzled the opposition. The Sudeten Germans were citizens of the Czechoslovakian republic and represented in the coalition government in Prague when they voted two to one for Hitler's party in 1935. Nazi ideology enjoyed such popularity among Sudeten Germans because this ideology did not merely reject compromise but condemned those who found compromise acceptable. It is in this perspective that Hitlerite anticapitalism, anticlericalism, condemnation of international socialism, and racial antisemitism assume logical consistency.

In this context a note on racial antisemitism is in order. Most Eastern European Jews who emerged from the narrow confines of the ghetto in the 19th century confirmed their emancipation by eager acquisition of German culture. It should be kept in mind that this was soon after Germany's golden age when cultured men of the world over learned German in order to read Goethe and Kant in the original. Throughout the multi-lingual Habsburg empire assimilated Jews partook of and contributed to German culture. While assimilated Jews throughout the Danube monarchy identified themselves as Germans they rarely took any but conciliatory positions on language problems. In this the members of Jewish communities differed hardly at all from those who had converted to Christianity. The chauvinists soon found the ostracism directed against "non-Aryans" an effective instrument for the initiation of "Aryans" who were prone to compromise in the language question. Among Germans outside the so-called Sudetenland racial antisemitism only appealed to a marginal fringe but in the Sudetenland and in the other mixed language areas of Austria-Hungary racial antisemitism found a ready response. Racial antisemitism also enjoyed a great deal of popularity among German-Austrian students. Thus we find that the extremist chauvinists not only enjoyed ultimate triumphs on the German side from 1938 till 1945, and on the Czech side after 1945 but that they affected the political climate decisively, even while without formal political power and outnumbered, by intimidating the moderates through social pressure. Thus we have numerous accounts of bilingual Bohemians and Moravians who sometimes concealed knowledge of their second language in order to avoid the scorn of the aggressive chauvinists.

During the first world war the concept of "self-determination of nations" was elevated by President Wilson's endorsement to a principle that was to guide the peace makers.

In fact, this concept only aggravated tensions a great deal because it merely legitimized conflicting claims at the expense of accommodation and compromise because it implied the right of the majority to have its way to the detriment of the minority. In all territories where language groups collided in joint settlement conflicting claims could invoke the principle of self-determination of nations on the basis of claims for revisions of boundaries that would shift the composition of majorities one way or another.

At the peace conferences that followed the first world war and in the subsequent years the principle of self-determination of nations was readily invoked as a cloak for power politics and extensive nationalist aspirations that served to disrupt the successor states as they had disrupted the Danube monarchy.

It is now obvious that disputes between language groups may be accommodated effectively only within the context of joint acquiescence in which little weight is placed upon incidental "majority decisions". Democratic decision making is only legitimate within the context of a shared value system, and this cannot be provided by any simple formula, be it autocratic or democratic in nature. The only alternative to joint acquiescence and accommodation are final solutions in the form of forced assimilation, expulsion, or mass murder.

### *Switzerland, Alsace-Lorraine, and North-Schleswig*

The relations between different language groups in Switzerland, Alsace-Lorraine, and North-Schleswig are of interest primarily because of their contrast with such relations in Central and Eastern Europe. In all these places multi-lingualism has been accepted as a way of life.

The case of Switzerland need only be mentioned in passing because it is well known as the classic example of harmonious multi-lingualism. There is no Swiss language. The German-, French-, and Italian-speaking citizens of the Swiss nation simply take it for granted that the educated Swiss have to become fluent in languages other than their own, especially if they aspire to a career in the service of their government or in their school system.

For the bi-lingual people of Alsace-Lorraine and for those of North-Schleswig, national sovereignty has been an issue but not bi-lingualism. Within the last hundred years Alsace-Lorraine has twice been taken by Germany from France and twice by France from Germany, and Schleswig has been taken by Prussia from Denmark in 1864, and Northern-Schleswig was returned to Denmark in 1920 after a plebiscite.

Most families in Alsace-Lorraine had members who served in the German army against France and in the French army against Germany, and some men even served themselves in both armies in short succession. Since all educated Alsace-Lorrainians have traditionally been schooled in French and in German they have never been troubled by bi-lingualism as an issue. This is remarkable in view of Alsace-Lorraine's record as a bone of contention between France and Germany, and the political implications of irreconcilable national loyalties.

Svalastoga and Wolf<sup>2)</sup> confirm the author's earlier observation regarding the recency of what is known as "nationalism":

"This kind of nationalism does not seem to have meant much to the ordinary man in Europe before late in the 18th century, and in South Jutland (of which Schleswig forms a part) not much before 1830. If one had asked a local farmer before that time whether he was Danish or German, he would certainly have assured that he was Schleswigan."<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> Kaare Svalastoga and Preben Wolf, A town in Danish Borderland. *International Review of Community Development*, Rome, 1965, pages 27 - 48.

