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CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONALISM IN THE CZECH LANDS, 1880-1914

By

Mark James Hoolihan

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONALISM IN THE CZECH LANDS, 1880-1914

By

Mark James Hoolihan

The period 1880-1914 was one of dynamic interaction among social, economic and political changes in the Czech lands. Czech society produced a strong nationalist movement in this period, shaping political and social discourse. The changes brought about by the creation of a modern industrial society had simultaneously created a strong civil society. These two phenomena affected one other greatly, and must be understood in the context of their relationship to each other. As Czech nationalism became a mass movement it transformed the nature of politics and society in the Czech lands.

This study examines the case of Czech nationalism through the activities, goals, strategies and ideologies of a group of primarily Czech speaking organizations in the Czech lands of the Habsburg Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In doing so this dissertation highlights the unique nature of the Czech case and gives insight which adds to a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of nationalism. Czech nationalism sought to achieve political cultural and economic dominance within territories where they felt historically rooted. The fact that they sought autonomy within a pluralistic society rather than an independent or ethnically homogeneous state makes the Czech case unique. Despite the fracturing of Czech political life into many different parties, Czechs maintained a general sense of working towards common goals of autonomy for the nation.

1970-1971

1972-1973

1974-1975

1976-1977

1978-1979

1980-1981

1982-1983

1984-1985

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1988-1989

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1992-1993

1994-1995

1996-1997

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Introduction

CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONALISM IN THE CZECH LANDS

The relationship between civil society and nationalism among Czechs in the Czech lands¹ during the period 1880-1914 was complex, with the two phenomena closely intertwined. A strong Czech nationalist movement was evident in political and social discourse and changing political life. But as a strong Czech political movement emerged in the 1890s, it was split into many new parties representing interests that at first appear to be separate from Czech nationalism. The growth of a modern industrial society had simultaneously created a strong civil society with interest groups organized along economic lines and yet these groups also bore the marks of Czech ideas about the nation. At the same time, Czech nationalism grew into a mass phenomenon. This was evident in the formation of strong parties articulating and representing different political views in the 1890's.

This work looks at the process whereby Czechs reshaped the political and social landscape within these territories based on their new ideas of nationalism. Looking at the complexity of Czech nationalism, whereby Czechs sought political autonomy in a pluralistic society, demonstrates how varied in its forms and goals nationalism can be. Even within Central Europe in this time period, nationalism cannot be described according to a single model but instead each individual case must be looked at comparatively. Nationalism takes not a single form, but is an overarching concept that describes a range of ideas and processes and can take different forms aimed at a range of objectives.

¹The term Czech lands refers to the territories of Bohemia, Moravia and rump Silesia (i.e. those parts of Silesia retained by the Habsburgs in the mid-eighteenth century, when the province was lost to Prussia), which comprise the current day Czech Republic. See Appendixes A and B.



Czech nationalism has several unique features. It was tied to a territory, yet Czechs did not seek independence. Neither did they seek an ethnically homogeneous territory or state. Other than the Old Czech party, Czech nationalism was rarely concerned with resurrecting an ideal of a past kingdom or territorial rights. Yet Czech nationalism was rooted in a connection to the provinces of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Czechs conceived of this territory as “Ma Vlast” (my homeland) and conceived of their nation in terms of a (primarily, but not completely) linguistically defined ethnic group. Czech nationalists sought autonomy, and even political and cultural dominance, within these historic territories. Yet they conceived of these territories as remaining pluralistic, living alongside ethnic Germans within the Habsburg Empire. Czechs did not agree on what exactly their future society would look like, but during the period covered in this study this was the general vision they worked towards.

A diverse array of organizations influenced the Czech nationalist movement. These organizations were often united in support of such aims as Czech language schools, electing Czech delegates to local organs of self-government and mass demonstrations and campaigns such as Prague’s struggles over monuments. Multiple segments of society brought their voices to the national movement, shaping its’ character and goals.

Czech nationalism is one example of the nationalist phenomenon that has transformed the world over the last 200 years. There are many types of nationalism and not all national movements lead to or hope for a nation state. If the nation state is not inevitable, then what is nationalism? The fact that Czech nationalists did not seek a nation state, but rather cultural and political autonomy within a territory, makes this an instructive example. Nationalism varies and the Czech case shows us a process of nation forming in a multi-ethnic state aimed at internal assertion but also inter ethnic accommodation. Czech nationalists sought a multi-ethnic society that could in some ways be called a miniature version of the Habsburg Empire.



This study examines the case of Czech nationalism through the activities, goals, strategies and ideologies of a group of primarily Czech speaking organizations and political parties in the Czech lands of the Habsburg Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The goals of these organizations were primarily to further the economic and political interests of their members. Their activities involved meeting to discuss common interests, aiding in the education of members, working to promote their causes publicly, and planning activities such as public gatherings, festivals, and sometimes demonstrations to promote their interests to the public as well as the imperial government. These organizations led to support for many new political parties in the 1890's which caused an erosion of support for the Young Czechs who had previously been the dominant party and a fracturing of what had earlier been a fairly homogeneous political life. The ways in which Czechs organized themselves were part of a broader transformation of Czech nationalism and society. This transformation reshaped society, changing the situation of Czechs from that of second class citizens resembling a subordinated minority to the dominant ethnic group in much of the Czech lands.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE CZECH NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Historians have generally examined Czech society in this period through the lens of the national movement. This is not to say that historians have not examined other aspects of Czech society, but rather that the overarching framework of the national movement pervades their work. Miroslav Hroch best characterizes the idea as a constantly progressing national revival which begins with a Phase A of scholarly interest in language and culture, leading to a Phase B of political agitation and finally to a Phase C where mass participation of the population in the national movement occurs.² Such

²Miroslav Hroch, *The Social Preconditions of National Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.44-45.



frameworks have been applied to many European national movements during the period, and are particularly pervasive in studies of Czech history. The history of the Czech national movement is very easily fitted within a framework that follows Hroch's model.

Hroch's theory is similar to what other historians have said about Czech nationalism. Karl Deutsch described the process as the political mobilization of ever greater segments of Czech society during the nineteenth century.³ Scholars and such as Hugh Lecaine Agnew and Joseph Zacek refer to a "renaissance" or "awakening" terms that were also used by Czech nationalists during the nineteenth century. This idea of increasing participation in the national movement is still useful today, but needs to be taken further by looking at the multiple voices shaping the national movement during Phase C.

The "top-down" model of national development Hroch uses as his starting point has been applied by many historians who focus particularly on a few individual national "awakeners" credited with starting and guiding the national revival. The Phase A concentration among intellectuals has been well studied, and provides easy justification for focusing on a few leaders in the early period. In the late eighteenth century men such as Josef Dobrovsky, Vaclav Kramerus and Josef Jungmann laid the groundwork for cultural and linguistic revival. Dobrovsky in particular is often cited as the most influential for his work in advancing the study of both the Czech language and Czech history.⁴ The early leaders developed the Czech language to the point where later leaders could write in Czech and expand the circle of those literate in it.⁵ Hugh Lecaine Agnew's

³Karl Deutsch *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1953), p.133.

⁴Robert Auty, "Changing Views on the Role of Dobrovsky in the Czech National Revival" in Brock, Peter and Skilling, H. Gordon *The Czech Renaissance of the 19th Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p.15.

⁵Hugh Lecaine Agnew, *Origins of the Czech National Renaissance* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), p.190.

Origins of the Czech National Renaissance, John F. N. Bradley's *Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, Peter Brock and H. Gordon Skilling's *The Czech Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century* and Robert Pynsent's *Questions of Identity* are all major works of the last three decades that focus on the linguistic revival led by a few awakeners who shaped and encouraged the formation of broad Czech identity.

The "top-down" model also strongly influenced the study of later political parties and leaders, which Hroch would characterize as "Phase B". Frantisek Palacky, Karel Havlicek, the Gregr Brothers, Karel Kramář, and T.G. Masaryk were all major political figures during the mid-late nineteenth century, and all have been studied thoroughly.⁶ Palacky and the Gregr brothers in particular receive great attention as the most politically active Czechs during the mid to late nineteenth century, when it is easier to place Czech political leaders soundly within the framework of a "national movement." Masaryk, like Kramář, belongs to both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to a period where mass political movements were appearing, and many historians have studied his life and works.⁷ The Gregr brothers were major figures in Czech political life in the nineteenth century, and still hold a high place in Czech historiography.⁸ Studying political leaders gives a picture of a continually expanding national consciousness diffused and controlled by intellectual elites. While it can also shed light on diverse political sentiments and interests, such a framework poses problems when dealing with the last decades of the

⁶For a general overview of the importance of these figures to Czech historiography, see Agnew, Hugh Lecaine *Origins of the Czech National Renaissance* (cited above) Bradley, John F.N. *Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984) Pynsent, Robert *Questions of Identity* (London: Central European Press, 1994) and the edited volume by Brock, Peter and Skilling, H. Gordon *The Czech Renaissance of the 19th Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

⁷Eva Schmidt-Hartman, *Thomas G. Masaryk's Realism* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1984), p.9. Other works on Masaryk's political life include Roman Szporluk's *The Political Thought of Tomas G. Masaryk*, Jaroslav Opat's *Filozof a Politik T. G. Masaryk*, and Roland Hoffman's *T.G. Masaryk und die Tsechische Frage*.

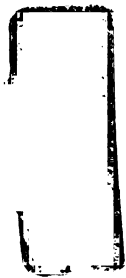
⁸Jiri Staif, "Česka Národní Společnost a Její Politické Elity v letech 1848-1991" in Vosahlikova, Pavla and Repa, Milan *Bratři Gregrovi a Česká Společnost v Druhé Polovině 19. Století* (Prague: Nakladatelství Dr. Eduard Gregr a syn. S.R.O. , 1997), p.10.

Habsburg Empire. This was a time when diverse movements and segments of society made themselves and their interests felt in the political sphere, many of them for the first time.

The political parties of the period have often been examined as representative of Czech political life. The Old and Young Czechs for the most part controlled Czech politics in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The struggles between them shaped Czech political life and are also easily examined within a framework of the “national movement.” Bruce Garver’s work describes not only the ways in which the Young Czechs took control of politics in the late nineteenth century, but how they were unable to maintain that control as many other interests and political organizations began to make themselves felt. Many new parties emerged in this period, changing the nature of Czech political life. Studying political parties such as the Young Czechs breaks down somewhat the monolithic nature of the “top-down” approach to studying Czech society, but has its limitations also, as it tends to focus on elite political actors at the expense of mass political movements.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were also marked by the rise of mass social and political organizations, movements and parties that can easily be fit into Hroch’s “Phase C” of mass participation in the national movement. Two such organizations are the *Matice Česka* and the National Theater (*Narodni Divadlo*) Movement. The *Matice Česka* was a national literary society that worked to promote the broad use of the Czech language. It helped in the early stages of the national revival and to lay the foundation for the strong development of Czech cultural life throughout the century.⁹ The National Theater movement was a great example of mass participation well studied in Stanley Kimball’s *Czech Nationalism: A Study of the National Theater Movement*. The National Theater was built (and rebuilt immediately following a fire) by

⁹Stanley Kimball, “The *Matice Česka*, 1831-1861” in Brock and Skilling, op.cit, p.73.



donations sent in by large numbers of Czechs over many years. Its construction was a mass movement which involved people from all over Czech society in a common goal of national cultural revival.

Mass participation in the national movement has been examined through the prism of the Sokols, The National Theater and other mass movements which strengthened Czech nationalism.¹⁰ The Sokols were gymnastics societies that actively worked to promote Czech nationalism and had broad grass roots support.¹¹ The Sokols were part of a broad national movement joining together local clubs. Mass participation in political life challenging the monolithic model is best represented by studies of movements such as the Progressives and *Omladina*, as well as grass roots organizations such as economic boycotts of German businesses.¹² The immense popularity of ethnographic fairs and exhibitions also demonstrates the mass base of Czech nationalism at the time.¹³ Ethnographic fairs boasted of the cultural strength of the Czech nation, as well as the historic claim of the Slavs on the lands of Bohemia and Moravia. Mass political movements and grass roots organization altered the conception of who framed political debates as well as how they were framed. From all of these we see not only mass participation in the national movement, but get a sense of the contested nature of Czech political life, with diverse interest groups all claiming to represent the Czech nation. These interest groups would bring multiple voices into the discourse of the nation.

¹⁰Claire Elaine Nolte, *The Sokols in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), Kimball, Stanley Bucholz *Czech Nationalism: A Study of the National Theater Movement* (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1964).

¹¹John F. N. Bradley, *Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984),p.24.

¹²Katherine Albrecht, "The Rhetoric of Economic Nationalism in the Bohemian Boycott Campaigns of the Late Habsburg Monarchy" *Austrian History Yearbook* 32, 2001, pp.47-67.

¹³Josef Kandert and David Scheffel, "Politics and Culture in Czech Ethnography" *Anthropological Quarterly*, Jan. 1994 v67 n1 p.19.



The 1890s witnessed many examples of this mass political participation among Czechs. Two examples worthy of note are the Students' Progressive movement and the proletarian based *Omladina* movement. Karen Freeze studies the progressive movement in her dissertation *The Young Progressives: The Czech Student Movement, 1887-1897* and Katherine David-Fox looked at both of these as well as other trends in her dissertation, *The 1890's Generation: Modernism and National Identity in Czech Culture, 1890-1900*. As these authors point out, both of these movements sought to challenge the political leadership of the Young Czechs, and get other interests represented politically. These were both grass roots movements which had a different social base than either the Young or Old Czechs. By studying these movements, historians paint a broader picture of Czech political life, challenging the monolithic model somewhat.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century also saw the emergence of new political parties, including mass-based parties, which challenged and ultimately eroded the Young Czech's political dominance. By the turn of the century, mass parties such as the Agrarians began to make an appearance not only in local elections, but also in the imperial *Reichsrat*.¹⁴ By 1907, after the introduction of universal male suffrage, the Young Czechs lost their hegemony and became only one of seven parties represented.¹⁵ William Jenks, along with Garver, has shown how the Young Czechs lost their predominance to the new mass parties such as the Agrarians (*Agrarní strana*), Clericals (*Konservativní strana lidová, Katolická strana národní*) National Socialists (*Strana národně socialistní*), and Social Democrats. The Social Democrats in particular, were ideologically opposed to nationalism, although the Czech Social Democrats were later forced to compromise with nationalism by separating from the larger Social Democratic

¹⁴Jenks, op. cit., p.215.

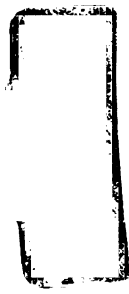
¹⁵Ibid, After years of debate and compromise the introduction of universal male suffrage ended the curial system. The *Reichsrat* retained an upper house of deputies appointed by the emperor, nearly all hereditary nobility.

party. The changing nature of Czech political life through the decline of the Young Czechs is different from the traditional “top-down” view of Czech nationalism, as it demonstrates not only that mass participation had arrived, but that Czechs would no longer allow political expression to be confined simply to the limits of the national movement. This change in the structure of political life was a result of the development of a strong civil society.

TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

By looking at the intersection of nationalism and civil society through these organizations and movements, this work shows that the Czech case was distinctive and offers insight into the processes of nation-forming. The major question to be addressed is how did these two phenomena of a strong civil society and an overarching national movement affect each other and what does that tell us about the historic context for Czech nationalism in particular and about nationalism in general? In the Czech case nationalism was not only a prerequisite for civil society but also something that shaped its character, which was particularly evident in the political fracturing occurring in the 1890s and early twentieth century. The following chapters examine the relationship between these phenomena in order to demonstrate an example of the process of nation forming and who was contributing to it. We gain a better understanding of what nationalism is when we can see its many forms and possibilities.

Chapter One looks at the Czech national movement in historical context. By comparing the Czech national movement to other movements, both within and outside the Habsburg Empire, we can see some of the unique features of Czech nationalism, as well as its similarities to other national movements. The origins of the national movement are traced, giving a picture of its strength by the late nineteenth century. This



chapter demonstrates how the Czechs were able to work together and agree on the overall concept of the nation and what it should be, even if they had other concerns and disagreements.

Chapter Two describes the growth of Czech civil society and its relationship to the national movement. The Czech character of most groupings, which maintained an ethnic exclusivity, added to the power of national identity in influencing Czechs' daily lives. Despite the diversity of Czech political, economic and social life, Czechs still maintained a strong national consciousness that pervaded all.

Chapter Three examines the changes in economic and social life that fostered the growth of a strong and diverse civil society. The background is the growth of Czech economic power overall and in relation to Germans. The nature of this transformation and its organization led to the development of a new and more complex civil society. Czechs equated economic strength with national strength. The variety of these organizations gives a picture of the broad scope and specific interests making their mark on Czech society. Czech political life developed hand-in-hand with economic and associational life and shaped a new social reality in the Czech lands. This chapter helps show who was part of the Czech nation and what strengths and concerns they would bring to the national movement.

Chapter Four demonstrates the growing Czech assertion of political power both regionally (nationally) and locally. The larger regional parties such as the Young Czechs and their success shows the increasing ability of Czechs to influence politics on the regional and (through the *Reichsrat*) central government level. This chapter looks at the municipal government of Prague as a major example of how Czechs took control of local organs of self-government in an ethnically conscious and effective manner. The growth of overall Czech political power is important to understand how Czech national assertion took on palpable dimensions. The examples given show how Czechs were mostly concerned with gaining cultural and political autonomy, and were usually able to work



together on these goals because they shared a general concept of what the nation should be.

Chapter Five traces the effect of these interests through formation and strength of new political parties. This chapter puts together the themes analyzed in the previous chapters. The diverse interests of civil society manifested themselves in many new parties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Looking at the organization of local political clubs will provide examples that demonstrate how grass roots interests made themselves felt politically and underpinned the new parties. This fracturing of Czech political life did not diminish Czech national assertion but gave it a variety of expressions. This chapter shows how these diverse parties emerged and still managed to share a common vision of the Czech nation, even if they disagreed over how the concerns of their supporters should be addressed.

Finally, Chapter Six assesses what these intersecting factors add to our understanding of Czech society, civil society and nationalism as well as the relationship among them. Overall this dissertation adds to our understanding of changes in Czech society in this period as well as offering insight into the process of nation forming. Nationalism as a phenomenon has many forms and no single model can describe it. Nationalism is a powerful force in modern history, yet to fully comprehend it and place it in context we must understand the variegated nature of nationalism and the many possibilities of what it can be. The Czech case shows that nationalism can be social, economic and political, and can coexist with other groups while promoting ethnic separation. We see many segments of Czech society organization and making their presence felt in new political parties. All this organization and new parties brought many varied interests into the public sphere. These organizations did not agree exactly on how to define the nation or what its specific goals were, yet through the examples shown here we see a common vision of what the nation was and should be, a vision shared by most Czechs.



The ability of Czechs to work towards the goal of cultural and political autonomy through many different channels and at local and regional levels over several decades makes the Czech case an important example of the phenomenon of nationalism. Like many other examples, Czech nationalism was about an ethnic group primarily defined by language and culture, and was tied to a historic territory. Yet Czechs were willing to accept both continued inclusion in the Empire and a large German speaking population in their midst. The intolerance towards the Jewish minority that remained a part of Czech nationalism did evolve by the twentieth century into a larger willingness to accept Czech speaking Jews as part of the nation, a trend that continued in interwar Czechoslovakia. Czechs conceived of the nation as the Czech speaking people inhabiting this territory, yet was not obsessed with an independent ethnically homogeneous state. Nationalism in this context is a much broader and diverse idea than the teleology of looking towards an independent Czech nation state would suggest. This mass nationalism, “phase C” as Hroch put it, is inherently diverse, shaped by multiple inputs from society. Nationalism can be many things at once, a collection of movements, organizations and ideas that do not always share common goals but rather general conceptions of what the nation is.



Chapter 1

NATIONALISM UNLEASHED: THE CZECH CASE

The ideas of the Czech nationalist movement were important to people at all levels of society by the late nineteenth century. Czech society was undergoing a process of transition from Hroch's stage B of political nationalism to phase C of mass participation in the national movement. Czechs were very conscious of their national identity and increasingly worked to reshape their society according to their vision of what the Czech nation should be.

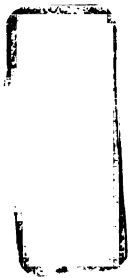
What the Czech goals of political and cultural autonomy meant was never fully agreed upon, yet in practice Czechs generally worked toward these ends. Czech nationalists did not seek an independent or ethnically homogeneous territory, yet it was tied to territory where Czechs were historically rooted. Czechs saw the provinces of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia as belonging to them, and felt slighted historically by German dominance. They sought a national right of political and cultural control of these territories. This autonomy they sought certainly meant Czech cultural and political control over themselves, but would also mean that they would have some control over Germans.

The Germans were definitely the "other" against which Czech nationalism was primarily mobilized. Yet Czechs did not seek their expulsion. Nor did they seek to take away cultural and political autonomy from the Germans, or assimilating them into Czech culture. Czechs conceived of themselves as dominating their territory politically, culturally and economically, in effect reversing the situation from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In much of the Czech lands they were generally successful by World War One, because they were generally able to work together for these goals, even if they disagreed on the particulars.



The transformation of Czech society was not purely a result of the intellectual led national movement. Rather, Czech nationalism was a mass phenomenon. By the late nineteenth century the question was no longer “Who or what is a Czech” but rather what kind of society would Czechs create now that they were increasingly conscious of their identity. Established norms were altered, social and political relationships were framed by the ideals of a new community, the Czech nation, and yet, the Czech national movement did not generally seek a nation state, rather it sought autonomy. The many Germans living within their midst, as well as the conception of the Monarchy as permanent, made the idea of independence too unrealistic for most to contemplate actively. This autonomy was political as well as economic and required a re-conception of what society was and how it functioned. This does not mean that daily interactions necessarily altered in the immediate sense, but rather that what those relationships meant was conceived in terms of the Czech nation and the goals of the national movement.

While Czech nationalism ultimately was the force behind the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, that was not the reason most Czechs participated in the movement. Unlike most European national movements of the period, which were state-oriented and secessionist, Czech politicians rarely talked of an independent nation state as their goal. What Czechs sought to do was alter the society they lived in, creating a new cultural and political space where the Czech nation could assert itself and develop. In this sense, Czech nationalism was quite different from Italian nationalism, which sought an ethnically homogeneous nation state through war and irredentist movements. The Polish nationalist movement within the Empire is a closer example, seeking autonomy within Galicia but generally accepting Imperial rule. This reshaping of their society was not directly threatening to the territorial integrity of the Empire and was rarely marked by violence. It also did not seek ethnic cleansing of the Germans from the Czech lands and was relatively pluralistic in vision. In essence Czech nationalists sought political autonomy and cultural equality, if not dominance, within the Czech lands, but were



satisfied to live among and with the large number of Germans who also lived in these territories. This is one of the unique features of Czech nationalism. Even though it was based on working against, and even hatred of, a German “other” its ultimate goals were relatively moderate.

While there were Czechs who envisioned the end of the Empire, prior to World War One this was not the goal of the national movement, nor was it a popular idea. Even Tomáš Masaryk, who would eventually be instrumental in the creation of Czechoslovakia, did not work toward that goal until World War One. During the government’s crackdown and trial of several *Omladina* (Youth) leaders in the 1890’s, Masaryk thought them too radical, with calls for independence, which he came to regret later on when he reflected on the period.¹ Without the stresses imposed on Czech society, as well as the Empire, by World War One, Czech nationalism might have taken a different form. Indeed the interwar Czechoslovak Republic was multi-ethnic, although Czechs enjoyed a position of political and cultural dominance in the Czech lands. It took the further shock of German occupation and the end of the first Czechoslovak Republic to create popular support for the idea of an ethnically homogeneous Czech territory. This resulted in the mass expulsion of three million Germans from the Czech lands after World War Two. One of the key goals of this study is to look at Czech nationalism during this period, rather than through the teleology of the nation state idea.

CZECH NATIONALISM IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Czech case occurred within the context of the age of nationalism in Central Europe and elsewhere. While the Czech case was unique in many ways, particularly its

¹Karel Čapek, *Talks with T.G. Masaryk* (North Haven, CT: Catbird Press, 1995), pp. 164-5. In these reflections Masaryk spoke much of the development of Czech nationalism and his role in independence, and very little about the fact that he and other nationalist leaders were neither working towards nor seriously contemplating independence in the period before World War One.



lack of a noble leadership and its pluralistic vision of the imagined society, it also shared many similarities with other national movements within the Habsburg Empire. Its distinguishing feature is that a separate nation state was not the goal. Yet in other ways Czech nationalism was like other national movements. The Czech national movement focused on language and a perceived cultural and historic heritage that all Czechs had in common. The furtherance of Czech language and culture through education and political protections and rights were central features of the national movement. While their vision did not seek an ethnically homogeneous territory, Czech nationalism was definitely rooted in the historic territory of the Crown of Bohemia, which included Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. Czech nationalism began with a small intellectual led movement and became a mass cultural and political phenomenon.

National movements within the Habsburg Empire were always influenced by the ideals of a nation state, but were often directed at cultural and political autonomy rather than state creation as an intermediate step. The tendency was to view the nation as a cultural entity that should exercise control in a given territory. Hungarian and Polish nationalism in particular were able to draw on a past statehood as well as an indigenous nobility. The Croatian national movement was also able to do this, but faced the difficulty of dealing with the Hungarian, rather than the imperial, government. The Romanian case lacked both a nobility and a strong statehood myth to draw upon. All these movements existed among ethnic groups scattered in different political entities.

Within the Habsburg Empire however, were ethnic groups whose members were mostly or entirely in the territory of the Empire. The Hungarian case was one that served as an example to others. Nearly all Magyars (Hungarians) lived within the borders of the Empire. Hungarian nationalism had a historic state to idealize, the medieval kingdom of Hungary, which existed from the ninth century until 1526. In this year it was overrun by the Ottomans, and the Habsburgs acquired the throne, although they didn't take full



possession of Hungary until the late 17th century.² The defined boundaries of this historic state would give a territorial basis to Hungarian goals. There had been a medieval Hungarian Kingdom, and the Hungarian nobility maintained their political and economic dominance within the Empire even in the pre-1867 period. Hungarian nationalism developed in the early nineteenth century along the classic lines of scholarly interest leading to political nationalism and mass participation. At first Hungarian nationalism sought a re-affirmation of the historic rights of the nobility, which embodied the “nation” as it was historically conceived. The nobility was a comparatively large group, comprising 5% of the population, some of them impoverished but with access to education and political power.³ This situation is exceeded only by Poland, where up to 10% of the population was considered nobility. While early Hungarian nationalists sought linguistic rights, it was within this framework of traditional rights of the nobility that they worked.

Hungarian nationalists made an abortive attempt at independent statehood with the revolution of 1848 and subsequent civil war. This early mobilization of Hungarian nationalism sought an independent nation state based on the historic rights of the Hungarian nobility and the boundaries of the historic kingdom of Hungary. At the same time the leadership sought to mobilize the population behind this movement as an expression modern nationalism and popular will, although only 6% of the population could vote.⁴

At first the Hungarian leadership had demanded autonomy within the Empire, which was granted by the Imperial government, which was under pressure from

²Janos Bak, “The Late Medieval Period, 1382-1526” in Peter Sugar, Peter Hanak, and Tibor Frank (eds.) *A History of Hungary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.88.

³Peter Laszlo, “The Aristocracy, the Gentry and Their Parliamentary Tradition in Nineteenth Century Hungary” *Seer* Vol. 70 No. 1 January 1992, p.79.

⁴Istvan Deak, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848-1849* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p.98.

revolutions in Vienna and Prague, as well as attacks from Piedmont on the Italian provinces. The situation escalated to full scale civil war, with the Hungarians inflicting several defeat on Habsburg forces and ultimately deposing the Habsburgs and declaring independence. The revolution was defeated by imperial forces with the aid of Russian intervention in 1849.⁵ The imperial government then attempted to rule Hungary directly for the next 17 years, and ultimately had to come to terms with its inability to rule without cooperation by the Magyar leadership.⁶ While the revolution failed politically, the memory of this brief period of independence would continue to be part of the myth of Hungarian nationalism.

Although the revolution failed, by 1867, the imperial government had to come to terms with Hungarian nationalism and gave Hungary autonomy within the Empire. This *Ausgleich* (compromise) gave the Magyars almost complete control of their half of the Empire, effectively creating two governments.⁷ There was still one Monarchy, but Franz Josef technically was only emperor in Cisleithania and was king of Hungary. The *Ausgleich* created one ministry of foreign affairs, one military establishment, and one joint finance ministry to fund the other two.⁸ Within the framework of the *Ausgleich*, the Magyar nobility was in control of Hungarian politics to such an extent that there were few checks on their power as long as they did not threaten the joint ministries of the Army and Foreign Affairs. This situation would lead to continual arguments over

⁵This intervention involved 200,000 Russian troops and was credited with helping end the rebellion. Several historians have argued that the Imperial forces would have won eventually. The Russian Tsar was upset by the ingratitude of the Imperial government when they did not support Russia in the Crimean war of 1854-6.

⁶Andras Gerö, *Modern Hungarian Society in the Making* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1993), pp.5-6.

⁷Tibor Frank, "Hungary and the Dual Monarchy, 1867-1890" in Sugar, Hanak and Frank, op.cit., p.252.

⁸This joint finance ministry actually ended up controlling Bosnia-Hercegovina when it was occupied by Imperial forces (Now technically called *Kaiserlich* und *Königlich* or Imperial and Royal) in 1878. This was done to alleviate the question over which half of the Monarchy would rule the two provinces.

Hungary's share of the common expenses as well as Magyar attempts to create a separate Hungarian army.⁹

The Hungarian government then proceeded to institute a policy of Magyarization, in order to make Hungary into an ethnically homogeneous nation state. This was done by making Magyar the official language of government where possible as well as using public education to force the Magyar language on much of the country, although Magyar speakers were under 50% of the population.¹⁰ Thus, the Hungarian government was in practice working towards making Hungary a nation state while theoretically accepting a position of autonomy within the Empire. Magyarization was based on a linguistic conception of the nation, which was different from the more racialized nationalisms of other groups.

Magyarization involved the use of government pressure to in effect wipe out minority cultures. The inaptly named Law of Equal Rights of Nationalities (Law XLIV of 1868) stated that there was only one political nation, the Hungarian nation, and that the equal rights of all were to be limited in the use of language "in so far as is rendered necessary by the unity of the country."¹¹ The principal method of Magyarization was to control the language of schools, which generally the government made Magyar. In addition, the language of the government was Magyar, and despite an official policy of minority language rights, the courts often operated in Magyar. The state railways used only Magyar, even in Croatia, which technically had autonomy.

