Contradictions in Terms?
The Relationship Between Czech and Austrian German Liberalism in the Late Habsburg Empire

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Treating Czech and Austrian German liberalism as two manifestations of essentially the same political phenomenon has not been commonplace in the existing literature on Austrian politics in the late Habsburg Empire. General accounts of late Habsburg history, as well as specialist literature on nineteenth-century liberalism, have almost invariably interpreted liberalism in Austria as primarily, if not exclusively the concern of Austrian Germans.[1] In Robert A. Kann's classic study of the history of the Habsburg Empire, the very notion of a Czech liberalism appears to be almost a contradiction in terms. Kann interprets Austrian politics – at least in the 1860s and 1870s – as a conflict between German liberalism and Slav (including Czech) conservatism. This "discrepancy of political ideologies" is said to have continued during the Taaffe regime of the 1880s, which Kann describes as "mainly based on German clerical conservative and Czech and Polish conservative support." With Taaffe, we are told, "not only German liberalism but liberalism altogether, seen as a powerful ideology, had permanently disappeared from the Austrian political scene."[2]

Political antagonisms are thus perceived as closely correlated to national ones, with the Germans representing liberalism and the Czechs (or Slavs) conservatism, reaction, or just 'nationalism', a description seemingly making any further investigation into the ideological

[1] See for instance the contributions on liberalism in Austria by Klaus Koch, Harm-Hinrich Brandt, and Lothar Höbelt in Dieter Langewiesche (ed.), Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich (Göttingen 1988). Only Brandt even mentions the non-German nationalities of Cisleithania, but not as communities worth analyzing in the context of nineteenth century European liberalism. By contrast, the anthology contains two contributions on Hungarian liberalism. Robin Okey, The Habsburg Monarchy (New York 2001) represents an exception to the rule, as Okey devotes due attention to liberalist trends among the Czechs and other Slavic nationalities. See for instance p. 135, 183, 216-20.

[2] Robert A. Kann, A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918 (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1977), 330, 361. Pieter Judson has convincingly challenged the conventional image of a total demise of Austrian-German liberalism after 1879, as also the view that liberalism in Austria was an import lacking domestic roots or a genuine social hinterland, but even in Judson's subtle analysis liberal politics in the Austrian Empire is treated as an exclusively German Austrian domain. Pieter M. Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914 (Ann Arbor 1996).

profile of Czech politicians superfluous.[3] This paradigm can be traced all the way back to the pre-First World War historiography on the Empire,[4] and ultimately to the Austrian German liberals themselves, who from 1848 until the collapse of the Empire stuck firmly by the belief that there could be no liberal opposition to the Austrian German cause. Even at a time when traditional Austrian German liberalism had long been pushed in the defensive by more radical political mass movements, the leading German liberal paper, the Viennese Neue Freie Presse (nicknamed the 'Neue Freche Presse' by Czechs), interpreted everything, including the Czech-German antagonism, "in a spirit which was 'German' and 'universalist liberal', for to the Neue Freie Presse these qualities were indistinguishable."[5]

The Austrian German liberal discourse construed its argument on the impossibility of a non-German national liberalism as a refined 'Catch 22': if a Czech (or any other representative of a minor nation, at least in the 'Cisleithanian' part of the Empire) made any claims to national equality with the Germans, and in particular to the equality of their languages, it only testified to the parochial horizon and non-reasonable nature of the claimant, and hence to his lack of entitlement to full political rights, since manifestations of reason and enlightenment in the Austrian public sphere required the use of the German tongue. From an Austrian German

[3] Harm-Hinrich Brandt briefly describes the Old Czechs as mere clients of the feudal conservative Bohemian nobility, while the Young Czechs are said to be building on some undefined "liberal-democratic tradition of Czechhood," which however is put entirely in the service of nationalism. Harm-Hinrich Brandt, "Liberalismus in Österreich zwischen Revolution und Großer Depression" in Langewiesche, Liberalismus, 149, 155. Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries also mostly refers to Czech politicians simply as nationalists.

[4] Richard Charmatz, the preeminent pre-war historiographer of Austria's most recent history, recognizes that Palacký and Rieger represented a liberal, 'bürgerlich', party in the Czech nation, but he interprets their alliance of the early 1860s with the federalist (in Charmatz's terms 'feudal') faction of the Bohemian aristocracy as a betrayal of liberal principles. He also calls the Old Czech German language newspaper, Politik "the paper of the Czech feudals", and describes the coalition supporting Taaffe in 1879 as consisting of "179 feudals, clericals and Slavic nationalists." The Young Czechs of the late 1880s are called "pro-freedom-democratic" ("freiheitlich-demokratisch"), but not liberal. Richard Charmatz: Österreichs innere Geschichte von 1848 bis 1895, 3 edn. Leipzig 1918, Vol. 1, 54-55, 114, Vol. 2, 40, 54.

[5] Steven Beller, "German Liberalism, Nationalism and the Jews: The Neue Freie Presse and the German-Czech Conflict in the Habsburg Monarchy 1900-1918," Bohemia 34 (1993), 63-74, quotation at 64. On earlier perceptions of the Czechs and of Czech politics in the Austrian German press see Francis L. Loewenheim, "German Liberalism and the Czech Renascence: Ignaz Kuranda, Die Grenzboten, and Developments in Bohemia, 1845-1849," in The Czech Renascence of the Nineteenth Century, ed. Peter Brock and H. Gordon Skilling (Toronto, 1970), 146-175, Andreas Gottsmann, "'Stockböhmen' oder 'Russenknechte'? Das Bild der Tschechen in der deutschsprachigen Presse Österreichs im Revolutionsjahr 1848/49, " Österreichische Osthefte, 34 (1992), 284-311, Eugenie Trützschler von Falkenstein, Der Kampf der Tschechen um die historischen Rechte der böhmischen Krone im Spiegel der Presse 1861-1879 (Wiesbaden 1982), and Christian Scharf, Ausgleichpolitik und Pressekampf in der Ära Hohenwart: die Fundamentalartikel von 1871 und der deutsch-tschechische Konflikt in Böhmen (Munich 1996).

liberal point of view, Czechs – like workers and peasants – could as individuals gain full political rights, but only through the acquisition of a German Bildung. In 1871 the Deutsche Zeitung insisted that "for us the nationalist position coincides with the free-thinking, enlightened one, since to be German means to be free and behave ethically"[6], and in 1901 the Neue Freie Presse made it a liberal act to protest against a Czech polytechnic in Brünn/Brno or any other such concessions to Czech linguistic demands, arguing that the use of the Czech language in these spheres would deny the students access to the free interchange of ideas possible only in a world language and inseparable from any notion of higher education.[7]

This Austrian German appropriation of the term liberal presented middle-class Czech politicians with a semantic as well as a political challenge: if this was liberalism, what scope was left for any Czech program, or politics, by that name or orientation? To start with semantics: around 1848, leading Czech public figures did use the term liberal (in Czech: 'liberální') in self-descriptions, and they defined the concept in positive terms. František Palacký did not hesitate to declare in 1848, "I am decidedly a liberal",[8] while Karel Havlíček two years later in a newspaper article defined liberalism in the following way: "Liberal stems from the Latin word liber (free) and is usually used as shorthand for labeling all who are for good progress and for political freedom."[9] But as Czech and Austrian German political representatives became entrenched in conflict in the early 1860s over the constitutional structure of Austria, and the terms 'liberal' or 'liberalism' became firmly associated with the Austrian German

[6] Cited from Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries, 169. My summary of the German Austrian liberal argument with regard to the non-German nations is based on Judson's reading of the liberal discourse.

[7] Beller, "German Liberalism," 69-70. This line of reasoning is strikingly similar to the arguments used in neo-absolutist statements of the 1850s justifying the government's withdrawal of concessions given in 1848-69 to Czechs and other minor nationalities with regard to language use in secondary and higher education. See Gerald Stourzh, Die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in der Verfassung und Verwaltung Österreichs 1848-1918 (Vienna 1985), 40, 42-44.

[8] Cited from Pavla Vošahlíková, "Počátky českého liberalismu v díle Františka Palackého," (The Beginnings of Czech Liberalism in the Work of František Palacký) in František Palacký 1798/1998 – dějiny a dnešek (František Palacký 1798/1998 – History and Today), ed. František Šmahel (Prague 1999), 289-299, at 291. See also Jan Havránek, "Tschechischer Liberalismus an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert," in Ungleiche Nachbarn: demokratische und nationale Emanzipation bei Deutschen, Tschechen und Slowaken (1815-1914), ed. Hans Mommsen and Jiří Kořalka (Essen 1993), 65 on the Czech usage of the word liberal around 1848.