<sup>3)</sup> Svalastoga and Wolf, *op. cit.*, page 30.

According to Svalastoga and Wolf, the most important source of tension between Germans and Danes goes back to the second world war and the German military occupation of Denmark. Feelings were aroused because some of the German-speaking citizens of Denmark served the occupying enemy forces during the war, and so the bitterness was occasioned after the war when treasonable collaboration was punished. Bi-lingualism as such is no issue because most inhabitants of the border region know both languages. Svalastoga and Wolf report that 79 per cent of the Danish majority of the border town of Tønder understand German, and 66 per cent are able to speak it fluently. All members of the German minority are fluent in both languages so that here minority group status is primarily the result of attitudinal identification. It is most significant for the fluidity of the line that divides "Germans" from "Danes" in Tønder that Svalastoga and Wolf actually enumerate six specific criteria that serve to identify a German under the heading "He would be generally classified as German if:

- 1) He identifies with the German group;
- 2) Sends his children to a German school;
- 3) Regularly speaks German to his children;
- 4) Consistently prefers the German church service;
- 5) Consistently associates with the German group;
- 6) Votes for the minority party".<sup>4)</sup>

In view of the foregoing it is not surprising that Germans and Danes frequently attend cultural and church services and lectures in which one or the other language may be used, and that intermarriage between the groups is not rare. It is also not worthy that even though Denmark as a whole is nearly completely monolingual the Danish government bears 80 per cent of the construction costs of German-language schools and finances 80 per cent of their upkeep. It should be inserted that the Danish government pursued this policy even while Germany was deprived of all sovereignty under allied military occupation.

By way of contrast, governments in Central and Eastern Europe hardly ever contribute to the construction and the upkeep of the schools of linguistic minorities unless in response to political pressures from within or without.

It may also be inserted, also by way of contrast, that Czechs and Germans rarely attended joint events of any kind, including concerts and ball games, during the last years of the Austrian monarchy and during the first years of the Czechoslovakia republic. The Prague writer Egon Erwin Kisch tells in his autobiography about his experience as a reporter for a German-language paper in Prague before 1914. In his *Marktplace der Sensationen* he reports that he was reprimanded because he would place his calls with Czech telephone operators in Czech while he might have placed them in German and that Germans and Czechs were not only not playing on the same football team but that Czech and German teams would not play one another. (Instead, these teams endeavored to outscore one another in their games against outsiders.) Kisch also reports that the German and the Czech newspapers ignored cultural events of the

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<sup>4)</sup> Svalastoga and Wolf. *op. cit.*, page 42.



other language groups. Thus the German-language papers of Prague reported faithfully and in detail the arrival and departure of the Austrian Emperor but they never mentioned the Czech exhibition that he had come to open. Except for the incipient thaw in the late twenties and early thirties Czech-German relations were just as strained during the two decades of the Czechoslovakian republic. It is noteworthy that this bitter Czech-German conflict took place under the jurisdiction of governments, before 1914 in Vienna and after 1919 in Prague, that tried to accommodate the conflicting claims in order to preserve the political system in question.

The cooperation and harmony between the language groups in Alsace-Lorraine and North-Schleswig had its roots in the wide-spread bi-lingualism that has long blurred and continues to blur the boundaries between the two language groups.

The language situation between the Czechs and Germans was different. All educated Czechs had a good command of German and nearly all Czechs knew some German but the Germans did not agree readily to learn Czech. Thus civil service positions that were designated as bi-lingual went predominantly to bi-lingual Czechs. The German mono-lingual intelligentsia formed the vanguard of German chauvinism in their insistence upon mono-lingual (German-only) requirements for civil service positions. The Czechs, in turn, resented that they had to become bi-lingual for careers that were open to mono-lingual Germans. At times accommodation and sensible compromise solutions seemed to prevail but the extremists were constantly in evidence and they had the last word.

#### *The Canadian Case*

Canada's survival as a political system depends upon a successful accommodation of its language problem. So does Switzerland. So did the Habsburg monarchy and then the Czechoslovakian republic. It appears as the most fruitful perspective to view the state of Canadian English-French bi-lingualism as somewhere between the well-balanced French-German-Italian tri-lingualism of Switzerland and the poorly balanced (and by now upset) Czech-German bi-lingualism in imperial Austria at the turn of the century and the Czechoslovakian republic in the late twenties. In what ways does the Canadian case resemble the Swiss and in what ways the Czech-German?