The creation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867 created problems for the other ethnic groups within Hungary, effectively half the Empire. Magyars were slightly

⁹In 1905 Franz Josef effectively halted Magyar attempts to demand a separate army by threatening them with expansion of suffrage in Hungary, which would have given political power to the minorities. In a compromise, the Hungarians were given their own reserve force, the *Honved*, which lacked its own artillery.

¹⁰*Magyar Statisztikai Evkonyu*, (Budapest: Buchdruckerei der Aktion-Gesellschaft Atheneum, 1904). In 1880 Magyar speakers were 41% of a population of 15,642,102.

¹¹Law XLIV of 1868, preamble.



less than half the population in Hungary itself, and the post-1848 period saw the emergence of other national movements within Hungary, particularly Croatian, Serbian, Romanian and Slovakian.

Croatia also had a historic statehood to aspire to, but it had been part of the Kingdom of Hungary since 1102. The Croatian nobility had managed to retain some of its position of political and cultural dominance, but Croatian nationalism was increasingly threatened by Magyarization.¹² In 1848 the Croatian nobility had chosen to fight against Hungarian nationalism in the name of the Emperor. Despite this, in 1867 Hungary was allowed to retain control of Croatia. While the Croatian parliament was allowed to remain and send delegates to the Hungarian parliament in Budapest, this autonomy was quite limited in practice.¹³ Throughout Croatia, the government imposed the Hungarian language where it could, including the state railways and many school districts. Croatian nationalism in this time period was focused on defending the Croatian language and the historic rights of the Croatian territory, while also often considering a broader movement of other south Slavs such as the Serbs.

The Romanians of Transylvania lacked indigenous nobility and a clearly defined historic kingdom. Within Transylvania, political life was dominated by the three “nations” (referring to the nobility of the three groups, which had controlled the territory since an agreement in the thirteenth century) of the Magyars, Szekels and Germans.¹⁴ While Romanian speakers were a majority of the population, they had no political leadership until the Romanian national movement organized in the late nineteenth century. Magyarization was applied forcefully to the Romanian population since they didn’t have political leaders to challenge it, as the Croats did. In reaction the

¹²Anthony Knezevic, *A Short History of the Croatian Nation* (Philadelphia: 1983), p.18.

¹³Barbara Jelavich, *A History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.320.

¹⁴Keith Hitchins, *The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), p.3.



Romanian national movement actually grew in strength as people felt their culture was threatened by Magyarization. One powerful factor was the existence of an independent Romanian nation state which could offer financial and cultural support to the Romanian national movement.

While the purpose of Magyarization was to destroy minority nationalism, even ones that barely had active movements, such as the Slovaks, the effect was generally the opposite. The pressure to give up their culture galvanized the minorities to develop their own education networks and work for cultural and political rights. Magyarization had its biggest success with Jews, whose identity was not so tied to language. This, coupled with the new opportunities afforded by assimilation, led most Jews to declare Magyar as their main language. The Germans were not as affected by Magyarization due to their political position and cultural position, aided by Magyar desires not to offend the Imperial government or Germans in Cisleithania. Magyarization created a strong reaction among Slovaks, Rumanians, Serbs and Croats which ultimately made them culturally and politically stronger, as well as hostile to the Hungarian government. This would eventually lead to the dismemberment of Hungary after 1918 with the creation of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and the annexation of Transylvania by an expanded Rumania.

The Polish case was similar in the respect of having a historic statehood to inspire it as well as indigenous nobility to lead the movement. The major difference with the Hungarian situation was that the boundaries of historic Poland as well as the population of Polish speakers were divided between the German, Habsburg and Russian Empires. The situation of Polish nationalism in the German and Russian empires was more difficult than that of those within the Habsburg Empire. Members of the Polish nobility generally accepted Habsburg rule in return for maintaining their historic position of privilege. In addition, the territory of the old Kingdom of Poland incorporated into the



Empire had large numbers of Jews and Ruthenians, particularly in the Eastern part.¹⁵ Because of this unique situation, Polish nationalism was not a major disruptive force in the Habsburg Empire.

Polish nationalism during this time period sought to re-create a now defunct state, the Kingdom of Poland, which had been partitioned between Prussia, Russia and Austria between 1772 and 1795. Poland had grown weak by the eighteenth century, with an elected king and a parliament, the *Sejm*, where the nobility could wield power. The nobility held a monopoly on power in the kingdom. The *Sejm* came to require a unanimous consensus to enact legislation. The *Liberum* veto, whereby any one dissenting member could dissolve the *Sejm*, came to obstruct the legislature from effectively running the country. The Polish system could not cope with ongoing economic and political crises.¹⁶

While the Kingdom of Poland had not been a nation state in the modern sense, Polish nationalism created a mythic Polish state as an ideal of the national movement. Polish nationalism was faced with the difficult fact that conditions varied importantly between the three empires controlling Polish territory. Conditions in Russia were hardest on the Polish national movement, with two failed revolts in the nineteenth century that resulted in increased Russian control over the country and the decimation of the national leadership, the nobility. The late nineteenth century saw increased attempts by Russia to impose the Russian language on Poland.¹⁷ Polish children were often banned from speaking Polish in Russian schools as part of this process of Russification. This was met by a growing Polish nationalist movement that would be the progenitor of Polish independence.

¹⁵Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland, Vol. II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p.144.

¹⁶Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), p.7.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p.196.



In Prussia, the situation was also marked by the decline of the Polish nobility and imposition of harsher rule. By the late nineteenth century Prussia united with other German lands to become the German Empire, which did not alter the situation on the ground. Indeed the period saw increasing German attempts to impose their language on the Polish people. The *Kulturkampf* of the 1870's fell harshly on Catholic Poles. In addition there were organized German attempts to acquire land from Polish owners and place German settlers in the region.¹⁸ These attempts to "Germanize" Poles had the opposite effect, galvanizing Polish nationalism within the German parts of partitioned Poland, much as Magyarization had ultimately caused minority national movements to grow in strength.¹⁹

In the Habsburg Empire, the Polish nobility benefited from a good relationship with the government and had a large degree of autonomy, which often made them supporters of the government rather than a nationalist movement aimed at resurrecting the Polish kingdom. The autonomy granted to Poles in Galicia made them generally supportive of the imperial government. It was obvious that their situation was much better than their compatriots in Prussian or Russian Poland, particularly after the failed uprising of 1863-4, after which Russia moved to eradicate Polish nationalism.²⁰ Like the Czechs, Galician Poles developed a diverse civil society under Austrian rule which would come to include ever larger segments of the population.²¹ The situation differed greatly however, in that Poles were historically the dominant ethnic group in the region. Poles were 46% of the population, 42% were Ruthenian and 10% Jewish.²² Neither of the

¹⁸Davies, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp.130-131.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Magdalena Opalski and Israel Bartal, *Poles and Jews: A Failed Brotherhood* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1994), p. 98.

²¹Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp.13-14.

²²*Ibid.*, p.11.



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latter two groups had historically possessed access to power, and thus the situation was quite different in Galicia than it was in the Czech lands.

All of these movements eventually sought to create or belong to a nation state. For many, World War One encouraged the most radical goals of the movements to become popular and feasible. Hungarian nationalism wanted to create an ethnically homogeneous Hungary, either within or outside of a Habsburg imperial framework. Polish nationalism ultimately sought the resurrection of the Kingdom of Poland, with Catholic Polish speakers as the ideal majority. Croatian nationalism strove to stop Hungarian dominance of the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia and eventually united with other South Slavs to create Yugoslavia. Romanian nationalism ultimately took Transylvania away from Hungary and united with Romania.

Inspired by the ideals of nationalism, Czechs also ultimately broke away from the Empire and formed a new state by uniting with the Slovak territories of Hungary, but there were unique characteristics. Like Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia was not a nation state, and was in fact multi-ethnic; there were more Germans than Slovaks within interwar Czechoslovakia. Czech nationalism did not have an indigenous nobility; most of the nobility were German speakers and did not identify with the Czech national movement. Czech nationalism looked to a historic kingdom of Bohemia, but this did not serve as a primary motivating factor. Czech nationalists saw the loss of an indigenous nobility in 1618 as a more important point in their history than either the coming of Habsburg rule in 1526 or the influx of German speakers in the late medieval period, which had made many towns predominantly German speaking.

Neither did Czech nationalism focus on the reinstatement of historic rights. This was the goal of the Bohemian nobility and for a time the Young Czechs. This might have become a primary motivating factor for Czech nationalism, but the imperial government did not follow through on promises made in 1871 to restore Bohemian autonomy. This was a watershed moment in Czech nationalism that helped shape the goals of the

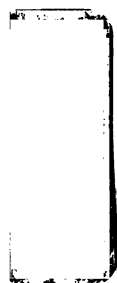


movement in the future. The Young Czechs and Old Czechs split shortly thereafter and the Bohemian nobility was not a major factor in the subsequent Czech national movement.

Czech nationalists were motivated by the ideals of the nation state, but the movement reached fruition in a situation where such a goal was not realistically attainable. Not only were the territories of Bohemia and Moravia under the control of the imperial government, but there was a large population of German speakers that was politically and economically dominant until the turn of the century. The important thing is that Czechs did not have the option of transforming this German population into Czechs as the Magyars attempted to do with minorities in their territory. While some spoke against the Empire, most Czechs did not envision the Habsburg Empire ending until the stressful period of World War One. The Habsburg Empire had existed since 1526, and while historians often look at those radical writers and politicians who spoke of its end in the nineteenth century, for most people this was inconceivable.

Instead of seeing a homogeneous Czech nation in control of the territories of Bohemia and Moravia, Czechs conceived it exerting political, economic and cultural power within the Habsburg framework so that the German minority would be in a subordinate position. The nation was more than a population, less than a territorial government, rather something different entirely. It sought not to frighten Germans with talk of independence, but to demand cultural and economic goals. Dr. Bedřich Pačák, the head of the Czech delegates to the Imperial Reichsrat, summed up the situation, "The whole strength of Czech life has agreed to be afraid of independence... Yet our nation will obtain the cultural, economic and national benefits."²³ The nation was formed in the daily lives of Czech speakers as well as the actions of the political leadership. Economic strength and associational life were part of this project of nation building. When Czechs formed into trade and economic associations, they were simultaneously creating the

²³Papers of Dr. Bedřich Pačák, Carton 4, Speech given at Kutná Hora, April 19, 1903, p.4.



nation and supporting the national movement in the same way as political and cultural associations were.

The Czech national movement was also influenced by the growth of nationalism outside the Empire. The German and Italian movements sharply contrasted with the Czech case. They developed around a relatively strong state (Prussian and Piedmont, respectively) which united other territories containing a majority population of the same ethnic group. In both cases the nation was defined in linguistic and cultural terms by intellectuals and mass movements were used by governments to create an ethnic nation state through diplomacy and warfare. These cases also fit Hroch's model of national movements moving through three phases. Both cases are examples of an effective political nationalism leading to the creation of a nation-state. As we have seen in the Czech case, there was no major effort to seek an independent nation-state.

The Czech case was different from all these. While the Czechs had a medieval Kingdom of Bohemia which covered both Bohemia and Moravia, it was not a nation state in the modern sense. There was a large German minority in Bohemian and Moravia that functioned as the dominant group politically and economically. And while there was no clear-cut definition of Czech and German identity in the nineteenth century, native Czech speakers did outnumber Germans, although the position of Czechs was that of second class citizens in the territory of Bohemia and Moravia. Czech nationalists definitely saw the territories they lived in as belonging to the Czech nation, but not in such an exclusive way that Germans could not continue to be part of society. Czechs sought a strong autonomy that would in many cases (such as Prague) give them a position of greater political and cultural influence at the local level than the Germans.

Looking farther afield there are other examples of national movements that sought cultural and political dominance in a territory rather than political sovereignty. The contemporary Welsh and Basque cases both exhibit similarities. These movements involve a minority striving for autonomy within a territory that they considered



historically theirs. So too Bundist nationalism among European Jews also sought autonomy within a territory, although not because Jews felt deeply rooted historically.

The Basques have developed a modern national movement in response to repression from the central government. Under Franco, the Spanish government attempted to repress and ultimately wipe out the Basque language and culture. This caused a reaction among Basque speakers, who developed and clung to their identity more strongly, a case reminiscent of minorities in Hungary under Magyarization. The Basques were able to ultimately win autonomy within Spain and maintain the use of their language, an act of political mobilization within an economically growing state that is somewhat similar to the Czech case.

However, the differences between the Basques and Czech cases are also apparent. The use of violence is the most obvious one. Up until fairly recently, Basque separatists engaged in violence against the Spanish government through ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* – Basque Liberty and Homeland). The goal of ETA was independence, rather than autonomy, for the Basque territory. There were also more mainstream Basque parties that work for autonomy, but ETA drew the majority of world attention. The use of violence and seeking independence were noticeable differences in the Basque case. Another interesting aspect of this movement has been Basque appeals to the EU as an ethnic group within the larger context of Europe rather than as part of Spain. It remains to be seen how this avenue of political action will play out.

The Welsh case is a contemporary example of an ethnic group that seeks autonomy for a territory as well as the preservation of its historic language. The devolution of power in Britain has seen Welsh politicians succeed in winning autonomy for their region, but the language issue is an ongoing one. While Welsh politicians have succeeded in gaining language rights within the schools, economic and social realities have meant that a majority of people who identify themselves as Welsh use the English language as their main language of daily interaction. Thus there is not as sharp a



correlation between language and national identity as appears (and was certainly desired by many) in the Czech case.

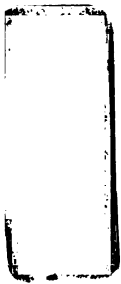
While Basque nationalism appears to have achieved both goals of autonomy and preservation of language, the ultimate goal of independence may not be met. The Welsh case is an example of an ethnic group that won political autonomy but may disappear as a separate language group anyway. Both of these involved political mobilization in a modern state. The Welsh movement was able to achieve its goals within a modern democratic state that allowed a high degree of minority rights. Basque nationalism could not achieve autonomy until democracy was restored in Spain. The Czech case involves an autocratic state experimenting with limited political participation but allowing a strong civil society to develop. The Czechs were able to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by this situation to remake their society and achieve a limited autonomy within a multi-ethnic territory.

THE CZECH LANDS IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Czech lands were part of the Habsburg Empire.²⁴ These “Czech lands” were in fact multi-ethnic, with Germans comprising 37% of the population of Bohemia and nearly the same in Moravia. Yet during much of the nineteenth century, Germans enjoyed greater overall wealth and political power than Czechs. In addition, the official language of government in

²⁴The term Habsburg Empire will be used here for simplicity's sake to denote all lands under the rule of the Habsburg Dynasty. Technically the Empire, also called Austria-Hungary, was split after the great *Ausgleich*, or compromise of 1867 into two territories as far as internal affairs were concerned: Hungary, or Transleithania, and Cisleithania, referring to the river Leitha which separated them. Cisleithania, while sometimes referred to as “Austria”, was technically named “The kingdoms and lands represented in the *Reichsrat*”. Cisleithania included all the Czech Lands and was ruled directly by the imperial government in Vienna.



Cisleithania was German, and many Czechs used German for daily business as well as dealings with the government. Most Bohemian and Moravian Germans were the descendants of settlers who migrated in during the late middle ages from territories to the North and West. While these lands were multi-ethnic, Czech speakers were the majority of the population and considered these territories the historic homeland of the Czechs.

German dominance of government, economy and society in the Czech lands was traditionally very strong, particularly after the defeat of White Mountain in 1620.²⁵ The nobility and government were exclusively German speaking. German was the official language of the government throughout this period, although there was increasing use of Czech at the local level after 1860. German speakers were the dominant force in the economy until the latter half of the nineteenth century, when Czechs began to make their presence felt in the economy. Most businesses owners and traders were German speakers. Bohemia and Moravia were considered by many German speakers to be essentially German provinces. This traditional German dominance frames the development of Czech nationalism.

Bohemia was the most economically advanced province, Moravia was close behind. Bohemia, and to a lesser extent Moravia, witnessed greater increases in Czech political control at the local level during this period. Silesia, where Czechs comprised less than a quarter of the population, remained largely under control of its German population. Bohemia and Moravia were administered separately under imperial governors, with each province also having a diet elected from among the nobility and the upper classes of society. The franchise for both the diets and the imperial *Reichsrat* expanded during the last decades of the Empire to allow some seats elected by taxpaying citizens in a curial system which gave representation based on wealth, eventually

²⁵The defeat of the predominantly protestant Czech nobility in 1620 led to a deliberate effort by the imperial government to replace them with Catholic German speakers. This moment is generally accepted in Czech historiography as representing the final blow to Czech national independence and the beginning of German dominance. See Josef Hanzal *Cesty české historiografie* (Prague: Nakladatelství Karolinum, 1999).

including middle and lower class taxpayers.²⁶ The curial system allowed the wealthy landowners to maintain much political power throughout the nineteenth century, despite repeated adjustments.

The great Bohemian landowners traditionally controlled political power in the provinces since 1620. Although they often acted out of loyalty to the territory and their privileges, they were almost always linguistically and culturally German. The imperial governor acted in accordance with the central government's wishes, controlling territory through district captains who reported to him. The imperial government acted often, but not always in accordance with the wishes of the provincial diets. Reforms in curial voting rights were an example of the type of legislation opposed by the members of the provincial diets.

In addition, by the late nineteenth century, local organs of self government had been allowed to have more say in local affairs. This local autonomy developed with the new constitution of 1860 and was accelerated after the *Ausgleich* with Hungary. The new organs of autonomous government included city councils, district boards of representatives (*Okresni zastupitelstvo*, *Bezirksvertretung*) and provincial executive councils (*Zemsky vybor*, *Landausschuss*). There was still direct imperial government, thus there existed a two-track system of government, both functioning side by side, with the boundaries often unclear and contested. Technically part of the same system as the provincial diets, local organs of self-government were often more democratic and more likely to come into conflict with the district captains. The provincial diets tended to be more conservative, dominated by traditional landowners. While district captains had final say in most matters, local government bodies were often able to assert control over

²⁶The curial system of the late nineteenth century underwent several changes. The basic structure was outlined in the electoral law of 1873 which provided four classes: (1) great landowners; (2) urban males over 24 who paid at least 10 florins in taxes; (3) members of chambers of commerce and industry; and (4) rural males over 24 who paid at least 10 florins in taxes. The reform of 1896 added a fifth curia of all males over 24. Voters could vote in as many curia as they were qualified for. See William Jenks *The Austrian Electoral Reform of 1907* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp.15-26.

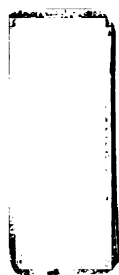


everyday matters and appeal for help when necessary to the many Czech political parties in the imperial Reichsrat.²⁷

The late nineteenth century was a time of increasing national and ethnic consciousness in the Habsburg Empire, as well as Europe in general. In Europe in this period, national movements sought to create nation states, where the dominant ethnic group was coterminous with the state. In the Czech lands, language was the primary ethnic identifier and became the source of conflict between Czechs and Germans. German was the predominant language in government and business until the late nineteenth century, and many people were bilingual to at least some degree. In the late nineteenth century, nationally conscious Czechs and Germans put pressure on people to choose one language and thus one identity. As Czech speakers came to identify themselves as a coherent ethnic group, the privileged position of the German language and German speakers in the Czech lands became a rallying point for Czech nationalism. Czechs sought essentially to reverse the perceived dominance of German speakers, making themselves the dominant ethnic group through much of the Czech lands. The focus on language as the identifier of nationality formed the basis for Czech cultural and political concerns which came to be known as the “National Awakening” (*Narodni Obrození*).

While the national movement was easy for many Czech speakers to join, for Jews in the Czech lands the focus on language as an ethnic identifier posed many problems. Jewish identity was based primarily on religion, not language. In the heated exchange over national identity, Jews were often compelled to choose sides based on language. Most Jews in the Czech lands spoke German, particularly in Prague. Jewish attempts to identify as German however, were often met with hostility based on ethnic and religious anti-semitism. Both Czech and German nationalism contained strong elements of anti-

²⁷Bruce M. Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), p.38.



semitism. This difficult situation for Jews did not resolve itself and continued after the collapse of the Empire.

The Czech National Awakening at first involved scholars in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries working to promote and increase the use of the Czech language in public life. The revolutions of 1848 witnessed some of the first outbreaks of broader Czech national identification and agitation. By the late nineteenth century, Czech language and culture was increasingly challenging German as the most visible in the public sphere. Czech literacy rates by the 1890s were among the highest in the monarchy, at 96%.²⁸ Czech literature, education and culture were often promoted within the framework of a self-conscious national movement. The Czech press, political parties and cultural organizations promoted a cultural and political nationalism. Czechs were increasingly conscious of which regions of the country was more “Czech” or “German” in character. This was often determined by analyzing who controlled local school boards and government as well as population figures, and many actively sought to increase the position of one ethnic group at the expense of another.²⁹ What language was spoken in a given territory made a region Czech or German in the public consciousness.

Such attitudes were met with derision, hostility and open opposition from equally nationally conscious Germans, who often saw Czech gains as a threat to their privileged position. Since German had a dominant position, language was the major mobilizing factor in the Czech national movement. While at first Germans did not actively work to oppose the Czech national movement, by the late nineteenth century Czechs had begun to mobilize politically. This brought a harsh reaction from Germans who thought of the political sphere as their own. Germans had taken their own traditional dominance, both cultural and political, for granted.

²⁸Ibid., pp.10-11.

²⁹Mark Cornwall, “The Struggle on the Czech-German Language Border, 1880-1914” *English Historical Review*, Sept. 1994, v109 n433, pp. 914-917.



The emergence of a strong Czech national movement led to a backlash of German nationalism. Germans formed associations that called for the maintenance of their privileged position.³⁰ Germans sought to defend their position against a Czech nationalism they saw as threatening. A good example is the fight over the 1897 Badeni language ordinances, which sought to make Czech equal with German for many official functions within the Czech lands. Many Germans viewed this as a threat, as few knew Czech, whereas many Czechs knew German. The fear was that Czechs would come to predominate in the government. This became a major political battle for both sides, highlighting the agitated state of national tensions in the Czech lands and creating mass participation in the political debate. German political agitation and rioting demonstrated vehement opposition to the ordinances, and they were withdrawn. For both Czechs and Germans, political consciousness was tied to the struggle over language in this period.³¹

The political landscape of the Czech lands was changing in the late nineteenth century with the appearance of several Czech parties, particularly in Bohemia. The increasing national consciousness of many Czechs and their new economic strength provided support for these parties. The first was the *Narodna strana* (National Party), commonly known as the Old Czechs (*Staročesi*), which campaigned in the 1860's and 1870s for Bohemian autonomy from the imperial government and was often affiliated with the interests of the large landowners. In 1874 a breakaway wing of the party became the *Narodna strana svobodomyšlna* (National Liberal Party), commonly called the Young Czechs (*Mladočesi*), although they generally did not differ in age from their counterparts. The Young Czechs advocated Czech national political rights, greater civil liberties, less cooperation with great landowners and anti-clericalism.³² The Young

³⁰Pieter Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), p.150.

³¹Jiří Kořálka, *Tschechen im Habsburgerreich und in Europa 1815-1914* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1991), p.127.

³²Garver, op. cit. p.60.



Czechs gained in popularity, becoming the dominant Czech political party by the 1890s, gaining 45 seats from Bohemia in the Reichsrat in 1897 compared to one for the old Czechs.³³ This gave the outward appearance of a generally united Czech political sphere, with the Young Czechs replacing the Old Czechs but one Czech party remaining in control.

By the 1890's, however, Czech political life was more diverse, with many new parties appearing. The growth of mass movements such as the students' progressive movement and the workers *Omladina* clashed with the Young Czechs, then the leading political party, over goals and interests to be dealt with politically. The dominance of the Young Czechs as protectors of national interest was shattered with their failure to support the mass political demonstrations by these two movements in 1892-3. Eventually, mass political parties such as the Social Democrats (*Socialni demokraticka strana*), National Socialists (*Strana narodne socialni*), and Agrarians (*Agrarni strana*) began to appear and overtook the Young Czechs politically, particularly after the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1907. Czech political life ceased to be monolithic as these new parties brought new interests and debates to public attention.

Czech society was also changing as a result of the growth of industry and urban centers. Bohemia and Moravia both saw major changes, becoming the major industrial areas of the Habsburg Monarchy and ranking on par with Western Europe. The resulting urbanization brought an expansion of the working class and other social changes. The Czech lands also excelled in agricultural production, becoming among the wealthiest per capita areas of the Empire.³⁴ The Czech lands were thus greatly affected by the economic shifts in the late nineteenth century, caught up in the same economic restructuring affecting other lands.³⁵ Political, trade, and cultural associations were representative of

³³Ibid., p. 350.

³⁴Ibid., p. 17.

³⁵Otto Urban, *Kapitalismus a Česká Společnost* (Prague: Nakladatelství Svoboda, 1978), p.77.

the many aspects of a modern economically vibrant Czech society. These changes affected both Czechs and Germans, particularly the position of Czechs vis-a-vis Germans.

Germans had traditionally controlled political and economic life, before and during the initial stages of the industrial revolution. By the late nineteenth century, Czechs were advancing economically both overall and in relation to Germans. Czechs predominated not only in the processing of sugar beets, the most profitable of agricultural industries, but also in the new industrial areas of machine tools and transportation as well as catching up to Germans in the new electrical and chemical industries.³⁶ Czech firms and banks came to take increasing control of labor and capital. Thus Czechs were no longer as subordinated to Germans economically, and were increasingly asserting their economic strength and even some economic control over the changing society of Bohemia and Moravia.

The new industrialization meant mass migration from the villages of Bohemia and Moravia to major urban centers and accompanying social change. The percentage of the population of Bohemia involved in agriculture dropped from 64% in 1846 to 32% in 1910.³⁷ By 1910 the Czech lands contained over 80% of Cisleithanian coal production, 90% of cast iron, 47% of machine building and over 75% of cotton and woolen textile production.³⁸ Whereas at first these changes involved German speakers more than Czechs, by the late nineteenth century Czechs were increasingly affected as well. The expanding middle class and growing urban proletariat were increasingly Czech in character. By the early twentieth century, the Czech middle class had surpassed the

³⁶Garver, *op. cit.*, pp.17-18.

³⁷David F. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1750-1914* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984), P.47.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p.132.



German middle class in wealth and numbers.³⁹ The advances in education created a literate urban population. This population, while often adhering to an ideal of ethnic unity, was at the same time increasingly divided socially and economically. Czechs began to organize in groups and economic cooperatives both urban and rural to represent specific cultural and economic interests. Competing visions of a Czech agenda appeared in Czech nationalist discourse as these groups made their voices part of the political process.

Due to the history of German dominance, coupled with continuing predominance of German language and political power, the changes in the Czech lands took place within a framework of growing national consciousness and increasing inter-ethnic conflict. The importance of language as an ethnic identifier, coupled with the political and economic dominance of Germans, made for a pervasive sense of oppression by the dominant German “other.” Czechs increasingly were gaining ground economically, politically and in some cases demographically. By 1890 Prague itself was 85% Czech speakers⁴⁰ and Czechs had taken control of the city council. In the countryside, Czechs were increasingly asserting control also over towns and schools where they predominated.⁴¹

Czech organizations were often self-consciously differentiated from German cultural and economic groupings, a process which was reciprocated by a strong and reactionary German nationalism. German organizations asserted their ethnic status, often expelling Czech members. There was an increase in German patriotic organizations in the 1890s, many of which had already been responsible for starting street disturbances. Germans student organizations planned and provoked fights with Czech students in the

³⁹Garver, op.cit., p.21.

⁴⁰Katherine David-Fox, *The 1890's Generation: Modernism and National Identity in Czech Culture, 1890-1900* (Yale 1996 Dissertation), p.52.

⁴¹Cornwall, loc.cit.

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streets of Prague with increasing frequency in the period from the 1890's to World War One.⁴²

APPLYING THEORIES OF NATIONALISM TO THE CZECH MODEL

As mentioned in the first chapter, the historiography of Czech nationalism has emphasized the theory of a constantly growing phenomenon to which once can apply a “top-down” model such as Hroch’s linear progression from scholarly interest leading to political agitation and then mass participation.⁴³ This model is a good starting point in examining Czech nationalism and society. The growth of the national movement can easily be charted, using cultural and political leaders and parties as benchmarks, as growing throughout the nineteenth century from a cultural phase to a political phase to mass participation. Scholars of the early phase are credited with creating the national movement, expanding the use of the Czech language and developing the language itself to the point where the broader population could use it and participate in the national revival.⁴⁴ As a basic framework for what this work describes as the national movement such models can be quite useful.

The relationship between Czech society and nationalism in this period was however, more complex than the standard progression. By focusing on individuals such as Josef Jungmann, Josef Dobrovsky and František Paláčky who were nationalist leaders through cultural or political action, the many forces shaping Czech nationalism can be overlooked or under-represented. To describe a phenomenon as broad as Czech national consciousness is to describe a cultural phenomenon emanating from all segments of

⁴²John F. N. Bradley, *Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984), pp.34-5.

⁴³Hroch, op.cit., pp. 44-45.

⁴⁴Agnew, op.cit., p.190.

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society, Czechs from different backgrounds and regions interacting in the public sphere on a daily basis over a long period of time. Czech nationalism became a truly mass phenomenon, no longer under the control of intellectuals and political leaders. The very concept and meaning of the term national movement in the Czech lands needs to be looked at as a process involving the dynamic of an emerging civil society engaging in mass politics.

Hroch's theory of stage C needs to be taken further. Once nationalism enters the phase of mass participation, the concept of the nation becomes much more difficult to define. Separate segments of society bring their own interests and inputs into the discourse of the nation. The nation becomes an even more dynamic and constantly evolving concept once mass participation begins to affect the national movement.

The term national movement describes the feelings and actions of individuals as well as the political and cultural discourses surrounding the idea of the Czech nation. Although it is a dynamic concept, Czech national consciousness involved shared ideas of Czech culture and political potential. Despite the fracturing of the political process the idea of the shared political and cultural power of the Czech nation remained pervasive throughout this time period. Czech organizations of all kinds, representing varied segments of society, were shaped by the ideas of the national movement.