[9] Karel Havlíček Borovský, "Strany politické" (Political parties), Slovan (The Slav) 2. and 19. October 1850, printed in Karel Havlíček Borovský, Dílo II (Prague 1986), 376-388, quotation at 386. Havlíček satirized the variety of people who suddenly declared themselves to be liberal in 1848-49, but he did not consider the term itself discredited.

centralist stance, the words gradually disappeared from the Czech political dictionary, except in references to the German opponent. In 1874, Palacký's frustration with the political practice of the Austrian German liberals (and with the many pejoratives addressed at the Czechs) led him to exclaim with bitter irony:

> Our Germans compensate more than sufficiently with their liberalism for what they have not been given of sense for right and justice. They are now almost exceedingly liberal, so why should they also be just? Justice would be a mere obligation, but liberality is magnanimous and offers more than it has to. So who is then allowed to remind it of a debt? It would be indecent to demand that the liberal lords should go so far as to regard the feudal, clerical, ultramontane Slavs as equal to themselves and deal with them accordingly.[10]

From the 1860s onwards the very word 'liberal' was thus too negatively charged for any Czech political party to use it. Instead the word svobodomyslný ('freethinking') came to substitute for it as a marker of liberal convictions, as in the National Freethinking Party, the official name of the Young Czech Party, and in many other contexts.[11] The close association of liberalism with the Austrian German liberals and the strength of the wrath against these is palpable in the entry concerning liberalism in the authoritative Czech encyclopedia from the turn of the century, Ottův slovník naučný:

> Liberalism means in parliamentary parlance a trend striving for the assertion of freethinking principles in all public life. In Austria it identifies itself with centralizing and Germanizing aspirations in a political and national perspective, and with capitalist exploitation in an economic perspective. German l[iberlaism] has made itself sadly famous through its persecution of non-German nations… In the Czech nation a liberal political party began to take shape soon after the introduction of constitutional life,

[10] Cited from Vošahlíková, "Počátky českého liberalismu", 297.

[11] Havránek, "Tschechischer Liberalismus," 65-71. The Young Czech leader Edvard Grégr made it clear in a pamphlet of 1874 that he considered 'free-thinking' and 'liberal' to be synonymous, see Cathleen Giustino, Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle-Class Ethnic Politics around 1900 (New York 2003) 351, note 10.

which of course did not have common political or economic principles with the German-liberal party.[12]

To the extent that any Czech liberalism was identified at all, its radical difference from and opposition to the Austrian German political movement by that name was thus underlined. Such dissociation was to be expected from contemporaries such as Adolf Srb, the author of the encyclopedia entry, but it has also – in less vehement words – colored later studies, which have largely analyzed Czech political liberalism in isolation from its Austrian German liberal environment as a distinctly national phenomenon.[13] But as I shall try to argue in the rest of this essay, Czech and Austrian German liberalism in the Habsburg Empire had much more in common than their mutual political and terminological alienation.

On the structural level a main point to make is that for all national disagreement between them, Czech and Austrian German political leaders (many of whom in 'the liberal era' came from Bohemia) all stemmed from one and the same 'Bildungsraum', or educational space. I mean by this that although they appeared as separate political forces, these Bürger representatives of two allegedly very different nations were socially and culturally, in terms of education and norms, of mentalities and often also at a personal level of one and the same milieu. For a start, the circles actively identifying with a national community were very small, because a marked national self-identification was alien to the vast majority of the population in Vormärz or pre-1848 Bohemia. Although one finds in nineteenth-century Bohemia a high correlation between mother tongue (or main everyday linguistic environment) and national affiliation, the mechanisms transforming such 'objective conditions' into subjective identification were only rudimentarily developed before 1848, or even 1860. There was no separate Czech system of higher or secondary education in Vormärz Bohemia capable of

[12] Ottův slovník naučný (Otto's Encyclopedia), vol. 15 (Prague 1900), 1016-17.

[13] See for instance the anthology Český liberalismus: texty a osobnosti (Czech Liberalism: texts and personalities), eds. Milan Znoj, Jan Havránek and Martin Sekera, Prague 1995; Otto Urban, Kapitalismus a česká společnost (Capitalism and Czech society), 2nd edition, Prague 2003; Bruce Garver, The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System, New Haven 1978, or Jiří Malíř, Vývoj liberálního proudu české politiky na Moravě (The Development of the Liberal Stream in Czech Politics in Moravia), Brno 1985. The present essay will primarily focus on developments in Bohemia. Tomáš Vojtěch, Mladočeši a boj o politickou moc v Čechách (The Young Czechs and the Struggle for Political Power in Bohemia), Prague 1980, offers a brief comparison of Young Czech liberalism with other "bourgeois trends" in Austria-Hungary.

equipping children with any national Czech education, linguistically or ideologically,[14] and so the educated middle-class elites that came to form the backbone of both the Czech and the Bohemian German political representation of 1848-49 were products of one and the same Austrian school system. As Gary Cohen has written: "All those who made their way into the more prosperous commercial or manufacturing strata, the professions, or the bureaucracy had to adopt the German language, Austro-German culture, and Catholicism if they lacked one or the other. This did not involve, however, the adoption of a specific German ethnic identity before the 1850s."[15] On the contrary, we may add, some of those who had adopted – or adapted to – both the German language and Austro-German culture ultimately opted for a Czech national identity, while others remained non-nationalized Habsburg loyalists.[16]

One should therefore not exaggerate the separating power of certain differences in the formation and composition of bourgeois strata from the German-speaking areas of Northern Bohemia, as compared to the ones stemming from the Czech-speaking central parts of the Kingdom.[17] A Czech-speaking and identifying bourgeoisie may have developed later and from somewhat different social backgrounds than its Bohemian German counterpart, but the social boundaries or differences between them were not sufficiently clear-cut to allow for simple identification of class with national allegiance. The educational and professional background of the Bohemian Czech and German representatives in the Austrian Reichstag or Parliament in 1848-49 was nearly identical, with a preponderance of lawyers, civil servants and other members of the 'intelligentsia' in both groups.[18] Also, the Union for the Encourage-

[14] Czech was the language of instruction only in primary schools in districts where it was the mother tongue of the pupils; it was taught as an optional subject at a few Gymnasien and at the universities in Prague, Vienna and Pressburg. See Jitka Lněničková, České země v době předbřeznové 1792-1848 (The Bohemian Lands in the Vormärz Era 1792-1848), (Prague 1999), 151-53, 401-406. The near exclusive use of German in secondary schools and higher education does not mean that these Austrian institutions (supervised by the Catholic church) had any German national curriculum or aims.

[15] Gary Cohen, The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914 (Princeton 1981), 24.

[16] I have borrowed this phrase, and the argument, from Jeremy King, "The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond," in Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette 2001), 121-23.

[17] On the formation of bourgeois strata in Bohemia and the social background of Czech political elites see the contributions by Pavla Horská, Otto Urban and Jiří Kořalka in Bürgertum in der Habsburger-Monarchie, eds. Ernst Bruckmüller, Ulrike Döcker, Hannes Stekl, and Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna 1990).

