**Ep234 - Czech soldiers in WW1 - Dr Jiri Hutečka.mp3**

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:00:19] Welcome to mentioned in Dispatches. The podcast on the Western Front Association with me, Dr. Tom Thorpe. The WFA is the UK's largest great war history society. We are dedicated to furthering understanding of the First World War and how around 6000 members worldwide. For more information, visit our website at Western Front Association dot com. It is the 6th of December 2021, and this is it followed 234 on today's Dispatches podcast. I talk to historian Dr. Eugene, who Tecca, an associate professor at the University of Credits Travel over in the Czech Republic. He talks about his recent book on the morale and motivation of Czech soldiers during the Great War. This book is published by Back on Book. I spoke to Yuji from his home in the Czech Republic. Hi Yuji, welcome to the podcast. Could you start by telling us about yourself and how you became interested in the motivation and morale of Czech soldiers in the First World War?

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:01:26] Uh huh. Uh, how. Hi, Tom. I'm. First of all, thanks a lot for having me here. My name is usually a rich guy, and. I'm currently associate professor at a small but lovely university right in the middle of Central Europe. The university where on scroll or categorize as it's as it's known in English speaking world. Uh I specialize in modern military history. Always was interested in modern military history, but always was interested in approaching it in, in a different way than it's usually been done. And I got to this topic through my early studies into the US Civil War and where I basically learned that there's plenty of interesting methodology that can be applied to studying warfare. And I ended up realizing that none of these metallurgy was actually ever used in historical writing on Czech military history. So I sort of went and tried to search for interesting topics and check militaries and check modern military history and check speaking soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army are sort of they are, of course, a theme in Czech culture. We know or know the good soldier shrink thing. And but I realized that they were barely ever a subject to serious study because most of day I'd just stereotyped as, you know, really bad soldiers sabotaging the Austrian war effort, being really anti antiwar. And whenever there was a historical debate about them, even among scholars, it's always about loyalty, but never about their military experience, the war experience, the they were never studied as soldiers. And because I was interested in general history, I realized that gender history could be really useful in actually analyzing the question not just about loyalty, but about the military experience itself. And so I ended up asking the question, is really masculinity a useful tool or useful, useful perspective to analyze, analyze military experience? And not many really. There are plenty, of course, that have plenty of history. So gender history of joint histories of First World War, general histories of Central Europe in the First World War, Austrian and so on. But very rarely gender historians go and study warfare, study soldiers, studied combat, and very rarely military historians, even those who are interested in motivation, morale, use the perspective of gender in studying this topic so that the whole final idea was sort of to connect these two perspectives and bring in and try to figure out whether it can be really useful in studying the case of Czech soldiers in the First World War.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:04:50] Now before we get into the detail, could you just give us a bit of background on the JE on the political status of the geographical area that is now known as the Czech Republic and indeed the area of the country that you are speaking from. What was it in 1914?