Czech nationalism emerged in an age when Europe was being transformed by nationalism. Czechs were influenced in their ideas of what the nation should be by other examples such as Prussia and Italy, as well as national movements within the Empire. Czechs generally worked towards a goal of autonomy within their perceived territories, an autonomy that would make them the dominant ethnic group. While there was never a full consensus of what exactly the Czech nation would be, this general vision drove different segments of society to participate in the nationalist movement. By World War One, Czechs had generally achieved political autonomy throughout much of the Czech lands.



Czech nationalists strove directly to remake society in Bohemia and Moravia, where Czechs predominated, based on this ideal of the nation. This was the main goal of Czech nationalism and it was successful. While ultimately, Czech nationalism would form the basis for the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, it is this process of nationalism in a plural context that makes the Czech case unique. The state that emerged in 1918 attempted to maintain these pluralistic ideals and create a multi-ethnic democracy, the only true democracy to survive in Central and Eastern Europe during the interwar period.

Chapter 2

ASSOCIATIONAL LIFE AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Czech nationalism did not involve Czechs seeking to overthrow the status quo within the Empire, but rather to change the situation within the Czech lands itself, and sought to gain autonomy within that territory. These goals did involve the replacement of German with Czech control at the level of local government in many cases. Czech nationalists envisioned their territory as “Czech” land, but this vision did not call for the reduction or expulsion of the German community. Like other national movements, Czechs believed the territory and the nation were linked, but not in same exclusionary sense of the German or Italian examples. Czech nationalists sought a pluralistic society, where Germans would continue to live alongside Czechs, but Czechs would have greater cultural and political power.

The ways in which Czechs chose to organize themselves are evidence of this conscious reshaping of society in a pluralistic way. Czech nationalists did not just seek outright political goals such as political representation and language rights. Czechs also sought to create a Czech nation in the sense of an “imagined community” as Benedict Anderson puts it. This community did not involve the physical transfer of any populations nor did it require (by the late nineteenth century) the redefinition of large numbers of people as Czech speakers. At this time, it was a more complex affair whereby Czechs consciously reshaped their society into one where Czech ethnicity became the dominant political and cultural force in most of the Czech lands. While the imperial government remained German (certainly in language at least), Czechs were able to assert political and cultural power at least equal to and sometimes greater than Germans within the Czech lands. This is evident in the ways in which Czechs organized separate groups along ethnic lines.



Civil society is a contentious term in modern scholarship which has been used variously and hence needs to be clarified here. For the purposes of this work, civil society refers to voluntary associations and organizations separate from the state and family. Civil society was an important component of the Czech national movement, developing during a socially and politically tumultuous period. In the Czech case, the space in which these associations and organizations formed and operated was an ethnically defined one.

Civil society in this work describes associational life in a modern industrial society. The Czech lands were urbanizing and industrializing in this period. The Czech lands were going through the same economic and social transformations as Western Europe in this period. A complex modern economy and society needed a strong associational life to function. This associational life involved economic, professional, cultural and political organizations. The associations varied widely in size, some being local, others regional. Despite the modern nature of Czech associational life, many were rural organizations dealing with agrarian issues, which linked them to the political life of the urban centers. While civil society as a term is used in different contexts by scholars, here it refers to this modern, diverse associational life involving many types of organizations operating in the public sphere.

These associations formed and operated in the public space which Jürgen Habermas termed the public sphere.¹ Similarly, and more recently, Jan Kubik described an approach to civil society which views it as a “public space, institutionally protected from the state’s arbitrary encroachment, within which individuals can freely form associations.”² Nicos Mouzelis uses the term to refer to social groups and institutions

¹Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989).

²Jan Kubik, “Between the State and Networks of ‘Cousins’: The Role of Civil Society and Noncivil Associations in the Democratization of Poland” in Bermeo, Nancy and Nord, Philip *Civil Society Before Democracy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), p.182.



separate from kinship and state groups or institutions.³ Ernest Gellner defines civil society as a set of institutions which are separate from the state and capable of being a counterbalancing force.⁴ A wide range of organizations potentially fit within these definitions of civil society. Civil society is both a space where associations are formed and operate as well as the constellation of such associations themselves.

Civil society as a term originates in Europe. Civil society was used by philosophers of the enlightenment to describe the new social culture they were seeing. John Locke described civil society as emanating from his conception of natural law. For Locke, civil society was contrasted to the state of nature. Locke, however, made no distinction between civil society and politics.⁵ Theorists of commercial society in the early modern period saw civil society as a constantly changing space where associations were formed according to the individuals' needs and desires.⁶ Hegel was one of the first theorists to define civil society as distinct from the state and family.⁷ Karl Marx saw it as part of the new capitalist economy, a sphere separate from the state where the market ruled and people acted according to their greed.⁸ These Western European conceptions of civil society came out of an age of social changes and capitalist expansion that was accompanied by the creation of a large (and largely bourgeois) public space for voluntary associational life.

This Western European perspective has changed in recent decades, with scholars

³Nicos Mouzelis, "Modernity, Late Development and Civil Society" in Hall, John A. ed. *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.225.

⁴Ernest Gellner, "The Importance of Being Modular" in Hall, op.cit., p.32.

⁵Sunil Khilnani, "The Development of Civil Society" in Kaviraj and Khilnani, *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.18.

⁶Ibid., p.22.

⁷Ibid., p.23.

⁸Joseph Femia, "Civil Society and the Marxist Tradition" in Kaviraj and Khilnani, op.cit., pp.136-138.

today examining civil society in Eastern Europe in light of the collapse of communism, and scholars looking at developing countries adapting civil society theory to the conditions of the countries they study. For scholars of Eastern Europe, civil society is important for its role in creating economic and political pluralism and acting as a counterbalancing force to the state.⁹ Scholars, particularly anthropologists, studying developing countries often find difficulty using West European models of civil society and adapting them to the unique conditions found in the developing world.¹⁰ Thus our concept of civil society is constantly changing as new models are developed and applied to comprehending new cases.

The Czech case that is studied here takes place in a time when Western Europe, outside of the United States (and to a lesser extent Japan), contained the only truly industrialized areas of the world. The development of civil society in Western Europe was a product of both the enlightenment and industrialization. Civil society as it developed in the Czech lands was preceded by the emergence of industrial economies and civil society in Western Europe. As industrialization developed slightly later in the Czech lands, mostly after 1848, Western Europe, particularly the lands that would become Germany after 1871, was an influential model for civil society there.

Great Britain was the first industrial economy and can serve as a model of the development of civil society. The British case was different from the Czech case. There was a recognizable public space for associations as early as the eighteenth century, focused mainly on clubs, charitable works and even social controls.¹¹ In Britain, the government loosened controls on associational life by the mid eighteenth century, at the

⁹Gellner, *op.cit.*, pp.32-33.

¹⁰Chris Hann, "Political Society and Civil Anthropology" in Hann, Chris and Dunn, Elizabeth *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.2-3.

¹¹Robert J. Morris, "Civil Society in Great Britain" in Bermeo, Nancy and Nord, *op. cit.*, pp.118-119.



same time as a vibrant capitalist economy was establishing itself.¹² Britain also witnessed a steady, albeit slow, expansion of the franchise during the nineteenth century. Unlike the Habsburg Monarchy, the British parliament had real power over the affairs of the government, whereas the Imperial *Reichsrat* could be prorogued by the Emperor at any time, and often was.

In Germany (more precisely what would become Germany in 1871), associational life didn't become possible on a large scale prior to 1848 due to government repression of organizations.¹³ In Germany, increasing urbanization, a growing capitalist economy, and an expanding middle class led to the formation of associations which sought a lessening of government interference, one of the strongest examples being the Prussian mining industry, which organized to get restrictions loosened by 1865.¹⁴ Germany developed a very specialized associational life, representing many of the diverse interests of society, from chambers of commerce to choral societies and clubs for the advancement of smoking.¹⁵ Like the Czech lands, civil society in Germany developed in an atmosphere of general state control which, although not as repressive as twentieth century examples, restricted associational life and subjected organizations to registration and government surveillance.

In France, associational life was strictly controlled during the nineteenth century. Both before and after 1848 the government only allowed a limited number of organizations to operate legally, many of them political.¹⁶ Salons, which often operated in

¹²Ibid., pp.119-120.

¹³Klaus Tenfelde, "Civil Society and the Middle Classes in Nineteenth Century Germany" in Bermeo and Nord, op. cit., p.87.

¹⁴Ibid., pp.88-91.

¹⁵Ibid., pp.91, 98.

¹⁶Raymond Huard, "Political Association in Nineteenth Century France" in Bermeo and Nord, op.cit.,pp.141-142.



private homes, were an exceptional space where politics were discussed. A highly specialized associational life developed despite government regulation, and after 1880 government controls were relaxed somewhat.¹⁷ It was not until 1901 that the government granted almost unlimited right to association, even political associations.¹⁸ This situation in Republican France was in marked contrast with the Czech case in the autocratic Empire, where the post 1867 period saw almost unlimited right to form organizations, including political organizations.

The Czech experience in this period was one in which voluntary associations could be formed with little direct government interference, although the Habsburg government did closely watch them, with police agents reporting on even small organizations and infiltrating ones deemed dangerous. These associations included large organizations which represented specific segments of society such as the *Československa obchodnicka beseda* (Czecho-Slovak Businessmen's Beseda) and *Klub narodního delnictva v Kutna Hora* (National Worker's Club of Kutna Hora).¹⁹ Business, trade and workers associations such as these formed along ethnic lines. The expansion of the public sphere was due to the needs of the new industrial economy and the constitution of 1860 which granted limited freedom of association, allowing large numbers of political, cultural and economic associations to form.

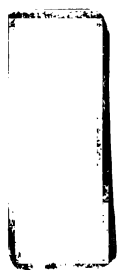
This expanded space was created by the changing conditions of modern industrial society in the Czech lands, which occurred concurrent with the growth of nationalism. Nicos Mouzelis describes modernity as a process of changing economic conditions and loyalties switching from local to national liaisons.²⁰ In other words, modernity was a

¹⁷Ibid., p.146.

¹⁸Ibid., p.151.

¹⁹*Statní Ustřední Archiv v Praze* [The State Central Archives in Prague; hereafter: SUA], *Presidium Mistodržitelství* [Collection of the Governor's Office; hereafter: PM} (1891-1900) 8/5/15/4 and 8/5/10/73, respectively. A Beseda was a cultural and/or patriotic society.

²⁰Mouzelis, op.cit., p.237.



more inclusive coming together of people and their economic and social interactions which created the need for broader conceptions of community. Benedict Anderson described these larger communities as “imagined”, loyalties created to replace day to day local loyalties with the concept of broad ethnic and national feeling. Ernest Gellner describes the “imagined communities” of nationalism as a prerequisite for civil society. Gellner’s “modular man” needs the broad loyalties of the imagined community to fit into the specific interest groups of civil society without conflicting with other loyalties.²¹ This economic transition thus became the prerequisite for nationalism, which is part of the preconditions for the development of a strong civil society in this model.

During the last third of the nineteenth century in the Czech lands, the growth of Czech national identity and the newly permissive conditions created by the 1860 constitution meant that a diverse associational life emerged that was contained within a self-conscious ethnic framework. This work uses the term “national movement” to describe broadly any and all actions undertaken by individuals and groups that consciously focus on the status of the Czech nation or ethnic group, principally in relation to Germans as the marked “other” within the Habsburg Empire. Similarly, the term “national consciousness” describes in broad terms the feeling of belonging to the Czech nation that was expressed by individuals and groups. The national movement was more than a political force, a phenomenon that shaped the daily lives of Czechs, including their economic, social and political interactions.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND CZECH POLITICAL LIFE

Mass participation in the national movement is evidence of only some of the changes Czech society was experiencing. The national movement was evident in all

²¹Gellner, *op.cit.*, pp.42-43.

aspects of Czech society while Czechs were constantly reshaping how they lived and worked. Focusing exclusively on the political aspects of the national movement tends to ignore the many forces shaping Czech society. In fact, the political leadership was constantly being challenged by these dynamic forces from below as civil society developed and organized politically. This dissertation looks at these complexities and offers a better understanding of the variegated process of nationalism in the Habsburg Empire through the Czech case.

Nationalism was not only a prerequisite for the growth of civil society, as Ernest Gellner's argues,²² but a constant presence that shaped the ways in which civil society developed. Ernest Gellner's theory can be used to examine the conditions necessary for civil society to develop in the Czech lands, but a more nuanced and historic approach to the relationship between nationalism and civil society is needed. Looking at economic and political organizations as well as mass political parties and movements demonstrates how Czech civil society was framed by the national movement while simultaneously shaping the character of Czech nationalism itself. This intertwining of nationalism and civil society is a distinguishing, although not entirely unique, feature of Czech nationalism, which was constructed within the framework of a multi-ethnic society with the goal of an economically and politically autonomous (but not separate) Czech nation.

Czech political discourse was framed by the national movement, but was increasingly affected by the interests of the civil society underpinning and shaping that movement. Civil society in the Czech lands included a variety of associations and organizations. The explosion of associations after the 1860's was due partly to the changing nature of society and partly to relaxed government controls. These associations and organizations were sometimes directly political, but often more economic in nature. Czechs were organizing based on their specific economic and political interests as well as

²²Gellner, *op. cit.*, pp.42-43.

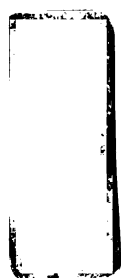
interests that directly supported the national movement. The national movement however, still affected the way these organizations were formed, particularly since most were exclusively Czech in character and language used. In turn the appearance of a strong civil society was part of a change in Czech political life. This relationship was due to the situation of the Czechs politically and economically. Czech nationalism saw these two factors as related and the ways in which civil society was organized became a very important component in the national movement.

While many organizations represented specific economic and occupational interests, there was often a strong political component. The lines between economic, cultural and political organization were vaguely defined and often deliberately crossed. Some were openly political, such as the *Hospodarske politicka jednota v Vysoke Nad Jizera* (Political Business Association of Vysoke Nad Jizera) and the *Jednota samospravnich uředníků obecních u okresních v Kralovství Českém* (Association of Autonomous Municipal and Regional Officials of the Kingdom of Bohemia).²³ Other organizations were ostensibly cultural, such as the *Delnický národní vzdělávací a zábavní spolek borák* (Worker's National Educational and Entertainment Group "Borák") and the *Československá obchodnická beseda* (Cecho-Slovak Businessmen's Beseda) yet were considered political by the government.²⁴ Organizations such as these provided a space where ideas were shared and political actions organized. Examining these organizations gives a more nuanced picture of these connections between civil society and the national movement.

The decline of the Young Czechs and the appearance of many political parties, including the new mass parties, demonstrates a fracturing of Czech political life. The Old and Young Czechs, with their smaller elite base, could no longer stand as the few

²³SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/8/12 and 8/5/9/4.

²⁴SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/9/18 and 8/5/15/4.



representatives of Czech political interests. Mass political movements, grass roots political organization and eventually mass parties would transform the nature of political life to the point where it could not be constrained by one or two all powerful political parties. The dynamic forces of a new civil society were demanding their interests be represented and in order to do so were challenging the political leadership of the previously dominant parties. The very nature of what constituted Czech political life, who it was to represent and how it was to do this were being contested by the increasing participation of various segments of society. The Czech nation was being formed by the participation of larger segments of the population through these new parties and movements.

Some theorists of civil society put political parties out of the boundaries of civil society itself. But political parties demonstrate the relationship between civil society and nationalism in the Czech lands. The reason is that political parties in the context of Czech nationalism formed a counterbalancing force to the state. Political parties were also essential for articulating the ideas of civil society.²⁵ The many interests that made up Czech civil society expressed themselves politically in the myriad of political parties that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, making the Czech lands a good case study of how nations are formed in varied ways as well as for probing insights about the relationship between civil society and nationalism.

This emerging Czech civil society involved Czechs organizing themselves in many ways besides political parties, creating a network of divergent groups which would underpin the newly formed political parties. The vast number and variety of organizations and institutions which were forming at the time has received scant attention from historians. From agricultural cooperatives in the countryside to business and professional associations, often organized by trade, there was a host of organizations

²⁵Mouzelis, *op.cit.*, p.226.

representing diverse interests. Examples include the *Společnost pro průmysl chemický v Království Českém* (Society for Industrial Chemists in the Kingdom of Bohemia), the *Spolek Česko-Moravských Mylnarů* (Organization of Bohemian and Moravian Millers) and the *Místní skupina unie všech sklársko keramických a spriznených delníků v Libni* (Local Union Group of all Glass and Ceramic Workers for Liben).²⁶ The minister of commerce reported in 1896 that there were 5,317 trade organizations in Cisleithania with 554,335 members. Of these organizations, 37.9% were in Bohemia and while only 8.8% were in Moravia.²⁷ In addition, there were cultural associations, class based workers' and clerical organizations, and associations of local political leaders. These organizations created a public space where the many interests and discourses of the new civil society could be channeled, dealt with and promoted.

All this organization gave strength to the voices of these diverse, changing and newly forming segments of society. The multiple discourses of the new industrial society were thus channeled into forums which allowed broadened political expression. These forums allowed more specific interests to be voiced politically. This phenomenon strengthened the newly forming political parties. While each individual organization did not necessarily correspond to any one political party, the existence of these organizations created channels for popular support of the new parties, as well as avenues of discourse between them and the various interest groups of society. This political discourse shaped the character of Czech nationalism which generally moved towards a greater political autonomy within the Czech lands.

Many of the organizations and groups that appeared were cultural and patriotic in character. Besedas, or cultural clubs, were common throughout the country. These were forums where literature was read and discussed along with cultural values. Such

²⁶SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/83, 8/5/15/80 and 8/5/11/23.

²⁷*Nase Doba*, 1896, p.66.

organizations were more diversified examples of the type of work carried on by the *Matice Česka*. While the Czech language was no longer seen as being in danger, the work of advancing Czech culture was still being carried on at a grassroots level. Grassroots organizations can be looked at as part of an overall national movement in which Czechs participated through the organizational framework of civil society.

The organization of Czech civil society was responsible for the fracturing of the political process by giving additional voice to the concerns of new and diverse interest groups. The organization of these interests underpinned the newly emerging political parties, creating avenues for dialogue between political parties and society and channeling popular support. Of nearly 400 civil groups and organizations listed with the governor's office during the 1890's, 79 were directly political in nature, with many others of a cultural or patriotic nature. These political organizations were by region, class and trade. This demonstrates some of the scale and diversity of grassroots Czech political organization which began to make itself felt in the declining strength of the Young Czechs and the emergence of new political parties which gained in popularity and power during this period.

The strength of everyday Czech political consciousness was shown in the general increase in visibility of Czech culture as well as several political struggles. Among the examples which this dissertation will examine is the controversy over the Jan Hus memorial in Prague. The early twentieth century witnessed political discord and an eventual Czech triumph over the placing of a memorial to Jan Hus on Old Town Square in Prague. Hus was a symbol for Czechs of national independence and for the Imperial government and Catholic Germans one of heretical insurgency. Hus had led a 15th century rebellion against the Church and Holy Roman Empire and remains a strong symbol of Czech pride and independence. The placing of the memorial was a strong symbol of not only Czech nationalism, but the triumph of Czech political power in Prague.

The placing of the Hus memorial occurred during World War One, but the struggle to place it there was part of this emergence of Czech nationalism as a strong social force. Czech civil society on the eve of World War One was economically strong and politically active. The goals of the Czech national movement were generally being achieved and Czechs had local autonomy throughout much of the Czech lands, as well as political rights in areas where they were a minority. These goals changed during WWI, and by 1918 Czechs demanded independence from the Empire, although not an ethnically pure nation state.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND NATIONALISM IN THE CZECH LANDS

One obvious way of tracing the rise of Czech nationalism is by looking at Czech political parties arising in a German Dominated political context. The historiography of Czech nationalism portrays a growing movement culminating in the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The national movement thus leads historians to this conclusion because the principle that the nation and political unit should coincide was at its core, as Ernest Gellner pointed out.²⁸ This overriding principle has been a major element of most histories of Czech nationalism, although independence was not actually a stated goal of most nationalist leaders. The focus on political nationalism is used as a barometer of overall Czech national consciousness. John Bradley described Czech nationalism as a phenomenon which was integrated into “national life” and developed politically.²⁹ While this is only one aspect of Czech nationalism, the work of political actors in shaping Czech nationalism was vital in the early decades of Czech nationalism, before it became a mass movement.

²⁸Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1983), p.1.

²⁹Bradley, op. cit., p.19.



Political life in the Czech lands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century involved many political parties and interests, but the single most pervasive influence was the ideas and ideals of the national movement. Until the very late nineteenth century, the major avenue for Czechs to act politically was within the national movement. Linguistic cultivation through cultural outlets and political struggles over language rights framed much of the public activity of politically active Czechs. As Joseph Zacek describes it, the cultural efforts of intellectuals were ultimately aimed at the political revival of the Czech nation.³⁰ In the immediate time period, this translated into goals of local autonomy and political rights, which were demonstrated throughout the region.³¹ While actual independence was not an openly stated goal of most politicians, nor a realistically expected goal of most people, the idea of a political awakening leading to more cultural and political autonomy for the Czech people was a widely accepted and proclaimed desire.

The influence of the religion on the nationalist movement was minimal compared to examples such as Poland. While most Czechs were Catholic, the church was officially allied with the Monarchy. While early nineteenth century nationalists had been supported by the clergy, by the latter half of the century the church was officially not supportive of Czech nationalism.³² Protestant symbols such as Hus became an important part of Czech nationalism. While most Czechs remained Catholic and many priests individually supported the nationalist movement, politically the Church and the national movement were very much at odds. The adoption of Hus as a popular national hero in the late nineteenth century was a potent symbol of this divide.³³

³⁰Joseph Zacek, "Nationalism in Czechoslovakia" in Sugar, Peter F. and Lederer, Ivo. J. *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), pp.176-177.

³¹*Naše Doba*, 1906, pp.212-213.

³²Bradley, op.cit., pp.74-77.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 94-5.



The influence of nationalist thinking caused regional political actors and loyalties to merge into a national political framework which organized and spread across the Czech lands. There were separate political systems and loyalties in each of the three provinces. The Young Czechs even went by another name in Moravia, the *Lidove strana na Morave* (People's Party of Moravia). The late nineteenth century saw the convergence of regional loyalties into the national movement, and political leaders spoke of the "Czech Nation and the "Czech People" even when technically representing only one province, such as Dr. Pačák, the leading Czech parliamentary delegate from Bohemia.³⁴ Political delegates from the three provinces would often meet to discuss common goals, such as the May 31, 1907 gathering in Prague where a meeting of a "group of national delegates" was held.³⁵ A common consensus that the Czech nation was the most important political loyalty took strong root in this time period and local political leaders and actions reflected this.

The situation varied by province, but increasingly Czechs saw local actions as part of a "national" cause. Bohemia was the province where Czechs had the strongest political power throughout this period. In Moravia, the large concentrations of Germans in major cities managed to keep a strong political hold. The first fights for Czech linguistic rights were often done on a regional level, such as the 1882 fight for Czech (and Polish) equality with German in Silesia.³⁶ In Silesia, Czechs were outnumbered by both Germans and Poles, making it a difficult region for Czech political gains. This fight would continue over schools for the next several decades, still being a contentious issue in 1907.³⁷

³⁴Papers of Dr. Bedřich Pačák, Literary Archive of the National Museum, undated speech.

³⁵*Lidove Noviny*, June 1, 1907, p.1.

³⁶William A. Jenks, *Austria Under the Iron Ring* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1965), p.92.

³⁷*Lidove Noviny*, July 19, 1907, p.2.

In the late nineteenth century, political debates were often framed by the political parties. The most influential were the *Narodna strana* (National Party), commonly referred to as the *Staročesi* (Old Czechs) and the *Narodna strana svobodomyslůna* (National Liberal Party), commonly referred to as the *Mladočesi* (Young Czechs). The Old Czechs had dominated the political scene for many decades, and their leader Frantisek Ladislav Rieger was one of the most politically active spokesmen of Czech Nationalism in the period.³⁸ Having broken off from the Old Czechs in the 1860s, by the 1880s the Young Czechs had come to the forefront as the commonly accepted leading party of Czech speakers.³⁹ These parties, as the dominant political outlets of Czech nationalism, were able to control expressions of national sentiment and appear to have been the only political outlet for such sentiment. The struggle between the Young and Old Czechs during these decades was in many respects a struggle for control of the nationalist movement, who would lead the Czech people politically. The triumph of the Young Czechs, which will be described in Chapter Five, was the downfall of the Old Czechs politically.

By the turn of the century, the Young Czechs' dominance of political life was eroding due to increasing challenge from other parties. Many segments of society felt that the Young Czechs were not adequately dealing with issues that concerned them. By the 1890s many other political parties had begun to emerge. These parties included the Social Democrats, National Socialists, Agrarians, Clericals and many other, smaller parties, there being almost no limits imposed by the imperial government on what kind of party could be formed.⁴⁰ As an extreme example, in 1911 the writer Jaroslav Hašek (later to write the classic Czech novel *Švejk*, but known at this time mostly for his life of

³⁸H Gordon Skilling, "The Politics of the Czech Eighties" in Brock, Peter and Skilling, H. Gordon *The Czech Renaissance of the 19th Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p.257.

³⁹Garver, op.cit., p.5.

⁴⁰*Narodni Listy*, May 7, 1908, pp.2-5.

drunkenness in Prague's pubs) and a group of radical friends formed the decidedly unserious *Strana Mirneho prokroku v mezich zakona* (Party of Moderate Progress Within the Limits of the Law).⁴¹ The Young Czechs attempted, but were unable, to maintain their position as the only major outlet for political expression, particularly after the introduction of universal male suffrage in the whole of Cisleithania in 1907. Yet within this broadening Czech political life, a strong sense of nationalism vis-à-vis the Germans was maintained, and indeed the political nationalism only grew stronger as Czechs demanded the representation of other interests. This political fracturing will be discussed in chapter Five. The influence of the nationalist movement on society maintained some sense of unity, albeit a very complex one, in the midst of an increasing political diversity.

BROAD BASED PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Another way of examining the national movement is by looking at the rise of mass politics. The late nineteenth century witnessed a large number of mass based outlets for participation in the national movement. This phenomenon fits into Hroch's conception of a Phase C of mass political participation. These outlets often invited participation by large numbers of people in cultural organizations and movements with strong political agendas, such as the *Sokol* and the National Theater movement. While ostensibly many of these movements were created and shaped by intellectual and political leaders, many segments of society influenced them.

Czech historiography generally looks at the 1848 revolution as the beginning of mass participation in the national movement. There are numerous examples to support this view. The 1848 revolution, which in the Czech lands was concentrated in Prague, while generally led by middle class intellectuals, saw the first Czech political program,

⁴¹Angelo Maria Ripellino, *Magic Prague* (London: Macmillan Press, 1994) p.226.

the first Czech political parties and the first Czech popular assembly.⁴² What started as an attempt to assert Bohemian state rights expanded into demands for freedom of the press and assembly. Intellectuals, students and workers began joining crowds that took control of the streets of Prague demanding national and personal freedoms as well as redress of economic grievances. Meanwhile the leaders of these groups petitioned the Emperor successfully for territorial and individual rights.

In the midst of the revolts, nationalist activists held a Slav congress in Prague. It eventually had 340 delegates, mostly intellectuals from within the Empire, with Czechs the largest contingent.⁴³ The idea of a Slav congress originated with the Croatian nationalist Ivan Kukuljevic-Saczinski's article in a Zagreb newspaper.⁴⁴ Also at this time, the Czech nationalist intellectual Frantisek Palacky refused an invitation to the German nationalist Frankfurt parliament for nationalist reasons. Several German delegates from the Parliament came to Prague to attempt to convince Czechs to join the parliament and accept German dominance in Bohemia and Moravia. Czech nationalists felt this represented German arrogance and their response was to call for a Slav congress to counterbalance German nationalism in the Empire.

The preparations for the congress inflamed many nationalist passions. German newspapers railed against the congress as an example of a dangerous "Panslavism" which would create a Slavic empire. The Magyar leadership was also against the congress, and attempted to get the imperial government to forbid it. In addition the question of whether Polish leaders would attend raised fears of a larger Slavic movement of Czechs and Poles directed against the Germans.⁴⁵ Ultimately the congress compromised the ideals of a

⁴²Stanley Z. Pech, *The Czech Revolution of 1848* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p.333.

⁴³Ibid., p.126.

⁴⁴ Erickson, John, "The Preparatory committee of the Slav Congress" in Brock and Skilling, op.cit., p.179.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.196.

larger Slavic nationalism and was attended mostly by Slavs from within the Monarchy with no Russians attending. The original proposals for the congress called for loyalty to the Habsburg Monarchy. While German nationalists and the imperial government would continue to see the bogeyman of “Panslavism” in any manifestations of Czech nationalism, there never really was a coherent Panslavic nationalism. Although cultural contacts between the leaders of the various Slavic nationalities were important, the congress itself disbanded on June 12th amid fighting in Prague and did not have a major influence in the course of Czech nationalism.⁴⁶ The ideas and organization it inspired were important at the time in galvanizing Czech leaders as well as the leaders of other Slavic nationalities within the Empire to conceive of national political action.

What had begun as a revolt against autocracy and the old Regime began to look more like a nationalist movement. The intellectuals and students began to organize along ethnic lines. Such divisions were not absolute however, but were some of the first truly national political organizations in the Czech lands. The fighting in Prague began with the anger of many groups against the Imperial government, but came to be seen by both sides more and more as a revolt of Czechs against German rule. The fears among Germans invoked by the Panslav congress, as well as the anti-German nature of some of the worker’s riots, contributed to a feeling of Czechs uniting against Germans. This was not always the case, but certainly became part of the historical memory of the events of 1848.

The 1848 revolution also brought newly formed peasant and worker organizations into the public sphere for the first time. The large scale demonstrations in Prague were not mere revolts against authority, but often took on a distinctly nationalist character. Czech newspapers talked about the threat of a “foreign invasion” inflaming nationalist passions.⁴⁷ Workers and artisans not only rioted, but joined on the barricades alongside

⁴⁶Pech, *op.cit.*, pp.136-138.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp.144-145.

the students. The fishermen of Podoli along the river were some of the last to surrender.⁴⁸ The workers and artisans made this revolt a large scale representation of discontent in Prague. It was a harbinger of the large socialist demonstrations that took place in Prague in decades to come.

Anti-German and anti-Jewish riots were part of the disturbances. Both Jews and Germans were perceived as agents of capitalism by Czech workers in the city. Large mobs attacked the Jewish ghetto more than once in what appeared to be spontaneous violence. The army only intervened when the bakeries were attacked.⁴⁹ Such violence reflected anxieties over the threatening nature of modern capitalism as well as traditional anti-Jewish hatred. Eventually the army moved in and protected the Ghetto from further violence.