[18] See Jiří Štaif, "Revoluce 1848-1849 a počátky občanské společnosti v českých zemích" (The Revolution 1848-1849 and the beginnings of civic society in the Bohemian Lands), in Narodní obrození a rok 1848 v evropském kontextu (The National Awakening and the Year 1848 in a European Context), ed. Milan Skřivánek

ment of Industry in Bohemia, founded in 1833 under the auspices of the Bohemian nobility and opened up for all Bürger capable of paying the fees in 1842, is commonly held to have been a main school of politics before 1848 for the younger generation of Czech patriots (F. L. Rieger, A. P. Trojan, F. A. Brauner and others). But the Union was an association for Bohemia's liberal bourgeoisie (and for the liberally inclined factions of the Bohemian aristocracy), not a Czech national institution.[19] Finally, Prague was the towering center of all intellectual and political life in Bohemia, and the city's inhabitants, most of whom were probably to some degree bilingual, were not (in spite of the formation of a Czech Burghers' Club ('Měšťanská beseda') in 1846, and other early attempts at 'nationalizing' the public sphere) sharply divided in their daily interactions into a 'Czech' and a 'German' national camp.[20]

To be concrete: in political matters, men like Rieger and Palacký ought to have, and did in fact speak the same language as the German Austrian liberals, both literally – they were of course fluent in German – as well as figuratively. Educated Czechs primarily encountered liberalism through German sources (and through the same sources as their German Austrian counterparts),[21] and one finds in the Czech community of the 1840s all the same basic liberal norms and values as among the Austrian Germans: Bildung und Besitz [education and

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(Litomyšl 1998), 72-75. Also Urban notes that the Bildungsbürgertum was strongly over-represented among the Reichstag from the Bohemian Lands, and that this trend was even more pronounced among the Czech delegates (62% of all delegates from Moravia and Silesia and 81% of those from Bohemia belonged to this group, and over 90% of all Czech delegates). Otto Urban, "Zur Frage der Voraussetzungen der politischen Tätigkeit des tschechischen Bürgertums in den Jahren 1848/1849," in Bruckmüller, Bürgertum, 208.

[19] Lněničková, České země, 153, 220-23. Urban, Kapitalismus, 158-59. The struggle of these young Czech representatives for an industrial school teaching in Czech, and for the publishing of the Union's journal in a Czech version next to the German one testifies to the growing strength of a Czech liberal bourgeoisie even before 1848, but all mobilization still took place within one common institution.

[20] To quote Cohen again: "In fact, many in Prague in the mid nineteenth century had a choice of ethnic affiliation… During the early stages of ethnic differentiation, family descent and geographical origin provided no simple determinants for identification." Gary Cohen, "The German Minority of Prague, 1850-1918," in Ethnic Identity in Urban Europe, ed. Max Engman et al., New York 1992, 267-293, at 270. See also Jan Havránek, "Předpoklady působení české kultury v Čechách v 19. století" (Preconditions for the Impact of Czech culture in Bohemia in the 19th century), in Město v české kultuře 19. století (The City in Czech Culture of the 19th century), ed. Milena Freimanová (Prague 1983), 110-113; Urban, Kapitalismus, 148-49, and Cohen, Politics, Chapter One.

[21] Otto Urban, "Český liberalismus v 19. století" (Czech Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century), in Český liberalismus: texty a osobnosti, 18. See also Hugh LeCaine Agnew, "Dilemmas of Liberal Nationalism: Czechs and Germans in Bohemia and the Revolution of 1848", in Nations and Nationalisms in East-Central Europe, 1806-1948: a Festschrift for Peter F. Sugar, eds. Sabrina P. Ramet, James R. Felak and Herbert J. Ellison (Bloomington 2002), 59-60, and Lněničková, České země, 79-86.

property], and in particular the former, were seen as prerequisites for access to the political sphere, whereas the calls for basic human and civic rights were derived from natural law. The voluntary association – be it a reading association or an industrial association – represented a model form of social organization for Czech Bürger elites also and played a significant role in the formation of these, while self-government was to guarantee the security, progress and liberty of citizens, as Havlíček argued at length in 1846.[22]

Even in their understanding of nationality Czech and Austrian German elites had a lot in common beyond the obvious differences stemming from the fact that any formulation of a Czech 'national idea' had to appear as marked in structuralist terms, i.e. as a deviation from an unmarked, naturally German high culture. As long as 'civilized', 'educated', 'progressive', and 'rational' were perceived as synonymous with 'German', Austrian German liberals could define their Germanness largely in terms of such cultural values as a potentially open, non-ethnic ideal against which the Czech aspirations could be dismissed as parochial, and hence irrational, "a politics based on mere ethnic identity".[23] We should, however, be careful not to make this Austrian German point of view our own.

First, Austrian German liberals also frequently lapsed into a rhetoric and discourse of essential ethnic difference drawing on the same Herderian and romanticist sources as the Czech national movement. It may therefore be most correct to acknowledge the fuzziness of perceptions of nationhood in the mid-nineteenth century: the belief in the possibility of acculturation to a higher German culture was not yet perceived as sharply at odds with organic or primordial understandings of Germanness. Depending on context one or the other could be emphasized.[24]

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[22] See his article "Co jest obec?" (What is a community?), originally in Pražské noviny (Prague News), 5. November until 31. December 1846, printed in Havlíček, Dílo II, 88-106. My summary of the constitutive features of Austrian German liberalism is based on Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries, Chapters One and Two.

[23] Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries, 58-59. See also Pieter Judson, "Rethinking the liberal legacy," in Rethinking Vienna 1900, ed. Steven Beller (New York 2001), 57-79, in particular 66-67, and Berthold Sutter, "Die politische und rechtliche Stellung der Deutschen in Österreich 1848-1918", in Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, Band III, 1. Teil: Die Völker des Reiches (Vienna 1980), 174-75.

[24] Stourzh, Die Gleichberechtigung, 22-24. Nor did the pronounced Herderian elements in the Czech definition of the nation prevent the national movement from bidding everybody welcome, irrespective of their family background, who identified with the Czech national project. For one example from 1848 see Miroslav Hroch, "Ludvík Rittersberg – účastník a komentátor revoluce" (Ludvík Rittersberg – Participant in and Commentator of the Revolution) in Skřivánek, Narodní obrození a rok 1848, 85-95. As to the complexity of defining Germanness, and on the impossibility of using a Kohnian dichotomy of 'western' liberal and 'eastern' ethnic or

Secondly, Czech politics was never merely ethnic. Havlíček's pointed statement of 1849, that "[e]verybody will be happy to call himself a citizen of the Austrian Empire when it becomes an honor...[but] the nations are God's and not the Emperor's … We will always remain Czechs, like the Hungarians and Italians, and we will never be Austrians, but only citizens of the Austrian Empire,"[25] testifies not only to his belief in the God-given natural rights of nations, but also to an ability to distinguish between ethnicity and citizenship. When in 1848, the Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode exclaimed: "Teach your children that they are not [simply] Hungarians, Germans, Slavs, [or] Italians, but rather citizens [Bürger] of a constitutional Austrian state"[26], it based its request on assumptions much closer to the ones of Havlíček than a juxtaposition of Czech ethnic and Austrian German political (liberal) nationalism would suggest.

Finally, Czech liberals shared the German view that only Kulturnationen, i.e. nations living up to European standards of civilization, could make claims to political and cultural recognition. Bildung was, from a Czech perspective, an individual and a national obligation. In German Austrian liberal perceptions, however, it remained a premise that only the German nationality was capable of living up to these standards, whereas in the Czech national ideology it was upheld that the Czechs from the outset of their 'awakening' already were a European Kulturnation. If this was initially a fiction (as many Czech patriots admitted in private) the Czech national elites strove very hard, and with much success to convert it into reality throughout the nineteenth century.[27]

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cultural nationalism to the analysis of Central European developments, see the fine discussion in Brian E. Vick, Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity (Cambridge 2002).

[25] "Porotní soud nad redaktorem Národních novin pro článek Výklad oktrojované ústavy od 4. března v čísle 62 Národních novin" (Trial by jury against the editor of the National News for the article An interpretation of the 'octroied' Constitution of March 4 in No. 62 of the National News), originally in Národní noviny (National News), 14 and 15 April 1849, printed in Havlíček, Dílo II, 189-199, quotations at 193.

[26] Quoted from Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries, 60. Agnew quotes the Bohemian German liberal Franz Schuselka for writing in 1843: "The language is the most holy possession of a nation, the strongest means for the preservation of its national independence, the purest expression of its national spirit… To sacrifice even an imperfect, raw language freely to a better foreign one is high treason to one's own worth…" Agnew, "Dilemmas," 53. Any Czech liberal could subscribe to this.

