

**BUDWEISERS INTO  
CZECHS AND GERMANS**

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**A LOCAL HISTORY OF  
BOHEMIAN POLITICS, 1848-1948**

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## Preface

In 1986, I spent a day in České Budějovice, a charming Czech town due south of Prague, about three-fourths of the way to the Austrian border. An American, I had fallen in love with Czech literature several years earlier, in college. Then, in 1984, I had moved past fiction, during six weeks in Prague. Yet when I made my visit to České Budějovice, during a second stay in Czechoslovakia, I still had no idea that within the “Bohemian lands” of Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia, the town had long counted as unusually mixed in national, Czech-German terms. I did know that during the Habsburg Monarchy, interwar Czechoslovakia, and the Third Reich, the rim of the Bohemian lands had been German, and the interior Czech. Thus the Czech-German conflict that was once so central to Bohemian politics had tended to unfold at arm’s length. Budějovice had been one of the exceptions—but that fact I learned only several years later, as the Cold War ended and as I advanced through the doctoral program in History at Columbia University.

The face-to-face quality of national conflict in Budějovice, I came to think, made it a good site for a local study through which I might try to capture the history of Bohemian politics in a new way. Multiple historians of the Bohemian lands had already written valuable studies on “the nationality question.” None of those studies, though, confined its geographical dimension in such a way as to permit considerable length in the chronological dimension and reasonable depth in the political one—which spanned the German and the Czech, the rich and the poor, the Christian and the Jewish, and much more. Scholars had provided considerable insight into the “Springtime of Nations” in 1848, when Czech and German leaders first took up important positions within formal political structures. Excellent work had been done on multiple aspects of the constitutional era between the 1860s and 1914; on the interwar Czechoslovak era of Czech democratic dominance; and on the Second World War, when Nazi Germany, in addition to annihilating Bohemian Jewry, drove almost all of Czech politics underground. At least the outlines were clear, finally, of the years between 1945 and 1948, when the restored Czechoslovakia eliminated German politics from the Bohemian lands by expelling its entire German population—and then became part of a quite different conflict, between East and West, as a Soviet satellite. The literature seemed to have covered all phases and sides in some fashion, but only piecemeal. In 1991, I returned to Budějovice and began my research.

Now, ten years later, I find myself humbled. The narrow story that I had set out to tell proved dauntingly deep and complex. Yet I also find myself surprised and heartened. My approach yielded sums different from my predecessors' parts in ways that I had not expected. Perhaps the best one-word introduction to those sums is "Budweisers." By it, I mean not bottles of the American beer but a certain kind of person from Budějovice—from whose German name, Budweis, the word derives. Budweisers awakened me to the roles played in national, Czech-German conflict by nonnational actors, and to flaws in narratives that revolved around "ethnicity." I came to see that conflict as only part of Bohemian politics between 1848 and 1948. I also came to think more historically about "Czechs" and "Germans," as well as about the "nation," a defining category of modern times.

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Finally, I thank my mother, my father, my two brothers, and the rest of my family. Without them—and especially my wife, Katya King, and our two children (born two years apart on the name day of Wenceslas, the patron saint of Bohemia)—I could not have overcome the physical and metaphysical obstacles to completing this project. I only wish that our beloved Scout, also known as der Schkub/Skautík, were still among us. May he live in memory as one of the finest American pooches ever to visit Budweis/Budějovice.

1 November 2001  
South Hadley, Mass.

Czechs of Budějovice, your peace-loving fellow citizens who do you no wrong," was written in Czech, and called on all fifty-four of the Jewish voters by name to abstain. Jews intending to appear at the polls were warned that they would be assumed to have come in order to vote against Grünwald.<sup>67</sup>

Two days later, armed gendarmes stood in the snow on the *Ringplatz*/*rynek* and made certain that Czech threats and dreams of disenfranchising Jews did not come true. Grünwald lost in Budweis/Budějovice by a tally of 489 to 584, but prevailed in the electoral district as a whole. *Budívoj* soon printed a letter from him, in which he expressed his thanks to supporters in both Czech and German. In the same issue, the Czech Electoral Committee also thanked Czech voters, together with "a small cluster of German voters who voted with us." "Finally," the statement continued, "we thank the Jews of Budějovice, who have pronounced themselves our clear political opponents, casting off the mask of hermaphroditism [*obojetnost*]. Decided adversaries we find preferable to fawning hypocrites. We will forgive those who have no homeland and have lost their language that they do not understand the struggle for these two estates [*statky*]. We regret, however, that these people ask not on which side lies right but instead which party rules."<sup>68</sup> Yet if Jews really were "decided adversaries" of Czechs, then Czechs bore at least half the responsibility. And whatever the politics of Budweis/Budějovice's Jewish residents, they were finding, as had Klavík/Klavik and Jirsík/Jirsik, that taking sides in the German-Czech struggle was increasingly difficult to avoid.

## Conclusion

The political flux that had begun in 1848 came to an end in 1871. A Greater Germany did not come into being. Instead, Prussia completed its expansion, through victorious wars against Denmark, the Habsburg Monarchy, and France, into a smaller German Empire. The Habsburg Monarchy, which had divided into a dual monarchy after losing the Austro-Prussian War, stopped short of further division into a tripartite one. To the south, Piedmont-Sardinia capped its transformation into Italy by seizing Rome. In the Prussian and Piedmontese cases, the dynasties that controlled the upper reaches of the state met with considerable success in claiming national legitimacy. They supposedly restored, or at least partly restored, a lost German and Italian unity. In the Habsburg case, on the other hand, it was the Hungarian movement that met with greatest success in claiming national legitimacy, against the dynasty. Hungarian leaders supposedly restored, or at least partly restored, a lost Hungarian sovereignty.

Czech leaders in Budweis/Budějovice reacted to the defeat of trialism with a surge of anger—directed at, among other people, Jews. Indeed, even before the defeat, *Budívoj* had begun to focus in disproportionate fashion on the Jewish voters in town, who made up only 5 percent of the diet and Austrian Parliament electorates. "In elections in Budějovice," the newspaper had claimed just before the Diet election on September 9, "the Constitutionalists owe thanks for their electoral victories above all to the Jews, whom they have tried to keep on their side at all costs. If the Jews were to vote with us, or at least abstain, the Czech side would emerge the victor from every contest." The editorial had concluded with the threat that Czechs would remember who voted how. Two months later, immediately after the definitive derailment of the Bohemian compromise, Czechs were urged to make no purchases from German or Jewish merchants at an upcoming fair: "Each to His Own [*Svoji k svému!*]" The following week, *Budívoj* published an anti-Semitic article.<sup>65</sup>

Budweis/Budějovice's Jewish population did tend to have liberal and German sympathies, for good reasons. All of the 250 Jews registered in the 1869 census were relative newcomers to town, usually from rural areas of the Central Bohemian plain. Encounters there with the traditional anti-Semitism of Catholic, Czech-speaking peasants had been common. So had less intimate and less dismaying encounters with German-language culture, in part because of laws dating from the late eighteenth century that had required Jewish children to attend German-language elementary schools. More recently, the *Beseda* in town had decided to accept "honorable and intelligent Jews" as members—but only a year and a half after splitting off from the *Liedertafel*. Liberal leaders had been more welcoming. Liberal deputies had also consistently emphasized achievement over birth, and had crafted the Fundamental Laws, which separated church from state and established legal equality for all citizens.<sup>66</sup>

*Budívoj* did not acknowledge the realities that made Czech, conservative, Catholic, and federalist stances less appealing than German, liberal, anticlerical, and centralist ones to most Jews. Nor did it allow that Jews might be Germans or Czechs, rather than a "nation" apart. Instead, *Budívoj* pandered to Czech anti-Semitism and made Jews into scapegoats for the actions of Francis Joseph—on whom direct attacks were taboo. In December 1871, just before still another election to the Parliament, the newspaper singled out Jewish voters for unfriendly attention. The front page carried three separate appeals. The first, signed by the "Election Committee of the Friends of the Compromise," was written in German and called on burghers to vote for Grünwald rather than for his opponent (whose principal backers supposedly included a baptized Jew). The second appeal, signed by the "Czech Election Committee," was written in Czech and delivered a straight national pitch. And the third, signed by "The

Nearly surrounded by the German Empire, Italy, and Hungary was Cisleithania, or what came to be known as the Austrian half of "Austria-Hungary." Here, as in the three emergent nation-states, much of politics now unfolded within a constitutional order of civil liberties and of elected legislatures with carefully delimited powers. That continued to be the pattern, in fact, until the First World War. Yet Cisleithania was fundamentally different. In the German Empire, Italy, and Hungary, the major factions all claimed to speak for the same "nation," and collaborated in suppressing non-Germans, non-Italians, or non-Hungarians who challenged the rules of the game. In Cisleithania, when centralists and federalists spoke of domestic conflict in national terms, that conflict was often between two "nations," rather than within one. Politics had moved in the direction of becoming not so much national as binational or multinational. The state apparatus, however, remained for the most part Habsburg. Some ministers and officials were national—usually German. Yet they served at the pleasure of Francis Joseph and over the objections of federalists, and could do little to nationalize the imperial-royal civil service, the army, or the law.