Ultimately imperial troops crushed the 1848 revolts in the Czech lands. The Imperial general, Windischgrätz, fought through the barricades which sprung up in the Old Town and around army headquarters. During the fighting a stray bullet killed his wife. A commission from the Vienna government attempted to make peace, even getting Windischgrätz to tender his resignation. But the announcement seemed to imply the Army had surrendered and within hours he withdrew his resignation.⁵⁰ He then withdrew his troops to the heights of the *Mala Strana* (The “lesser side” which includes the Hradčany castle complex). He then ordered his troops to bombard the town until all resistance ceased and the town was put under martial law. This effectively ended the 1848 revolutions in the Czech lands. Although 1848 was a failure in terms of national and individual goals, large numbers of Czechs were expressing political and nationalist agendas in the public sphere for the first time.

⁴⁸Demetz, Peter *Prague in Black and Gold* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), p.299.

⁴⁹Ibid., p.296.

⁵⁰Pech, op. cit., p.146.

The post-1848 period saw cultural organizations with more or less overt nationalist agendas as the major avenue for mass political participation. The *Matice Česka* was one of the first, founded before 1848, but gaining its greatest influence afterwards.⁵¹ The *Matice Česka* was a national literary society founded in 1831 to promote the use of the Czech language. The *Matice* sprang from the National Museum, itself one of the vital early manifestations of Czech nationalism.⁵² The National Museum had a journal, the *Časopis společnosti vlastenského museum v Čechách* (Journal of the Society of the Patriotic Museum in Bohemia), which was edited by František Palačky and founded in 1827. The Journal was aimed at as wide an audience as possible, and its success led to the development of the *Matice*.⁵³ Palačky, who would be the leading intellectual of Czech nationalism for decades, was probably inspired by the Serbian *Matice* in Pest, founded in 1826.⁵⁴ This *Matice* became a role model for several Slavic literary societies.

Although it started as a pioneer movement of a few intellectuals, the *Matice* grew throughout the century until its influence was felt by wide segments of the Czech population.⁵⁵ Palačky founded the *Matice* in 1831 with the aid of backers of the Museum journal. It's most important period was its first 30 years, during which it was the most influential national organization. Its importance waned after 1861 due to the enormous growth of other Czech patriotic societies. The ability of Czechs to form organizations of almost any character changed the social and political landscape of the Czech lands. As a

⁵¹ *Matice* is a Czech word which means mother and in this context meant the mother of the nation.

⁵² Agnew, Hugh Lecaine *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 2004), pp. 104, 111-113. The Museum was founded in 1818 as the Patriotic Museum in Bohemia and became the National Museum.

⁵³ Stanley Kimball, "The *Matice Česka*, 1831-1861" in Brock and Skilling, op.cit, p.60.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.58. At this time Buda and Pest were two separate cities, not officially united until 1873. The Serbian *Matice* was moved from Pest to Novi Sad in 1864.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.73.

result, the *Matice* was reduced to little more than a publishing house.⁵⁶ The *Matice* was originally scholarly and not directly political.⁵⁷ During its first three decades of operation it grew in popularity and began publishing works aimed at a much wider audience. This helped foster a sense of nationalism among newly literate segments of society. The *Matice* also published books aimed at Czech students attending Germans schools, to better acquaint them with the Czech language.⁵⁸ The *Matice* was not only influential in spreading the use of the Czech written language, it helped codify the language and settle disputes on its character.⁵⁹

The *Matice* was the forerunner of later cultural societies such as *Besedas*. *Besedas* were considered political by the government, and larger groups such as the *Československa obchodníčka beseda* (Czecho-Slovak Businessmen's *Beseda*) were kept under constant surveillance.⁶⁰ One of the original *Besedas*, the *Měšt'anska beseda* in Prague, originally included German members and was officially bilingual.⁶¹ The authorities granted permission for this organization in 1845, creating a space for the Czech bourgeoisie, who were the dominant element, making it a distinctly Czech organization despite its original bilingual nature.⁶² This organization was small but was very influential in being one of the first Czech organizations, inspiring future Czech associations of similar character. *Besedas* were more common in the late nineteenth century, and promoted Czech language and culture at a time when it was not threatened.

⁵⁶Ibid., p.61.

⁵⁷Nolte, op. cit., p.27.

⁵⁸Kimball, op. cit., p.66.

⁵⁹Agnew, op. cit., p.113.

⁶⁰SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4.

⁶¹Nolte, op. cit., p.27.

⁶²Pech, op.cit., pp.28-29.

By holding readings and public meetings, cultural organizations such as the *Matice* and *Besedas* worked to bridge the gap between an intellectual led movement and an increasingly nationalist population, aided by growing literacy rates which lead to nearly full literacy by the end of the century.

The *Sokol* was a broad based cultural movement with heavy nationalist overtones the first of the mass nationalist organizations that appeared after 1848. The *Sokol* was founded in 1862 by Miroslav Tyrš and other Czech nationalists as a gymnastics society, but its membership worked to spread nationalist ideology among the Czech people.⁶³ The *Sokol* sought to train minds and bodies for the nationalist movement. Originally the *Sokol* was one organization, the *Pražky tělocvicny spolek* (Prague Gymnastics Club), but soon spread to towns throughout the Czech lands. Early supporters included influential politicians such as Julius Gregr, the editor of the *Narodni Listy*.⁶⁴ The *Sokol* (the name means falcon) was inspired by a similar German nationalist movement, the *Turnverein*. The idea behind the *Sokol* was not only to have a broad nationalist organization, but to physically make the “body” of the nation strong by increasing the physical fitness of its members.

The *Sokol* became the most popular Czech nationalist organization, with participation from all segments of society, including 64.4% “workers or craftsmen” in the rank and file by 1895.⁶⁵ The *Sokol* helped make Czech nationalism a mass movement, and both historians and contemporaries recognized its importance.⁶⁶ Both Bohemian Germans and the Habsburg government warned of the growing strength of this movement.⁶⁷ To the

⁶³Bradley, op.cit.,p.24.

⁶⁴Nolte, op.cit., p.41.

⁶⁵Ibid., p.128.

⁶⁶Ibid., p.1.

⁶⁷Ibid.

government, the *Sokol* were a source of dangerous pan-Slavic tendencies which threatened the Monarchy. There was some truth to this concern, as pan-Slavic feeling was a major part of *Sokol* celebrations, and the *Sokol* worked with similar organizations from other ethnic groups. Yet despite such fears, the *Sokol* and Czech nationalism in general was never really pan-Slavic in its orientation or goals. The *Sokol* held exhibitions to show off not only their skill, but the numbers and physical strength of the Czech nation, and their meets were duly watched by the authorities. The *Sokol* continued to exist in interwar Czechoslovakia as a recognized symbol of Czech nationalism. The importance of the *Sokol* to Czech nationalism was recognized not only by Czechs, who participated in large numbers, but by the Imperial government that saw it as a threat.

Another often cited example of broad based participation in the national movement is the funding and building of the *Narodni Divadlo* (national theater).⁶⁸ While there was a preexisting Czech theater in Town, the major theater (now called the *Stavoske Divadlo* or estates theater and known as the place where Mozart premiered Don Giovanni) was considered “German” in this time of increasingly divisive nationalism. Much of the money originally came from wealthy donors, but even the first campaign of 1851 had 54% of donations from the middle and lower classes.⁶⁹ This was especially impressive given the small number of Czech papers and low literacy rates of the 1850’s.⁷⁰ The early years saw modest increases in collections, but more importantly a network of politically active Czechs developed throughout Bohemia and Moravia, with the theater committee working through local mayors to raise funds from poor Czechs in small towns.⁷¹

⁶⁸Stanley Bucholz Kimball, *Czech Nationalism: A Study of the National Theater Movement*, op. cit.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p.51.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, pp.49-50.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp.75-77.



Although the organization of the committee was impressive, the original campaigns came to a stop by the late 1850's. Part of the reason was bureaucratic obstruction, with the Imperial government generally opposed to the project. Another problem was the lack of a widely read Czech press at the time. The few politically active Czech papers faced government shut downs, such as Karel Havliček's original *Narodni Noviny*, which was closed in 1850.⁷² There were at this time very few Czech organizations, the Matice was the most active, but suffered from censorship, and the *Měšt'anska beseda* had a small membership.⁷³ Eventually the committee ran out of funds and did not meet from 1856-60.⁷⁴

The committee for the theater revived in the 1860's with government permission. There was a stronger Czech press by this time and better organization a sign of the growing strength of civil society. A subscription campaign brought in larger amounts in one year than the fifteen years preceding it.⁷⁵ By 1862 the committee was able to build a small provisional theater on the site of the future one.⁷⁶ Czech plays and music were increasingly part of the repertoire and Bedřich Smetana was the music director of the provisional theater from 1866-1874.⁷⁷ Smetana was not only a famous composer, but very active in the national movement. Arguments between Old and Young Czechs for control of the committee ended in the Young Czechs taking control and moving for a much larger building than had previously been planned, which was now possible due to

⁷²Ibid., p.55. Havliček was arrested and sent into exile in Tyrol. He suffered from poor health and was released and allowed to return to Bohemia and eventually Prague shortly before his death from tuberculosis in 1856. Paláčky was also threatened with arrest by a military court during this period of absolutist reaction after 1848, but was spared.

⁷³Ibid., p.47.

⁷⁴Ibid., p.54.

⁷⁵Ibid., p.78.

⁷⁶Ibid., p.66.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 69.



the success of fundraising efforts in all three provinces.⁷⁸ These plans rapidly moved forward after 1865.

The cornerstone was laid in 1868 after mass donations from across Czech society. Ordinary Czechs who had never been to Prague were thus able to feel a part of a broad national project. For the first time all parts of the Czech lands were included in a national project. This ceremony was considered one of the biggest events in Czech nationalism before 1918.⁷⁹ Over 60,000 people came to the celebration, which was a very large political gathering for the time, particularly since it was allowed by the authorities. Old and Young Czechs worked on the committee to build the theater and funds were gathered from the Bohemian nobility and through their political networks as well as popular subscriptions from all over the Czech lands.⁸⁰ The National Theater and the organizations supporting it became a major campaign which helped make Czech nationalism a truly mass movement.

The theater was completed among great national celebrations in 1881.⁸¹ Crown Prince Rudolf, then living in Prague, was invited. This controversial decision made the celebration of the opening less of a national celebration than a ceremony honoring the prince.⁸² Still the nationalist overtones were very evident. The first piece performed was the Czech composer Bedřich Smetana's *Libuse*, which tells the story of one of the earliest Czech legends.⁸³ The phrase *Narod Sobě* (The Nation Unto Itself) still hangs over the

⁷⁸Jaroslav Pacovsky, *Historie Budovy Národního Divadla* (Prague: Panorama, 1983), pp.56-63.

⁷⁹Kimball, op. cit., p.81.

⁸⁰Garver, op. cit., p.111.

⁸¹Pacovsky, op.cit., pp.118-126.

⁸²Ibid., pp.130-131.

⁸³Smetana died in 1884, shortly after the opening of the new theater. During his time in the theater he gathered with other nationalists in the Café Slavia across the street. This became a known place for nationalist discussions, with the nationalists, particularly students having their own table and the police informer having one reserved right next to them. A similar situation prevailed under communism when Vaclav Havel and his companions chose the Slavia as their favorite meeting place.

front of the stage. This signified the meaning of the theater, built by the Czech nation for the Czech nation.

The theater burned down shortly after its opening, but was rebuilt in two years by an even more massive funding campaign which created an even greater sense of popular participation in the national theater movement.⁸⁴ The second campaign actually raised more money in two years than the first campaign had. The first construction had depended on a large mortgage and contributions from a German controlled Diet. The second effort was almost entirely funded by contributions from Czechs and made sure most of the building contracts went to Czech firms and workmen.⁸⁵ The new theater was completed rather rapidly, opening in 1883. Contributing to the building of the *Narodni Divadlo* demonstrated the strength of Czech national feeling, and the close links between cultural endeavors and political nationalism. Czechs across society had a personal stake in the building and maintenance of a theater that many would never attend.

The many cultural movements of the late nineteenth century often had political overtones that were not ostensibly their main *raison d'être*. There was an increase of more open patriotic organizations and events, particularly the popularity of national or "ethnographic" exhibits and fairs. Mass fairs such as the Exposition of 1891 and the National Ethnographic Exhibition in 1895 were large examples of this phenomenon. Both of these events were attended by huge crowds from all over the Czech lands and lauded in the press.⁸⁶ Such exhibitions were popular among other ethnic groups at the time, and Czechs were influenced by other ideas of what made a nation. Ethnographic fairs displayed the place of Czech culture among the world's nations. Industrial fairs demonstrated the economic strength of the Czech nation, that it was as "modern" as any

⁸⁴Garver, op.cit., p.112.

⁸⁵Kimball, op.cit., p.143.

⁸⁶Kandert and Scheffel, op. cit., p.19.

other. These fairs and exhibitions, which were large well recognized events, brought an openly broad popular support for the national movement into the public sphere.

Truly mass political gatherings were happening quite frequently by the late nineteenth century. The largest were the *Tabory* (named after the stronghold of the Hussite warriors of the 15th Century), large well publicized outdoor mass gatherings which sometimes went on for days, where political nationalism was debated and celebrated.⁸⁷ The first one, at Říp in 1868, attracted 40,000 people and demanded Bohemian state rights and universal male suffrage.⁸⁸ Between 1868 and 1871 *Tabory* attracted as many as 1.5 million people at various gatherings.⁸⁹ In 1868 the Imperial government declared a state of emergency in Prague and its environs as a result of these mass nationalist gatherings and instituted a crackdown.⁹⁰ *Tabory* were sometimes broken up by government forces, but continued to be a popular expression of Czech nationalism throughout the late nineteenth century. The age of mass politics had truly arrived in the Czech lands.

The strength of the Czech nation was also proclaimed through the press and the movement for Czech language education. The two were related. The press was increasingly reaching a wide audience, due to both increased literacy rates and lower costs of the papers themselves. There were very few Czech papers and journals in the pre-1848 period, and those aimed at a wider audience tended to be printed in very limited editions.⁹¹ The brief freedom of the press granted in early 1848 enabled several papers

⁸⁷Nolte, op.cit., p.31.

⁸⁸Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* op.cit., p.135. Říp was the hilltop where the legendary Father Čech had first surveyed the region before leading the Slavic tribes in. Tabor was the name of the biblical hill where Jesus foretold his second coming, and had been the name of the major Hussite stronghold in the early fifteenth century.

⁸⁹Nolte, op.cit., p.31.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Barbara Kohan Kimmel, "Karel Havlíček and the Czech Press before 1848" in Brock and Skilling, op.cit., p. 113.

such as Havlíček's *Narodni Noviny* to emerge.⁹² This increase in Czech papers was diminished with the return of absolutism after 1850, marking a period of persecution of Czech nationalists, including Havlíček. The 1860's witnessed a relaxation of censorship and concomitant increase in the number of Czech papers. The number of political Czech papers in Bohemia increased from 10 to 120 between 1863 and 1895.⁹³ The ratio of Czech to German papers changed during this period from 53:47 to 66:34.⁹⁴ In 1890 there were 253 Czech language periodicals in Bohemia.⁹⁵ Many Czech papers used the word "Slav" "National" "Ours" etc. in their titles.⁹⁶ Two of the most influential examples were the Young Czech papers *Narodni Listy* (National News), and *Lidove Noviny* (People's News). Edited by Julius Gregr, the *Narodni Listy* had a circulation of 14,100 per issue in 1894, second only to the official *Prager Zeitung*'s 44,900 and much more than the Old Czechs' *Hlas Naroda* (Voice of the Nation) at 6400.⁹⁷ The expanded press meant not only that political papers were able to reach a wider audience, but also that they had to respond to the desires and visions of that audience in relating to the national movement. This created a wider forum for discourses shaping the meaning effects of the national movement.

Mass education was both a contributing factor and a concern to the national movement. A literate population was also crucial to mass participation in civil society. Prior to 1848 education had been focused in cities, but soon thereafter it spread to the countryside. This shift in focus was part of national leaders including the peasant in their

⁹²Ibid., p.129.

⁹³Garver, op.cit., p.102.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p.93.

⁹⁶Garver, op.cit., p.102.

⁹⁷Ibid., p.103.



vision of the nation and desiring that they be educated. As Karel Havlíček stated, “As long as the peasant is ashamed of his own name, the nation cannot raise itself!”⁹⁸ Czech organizations spent the next several decades working to increase Czech language education for all who desired it throughout the Czech lands, making both city dweller and poor peasant part of their conception of the nation. The increasing literacy rates among Czechs, reaching 96% by 1900, were the result not only of imperial law mandating universal elementary education, but a concerted mass effort on the part of Czechs.⁹⁹ Czechs worked at the local level to ensure that the language of education for children was Czech, or to arrange private schools where possible. This was easiest in cities where Czechs were a strong majority, such as Prague, where by 1897 there were 38 publicly funded Czech primary schools, compared to 6 German-language ones.¹⁰⁰ National and grass roots organization and mobilizations was necessary to create movements strong enough to accomplish this in other areas. This was partly done through political mobilization, and partly through fundraising which enabled people from all over the Czech lands to contribute to the national project of education.

Language was the central tenet of Czech identity, making the national movement focus on education. The Czech writer Jaroslav Vrchlický summed up the prevailing attitude when he said “We have only two weapons: the book and the school.”¹⁰¹ Such militaristic rhetoric was common among Czech nationalists, who spoke of a fight for the survival of the nation. This movement had great success, but met setbacks, such as the battle over language of schools in Silesia, which the *Lidové Noviny* reported in 1899 as a battle that was being lost.¹⁰² *Naše Doba* advocated that teaching Czech was more vital

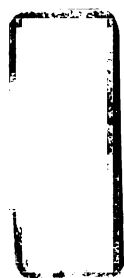
⁹⁸Kimmel, op.cit.,p.125.

⁹⁹David-Fox, op. cit, p.30.

¹⁰⁰*Statistická knizka kralovskeho hlavniho města Prahy*, op.cit., pp. 376-377.

¹⁰¹Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.143.

¹⁰²*Lidové Noviny*, July 4, 1899, p.2.



than having a population educated in German, even if it meant that they were thus put in low lever jobs, "better to work with your hands than have an uneducated population."¹⁰³ Newspapers such as the *Lidove Noviny* called for all "Czech children to only attend Czech schools."¹⁰⁴ Czech organizations worked to provide education for Czechs in areas where they were a minority. The era of mass education coincided with the era of Czech nationalism. Education was a political issue which was vital to Czechs on a personal and national level and thus was a rallying point for national feeling and political mobilization throughout this period.

The idea of a "language border," a region where both Czechs and Germans conceived of the national struggle as being physically played out, was a prime example of how education became a primary focus for political nationalism. As the number of Czech speakers in an area increased and they were able to demand Czech language education in schools, both Czechs and Germans saw this as a takeover of an area by the Czechs. Czech organizations worked to establish Czech education in predominantly German areas. Thus the organization *Matice Školska* was credited with "rescuing 1500 children in Brno" in 1899.¹⁰⁵ For Germans in particular, if Czechs gained representation in education, even without a majority in a region, this was taken as a Czech victory. This mind set created a zero-sum game which was of primary importance to both sides, each struggling to be the sole winner.¹⁰⁶ The following of the language border struggle in the press made it an issue where broad concern of the population was affected. The political and financial mobilization necessary to fund educational endeavors came from all over the Czech lands, not just the affected areas. Czechs were able to mobilize politically as a whole to

¹⁰³ *Naše Doba*, 1898, p.175.

¹⁰⁴ *Lidove Noviny*, July 13, 1899, p.1.

¹⁰⁵ *Lidove Noviny*, July 4, 1899, p.2.

¹⁰⁶ Mark Cornwall, "The Struggle on the Czech-German Language Border" *English Historical Review*, Sept. 1994, pp.914-916.

affect change in regions which for many were far beyond their general geographical perception of home.

Language was not of course, the only component of Czech national identity.

Czech identity was also strongly tied to the lands of Bohemia and Moravia, to ancient Czech kingdoms and the myths of Czech tribes who migrated into the area in the medieval period. Czech nationalism saw Czech culture as tied in to ancestry, it did not seek to culturally assimilate Germans, because they did not have Czech ancestors. Jews were often excluded from Czech nationalism, partly because they were perceived as Germans, partly due to Christian anti-semitism, and also due to modern ethnic anti-semitism, which saw Jews as physical outsiders. By the twentieth century there was more acceptance of Jews as Czechs if they spoke the language, but lingering anti-semitism demonstrates how Czech nationalism was not entire based on language.

All of these movements and changes are indicative of the introduction and increasing participation of large numbers of the population into the political and cultural space of the national movement. By their participation the masses of Czech society showed that not only would they not sit on the sidelines of the national struggle, but that they would not passively follow the lead of intellectual and political leaders in shaping the movement. Since culture and politics were always intertwined in the Czech experience of the period, there were more and more avenues for ordinary Czechs to enter the political and cultural space of the national movement. Czechs joined organizations representing their trades and interests and entered the political sphere. The entrance of larger segments of the population meant that more people would be affected by the national movement, but also that more people would have a voice.

ECONOMY, SOCIETY AND NATIONALISM

The relationship between economic and social life in the Czech lands was complex. The growing Czech economic strength of the time period added to the power of the national movement. The strong ethnic divides in many towns and cities were socially created and very pervasive, although not absolute, thus serving as a constant reminder of national separateness on a day to day social and economic basis. Czechs were aware of this divide and it heavily influenced their organization and participation in daily life and the national movement.

One of the factors influencing Czech perceptions of their national position was the common belief that they were the economic underdog. In fact, while politically Czechs could easily be described as second class citizens in their territories and indeed the Empire as a whole, by the late nineteenth century they were no longer necessarily in a subordinate economic position overall. Traditionally Germans (and German-speaking Jews) had been the dominant economic group; this was changing rapidly in the late nineteenth century. Czechs were increasingly not only running major businesses, but made up a large part of the urban workforce and benefited from increased wages and overall growth in income. More people also spoke Czech as a daily language in their business dealings by the late nineteenth century. Still Czechs tended to see themselves as fighting an uphill battle against German dominance, partly due to the strong linkage in peoples' minds between economic and political strength, duly reported in *Naše Doba's* description of the economic situation of the nation in 1909.¹⁰⁷ Czechs sought to correct a historical economic dominance by Germans, both real and perceived.

For Czechs this battle over national strength would play itself out strongly in their motivations and actions in the economic sphere. There was a strong effort to build up

¹⁰⁷*Naše Doba*, 1909, p.14.



Czech industry, the first organization forming in 1833, and by the end of the century many organizations existed which were actively concerned with the promotion of Czech business and industry.¹⁰⁸ Czechs and Germans often interacted economically, but many shared a common desire to view the economic interests of Czechs overall as having vital importance, and thus for Czechs to do business with other Czechs.¹⁰⁹ This desire made the connection between economic and political/national life openly part of everyday discourse for both Czechs and Germans. Czechs made efforts to shop from other Czechs as much as possible, and most often chose to organize themselves in ethnically exclusive economic organizations.

The *Svuj K Svemu* boycotts during the 1890s encouraged Czechs to boycott German businesses.¹¹⁰ They were met with a counter-boycott campaign conducted by Germans. In practice the *Svuj K Svemu* boycotts were more generally anti-semitic in nature, playing on economic rivalries between non-Jewish and Jewish storeowners. Some Czechs perceived Jews as Germans. Nationalism and anti-semitism overlapped during these boycotts. T.G. Masaryk and others commented on the anti-semitic nature of these boycotts.¹¹¹ While they were popular and mobilized crowds, more reasonable Czech leaders argued against them as ineffective at aiding the Czechs economically.¹¹² There were large boycott campaigns in 1897 after the Badeni ordinances and again in 1908, the latter being organized by the National Socialist party. These boycotts demonstrate the part played in anti-semitism in Czech nationalism, which also saw anti-Jewish rioting during the Hilsner affair of 1899. While briefly reinforcing nationalist

¹⁰⁸Richard Rudolph, *Banking and Industrialization in Austria-Hungary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.64.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰*Naše Doba*, 1900, p.457.

¹¹¹*Naše Doba*, 1895, p.929.

¹¹²*Naše Doba*, 1900, p.459.



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feelings, the boycotts were ultimately ineffective in aiding the nationalist movement and were abandoned.¹¹³

Although the Czech lands were developing a sophisticated and diverse modern economy, this pervasive nationalist thinking created a sense of unity which expressed itself in the ways in which Czechs organized themselves. Many economic organizations had patriotic and national motivations as well.¹¹⁴ Czechs tended to form their own ethnically homogeneous organizations, partly of their own desire and partly due to the ethnic exclusiveness of German organizations. The very act of forming exclusively Czech organizations expressed a political desire to be part of the nationalist movement. In the atmosphere of the time, joining an obviously Czech group was a declaration of support for the nationalist cause. In even small ways like this Czechs were taking part in a larger discourse of nationalism on a daily basis.

These separate Czech organizations reached across society. Women also formed organizations along nationalist lines. The first Czech women's journal, the *Ženske listy* (Women's News) was started in the 1890's and soon followed by the *Ženský obzor* (Women's Horizons) in 1896. By the early twentieth century there were three more Czech women's journals.¹¹⁵ The first major women's group was the *Ženský klub český* (Czech Women's Club), founded in Prague in 1903. The *Ženský klub český* generally concerned itself with how women were affected by the nationalist struggle, but also worked for general women's emancipation.¹¹⁶ The *Ženský klub český* held a meeting in 1908 to deal with voting rights for Czech women, as reported in the *Narodni Listy*.¹¹⁷

¹¹³Albrecht, op.cit., pp.47-67.

¹¹⁴SUA PM, *Zalezitost Spolkove*.

¹¹⁵Marie L. Neudorfova *Česke ženy v 19. století* (Prague: Nakladelstvi JANUA, 1999), p.164.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p.216.

¹¹⁷*Narodni Listy*, March 9, 1908, p.2.

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Women's groups dealt with issues both social and political. An 1897 Czech women's congress called for emancipation of women, arguing that it went hand in hand with national freedom.¹¹⁸ A 1912 conference of women's groups in Prague dealt with a wide variety of issues affecting women, but was for Czech women's groups only.¹¹⁹ Women's organizations, while asking for changes in society, remained within the nationalist framework whereby Czechs shared overall political and cultural goals.

Social life itself was often segregated. As with economic life, it is necessary to note that Czechs and Germans had historically interacted economically and socially on a daily basis throughout the Czech lands. What changed in the late nineteenth century was an increased awareness and meaning of their differences. Czechs and Germans formed their own separate social clubs, with Jews often forced to have their own exclusive organizations. The University had been split into separate German and Czech institutions in 1881, and Czech and German students often fought each other in the streets of Prague. There were often minor scuffles in the streets, where Czechs tended to march down *Ferdinandova* (now *Narodni Trida*) and Germans on the intersecting *Am Graben* (now *Na Přikope*).¹²⁰ The student clubs in particular often organized processions looking for skirmishes. The German-Jewish Casino on *Graben* had an alarm that when pressed would alert those inside to rush out to defend Jewish students from Czech or German attacks.¹²¹ Although rarely serious, such street scuffles were evidence of a wider mind set of segregation and difference affecting both Czechs and Germans.

Overall the influence of the national movement within Czech society grew during this period. The participation of increasing numbers of Czechs in mass political

¹¹⁸*Naše Doba*, 1897, pp.826-827.

¹¹⁹*Naše Doba*, 1912, p.317.

¹²⁰Scott Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siecle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p.7.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, pp.7-8.

organizations greatly altered, but ultimately strengthened, the national movement. More people and more interest groups became active in the politics of the national movement. Czechs organized themselves politically with the common purpose of advancing the interests of the nation as a whole. Mass participation in cultural and political endeavors ensured that all segments of Czech society would alter nationalist discourse by their contributions to it. Even in their economic and social lives, the ways in which Czechs organized and conducted their affairs was framed by the discourse of nationalism. This is not to say that Czechs were united politically, or able to mobilize the entire population for any one campaign or agenda. The specific goals of the national movement were never agreed upon, but politically active Czechs generally worked towards greater cultural and political autonomy within the framework of the Empire.

Chapter 3

ECONOMIC ASSOCIATIONS IN THE CZECH LANDS

Dr. Bedrich Pačák, the leader of the Club of Czech Delegates to the Imperial *Reichsrat*, told Czech delegates that “As we must be united on political and national questions, so must we recognize the importance of dealing with economic questions.”¹ A diverse array of associations was necessary for the functioning of the modern industrial economy of the Czech lands. While many cultural organizations were formed as nationalism grew, economic and trade organizations also were formed. Often these organizations were also political, as more Czechs felt themselves part of the national movement. Czech considered economic power to be part of the strength of the Czech nation. This economic power was steadily growing in the last decades of the Habsburg Empire.

Major changes occurred in the economic life of the Czech lands in the nineteenth century, particularly after 1848. The region became urbanized and industrialized, by 1890 36.5% of Czechs worked in the industrial sector and the Czech lands accounted for three-fifths of Cisleithania’s industrial production.² The Czechs ultimately shaped their own separate civil society as much as they could, taking a model of modernity which at first appeared German and making it their own. By the late nineteenth century, the Czech lands were the strongest industrial region of the Habsburg Empire, and by 1880 they were producing the majority of Cisleithania’s iron, chemicals, machine tools and sugar.³ Czechs and Germans lived and worked together in this region, interacting socially,

¹Papers of Dr. Pačák, Literary Archive of the National Museum, Carton 4, undated speech.

²Robert A. Kann *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p.464; David-Fox, op.cit., p.27.

³Good, op. cit., pp.132-133.

politically and economically. These changes, however, were perceived by much of those in society to happen within distinctly “Czech” and “German” frameworks of national consciousness. The strength of Czech civil society brought a diverse set of voices and interests to the national movement.

OVERALL ECONOMIC CHANGES

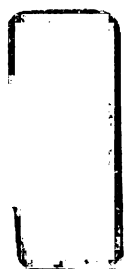
Bohemia and Moravia were vital to the economic development of the Empire, Upper Austria and Vienna being the other major industrial centers. Historically Bohemia and Moravia had been a strong economic area, suffering major setbacks during the Thirty Years War and only gradually recovering. In the late nineteenth century, parts of the Empire were undergoing what Walter W. Rostow termed “take-off” into self-sustaining economic growth.⁴ Leading sectors such as textiles, iron and steel, coal and railroads experienced continuous expansion. This rapid industrial growth occurred first in Vienna and Upper Austria but soon moved to the Czech lands.⁵ This model of an industrial economy and society would provide the basis (and the capital) for the economic changes in the Czech lands.