[27] See Vladimír Macura, "Problems and paradoxes of the national revival", in Bohemia in History ed. Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge 1998), 182-197, and Christopher P. Storck, Kulturnation und Nationalkunst: Strategien und Mechanismen tschechischer Nationsbildung von 1860 bis 1914 (Cologne 2001). The dismissal of the Czech chances of becoming a Kulturnation could be reconciled with a liberal German self-perception through arguments that certain nations ('Völker') had a greater innate potential for progress in civilization than others. When Leopold von Ranke defined European or Occidental civilization as the joint historical product of the strivings of

Given these close social, educational, and ideological affinities we should expect concord rather than conflict in the political sphere also, and in fact we can observe a recurring pattern from 1848 onwards during all major upheavals in Austrian politics: At first, Austrian German and Czech national elites responded in the same way and at times even together, eyeing the liberal potential in the situation, but then conflict broke out on the very visible level of national disagreement over issues that cannot per se be placed on a liberal – anti-liberal scale. As argued, the German liberal discursive hegemony, and perhaps also the German political hegemony, may have led friend and foe alike to identify German unification, Frankfurt style, and then Austrian centralism with liberalism. But none of these stands follow logically from liberal theory.

When in early 1848 revolutionary moods reached Austria from France and Germany, Prague citizens went into action even before Metternich's resignation on 13 March. The Prague elites – Czech and German, although the well-prepared nationally Czech Bürger elites soon took the political lead – cooperated in March in the so-called "St. Wenceslas Committee" on the drafting of two petitions, submitted to the Emperor in late March and early April respectively. These petitions contained the standard liberal demands of the day: a constitution, freedom of the press, full religious freedom, oral and public court proceedings, national guards, local self-government etc. Disagreement on the drafting of these texts was political, not national, as the Prague liberals successfully prevented radical democrats from introducing calls for the regulation of work and wages or the abolition of serfdom into the petitions.[28]

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the Romance and Germanic nations he explicitly excluded the Slavs from a share in this history "because of their strange and peculiar nature." Slavic nature thus bars the way to European (Romance and Germanic) culture, and so – the liberals could argue – only by overcoming this nature, only by 'de-Slavicizing' oneself, could one become a truly civilized Bürger. Such perceptions of and arguments about 'the Slavs' became quite frequent in German discourse from around 1848, see Peter Bugge, "'Land und Volk' – oder: Wo liegt Böhmen?" Geschichte und Gesellschaft (Vol. 28, 2002), 404-434 for references and discussion.

[28] The St. Wenceslas Committee consisted in Josef Polišenský's words, of "only two radicals… several Germans, a Jewish banker, and the rest were middle-class Czech liberals." Josef Polišenský, Aristocrats and the Crowd in the Revolutionary Year 1848 (Albany 1980), 112. More Czech and German liberals and conservatives were added when the committee was transformed into a broader National Committee on 10 April. See also Otto Urban, Česká společnost 1848-1918 (Czech Society 1848-1918) (Prague 1982), 23-25, and Stanley Z. Pech, The Czech Revolution of 1848 (Chapel Hill 1969), 47-79. Full Czech texts of the first petition in its draft and final version, and of the second petition can be found in Josef J. Toužimský, Na úsvitě nové doby (At the Dawn of a New Era) (Prague 1898), 63-66, 184-188, 247-48.

A novelty in the petitions was the call for "complete equal rights for the Czech and the German nationality in all Bohemian Lands, schools and offices," an equality that was to be recognized and guaranteed by law.[29] As a declaration of 21 March, signed by fifty-two "Writers of Prague, of Czech and German tongue, raised by the feeling of liberty and … concord between the Czech and German population of their fatherland" made clear, this call stemmed from the "zeal and strivings of the Czech part of the population", but it was "not to be regarded as a disturbance of this concord."[30] The Czech introduction of the principle of national equality on the political agenda of 1848 thus happened with the full consent of the participating Prague German elites, who in March subscribed to a rhetoric of brotherhood and equality between the German and Czech nations in the Bohemian lands in their struggle for progress and liberty. This was very different from the later Austrian German liberal discourse of German cultural and hence national superiority, and Czech reactionary national fanaticism.[31] Secondly, as Gerald Stourzh has demonstrated, the idea that equal national rights was a legitimate liberal principle spread very quickly from Prague not only to other parts of Austria, but even to the German constitutional assembly in Frankfurt. This doctrine must thus be considered common Austrian or Central European liberal property, not some nationalist, collectivistic pollution of liberal principles.[32]

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[29] Quotation from the first draft petition of 11 March. The call for legal guarantees was made explicit in the final version of the first petition and repeated in the second petition of 29 March. See Toužimský, Na úsvitě, 64, 189, and 248, and Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung, 17-18.

[30] Quoted from Toužimský, Na úsvitě, 149. Among the signatories were Ignaz Kuranda, Karl Egon Ebert and Moritz Hartmann. The term for "Czech" in the German version is "böhmisch".

[31] According to Křen several German towns in Bohemia supported the Wenceslas petition; Jan Křen, Die Konfliktgemeinschaft: Tschechen und Deutsche 1780-1918 (Munich 1996), 91. See also Toužimský, Na úsvitě 189-92. A report in the Reichenberger Anzeigeblatt, criticizing the anarchy in Prague created by the "czechischen Ultras" led to a joint Prague Czech and German protest declaration stating: "We attend persistently here in Prague to the concord between both nations, Germans and Czechs, since we know well that we could easily both of us be deprived of our freedom if a national strife between us broke out." Signed by 33 Prague Bürger and printed in Národní noviny (National News), 5 April 1848, 3. Ludwig von Löhner's League of Germans of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia for the Preservation of their Nationality, founded in Vienna in early April in protest not only against the call in the second Wenceslas Petition of 29 March for Bohemian crown land unity, and in support of their incorporation in a new Germany, but also against any concessions to the Czech language in secondary education and the civil service (see Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 92) thus did not represent the view of all Bohemian German liberals.

[32] Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung 17-21. Stourzh insists that the idea of equal rights among nationalities was interpreted in 1848 as an implementation of the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity of the French revolution, ibid. 3. In this perspective Křen's argument gains weight that the Czechs contributed significantly to the enrichment of the supply of ideas of liberalism and democracy, Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 83.

The two Prague petitions insisted finally that the political framework for the realization of the demanded rights was to be a union of the Bohemian lands with its own freely and broadly elected parliament, and even this claim had the initial support of the Prague German liberals. We thus see again how liberals could produce many different answers to what form of statehood to establish for their emerging community of free and responsible citizens.

Sadly, in the strife about Bohemia's and Austria's relationship to Frankfurt, which from April 1848 came to separate the Czech and Bohemian or Austrian German political elites for much of the following year, both sides were equally quick to let perceived national interests take precedence over liberal concerns – cf. Austrian German reactions to Windischgrätz's attack on Prague in June and Czech ones to his quenching of the Vienna uprising in October.[33] Only as the Großdeutsch or Greater German program fell and the Austrian state became the realistic and hence commonly accepted political framework, could Czech and German political representatives begin to join forces again in a liberal alliance in the Reichstag, especially during its spell in Kremsier/Kroměříž. The most significant Czech contribution here was perhaps Rieger's work on the draft Bill of Rights, culminating in his passionate defense of the idea of popular sovereignty in a speech of January 10, 1849, a speech that led Ludwig von Löhner to embrace him heartily.[34] Among the many standard liberal claims, this Bill of Rights guaranteed in Art. 21 the equal rights ('Gleichberechtigung') of all nationalities of the Empire and obliged the state to secure the equality of the languages common in the individual crown lands ('landesübliche Sprachen') in schools, civil service and public life.[35] Again, my point is not to show that even Czech Reichstag delegates were

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[33] The 'Whitsuntide Uprising' in Prague was politically motivated, not nationally. Both Czech and German radicals took part in the fighting, which the Czech liberals perceived as a disaster. But outside Prague the event was largely interpreted as an anti-German Czech rebellion and even people like Löhner and Kuranda praised Windischgrätz as a national hero. See Pech, Czech Revolution, 139-166, and Josef Kolejka, Národy habsburské monarchie v revoluci 1848-1849 (The Nations of the Habsburg Monarchy in the Revolution, 1848-1849) (Prague 1989), 192-203. Gottsmann, "'Stockböhmen' oder 'Russenknechte'?" 294-97, shows how a stereotypical hostility to the Czechs was more predominant then in the Viennese press than in the Prague German one. On Czech condemnations of the Vienna uprising see Pech, Czech Revolution, 193-208.

[34] Robert Sak, Rieger: Příběh Čecha devatenáctého věku (Rieger: The Story of a Czech of the Nineteenth Century) (Semily 1993), 102. When drafting the individual articles Rieger mostly looked to Rotteck and Welcker's Staatslexikon for inspiration, ibid. 104. On 17 January 1849 Löhner called Rieger the "Ajax of the Parliament", see Otto Urban, Kroměřížský sněm 1848-1849 (The Kremsier Parliament 1848-1849) (Prague 1998), 71.