Germanness and Czechness in Cisleithania, meanwhile, in the process of moving toward the political fore, had changed considerably, even while remaining linked by a "negative and analog tie." German leaders had abandoned their historical focus on the territory of the Holy Roman Empire and had shifted to a more realistic, civic focus on the territory of Cisleithania. At the same time, they had pushed the historical-cultural, or elitist, strand to Germanness in civic directions, and had reduced their emphasis on ethnicity. Czech leaders, in contrast, had retained their emphasis on ethnicity and had become more populist—through *tábory*, through invocations of "five million souls," and, for that matter, through attempts at harnessing base popular sentiments such as anti-Semitism. One result was that the weak historical-cultural strand to Czechness had grown weaker still. Federalist great landowners had become less important to the Czech movement. They, as well as ethnic Germans in the Bohemian lands, had become less Czech in Czech eyes. Yet the historical-territorial strand to Czechness remained. German-speaking Bohemians might not count as Czech, but the land on which they lived did.

The strength of the Czech and German national movements, however, should not be exaggerated. Nor should the extent of their conflict with traditional Habsburg forces. In Budweis/Budějovice, national leaders had succeeded in forcing a choice on some Budweisers between Czech and German. That choice, though, concerned only thin slices of life: elections, in which the great majority of Budweisers could not vote; associations, in which the great majority could not or did not join; the press, which

many people did not read; and schools, which were only beginning to offer a choice between Bohemia's two languages. Typical was not the treasonous statement of "better to become Prussian than Czech," but rather an attempt by the *Beseda* and *Liedertafel* to outstrip one another in the presence of the Bohemian government.<sup>69</sup> The national movements competed with each other over which was more Habsburg-loyal.

## Two

### A More Broad and National Politics, 1871-1890

The common people of our town are Czech, and thus far, this precious material has not enjoyed our attention.

—*August Zátka*, 1882

We wish to draw all strata of the German citizenry to the great national project.

—*Josef Taschek*, 1884

In Budweis, the two competing parties must demonstrate their congenial strength. Whichever side proves itself, over time, to be stronger must necessarily be accommodated by each government, in accordance with the law.

—*Count Eduard Taaffe*, 1888

In Budweis/Budějovice during the 1870s and 1880s, public life expanded. Elections, associations, schools, and the press ceased to exhaust the list of principal political spaces, and a bourgeois elite, together with imperial-royal officials, ceased to exhaust the list of principal political actors in town. Municipal enterprises, the census, new and less local associations, the labor market, and both shops and shopping became important arenas for contestation. So, for that matter, did many nonbourgeois—at the same time that they became political actors in their own right.

Politics also became more national, even as nationhood itself changed. Constitutionalists grew more German, and less liberal. Their opponents grew more Czech, and less Catholic. German leaders became somewhat less elitist, while Czech leaders reduced their emphasis on Bohemian state rights. Both came to think of nationhood in more ethnic terms. Both national movements also expanded demographically and spread out from their original, fairly specific tethering points along the political spectrum. The expansion and change both of nationhood and of politics more generally, however, were incremental, not revolutionary. August Zátka and Josef Taschek, new leaders of the opposing movements in Budweis/Budějovice from the early 1880s, followed up only in part with action on their claims to the “common people of our town” and to “all strata of the German

citizenry.” Organizations came to include many lower-middle-class individuals, but continued to exclude working-class ones. In some senses, Count Eduard Taaffe, the Cisleithanian prime minister between 1879 and 1893, did “accommodate” the stronger, German side in town, led by Taschek. But before, during, and after Taaffe’s term in office, the state was dominated by nonnational elites, and actively shaped the political field. State policy, for example, largely defined the lower-middle class that Taschek and Zátka set to embracing. The strength of the two increasingly national parties in town, for that matter, became more equal over time—less because of their “congenital” natures than because of ongoing dynamics in which the Habsburg authorities, both intentionally and unintentionally, played major roles.

### Public and Private

Months before the enactment of the Fundamental Laws in 1867, workers in Budweis/Budějovice had begun tearing down the medieval ramparts that by that point served only to choke the town. *Budivoj* found strong symbolism of a national sort in the event. “With the demolition of this bulwark,” the newspaper commented, “legal continuity is sundered. Demolished is the historic right of our Teutons not to know Czech.”<sup>1</sup> Mayor Claudi saw things differently, perhaps in part because he and other Constitutionalists dominated the town council. In the mid-1860s, through legislation understood by Habsburg policymakers as a counterbalance to the centralist February Patent of 1861, town councils throughout Cisleithania had gained a measure of autonomy almost without parallel in Europe. “Communes” [*Gemeinden/obce*] had won extensive latitude in important fields, including education, taxation, language policy, and public utilities. Urban communes, or municipalities, had retained control over the granting of burgher status and, thus to some degree, over the contours of the third municipal curia.<sup>2</sup> At about the same time, as part of a Europe-wide trend, the size of municipal government had begun to mushroom. During the late 1860s and early 1870s, the town council in Budweis/Budějovice oversaw not only the razing of the old town walls but also the illumination of streets by a new gasworks, the drastic reduction of cholera outbreaks by a new sewage system and waterworks, and more.

Such projects gave Liberal and German aldermen tangible ways to promote Germanness and to discourage Czechness. Czech leaders, in an open letter to the mayor in February 1869, complained that whenever the *Liedertafel* sponsored a dance, lamps belonging to the new gasworks lit up the streets until dawn. The lamps outside the German *Casino* burned brightly all the time. But around the site for a *Beseda* gathering, the light-

of Bohemia's richest and oldest noble families, Prince Franz von Lobkowitz/František z Lobkovic. After this bow to federalist great landowners, additional bows followed in the direction of other key constituencies. In the Tábor district of the chamber, a bloc of Jewish voters had abandoned the Constitutional ticket and had decided the outcome in one curia. In 1885, the Chamber Council filled its seat in the Lower House with a Jew. Czechs, for their part, gained linguistic equality in the chamber's publications, as well as the replacement of German with Czech as the language of administration.<sup>38</sup>

### ✓ A New Generation

In 1883, Grünwald moved to Prague. His departure, combined with the aging of Hynek Zátka and others, cleared the way for August Zátka to assume the mantle of Czech leadership in town. By now thirty-six years old, with his own law offices, Zátka had settled down, marrying Klawik/Klavík's granddaughter, Johanna Klawik/Jana Klavíková, in 1878. Since Zátka's first, somewhat wild public appearances in the early 1870s, he had matured into a principled and charismatic leader, equally gifted at war-room strategizing and at rallying crowds with impassioned speeches.<sup>39</sup> Recognizing the central Czech advantage—mounting strength with every year—he worked consistently to choke off impulsive calls from the ranks for frontal charges, without depressing morale. *Zátka*, by coincidence, means “stopper” or “cork” in the Czech language.