During the nineteenth century Bohemia and Moravia underwent the broad structural changes necessary for transition to a capitalist industrial economy. Textile and glass production had been specialties of Bohemia in the eighteenth century, but production was pre-industrial and decentralized. Heavy and light industry, agricultural processing, trade and commerce all grew strongly during the nineteenth century. The Czech lands accounted for nearly three-fifths of industrial production in Cisleithania and two-thirds of its industrial labor.⁶ Between 1867 and 1882, the number of capitalist

⁴Ibid., p. 8-9.

⁵Ibid., p.129.

⁶Kann, op.cit., p.464.



enterprises increased tenfold, and the capital reserves of the Czech lands also increased tenfold between 1890 and 1912.⁷ The Czech lands had one of the densest railway networks in Europe.⁸ By 1900, 36% of the labor force in the Czech lands was in industry and mining, compared with 20% for Cisleithania as a whole.⁹ The Czech Lands by 1900 accounted for 90% of cast iron productions and 59% of pig iron production.¹⁰ The Škoda works were the Empire's major steel and weapons producers. Coal became the principal fuel, and iron, steel and machine industries were the driving sectors of the economy.¹¹ By the twentieth century, the steam engine was being replaced by the more efficient electrical and internal combustion engines.¹² The Czech lands accounted for over three-quarters of cotton and woolen textiles by 1910, as well as 94% of sugar refining and 58% of beer production.¹³ By the turn of the century, the Czech lands were strong in the newly formed electrical and chemical industries as well, where Czechs themselves were equally involved as Germans.

Czech speakers were increasingly playing a significant part in these new industrial sectors of the economy. Traditionally, Germans had dominated the economy in the Czech lands. German migration in the middle ages had been an important factor in the establishment of many towns in Bohemia and Moravia. Germans were the most economically influential group in most cities. Although this had been the case prior to 1620, Czech historiography usually focuses on that date as symbolic of the loss of Czech

⁷ John F. N. Bradley *Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Boulder, East European Monographs, 1984), pp.21-22.

⁸ Ibid.

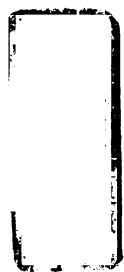
⁹ Rudolph, op.cit., p.40.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.41.

¹¹ Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.140.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Rudolph, op.cit., p.40.



dominance in their own lands and the rise of German political and economic control. Although the characterization of the Kingdom of Bohemia as Czech or German is anachronistic, the historic case was a major part of both nationalisms in the nineteenth century. German speakers, many of them Jewish, were most visible economically in the cities of Bohemia and Moravia in the early nineteenth century.

By the mid nineteenth century, German speakers were losing this dominance. This was due not only to increasing numbers of native Czech speakers participating in commerce and industry, as well as migrants from the countryside, but also to an increase in people who chose Czech as their main language of daily interaction, a symptom of the strengthening national movement, particularly after 1848. It is important to note that although both Czech and German discourse took for granted who was a Czech or a German by the late nineteenth century, these definitions were not so clear cut, particularly in the early nineteenth century. Ethnic identity was not important to most people, and many in cities spoke both Czech and German. In the mid nineteenth century this began to change as the ideas of nationalism took hold and there was great pressure for people to define themselves as Czechs and Germans. This heavy focus on language as the primary ethnic identifier would put many Jews in a position of being perceived as Germans by Czechs, but not accepted as Germans due to ethnic anti-semitism, which was pervasive among both Czechs and Germans.

Czech management and capital played an increasing role during this period. While Germans continued to control some industries, many were becoming predominantly Czech. Sugar and food processing in particular were controlled mostly by Czechs by the late nineteenth century. These new industries increasingly had large Czech workforces as well as ownership. The sugar processing industry was a major part of the economy, and when it faced a crisis, Young Czech politicians would take note, as happened during an economic crisis in 1895.¹⁴ Czech capital and entrepreneurs were also

¹⁴*Narodni Listy*, May 2, 1895, p.5.

able to take the lead in the machine tool, transportation and leather goods industries.¹⁵

The ability of Czechs to organize industrial cooperatives in the milling and brewing industries was reported by the journal *Naše Doba* as a sign of Czech strength as a nation.¹⁶

The structural changes in economy and society reshaped economic and financial activity. A sophisticated banking system emerged, and the Czech lands became a place for investment from Vienna. Czech capital itself also became very important to this process. Many banks and credit associations, often of a deliberate Czech character, came into being in the late nineteenth century, such as the *Živnostenská banka pro Čechy a Moravu* (Trade Bank for Bohemia and Moravia), one of the most important commercial banks, founded in 1868.¹⁷ The formation of banks such as this was a deliberate act on the part of Czechs concerned with promoting self-consciously “Czech” business and capital. This bank was formed with only Czechs controlling it, which at first gave it problems getting permission to engage in industrial promotion in Vienna.¹⁸ It became not only the major investor in Czech agribusinesses, but also exported Czech capital to other parts of the Empire.¹⁹ The opening of the *Vzájemná pojistovací banka Slavia* (Mutual Securities Bank Slavia) in 1868 was done in a with a “Slavic mood” and was attended by several leading figures of the Czech national movement.²⁰ Prague even came to be a major financial center in its own right, rivaling Vienna itself.²¹ Czechs and Germans categorized

¹⁵Rudolph, op. cit, p.41.

¹⁶*Naše Doba*, 1908, pp.42-43.

¹⁷Rudolph, op.cit., pp.70-72.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.142.

²⁰Laroslav Lani and Jan Vlk (eds.) *Dejiny Prahy* (Prague:Paseka, 1998), pp. 168-170.

²¹Rudolph. op.cit., pp.70-72..

banks and credit institutions as either Czech or German and compared the strength of the financial institutions. In 1901 *Naše Doba* reported that there were 73 Czech credit banks in the Czech lands and 104 German ones.²² By 1911, *Naše Doba* could report that the *Českých obchodních bank* (Czech business Bank) was important for “our national economy” in an explicit reference to the Czech nation.²³ The Czech lands were a center of industrial development, trade and banking, thus making them at the forefront of the rapid changes and modernizing forces of the new industrial and financial economy. Czech nationalists were concerned that the Czech nation participate in this economic strength as a self consciously national group.

The new economy required and created changes in the workforce, including a shift in population to urban industrial centers.²⁴ The Czech lands maintained a large agricultural workforce, some 38% of the population in 1910, but also were responsible for much of Austria’s industries processing agricultural products such as flour milling, sugar beet refining, textile manufacture, etc.²⁵ Many Czechs were involved in these and other industries. Growing migration took place into the cities during the nineteenth century, the greatest population growth in the Czech lands being in new industrial areas. Here population grew two and a half times between 1857 and 1910, a much greater increase than overall population, which went from 6,956,000 to 10,052,000.²⁶ Much of this migration was Czechs coming into cities from small towns and villages, which added to the change from German to Czech as the main language of everyday life in many places, particularly Prague. Previously most cities had been dominated by German

²²*Naše Doba*, 1901, p.134.

²³*Naše Doba*, 1911, p. 536.

²⁴Urban, *Kapitalismus a české společnost*, op.cit., pp.89-90.

²⁵Rudolph, op. cit., p.41.

²⁶Garver, op. cit.,p.326.



speakers, while large areas of the countryside consisted primarily of Czech speakers. The north Bohemian coal and steel areas witnessed a 300% increase in Czech speakers in the period 1880-1900, compared to a 60% increase in German speakers.²⁷ Country towns in Czech speaking areas tripled their population.²⁸ Overall this created a Czech predominance in the cities as well as an increase in personal income for the predominantly Czech migrants.

This new urban workforce was quite different from the peasants of a generation past. In 1846 64% of the population had been involved in agriculture, by 1890 this figure was 40%.²⁹ By that time 36.5% of Czechs worked in the industrial sector.³⁰ Czechs were now increasingly educated and skilled, as well as having more personal wealth overall. The new Czech proletariat was literate, which made the formation of large associations easier. Many Czech workers joined voluntary cultural and political organizations such as the *Klub narodniho delnictva* (National Workers' Club)³¹ and the *Delnický národní vzdělávací a zábavní spolek Borák* (Worker's National Educational and Entertainment Association "Borák")³² and their presence was felt in political life as these organizations attempted to influence political leaders, as well as form parties of their own. As early as 1871 there 279 workers' self-help associations in Bohemia and 46 in Moravia.³³ By 1898 *Naše Doba* reported that the many workers' organizations were capable of great agitation, although their success against the government and courts was often limited.³⁴

²⁷Ibid., p.20.

²⁸Bradley, op. cit., p.21.

²⁹Good, op. cit., p.47.

³⁰David-Fox, op.cit., p.45.

³¹SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/10/73.

³²SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/9/18.

³³Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.142.

³⁴*Naše Doba*, 1898, p.558.



The need for a skilled and educated workforce was met by a desire on the part of the imperial government to educate the populace. Czech nationalists were also interested in furthering education to strengthen the nation. The intellectual led national movement of the mid nineteenth century succeeded in its goals of promoting literacy in the Czech language. By the 1880's Czech schools were entirely in Czech hands, primary and secondary education being controlled by locally elected school boards. Higher education was controlled by district school councils, which were Czech or German depending on the majority that controlled the district. In predominantly German areas, Czechs were able to fund Czech language schools through their own organization, the *Ustředni matice školska*.³⁵ By 1900 literacy among Czechs was 96%, some of the highest rates in the Monarchy.³⁶ Increased literacy was necessary for the involvement of society in associational life as well as the national movement.

The Czech population was also diversifying due to the influence of the new economy and society. Increased wealth, urbanization and education changed the size and nature of the urban Czech population. Czechs were entrepreneurs, proletarians, and part of the new white collar workforce necessary to maintain a modern economy. By 1910, out of 1,000 employed Czechs, 326 were self-employed, 35 were clerks and 427 were industrial workers.³⁷ That year Bohemia had 1,040,763 professionals and 763,677 people engaged in commerce.³⁸ While the old aristocracy maintained its power at the highest levels, the middle class (both Czech and German) came to be numerically predominant in the bureaucracy, and provided the political leadership of Czech political parties.³⁹

³⁵Bradley, op.cit., p.23.

³⁶David-Fox, op.cit.,p.30.

³⁷Garver, op. cit., p.329.

³⁸Bradley, op.cit., p.21.

³⁹Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.141.

Intensive efforts at improving education led to large numbers of Czechs qualified for such positions. These Czechs would bring their own skills, experience and interests to the national movement.

THE EMERGING CIVIL SOCIETY

The industrial economy that was being created in the nineteenth century in the Czech lands depended on a complex array of organizations and associations in a newly expanding public space to support it. This new public space, or civil society, was the space where people organized themselves and discussed common affairs.⁴⁰ Habermas referred to the “public sphere” as a principally bourgeois space where individuals come together as a public.⁴¹ In the Czech lands, many voluntary associations composed civil society. These were usually set up as either Czech or German in character regardless of whether they were directly political. This organizational structure reflected the increasingly polarized nature of society as a whole in the late nineteenth century. Regardless of their reason for organizing, both Czechs and Germans almost always segregated themselves and identified their group as belonging to one or the other nationality.

Czech associational life greatly expanded after the new constitution was promulgated in 1860. This allowed an increasing number of organizations, particularly economic and trade oriented ones such as the *Československa obchodnicka beseda* (Czechoslovak Businessmen’s Beseda), which despite its name was not in Slovakia, allowed Czech businessmen to congregate and discuss their common affairs in an

⁴⁰Christopher Bryant, “Civic Nation, Civil Society, Civil Religion” in John Hall, ed. *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp.144-145.

⁴¹Habermas, *op.cit.*, p.27.

organization that was also political.⁴² In 1899, this organization opened a business school in Prague which was private and thus not under government control.⁴³ The *Zivnostenska jednota pro Kralovstvi Česke* (Trade Union for the Kingdom of Bohemia) was an umbrella trade organization covering Czechs in both Bohemia and Moravia.⁴⁴ As long as they refrained from engaging directly in politics (although this was a fine line crossed many times throughout the Empire, particularly by cultural societies such as Besedas.) and duly registered with the authorities, In this case with the Governor's office. There was a wide spectrum of what kind of associations could be formed. Broad ranging examples include specific professional organizations such as the *Spolek českých chemiků a lékařů* (Association of Czech Chemists and Medics) and the *Spolek majitelů domů v assanacním obvodu* (Association of Home Owners in Slum Clearance Areas) This last organization worked for the concerns of those affected by slum clearance, particularly in Prague, which was undergoing massive urban reconstruction by the late 1890s. There were also recreational groups such as the *Jednota českých střelců* (Association of Czech Shooters) which represented hunters and sportsmen, traditionally a small and upper class group in Bohemia and Moravia.⁴⁵

These voluntary associations were quite varied in their membership and nature. Cultural associations were quite common, although this was usually a codeword for a political organization. Some organizations tried very hard to ignore class and economic differences, while others, embraced them. Worker's organizations were founded on class differences. The *Matice Česká* was originally an organization of intellectuals only,

⁴²SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4 The use of the name Československo reflected a panslavic feeling towards Slovaks among many nationalist Czechs in this period which rarely involved any actual connections to Slovak nationalists, who lived under very different political conditions in the Hungarian half of the Monarchy.

⁴³*Naše Doba*, 1899, p. 850.

⁴⁴SUA PM (1891-1900) 8/5/15/115.

⁴⁵SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/42, 8/5/15/25, and 8/5/8/32.

although it later expanded its membership. The *Sokol*, a nationwide gymnastics organization with strong political overtones, tried very hard to have its member overcome class differences in the name of the nation. The *Sokol* had active participation from many strata of society, including 64.4% “workers or craftsmen” in 1895.⁴⁶ In the 1890s many *Sokol* clubs expelled members who belonged to Social Democratic organizations, as the internationalism of the party threatened the ideal of Czech nationalism.⁴⁷

Besedas, or cultural organizations which often had strong patriotic undertones, were often formed along class or professional lines. The term *Beseda* originally meant an informal meeting or chat. A *Beseda* is an adult education society which developed during the national revival as cultural societies where literacy and nationalism were encouraged, making them inherently political in the context of the period. *Besedas* were often less formal than the *Matice Česka* and more geared toward common people than elites. They often served a smaller constituency than the *Matice*.

Besedas gained in popularity and were often formed along economic lines. The above mentioned *Československa obchodnicka beseda* was an example of a *Beseda* which had a more narrow membership and was used to bring together businessmen, serving both economic and cultural interests. During the 1890's, the Presidium of the Governor's office listed 17 *Besedas* and 79 other political organizations registered.⁴⁸ The Imperial government however, listed a total of 136 *Besedas* in Bohemia and Moravia in 1893.⁴⁹ Many other organizations also had political undertones despite ostensible narrow organizational memberships. In 1899 the *Vzdelavaci beseda delnictva pekarskeho* (Bakery Workers' Educational Beseda) had a “Hus Celebration” which was an inherently

⁴⁶Nolte, op.cit., p.128.

⁴⁷Ibid., p.143.

⁴⁸SUA PM, *Zalezitosti Spolkove*, 1891-1900.

⁴⁹*Naše Doba*, 1896, p.93.

political act in itself in the context of the time period.⁵⁰ This celebration consisted of a gathering of chapters from the region around Brno and was portrayed by the local paper as a national act honoring both Hus and brother workers.⁵¹

Separate women's organizations existed from the beginning of the national movement, creating a space for women's political participation as well as addressing specific social and economic concerns of women. Women were often excluded from political life, and their economic and social problems ignored. While describing a meeting of the *Ženksy klub český*, the normally conservative *Narodni Listy* acknowledged the "educated clientele of this group and the political actions of these Czech women over the last year." And recognized the "importance of working for women's voting rights."⁵² The more progressive *Naše Doba* described a Congress of Czech Women's Groups in 1912 as "A meeting addressing the concerns of women, which Czech official representatives should pay attention to, as they do not have official delegates groups themselves (in the parliament). They have a need to testify about their concerns."⁵³ Not all women's organizations were as directly political. The same paper reported that year on the concerns of women as related to "the centrality of the kitchen... and the problems of bread, meat, fruits and vegetables."⁵⁴ Still, in 1897 *Naše Doba* recognized that women also worked outside the home and that the problems of industrial employment also affected them.⁵⁵ A Women's congress held in Prague that same year called for the emancipation of women, while at the same time paying homage to the nation and "Czech

⁵⁰*Lidove Noviny*, July 8, 1899, p.2.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²*Narodni Listy*, March 9, 1908, p.2.

⁵³*Naše Doba*, 1912, p.317.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵*Naše Doba*, 1897, p.171.



Women” in its program.⁵⁶ The goals of women were often articulated within the framework of the national movement. Although women could not vote or run for office, separate women’s organizations which could influence political discourse brought more of the Czech population into the political life of the Czech lands.

Many class based organizations were overtly political. Organizations often had ties to larger political parties. This type of grass roots organization made Czech civil society an important part of the political process, and brought close government surveillance. The *Klub narodniho delnictva v Kutna Hora* (National Worker’s Club of Kutna Hora) was described in reports to the district captain as being affiliated with the National Socialist party.⁵⁷ The Jaromer branch of the *Delnický národní vzdělávací a zábavní spolek Borák* (National Workers’ Educational and Entertainment Association “Borák”) was described as a group of 50 workers affiliated with the “Czecho-Slovak Social Democratic Party and radical movement worker parties”.⁵⁸ Although the group was small, meeting in the Gasthaus of one Wenzel Chmelik, it was considered potentially dangerous by government authorities⁵⁹. Reports to the governor’s office and district captains kept an eye on groups such as this, since organizations of workers were suspected of being sources of political agitation. During the 1880’s the government had attempted to use “anarchist laws” to break up worker organizations in Cisleithania, but had also been forced by political pressure from the potential power of such organizations that they introduced social legislation.⁶⁰

⁵⁶Ibid., pp.826-827.

⁵⁷SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/10/23.

⁵⁸SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/9/18.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.142. This early social legislation included a six day workweek, the forbidding of employment of children under twelve, accident and sickness insurance, and factory inspections. These rules were not strictly enforced however, and the idea of adding a workers’ curia to the *Reichsrat* was vetoed at the time.



Czechs were forming many associations to represent their economic interests. The minister of commerce reported in 1896 that there were 5,317 trade organizations in Cisleithania, with 37.9% of these in Bohemia and 8.8% in Moravia.⁶¹ Trade organizations were able to deal with the government directly by this time period, even if their demands were not always met, such as the large but ultimately failed 1897 strike of North Bohemian miners, which attempted to demand a seven hour day and minimum wage.⁶² It should be noted that many organizations also served a dual function, such as the workers' political and cultural clubs, where economic, political and cultural activities coincided.

As with the worker's clubs, organizations such as the *Československa obchodnická beseda* (Czecho-Slovak Businessmen's Beseda) were constantly watched, with bi-weekly police reports turned into the government office regardless of whether there was actually anything to report.⁶³ In April 1896 this organization held a congress which it advertised as a meeting to discuss business affairs followed by a concert of Slavic music such as Dvořák and Smetana. The police reports mentioned each speaker by name and described them as political agitators.⁶⁴ Even organizations that were not overtly political were considered potential sources of political agitation. The favorable attitude towards the *Československo Obchodnicka Beseda* displayed in articles in the nationalist newspaper *Čas*, for example, was a source of suspicion to the police officers in charge of watching it, in 1894.⁶⁵ Some of this was government suspicion of any organization, but any Czech organization was inherently suspect in a government dominated by German speakers and fearful of nationalist agitation, reflected in such

⁶¹*Naše Doba*, 1986, p.66.

⁶²*Naše Doba*, 1897, p.72.

⁶³SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

actions as the withdrawal of the Badeni language ordinances in order to placate German opinion. Czech nationalist organizations were often described as “Pan-Slav” and accused of disloyalty to the Monarchy. While Panslavism was never really influential among Czechs, it was a great fear of the Monarchy, which saw Slavic nationalism as a great threat to the Empire.

Commercial organizations and institutions of a wide nature served the needs of this dynamic economy and allowed groups to mediate disputes as well as further economic interests. A wide range of organizations such as the *Spolek Česko-Moravských mylnaru* (Association of Czech-Moravian Millers) were now becoming very prevalent and influential.⁶⁶ The *Spolek Česko-Moravských mylnaru* was a widespread organization with chapters in many locations throughout the Czech lands that allowed millers to come together and work out their common economic concerns.⁶⁷ *Narodni Listy* reported a meeting of sugar processors and agricultural workers organizations in 1908 whereby each agreed to work towards common interests.⁶⁸ Agricultural processing was a major linchpin of the economy in this region and large concerns such as millers were wielding enormous economic and political influence. In 1895 there were 133 sugar millers in Bohemia alone, out of 220 in the entire Empire.⁶⁹ Several Czech agricultural organizations held a congress in Brno in 1897 to demand a Czech bank to lend money to Czech farmers in Moravia.⁷⁰ The industrial millers and brewers’ association held a congress in 1908 to discuss their interests, and proclaim their right to autonomous organizations.⁷¹ These

⁶⁶SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/80.

⁶⁷SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/80.

⁶⁸*Narodni Listy*, April 11, 1908, p.5.

⁶⁹*Naše Doba*, 1897, p.70.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p.69.

⁷¹*Naše Doba*, 1908, p.42.

large congresses enabled organizations to work on a regional level to further their interests.

Consumers' and producers' cooperatives, and savings and loan associations, first authorized in 1873, eventually became important linchpins of the economy, especially by the turn of the century.⁷² This was forestalled, however, by the crash of 1873, after which banks and savings and loan associations were greatly reduced in number, not recovering until the 1890's.⁷³ By 1900 Bohemia alone had 33 credit unions with 14,436 members and 34 consumer's cooperatives with 9,782 members.⁷⁴ Smaller scale local cooperatives were important in linking the expanding regional economy with the countryside, where industrial crops such as sugar beets, which required major processing, were an increasing source of profit.

Other kinds of organization represented more specific interests of the urban side of the new economy and civil society. For example the *Společnost pro průmysl chemický Kralovství Českém* (Society for Industrial Chemists in the Kingdom of Bohemia) represented a newly emergent group of specialists necessary in the industrial age.⁷⁵ The *Hospodársko průmyslová jednota v Kolin* (Industrial Business Union of Kolin) represented the Czech side of manufacturing in an industrial area where Germans had predominated in the early nineteenth century.⁷⁶ There were organizations for pharmacists, grocers, farmers, government officials as well as general trade and businessmen's associations many with hundreds of chapters.⁷⁷ One example is the *Zemská jednota*

⁷²Garver, op.cit., pp. 98-100.

⁷³Rudolph, op.cit.,pp.72-73.

⁷⁴*Naše Doba*, 1900, p.848,

⁷⁵SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/83.

⁷⁶SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/10/27.

⁷⁷SUA PM (1891-1900), *Zalezitosti Spolkove*.



řemeslných a živnostenských společenstev v Kralovství Českém (Land Union of Artisans' and Trade Groups), which reported in 1900 that they had 275 groups and 23,000 people in their organization.⁷⁸ The diversity of society and the economy is reflected in the diverse nature of the organizations and associations people formed to discuss, mediate and promote their common interests.

Most of these organizations were of a separate ethnic character. National feeling was so pervasive in society that most associations were deliberately Czech or German. This was sometimes reflected in the names themselves, such as the Central Club of Czech Grocers, or the Conference of German Journalists.⁷⁹ The nationalistic press shared this view, and praised the meeting of organizations which were not overtly political as acts favorable to the strength of the nation, such as a meeting of Czech dairy producers in 1899.⁸⁰ *Naše Doba* praised the formation of organizations as part of the “national undertaking of business and industry” which would give the country “internal strength.”⁸¹

Jews, by the same token, often formed their own organizations, but represented their cultural allegiance by having the official name of their organization in Czech or German. Although for most Jews German was the language of choice, this was changing by the 1890s, and there were organizations such as the *Česko židovská národní beseda* (Czech Jewish National Beseda) or the separate student society *Studenstky spolek Maccabaea* (Student Association “Maccabee”) which also served as a fighting society for students in the highly charged political atmosphere of Prague at the time, appearing more frequently by the twentieth century.⁸² While some of these groups had Czech names,

⁷⁸*Naše Doba*, 1900, p.221.

⁷⁹SUA PM (1891-1900), *Zalezitosti Spolkove*.

⁸⁰*Lidove Noviny*, August 9, 1899. p.3.

⁸¹*Naše Doba*, 1899. p.781.

⁸²SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/10/55 and 8/5/15/109.



many had German names. Language was the main, but not the only, identifier of nationality, and many Jews had trouble fitting into either Czech or German organizations.

A major shift was occurring at this time period with respect to Jewish linguistic identification. In 1890 one third of Bohemia's Jews declared Czech to be their main language of daily use but in 1900 54% of them declared Czech to be their main language.⁸³ Still, this period was marked by popular anti-Jewish demonstrations among the Czech populace, especially during the riots over the 1897 Badeni ordinances, and the Hilsner affair of 1899.⁸⁴ The *Svuj K Svemu* campaign of the 1890's also witnessed anti-Jewish violence, particularly against shop owners. This strain of antisemitism in Czech nationalism had also been evident in the anti-Jewish riots of 1848. Jews, Germans and Czechs more often, but not always, formed their own separate civil societies within a cultural framework that determined the nature of these organizations in many ways, even if they were ostensibly of a purely economic nature. In many ways Jews were caught between these two nationalisms, accepted by neither, in an increasingly ethnically polarized society.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Because the national revival was considered part of everyday life, Czechs came to believe economic organizations made the nation strong. Thus the *Lidove Noviny* described a meeting of businessman's cooperatives in Brno in 1899 as "part of our national business revival" in the same language used to describe the national revival of a

⁸³Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), p.18.

⁸⁴Ibid., p.17. The Hilsner affair began with a blood libel accusation against Leopold Hilsner which grew into a popular wave of anti-semitism. Tomas Masaryk took up the public case for Hilsner, but the affair was marked by anti-Jewish riots in Bohemia and other parts of the Empire. Hilsner was convicted of murder, a sentence commuted to life imprisonment by Franz Josef, and later pardoned by Emperor Charles II.

generation earlier.⁸⁵ In 1897 *Naše Doba* called for a museum of Czech Business in order to celebrate the national strength in industry and commerce as well as in writers and intellectuals.⁸⁶ Economic strength was measured not in purely business terms, but in terms of how many Czech individuals and Czech organizations were visible in the economy. Thus even a small businessman was encouraged to think of himself as part of a larger national project, an attitude encouraged by ethnically segregated business organizations.

Some voluntary associations were local, but many were local chapters of larger national organizations, such as the *Klub národního dělnictva* (National Workers' Club)⁸⁷ and the *Československá obchodnická beseda* (Czechoslovak Businessmen's Beseda), which had chapters in many cities.⁸⁸ Such grass roots organization demonstrated the ability and desire of Czechs to think in broad regional (Bohemia) and national (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia) terms. Organizations such as The *Klub národně dělnictva* (National Workers' Club), the *Jednota Samosprávních Úředníků Obechních u Okresních v Kralovství Českém* (Association of Autonomous Municipal and Regional Officials), and the *Československá obchodnická beseda* (Czechoslovak Businessmen's Beseda) were examples which had chapters in several locations, and were registered with the authorities as both separate chapters and unitary organizations.⁸⁹ The main repository of information was kept by the government on the overall national organization, although regional chapters were also watched. The *Československá obchodnická beseda* (Czechoslovak Businessmen's Beseda), for example, was reported by the Prague Police Directorate as a central organization covering Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia with the

⁸⁵*Lidové Noviny*, July 12, 1899, p.2.

⁸⁶*Naše Doba*, 1897, p.282.

⁸⁷SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/10/73.

⁸⁸SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4

⁸⁹SUA PM (1891-1900), *Zalezitosti Spolkove*.

Prague chapter being considered the most dangerous by the police as the center for the organizations congress of delegates in 1891.⁹⁰

Broad organizations allowed people from many regions to come together and discuss matters of common interest, such as the June 18, 1899 meeting of the *Jednoty zemske živnostenských společenstev na Morave* (Union of Trade Societies for the Region of Moravia).⁹¹ This meeting was described as a peaceful gathering of at least 286 well behaved delegates who discussed the major business concerns of the region.⁹² The January 8, 1908 meeting of the *Zemská Jednota řemeslníků a živnostenských společenstev v Kralovství Českém* (Association of Regional Artisan and Trade Societies for the Kingdom of Bohemia), called on grass roots organizations from across Bohemia to come together to deal with the economic and social issues resulting from the advancement of industry. The *Narodni Listy* described their demands as “fair requests for all Czech business to be conducted in the interests of human and social needs” and called on the Czech public to support this organization as it added to the “national strength.”⁹³ Organizations such as these represented the interests of their constituents in mediating common affairs as well as often supporting broader political interests.

The emergence of a broad political spectrum in the late nineteenth century was a direct result of the influence of the divergent interests of Czech civil society. The Young Czechs themselves gained influence over the Old Czechs, becoming the major political party due in part to their ability to organize local chapters across the Czech lands. This organizational ability was soon copied by other political organizations, leading to the fracturing which will be discussed in chapter 5. Many grass roots organizations felt the

⁹⁰SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4.

⁹¹*Lidove Noviny*, July 4, 1899, p.2.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³*Narodni Listy*, January 12, 1908, P.4.

Young Czechs were no longer representing their interests, and this led to the formation of new political parties.

A good example of economically motivated organizations splitting from the Young Czechs is the formation of the Agrarian party, which grew out of many different agricultural associations. These included the *Združení českých zemědělců* (Association of Czech Agriculturalists), which broke away from the Young Czech party in 1898. When the *Sdružení českých zemědělců* decided that the Young Czechs were ignoring agricultural interests, they declared their independence and formed their own political party.⁹⁴ The Agrarians were able to mobilize broad grass roots support and bring under their control many smaller agricultural organizations such as the *Selská jednota pro Království České* (Peasant Union of the Kingdom of Bohemia), the *Zupní jednota hospodářských společenstev středočeských* (Regional Union of Central Bohemian Economic Societies) and the *Východočeská jednota* (East Bohemian Union).⁹⁵ Thus local grass roots organization led to major political influence for the agricultural sector of society. This was the first major case where the interests of civil society were the driving force behind the creation of a new political party, and it was the beginning of the end of Young Czech dominance in political life. By representing agricultural interests, the Agrarians were able to get the support of grass roots peasant organizations.⁹⁶ This was a lesson not lost on political leaders who witnessed the Young Czechs lose the political support of the agricultural associations. At the same time the political program of the Agrarian party assured the public that it was still interested in being an active part of the national movement and would cooperate with other Czech political parties in the *Reichsrat*.⁹⁷

⁹⁴Garver, op.cit., p.288.