[35] Rieger sat in the sub-committee on the Bill of Rights with Ernst Violand from Lower Austria and Franz Hein from Moravia, two German liberal delegates. Also Josef von Lasser influenced the final wording of Art. 21. See Urban, Kroměřížský sněm, 56 ff. In another example of how ideas circulated in Central Europe in 1848, Stourzh

capable of supporting a liberal agenda, but to argue that this finding of a common language – to a high degree also on the political meaning and significance of nationality – should not surprise us, because all these educated middle-class delegates were products of the same Austrian experience. It was therefore not so much "the Austrian nations" who found each other in Kremsier/Kroměříž, as a narrow segment of Austrian elites (without representation from Hungary and Lombardy-Venice), agreeing also on the relevance of dividing themselves into national camps.[36] Sadly, their conciliation came too late to stop the dynastic counter-revolution.

History almost seemed to repeat itself in 1860-61 when Austria made a careful return to constitutionalism. At first, Czech and Austrian German liberals rejoiced in the new freedom and sought cooperation on a variety of liberal political issues. The Czech attempts in 1860 to gain permission to publish a political newspaper, expressed in a petition by Rieger to the Emperor, was supported by the Prague German liberal press,[37] and in December 1860 the Prague Czech and German liberals presented a joint electoral committee and program for the upcoming local elections in the city.[38] At the elections to the Bohemian Diet [sněm] in March 1861, Czechs and Germans had separate lists, but Leopold von Hasner and Adolf Maria Pinkas, who later joined the German camp in the Diet, were elected from Prague on the recommendation of the Czech electoral committee, whereas conversely two pro-Czech

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shows how Rieger when drafting the Bill found inspiration both in Pillersdorf's Austrian Constitution of 25 April 1848 and the draft German Constitution of Frankfurt, see Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung, 24-27.

[36] Sutter, "Stellung der Deutschen", 177-78. Even with regard to the territorial-administrative organization of Austria a high degree of consensus had been reached, in spite of Palacký's resignation from the Parliament in protest against the lack of comprehension for his vision of a federalization of Austria along ethnic lines. See Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 99-108.

[37] Trützschler von Falkenstein, Der Kampf der Tschechen, 27. Rieger's memorandum of 14 June 1860, signed by further eleven leading Czech national representatives, is printed in full in Politické programy českých národních stran 1860-1890, ed. Pavel Cibulka (Prague 2000), 39-44. The text, written in the name of the 'Czechoslav' people, echoes the liberal rhetoric of 1848, and next to arguing for the virtues of having a political daily it stresses the need for secondary education in the Czech language, all to improve the nation's level of education.

[38] Under the slogan "Progress toward Betterment" the program called not only for reform, progress and equal rights for all under the protection of the law, but also for the implementation (and not just recognition) of equal rights for all nationalities and confessions. The full text of the program is printed in Politické programy, 47-48. See also Cohen, Politics, 46-47. As in 1848, Prague Czech and German liberals thus together supported the doctrine of national equality, which had been abandoned by the neo-absolutist regime, and towards which even the Schmerling cabinet had lukewarm feelings, see Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung, 39-49.

representatives were elected from predominantly 'ethnic German' districts.[39] National segregation was thus still far from complete, and numerous cases show that also the Czech community remained open to anyone who embraced the national vision, even if they were not of Czech descent or did not speak Czech fluently.[40] The Prague newspaper market of the 1860s and 1870s may illustrate how misleading it would be to perceive of Bohemian society as neatly divided into two national camps based on, and marked by language: Next to the national (i.e. nationally agitating) newspapers, like the Czech Národní listy (National Papers) or the German Bohemia or Tagesbote aus Böhmen, we find the Prager Zeitung or the Pražské noviny (Prague News) expressing the official Habsburg view in both languages, and even the German language daily Politik, a paper addressing those who "politically belonged to the Czech camp even though they were more used to reading German than Czech."[41]

Soon, however, Czech opposition to Prime Minister Schmerling's centralism, which had the support of the Austrian German liberals, made the Czech National Party join forces with the conservative nobility in demanding the recognition of an autonomist program, the so-called Bohemian historical state rights, an alliance determining Czech attitudes toward the central political institutions of Austria for the next two decades and leading them to boycott the Reichsrat or Austrian Parliament from 1863 to 1879.[42] This was the move that made Kann

[39] Jiří Kořalka, "Tschechische bürgerliche Landtagabgeordnete in Böhmen 1861-1913," in Bruckmüller, Bürgertum, 212; Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries, 89-90. Pinkas and Hasner tried in 1862 together with Anton Gindely and Karl Habietinek and with the initial support of approximately twenty Czech and German deputies, but ultimately in vain, to establish a nationally neutral, liberal Klub der Mitte in the Diet. See Otto Urban, "Der böhmische Landtag," in Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, Band VII: Verfassung und Parlamentarismus, 2. Teilband: Die regionalen Repräsentativkörperschaften (Vienna 2000), 1997, 2005.

[40] The most prominent case is probably that of Heinrich/Jindřich Fügner, the co-founder of the Czech Sokol (another bourgeois-liberal association modeled after German paragons), see Claire E. Nolte, "Choosing Czech Identity in Nineteenth-Century Prague: The Case of Jindřich Fügner," Nationalities Papers, Vol.24 (1996), 51-62. Nolte tells how Fügner around 1860 was "brought… into the upper echelons of Czech society in Prague, a small world of mostly German-speaking Czech patriots, where Fügner's poor command of Czech was no barrier to acceptance." (ibid. 54). See also Cohen, Politics, 44-45.

[41] Havránek, "Předpoklady působení," 113-14. In 1862 in Prague 6400 copies of Czech language papers were published, and 11,000 copies of German language papers, of which Politik made up 2100, ibid. Politik was for decades the main organ of the Old Czech faction of the Czech national movement, as its Czech language newspaper Národ (The Nation; published 1863-65) was unable to compete with the Young Czech Národní listy. See also Scharf, Ausgleichpolitik und Pressekampf, 105-111, and Karel Hoch, "Dějiny novinářství od r. 1860 do doby současné" (The History of Journalism from 1860 to Contemporary Times) in Albert Pražák (ed.), Československá vlastivěda VII: Písemnictví (Czechoslovak National History and Geography VII: Literature), 449-458.

[42] See Urban, Česká společnost, 163-73, and Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 120-25 on the reasons that made the Czech leaders opt for this alliance, which was perceived as 'unnatural' by the majority of Czech liberals.

and others label the Czechs 'conservative'. But again, matters are more complex. For a start, the Czech political leaders themselves kept insisting that they were committed to liberal values, which do figure prominently in all Czech political programs of that era.[43] Secondly, at several occasions in the early 1860s Czech and German liberals cooperated in the Bohemian Diet against the conservative nobles.[44] Thirdly, Czech attempts in 1863 to get the Diet to revise the curial voting system [systém volebních sborů] to secure a more proportionally just Czech representation in the Diet while respecting the liberal doctrine of tax payment as a pre-condition for voting rights were rejected by a coalition of conservative nobles and Bohemian German liberals.[45] And finally, the alliance with the nobles helped the Czechs to great advances in education, in particular in 1864 with regard to the use of Czech in secondary schools, as called for in all Czech political programs.[46] Even the strict legalism of the Czech state rights argument, used also to justify the boycott of the Reichsrat before and after the Ausgleich or Compromise of 1867, may be interpreted not just as an imitation of Hungarian liberal strategies and demands, but also as a product of an Austrian liberal adherence to the principle of Rechtsstaatlichkeit, or the rule of law.

If until the early 1860s Austrian German liberalism mostly shaped its Czech counterpart in terms of norms, values, and language, its main formative contribution thereafter was probably of a legislative nature. With few interruptions the Austrian German liberals had the major say in Austrian governments and Reichsrat politics in the 'liberal era' of 1861-1879, which established the administrative and political framework that was to frame Austrian and hence Czech politics until the end of the Monarchy. In 1862 a system of self-government was introduced at communal level (and in 1864 at district level in Bohemia), which – though two-tracked with

[43] Notice for instance Rieger's speech in the Reichsrat of 19 June 1861, quoted in part in Urban, Česká společnost, 170, or see the various declarations of the 1860s printed in Politické programy.