By the following year, 1884, a changing of the guard had begun in the Constitutional camp, too. Deputy Mayor Groh retired, and Mayor Claudi died that fall. For the next several years, a cluster of men ran the party and town hall: Wendelin Rziha, an attorney who apparently had begun his political career elsewhere as a Czech (Vendelín Ríha); Anton Franz Taschek, a merchant; and several others. Yet none of those burghers succeeded in bending the others to his will. Rather, with time, *Taschek's* son *Josef* did. This graduate of the engineering faculty in Vienna, only twenty-seven years old in 1884, had set to work immediately upon his return to Budweis/Budějovice in the late 1870s at constructing a personal political machine within the world of liberal associations. In electoral politics, the first results of his efforts showed in the summer of 1884, with his election to the town council as an alternate. This was followed by his designation as deputy mayor in 1890, as member of the diet in 1893, and then as mayor in 1903—the nearly mechanical outcome of harnessing the local wheels of power and patronage, and then of due diligence in lubricating them.<sup>40</sup>

Like Claudi, *Taschek* found his very Germanness called into question by Czechs—on ethnic grounds. Sometimes, as Zátka delighted in pointing out, *Taschek* made Czech-inspired grammatical errors in the German language. *Budívoj* reminded its readers that *Taschek's* father had come to Budweis/Budějovice in the 1840s from the Czech-speaking village of *Bernardice* and had signed on as a charter member of the *Beseda* in 1862 before rethinking his loyalties. For that matter, *Budívoj* noted that the family name was a Czech one, and lay at the root of the word “*vašák*”—meaning “rascal.”<sup>41</sup> *Taschek* was “really” a Czech, and thus the worst kind of German. As a Czech saying goes, *Potvrčenec horsí Turka*—“worse than the Turk is the Turkish convert.”

Constitutionalists, in a sign that their understanding of ethnicity continued to differ from the Czech understanding, did not question *Taschek's* Germanness. Nor did they claim that Grünwald was a German because of his name, or that Zátka was a German because he spoke German as a native. Czech understandings of ethnicity, as has already been noted, tended to stress native command of a language, and to classify as “Czech” anyone who spoke both languages of Bohemia equally well. (Czechs did make exceptions when doing so helped the cause. Zátka's mother, for example, had learned Czech only as an adult; here is part of why German counted as one of the “mother tongues” of her oldest son. But she counted as a Czech to Czechs—who did not poke fun at the very national names of her last two sons: Vlastimil and Dobroslav. Here supranational understandings of women as minors—such that their nationhood, like their citizenship, hinged on that of a father, husband, or son—played a role.) Constitutional and German understandings of ethnicity, in contrast, tended in cases of bilingualism to emphasize what Constitutionalists had always seen as important: individual action and conviction. *Taschek* was German because he spoke German, acted like a German, and claimed to be a German—any accent or errors notwithstanding.<sup>42</sup>

In those parts of the Bohemian lands where almost everyone spoke only one language, the new, jointly national emphasis on ethnicity promised to render the nationalization of two “peoples” easier. Czech and German leaders, by agreeing on who belonged to which national movement, could hinder each others' recruitment efforts less, and could make nationalization seem more natural and inevitable. But in places such as Budweis/Budějovice, where the proportion of utraquists was unusually high, the difference between Czech and German ethnicity allowed both national movements to claim many of the same individuals. As Zátka and *Taschek* began to look past burghers and bourgeois to an entire people, each leader pursued an internally consistent view of who his people were. Yet the result was not a productive division of nationalizing labor. Rather, thousands of utraquists became sites of Czech-German contestation. A person's nation-



Figure 3. Josef Taschek (1857–1939). German Liberal leader and mayor of Budweis/Budějovice, 1903–1918. Courtesy of the State Regional Archive in České Budějovice.

ality depended on who was doing the ascribing. Even for people speaking only one language, nationalization became less a question of nature and of inevitability than of choice—not only between Czech and German but between national and nonnational. Because the rhetoric of ethnicity had Czech and German variants, Budweis/Budějovice's many utraquists did not “break” or completely disable the rhetoric. Yet by clashing, the two variants stripped the Czech and German ethnic convergence of at least part of its accelerating effect on nationalization.

Both Taschek and Zátka worked harder than their predecessors at splitting utraquist associations and at heightening the national qualities of middle-class clubs already dominated by one national movement or the other. The First South Bohemian Association of Soldiers and Public Officials, founded on a utraquist basis in 1880, did not remain that way for long. When the president led the board in rejecting applications for membership from Zátka and from two other men late in 1882, Czech members staged a revolt. In January 1883, on a floor vote, they revoked the board's action and impeached the president, replacing him with Zátka. There followed an exodus by Germans from the club, which transferred its headquarters to the *Beseda*. (In 1884, members nonetheless attended Claudi's funeral.) Both the *Turnverein* and the *Liedertafel* added the word “German” to their name—although a majority of the gymnasts rejected the change in 1882 and agreed to it, at Taschek's urging, only on a second vote in the following year. The *Liedertafel* also adopted a new emblem: a swan with spread wings over oak leaves and a lyre on a band in the black, red, and gold German colors.<sup>43</sup>

In the fall of 1883, a bust of Joseph II of Habsburg went up in town, in a sign that Constitutional leaders continued to strengthen their emphasis on Germanness, and to do so in ethnic ways. A century previously, Joseph II had sought to improve and to centralize the governance of his far-flung lands. To that end, he had attempted—and failed—to make German a sort of Habsburg *lingua franca*. Taschek, together with German leaders throughout Cisleithania during the early 1880s, seized on the monarch's promotion of the German language and made him a new national hero. Taschek also exploited the unveiling of the bust to lend his still heavily middle-class movement a more populist appearance—by recruiting villagers to attend. For them, Joseph II's improvement of peasants' legal position vis-à-vis nobles probably meant more than did his language policy (whose national motives existed only in the imagination of Germans and of Czechs). The bronze took up a position directly opposite the *Beseda*, where it provoked Czechs daily over the following decades.<sup>44</sup>

Immediately after the unveiling, Taschek held a meeting at which he proposed forging closer links between Germans in Budweis/Budějovice and German-speakers living in the nearby countryside. The German



Union of the Bohemian Forest [*Deutscher Böhmerwaldbund*] came into being as a result, with Taschek serving as president. In 1884, the *Kreisblatt* explained that the mission of the association was to "bring laborers and domestic help as fresh elements to the Germans of this town so as to put an end to the inundation with Czech factory workers and maids. The apprentice and maid from [the Bohemian Forest], and if necessary from [Upper] Austria, must be mobilized. It should no longer be so that prominent German businesses in Budweis have Czech managers who bow and scrape on the job in front of their employers, then take part assiduously in the sappers' work of the Czechs in the *Beseda*." In another report on the *Böhmerwaldbund*, the newspaper insulted Czechs again, even while borrowing the central Czech ethnic metaphor of national consciousness as a natural state to which individuals awaken from a deep sleep: "In wide circles, there still rules an alarming indifference in national matters. In the long term, this can only bring about the worst, given that our Czechs, allied with the feudals and with the clericals, use every possible means to pull the nightcap farther over the eyes and ears of the plain and honest German [*dem deutschen Michel*]."<sup>45</sup> Constitutional leaders were taking poorer people more seriously as potential national recruits. Those leaders also agreed now with Czech leaders that people who arrived in town speaking only Czech translated much more easily into Czechs than into Germans. In less than liberal fashion, Taschek attempted to influence who joined the labor market in town, thus conceding that sheer numbers mattered more than he liked in the Czech-German struggle.

The *Böhmerwaldbund*, although geographically more focused than the German School Association, differed less from it than from the men's choirs and social clubs that had characterized both national movements during the 1860s and 1870s. Membership in the new type of associations was more broad, not only in the class, numerical, and territorial senses but in a gender sense as well. Emphasis lay less on face-to-face encounters of middle-class males who already knew one another than on pulling together small financial contributions from a large number of men and women. Those contributions or dues, furthermore, went not so much to self-celebration as to projects that benefited others—strangers made abstractly familiar through their nationalization. Less than a year after the founding of the *Böhmerwaldbund*, more than 7,000 members belonged to it through forty-eight chapters, one in Budweis/Budějovice and the rest scattered over the Bohemian Forest and beyond. At about the same time, the local chapter of the German School Association (also headed by Taschek) claimed that the number of its female members alone had now passed 500.<sup>46</sup>

Older national clubs in town tried to adjust to this new model, Czech ones often with greater success. Months after the founding of the German

School Association in 1880, Zátka's Czech School Foundation had become part of a pan-Bohemian association, the Czech Central School Foundation. Both of the gymnastics clubs in town had done much the same even earlier. The size and the social composition of the *Turnverein*, though, stagnated. Only 194 men belonged in 1890, despite an effort during the late 1880s at recruiting lower-middle-class members with free lessons. The *Sokol* pulled ahead, counting 320 members by 1894. (Anyone inclined to take literally the *Sokol* slogan, "Every Czech a *Sokol*!" though, has to draw sobering conclusions even from that higher figure.) Both gymnastics clubs, like the *Beseda*, the *Geselligkeitsverein*, the *Liedertafel* (which added a small women's choir), and additional associations, failed to take off into geometric growth. Instead, they continued to be predominantly middle-class, local, and male.<sup>47</sup> In electoral contests, trends were similar. Local Constitutionalists and federalists had already tied themselves into larger political networks some time ago. But under Zátka's leadership, Czechs and Catholics gradually became more open about their affiliation with the Bohemian/Czech National Party, and discontinued names such as the Burgher Party. Both of the major "parties" in town also became more worthy of that name, by growing beyond small clusters of notable men.