⁹⁵Garver, op.cit., pp.288-290.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp.288-290.

⁹⁷*Naše Doba*, 1903, pp. 455-456.



The Young Czechs were aware of the organization going on in the countryside, but were not able to control such organizations by the 1890's. The Young Czechs tended at this time to see rural Czech organizations as part of their political base, even though this was not the case. In the years prior to the forming of the Agrarian party, Young Czech politicians viewed agricultural organizations as merely an extension of the national movement. Thus Julius Gregř's *Narodni Listy* spoke of peasant organizations as "part of the history of our nation...Czech farmers work with our political and economic program, and our political organization shall have a cozy relationship with them, the foundation of our political life being our nationality."⁹⁸ Such self assurance by Young Czech political leaders did not reflect the discontent among organizations in the countryside which led them to form their own political organizations, still concerned about broader national goals, but dedicated to representing the interests of the countryside politically.

Besides the primarily cultural organizations mentioned above, professional and trade organizations also made their presence felt. Some were organizations of officials who gathered to deal with their common interests apart from strictly official business. An example is the 14th congress of the *Jednoty samospravnich uředniku obecniho i okresniho v Kralovstvi Českem* (Association of Autonomous Municipal and Regional Officials), described in their literature as including "friendly festivities" and a music program to feature "Slavic" music.⁹⁹ This congress of officials from all over Bohemia took place in Horovice in 1899 and all who wished to come had to apply to their local committee for permission to attend.¹⁰⁰ Despite being from different governing bodies, these officials felt they had common interests and affairs that needed to be discussed and celebrated on a continuous basis. Important to their agenda was their status in Czech society under the

⁹⁸ *Narodni Listy*, May 4, 1895, p.1.

⁹⁹ SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/90.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.



current legal conditions of the empire and their specific material conditions, all of which was reported to the government on the same day as the conference.¹⁰¹

Trade and Business organizations varied in size, from the broad organizations affiliated with a political party such as the *Československa obchodnicka beseda* (Czechoslovak Businessmen's Beseda), to smaller local organizations like the *Místní skupina unie všech sklarsko keramických a spriznených delníků v Liben* (Local Union Group of All Glass, Ceramic and Related Workers for Liben).¹⁰² Broader organizations such as the *Československa obchodnicka beseda*, with chapters in many towns, met the need for those involved in economic activity to see their interests represented on a regional and national level. Smaller associations which were not directly tied to larger umbrella organizations, such as the *Místní skupina unie všech sklarsko, keramických a spriznených delníků v Liben*, while tying together many workers of related trades, served the local interests of those involved. The organizational ability of grass roots organizations at the local and national level made the varied economic interests of the newly strengthened civil society too influential for political parties to ignore.

The government kept a close watch on any organizations it deemed political. Patriotic and cultural societies could be closed down if they engaged directly in politics, and the governors of Bohemia and Moravia shut down many of them, including all the Czech student associations of Bohemia in 1893.¹⁰³ The organization of the *Jednoty zemske živnostenských společenstev na Moravě* (Association of Trade Societies for the Region of Moravia) in 1899 was a political act involving divergent interests across the region coming together to make their presence felt. Several regional trade associations joined together seeking the approval of the Governor's office, which they did not believe

¹⁰¹SUA PM (1891-1900), Report of Adolf Novacely, 10 Sept. 1899.

¹⁰²SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4 and 8/5/11/23.

¹⁰³Garver, op.cit., p.110.

they would get easily.¹⁰⁴ The *Českoslovenksa obchodnicka beseda* (Czechoslovak Businessmen's Beseda), while ostensibly a cultural association, was closely watched by the Governor's Office, which believed this to be a political organization worth keeping extensive reports on, police agents reporting in every few weeks on the status of the organization.¹⁰⁵ With 2200 members throughout Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, the *Československa obchodnicka beseda* (Czechoslovak Businessmen's Beseda) was deemed in police reports to be an organization that could cause trouble although it was "for individual solutions to social problems and against international socialism."¹⁰⁶ *Naše Doba* protested the interference of the Minister of Justice in the affairs of such organizations, calling for their autonomy to be preserved.¹⁰⁷ Workers' organizations in particular were seen as a threat and not only watched but sometimes disbanded by the government, particularly under the Taaffe regime (1873-1890).¹⁰⁸ The recognition by press and government of the political import of such organizations was a constant reminder of the influence of even principally economic groupings on the political life of the Czech lands.

All of these political, professional and trade organizations fall under the rubric of civil society. Some primarily represented specific economic interests of their members. Many were in some way political, at the very least merely by being exclusively Czech in character given the nature of ethnic politics in the Czech lands at the time. More importantly Czechs themselves saw their organizations as advancing the cause of Czech nationalism. The importance of these organizations was recognized by the political leadership. One Social Democrat, reported in the *Narodni Listy*, stated, "The politically

¹⁰⁴*Lidove Noviny*, July 4th, 1899, p.2.

¹⁰⁵SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4.

¹⁰⁶SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/15/4.

¹⁰⁷*Naše Doba*, 1896. p.170.

¹⁰⁸Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p .142.

oriented business organizations are part of one national connection, one national way of thought... we need not be afraid of the others.”¹⁰⁹ This was reinforced by government surveillance of organizations, which served to strengthen national feelings of solidarity and oppression. While different in their individual nature, together they represented the changing and intertwined nature of society, economy and politics as the Czech lands transformed into a modern industrial society. Despite their many different identities and interests, Czech meeting in these separate organizations still felt they were part of one larger community – the Czech nation.

THE POLITICS OF ECONOMIC LIFE

The economic and social changes which brought about the new civil society took place in a social milieu heavily influenced by the national feelings of both Czechs and Germans. The Czech lands were so heavily engrossed in what both contemporaries and historians have called the “national struggle” that it seemed no aspect of life was unaffected. Students, workers, officials, professionals, businessmen all chose to come to together in organizations that were often overtly or covertly political. These organizations were segregated along ethnic lines, a constant reminder of the presence of national ideas. While Germans were a numerical minority, they had strong political and economic influence, unlike numerical minorities in the Hungarian half of the Empire. In the major cities of Moravia they were stronger numerically than in Bohemia. The coming of modern industrial society to the Czech lands thus differed strongly in character from other lands, such as England, France and Germany, even though they generally followed the same economic model.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹Urban, *Česke Společnost*, op. cit., p.473.

¹¹⁰Good, op.cit., pp.238-244.



For Czechs, the self-conscious assertion of their new found economic power was a way of making a “modern” Czech nation. The number of Czech economic organizations was remarked upon in *Naše Doba* as a sign of the strength of the Czech nation, as the number of these organizations was growing numerically and in comparison to German economic organizations.¹¹¹ The traditional German economic dominance made these Czech gains reinforce a sense of national empowerment. When they organized as Czechs, people realized they were making a political statement vis-à-vis the Germans in the region, and thus taking part in the “nation” as a whole. In 1899, *Naše Doba* lamented the lack of Czech trade schools in the dairy industry, whereas there were 23 dairy trade schools which were considered German. It was deemed important for the Czech nation to have its own separate dairy trade schools.¹¹² The *Sjezd Českých a Moravských živnostníků* (Congress of Bohemian and Moravian Tradesmen) in July of 1899 for example, specifically honored the *Sokols* and celebrated the “spirit of the national awakening” while warning of the danger to the Czechs from “rich German competitors” and “Jewish antagonists.”¹¹³ *Naše Doba* in 1900 noted the great progress in industry and the economy, and tied this to the cultural power of the nation compared to the Germans.¹¹⁴ This nation needed economic and organizational power to foster and support its political power. Czechs would not be on the sidelines of the new economy, no longer subordinated to Germans, either politically or economically. In 1848 many Czechs had attacked businesses they perceived as belonging to “foreign” (German or Jewish) ownership. By the end of the century, Czechs were themselves the owners of many of the factories and businesses and were often self-consciously aware of this fact.

¹¹¹*Naše Doba*, 1900, p. 847.

¹¹²*Naše Doba*, 1899, p. 137.

¹¹³*Lidové Noviny*, July 12, 1899, p.2.

¹¹⁴*Naše Doba*, 1900, pp.299-302.



Many Czechs equated their newfound economic strength with political power. A meeting of Czech parties in Moravia in 1907 promised to work together for nationalism and territorial rights.¹¹⁵ Although such promises did not always translate into unity in parliament, the idea of Czech political unity was part of the program for most delegates. Growing Czech economic power gave more Czechs the franchise in conjunction with more liberal suffrage rules. For many Czechs, economic power was equated with national strength.

Separate Czech credit and savings banks and associations were formed to aid economic growth and often were heavily influenced by nationalist forces.¹¹⁶ The *Sjezd peneznich ustavu a hospodarskych společenstev* (Congress of Financial Institutes and Business Societies) in July of 1899 was concerned with specifically Czech financial institutions and businesses across the region of Moravia, paying attention to the need to “assist small businesses and farmers.”¹¹⁷ This organization was itself portrayed as a sign of “national economic strength.”¹¹⁸ This attitude also caused a sense of national inferiority when Czechs compared unfavorably to Germans. In 1901 *Naše Doba* reported the increase in Czech credit banks but remarked that they were still inferior in numbers and financial holdings to German credit banks.¹¹⁹

Czechs were continually aware of the importance of economics to their status as a national group. Economic boycott campaigns helped to reinforce this perception. In the period 1880-1914 a large number of boycotts were conducted by Czechs against German-owned businesses and vice-versa.¹²⁰ Much of the boycott campaign was actually anti-

¹¹⁵*Lidove Noviny*, July 1, 1907, p.2.

¹¹⁶Rudolph, op.cit.,pp.70-71.

¹¹⁷*Lidove Noviny*, July 13, 1899.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹¹⁹*Naše Doba*, 1901, p. 134.

¹²⁰Albrecht., op.cit., p.47.



semitic in practice, which was criticized by nationalist leaders such as T.G. Masaryk.¹²¹ The *Svuj K Svemu* (Each to his self) campaign was started in 1892 and was the cause of much anti-Jewish rioting in the Czech lands.¹²² While these periodic boycotts did not last, they served to heighten tension between Czechs and Germans by giving publicity to the most radical activists on both sides. This highlighted the importance of economic strength to both Czechs and Germans. In this atmosphere of national antagonism, Czech economic organizations took on a nationalist political character reinforced by daily reminders of the relationship of economics to nationalism.

Czech self-conscious attempts to make Prague a modern city and demonstrate the strength of the Czech economy and culture were also examples of this trend. The *Obecní Dum* (Municipal House) and *Narodní Divadlo* (National Theater) campaigns, which will be covered in chapter 4, showed economic and technical as well as cultural prowess. The hosting of international exhibitions as well as extensive slum clearance to make way for new urban development were self-conscious attempts to create and display a “modern” Czech Prague for all to see.¹²³ The nation had to be strong, and Czechs increasingly displayed their belief that technical and economic strength were a major part of this.

National consciousness among Czechs was a partial factor in driving them together. While personal and economic interests were part of the motivation for voluntary associations, the need to have a Czech organization separate from and often competing with German organizations was also a powerful factor. While economic cooperation may seem obviously beneficial, separating Czech from German organizations is not necessarily in one’s best economic interests. Within the context of the Czech lands, however, both Czechs and Germans saw political unity and economic strength as

¹²¹*Naše Doba*, 1895, pp. 928-929.

¹²²Rothkirchen, op. cit., p.17.

¹²³Peter Demetz, *Prague in Black and Gold* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), pp. 315-316.

intertwined. The *Zupni jednota hospodarska severovýchodnich Čech v Hradci Kralove* (Regional Business Union of Northeast Moravia in Hradec Kralove) noted this as it thanked Dr. Bedrich Pačák for his work in “voting for their interests and affairs.”¹²⁴ When describing his parliamentary program, Dr. Pačák described the situation of Czechs as a minority in the parliament, but stated that they be strong as a people, and make their land strong.¹²⁵ Czechs often thought of themselves as the perpetual underdog, second-class citizens in their own lands. Rudolf Havlicek, writing in 1914, remarked on the great gains the Czech nation had made in the previous four decades, but warned the Czech public that they were still in an inferior position as compared to Germans, and the national struggle was still important.¹²⁶ Coming together in political, economic and quasi-political cultural associations was part of a process of asserting national unity and strength through common interactions that in many countries would have been considered apolitical. Political power was wielded directly through organizations such as the Agricultural Associations. The economic and political were consciously linked as Czechs created their own modernity.

The coming of a modern industrial economy and civil society to the Czech lands followed a Western model, but was uniquely shaped by the Czech experience. Germans and Czechs went through this process together, the economy affected all and all participated in one society. But both Czechs and Germans lived in separate cultural worlds, even as they interacted economically and socially. These separate cultural worlds were based on language differences and the strength of national feeling and separateness among both groups. Thus while modernity was shaped in the Czech lands simultaneously for Czechs and Germans, Czechs worked consciously and consistently to shape it to their own vision of a modern nation, diverse, strong and identifiably separate from the German

¹²⁴Papers of Dr. Pačák, Karton 3, Official Correspondence, October 12, 1896

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶*Naše Doba*, 1914, pp.1-2.

model which coexisted in the same territory. This happened due to the strength of the Czech national movement, thus Czechs were self-consciously aware that their economic and social groupings added to the strength of the nation as they saw it.

Chapter 4

FROM PRAGUE TO PRAHA: LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS AND CZECH POLITICAL GAINS

The strength of Czech associational life helped foster great political gains. Political life in the Czech lands during the 1880-1914 period witnessed increasing Czech power in local, imperial and regional political life. The advent of a Czech majority on the city council of Prague in particular was of great importance and encouraged a strong sense of national pride among Czechs. The strength of the national movement both contributed to and benefited from such changes. Prague was culturally, politically and economically the center of not only Bohemia, but the Czech lands as whole. Through their control of the Prague city council, Czechs were able to assert Czech identity as never before in the most important city in the Czech lands, controlling education, the language of street signs, and important events such as the industrial exhibition of 1891. The regional and imperial politics have garnered the majority of attention from historians, but the steady gains in local control were vital in increasing Czech political, social and economic gains in this period. These political gains were possible due to Czech economic gains and to growing national sentiment and organization.

CZECH POLITICAL GAINS AT THE IMPERIAL LEVEL

The representation of Czech interests at the imperial level was new. The imperial *Reichsrat* saw gains in Czech participation by the late nineteenth century. During this period the Old Czechs had boycotted the *Reichsrat* from 1863 to 1879, whereas the newly formed Young Czechs had joined the *Reichsrat* in 1874.¹ The Old Czechs agreed

¹ Garver, op.cit., pp.68-74.



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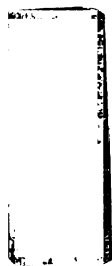
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to end passive resistance and return to the *Reichsrat* in 1879, but saw their power slowly erode over the next decade. The previous hold on power of the Old Czechs was broken by the 1890s due to the growing strength of the Young Czechs, who appealed to a wider range of voters.² Whereas the Old Czechs had the Bohemian nobility as their core supporters, the Young Czechs strongly appealed to the growing number of middle class voters. The Young Czechs in turn were affected by the emergence of other parties. Throughout these changes there were disagreements, but there was also a great deal of cooperation among the Czech parties. The delegates in theory cooperated through the *Klub českých poslanců* (Club of Czech Delegates) but after 1891 the Young Czechs worked through the *Klub neodvislých poslanců českých na říšské radě* (Club of Independent Czech Delegates to the Imperial *Reichsrat*). This became the most influential organization and included many parties, but deliberately excluded the Young Czechs. All this took place in a political forum where Germans had traditionally held almost all the power.

By the 1890s the majority of Czech delegates to the *Reichsrat* were Young Czechs. Previously the struggles between Old and Young Czechs had been one of the major determining factors in Czech politics. When the Young Czechs had formed the Club of Independent Czech Delegates to the Imperial *Reichsrat* in 1888, it was the beginning of the official end of cooperation, made final in 1891.³ This was an assertion of their political independence from the Old Czechs. This break was one of many between the two parties which prevented a united Czech front in the *Reichsrat*. With the coming of the Young Czech majority, Czech political infighting would be less of a factor during the 1890s as the power of the Old Czechs waned. The Young Czechs were able to present a reasonably united Czech front in the *Reichsrat*, increasing their influence and

²Marcella Efmertova, *Česke Žeme v Letech 1848-1918* (Prague: Nakladatelství Libri, 1998), p.91-92.

³Garver, *The Young Czech Party*, p.121.



maintaining it until the growth of other parties later in the decade began to erode their power.

The Young Czech majority coincided with a great increase in Czech representation overall. The expansion of franchise based on residency and property occurred in stages during the late nineteenth century, increasing the number of voters substantially.⁴ In the Czech lands in particular this caused a great loss of power for Germans, especially after the 1882 law.⁵ The expanding franchise created many new voters in predominantly Czech districts. This resulted in overall gains for Czech seats in the *Reichsrat* from both Bohemia and Moravia. In Bohemia, Germans now held less than half the seats for the first time.⁶ In Moravia the Young Czech party was known as the *Lidova strana na Moravě* (People's Party of Moravia) and generally had less success against German parties, who had strong support from a larger German population in the cities.⁷ Czechs were now able to put their interests before the imperial government as never before.

One of the reasons for the gains of the Young Czechs was the dispute over the Vienna Agreement (*Punktace*) of 1890. This agreement between the Old Czechs, German Liberals and the great landowners would have divided Bohemia administratively. Administrative districts where Czechs predominated would use both languages, whereas other districts would use only German. The Bohemian Diet would be divided into to national curias, with Germans having veto power and greater proportional representation.⁸ The main courts in Prague would also be divided into Czech and German

⁴Jenks, op.cit., pp.15-26.

⁵David-Fox, *The 1890s Generation*, op. cit., p.52.

⁶Garver, op.cit., p.125.

⁷Efmertova, op.cit, p.92.

⁸Punktace, sec. III..

sections.⁹ In effect this agreement would end Czech hopes for attaining national autonomy or even representation in predominantly German areas.

The *Punktace* was an attempt by the Old Czechs and German liberals to assert power in the face of growing opposition from radicals. The German press was generally supportive of the *Punktace*, but the Czech press was opposed.¹⁰ Both Czech and German popular opinion expressed itself in street disturbances. While the *Punktace* never became law, due to strong opposition from both Czechs and Germans, it had many effects. One of these was the anger of Bohemian Germans which caused them to withdraw from the Jubilee Exhibition of 1891 in Prague, honoring the centenary of Leopold II's coronation. Czech organizations, led by the Young Czechs, took over the planning of the exhibition and made it into a celebration of Czech technical, economic and social progress, making it a showpiece of Czech nationalism.¹¹

The Czech reaction to the *Punktace* was centered on the Young Czechs. The Young Czechs were deliberately excluded from the negotiations. Young Czech opposition was based on their desire to one day achieve national autonomy. By the 1890's the Young Czechs represented middle class, agrarian, artisan and worker interests.¹² Young Czech political action prevented the *Punktace* from being ratified by the Bohemian Diet.¹³ The Young Czechs proved themselves more responsive to the public mood than the Old Czechs. This action cemented Young Czech leadership in Czech politics and was instrumental in demonstrating the power of Czech society and its political leaders to carry out broad based political action.

⁹Punktace, sec. VII.

¹⁰Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op. cit., p.139.

¹¹Ibid., pp.159-161.

¹²Efmertova, op.cit., p.92.

¹³Ibid.

The 1890's saw the government, headed by Count Kazimierz Badeni, attempt to introduce major language concessions to Czechs in return for their support in the *Reichsrat*. The 1897 Badeni language ordinances were an attempt by the imperial government to placate Czech nationalism by making Czech equal to German in some government departments within the Czech lands. Badeni also hoped to win the support of Czech delegates against German radicals. The Badeni ordinances would have made Czech an official language within the departments of Justice, Interior, Finance, Trade and Agriculture, and even then only in cases dealing with the public. They would have required all officials in these departments to demonstrate proficiency in both Czech and German within four years.¹⁴

The resulting German demonstrations eventually brought down the Badeni government.¹⁵ Germans were upset at the language requirement, which they felt would give an advantage to Czechs in government positions, as more Czechs were bilingual. In addition, they felt that their position of cultural dominance was threatened. There were massive demonstrations of German in the Czech lands as well as other parts of the Empire. German deputies in the *Reichsrat* managed to obstruct the passage of the bill for many months. There were even outpourings of support from Imperial Germany.¹⁶ This German anger eventually caused the Badeni government to fall and the ordinances to be rescinded.

Although the ordinances were withdrawn, their promulgation was indicative of the new found influence of Czechs, able to press demands more than at any previous time. At the same time, the crisis over the ordinances somewhat eroded the strength of the Young Czechs. The ordinances put the Young Czechs in the position of compromising with the government, much as the *Punktače* had done for the Old Czechs

¹⁴Garver, op. cit., p.239.

¹⁵Urban, op.cit, p.459.

¹⁶Stanley B. Winters, "The Hegemony of the Young Czech Party" in Brock and Skilling, op. cit., p.309.

in 1890. Not all Czech delegates were in favor of this compromise and some Czech public opinion thought the ordinances did not go far enough in addressing Czech political demands. The years after 1897 saw a slow decline of support for the Young Czechs and an increase in strength of other parties.

CZECH POLITICAL STRUGGLES AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL

The Bohemian and Moravian diets witnessed great changes in the late nineteenth century. Traditionally controlled by the landowning nobility, they were transformed by more open franchise rules. This enabled Czechs to increase their representation in both the *Reichsrat* and the diets.¹⁷ They did not gain control of these institutions, but were better able to represent Czech interests. The relationship between the diets, local organs of self-government and the imperial government was complex. In each of the Czech lands, local organs of self-government were ultimately responsible to the Provincial Executive Council, the executive arm of the diets. But when dealing with issues such as taxation and recruitment and quartering of soldiers, they were responsible to the district captains. The diets were responsible for most other affairs carried out at the local level, such as health and education.¹⁸

During the 1870's the Czechs had attempted passive resistance by not participating in either the Bohemian Diet or the *Reichsrat*. This boycott had started with demands for Bohemian state rights and recognition of the Bohemian Crown, which included Moravia and Silesia. The Germans in the diets of all three provinces had protested and the idea was finally dropped in 1871.¹⁹ The Young Czechs had been the

¹⁷Garver, *op.cit.*, p.123.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp.90-93.

¹⁹Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, *op.cit.*, p.136.



first to return to the Bohemian Diet as well as the *Reichsrat* in 1874, whereas the Old Czechs did not return to the Diet until 1878 and the *Reichsrat* in 1879.²⁰ The absence of the Czechs had enabled Germans to control the diets, although both Young and Old Czechs remained active in local self-government.²¹ The decision to return to the diets was very controversial, with Old Czech papers denouncing the returning deputies as “Krauts” carrying “The National Cross to Golgotha.”²² Czech political parties were almost always more successful in making changes in Bohemia than Moravia, where German control was stronger, particularly in urban areas, and franchise rules were slower to change.

The gains in the diets not only paralleled the gains in the *Reichsrat*, but also witnessed the triumph of the Young Czechs over the Old Czechs as the representative of Czech interests in the 1890's. The diets still had power in the 19th century, although the central government often had more direct influence through the governor and the district captains. The diets were a bastion of the old nobility, which still tended to identify with their estate rather than any one national movement. This *Landespatriotismus* would be strongly challenged in the tense political atmosphere of the last decades of the Empire. Having been the first Czechs delegates to rejoin the Diet in 1874, the Young Czechs retained their influence after the return of the Old Czechs and even expanded it. In 1889 the Young Czechs made a strong showing, taking 39 of 97 Czech seats in the Bohemian Diet, including 30 of 40 rural districts.²³ As in the *Reichsrat*, the 1890's witnessed the end of the Old Czechs as the dominant Czech party in both the Bohemian and Moravian diets, and made the Young Czechs for a time the nearly hegemonic representative of Czech interests politically.

²⁰Garver, op.cit., pp.68-75.

²¹Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.136.

²²Garver, op.cit., p.73.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 121.

In Moravia Czech gains were not as strong, although here too Czech organization had great effect. Germans remained politically dominant throughout this period due in part to a stronger presence in urban areas than in Bohemia. In 1905 an attempt was made to regulate national conflict through the Moravian Compromise (*Ausgleich*). This compromise was reached between the German landowning parties on the one hand, and the Old Czechs and Czech Clericals on the other. The Germans were not as territorially contiguous in Moravia as in Bohemia, and had more concentrations in urban areas in the former, giving them much greater electoral power. The position of Germans in Moravia was overall stronger in the early twentieth century than in Bohemia and the Czech national movement was slightly weaker. Partly this was due to a more restrictive franchise, at least before 1905, which excluded small and middle landholders who were part of the strength of the Young Czechs in Bohemia. The strong Catholicism of the province also mitigated against the anti-clericalism and liberalism that were part of the Young Czechs platform.²⁴

There was also a strong Young Czech organization, which technically went by *Strany lidove moravske* (People's Party of Moravia) which had great political influence throughout the Czech lands through its newspaper, the *Lidove Noviny*. The Germans were willing to concede having officials proficient in both languages in return for a curial system that assured the maintenance of German power.²⁵ The compromise broadened the franchise while at the same time dividing each curia according to nationality as well as a third curia for the great landowners.²⁶ This made the Moravian Diet more democratic while still generally maintaining the privileged position of Germans, who controlled more of the wealth and land and many Czechs regarded it as a national catastrophe.²⁷ The

²⁴Ibid., p.96.

²⁵Judson, op.cit., pp.262-263

²⁶Horst Glassl, *Der Mährische Ausgleich* (Munich: Fides-Verlagsgesellschaft), pp.213-216.

²⁷Efinertova, op.cit., p.115.

compromise excluded mass based parties and was not in the long term a solution Czechs could be happy with.²⁸

The province of rump Silesia was another place where Czech gains were not so marked as in Bohemia. Silesia was a mixed area of Germans, Czechs and Poles. According to the 1910 census, Germans were 43.9% of the population of Silesia, whereas Czechs were 24.3% and Poles 31.7%.²⁹ Germans remained politically dominant despite being outnumbered by Poles and Czechs combined in many districts.³⁰ Silesia, like Moravia, lacked a district level of self-government, making the local communities more directly controlled by the provincial government and Czech political power was somewhat weaker.³¹ Because of this, it was considered by many Czechs to be a political battleground where they were in danger of losing, unlike most of Bohemia and Moravia at the time. Czechs themselves complained of “Germanization” of Czechs through German control of local government.³² Czech papers also reported that Polish schools were being Germanized but “of their own free will.”³³ Silesia would remain an area of concern to Czech nationalists, but the small population of the provinces (757,000 as compared with 6,770,000 for Bohemia and 2,622,000 for Moravia) meant that it would be less important to the nationalist struggle.³⁴

²⁸T. Mills Kelly, “Last Best Chance or Last Gasp? The Compromise of 1905 and Czech Politics in Moravia.” in *Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003), pp.279-301.

²⁹Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire* Vol. II (New York: Octagon Books, 1977), p.302.

³⁰*Naše Doba*, 1903, pp.200-202.

³¹Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., pp.131-132.

³²*Lidove Noviny*, July 4, 1899, p.2.

³³*Lidove Noviny*, July 19, 1907, p.2.

³⁴Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, op.cit., p. 301.

THE STRUGGLE OVER LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, local organs of self-government were given greater autonomy and expanded powers. This created a new political space where Czechs could assert themselves. This new space also became a battleground between the nationalities. With increasing chance for political representation available, Czechs and Germans saw this as a contest over which ethnic group would be dominant. The Czech nationalist Eduard Gregr summed up this worldview for Czechs, "Our nation must keep up or it will decline."³⁵ The tendency of both sides to see local political power as part of a broader zero-sum game of ethnic struggle made each local organ of self-government politically and culturally important.

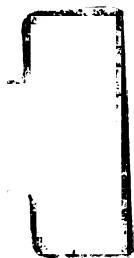
The new powers of autonomous self government were still being created and contested within the centralized structure of the Monarchy. Each district was run by a district captain (*Bezirkshauptmann, Zastupitelstvo*) who reported directly to the governor. After 1862, local organs of self-government existed side by side with the district captain, whose powers became more legally circumscribed and less arbitrary.³⁶ The basic unit was the commune (*Obec, Gemeinde*), which reported to the Provincial Executive Council (*Zemske Vybor, Landausschuss*). In Bohemia there was an intermediary organ, the District Board (*Okresni Zastupitelstvo, Bezirksvertretung*), which the communes reported to.³⁷ The communes were responsible to the Provincial Executive Council for matters of education, public health, public utilities and education, and to the district captain for taxation and recruiting and quartering soldiers.³⁸ While technically the district captain had final authority in most matters, this was mitigated by the ability of local governing

³⁵ Urban, *Česke Společnost*, op. cit., p.374.

³⁶ Garver, op.cit., p.91

³⁷ Ibid., p.90.

³⁸ Ibid., p.91.



bodies to appeal directly to the government and representatives in the Reichsrat. In effect, despite the viewpoint of many Czechs that the Monarchy itself was German, the government generally operated within its own rules, creating a new political space in which Czechs were able to assert control.

This new power of local government gave great power to Czech communities that were able to take advantage of it. Technically the Monarchy was never an empire of Germans over ethnic groups, but in practice Germans had traditionally been dominant and were certainly perceived to be. While in practice the new autonomy of local organs of self-government did not always work as it ideally should have, in general there was a major shift in the ability of local communities to make their own decisions. Czechs enjoyed their greatest political power at the local and district level and many of their organizations began locally and later merged into larger groupings.³⁹ Thus many Czech communities were gaining more political and cultural strength at the same time that the influence of the national movement had them more conscious of their subordinate position.

Gaining control over local organs of self-government was not necessarily easy. Local government, school boards and courts were areas of struggle over which language group would control them. In general, the process was supposed to be orderly, but the loss of control by one side often led to strong nationalist agitation. Language of schools was often a source of great conflict for both Czechs and Germans, as each sought to ensure that as many schools as possible were using their respective languages. The 1907 struggle over language in the schools and courts of the city of Cheb was described as the “Cheb language scandal.” What had been a local argument was taken up by parliamentary delegates on both sides.⁴⁰ Czechs fought to gain control over language in

³⁹Ibid., p.89.