[44] Several such instances are listed in Urban, "Der böhmische Landtag," 2008. Beyond the realm of national controversy there was thus still plenty of room for pursuing common Bürger economic and political interests.

[45] Palacký, who presented the Czech case, showed convincingly and in great detail how the design of constituencies discriminated against the Czechs, whose share in tax payments far exceeded their share of seats in the Diet, see Urban, Česká společnost, 174-75. The Czech calls for reform could therefore not be dismissed from the standpoint of liberal doctrine, which gives weight to Křen's argument that national intransigence dictated the "profoundly illiberal attitude of the liberal Germans"; Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 125.

[46] Urban, "Der böhmische Landtag," 2007.

much control still in the hands of imperial authorities – gave ample scope for local political development. A restricted curial franchise was used at elections at all levels (it was reformed only for Reichsrat elections), and that secured liberal middle-class control of the local polity. Pieter Judson has pointed to the pivotal role of municipal politics and voluntary associations in the preservation of an Austrian German liberal hegemony outside Vienna; Cathleen Giustino's study of ghetto clearance in Prague offers rich insights into how the same mechanisms were at play around 1900 in Czech municipal politics.[47]

The December 1867 complex of post-Ausgleich constitutional laws for Cisleithania included also a Bill of Citizens' Rights with a rich catalogue of liberal principles: equality before the law, personal freedom, the inviolability of private property, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, the right to assemble and form associations (although Art. 12 called for special legislation to regulate the practicing of this right) and so forth. Art. 1 of the Bill created an Austrian citizenship ('Staatsbürgerrecht'), while simultaneously Art. 19 recognized the equal rights of all nationalities ('Volksstämme'), and the equality of all languages customary in the crown lands in schools, government agencies, and public life.[48] This constitutional catalogue of rights served Czech Bürger also, but on the other hand Czech hopes for the creation of a satisfactory framework for their collective political self-realization were marred twice: with the introduction of dualism in 1867 and again in the autumn of 1871, when the so-called Fundamental Articles, which would have created a kind of sub-dualism within Cisleithania, were withdrawn after Austrian German liberal and Hun-

[47] Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries, Chapters 7 and 8; Giustino, Ghetto Clearance. On local self-government and administration in Bohemia and Austria see Jiří Klabouch, "Die Lokalverwaltung in Cisleithanien," in Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, Band II: Verwaltung und Rechtswesen (Vienna 1975), 270-305, and Georg Schmitz, "Organe und Arbeitsweise, Strukturen und Leistungen der Landesvertretungen," in Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, Band VII: Verfassung und Parlamentarismus, 2. Teilband: Die regionalen Repräsentativkörperschaften (Vienna 2000), 1353-1393.

[48] The liberals took most formulations almost verbatim from the octroied Constitution of 4 March 1849, which, however, had not acknowledged the equal rights of nationalities. Its introduction in the December Constitution may thus be interpreted as the full recognition of this claim as a liberal principle. The March Constitution had recognized a Reichsbürgerrecht (while mentioning Austrian Staatsbürger in Art 7 in a separate Bill on fundamental political rights). See Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung, 53-57, Judson, Exclusive Revolutionaries, 118-126, and Wilhelm Brauneder, "Die Verfassungsentwicklung in Österreich 1848 bis 1918", in Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, Band VII: Verfassung und Parlamentarismus, 2. Teilband: Verfassungsrecht, Verfassungswirklichkeit, Zentrale Repräsentativkörperschaften (Vienna 2000), 120-25, 181-190. Full texts of all Austrian Constitutions can be found at http://www.verfassungen.de/at

garian pressure.[49] Prague was declared in a state of emergency, and the Austrian German liberal predominance in the Auersperg Cabinet (1871-1879) meant that Austrian liberalism was increasingly measured by its political practice, rather than by its rhetoric and doctrines; a practice which in the Czech view implied a very high correlation between German liberal cabinets in Vienna and infringements of the freedom of the press and other basic civic and political rights in Bohemia.[50] Hence Palacký's sarcastic remarks, cited above.

Finally, the Austrian German liberal hegemony produced an economic space in which also Czech entrepreneurs could act. Economic liberalism and the centralization of Cisleithania created lucrative conditions for the growth of a Czech national industry (based mostly on the agro-industrial sector), and for its eventual utilization of the opportunities in the whole 'inner market' of Cisleithania. In accordance with liberal principles, Czech and German politicians and Bürger tended well into the 1880s to regard the whole sphere of trade and production a 'free zone' exempted from national controversies, and to pursue their class interests accordingly.[51] So, contrary to functionalist theory, the economic modernization of Austria neither led to the creation of one Austrian state-nation (as expected by Schwarzenberg's neo-absolutist regime and in the post-1848 Austrian German liberal vision), nor to calls from the national bourgeoisies for the division of the huge Austrian 'inner market' into small nation-states.

As suggested above, the Austrian German liberal fall from power in 1879 and the installment of Taaffe's 'Iron Ring' around them is generally perceived as a turning point in the history of

[49] See Scharf, Ausgleichpolitik und Pressekampf, for a detailed account of the events. The Hohenwart Cabinet tried to justify its policy of conciliation towards the Czechs by evoking the liberal discourse of education: "The non-German elements of the Empire must today be allowed a greater and more independent share of the running of the state [der staatlichen Arbeit], not because they are Poles or Czechs, Rumanians or Slovenes, but because they under the civilizing influence of the state and the German element have acquired a higher measure of ability." Quoted from Scharf, Ausgleichpolitik und Pressekampf, 55.

[50] See Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 155-162. Urban, "Der böhmische Landtag," 2023-2025 describes how elections to the Bohemian Diet were manipulated in 1872 to secure support for the centralist liberal regime.

[51] This point is argued in detail in Peter Heumos, Agrarische Interessen und Nationale Politik in Böhmen 1848-1889 (Wiesbaden 1979), 53-54, 154-56, 169. Compare with Albrecht, who in her study of the Chambers of Commerce in Bohemia writes: "When the control of institutions was involved, Germans and Czechs disagreed sharply along national lines. When economic policy issues could be divorced from their institutional context, however, the situation was more complex… Czechs and Germans occasionally cooperated on issues that could strengthen the competitive advantage of all business in Cisleithania, such as trade, taxes, or Austria's relationship with Hungary." Catherine Albrecht, "Chambers of Commerce and Czech-German Relations in the late Nineteenth Century," Bohemia Vol. 38 (1997), 298-310, at 299.

liberalism in Austria. In Czech politics things had already begun to change in 1874, as dissatisfaction with the alliance with the conservative nobility and the policy of passive resistance made the Young Czechs establish themselves as an independent political party, with a consistently liberal program.[52] The Young Czechs advocated political activism and a return to the Bohemian Diet and later also the Reichsrat, and soon after Palacký's death in 1876 the Young Czech leader Eduard Grégr even dared to criticize Bohemian state rights for being incomprehensible and "not worth a pipe of tobacco without the proper power capable of securing their validity."[53] When in 1878 internal strife in the Austrian German liberal camp over the annexation of Bosnia created a new window of opportunity for Czechs, even Rieger, Palacký's successor as informal national leader, sought a way out of passive resistance. As in 1848 or 1860, the Austrian German liberals seemed the most natural potential ally, and with the help of another veteran from 1848, Adolph Fischhof, Rieger met on 31 October 1878 with the influential editor-in-chief of the Neue Freie Presse, Michael Etienne, and Alexander Scharf, publisher of the Wiener Sonn- und Montagszeitung. Rieger wrote about the meeting to his wife:

> I will be today among three Jews; it will be a kind of viva voce, and if they find me sufficiently kosher, perhaps even my nation will then get its General Certificate of Education and be allowed a voice in Austria.[54]

The quote is telling of how important Austrian German recognition of the maturity of the Czech achievements in Bildung was for Rieger, and how closely related he believed cultural and political recognition to be, i.e. how deeply committed he was to one of the core doctrines of Austrian nineteenth century liberalism.

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[52] The full text of the Party program of 27 December 1874 is printed in Politické programy, 213-215. The program was liberal both in its political demands and its rhetoric of Bildung ('vzdělanost') and progress.
[53] Quoted from Urban, Česká společnost, 309.