The Czech "Each to His Own" campaign, as well as a German equivalent, began to influence the purchasing decisions of a broader cross-section of town residents. District captains and judges frowned on calls to boycott, and the Cisleithanian Supreme Court eventually ruled that they violated the constitutional rights of shopkeepers and that instigators could be punished with jail terms of up to six months. Yet prosecutors put next to no one on trial—because people were not so dim-witted as to require incitement explicit enough to meet legal standards of proof. Owners of businesses came under pressure to make a declaration of national colors and to surrender one part of their clientele in order to keep another. In 1885, the *Böhmerwaldbund* issued an address book or directory for Budweis/Budějovice that ascribed a nationality to business owners through different typefaces. The National Bohemian Forest Union (NJP), founded by Czechs in response to the *Böhmerwaldbund*, condemned the publication. But once the Czech business community in town stood on firmer legs, the NJP published a directory of its own, in 1894.<sup>48</sup> The very existence of such directories, of course, indicates that even shoppers who assumed that every business owner had a national affiliation sometimes could only guess at what it was.

In June 1884, in a sort of inaugural speech as Grünwald's successor, Zátka proposed ways to weave more densely the Czech institutional web that, radiating outward from the *Beseda*, was beginning to cover the town. He urged the creation of a new *Beseda* of the People, on the model of the

original *Beseda* and of the derivative *Beseda* of Artisans and Tradesmen, founded in 1882. "The common people of our town are Czech," he claimed, "and thus far, this precious material has not enjoyed our attention." The attention that he now proposed included founding more schools. Zátka also made a case for establishing a German-language newspaper and a club which, conservative and nonconfrontational, might draw national neutrals in the direction of the Czech movement. In keeping with the long-standing Czech practice of combining ethnicity with a more historical, state rights nationhood, he pointed out that some German-speakers, especially imperial-royal officials, army officers, priests, and Jews, might become Czechs. "Perhaps the slogan of reconciliation might find an echo among burghers as well. There is plenty of material for a conciliatory German association. In elections to the diet, Austrian Parliament, and town council, Czechs would not hesitate to vote for honorable men, even if they were Germans by birth, and such candidates could win if they had, in addition to Czech votes, a relatively small number of German ones. For Jews, such a German conservative association could serve as a bridge over which to escape from German-national captivity."<sup>49</sup> Such people felt more comfortable in German-speaking settings, Zátka apparently believed, but they disagreed with some or all of liberal and German politics. By demanding less than the German movement did and by offering more, the Czech movement might win adherents.

Czechs followed through quickly on Zátka's proposals. The *Beseda* of the People, founded in December 1884, lured lower-middle-class people by charging no dues and by sponsoring cheery gatherings—where the club motto, "Czech children belong in Czech schools," probably figured prominently. A new Czech high school, funded entirely through private donations, opened its doors in September. By 1885, there were 2,396 children in Budweis/Budějovice acquiring an education primarily in the Czech language, nearly seven times as many as in 1870. Zátka's wife became the president of a new Czech women's association dedicated to raising money for girls' schools; the NJP opened a lending library in town; and the *Beseda* undertook construction of a new wing.<sup>50</sup>

Attempts at making Czechs out of German-speakers yielded less inspiring results. When elections to the Parliament took place in November 1884, neither Zátka nor other local leaders of the Bohemian/Czech National Party ran. Instead, they persuaded a retired army officer with an impeccable record and with no clear nationality, Franz/František von Kopriva, to do so. As a Czech historian phrases the matter, the hope was that he would prove appealing to voters for whom "the state idea meant more than the national cause." The town council, which had the right to appoint half of the members for an electoral commission encharged with policing the polls, appointed Constitutionalists. The district captain, who

appointed the other half, appointed federalists—in an effort to help a candidate who was certain to join Prime Minister Taaffe's coalition. By a count of 429 votes (39 percent) to 671 (61 percent), von Kopriva lost to Josef Schier, a merchant. The tally marked only a 2 percent improvement on the showing by a more Czech candidate, Vokáč, against Claudi in 1879.<sup>51</sup>

Early in 1886, a Czech-funded semiweekly, the *Budweiser Bote*, commenced publication—in German, and employing what it claimed, without a trace of irony, was a "truly progressive, conservative perspective." Perching precariously at the point where German, Czech, and nonnational views diverged, the newspaper promised that it would "advocate steadfastly the true rights and needs of the German people, but devote full consideration and generous recognition at the same time to the efforts and interests of the other peoples of our fatherland." At best, the *Bote* may have succeeded during its decade-long existence in luring a handful of nationally neutral burghers, officials, and Jews closer to the Czech cause. The "Union" club, founded for the same purpose at the end of 1884, proved a similar let-down, developing into little more than a license for a small cluster of Budweisers to socialize with one another in the *Beseda* in German. Zátka had the Union dissolved in 1889.<sup>52</sup>

### The Five-florin Men

Neither Zátka nor Taschek succeeded in altering the national balance within the middle-class electorates that they, as new leaders, had inherited. Instead, they confirmed and deepened that balance together. A decision at the highest Habsburg level, however, ensured that formal politics now preoccupied an additional social stratum as well. Taaffe, seeking to consolidate his Iron Ring coalition, pushed a bill through the Austrian Parliament in 1882 that reduced from ten florins to five the tax threshold at which men became qualified to vote for candidates to the central legislature, as well as revised the structure of the great landowners' curia in Bohemia. Somewhat later, he also helped bring about an expansion of the electorate of the Bohemian Diet, whose Constitutional majority had yielded to a fragile federalist one in 1883. When the first Austrian Parliament elections to be held according to the new franchise occurred in the summer of 1885, the number of ballots cast in Budweis/Budějovice increased by nearly 40 percent. One of the Constitutional responses was to begin a boycott of the Diet in 1886. Federalists, meanwhile, rushed to embrace the shopkeepers, low-ranking officials, and less wealthy artisans who made up the "five-florin men." They, in fact, were the audience at which Zátka aimed the new *Beseda* of the People.<sup>53</sup> Although Czechness

the original party came to be known, to their disadvantage), and questioned the close alliance with federalist great landowners. Yet Young Czechs, like Old Czechs, maintained a historical, state-rights rhetoric next to an ethnic one. And unlike *völkische*, Young Czechs maintained organizational unity. They also made their first major mark not with utopian and rash proposals but with the pragmatic objection during the 1870s that the Czech boycott of the diet and of the Austrian Parliament was yielding no results. That challenge to civic negativism helped to bring about the Iron Ring.

During the 1880s, five-florin men helped to make the National Liberals or Young Czechs a major force in Bohemian politics. Yet the Czech movement as a whole remained far more united than the German one. Young Czech leaders worked closely with Old Czech ones until the late 1880s and argued that two parties could serve the Czech "nation" better than could one.<sup>59</sup> The flip side to that argument was that, in pockets of Czech weakness, a one-party structure remained justified. And indeed, in Budweis/Budějovice, Zátka's Old Czechs did not face a branch of the Young Czech Party until the end of the decade. Even then, Czech clubs experienced nothing like the tensions in German ones between Liberals and *völkische*. In Budweis/Budějovice, the unusually even balance of Czech and German strength delayed and softened a central outcome for the Bohemian lands as a whole of Taaffe's enfranchisement push: greatly increased Czech-Czech and German-German competition.