⁴⁰*Lidove Noviny*, 12 Dec. 1907, p.1.

the city, a struggle which took on wider political implications as Czech parliamentary delegates attempted to influence events in Cheb.

From the point of view of the national struggle, one of the most important power accorded local organs of self-government was control over schools. A common refrain of Czech nationalists was “Czech students to Czech Schools”.⁴¹ In some areas both Czech and German language schools existed, but in small towns there often could be only one. After 1869 the schools in each district were controlled by elected boards, with some provision for any minorities to have their own schools if they numbered at least 40 students in a district. While technically the law allowed for a public school in a minority language in any district with at least 40 students of that minority with 5 years residency, in many cases, German controlled local government tried to prevent this.⁴² The Czechs then formed their own organization, the *Ustředni matice školska* to fund Czech language schools privately in predominantly German areas.⁴³ Local educational associations, newspapers and Old and Young Czech political leaders worked together to found this organization in 1880.⁴⁴ The *Matice školska* enabled them to circumvent German obstruction and ensure that as many children as possible would be educated in the Czech language.

Czech organization of both teachers and government officials also played a part in the struggle to maintain control over the language of schools.⁴⁵ This struggle over who would control the language of education became a major battleground in what was perceived as a cultural war with ultimate victory going to one ethnic group that would

⁴¹*Lidove Noviny*, 13 Dec. 1899 and *Nase Doba*, 1907, p.48.

⁴²Garver, op.cit., pp.112,113.

⁴³Bradley, op. cit., p.23.

⁴⁴Garver, op.cit., p.113.

⁴⁵*Naše Doba*, 1904, pp.697-698.

win control over the largest territory. Both Czechs and Germans perceived this struggle as increasing the strength of their nation, but did not actively seek to assimilate the other culturally. This seeming contradiction stems from a defensive feeling on both sides, whereby Germans saw any manifestation of Czech strength as an assault on their position in society, and Czechs saw themselves as suffering from dominance by the Germans. Czechs did not seek to make German speakers Czech, but believed they were expanding the opportunities for more Czech children to attend Czech schools rather than German. This attitude assumes a pre-existing identity for each child as Czech or German, to be preserved rather than created. This situation contrasts with Hungary, where the Magyars viewed minority children as culturally malleable, to be made into Magyars through education.

Czechs and Germans both worked to gain control over local government. Nationalist leaders were not only concerned with school boards, but with asserting cultural and political power in as many communities as possible. This meant grass roots organizing. The *Klub přátel české samosprávy* (Club of Friends of Czech Self-Government) was an organization of government officials and concerned citizens which worked to protect and further Czech self-government.⁴⁶ This group organized itself through mayoral councils from cities in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.⁴⁷ The *Jednota samosprávních úředníků obecních a okresních v království Českém* (Union of Autonomous Municipal and Regional Officials of the Kingdom of Bohemia) was another such organization. This organization worked to improve the competency and unity of purpose of Czech officials in government.⁴⁸ The meetings of this group were also celebrations of Czech nationhood, such as the 1896 congress at the mountain of Říp.⁴⁹

⁴⁶*Naše Doba*, 1906, pp.54-55.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸*Naše Doba*, 1904, pp.769-770.

⁴⁹SUA PM 8/5/15/90

This Mountain was the mythical place where the father of the nation, Cech, had led his people to settle down. It became a common meeting place for mass nationalist gatherings in the late nineteenth century. Organization among local governments helped foster united action when municipalities faced struggles over elections which were perceived as threats to self-government, which Czechs recognized as a “manifestation of the Czech nation.”⁵⁰

Czech gains in taking control of local organs of self-government were facilitated by both an expanding franchise in the later nineteenth century as well as growing Czech economic power, which increased the number of Czechs eligible to vote. A slightly more liberal franchise law in Bohemia than Moravia allowed greater Czech gains there in elections for the diet, local government and chambers of commerce, where Czechs gained control of many major towns in Bohemia, including Prague and Pilsen’s chambers of commerce in 1884.⁵¹ Chambers of commerce, while ostensibly commercial, were the second of four curias electing representatives to the provincial diets.⁵² Czech organization in Moravia was also hampered by stronger German predominance in urban areas.⁵³ Overall Czechs made great gains in taking control of local organs of self government throughout the Czech lands.⁵⁴ Czechs were also much more active in grass roots organization by this time.

Czech grass roots organization was essential in all these gains. Not only did organization come from the direction of the national political parties, but Czechs worked together at the local level to increase their political influence. Taking control of local

⁵⁰*Naše Doba*, 1906., pp.212-213.

⁵¹Garver, op.cit., p.124.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p.99.

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴Efmertova, op.cit., p.125.

governing bodies and chambers of commerce required strong organizations at the local level. Funding private schools was done at the local level and with help from national organizations such as the *Ustředni matice školska* and the political parties. The four Czech National Unions in particular were instrumental in providing funds and organization to aid education and cultural endeavors.⁵⁵ The unions provided funding for Czechs to acquire land, improve businesses and take control of education and local government. This was aided by the strong support local government could provide, including protection from German obstruction.⁵⁶

What began as an increase in Czech control over local government coupled with an increase in the availability of Czech language education soon became a hotly contested aspect of the nationality conflict. Czechs worked through their organizations to gain power on school boards and local governments.⁵⁷ Many Germans saw this as an encroaching threat to their historical position of power. German nationalists began to talk of a “language border” an idea based on the concentration of many Germans in the North and West of Bohemia and Moravia, although this is a generalized view, as Germans lived all over both provinces, with concentrations in large cities.⁵⁸ The language border idea originated with German nationalists, but was soon taken up by Czechs as well. This language border was defined primarily by whether individual communities had Czech or German majorities controlling local government. Both sides believed this border could be moved by political and cultural organization and agitation in a given area.

The idea of a language border defining a German area became such a widely held belief that it persisted after the breakup of the empire. In 1918 four predominantly

⁵⁵Garver, op.cit., p.114-115.

⁵⁶Tbid., p.113.

⁵⁷*Naše Doba*, 1910, pp.196-197.

⁵⁸Cornwall, op. cit., pp.914-916.

German regions along the border attempted to break away from the newly formed Czechoslovakia. These regions were called *Böhmerwald* (Bohemian Forest), *DeutschBöhmen* (German Bohemia), *Südmähren* (Southern Moravia) and *Sudetenland* (The region around the Sudeten Mountains in Northern Moravia). All were occupied by Czechoslovakian forces by the end of December 1918. During the interwar period, Nazi Germany used the term *Sudetenland* to refer to all the regions along the borders with Germany and Austria, and the term is often used anachronistically in historical texts today to refer to these areas and the people in them.

People in the Czech lands came to believe that gains in control of local organs of self-government and/or language of education made a given town and region “Czech” as opposed to “German” areas. German defensiveness over Czech gains was often exaggerated given their strong political position and led only to a stronger Czech consciousness that this was indeed a struggle between the nationalities. The idea of the “language border” became of serious concern to both Germans and Czechs in the late nineteenth century, adding to a mind set of cultural struggle where many Czech and Germans came to perceive that there would be only one ultimate winner.⁵⁹

CZECH GAINS IN PRAGUE

One of the strongest examples of Czech gains is the taking over of the Prague city council in 1861, when Czech speakers became a majority in the newly empowered body. The first Czech mayor, František Pštross, used his power to promote Czech cultural and political life through funding of education and cultural projects.⁶⁰ The taking over of the city council was symbolically and pragmatically a major shift in the position of Czechs

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.132.

vis-a-vis Germans in the Czech lands. Prague was the first major city where Czechs were able to take control of local government. Czechs were able to use their position to further advance the national movement, as well as strengthen Czech economic interests. By 1890 Prague itself was 85% Czech speakers and the city council was predominantly Czech.⁶¹ It should be noted that this was all done on a limited franchise, during this entire period only 6% of Prague citizens were eligible to vote in municipal elections.⁶² Czechs had gained a majority on the council in 1861 and by 1888 there were only Czechs on the council.⁶³ The official minutes of the meetings were kept in Czech, even to the point of speeches given in German being recorded in Czech with a small note that they were originally in German.⁶⁴ Czechs made the city council meetings, and then the city, deliberately Czech in character. Control of the city council made the position of Czechs in Prague much more comparable to that of Germans, although the official language of the imperial government and bureaucracy remained German.

The fact that Czechs were able to take over and maintain control of the city council is a very strong example of the general strength of respect for the law of the land. Germans were very upset and threatened by Czech gains, yet were unable to stop them. Czechs won repeated elections and were able to gain and hold seats despite German objections. Although Germans predominated in the Government both in Bohemia and at the imperial level, neither the Governor's office nor the imperial government intervened to restore German predominance or lessen the powers of the city council. Czechs were able to make Czech the official language of the city council and enforce language changes such as street signs. Despite Czech assertions that the government always acted

⁶¹David-Fox, op. cit., p.52.

⁶²Cathleen M. Giustino, *Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003).

⁶³Peter Demetz, *Prague in Black and Gold* (Hill and Wang, 1997), pp 314-317.

⁶⁴*Vestník Hlavního Měste Prahy* (Bulletin of the Capital City of Prague), April 4, 1900, RVII C.1, P.4.

against their interests, the monarchy generally followed its own regulations in respect to local government.

Czechs were able to win elections due in large part to their growing economic strength. Voting was based on tax paid, which in turn was based on property assessment. Historically this arrangement had made for strong German electoral majorities. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Czechs were increasingly economically powerful, taking control of many industries and much of trade. Both had historically been controlled by Germans and Jews. Czech strength was dominant in the areas of machine tools and transportation and growing in the new and rapidly growing electrical and chemical industries.⁶⁵ This growing economic strength was captured by a sense of community which encouraged Czechs to vote for Czech candidates in a deliberate effort to make the city council Czech in character. Business was not just business in Prague, but part of a larger sense of competition between the two ethnic groups.

For Czechs taking control of the city council was definitely seen as triumph for the nation. Prague was the historic and cultural capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia, which included all the Czech lands. This was not just a local phenomenon but an example for other cities of what could be accomplished through Czech unity. It was a self-conscious assertion of the Czech character of Prague. Golden Prague (*Zlata Praha*) to Czechs very much meant “our” Prague, not a multi-ethnic city where all took part, as Prague was at the time and had been historically. Many Czechs felt their nation was asserting its rightful place through the actions of the city council.

German attitudes only reinforced Czech beliefs. For many Germans, Prague was considered a German city by historic right and cultural superiority. Street signs and landmarks were in German and officially the city was known by its German name Prag. Germans and many others to this day know Smetana’s musical tribute to the river *Vltava*

⁶⁵Garver, op.cit, pp.17-18.

by its German name *Moldau*, whereas Smetana wrote it as part of his highly nationalistic masterpiece *Ma Vlast* (My Homeland). Germans often felt threatened by any Czech gains and reacted as if these would hurt their position immensely. By 1885, the German parliamentary leader Ernst von Plener complained, "It will soon come about that the German colony in Prague will live as if in a foreign country."⁶⁶ The intransigence of German nationalist attitudes only reinforced Czech beliefs that their nation was struggling for its survival.

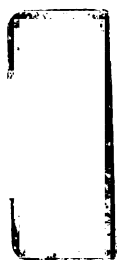
There often was no middle ground in the nationalist struggle. Both Czechs and Germans began to see the cultural space of Prague as a contested battleground that could only have one clear owner through victory in the nationalist struggle. For Czechs, this struggle for national survival was represented by the status of the Czech language. The nationalist leader Eduard Gregř noted, "It is not possible for our nation to be healthy if our national language becomes useless. We must not allow the nation's life to waste away, but must galvanize it to endure the pain."⁶⁷ Thus the city council was not content to make Czech the public equal of German, but moved to eradicate German altogether from street signs, making a visible victory for the Czech language. Language was not only a symbol but seemed to have the power to create reality through its use and presence. Both Czechs and Germans shared this belief, making issues such as street signs more than symbols to many.

The increasing hostility between Czechs and Germans was displayed in the many street disturbances of the period. Nationalist groups often organized these, and prior to the 1880's were mostly German.⁶⁸ By the 1890's the Czechs were able to organize their own massive demonstrations. There were also often spontaneous acts of vandalism

⁶⁶Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* Second edition, revised (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006).

⁶⁷Urban, *Ceřke společnost*, op. cit., p.372.

⁶⁸Bradley, op. cit., p.33.



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against Imperial symbols, and fighting in the streets between German and Jewish student groups. The first major Czech – German student rioting had occurred at Chuchle in 1883.⁶⁹ Demonstrations by Czech groups in the 90's led to violence between crowds and the troops sent to disperse them many times. In the Badeni ordinance riots of 1897, 30 Czech rioters were injured by police and 147 arrested.⁷⁰ While large scale political demonstrations were organized by Czech parties, most of the violence during this period resulted from agitation by small groups of radicals on both sides and was usually spontaneously generated.⁷¹

Further complicating the nationalist struggle in Prague was the status of Prague's Jewish community. One of Central Europe's oldest, the Prague Jewish community had grown and endured pogroms and even expulsions (1541, 1744).⁷² Many Jews spoke Yiddish, which being linguistically close to German, facilitated the easy learning of German. As language was not a major part of Jewish identity and German was historically the language of government and commerce in Prague, many Jews spoke German as part of their daily lives. Many nationalist Germans did not accept Jews as part of the German nation. Jews therefore tended to form their own clubs and organizations, separate from both Czechs and Germans. As Jews were nearly half of the German speaking population of Prague, this created a situation with many tensions, as many have noted in the example of Franz Kafka's cultural isolation.

When the national issue became heated in the nineteenth century, Czechs tended to see Jews as Germans and part of the other side of the nationalist struggle, although, increasingly many Jews were declaring Czech their main language.⁷³ Most Jews spoke

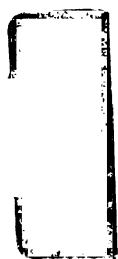
⁶⁹Ibid., p.34.

⁷⁰Ibid., p.35.

⁷¹Ibid., pp.34-37.

⁷²Demetz, op. cit., pp. 200,246.

⁷³Ibid., p.317.



German before 1900, Yiddish being a rare language in Prague.⁷⁴ While the linguistic emphasis of the national struggle might have seemed to offer opportunities for Jewish acceptance, in practice Czechs were often also defining the nation in ethnic terms when it came to Jews. There were large anti-Jewish riots staged by Czechs during the 1890's, particularly during the *Svuj K Svemu* campaigns as well as the Badeni language ordinances and the Hilsner affair.⁷⁵ Czech nationalism, which was primarily linguistic and cultural when concerned with Germans, exhibited a prominent tendency to racialize Jewishness during these disturbances.

This strain of anti-semitism had been present in Czech nationalism for some time. The 1848 disturbances in Prague involved many anti-Jewish riots. August Rohling, professor of theology at Prague university, published his influential anti-semitic tract *Der Talmudjude* in 1871.⁷⁶ The anti-semitism of the 1890's was supported by attacks in the Young Czech *Narodni Listy*.⁷⁷ Several prominent writers and journalists such as Jan Neruda and Karel Havliček lent legitimacy to Czech anti-semitism.⁷⁸ Rates of intermarriage were much lower in Prague than in Berlin or Vienna.⁷⁹

The economic boycotts of the *Svuj k Svemu* (each to himself) campaigns often contained strong anti-semitic components. *Nase Doba* warned it's readers to beware that such campaigns were definitely "economic antisemitism" and calls for these boycotts were defining "Czechs as Christian."⁸⁰ In practice this meant the anti-German boycotts

⁷⁴Spector, op. cit., p.90.

⁷⁵Rothkirchen, op. cit., p.17.

⁷⁶Ibid., p.14.

⁷⁷Ibid., p.17

⁷⁸Sayer, op. cit., p.113.

⁷⁹Demetz, op.cit., p.317.

⁸⁰*Naše Doba*, 1895, p.929.

were predominantly directed at Jewish businesses. This campaign started in 1892 and was to continue sporadically into the twentieth century. The business owners themselves were often bilingual, but the more radical nationalists behind the boycotts often identified all Jews as agents of German domination. Some Czechs rejected this however, and prominent nationalist leaders moved against the anti-semitic component of *Svuj k Svemu*, notably Tomas Masaryk's Realist Party.⁸¹ Masaryk however, continued to view Jews as a separate racial element which would eventually be culturally assimilated into the Czech nation.⁸²

For most Jews however, the nationalist struggle was one which left them caught in the middle often accepted as neither Czech nor German. Nonetheless, attitudes began to change during this period, and by World War One most Jews in the Czech lands identified themselves as Czech speakers. This change was a slow one, but between 1890 and 1900 a shift took place where most Jews in Prague and Bohemia as a whole identified Czech as their most important language of daily use.⁸³ In 1901 the *Českožidovské Listy* (Czech-Jewish News) called for Czech language education for Jewish children saying Jews should "not be pro-Germanization, neither indifferent to nationality, rather they should embrace Czech culture."⁸⁴ Many Jewish shopkeepers also changed their signs from German or bilingual to Czech in this period.⁸⁵ This trend would become more pronounced during the interwar period. Still, this persistence strain of anti-semitism in Czech nationalism does demonstrate great similarity with other central European nationalisms, and shows one of the ways in which Czech nationalism was

⁸¹*Naše Doba*, 1901, p.220.

⁸²Rothkirchen, op.cit., p.18.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴Ctibor Rybář, *Židovská Praha* (Prague, Průvodce Památkami, 1991), p.122.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

based on more than linguistic identification, with Czechs conceiving of themselves as a racially distinct group with historic ties to their territory.

The city council attempted to make Czech on a par with German in official business. A major visible indication was the changing of language of streets signs. At first the council added Czech versions of all street signs, making them bilingual. In 1861 the newly Czech dominated city council decreed that all street signs be in both languages, with Czech on top. This was the same year Czech became the official language of all city offices.⁸⁶ Despite the anger this caused among Germans, in 1893 the council went further and ordered the German versions removed making a very visible assertion of the Czech character of the city.⁸⁷ The city council also replaced the imperial black-on-yellow of many signs with the Czech national colors of red and white.⁸⁸ The Germans, represented by the German Casino, reacted strongly and appealed the decision to Cisleithania's highest court, but the court upheld the council's decision in 1896. The Casino then provided German landlords with German-language signs for their buildings.⁸⁹ This was done deliberately as an assertion of Czech identity and a slap in the face to German beliefs that Prague was a German city.

The changing of street signs caused great anger among Germans. The members of the German casino were the wealthy leaders of the community, the equivalent to the well of Czech members of the city council. They attempted to fight the decision legally, but failed. Germans used to power of their own organizations in the nationalist struggle. As the German journalist Theophil Pisling wrote, "As is well known, one should learn from one's enemies... The Czechs above all have shown us what purposes seemingly

⁸⁶Sayer, op.cit., p.101.

⁸⁷Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p.3.

⁸⁸Sayer, op.cit., p.101.

⁸⁹Cohen (Second Edition), op.cit., p.111.

harmless associations serve and what can be made of anniversaries and similar observances. Fine, now we can have our own associations and celebrations too.”⁹⁰ The use of language was such a powerful symbol that the act of changing street signs to Czech was seen as a direct attack on the position of Germans in Prague. This anger asserted itself even after the first decision to create bilingual signs, and only grew stronger after the decision to remove any German street names. Despite the anger of many Germans and sympathy from others in the Monarchy and in Germany, the city council was able to maintain its control over the language of street signs, demonstrating the importance of the new electoral process and autonomy of local government to the nationalist struggle.

This period witnessed many ethnographic and trade fairs in Prague. The city council worked to make Prague a showpiece of Czech accomplishments. The 1891 Universal Exhibition featured a large steel tower on *Petřín* hill designed to look like the Eiffel tower. It was called the *Česka Eiffelova* and described as “Mala, ale Naše” (little, but ours).⁹¹ The *Petřín* tower is the same height from the *Vltava* river as the Eiffel Tower is from the ground. This was done in deliberate imitation of the Paris exhibition of 1889.⁹² This Exhibition was run almost entirely by Czechs, the German leadership having backed out in a fit of anger over the *Punktače*. The tower, which still stands, was designed as a monument to Czech technical prowess. The 1908 exhibition of Chambers of Commerce and Trade was another major fair, one which deliberately highlighted Czech business accomplishments.⁹³ It also highlighted the modern and technical Czech nation and its’ many industrial achievements. Such fairs demonstrated the strength of the

⁹⁰Ibid., p.40.

⁹¹Pavel Augusta and František Honzák, *Sto let Jubilejní* (Prague: Nadladelství technické literatury, 1991).

⁹²Ibid., pp.20-22.

⁹³Efmertova, op.cit., p.398.

Czech nation culturally, economically and technologically. The city council worked to promote this image of a modern, Czech Prague to themselves, the Germans and the rest of the world.

The idea of a modern Prague was important to Czechs, more so than any other city, because it was the historic capital as well as the first major city where Czechs gained control over local government. Prague was the center of Czech industrial and economic strength, a fact nationalist papers were very aware of. *Naše Doba* reminded its readers in 1909 to be proud of “Our industrial as wells as economic strength... all accomplished with Czech capital.”⁹⁴ Prague was run by the Czech middle class, which was very proud of its cultural and economic power.⁹⁵ The city was undergoing great changes during this time period. Sewage, electricity, and public transport were among the changes taking place in Prague. The Vltava was regulated and flood protection improved.⁹⁶ The city council oversaw the installation of gas lines throughout the city.⁹⁷ The city council also saw the importance of taking care of public buildings as part of the city’s image.⁹⁸ New grand projects were instigated and old buildings renovated. Whereas major European cities were all dealing with new technologies and public works projects, in Prague this was not just modernization of the city, but of the nation as well.

Prague was the showpiece for Czechs of modernization that was taking place all over Bohemia and Moravia. By 1914 the Czech lands had 290 electrical generating plants covering about a third of the territory. Prague had 118 telegraph stations by 1897.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁴*Naše Doba*, 1909, p.14.

⁹⁵Demetz, op.cit., p.316.

⁹⁶*Naše Doba*, 1907, p. 94.

⁹⁷*Vestník Hlavního Měste Prahy*, May 22, 1897, RIV, c.3, p.51.

⁹⁸*Vestník Hlavního Měste Prahy*, January 19, 1894, RI, c.3, p.40.

⁹⁹*Statistická knížka kralovského hlavního města prahey*, 1897, p.112

first telephone exchange appeared in Prague in 1882, but was soon followed in Brno, Liberec and Plzen, reaching 35,000 subscribers by 1914. In 1911 there were 2,000 automobiles and 4,000 motorcycles registered in the Czech lands.¹⁰⁰ In 1897 Prague had 19,856 employees in its rail and streetcar system, and a total population of 361,143.¹⁰¹ Modern technology was increasingly employed by Czech controlled firms and local government. Part of Czech national identity was tied to a feeling that they were a modern nation asserting control over the forces of modern technology and economic life.

The city council spent much time regulating slum clearance in order to produce a modern city. The city suffered from high mortality in crowded neighborhoods, with many buildings lacking indoor plumbing. Much of this slum clearance fell on the area of the old Jewish ghetto, now devoid of most of its Jews, creating the neighborhood seen today. Although it still contains the town hall, cemetery, and several synagogues, it is in fact a fairly new neighborhood in Prague.¹⁰² The Ghetto had been the home of Prague Jews for centuries, and was the scene of large scale anti-Jewish rioting in 1848 and a devastating pogrom in 1389. Restrictions were slowly removed after 1848, including destruction of the wall around it. Most Jews had chosen to leave the Ghetto area after the abolition of the prohibition on living elsewhere in 1867. Left behind were a few of the poorest or most resolute Jews. Many of the poorest residents of Prague moved in and the area had deteriorated further.

By 1885 the ghetto was the most crowded area of the city, with 1800 residents per hectare, compared with 1300 in the heavily working class area of Žižkov.¹⁰³ The mortality rate for infectious diseases was highest here, 30.18 per thousand, compared to

¹⁰⁰Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.155.

¹⁰¹*Statistická kniha královského hlavního města Prahy*, 1897, pp.97, 444.

¹⁰²Cathleen M. Giustino, "Municipal Activism in Late-Nineteenth Century Prague: The House Numbered 207-V and Ghetto Clearance" in *Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003), pp.247-278.

¹⁰³Demetz, op.cit., p.315.

20.61 in the *Mala Strana* (Lesser Side) and 18.13 in the *Stare Město* (Old Town).¹⁰⁴

Slum clearance in this area was thus not actually directed against the Jewish community, but against one of the most decrepit areas which also happened to be located in a prime area in the city center. There was some great debate about what historic sites to preserve, and eventually it was decided to save the Old Jewish cemetery, now a major tourist attraction.¹⁰⁵

Such projects were designed to make Czech Prague a model modern city. Slum clearance and the building of modern infrastructure were to make Prague a world class capital city. At the turn of the century Prague was a modern European city with streetcars, electricity, gas and indoor plumbing in most areas. Whereas the cold war has tended to enforce a notion of an “Eastern Europe” less advanced than “Western Europe” most citizens of Prague probably would have considered themselves to be part of a society that was the equal both technologically and economically of any major city in Western Europe.

In 1900 the city council completed one of its greatest projects, the *Obecní Dum* (Municipal House) a grand cultural center in Prague. A place for lectures, concerts and other cultural events, the *Obecní Dum* represented the assertion of Czech cultural and political strength. The nationalist nature of the project spoke to the fact that it was the Czech municipal house, and the city belonged to the Czechs. The *Obecní Dum* is an ornate art-nouveau building at the edge of Prague’s old town, along one of the major streets. Its planning and construction was another visible sign of the strong Czech character of the city. Czechs were asserting in this grand cultural space a physical symbol of their new strength and claim to cultural ownership of Prague, the heart of the Czech lands. Czech historical legends had father Čech stopping his people in the area of Prague and settling permanently.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Giustino, *Tearing Down Prague’s Jewish Town* op.cit., pp. 144-147.

The ability of Czechs to raise funds and construct the *Obecni Dum* was not only a symbol, but a concrete example of their newfound political and economic strength. The city approved funding for the new edifice, which while theoretically for all Prague citizens, was in character definitely a Czech structure. The murals on the walls and ceilings depict mythical Slavic glories, a sure affront to German sensibilities in the highly charged political climate of turn-of-the century Prague. The main concert chamber, Smetana hall, was named for the great nationalist and composer. The *Obecni Dum* was a physical symbol of a broad cultural war in which control of the city council gave the Czechs a strong advantage.

The funding of Czech language schools was another area where Czech control of the city council was very useful. At this time all over Bohemia and Moravia, Czech communities were attempting to make Czech language education available. In some cases privately funded Czech-language schools were set up where public ones were controlled by Germans. A strict numerical majority in a region did not automatically guarantee Czechs a school using their language. In Prague this was the case, as the city government was able to fund many Czech schools. Having a numerical majority and control of the city council guaranteed that there were enough Czech schools in the city for all parents who chose to attend them. In 1897 there were 38 publicly funded Czech elementary schools in Prague, compared to 6 German-language ones.¹⁰⁶ Jewish parents could choose to send their children to either of these schools, or to one of the private Jewish schools. Czech political power, based partly on economic power, was reinforcing Czech cultural strength.

One of the most controversial measures supported by the city council was the erection in 1915 of a monument to Jan Hus in the historic Old Town Square (*Staroměstské*

¹⁰⁶*Statistická kniha královského hlavního města Prahy* (Statistical Book of the Royal Capital City of Prague, 1897), pp.376-377.

Naměstí), the planning of which had begun in the council as early as 1899.¹⁰⁷ Originally Czech nationalists had wanted to plaque honoring Hus in front of the national museum. The opposition to this was voiced in the Bohemian Diet by the noble Karl Schwarzenberg who accused the Hussites of being thieves and arsonists, and compared them to the young Czechs. As a result of this, Czech organizations were mobilized to demand a large statue of Hus to be placed on Old Town Square instead.¹⁰⁸ Hus, a religious leader whose death inspired a rebellion in the early fifteenth century, has become a central figure in Czech historiography and culture. While Hus was originally seen as a religious figure, Czechs have made the rebellion into a nationalist struggle against the Catholic, imperial German overlords (Communist historiography tried to portray the Hussite wars as a struggle of the working classes against feudalism) ensuring his place in Czech historiography. It was the early Czech nationalist and historian, Palačky who enshrined Hus's religious struggle in Czech memory as a nationalist myth.¹⁰⁹

The decision to place a monument to Hus in the heart of the Old Town inflamed many. Germans were upset by the prominent place of a Czech national hero they saw as an outlaw rebel. The Catholic Church, which had a monument to the Virgin Mary on the square, was upset by the thought of a protestant hero sharing the space (in 1918 inflamed Czech crowds destroyed the Marian monument).¹¹⁰ The Catholic Church voiced its objections in the name of the "Catholic Czech nation" and a Monument supporter assured

¹⁰⁷ *Vestník Hlavního Měste Prahy*, op. cit, Feb. 15., 1899, RVV c.2.

¹⁰⁸ Eagle Glassheim, "Between Empire and Nation: The Bohemian Nobility, 1880-1918" in Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit *Constructing Nationalities in Central Europe* (New York: Berghen Books, 2005), p.72.

¹⁰⁹ Frederick G. Heymann, "The Hussite Movement" in Brock and Skilling, op.cit., pp.231-233.

¹¹⁰ The destruction of the Marian statue marked the beginning of a large campaign of destruction of statues representing the Habsburgs and Catholicism which swept through the Czech lands in the first years of the republic. For more on the destruction of statues, see Cynthia Paces and Nancy Winfield "The Sacred and the Profane: Religion and Nationalism in the Bohemian Lands, 1880-1920" in Judson and Rozenblit op. cit.

the public it was not anti-Catholic in nature, but the symbolic battle lines were drawn.¹¹¹

While the objections to the statue were voiced in religious terms, most Czechs supported the building of the statue. While most Czechs were Catholic, Hus had become much more than a religious symbol, and was part of the pantheon of Czech national heroes; one which Czechs believed led a national revolt of the Czech nation.

Against the wishes of the Germans, the imperial government and the Catholic Church, the monument was dedicated in the highly charged political atmosphere of 1915, and still stands today. The monument was another physical assertion of the Czech character of Prague. The timing of the dedication only aggravated the pointed nature of the monument as a cultural symbol. Hus the rebel against German domination stood openly in the heart of Prague, surrounded by symbolic Czech figures such as Hussite warriors, Czech Protestant exiles, and a mother with her children.¹¹² Czechs were able to use their history as well as their control over the city council and its funding to make a large visible sign of Czech claims to cultural ownership of both Prague and the Czech lands.