[54] Quoted from Zdeněk V. Tobolka, Politické dějiny československého národa od r. 1848 až do dnešní doby Vol. II. 1860-1879 (A Political History of the Czechoslovak Nation from 1848 until Today) (Prague 1933), 327. I see in the mentioning of Etienne, Scharf, and Fischhof's Jewishness not so much anti-Semitism as an expression of how Viennese Jews together with Bohemian Germans made up a significant segment of the Austrian German liberal leadership.

The meeting did bring a rapprochement expressed in a joint declaration, known as the 'Emmersdorf memorandum', which in seven points listed the principles upon which Czech – German liberal cooperation could be built. The list included the call for a nationalities law to protect minorities in all the lands of Austria, a reform of the electoral system in the Bohemian lands removing the political privileges of the great landowners, increased self-government for the provinces (but no Bohemian state rights), and a Czech return to the Reichsrat, in which they would be obliged to "work for the liberal [freiheitlichen] principles of our time, which the exclusion of ultramontane and feudal tendencies, while defending the right to free self-determination and autonomy."[55] The memorandum was to be a first step only, but the initiative soon collapsed. Eduard Herbst, the leader of the Bohemian German liberals rejected the compromise as nationally unacceptable, and the Emperor himself also let it be known that if the Czech and German liberals truly found each other he could see little benefit in a Czech return to the Reichsrat.[56] The Emperor already had plans for the conservative alternative eventually materializing with Taaffe. So again, the Czech support of the Taaffe cabinet was not their first choice, but their best chance of getting concessions. They made progress with regard to the use of Czech in the civil service and in higher education (the Stremayr ordinances and the division of the Prague University in 1882), but they never felt the alliance to be 'natural', and the concessions granted by Taaffe to the clerical parties in school policies were met with little enthusiasm among the Czech politicians forced to support them.[57]

In response to the loss of power after 1879 Austrian German liberalism underwent a major transformation into a nationalist mould, while remaining organized around the same values of progress, science and education, and the same concerns for diminishing intra-community differences, which had dominated earlier liberal Bürger elite politics.[58] It might be argued that German Austrian liberalism had now become imitative of the Czech one, in the

[55] Quoted from point five of the memorandum. Full German and Czech text in Politické programy, 247-48.

[56] Tobolka, Politické dějiny, 329, stresses Herbst's negative influence, Urban, Česká společnost, 324-25, the Emperor's hostility, and Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 168 a combination of both. All agree that Etienne's death in 1879 was a major blow to the initiative.

[57] William A. Jenks, Austria under the Iron Ring 1879-1893, (Charlottesville 1965) offers a detailed account of the Taaffe era. Somewhat at odds with Urban's interpretation Jenks argues that Taaffe in 1879 hoped for a coalition ministry with both German liberals and Czechs, but that Herbst refused the proposal, op. cit. 34-35.

[58] Judson, "Rethinking the liberal legacy," 68-74.

sense that the latter had a certain lead in nationalizing the liberal discourse and in integrating the lower social strata into a middle-class based social system, while still insisting on national unity under the natural leadership of the educated bourgeoisie. It might be argued that German Austrian liberalism was still ahead of the Czechs, as is suggested by Schmidt-Hartmann's comparison of the German reform efforts embodied in the so-called Linz Program of 1882 and the Czech efforts from the group of Realists of the early 1890s.[59] And it might be argued that Austrian German and Czech political thought and action remained as synchronized and interwoven as I have argued they were until the 1870s, or to the contrary that they simply parted ways as Czech society, with its educational system complete, increasingly constituted a separate whole, a complete, autonomous 'semiosphere' based on the Czech language.[60]

As to the last possibility, it seems to me misleading to think of Czech society as a closed system, largely sealed off from any larger Austrian system of communication. The formal national segregation of Austrian education at all levels did not stop most Czechs and even some Germans from learning the other language, and the individual choice of school did not always respect the dictates of national classification.[61] Politics and associational life remained the spheres most sharply divided along national demarcation lines, whereas in Prague and other 'mixed areas' Czechs and Germans lived next to each other, socially and partly religiously stratified rather than nationally, just as they met at work, when shopping or trading (in spite of the increased campaigning for economic national autarky), and sometimes also at café, concerts etc.[62] Also, everybody was confronted with the same Austrian administrative

[59] Eva Schmidt-Hartmann, "People's Democracy: The Emergence of a Czech Political Concept in the Late Nineteenth Century", in East European History - Selected Papers of the Third World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, ed. Stanislav J. Kirschbaum (Columbus 1988), 125-140.

[60] The term is Macura's, borrowed from Lotman; see Macura, "Problems and paradoxes," 184.

[61] In 1890, 40% of the pupils in the German municipal Volksschulen and Bürgerschulen in Prague reported Czech as their mother tongue, in 1910 the number was 17%. A much greater number of pupils followed courses in the other language, although it was taught as a non-required subject, See Cohen, Politics, 132-33. Nekula reports that at Franz Kafka's German Gymnasium in Prag in the 1890s, the Czech courses were mostly followed by sons of storekeepers and doctors, less by sons of higher civil servants or industrialists. Among the Czechs of Prague, he adds, a Czech-German bilingualism remained widespread in first of all intellectual circles, due to their longer education and the increased career opportunities offered by a knowledge of German. See Marek Nekula, "Der deutsch-tschechisce Bilinguismus," in Deutsche und Tschechen: Geschichte – Kultur – Politik, eds. Walter Koschmal, Marek Nekula, and Joachim Rogall (Munich 2001), 212. See also the contributions by Jeremy King and Tara Zahra in this volume on school attendance as a legal and political battle field.

[62] Cohen, Politics, 134-37; Gary Cohen, "Deutsche, Juden und Tschechen in Prag: das Sozialleben des Alltags, 1890-1914," 64-67, and Robert Luft, "Nationale Utraquisten in Böhmen: Zur Problematik 'nationaler Zwischen-

and judicial system traditionally committed to an ideal of national neutrality, and all political elites had to meet in the Reichsrat and other institutions. Robert Luft describes the Czech political elites of 1907-1914 as biographically, economically, socially, and politically deeply entangled in the administrative structures of Cisleithania, in stark contrast to the ideological and propagandistic 'Staatsferne' [distance from the state] typical of Czech politics.[63]

To return to the issue of liberalism, in some of the scholarly literature focusing on Czech politics we meet an interpretation of the turn of events after 1879 exactly opposite to Robert A. Kann's quoted above. Jan Křen writes: "If so far the Germans had been the main bearers of social progress, it was now the nations which possessed fewer rights, and especially the Czechs, who became the main champions of democratization."[64] Similarly, Bruce M. Garver contrasts the "predominantly liberal and democratic orientation of Czech politics" with the position of the privileged Germans, who "were the sole nation within the monarchy that had anything to gain from a more centralized and more authoritarian state, whether Rechtsstaat or Polizeistaat."[65] Clearly, Garver uses the word 'liberal' here in the broad sense as synonymous with 'reform-oriented', 'democratic' or 'progressive', and though Křen and Garver are correct in pointing out that Czech political parties took the lead in Austria in pushing for universal manhood suffrage and other democratic reforms, this contrasting of Czech and Austrian German political norms and attitudes in the late Habsburg Empire should not be pushed too far.[66]

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stellungen' am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts," 43, both in Allemands, Juifs et Tchèches a Prague, eds. Maurice Godé, Jacques Le Rider, and Françoise Mayer (Montpellier 1996).

[63] Robert Luft, Parlamentarische Führungsgruppen und politische Strukturen in der tschechischen Gesellschaft 1907-1914 (Munich 2001), 505. As to the civil service, the Czech National Council noticed in 1905 that among the approximately 700 Bohemian 'Landesbeamten' there were 29 "profoundly neutral persons", who neither sided with the Czechs, nor with the Germans. See Luft, "Nationale Utraquisten," 40. Even among those civil servants, we may add, who proclaimed to be of one or the other nationality, this national self-identification did not by necessity imply a commitment to national politics.

[64] Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 196.

[65] Garver, The Young Czech Party, 302, 262.

[66] "In their attitudes to civic rights there was no difference between Czech and German liberal politicians. The differences between them were in the economic field, but even there the difference was no longer very big in the last pre-war years. The Czech nationalists were liberal, and the German liberals nationalistic." Havránek, "Tschechischer Liberalismus", 80.