Why, contrary to Taaffe's expectations, did lower-middle-class politics take on primarily national forms, and spur a greater nationalization of middle-class politics—in the sense that Constitutionalists became more German and federalists more Czech? Across Europe, as well as beyond it, politics was becoming more national. In Cisleithania, the parties that dominated politics at the beginning of the 1880s were already partly national. Even before Taaffe's enfranchisements took effect, those parties (and especially the Bohemian/Czech National Party) had begun to recruit and to nationalize lower-middle-class males. Because runners-up in winner-take-all elections get no prizes, political entrepreneurs who sought power by courting the new voters had to court at least some of the old voters as well. Useful in that context were national rhetorics. They proved flexible enough to accommodate considerable change in the social composition both of the national movements and of Bohemian politics more generally. As will be shown in the next chapter, furthermore, the Czech and the German movements in Budweis/Budějovice thrived not only on conflict with one another but also on internal conflict as well. Both movements, once internally articulated, succeeded in reaching more residents than ever before and also in reaching deeper into individual lives.

Taaffe only made incremental additions to electorates. He did not transform them and the party system by enfranchising vast numbers of people all at once. From Habsburg perspectives, the politics that mattered was not local. As Taaffe stated in 1888, "In Budweis, the two competing parties must demonstrate their congenital strength. Whichever side proves itself, over time, to be stronger must necessarily be accommodated by each government, in accordance with the law."<sup>60</sup> He left municipal electoral orders unchanged, and provided few incentives for politicians to found parties that professed loyalty to the Habsburg Monarchy in nonnational ways. Instead, he focused on boosting already existing parties that made up part of his Iron Ring. Habsburg policy was at most boldly conservative, not revolutionary. And as is the case with most policies, it had some unintended consequences.

As the Czech and German movements grew socially more inclusive, a subtle yet momentous transformation took place. "Liberal" and "Constitutionalist" had used to overlap considerably with "German." Now the Czech and the German movements both claimed a Liberal party. The reverse, though, did not hold true: no liberal movement existed with subordinate Czech and German parties. The Right-Left political spectrum and the Czech-German conflict, for some time roughly parallel, were becoming hierarchically ordered. Both Czech and German Liberals were now less liberal than they were national. Non-Liberal voters, too, tended now to decide first on their national loyalties, and only then on how they viewed the Church, "equality," and individual candidates and issues. The Habsburg injection of the lower-middle class into electoral politics challenged the Czech and German establishments, but the more complex politics that resulted was all the more emphatically national.

In 1866, the Habsburg Monarchy had lost a major war with Prussia. As Pieter Judson has pointed out, however, Constitutionalists in Cisleithania had experienced the military defeat less as a nationalizing event than as confirmation that their own, only partly national course was correct. Indeed, they had exploited Francis Joseph's weakness after 1866 to win significant political victories—above all, the enshrinement of their principles in the Fundamental Laws, and the almost uninterrupted control for more than a decade of key Cisleithanian ministries. During those years, Liberals had claimed, as exceptional individuals, to represent the best interests of all—without regard to class, for example, or to language.<sup>61</sup> The Germanness of Cisleithanian liberalism had remained weakly defined and often secondary, and the Germanness of Prussia and of the Germany created in 1871 had remained distant.

In 1879, shortly after the Habsburg Monarchy's "victory" in claiming Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberals had lost their positions within the state apparatus. The new holders of at least some of those positions had been

active military duty, like almost all women, continued to be denied the vote in any election. Officers also continued to associate above all with each other. From the mid-1880s, the *Beseda* and the *Geselligkeitsverein* each counted an officer among the members of its board. But those two men, together with their comrades in arms, belonged to both clubs simultaneously. This double, group form of membership, ordered by the army command, weakened the national content to dances and to other forms of socializing with civilians.<sup>63</sup>

Some priests had strong national sentiments and clashed with a part of their congregation as a result. But at higher levels of the Church administration in town, where policy was made and where funds were allocated, individuals did not divide clearly into Czechs and Germans. In February 1883, Bishop Jirsik/Jirsik died. Over the following decade or more, Czechs appointed him a national hero, commemorating the day of his death every year and collecting funds to erect a statue in his honor. The next bishop, an imperial count, acted with scrupulous national impartiality during his tenure—which was cut short in 1885 by his elevation to archbishop in Prague, and then to cardinal. His successor in Budweis/Budějovice, Martin Josef Říha, a professor at the seminary, was of far more humble origins, yet displayed the same “strict impartiality.” Germans did not celebrate his birthday as Czechs did, but German newspapers found little cause for national complaint right up to Bishop Říha’s death in 1907. And the Liberals who dominated town hall made him an honorary burgher in 1899.<sup>64</sup>

Many middle-class Jews remained weakly national as well. They did so, though, not so much by their own decisions as because of anti-Semitism in both national movements. The very shape of the synagogue, built in 1888, expressed strong assimilationist desires. It was, in the words of an architectural historian, “the most obviously church-like structure created for Jewish worship” in all Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and a signal that members “were almost hoping to be mistaken for local Catholics.” This assessment finds confirmation in a fictionalized family history written by Norbert Frýd, a Jew born on Budweis/Budějovice’s *Ringplatz/rynek* in 1913. Jews in town, he claims, regularly referred to the synagogue as “the church”—a designation that Frýd judges justified, given that the building “was in the fashionable neo-Gothic style, with two pointed towers, stained windows, and an organ that made it resemble a Catholic sanctuary far more than a synagogue.”<sup>65</sup> Budweis/Budějovice’s Catholic population was becoming more national. But the Jewish population, by embracing Catholic appearances, failed to enter completely into the trend. Czech and German acceptance of Jews was less than complete—whatever liberal Germans said to the contrary.

federalists. That development, far more than the war of 1866, had led to a redefinition and strengthening of Germanness in Budweis/Budějovice and in the Bohemian lands. Indeed, that reversal had led to a redefinition and strengthening of nationhood more generally within Bohemian politics. Constitutionalists had become less liberal and more German, and Germanness had become less civic and more ethnic. Constitutionalists had not become German or ethnic enough, though, to prevent the emergence of a new, *völkisch* wing to the German movement. Although inconsistent, that new wing might be characterized as indifferent to the question of Germanism or federalism, and hostile to civic understandings of Germanness. *Völkisch* leaders also pushed historical-cultural, elitist Germanness in populist directions, such as to place even the most lowly speaker of German over any speaker of Czech. Federalists, meanwhile, had become more Czech, while Czechness had continued to become more populist. Czechness had also grown less anticivic—in the sense of remaining primarily ethnic, with a secondary emphasis on the historical unity of the Bohemian lands, but becoming reconciled to the centralist structure of Cisleithania. The two blocs that, together with Habsburg leaders, made up the principal players in Bohemian politics were becoming more national, and the two nationhoods more similar, even as basic asymmetries persisted.

### Old Politics and New

In 1888, *Budínovj* estimated that three or four thousand “Czechs” in Budweis/Budějovice either remained indifferent in national matters or “pass themselves off as Germans so as not to spoil things for themselves with ‘the lords.’”<sup>62</sup> That claim amounted to a wildly optimistic exaggeration of the breadth of national sentiment in town. Only recently had the institutional structures of either national movement begun to include the lower-middle class. Both movements continued almost to ignore families below the five-florin tax threshold—who made up an absolute majority of the population. Both movements devoted more attention than previously to females, but still far less than to males. Even among middle-class males, Budweiser components persisted into the late 1880s and beyond. Higher-ranking civil servants, for example, fit poorly into the national scheme of things and had reasons not to accommodate to it. The same holds true of genuinely liberal (as opposed to nationally liberal) individuals who spoke only Czech and of devoutly Catholic burghers who spoke only German.

Army officers remained largely nonnational too. In 1860, an author had written that “the Austrian armed forces form a society in and of themselves, one could almost say a nationality.” A generation later, men on

great landowners and with other practitioners of the old politics, saw no great need to weld Budweisers, Praguers, and so on into some sort of "people." National leaders—less powerful and less shielded from the daily, local rough-and-tumble than were men such as Francis Joseph, Taaffe, and Prince John Adolf—almost had to understand better the implications of popular participation in politics. With hard work, those national leaders met the Habsburg challenge of suffrage reform. They began to digest a whole new following. One consequence was an increase in tensions within both national movements. But another, as will be seen, was a new robustness—manifested in organizational structures, in membership figures, and in a growing confidence that national fortunes might rise and fall, but "nations" would remain. All this occurred gradually and within limits. National and nonnational modes of action remained complementary in many ways, not contradictory. The old, grand politics and the new, more gritty one collided only in some arenas. And even then, Czechness or Germanness by no means implied disloyalty to the state.