Canadian bi-lingualism appears similar to Swiss tri-lingualism at the formal level because Canada's two languages enjoy equal legal status. In actual fact, however, the French Canadians are under much more compelling pressures to learn English than English Canadians are to learn French. Even in the heart of Quebec Province French Canadians need a command of English to get ahead while English speaking Canadians outside of Quebec are under next to no pressure at all to learn French. Mono-lingual English speakers in Quebec are a great deal less impeded in their careers than monolingual French speakers outside of Quebec. It is therefore not surprising that many more French Canadians know English than English Canadians know French just like many more Czechs knew German than Sudeten Germans ever knew Czech. Canadian bi-lingualism is as old as Canada itself but it has become a problem only recently.

At the time of the Conquest, religion outranked language as a divisive issue. It is noteworthy that the English-speaking Protestant critics of the Quebec Act objected

to the liberality of the stipulations on religion but did not take exception to those in French language. In the 18th century the eminence of French was not questioned, and those who aspired to public office and social acceptance among the well-bred had to learn it but religious tolerance was an issue.

Two developments combined to make Canadian bi-lingualism a problem. English has always outranked French within North America but for several generations French outranked English in the Western world as a whole. As a consequence Canadians of both language groups were under comparable pressures to learn another's language. Over the years, French gradually lost its place as the most important world language to English. This decreased the pressures upon English-speaking Canadians to learn French and increased the pressures upon French Canadians to learn English.

At the same time, industrialization and urbanization of Quebec Province has induced many Frenchmen to seek work in business and industry where the upper echelons are predominantly English. As a consequence, "French-speaking Canadians are under increasing pressures if they want to reach the upper echelons of management in white collar office settings".<sup>5)</sup>

E. C. Hughes documents the English dominance of industry in Quebec in some detail in his work on *French Canada in Transition*.<sup>6)</sup> In his chapter on "The Industrial Hierarchy" he presents a breakdown of the employees of a mill where over 85 per cent of the total number of employees are French but only 4 per cent of staff members above the rank of foremen and only 30.5 per cent of the foremen.

French Canadians resent the actual inequality between the languages all the more because this inequality is codified in differences in legal recognition at the provincial level that offsets the codified legal equality at the federal level. While English enjoys official recognition as the second language of Quebec French does not enjoy such recognition in the other provinces. Resentment about this is succinctly expressed in a letter to the editor of *SCIENCE*, a weekly published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, D.C. The writer is a professor of biology at the University of Ottawa.

"... If English dominance in the business affairs of Montreal is a major factor in French Canadian discontent, surely an equal strain upon Confederation is caused by the failure of legal recognition of the French language by the City of Ottawa, of which about half of the population is French speaking, and by the Government of Ontario. The latter is particularly important because Ottawa, unlike Washington, is not a federal district; it is part of the Province of Ontario, and it is subject to the laws of a predominantly English province".

"The new 1965 charter gives the University of Ottawa the specific duty 'to further bilingualism and biculturalism and to preserve and develop French culture in Ontario'. All students are required to study both French and English. Yet, almost all of the

<sup>5)</sup> Cited from Nathan Keyfitz, "Canadians and Canadians", *Queen's Quarterly*, LXX, summer 1963, pages 163-182, by Stanley Lieberman, "Bilingualism in Montreal: A Demographic Analysis", *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1965, Vol. 71, pages 10-25.

<sup>6)</sup> E. C. Hughes, *French Canada in Transition*. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1943.

*French speaking students become fluent in English, while relatively few of our English speaking students become fluent in French".*

"... The Faculty of Medicine was founded in 1945 with the intention of using the two languages interchangeably. This, however, proved to be a *vain hope*, because the *English speaking students generally did not have adequate command of French*". (Italics by the author of this paper)<sup>7)</sup>

These complaints by an English-speaking French Canadian university professor sound very much like analogous complaints registered by German-speaking Czechs in imperial Austria. The Austrian Czechs also resented the de-facto discrimination against their mother tongue.

The Germans, on their part, resisted requirements to learn Czech even in mixed language areas. As a consequence, positions that required bi-lingual competence nearly always went to Czechs. Similarly, the imposition of bi-lingualism in Canada at this time would, of course, favor the more frequently bi-lingual French Canadians over the predominantly mono-lingual English Canadians.

The prospects of English-French relationships in Canada, are, however, in many ways more auspicious than Czech-German relations have ever been. First of all, in Canada bi-lingualism has always been accepted as a matter of principle, and it rests upon well-rooted traditions. Also, and possibly even more important, it is less of an imposition for an English-speaking Canadian to learn French than it had ever been for a German to learn Czech. German has always been more of a world language than Czech while English and French are usually considered as world languages of comparable rank.