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:05:08] Oh. Where do we start? It's very. It's complicated. Everything's complicated about Central Europe. But, of course. What do we talk about historically is the so-called bohemian croplands or the lands of the Bohemian crown? Basically, Bohemian Arabia, most turnstiles here, which is the lines that are ignited by the flag. And whoever holds the crown of the king of Bohemia is sort of rules these three historical lands. And of course, never since 16th century it was the birds who held the crown of kings of Arabia. Therefore they ruled these lands. And over, over centuries, they sort of succeeded in stripping, stripping these lands of most of their autonomy and replacing them with sort of enlightened centralism. And by the end of the 19th century and then throughout the 19th century, liberal constitutional monarchy is also the conduit ends up being in the late 19th century. So what then? Of course, we met the bohemian from lands are located in the western part of Austria-Hungary, in the Austrian part of the dual monarchy. So this is Austria really, and part of the Austrian park of monarchy, or so-called Slovenia, as it was called those days. And why? One thing that has to be emphasized here, as in these lands in connection with the topic of my book, they are not in any way. Czech lands ethnically. The Czech Republic today is really after the 20th century was basically ethnically cleansed. And so it's like 98% Czech. But, you know, early 20th century, it was really multi-ethnic, multi lingual space as it was the whole empire and bohemian lands were basically the same. So Czech speakers are the majority here, but only about one third of the population actually spoke different languages or different first language because the census was not asking people about nationality, it was asking people out of the first language. Most of the minority in bohemian lands were Germans or German speakers, but hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps a million, were bilingual or even multilingual. And even today, historians sort of debate the the the really one of the big issues in Central European history these days is the question of indifferent national indifference. So we really are not sure how many of those people who subscribed to be Czech or German felt to be Czech or German. But what we know for sure and was quite obvious by 1914 through to education because of the educational system was so thoroughly nationalized and so on. Most people, especially in big cities and especially in the in the middle class, a level and higher with better educated people, felt sort of identifying, being Czech, German, Polish or or whatever. But this most of the time, these identities never really they they didn't stand in opposition to Austrian patriotism. So it was in 1914, it was very much possible to feel Czech and to feel Austrian at the same time. It was not they were not opposites. But one of the things that the Great War did was not just to the soldiers. It was for most of the people in the region, was that it sort of split this this structure of identities and the national identity or class identities or even local identities suddenly started to stand opposite, increasingly opposite to Austrian patriotism and sort of the unity of the whole of the feeling of being a member or a subject to the for this whole great empire ever paraded during the war.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:09:43] So what was the Czech military contribution to the Austro-Hungarian army during the war and where did the majority of of Czech speaking soldiers serve during that conflict?

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:09:55] I'll check. Contribution sort of uh, was uh, according to the statistics and we read done. The army didn't keep statistics of nationalities and they didn't use the statistics to actually account for nationalities that of did. But we have sort of we can use the language statistics and we have we have only sort of rough estimates here, but we know that about one and a half million men from bohemian lands served in Austrian Hungarian army, enlisted during the war. And based on peacetime language statistics, we estimate that about 1 million of them spoke Czech as their primary language. Out of those, actually, more than 100,000 died in the war and about 200,000 were ended up permanently disabled by the end of the war. Czech soldiers served in all capacities and also Hungarian army with all weapons. Before this, during this podcast and checked the Czech the some statistics, they were surprisingly overrepresented with cavalry units a little bit, but in general checks were sort of the average Austrian soldier. So there was about 12, 12 to 11 to 13% of Czechs in the infantry, in artillery, even even in the Navy, because Czech, they were bohemian lines were sort of the engineering powerhouse of the empire. They were the industrial heartland of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. So there was plenty of engineering education and plenty of Czech sailors, even though Czech lands or bohemian lands had no, no, no, no access to sea serve in the Austro-Hungarian navy throughout the war in the Mediterranean. And so and so because because it being this average Austrian soldier, they surfed all over the place. So it's the eastern front end of 1914 till 1917. They did the Serbian front, 1914 until 1916, the Balkans later on, basically sort of the security borderline and turning into a frontline in 1918 in the Balkans, of course, the Italian from the in the Dolomites and the Alps in after 9th May 1915. But you can find Chick, Austria, Czech soldiers in Austro-Hungarian uniform on the Western Front with some divisions led to the German army in 1918 and even into Palestine, where a detachment of artillery Austria-Hungary actually served along with the Ottoman Army in 1916, 1917. So they were really all over the place. And of course, one thing that always has to be mentioned, because it's the Czech experience that makes it into the textbooks, is that we had the Czechoslovak Legion, which was the sort of a cornerstone of the church. The Czech nationalists are sort of project of Czech independence. That's really minority of Czech politicians who went into exile in 1914. The elite, led by Tomas Masaryk, sort of came up with the idea that this war will reach national independence. So they ended up sort of supporting the creation of exile army. And this exile army was the Czechoslovak Legion. But just as a comparison, only 90,000 soldiers enlisted into the Czechoslovak Legion over the course of the war, while, as I mentioned, 1 million served in the Austria-Hungary Army. So the Czechoslovak Legion was never really, you know, the majority experience for vast numbers of check Czech veterans or Czech men.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:14:12] So what is the predominant historiography around Czech soldiers combat motivation during the Great War?