The opening and closing dates of this chapter, 1871 and 1890, also frame Bismarck's years as chancellor of the German Empire. That is a coincidence, as well as an indication that the whole of Central Europe was caught up in some of the same developmental trends. Links between Germanness in Budweis/Budějovice and abroad remained weak. Dominating the political horizon in town in 1871 was not the unification of Germany but the collapse of the Bohemian state-rights effort at converting the monarchy from a dualist state into a trialist one. More important in the history of Czech and German nationhood in the Bohemian lands than the military alliance with the German Empire in 1879 was Taaffe's formation that same year of his Iron Ring. Thereafter, conflict between federalists and centralists arguably became a dimension of conflict between Czechs and Germans, rather than vice versa. In 1890, not so much Bismarck's dismissal by the young and rash Emperor William II marked the beginning of a new era as did another attempt, discussed in the next chapter, at a restructuring of politics through a Bohemian compromise.

In 1890, for the first time, workers across the Habsburg Monarchy celebrated the first of May with public processions. In Budweis/Budějovice, fewer than 200 men and women dared to participate, and thus to defy both their employers and the intimidating presence of intensified police patrols.<sup>67</sup> The year before, a united Austrian Social Democratic Party had been founded again, while in 1891, antisocialist legislation in Cisleithania expired. Politics began to open wider still and to include not only an additional social stratum but also a movement that claimed to represent a nonnational or at least multinational "people"—the proletariat. Here was a new challenge for Budweis/Budějovice's Czech and German movements.

Above the middle classes and mostly beyond Budweis/Budějovice's boundaries were aristocrats. They continued, although less than in times past, to play major roles in politics, through institutions such as the great landowners' curias in the diet and in the Lower House of the Austrian Parliament, through the Upper House as a whole, and through posts such as Taaffe's. A handful of high nobles also wielded considerable clout more locally. The Schwarzenberg family, for example, owned dozens of breweries, mills, and additional enterprises in Southern Bohemia, staffed by more than 2,000 officials and employees. The head of the lesser, Orlik/Orlík branch of the family, Charles (1824–1904), was a leading federalist and a close political associate of Old Czechs. And the head of the main, Krumlov/Krumlov branch, Prince John Adolf (1799–1888), "behaved in friendly fashion toward the Czech nation" during the final years of his life, according to *Budvoj*. Yet neither man counted as national. John Adolf did contribute thirty florins to the *Böhmerwaldbund* upon its founding in 1884. Considering that his family owned approximately one-third of the entire Bohemian Forest, though, the contribution counts as a minor one—and in any case, found a Czech counterbalance in John Adolf's status as a founding member of the *Beseda*. "The late Prince's ideal," wrote *Budvoj* in its obituary in 1888, probably glad that he had not become a German, "was a position above the national parties."<sup>68</sup>

The German and the Czech movements made little attempt to "swallow" aristocrats, Jews, or Budweiser holdouts among the bourgeois. Instead, national attention shifted during the 1880s to the many Budweisers of the lower-middle class. Socially speaking, Zátka, Taschek, and other national leaders probably had little in common with individual shopkeepers, clerks, and the like. As a group, such people in Budweis/Budějovice arguably had less power than a single Schwarzenberg. Yet in the new politics, emerging beside the old across the monarchy (and for that matter across Europe), victory went not to the gourmet but to the gourmand. The old was a politics of quality. The new was a politics of quantity. And in the context of that new politics, the lower-middle class more than made up for a lack of refinement, as compared to "higher" nonnational elements, with greater numbers and with a greater ease of ingestion.

The last Budweiser to have played a significant role as a political leader had been Klavík/Klavík, during the 1860s. Since then, Budweisers had been Habsburg-loyal in mostly reactive ways, as followers. In Budweis/Budějovice, that left as Habsburg leaders only the district captain and a few other imperial-royal officials (as opposed to municipal ones, for example, who almost had to be German). And those imperial-royal officials were much less leaders than administrators or soldiers. Outside town, there was the rest of the imperial-royal civil service and military, as well as the immensely powerful figure of the emperor-king. But they, together with

## Three

### ✓ Free-for-All, 1890–1902

I accept with pleasure the assurances of the loyalty and dynastic fealty of the town of Budweis, and I express to you my warm thanks. I am convinced that the inhabitants of this town of both nationalities will always maintain their loyal Austrian ways [spoken in German]. I sincerely wish that all of you will compete, with all your strength, for the public good in peace, and that you will thus contribute to the prosperity and progress of the town [spoken in Czech].

—*Emperor-King Francis Joseph, 1895*

In a time when the fratricidal struggle against class-conscious workers is conducted with unprecedented loudness on the hot soil of nationality struggles, and when often a solitary critical word suffices to ensure that he who pronounced it is branded a traitor to his fatherland and driven to the political slaughterhouse by his enemies as an enemy of the nation, we feel doubly the weight of our task.

—*Jihočeský dělník, a Social Democratic newspaper in Budweis/Budějovice, 1897*

[We will smash your brewery to smithereens. We know your weak spots, and it is not an audit but something else that will break your neck. . . . Here you have our ultimatum. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! We do not want to conquer Town Hall but we have a right to the third curia, and we will not allow anyone to strip us of it!]

—*Budivoj, 1902*

During the final decade of the nineteenth century, public life in Budweis/Budějovice continued to expand. The Czech and German movements participated in that deepening and broadening of political participation but

did not create it. Or if they did create it, then it created and re-created them as well, in a complex process with causes and consequences that in no way remained limited to national matters. Habsburg leaders, for example, played a major role in pulling lower-class men into politics. So did Social Democrats, or Marxists. The unity of both national movements came under new strain. Indeed, the Marxist insistence on the primacy of class signaled at least the possibility of supplementing or replacing the national and Habsburg categories that had structured politics thus far.

Between the national movements, within them, and across the whole of the growing political field, conflict found expression in ever sharper language and even in physical clashes. The trend toward greater ideological complexity, in contrast, proved short-lived. The German and Czech movements, rather than breaking into pieces along class or other lines, became more differentiated and articulated. Politics as a whole, rather than swinging in a less national direction, swung in a more national one. Not only Social Democrats but also Habsburg leaders, including Francis Joseph himself, thought more and more nationally, even as they sought solutions to mounting national problems. The new class complexity remained. But national leaders, and especially Czech ones, succeeded at accommodating their organizations to it, and at making national questions trump class questions much more often than vice versa.

### Intranational Conflict, Nationalizing and International Dynamics

In the early 1890s, national politics in Budweis/Budějovice “caught up” somewhat with national politics elsewhere in the Bohemian lands, by becoming internally more divided. Yet the Old Czech-Young Czech division and the Liberal-*vůlkiszb* one did not set back the national movements as a whole. Even as hostility between individuals on the same national side increased, nationhood in a generic sense became more central to politics. Intranational conflict also pushed the German and Czech camps farther apart; national sentiments became deeper and more intense.<sup>1</sup> The following discussion presents this complex dynamic through the example of the aftermath in Budweis/Budějovice of the Bohemian Compromise, a pact signed in 1890 but never implemented.