Two further aspects of Czech-German relations impeded peaceful accommodation that are missing happily from the Canadian situation. Austria's autocratic Habsburg regime had failed to permit traditions of and experience with responsible self-government to develop and take root while Canadians have generations of experience with the give-and-take of democratic politics. The Habsburg regime yielded to democratic aspirations for constitutional government only under the impact of defeat in war abroad and revolutionary pressures at home, and even then parliamentary government did not emerge from the shadows of autocratic tutelage. Autocracy, however, maintains law and order through the imposition of unwilling obedience. This gives rise to utopian aspirations and extremist ideologies which are most effectively discouraged in an atmosphere of free debate.

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7) Science, Washington D.C., Vol. 155, No. 3760, p. 265, January 20, 1967. A statistical illustration: Quebec Province and its largest city, Montreal, are predominantly French speaking. Yet it is the French Canadians who tend to become bilingual rather than the English Canadians: About 800,000 citizens of Montreal speak only French, about 500,000 speak only English, and about 750,000 are bilingual. Among the 1.4 million Montrealians whose mother tongue is French 60 per cent have remained monolingual; of the half million with an English mother tongue 93 per cent have remained monolingual. (The remainder of the bilingual in Montreal have either grown up bilingual or have a mother tongue other than English or French.) By contrast, in Moncton in New Brunswick, one third of the population is of French mother tongue and two thirds English. 90 per cent of those with a French mother tongue have learned English but only 4 per cent of those with English mother tongue have learned French. From Stanley Lieberman, "Bilingualism in Montreal: A Demographic Analysis", *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1965, Vol. 71, p. 18.

Finally, political pressures from across the borders provided subversive extremists in Austria-Hungary and then in Czechoslovakia with encouragement that is lacking in Canada. Neither France on one side nor the British Commonwealth or the United States on the other are ever likely to encourage Canadian ultras on either side of the language question. Conversely, Czech and German chauvinists were always able to derive encouragement as spearheads of pan-Slavic or pan-German movements even when their popularity among their people was at a low ebb.

The history of Czech-German relations shows at the same time that the potential of the uncompromising extremists must never be underestimated. Their discipline, militancy and their capacity for action provide them with a political leverage far in excess of their actual numbers. They are able to intimidate the moderates even when they are hopelessly outnumbered because moderates usually have a distaste for strife and commotion of any kind. Also, in times of crisis moderates may even support extremists at the polls. Such support is not meant as an endorsement of extremism but is intended to induce the other side to yield more. (Thus numerous Sudeten Germans have assured the author that they had voted for the pan-Germans in the thirties to obtain bigger concessions from the Czechs rather than to disrupt the republic. While such expressions of motives cannot be validated in retrospect they probably contain a fair measure of truth).

Observations of group conflict have confirmed consistently that the marginal element of the conflicting groups appears invariably as the driving force behind the escalation from minor disagreements to bitter battles. This has been recorded by observers in large scale conflicts, and it has been analyzed in detail in small group experiments. Once conflict has been escalated beyond a certain point the moderates, even when they are the overwhelming majority, become combatants in spite of themselves. They become the pawns of developments that they may have arrested by facing up to the marginal trouble makers in their own midst. Compromise solutions are bound to be unattractive, and they are unlikely to inspire a great deal of enthusiasm when extremist demands are easily formulated and readily propagated.

### *Conclusion*

Multi-lingualism becomes an issue only through conflicting claims for official recognition. The history of Central Europe shows that such conflict over official recognition of different languages may disrupt political systems, and some of the multi-lingual developing countries appear to be on the verge of repeating the experiences of Central Europe. On the other hand, the examples of Switzerland, North-Schleswig, and Alsace-Lorraine show that problems of multi-lingualism may be resolved peacefully. Conflict over multi-lingualism does not, of course, appear in isolation. Differences of religion, racial tensions, class conflict, and foreign relations are apt to be involved in varying degrees, and they have to be taken into account in the study of individual cases. Our comparative analysis of instances of multi-lingualism in Europe and North America suggests, nevertheless, certain general propositions regarding this problem area.

Multi-lingualism is not an issue

in agrarian societies that are predominantly illiterate under elites that share a lingua franca;  
in societies about to absorb multi-lingual immigrant groups as long as no claims for official recognition of alternate languages appear;  
when contending language groups are territorially separated so that they may be served by their own mono-lingual institutions;  
when at least the educated of all language groups know the languages of their fellow citizens; this is likely when the languages in question are world languages of comparable rank or when the language of higher rank within the political system is of lesser rank abroad, provided that no irridentist pressures are exerted from across the border.

Multi-lingualism is a source of conflict within political systems  
only in industrial urban societies where official recognition of languages affects careers in and services provided by public institutions;  
when members of different language groups are under unequal pressures to learn the languages of the others; this is the case when the most important language within the political system is also the most important abroad;  
when the direction and/or intensity of pressures to learn the language of the other group or groups is changing.  
Tensions over official recognition of languages are compounded by class conflict, religious disputes, racial strife, and by foreign relations.