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:14:20] Oh well, it's because I mentioned that you guys lot obedience. So the dominant dystrophy is really based on explaining this, you know, the difference between the myth and the reality. So we have the Czechoslovak Legion, which of course is the cornerstone of the Independent Republic after 1918. But then we have to explain away the fact that most Czech soldiers actually serve in the in their own army. And so the sort of the easy explanation, everybody's sort of most okay with the story was that they served because they are forced forced to do so. And they were serving as really, really bad soldiers, good soldiers, fakes, sabotaging the war effort and basically waiting to destroy at a first the first moment possible. And this was a narrative that was pushed forward by the sort of official narrative of Czechoslovak public memory in 1920s. And it was the official narrative of all the exile politicians during the war, of course, because they needed evidence to support their claim for independence with the great power. So they were basically telling everyone the Czechs are sort of being forced to serve in a war they don't want. And so ironically, the same narrative was pushed by forward by German Austrian nationalists in Austria-Hungary, because for them this narrative was and was the sort of supporting evidence to keep Czech nationalists from away from political parity of of any sort. So this was a narrative that emerged during the war and it was really sort of subscribed to by everyone in 1920s, 1930s. The veterans were not really not always happy with it, but nobody really cared about their opinion. And the communist historiography only sort of switched the position. So for the communist historiography, the result was the same. Czech soldiers didn't want to serve in Austria-Hungary, always wanted to desert, but not because they were Czech nationalists, but because of their class consciousness, because this was the imperialist war for us. And only after 1990. It is a debate about loyalty. It really sort of balanced itself out, but it was always about loyalty. So the historiography of Czech soldiers motivation was always about asking questions whether they were loyal or not. So this is just something you really get the gut into English. English speaking historiography. For most of the 20th century, whenever you read a book on Austria-Hungary and in a Great War and checks are mentioned, that may mainly the first moment they are there. It always goes to the issue of loyalty and whether they be loyal or not. And then some some of those past decade or two started to question basic, you know, the basic stereotype of disloyal Czechs we have works by Richard lying so uncovered the the way Austria did in Hungary Austria-Hungary army mishandled some of the some of the famous cases of mass desertions. Our books by Alex Swanson Mark Cornwall who really started to change the narrative a little bit, put it into context, but from my point of view, Czech soldiers really deserved to be sort of studied as soldiers first and only Czechs as second, because that was never really done. So that was that was the motivation behind my book, really.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:18:27] Which leads me onto conveniently onto the next question from your research, what did you find that motivated Czech combatants?

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:18:36] Well. Mostly I would say it could be we can apply this to many soldiers throughout, you know, throughout the Great War, everywhere. But there are some, you know, local differences, so to speak, and or difference. And based on culture and based on the situation, of course, in in Central Europe at the time. And one thing that I have to say sort of first is that it's really class and education dependent and which, of course, sort of skews the perspective of the sources, because most of the sources we have is comes from the more educated soldiers. So they tend to be more national places, of course, especially with the memoirs, because the memoirs are American postwar, when we all know how it ended up, Austria-Hungary is no more. So the memoirs tend to be more nationalistic than diaries, for example. And but in general, I would say that initially the motivation to enlist and was not really about any kind of any kind of enthusiasm for the war. There was very, very