Early in January 1890, Prime Minister Taaffe called together Old Czechs, Liberal Germans (known at this point as the “United German Left”), and both centralist and federalist great landowners for negotiations in Vienna. By the end of the month, all parties to the talks had settled on legislation, to be passed by the Bohemian Diet, that reworked administrative boundaries, diet curias, language policy, and more. At the heart of

*merwaldbund* organized in the Bohemian Forest, in the village of Höritz/Hořice, proved a continual financial drain on the municipality. So did an omnibus venture within the town limits. Partly as a result, Budweis/Budějovice ran large budget deficits and imposed on residents the highest tax rates in all Bohemia.<sup>55</sup>

In 1885, Czech companies and institutions had employed fewer than 120 workers and managers. By 1900, that figure had increased to almost 700. To be sure, the Hardtmuth pencil factory alone employed more than 1,000 men and women by the turn of the century, and was by many accounts a German bastion. Yet the Czech movement had made considerable progress toward what Czech publications consistently phrased as a liberation of Czech workers from the bondage of German employment. Czech leaders, as usual providing impossibly precise figures, claimed that Czechs had paid only 30.5 percent of municipal taxes in 1890 but 38.1 percent in 1900. In 1902, Czechs captured control over the last of the small businessmen's associations in town.<sup>56</sup>

The Social Democratic movement also made progress, but of another sort. In April 1899, workers stopped building a new barracks on the outskirts of town and persuaded several thousand other men and women to put down their tools, too. Leaders demanded a reduction in the length of shifts, an increase in wages (bricklayers earned slightly more than two crowns a day at the time), and recognition of the first of May as a holiday. More than two weeks of daily demonstrations followed, including some violent confrontations that provoked the intervention of the municipal police and the army. The strikers won at least some concessions. After the German firm that was overseeing the construction of the barracks had joined other firms in granting a small wage increase, work resumed on the second of May.<sup>57</sup>

### Nationalizing Beer

An example of how national loyalties had come to shape economic activity lies in the production, marketing, and consumption of beer. The Burghers' Brewery in Budweis/Budějovice, established in 1795, was the property of those individuals who owned the nearly 400 buildings downtown. To sell a building was to lose one's share in the brewery. Until the 1860s, no other business in town had possessed brewing rights, and laws had regulated tightly which beer could be sold where within Cisleithania. The brewery had thus paid reliably plump dividends—which had found reflection in real estate prices and in the social profile of the owners. That profile, in turn, had found reflection in politics. In 1871, *Budimaj* had objected to the participation of the Burghers' Brewery in elections to the Austrian

Parliament. A majority of the owners of the brewery, in other words, had decided to use its vote in the Chamber of Commerce and Trade to back a Constitutional candidate.<sup>58</sup>

The deregulation of the beer market, together with the development of an ever more dense railroad network over which beer could be transported quickly, cheaply, and packed in ice, had signaled new dangers, but also new opportunities for the Burghers' Brewery. On the one hand, the *Besida* and other Czech establishments had begun switching to other, less German suppliers, such as the Schwarzenberg brewery in Krummau/Krumlov. Attempts by German Liberals at blocking this aspect of the "Each to His Own" campaign—by exploiting control over town hall in order to link the issuance of liquor licenses to long-term contracts with the Burghers' Brewery, for example—had failed. On the other hand, vast new markets had opened up. In the early 1870s, an old-fashioned faction had lost control of the Board of Directors of the brewery, and an opposing faction (including members of the Taschek family, but also of the Zátka one) had set a bold new course: modernizing and ramping up production, as well as pushing the sales force farther afield. Small quantities of Budweiser beer had soon traveled even to the United States. Little profit had resulted from that particular export drive, but something else had. Two men in St. Louis, Eberhard Anheuser and Adolphus Busch, had appropriated the Budweiser name for an unrelated brew, and then had gone on to make it one of the first coast-to-coast American brand names.<sup>59</sup>

Closer to home, the Burghers' Brewery had fared better. By the mid-1890s, it owned multiple installations besides the beer-producing plant itself: several restaurants near town, including one at the site of the Passion Plays in Höritz/Hořice; refrigerated warehouses in Brünn/Brno, Graz, Innsbruck, Trieste, and additional cities of Cisleithania; and also warehouses in such places as Zagreb, Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich. Production had nearly tripled since 1871, to 114,000 hectoliters; the number of employees in Budweis/Budějovice had sextupled, to more than 200; and the dividend had jumped from 100 to 400 crowns—more than half of what a bricklayer could hope to earn in a year. The Burghers' Brewery, despite its antiquated ownership structure, had become a modern manufacturing facility. To the extent that the brewery was German, it seemed to disprove Zátka's claim that German burghers in town made poor businessmen.

The Germanness of the brewery, however, had reached a high point during the late 1880s or early 1890s, and thereafter had yielded to a more generic nationalization. At the beginning of the 1890s, the Czech Savings Bank had managed, through subterfuge, to purchase a brewery-linked building on the *Ringplatz/rynek* from a burgher allied with Taschek. Liberal German leaders, made suddenly aware of a new threat, had mobilized

to defend the brewery, and for that matter the center of town—only to realize gradually just how powerful the Czech push was. By 1900, Czech families and businesses made up almost one third of the owners. *Zátka* himself continued to own at least one brewery-linked house.<sup>60</sup>

Well before 1900, *Zátka* had decided to complement the Czech attempt at gaining control of the Burghers' Brewery with a more radical strategy: founding a new, Czech brewery that would capture market share from the German-dominated one. In 1895, a Czech Shareholders' Brewery had come into existence in town. Rejecting the model of the Burghers' Brewery, which just then was celebrating its centenary, the new company had organized itself as a corporation instead. Like other Czech companies, it had raised capital by issuing stock in denominations small enough that even individuals of modest means could afford a share or two. By 1902, the Czech Shareholders' Brewery had more than 6,500 shares outstanding.<sup>61</sup>

The new business had proved an immediate success. The *Beseda* had signed up as one of the first regular customers, and from that point on could claim the distinction of being a Czech establishment that served Czech beer. So, before long, could more and more restaurants and pubs, including one called "The Czech/Bohemian German" [*U českého Němce*]. Open and explicit in financial dealings in a way that the Burghers' Brewery had never been, the Czech Shareholders' Brewery timed annual reports and dividends to coincide with those of the rival company. Regular drinkers of the new brand probably included all shareholders. In hoisting a glass, they could quench their thirst, increase the value of their assets, and serve the national cause all at once. The annual summer festival of the Shareholders' Brewery soon became a major Czech fund-raising event. Germans, meanwhile, also stood free to drink the beer—which, like its competitor, carried the name "Budweiser" in German. At the request of some buyers in Styria, the Czech Shareholders' Brewery even shipped bottles with labels that contained no mention of anything Czech or Bohemian. By 1900, the new Brewery had 130 employees in Budweis/Budějovice. It had also already given shareholders some tidy profits, and perhaps some beer bellies. The following year, when Czech-language schools in town first surpassed German-language ones in enrollment, the Shareholders' Brewery outstripped the Burghers' Brewery in barrels produced.<sup>62</sup> Such remarkable achievement set new standards in town for enterprise.

The spectacular feat of outproducing a major firm after only six years also indicated that something was rotten in the Burghers' Brewery. Indeed, its beer seemed to have declined in quality—in a development related to a dramatic widening in the Liberal-*völkisch* divide. In the late 1890s, Leopold Schweighofer, a German *völkisch* leader and the owner

of a brewery-linked house, had launched a campaign against the Liberal German faction (headed, as in town hall, by Taschek and by Kohn) that dominated the brewery's Board of Directors. The young and brash Schweighofer, in his quest for victory against Liberals and for growth more in line with that of the Czech Shareholders' Brewery, proved willing to pact even with house-owners downtown who were Czechs.<sup>63</sup> "Better a Czech than a Liberal German," he and his followers seem to have reasoned in their angrier moments, and "Better a Czech than a Jew." To Czechs who owned a stake in the Burghers' Brewery, Schweighofer held out not only hope of better management but a chance to bloody Taschek and to neutralize the company as a political factor. After all, the brewery could influence how its employees behaved—not only at the ballot box but in school enrollment decisions for their children, in associational life, and so on. By definition, a *völkisch*-Czech coalition would not exercise its power to the advantage of either national movement.

