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## “Chalupáři” and the German Heritage in Czechoslovakia

This paper is based on broader research that examines the influence of formerly German material objects in Slovakia and Czechia on relationships between new and old populations in post-displacement Central Europe. It explores whether materiality can function as a bridge between these groups.

These questions form the basis of an ongoing research project, *Recycling the German Ghosts: Resettlement Cultures in Poland, Czechia, and Slovakia after 1945*, conducted at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences.

The research team employs archival and ethnographic methods to analyze how new inhabitants managed confiscated property, including public institutions, material heritage, buildings, and everyday objects, in northern Bohemia (Sudetenland), central Slovakia (Hauerland), and Pomerania in western Poland.

This paper examines the phenomena that shaped practices of engaging with formerly German materiality in the unique context of former Czechoslovakia. Beginning in the 1960s, chalupáři, or cottage owners, re-populated and re-used places, houses, and objects that were initially considered unattractive by the first generation of settlers. Archival sources indicate that, in the immediate post-war era, specific objects or houses—particularly those symbolizing the modern lifestyle of the urban upper middle class—were in high demand. In contrast, houses in peripheral regions containing objects of different aesthetics were often abandoned or deliberately destroyed from the late 1940s onward.

The rise of consumerism and increased car ownership, accompanied by changes in leisure activities, enabled a broader segment of Czechoslovak society to acquire second homes. The borderlands, where confiscated houses in mountainous regions were available at low cost, became central to this

new era of chalupaření, which was associated with an emerging appreciation for traditional and vintage rural architecture. This trend renewed the popularity of objects and houses confiscated approximately twenty years earlier from expelled Czech and Slovak Germans. The new generation of Czechoslovak chalupáři was typically aware of the historical context of their second homes and was the first to attribute historical value to these properties, viewing themselves as custodians of German heritage and culture in Czechoslovakia.

To illustrate this thesis, the paper presents case studies of the village of Hadviga (formerly Hadwig) in central Slovakia and several villages in the northernmost regions of Czechoslovakia. In doing so, the research aims to provide a perspective on Czechoslovak history and memory that acknowledges the distinctions between Czechia and Slovakia.

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