little true enthusiasm on the part of the Czech speaking population. There was more happening with the German speaking population in German, Bohemia and Moravia, but still it was for most. There was some moments of, you know, Czech public or people gathering on the streets and even singing some patriotic songs and Czech that happened. And but that was mostly sort of this support for the state in a moment of crisis. So in 1914, everybody sort of understood, okay, the bad thing a bad thing happened to our to the successor to a hard thrown. The state goes to war. It's something for its citizens to do is to, you know, to support the state. It's nothing to be debated. So it really the initial initial moderation was something like passive acceptance of reality or general general consent, I would say consent that led to very quick enlistment. And then, of course, this leads to massive social pressure and that I found this probably the most important motivation, the social pressure. Everybody's pressuring everybody like there is nobody there's been no one who's trying to hide away somewhere in it, at least initially. And so this this general common interest creates this sense of cohesion that everybody you know, everybody as one soldier actually wrote in his diary. Everybody's going, so I have to go to. There's no way to debate that. And of course, initially in 1914, the big the big topic is that the disbelief that there will be no war, really, because we have to realize this is the fourth, third or fourth mobilization of Austro-Hungarian army in six years. So the Austro-Hungarian army is mobilizing for war very, very often, and it never ended up in a war before. So why should it be different now? Of course, this was very shortly in hopes. And then after the war started, most people actually believed that this is going to be a short war, probably a terrible war, but still a short course that didn't work out. And when the soldiers were sort of serving on through the war and this we talking about a sustaining motivation, what sustained them in the service. I'd say that the the constant sort of increasing they gave way to. Coercion of Biden like institution, of course, went on the side of from the part of the army, a sort of associated coercion that everybody was coerced to stay in the ranks and felt crushed to stay there. And of course, this was a result of the increasing, you know, the casualties. War fatigue and exhaustion, general exhaustion, the miserable conditions in the army, where the logistics of Austria-Hungary army was increasingly bad. So soldiers were literally starving by 1917. And in 1918, basically the only thing they talk about in their personal columns is, you know, searching for food or having no food. And the bad treatment by the army would probably get to it later on. So this sort of created this feeling that this that the disillusionment and probably demonization. So the initial motivation turn into a demand evasion. But at the end but even though it even even if we realize the situation was this bad is really surprising that most of these guys. Served on grudgingly with sort of deep disillusionment and very demotivated, served on until like late summer or early fall of 1918. Most of them still stayed in the ranks as very passive, very disinterested, and I would say mentally divorced soldiers divorced from the Austro-Hungarian war effort late in 1918. And it's not very special to Czech soldiers, I'd say, but they had their reasons to be even more disillusioned. But in 1918, most Austria-Hungary soldiers don't really care how the war will end. Only for it to end. So if it. But it's if it's surprising in the case of object to object to, we would for example expect for them to hope that Austria-Hungary will be no more and there will be new, new beginning of some sort. There's still, I'd say, most of them in the spring of 1919, for example, hope for the final offensive on the people ever to succeed, because that would mean the war will be over and when the offensive doesn't succeed. So they hope for for Austria-Hungary to lose because the war will be over. So whatever brings the war to its end as a good thing in 1918.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:25:33] And did you find that sort of societal and cultural influences underpinned their motivation? I'm thinking about social norms or ideas of masculinity or gender. Did you think those were important?