But even a specialist in Czech nineteenth-century liberalism such as Otto Urban argues that the Young Czech Party, after its outburst of radicalism around 1890, consolidated itself as a "solid liberal party," and that "under the concrete historical conditions of the 1890s [it] represented the most profiled liberal party of all in Cisleithania."[67] This may be over-stated, but in figures such as Josef Kaizl or the Old Czech Albín Bráf, Czech society of the late nineteenth century did produce highly competent political leaders with a pronounced liberal profile. We may interpret this phenomenon as caused by the fact that Czech Bürger representatives now considered their national community to be sufficiently consolidated (so self-evidently a Kulturnation in the nineteenth-century sense of the word) for them to engage directly and responsibly in the running of the Austrian state as Czechs and Austrian citizens. Kaizl designed a new Czech strategy of a 'politics in stages', a systematic effort to secure for Czechs their share of seats in the government and the Austrian bureaucracy in order to make Austria politically and socially more of a home for Czechs. This was a liberal approach, but marked by a somewhat 'illiberal' dependency on the bureaucracy and the executive, typical also of the Austrian German liberals of the 1860s and 1870s.[68] With self-confidence and sincerity, Kaizl condemned in 1895 the "sterile and prejudiced nationalism" that prevented Czechs and Germans from coming to an understanding that could revitalize Austria around liberal principles. He declared:

> Here to a high degree we still have to win political freedoms; I will just offer slogans: equal right for nations, equal electoral rights, freedom of expression in word and print, freedom of association and assembly… Here political liberalism still has a sphere of activism and makes lots and lots of sense, and one must regret… that there is no really strong liberal party in Austria…[69]

So, at a time when Austrian German liberals had reached the conclusion that there could be no natural symbiosis between themselves and the Austrian state, resulting in a massive investment in the national community as a 'substitute umbrella' for their followers, Kaizl tried to

[67] Urban, "Český liberalismus", 26.
[68] On Kaizl's strategy see Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 202-205.

[69] Josef Kaizl, České myšlenky (Czech Thoughts) (Prague 1895), 142. The quote on "sterile and prejudiced nationalism" stems from a Reichsrat speech of 28 October 1895, cited from Urban, Česká společnost, 448.

take the Young Czech Party in the opposite direction. But even this attempt at finding common Czech-German liberal ground in an Austrian framework failed, and with Kaizl's early death in 1901 not only the most "Austrian",[70] but also the most committed liberal Czech political leader disappeared.

As a political philosophy, liberalism has its Leitmotif in the relationship between citizen and state. The societal glue binding individuals and the whole is civic society, the complex network of formal and informal associations of responsible Bürger and citizens. But liberalism had problems finding a coherent doctrine about, or answer to what 'the nation' was or meant in this equation. The equal right of individuals was an established cornerstone in liberal doctrine, but in 1848 Austrian liberals agreed to extend the principle to nations. This reinterpretation of the equal rights doctrine as also a collective claim proved to be a formidable theoretical and practical challenge to the liberals, who had to come up with answers first to the nature of this new collective subject, and then to its legal and political representation.

At the individual level, liberals sharply distinguished between civic and political rights, or between passive and active citizenship: civic rights were natural and universal, but to enjoy political rights one had to qualify as a Bürger, i.e. to prove through Bildung und Besitz that one could contribute responsibly and maturely to society's self-government. But there was also, I have tried to argue, a broad if often overlooked consensus among Czech and Austrian German liberals that this liberal logic applied to nations too. Nations were God's creations and hence at an elementary level protected by natural law. But once the most basic civic rights (understood primarily as a right to learn and use one's mother tongue) were to be followed by political rights, all agreed that only mature and educated nations living up to European standards of civilization were entitled to these. Czechs wanted to be measured by these standards, but could not accept what was, in their eyes, the a priori Austrian German verdict that Czechs fell short.

Liberal doctrine insists that the status as Bürger is an open category, i.e. that every individual has the chance to advance to the ranks of the politically entitled. The same logic ought by analogy to apply for the collective. But Austrian German liberals were reluctant to

[70] As Friedrich Austerlitz wrote about Kaizl in 1914. Citation from Křen, Konfliktgemeinschaft, 238.

recognize this. It was an open issue in liberal doctrine whether society should actively encourage attempts at socio-political advancement by individuals (or, by extension, nations), or whether a laissez faire principle should apply. But to actively hamper chances of progress represented a violation of liberal principles. When seeking to prevent, say, the full development of a Czech educational system, Austrian German liberals would have had to argue that barriers to advancement in Bildung had root in innate qualities of the minor nations, not in a politics of discrimination. Metaphorically speaking, they moved from seeing the situation of the minor nations as analogous to the one of the 'non-independent' classes, as individuals from minor nations were offered an escape from the prison of their 'ethnic nature' through German acculturation, to seeing it as analogous to the one of women, whom 'nature itself' excluded from political rights.[71]

With regard to national representation the profound and ultimately unbridgeable disagreements between Czech and Austrian German liberals are well known. But behind the federalism-centralism antagonism we can glimpse a shared understanding that decision-making must take place in a political unit that allows the national community a suitable representation. Bohemia (or the lands of the Bohemian Crown) represented such a unit in Czech liberal eyes, whereas Bohemian or Austrian German resistance to any major decentralization of power to the crownlands was rooted not just in fears that these might become bastions of conservatism or parochialism, but also in the view that Austria/Cisleithania represented a proper forum for their national representation.[72] For long, the goal was to obtain a sufficient share in the formulation and conduct of politics in a territorially defined political unit, but

[71] The liberals had a point when arguing that the application of the equal national rights doctrine could get in conflict with the equal rights of individuals if used to bar members of culturally weaker nations from access to high quality education in another language. This was the logic applied in Bohemia in 1850 to justify that the "Prüfung zum Nachweise der allgemeinen Bildung" was to be made in the German language only. It would be a deceitful abuse of the equal rights doctrine, the Government decree argued, if candidates with a different level of Bildung could make the same claims to government funded teaching posts ("Versorgung im Lehramte") – instead true concern for the equal rights consisted in securing for the youth of all nationalities an education of the highest possible standards. For argument and quote, see Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung, 40. My point is that such a line of reasoning was much less tenable from a liberal perspective around 1880 or 1900 than in 1850, since in the meantime Czech education had proven capable of making significant progress.

[72] Eduard Herbst declared in 1870 in the debate about a possible Bohemian mini-Ausgleich: "We do not want to be oppressed by a majority in every single land, we want and wish that the Germans in Austria can be and remain Germans precisely in Austria ["Deutsche eben in Österreich"; emphasis in original], not merely Germans in Bohemia and Germans in Moravia or wherever else." Cited from Scharf, Ausgleichpolitik, 28.

from the 1880s onwards Czech and Austrian German liberals increasingly demanded that the administration of national matters be placed in the hands of the nations themselves.[73]

When in 1848 liberals introduced the idea of national equality, they took for granted the existence of a supra-national territorial state, which (controlled by the representatives of the people/peoples) could guarantee these rights and protect the individual and the collective against arbitrariness and discrimination. Calls for national self-administration weakened the very idea of a liberal territorial state. I see in this not just testimony to the growing illiberalism of national elites, but also an inability of the Habsburg regime to reconcile Article 1 and Article 19 of the Constitution's Bill of Rights, Austrian citizenship and the equal rights of nationalities. Beyond the difficulty of translating Article 19 into viable political arrangements, the state also hesitated before giving Article 1 sufficient political content, for instance by making the government responsible to the parliament. That seriously weakened the prospects of a true liberal alliance (the possibility of which I have tried to demonstrate) that could have balanced Articles 1 and 19, individual as opposed to collective rights and responsibilities. From 1848, Austrian German liberals (and from a different position also their Czech counterparts) oscillated between understanding the nation as a primordial collective and as a community of educated and responsible citizens. As Austrian German liberals increasingly invested loyalties and 'meaning fulfillment' that they had originally reserved for the vision of the constitutional state instead in the figure of the ethnic or racial nation, and as Czech liberals never managed – to follow up on Havlíček's dictum of 1849 – to be happy citizens of Austria in the Emperor's world and happy Czechs in God's, Austrian liberalism had to remain a building without a roof. Its contradictions stemmed not just from the lack of a shared Czech-German liberal language, but also from perceptions, ideas, and conditions that all liberals in Austria had in common.

[73] Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung, 14.