The combination of Czech pressure and of *völkisch* rebellion weakened the Liberal grip on the Burghers' Brewery. Once the Liberal faction lost its ability to shroud financial data in secrecy, Schweighofer discovered that Taschek, his father, Kohn, and their associates had been selling the Burghers' Brewery ice, wood, coal, and hops at grossly inflated prices. The motive for this swindle remains unclear. Liberal leaders may have sought to profit personally, or they may have acted on behalf of their party—which needed ever more cash to keep members and voters in line. Quite likely brewery funds ended up diverted both to private and to German public ends. Wherever the money went, *völkisch* and Czech brewery owners found that expressing shock over its absence served their aims. Some of Taschek and Kohn's previously passive allies, appalled and angered by the new revelations, began to side with the rebels. Liberal members of the board denied everything and refused to step down.<sup>64</sup>

In October 1900, just as town residents were gearing up for the census and for elections to the Austrian Parliament, Schweighofer went public with his allegations. The speech he made provides a perspective committed all too rarely to paper on an important issue: how Taschek's party commanded loyalty or obedience from followers. "It would be interesting to know," Schweighofer said,

how many votes for [the Liberals] would remain if everyone could vote as he thought. But one person owes money to the Savings Bank and another has a promise of a loan. The first is a municipal employec, the second an official of an institution—the Brewery, the Savings Bank, the "Bee" Loan Cooperative—dependent on them in another way. A third person is subject to the Town School Board, a fourth rents his lodgings from one of their people and is threatened



with eviction. A fifth, meanwhile, who owns a house, finds himself threatened with termination of his lease by a renter belonging to their party. Craftsmen they threaten with no more work, businessmen with boycott!<sup>65</sup>

In the Liberal German political economy, all was linked in a seamless web having town hall at its center. Indeed, town hall itself owned nearly a dozen brewery-linked buildings, while the brewery held at least one vote in the very small and very powerful municipal first curia.<sup>66</sup> This structure made for political strength, but also for economic inefficiency. The brewery, under Taschek and Kohn, had no real bottom line, and insufficient incentive to streamline operations as the market demanded. If the thousands of shareholders and employees of the Czech brewery found that what was good for the Czech movement also benefited them individually, then only the elite among German owners of the Burghers' Brewery could claim the same. For other Germans, national and personal interests coincided in much sloppier fashion.

Schweighofer and other *völkische* fought Taschek and his Liberals with more abandon than Holanský and other Young Czechs fought Zátka and his Old Czechs. Unlike Holanský, Schweighofer succeeded in wresting control from his intransigent nemesis over a major institution; in January 1902, he won election as Chairman of the Board of the Burghers' Brewery, backed by *völkische* and by Czechs. Immediately, that coalition faced a test. Liberal leaders had been exerting their influence within companies in an attempt to assure a Czech defeat in elections, now overdue, to the town council. Early in February, Czech leaders learned the extent of that attempt (whose details are explained in the next chapter), and reacted with a vehemence—and confidence—that would have been inconceivable a decade previously. *Budínov*, less concerned with the fortunes of Schweighofer's Czech allies among the owners of the Burghers' Brewery than with Czech political fortunes more broadly, warned Schweighofer to rescind the previous chairman's pro-Liberal measures. Otherwise, "we will smash your brewery to smithereens. We know your weak spots, and it is not an audit but something else that will break your neck. . . . Here you have our ultimatum. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! We do not want to conquer Town Hall but we have a right to the third curia, and we will not allow anyone to strip us of it!"<sup>67</sup>

In 1900, Schweighofer had countered Liberal charges that he was betraying the national cause by arguing that the Burghers' Brewery "is not a political enterprise. Rather, it is a purely commercial one, purely economic. Neither Germans nor Czechs nor Jews count in it, but simply numbers and success." He had drawn the line at cooperating with Czechs in elections. Now, though, in order to deal another blow to his intransigent

Liberal opponents, he risked lifting his national, Czech opponents to a big electoral victory—and losing money. If Schweighofer hesitated, then he did not hesitate very long. He gave in to the Czech pressure, and rescinded his Liberal predecessor's measures. In April, the new management that Schweighofer headed filed suit against former members of the board, and erected a Czech-language sign to complement the German-language one at the entrance to the factory compound.<sup>68</sup>

Originally a brewery of Budweiser burghers, then an increasingly Liberal and German one, and then a mostly German one with a seditious Czech minority, the Burghers' Brewery (and for that matter, Budweis/Budějovice as a whole) had become a factionalized *völkisch*-German-Liberal-Jewish-Christian-Czech hodgepodge. Between 1901 and 1905, the company paid out no dividend. Eventually, Taschek and his allies had to repay tens of thousands of crowns, if not the nearly two million crowns sought in lawsuits. The Czech Shareholders' Brewery, meanwhile, continued to thrive. Then again, how Czech it was stands open to question. Schweighofer claimed in 1902 that Germans owned almost half of all shares.<sup>69</sup>

As the case of the breweries illustrates, the structure of individual companies reflected their owners' national loyalties. The structure of those loyalties, in turn, continued to reflect early Czech-German socioeconomic disparities—and contributed, paradoxically, to reducing or even to reversing them. To some consumers, the two brands of beer may have seemed quite similar. But their political aftertastes differed radically. The Czech one was strong, open, and promising, while its rival smacked of corruption, decline, and discord. The former brew figured both as product and as producer of a Czech capitalist society characterized by strong cross-class bonds and by growing confidence. The latter, to the extent that it could be called German, served as symbol of a divided community whose increasingly illiberal leaders feared the future. As a Czech-German hybrid, finally, beer made by the Burghers' Brewery embodied the growing problems of containing a mutually exclusive, mutually reinforcing national dynamic within a Habsburg framework.

The Czech movement could have sought out unexploited economic niches for its ventures. Instead, it founded company after company directly opposite established German firms: the Shareholders' Brewery opposite the Burghers' Brewery, the National Pencil Company opposite Hardtmuth's, the First Budějovice Enamelware Factory, Inc. opposite three small, family-run enameleds, and so on. A few of the Czech startups drove their German enemies out of business. Several failed themselves. Most did neither, instead hauling the sleepy local economy into modern times and tightening the national grip on business and on public life as a whole.

## Conclusion

During the 1890s, the Czech movement in Budweis/Budějovice had proved successful at maintaining a fundamental unity even while undergoing rapid change and growth. Key elements had been the development of internal articulations, which found expression in an emergent multiparty system, in an ever larger set of associations, and in the ownership structure of businesses. Whether rich or poor, whether anticlerical or devoutly Catholic, individual Czechs could take pride in "their" brewery in town. Differentiated organizational structures provided attachment points for every Czech—which the entire movement defined consistently, in primarily ethnic fashion.

The German movement, in contrast, featured mutually hostile factions. Until the 1880s, Pieter Judson has argued, German-speaking bourgeois males in Cisleithania had used the universalist language of liberalism to conceal even from themselves their particularist interests.<sup>70</sup> Then, after the political shocks of 1879–80, an ethnic strand to Germanness had emerged—less elitist, unambiguously national, and more like the dominant strand within Czechness. During the 1890s, the Liberal and *völkisch* strands had failed to converge on a consistent, overarching understanding of Germanness. Meanwhile, in an echo of the Liberal-German pattern of the 1860s and 1870s, working-class Germans had found perhaps their strongest advocate (and maker) in the Social Democratic movement, despite its location partly outside the German camp. In similar fashion, at least in some parts of Austria, the Christian Social Party had become a foremost representative of German political Catholicism—yet had developed in less national and in more Catholic directions than Czech counterparts. In the German Empire, Bismarck had waged domestic battles during the 1870s and 1880s against both Social Democracy and political Catholicism. In the more complex setting of Cisleithania, too, the Germanization of many workers and Catholics involved considerable intranational dissonance. Czechization unfolded with greater consistency and success.

Despite these Czech-German differences, politics as a whole in Budweis/Budějovice had grown more national. Why? First, the national movements had been able to meet the challenge of a more pervasive politics from a position of strength. Neither movement controlled the state, but for some time now, both had played central roles in electoral politics and in associational life. Second, the national movements had each other. Social Democratic leaders did not have the good fortune of finding major opponents who understood themselves primarily in class terms. Nor did would-be leaders of Catholic or Aryan movements succeed in pairing off

with a credible movement in a struggle on whose religious or racial axis the contestants agreed. German and Czech leaders, in contrast, did agree. In their struggle against each other, they generated a powerful framework for interpreting, however inaccurately, nearly any event on the political field. Politics might pit burghers against officials, Bohemians against Budweisers, rich men against poor, Catholics against Jews, and any of those against themselves, or against Czechs or Germans. But from national perspectives, all those conflicts reduced to a competition for resources between Czechs and Germans. Nonnational loyalties figured merely as less-than-national ones. Even when Habsburg loyalties figured as more-than-national ones, they did so as a mere adding together of national parts, as a common political language for the national communities within the country. Budweiser, burgher, Bohemian, and other non-national categories were becoming secondary—and not only for adherents of national movements.