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:25:46] All right. As I was asking, why these men did these men fight until the very end? They so often. Like most of them didn't deserve they didn't deserve it. Most of them stayed and rings if they survived. And it, of course, led me to these underlying factors. And first, it had actually shown itself in the initial motivational issue and free, for example, for a young soldier, as it's obvious, quite obvious that young soldiers. Treat military service in a different way than soldiers with families, with established careers and basically established life stories. So this is about sort of the masculine life story being produced. And for young soldiers who were on the sort of on the verge of enlistment, many of them, actually. Talk about the situation in terms of attaining full manhood because it's quite obvious the same all over Europe. I think that when war comes in 1914, the society and the social norms change. So the suddenly masculinity is becomes identified with military service and whatever is not military service is not really masculine. So for men to attain masculinity or keep it even keep it meant to be able to live. Ideally to don a uniform. And if not to be able to explain why they are. Nothing new for me happened throughout Bohemia, for example, with workers in factories having some rough time explaining, explaining on the streets to people like why my son is in the army fighting in the front a different way. You guys are not. And for example, factory workers who were of course, spared military service because of their skilled work, for example, in and munitions factories they had this experience so for many soldiers actually mentioned is like. If I want to be treated as a man, everybody who's a man is doing this. So I want to be a man. So masculinity becomes sort of an ideological tool that is used in propaganda. Of course, that's propaganda. Posters are always working with this topic and it ends up working even with those soldiers who otherwise we don't subscribe to, to the, you know, the more obvious political marketing tools, so to speak. And then I then Matt, speaking about masculinity, I felt that it sort of ended up propping up the sustaining motivation as well because it sort of helped the group dynamics of creating the wartime comradeship, as they call it, or the camaraderie among the school in the primary group, which sort of, first of all, enabled men to be. To stay being man and still survive psychologically and emotionally survive. War so they could express emotions. For example, they could be dependent on others, which is something really not really manly or refined in saying on the century and expressed their dependance to their comrades because they are comrades. So they have this very special relationship and it sort of created the dynamic of cohesion within primary groups. And if there was a good leader who sort of was able to join this dynamic and in the right direction, that really, really worked out for for the Army, of course, it could work out the opposite direction. And it was increasingly like this in this case that the the. Primary group interests are increasingly running against the interests of the Army. And the other thing, of course, was the massive casualties then to destroy these primary groups very often. So this really this. These dynamics ended up sort of being dysfunctional at bay within the Australian Army because of the pressures of the war and the situation the Indigenous find themselves in. Most had been destroyed at the end. So this motivational potential masculinity was sort of doubtful because sometimes it worked the opposite way actually. And I found that these norms of masculinity work against so it just motivation. For example when men entered the service. It ended up even though they did it for it with the idea of keeping their masculine status, they ended up realizing that then the whole character of class and connected with gender hierarchies. So the hierarchy of power from peacetime society was really upturned into a new, completely different hierarchy in the army, where people who were, you know, supposedly respectable gentlemen but are suddenly being commanded by these brutes in educated who were given power to command other people. And this was sort of creates this massive dynamic, this dynamics of increasing complaints, and it's sort of similar in many other military structures. But with Czechs, it was really even more difficult because for them it was very often being commanded by people who were increasingly nationalists, German, Hungarian reserve officers who got in place, the career officers who died early in the war. And these people sort of projected the nationalist optics into the treatment of the soldiers, which, of course, the soldiers then projected these national optics into the grievances that they felt on the other side, that the whole situation was very damaging to masculinity as well. So modern warfare, of course, doesn't lend itself very well to improving one's masculine statutes through any kinds of heroics. Basically, this very harrowing experience making man into passive targets. And one of the things I found throughout the book and in all of the topics I covered, was that about there's this sort of underlying sense of losing control and losing power. And modern masculinity is basically based base structure around power and around control, over oneself, over other people. And what these soldiers experience is that they lose all this drinking during their military service. They lose it in combat. They know they have no control about the way they will die. They have no control about the way they will be. They would be wounded. They have no way to do anything about it. In a war where 70% of war wounds are caused by drought, by artillery. And the same way they lose control and power to to people, they disrespect to people who they feel disrespect them. So it's and this ended up sort of underlying the sense of disillusionment, not just the situations where we have nothing to eat, but it's really it's really uncomfortable from the point of view of staying. Man, this was really one topic that really was very mentioned very often was the very odd consequence the war had for one's body and of war and very often here. So just really even those who are not really vocal that much about it, they really used the language of masculinity when they talk about their own body and the way the war basically disfigure is mutilates or destroys their body, not just through, you know, through wounds. But for example, again, we go back to the horrible supply situation. Most of them are in 1918 complaining that they just don't look like men in 1918 because they are. The average weight in some units was about 50 kilograms and because these guys were literally starving. So they feel really emasculated physically by war and. This emasculation with us going back to social and societal norms and societal context was even made worse when they realized that the same situation was happening back home with the economy of Austria-Hungary basically crumbling in ever since 1917 and their families are starving back home, back home. And there they are supposed to be the, you know, the breadwinners, the protectors of their families. There was part of the. Official propaganda in this war. You should protect your families against these barbarians. From the east was part of Austrian propaganda. So they are protecting their families. But the families are dying of starvation back home. How? How does it make sense? Like, how does it really get? Can they blame them? Increasingly, they complain that basically it's impossible to be a good soldier. And supposedly man. And it's possible it's impossible to be a good father and and supposedly a man, for example. And of course, it all it's more complicated. They are losing control over their wives and basically women back home. The big topic being women taking over the responsibilities, masculine responsibilities, supposedly in the gender order. And in case these women are successful, it makes the soldiers feel redundant. And if they're not successful, it makes them feel desperate because they want to go home and help their family. So. And this is one of the for example, I didn't really do too much research into the issue of desertion, but it seems like the key role in deserting was basically this sense of preserving oneself for his for his loved ones, basically trying to go home and be trying to survive. Of course, the survival instinct and about going home to survive for someone and possibly to help out back home as much as it was possible. So this was really something that really undermined and this was really a double edged sword that it sort of could motivate, you know, propaganda used it to motivate the soldiers. And soldiers were kept in contact as much as possible with their families through mail and leaves home lives and so on. But, of course, they were kept in contact with the increasing and dire situation at home. So that ended up being damaging, damaging to their sense of masculinity. I don't say that this is was this the the issue of gender was really, you know, the key issue here. But it's always sort of in the background of all the other issues we talk about here right now.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:38:24] And my penultimate question is what impacted the policies and efforts of the Austro-Hungarian state and Austro-Hungarian army have have on improving or degrading the morale, the motivation of Czech soldiers in its service.

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:38:40] Well, they put and everything they did made it worse. Made it worse for everyone at the end for the Army. And these were for the soldiers. Well, and for all the soldiers, basically. But Austria-Hungary army was very bad at H r and it was very bad H regarding minority groups and Czech speaking tools was probably the largest singled out minority that was conceived or perceived to be different. And because the army was Django and Army was always paranoid about internal dissent and it was a big problem in the revolution 1848 1849. So for decades after the revolution, the Hungarians were considered to be, you know, the worst. Possible possible dissenters. But with the increasingly nationalist politics in Austria-Hungary later in the 19th century, and especially Austro-Hungarian after the Austro-Hungarian compromise, the Hungarians became the, you know, the the defendants of the compromise because it was very beneficial to them. So other groups became suspect even before the war. For example, the Austro-Hungarian army didn't really believe Czech check conscripts would show up in 1914, so it changed the mobilization plans. And mobilizing another Army Corps from states from Syria. So they so they could replace the checks. Who would not show up? Of course they showed up and everybody was surprised. But the moment the first defeats came late, late in 1914, of course, everybody was starting to search for scapegoats. And these scapegoats were sort of already at hand because they were the suspect nationalities, as they call them. So as an illustration, I always use the way patriotic songs were treated by the Army, because when the when the regiments were were marching to the train stations in August 1914, the Czech dominated, German dominated regiments were singing their own songs in German. Czech dominated regiments were singing their own songs. In Czech, for example, they were singing No of Morning, which is the current national anthem of Czech Republic and the national anthem of future Czechoslovakia in 1914. But it was a Czech patriotic song, and they were allowed to do that. They were marching through the streets, singing that song, and it was okay because it was a patriotic song. And October, I think October or November, 1914, it was banned. To sing this, especially this, this song, or as yet any other song in check. So for Czech soldiers, for example, this this made it made it really difficult to be patriotic because you basically were not allowed to be patriotic in Czech language, because Czech language made you suspect the situation got much worse after the spring 1915, supposed mass desertions of the 28th Regiment and then the 36th Regiment of Infantry on the Eastern Front. They were numbering desertions, but the army was really sort of again, we're talking about scapegoats here. So something went wrong. And to blame someone else, the local commanders basically blamed the Czechs. And it sort of ballooned into a huge affair. The regiment was publicly disbanded, which never happened in Austria-Hungary. I get an army in the past 300 years and because of this checks were increasingly sort of being seen as the traitors. Even by the public, by the general public. So speaking in public children check language as a soldier would give you some really aren't into some uncomfortable situations people would laugh and laugh and you would you know, show up their hands in the air that you're. Yeah, you're a traitor, right? And of course, the officers were increasingly reserve officers. I mentioned replacements for the career officers. They were increased coming from nationalist background very often. So they they were treating Czech soldiers even worse. And this created a sort of, you know, vicious circle of. The sense of lack of respect and a lack of respect for the sacrifice they were doing, especially with the better educated Czech soldiers, because they expected to be respected for what they were doing for Austria-Hungary. One of them said, Well, we didn't want this war or we didn't care about it, so to speak, but we still fought in this war. We still died in this war. And what what we got, what we got for it was, you know, being called traitors. And so this cause this was very slow, but not quite the burn slaying slope of increased disillusionment and increasing increasingly the antiwar attitudes. It was sort of common to everyone, but this antiwar attitude to Czech soldiers was increasingly and tight and Austrian in the sense that Australia is the country that basically disdained it, failed its soldiers, by the way that it treated them. So this while this general demoralization was a tendency that's obvious with everybody in the Austro-Hungarian army towards the end of the war, which I it's sort of even more more obvious because that this added insult to injury, so to speak.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:45:00] And my final question is, where can people learn more about your book and your research?

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:45:06] Well, the books and of course, if you're into the listeners, would be interested in reading something out of my book. And it sort of the introduction is freely available on the publisher's website to brag I'm bookscan where you can buy the book. And under my I was thinking of a where actually I'm thinking about where my work is sort of easily available. And probably the best way to do it would be just to visit the research gay economy or academia and add up the profiles I have and there are some of my articles that I wrote in English are either available there and freely or a reference there. Recently I published two articles last year an article on Czech, basically the way Czech soldiers demobilized after the First World War and how they interpreted the experience in context of being re mobilized into Czechoslovak service. Because Czechoslovakia was of course basically born out of war against its own population, against Hungary and against Poland. So many of these soldiers we speak of, we talk about they came home and were basically. Pushed into service along the Czechoslovak legions fighting in Slovakia against Hungary and so on. So this is an article about this postwar experience and the way it worked as a part of the effort to. Reconfigure the public memory of the First World War. Basically, the veterans trying to point out that they fought for Czechoslovakia, too. Another article I have is that was just it's just recently been published. It is on a it's in a collection of. On languages at war. It's a really interesting collection on language issues in various armies and the First World War published by Bloomsbury this spring. And I have a I have a piece there on Czech soldiers. And what I particularly talked about here is that the way language was increasingly used against them, their own language was used against them, and how this sort of misuse of language policies by the Austrian Guardian Army led to, well, realizing the need soldiers to realize that they are, after all, Czechs. So that's it. And I'm going to actually my future work will be potentially interesting, too, because I am currently preparing a project on the home front in my home town of L.A., where I live, which was a fortress ex fortress garrison town. And really what happened during the first war in Central Arabia and it's really interesting case of, you know, a large garrison German dominated town with but German but German speaking leads but general population being increasingly Czech. And so this national class and sort of structural conflict that happened that that was the potential was here and that sort of got to the surface during the war. So the wartime history almost is something that I'm really interested in these days.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:48:56] Yuji, thank you very much for your time.

**Dr Jiri Hutečka** [00:48:59] Thank you, John, for your time and for having me here on this fascinating podcast. Thank you.

**Dr Tom Thorpe** [00:49:11] You have been listening to the Mentioned in Dispatches podcast from the Western Front Association with me, Tom Thorpe. Thank you all my guests for appearing on this edition. The Theme Music for this podcast with George Butterworth, The Banks of Green, when he was performed by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, conducted by Chris Rissman and produced by BIS Records. This recording is part of a collection of orchestral works by Butterworth, performed by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and supported by the Western Front Association. This is available from all cubical source under the record code B.S. 2195. Until next time.