Czech control of the city council meant that funds could be procured for memorials such as the one for Jan Hus. Not all were surrounded by such controversy. The funding of a memorial to the great nationalist Frantisek Palacky was approved by the city council with no major debate.¹¹³ The creation of monuments and public buildings was rarely as contentious as the fight over Jan Hus. While in general the renaming of street signs in Czech caused German opposition, the Czech city council was able to rename streets and squares to honor Czech national heroes. The symbolism of street signs for Czechs and Germans made it a visible sign of long term changes in the political

¹¹¹Paces and Wingfield, op.cit., pp.114-115.

¹¹²Cynthia Paces "Religious War: The Battle Over National Symbols in the Czech Lands, 1890-1925" p.6.

¹¹³*Vestník Hlavního Měste Prahy*, May 12, 1900, RVII c.4, p.1.

life of Prague. The physical public spaces of streets and squares spoke of Czechs conception of the city and land as belonging to them. This was Czech *Praha*, not German *Prag*, the major commercial and cultural capital of not just Bohemia, but the newly developing idea of the Czech nation. Local control meant Czechs could remake Prague in their national image with little interference from the imperial government. Control of Prague was not just one piece of the national movement, but a symbol of Czech strength throughout the Czech lands.

All these changes occurred due to the ability of Czechs to organize and take advantage of the new political space opened up by expanding franchise rules and the respect for the autonomy of local governing institutions by the Imperial government. The expanding franchise was met by greater economic power in the hands of Czechs, which doubly increased their ability to participate in public life. The Prague city council in particular is an example of how Czechs organized and used their newfound economic and political power to further what they perceived as the interests of the Nation. This meant increasing the use and visibility of the Czech language through funding schools and changing street signs as well as working to make Czech culture visibly dominant in Prague and by extension the Czech lands as a whole through actions like the building of the *Obecní Dum* and the Jan Hus memorial. The city council was most often preoccupied with the day to day affairs of running a major city, but it was precisely these actions which had the most impact as far as much of the public was concerned, both German and Czech.

Czech nationalism grew in strength because of this increasing organization even though it was not united. The diversity of associational and political life in the Czech lands was united only in a general sense of shared goals. The perceived historic dominance of the German “other” was a rallying point most Czechs could share. The Czech national movement envisioned political and cultural autonomy for Czechs within the territory they perceived as theirs. In effect they sought to reverse German economic

and political dominance, making Czechs the dominant group. While different political parties had their own agendas, this general vision was shared and Czechs worked towards it at all levels of political life. The grassroots organization of Czech civil society enabled political parties to gain power at the local and regional level. Czechs did not gain complete control over these lands, but that was not a major goal of the national movement. Czechs achieved much of what they had worked for in the period before World War One.

Chapter 5

HARMONY IN DISUNITY: POLITICAL FRACTURING

By the late nineteenth century the dominance of Young and Old Czechs in political life had waned and in their place a more diverse political sphere was developing. Some of this political fracturing was due to an expanding franchise, culminating in the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1907. All of this occurred in territories where Czechs were a numerical majority yet a subordinate political group. Czech political parties were not united in specific goals, but most shared a vision of Czech political and cultural autonomy, if not dominance, within the Czech lands.

This shared vision was not a concrete outline for what the nation was or what a future Czech dominated state would look like. Rather, Czechs shared a united anger at perceptions of historic dominance by Germans in the political, cultural and economic realms. This dominance was viewed as a historic tragedy primarily resulting from the thirty years war. Czechs could generally agree that they were in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the Germans. That did not mean they agreed specifically on what made up Czech identity, other than common language. National Socialists and Social Democrats were concerned that the nation did not value workers enough. Agrarian parties saw the countryside as embodying the nation. Clerical parties saw the Catholic religion as a major part of Czech identity. Many Protestants and general secular nationalists looked to Hus as a major Czech figure and saw Catholic dominance as a threat to the nation. Despite all these differences, Czechs generally came to work towards the goal of autonomy and even dominance within their territories, albeit alongside a large German minority.

The appearance of new political parties was only the most politically visible aspect of this transformation. The national movement was affecting all aspects of Czech life and thus bringing the input and interests of many people into the political process for the first time. By making everyday life part of the political process, the national



movement helped lead the way for more people to be concerned with and participate in political life. The growth of the national movement thus led to an expanding pool of political participants, fueling support for political parties while putting pressure on them to respond to their constituency.

The changing nature of Czech society also created the pre-conditions for a changing political sphere. More Czechs were urban, literate, and benefitting from increasing wealth (over the long term) and thus able to participate in formal political life. The Czech middle class surpassed the German middle class in both wealth and numbers by 1910.¹ The new economy affected the countryside as well. Many Czech peasants were able to improve their standard of living through better farming methods and more effective cooperative organizations.² Industrialization not only drew people from the countryside, but changed the organization of the rural economy, with more large scale economic concerns like sugar-beet refining growing rapidly in this period. This transformation of both city and countryside to meet the needs of a modern industrial society created many divisions throughout the society in terms of class and occupation.³ A large urban working class developed, albeit one that often suffered horrible working conditions. These new social divisions created the potential for a wider range of Czech political parties.⁴

The national movement united Czechs politically in many ways, but at the same time economic and society forces were dividing them in new ways. Under these circumstances, one or two political parties could not maintain a monopoly on political discourse. Even before 1907, many new political parties made their appearance and

¹Garver, op.cit., p.21.

²Ibid. ,p. 22.

³Otto Urban, *Česke společnost 1848-1918* (Prague: Nakladatelstvi Svoboda, 1982), p.275.

⁴Ibid., p.296.

gained strength. Czech civil society meant that many groups and people felt that the old political parties did not represent their specific interests. The new parties would arise from the efforts of people to organize to get their interests represented. The national movement did not lose its importance, historians agree it continued to grow in this time period. But the comparatively monolithic nature of Czech political life did begin to break down as civil institutions expanded their reach and influence. Looking at the Czech society through these institutions allows us to see the divergent voices influencing the nationalist movement.

CZECH NATIONALISM IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Czech political life was undergoing some of the same changes as other national groups within the Habsburg Empire. As political nationalism grew in strength, many segments of society brought their interests and concerns into the public sphere. National movements were not monolithic, and did not always agree on what the nation meant. Like the Czechs, many national movements were able to agree on a basic conception of their goals, which usually meant a predominantly homogeneous nation state, unlike the Czech case, which sought autonomy in a pluralistic society. While these differences are not always as obvious at first glance, the overall conception of the national movement did vary within the Empire.

The Polish case involved a nationalism seeking to resurrect an ideal of a Polish state. Polish nationalism was originally led by the nobility, which looked to a vision of a past Republic in which nobility embodied the nation. By the late nineteenth century Polish nationalism was also split into different political groups, such as workers, peasants, middle class and Jewish groups, themselves split into different factions. Polish identity was evolving, and competing identities of class and religion were also very prevalent. Many Social Democrats worked for an ideal of international class solidarity.



Many Jewish groups worked with the ideal of Jewish nationalism separate from Polish identity. The Bund was a Jewish socialist movement that also worked with the conception of a separate Jewish national identity. Polish nationalism would ultimately lead to an independent nation state in 1918, albeit a state with large non-Polish minorities.

Hungarian nationalism also was based on the ideal of a state led by the nobility. Originally Magyars conceived of the nation as residing with the nobility. This ideal expanded in the nineteenth century to include all Magyar speakers, but Hungary remained a state led by the nobility. A restrictive franchise kept political power in the hands of a few. Hungary remained essentially a Magyar dominated state where power was wielded by nobility. The creation of independent Hungary in 1918 only altered the situation ethnically, with Hungary losing the territory containing most of its minorities and therefore becoming a de facto ethnically homogeneous nation state. Like the Czechs, the Magyars had a primarily linguistic definition of the nation. They took it to more extremes than many national movements were willing to go, attempting to assimilate all minorities culturally, and only then accept them into the nation. More so than other central European national movements, the Hungarians did accept Jews as Magyars if they would assimilate linguistically and culturally. While it was not absolute, this stronger reliance on language as the sole signifier of identity made Hungarian nationalism unique in Central Europe.

The Croatian national movement was also based on historic rights. The Croatian ideal was the medieval Kingdom of Croatia, which was annexed to Hungary in 1102. Croatian nationalism originally was based around the nobility attempting to reassert historic rights with Hungary. By the late nineteenth century Croatian nationalism was much more multi-faceted. The concept of who was a Croat was very difficult to define, with many dialects which were very similar being spoken throughout the region. In addition there was an independent kingdom of Serbia next door which many Southern Slavs identified with, particularly Orthodox Christians. Croatian nationalism was rent by

the questions of who was a Croat. Was it only Catholics? Was it all south slavs? Which dialects were "Croatian" when faced with Serbian or Slovenian nationalism? Were all southern slavs part of one big Slavic family? These questions made a united national movement difficult, and indeed in 1918 Croats banded together with other south slavs to create the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which eventually became Yugoslavia.

Romanian nationalism was more united in its goals and had the unique difference of a Romanian nation state contiguous with Transylvania. Most Romanians were peasants, and the Romanian national movement within Hungary lacked a nobility, many early leaders being priests. While the Romanians in Transylvania could look to a Romanian nation state next door for inspiration, the Hungarian government strongly suppressed any irredentist movements, or indeed any expressions of Romanian identity. Only a few Romanian newspapers were allowed, and were heavily censored. Romanian national leaders were divided over whether to work with the Monarchy or against it. By World War One most Romanians came to favor annexation with Romania, which happened after the war.

While all these movements were split politically, all managed to have some shared ideas about the nation. One of the factors which makes the Czech case stand out is the fact that there was more of a consensus on what the Czech nation was and what the goals of the national movement were. Even Czech Social Democrats ended up separating themselves from the larger Social Democratic movement because of the power of the shared belief of the importance of a separate Czech identity. Czech political parties and social groups continued to have differences, and there were many arguments. Still Czech nationalism continued overall to work towards greater cultural autonomy within the Empire. Czechs thought of their territories as belonging to them, but not in such an exclusive sense that the Germans would not continue to live there as a culturally separate group. This goal of autonomy was perceived most to be an end in itself, rather than a

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stepping stone to eventual independence. The lack of a strong noble leadership kept the ideal of a medieval Bohemian Kingdom from becoming a major focus of the national movement. Instead Czech nationalism envisioned itself creating new conditions within the Empire, reshaping their political and cultural situation while remaining in a pluralistic society.

POLITICAL LIFE UNDER THE YOUNG AND OLD CZECHS

Prior to the end of the century, Czech political life had been dominated by the *Narodni strana* (National Party), also known as the *Staročesi* (Old Czechs), and the *Narodni strana svobodomyslna* (National Liberal Party), commonly called the *Mladočesi* (Young Czechs). The National party was the only major Czech party until the 1870's, when it began to lose ground to the newly formed National Liberal Party, known in Moravia as the *Strany lidove moravske* (Moravian People's Party). By the 1880's the Young Czechs became the dominant Czech party until they lost power to new parties in the 1890's. Prior to the turn of the century, the programs of and conflict between these two parties was the dominant feature of Czech politics. While later fracturing was caused by the needs of other interests to be represented, the struggle between the Young and Old Czechs was a struggle over control of the political sphere and by extension the national movement.

The Old Czechs were the principal political leaders of the Czech national movement in the 1860's and 1870's. The Czech leaders Frantisek Palačky and F.L. Rieger allied their party with the conservative great landowners on a program of Bohemian states rights in 1861.⁵ Allying with the landowners on a platform of states rights and autonomy alienated Czechs seeking more direct rights for individuals and the

⁵Efmertova, op.cit., p.80.



nation. By states rights, the Old Czechs meant for increased autonomy for Bohemia and Moravia under the existing provincial Diets. This was a *Landespatritismus*, or loyalty to the territory, and not ethnic nationalism, which the Old Czechs would later adopt as a platform. Thus it gave the Old Czechs a very narrow base of support.

Still, this alliance enabled the Old Czechs to gain majorities in both the Bohemian and Moravian Diets, which Palacky and Rieger saw as a stepping stone to acquiring greater national and individual rights in the future.⁶ Old Czech figures like Rieger were regarded as national figures, as they represented the only Czech political party. The party failed however, to achieve full autonomy for Bohemia and Moravia, and ended up boycotting the Diets for large periods of time after 1868, and the Reichsrat from 1863-1879.⁷ While enjoying a monopoly of Czech political power, the Old Czechs failed to achieve their major goals and alienated many national minded Czechs.

The response of these alienated Czechs was to form the Young Czech party. The Young Czechs were not formed as a party until 1874, but existed after 1863 as a faction within the National Party often disagreeing on issues such as: the alliance with the landowners, how to advance states rights, passive resistance, and support for the Polish insurrection against Russia.⁸ The Young Czechs developed into a strong faction advocating national autonomy and cultural and political rights for individuals and the Czech nation as a whole.⁹ The Young Czechs were not actually a different generation from the Old Czechs, but a more radical faction advocating strong liberal and nationalistic ideals.¹⁰ They counted among their leaders the famous Gregř Brothers, of

⁶Garver, op.cit., pp.51-53.

⁷Ibid., pp.55-57,68.

⁸Efmertova, op.cit.,p.80.

⁹Julius Gregř, "Program Narodni Strany Svobodomyslné," in Milan Znoj, Jan Havranek and Martin Sekera *Česky Liberalismus* (Prague: Torst, 1995), pp.176-178.

¹⁰Efmertova, op.cit., pp. 80,91.

whom Julius, the editor of the *Narodni Listy*, became very influential through this paper's wide circulation.¹¹ The Gregř brothers were considered national heroes, and are still revered today. This faction disagreed within the party, often voting against the majority, until 1874 when it split to form its own party.

The discontent with the National Party showed itself not only among Young Czech politicians, but in popular support which helped push them to form their own party. In the late 1860's and early 1870's large outdoor demonstrations called *Tabory* mobilized the public in support of national aspirations.¹² These featured national songs, poems, and proclamations. The *Tabory* rapidly became a factor in shaping Czech politics.¹³ Between 1868 and 1871, an estimated 1.5 million people attended *Tabory* throughout the Czech lands.¹⁴ The *Tabory* influenced Czech political leaders to recognize the strength of popular national feeling and encouraged Young Czech leaders to split from the party in favor of more radical national and civil liberties aspirations.¹⁵ In 1874 Young Czech delegates returned to the Bohemian Diet in defiance of the National Party boycott and by December had split to form their own party.¹⁶

The Young Czech's struggle with the Old Czechs over control of the national movement reshaped the nature of that movement. The Young Czechs were aided by a

¹¹Pavla Vosahlikova, "Vliv narodnich listu na utvareni ceskeho verejneho mineni ve 2. Polovine 19.stoleti" in Vosahlikova and Repa *Bratři Gregřové a česká společnost v druhé polovině 19. Století* (Prague: Nakladatelství Dr. Eduard Gregř a syn, s.r.o., 1997), pp.39-40.

¹² The term *Tabor* referred to the city of Tabor in Bohemia. Tabor is important in Czech nationalism as a center of power of some of the most radical Hussites in the fifteenth century. The Hussite wars, while fought primarily over religion, are viewed in Czech historiography as a nationalist struggle over foreign domination, making the Taborites symbols of a strong Czech national spirit. The town itself was named Tabor after the biblical mountain where Jesus is said to have foretold his second coming.

¹³Urban, *Česke Společnost*, p.232.

¹⁴Nolte, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁵Garver, op.cit., p.72.

¹⁶Efmertova, op. cit., p.80.



new more direct and open franchise, which expanded throughout 1880s and 90s until universal male suffrage in 1907, which brought in voters sympathetic to their platform.¹⁷ The Young Czechs appealed to more popular conceptions of rights of the nation. They favored linguistic parity with German as well as universal male suffrage. The unwillingness and inability of the Old Czechs to offer good solutions to the political and economic problems of the time led to their gradual loss of political power to the Young Czechs. Whereas in 1889 the Old Czechs still controlled most Czech seats in the *Reichsrat*, by 1891 the Young Czechs had supplanted the Old Czechs as the dominant force in Czech politics, both at the national and local level. This status continued throughout the 1890's and was reaffirmed by their victories in 1895.¹⁸

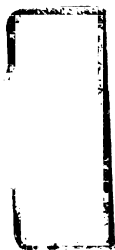
Gaining the largest number of seats in the imperial *Reichsrat* made the Young Czechs the main political voice for Czech nationalism during the 1890's. Previously the Old Czechs had controlled the Club of Czech Delegates (*Klub českých poslanců*) giving them the leadership role and platform to act as a voice for the Czech nation. The Young Czechs split off from this to form their own on Club of Independent Delegates (*Klubu nezávislých poslanců*).¹⁹ Young Czech victories in 1891 enabled them to reform a larger organization, Club of Independent Czech Delegates to the Imperial *Reichsrat* (*Klub neodvislých poslanců českých na Říšské Radě*) which would be the leading Czech organization in the *Reichsrat*.²⁰ The Club of Independent Delegates was eventually led by Dr. Bedřich Pačák, who represented Young Czech interests while still attempting to maintain some unity among the many Czech parties appearing by the turn of the century, at least in their representation in the *Reichsrat*.

¹⁷Ibid., pp.90-91.

¹⁸*Narodni Listy*, Nov. 13, 1895, p.1.

¹⁹SUA *Kluby českých poslanců snemovny Říšské Rady ve Vídni*, p.7.

²⁰Efmertova, op.cit., pp.90-91.



The failure of the Old Czechs to maintain control of Czech politics emerged as a result of an expanding civil society. The Young Czechs were predominantly supported by middle class interests, “mass” political parties did not truly appear in the Czech lands until more expanded franchise laws in the 1890s and early twentieth century. Autonomous local organs of self government, commercial organizations and institutions and cultural/patriotic voluntary associations formed the backbone of Young Czech support.²¹ The Young Czech’s program appealed to urban small businessmen as well as agrarian interests at this time.²² While this was a much broader base than that of the Old Czechs, it still did not really appeal to the needs of the larger peasant and working class population.

The Young Czech program of expanded civil liberties and national rather than regional rights appealed strongly to supporters from these newly formed organizations. The educated middle classes preferred the more radical Young Czech program and saw it as more in line with their interests than the landowner and clerical supported Old Czechs. The Young Czechs were more willing to fight for language rights across the Czech lands. In a sense this was the first fracturing of the Czech political sphere, the political leaders of the time being perceived as not representative of the specific interests of large swaths of the newly strengthened civil society. In a few decades the Czech national movement had gone from a small number of politically active people able to generally unite in support of one party to a larger more diverse group less united on goals and methods. The struggle between the Young and Old Czechs was, however, more a struggle over control of the national movement. By putting forth a program more in tune with the interests of middle class society, the Young Czechs were able to win over enough political support to become for a brief period from the 1890s through 1907 the major political leaders in the Czech lands and by extension of an increasingly assertive national movement.

²¹Garver, op. cit., p.88.

²²Urban, *Česke společnost*, pp. 410-411.

the same time, the Government has been very successful in its efforts to reduce the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate has fallen from 10.2 percent in 1982 to 5.6 percent in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980. The Government has also been successful in reducing the inflation rate. The inflation rate has fallen from 13.3 percent in 1982 to 4.8 percent in 1989. This is also a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980.

The Government has also been successful in reducing the budget deficit. The budget deficit has fallen from \$170 billion in 1982 to \$100 billion in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980. The Government has also been successful in reducing the national debt. The national debt has fallen from \$1.1 trillion in 1982 to \$0.8 trillion in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980.

The Government has also been successful in reducing the trade deficit. The trade deficit has fallen from \$100 billion in 1982 to \$50 billion in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980. The Government has also been successful in reducing the current account deficit. The current account deficit has fallen from \$100 billion in 1982 to \$50 billion in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980.

The Government has also been successful in reducing the foreign debt. The foreign debt has fallen from \$1.1 trillion in 1982 to \$0.8 trillion in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980. The Government has also been successful in reducing the foreign debt service. The foreign debt service has fallen from \$100 billion in 1982 to \$50 billion in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980.

The Government has also been successful in reducing the foreign debt to GDP ratio. The foreign debt to GDP ratio has fallen from 100 percent in 1982 to 50 percent in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980. The Government has also been successful in reducing the foreign debt to exports ratio. The foreign debt to exports ratio has fallen from 100 percent in 1982 to 50 percent in 1989. This is a significant achievement, especially considering the fact that the economy has been in a recession since 1980.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE FRACTURING OF THE POLITICAL SPHERE

The best example of the breakthrough of the interests of civil society into the political sphere is the political fracturing that climaxed in the 1907 elections. The previous hegemony of the Young Czech party over political life was shattered. The Young Czech party, which had held an overwhelming majority of Czech seats in the *Reichsrat* since 1891 when they overtook the Old Czech party, now held only 21 out of 85 seats, and was one of 7 Czech parties represented.²³ The new parties included National Socialists, Clerical parties and Agrarian interests. While the Young Czechs formed the new National Club of the Imperial Reichsrat (*Narodni klub na Risske Rade*) in an attempt to bring some unity by including the Agrarians, Old Czechs and National Catholic Party (*Narodnich Katolik strana*), there were still many parties that refused to participate alongside the Young Czechs. These included the National Socialists (*Narodnich socialistu*) and the Party of States Rights (*Statu pravni strany*).²⁴ The diversity of Czech political life could no longer be represented by one party. This was in part due to the establishment of universal male suffrage in the Austrian half of the Empire in 1907, but the beginnings of other political parties were already being seen prior to this. The diverse nature and interests of a complex civil society definitively shaped the political sphere by bringing about this fracturing of Czech political life.

The inability of the Young Czech party to satisfy the broad, diversifying and pressing interests of Czech society had begun to show in the development of other

²³William A. Jenks, *The Austrian Electoral Reform of 1907* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p.215. The 85 seats for the Czechs does not include 24 Czech members of the Social Democrat Party, who acted in coordination with other Social Democrats.

²⁴SUA *Kluby českých poslancu snemovny Risske Rady ve Vidni* p.9.



political parties prior to 1907. By 1897 the Young Czechs had been forced to share representation in the *Reichsrat* with Agrarian and National Socialist interests, representing very diverse segments of society.²⁵ Much of the ideological leadership was lost after 1900 to Thomas G. Masaryk's left-liberal Realist Party, (although politically the realists sometimes worked with the Young Czech club of delegates), which advocated social and political justice and slow reform of the system.²⁶ This occurred at the regional as well as the Imperial level of representative government. By 1902 the Bohemian Diet included Workers, Agrarian and Clerical parties.²⁷ The Young Czechs, under the leadership of Dr. Bedřich Pačák, continued to be a major party after the 1907 elections and were still representing Czech interests in the imperial *Reichsrat* as well as in the diets of Bohemia and Moravia, but their near monopoly on power was decisively broken²⁸. The Young Czechs, who predominantly represented the well-to-do bourgeoisie and middle class interests, were perceived to be out of touch with the interests of much of urban and rural society.²⁹ The new parties continued to grow in strength up until World War One.

Workers' parties were springing up throughout Europe in this period, and the Czech lands were no exception. By 1900 the urban proletariat comprised 30.8% of all employed Czechs.³⁰ The dominant presence of industry created a large urbanized industrial class which began to demand representation of its specific interests, which many felt the nationalist Young Czech Party was not providing. Splits between workers and the middle class who made up the support base of the party belied the apparent

²⁵Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p.443.

²⁶Efmertova, op.cit., pp.93-94 and *Lidove Noviny*, November 20, 1907, p.1.

²⁷*Naše Doba*, 1902, pp.849-850.

²⁸*Lidove Noviny*, September 27, 1907, p.1 and November 13, 1907, p.1.

²⁹Jenks, op.cit., p.190.

³⁰Garver, op. cit., p.21.

homogeneity of Czech interests in the political sphere. The large number of strikes during this period are also evidence of this split.³¹ The National Socialist and Social Democrat parties were able to capitalize on worker unrest, and took their first seats in the Reichsrat in the decade preceding 1907. By 1907, the Czech Social Democrats had 24 seats and the National Socialists 9.³² These two parties were the major representatives of worker interests, but the Clericals, Realists and Young Czechs were also able to mobilize worker support.

Workers parties also relied on local organizations which often predated them. The National Socialists formed from an assembly of workers and tradesmen associations.³³ The government watched organizations affiliated with them, such as the *Klub narodniho delnictva v Kutna Hora* (National Worker's Club of Kutna Hora) for this very reason.³⁴ The National Workers Clubs, which existed in many towns, formed part of a major network of organizations underpinning the National Socialists. The Social Democrats had a network of workers' clubs, as did the Czech Catholic Workers' organization.³⁵ In 1893 there were 1299 worker's organizations in the Czech lands.³⁶ (This figure does not separate Czech from German organizations, but at that time Social Democrat organizations were multi-ethnic.) There were 136 organizations listed as Besedas, which were cultural as well as patriotic associations.³⁷ The ability of workers to organize themselves also led to their supporting different political parties. The National Socialists

³¹Ibid., p.22.

³²Jenks, op.cit., p.215.

³³Garver, op.cit., p.295.

³⁴SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/10/23.

³⁵*Naše Doba*, 1908 p.190

³⁶*Naše Doba*, 1896, p. 93.

³⁷Ibid.

were not as radical, and willing to cooperate with middle class interests. Other workers joined the Clerical Party or supported the Young Czechs.

Worker's organizations themselves were divided in nature as well as political affiliation. Some were Besedas, which had a cultural and nationalistic connotation, but only 9 in Bohemia in 1893 were directly listed as political, whereas 10 were called reading societies, 105 Besedas, and 33 trade societies.³⁸ Like the rest of Czech society, Czech workers were not a monolithic block, and they often organized into groups which did not have a nationalist agenda as their primary platform. Still the division of workers' groups by ethnicity, eventually including the Social Democrats, speaks to the importance of national identity for all segments of Czech society.

All these emerging organizations were a cause of concern for a government afraid of social as well as national revolution. Even a small organization affiliated with a larger political party could come under scrutiny from the Imperial Government, usually in the form of the police, who reported to the Governor's office. For example the 50 member Jaromer branch of the *Delnický národní vzdělávací a zábavní spolek Borák* (National Workers' Educational and Entertainment Association "Borák") was deemed by the policeman reporting on it as worthy of concern due to its affiliation with the "Czecho-Slovak Social Democratic Party and radical movement worker parties."³⁹ Such police reports kept the government informed of groups it considered dangerous, and obviously this worker's organizations was perceived as a potential threat.

The Czech National Socialist Party (*Národní-Sociální Strana*) was formed in 1898 in Prague to represent the interest of Czech workers throughout the Czech lands.⁴⁰ The National Socialist program was more radical concerning workers' rights than the

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹SUA PM (1891-1900), 8/5/9/18.

⁴⁰Efmertova, op.cit., p.101.

Young Czechs had been, but they were willing to cooperate with them on many issues.⁴¹ The National Socialists were in favor of increased rights for workers, but as hostile to capitalism as the Social Democrats.⁴² They advocated autonomy for all ethnic groups as well as universal suffrage for men and women.⁴³ The National Socialists were able to develop a wide following, although not as large as the Social Democrats. The National Socialists were aided by a large scale grass roots organization comprising many local clubs. The National Socialist organized events in celebration of workers and the nation, including a major celebration of Jan Hus in Moravia in 1899 involving groups from several towns in the province.⁴⁴

The Social Democrats coordinated with other Social Democrats in the empire, at first abandoning the overarching framework of the national movement. This represented a major break, more so than any other party, in the homogeneity of the Czech political process. Yet in 1906, a semi-separate *Československo socialne demokraticka strana delnictva* was formed, which still sought to work with all social democratic parties in Cisleithania.⁴⁵ Even before this, local organizations maintained a separate ethnic character. In 1896 for example, a congress in Prague was reported to involved delegates from 14 German, 13 Czech and 2 Polish organizations, the delegates being reported by their ethnicity in *Naše Doba*.⁴⁶ These national divisions, particularly the Czech-German struggle in the Bohemian lands, would be a major problem for the Social Democrats as they sought to unite workers.

⁴¹*Naše Doba*, 1900, p.923.

⁴²Urban, *Česke společnost*, p.488.

⁴³Garver, op.cit., p.296.

⁴⁴*Lidove Noviny*, July 8, 1899, p.2.

⁴⁵Efmertova, op.cit.,p.95.

⁴⁶*Naše Doba*, 1896, p.649.



The Social Democrats were nevertheless very successful as a mass party, becoming the second largest party representing the Czech Lands in the imperial *Reichsrat* in 1907 with 24 delegates. The Social Democrats organized early on, and had 238 groups within the Czech lands with 39,613 members in 1895.⁴⁷ Originally one of the strongest differences between the Social Democrats and the National Socialists was the former's commitment to international worker solidarity. Technically this meant the Social Democrats were opposed to nationalism, but already in the 1890's there were separate Czech and German chapters. By 1911 however, the Social Democrats had split into a Czech and German faction.⁴⁸ Nationalist tensions were too strong in the Czech lands for this mass workers' party to stay united based on class unity.

The agrarian parties that entered the political process in this period subordinated national interests to group social and economic problems, but did not completely ignore nationalism all together. Czech peasants and other rural interests had begun forming associations separate from the dominant political parties, including cooperatives and mutual aid societies, which worked directly for agrarian interests, specifically in areas of tariffs, farm credit and taxation. By 1912 there were 938 such organizations in the Czech lands.⁴⁹ They drew on a large base: in 1890 there were an estimated 2,375,000 agricultural workers, of which 292,945 were considered "Independent Farmers."⁵⁰ Even before the formation of the Agrarian party, these organizations had begun to have large scale meetings of representatives of different local chapters, coordinating their efforts throughout the Czech lands. By 1897 the *Česky odbor zemedelske rady* (Union of Czech Agricultural Councils) was able to hold a meeting of chapters from around the country to

⁴⁷*Naše Doba*, 1895, p. 379.

⁴⁸Garver, op. cit., p.283.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p.22.

⁵⁰*Naše Doba*, 1897, p.938.

press for “legislation regarding business insurance and private insurance” for Czech smallholders and medium landowners.⁵¹ That same year, there was a separate *Sjezd českého rolnictva* (Congress of Czech Farmers) in Prague that called for the Young Czechs to support Czech language agricultural schools as strongly as they supported business schools.⁵²

The *Sdružení českých zemedelcu* (Association of Czech Agriculturalists) was an umbrella organization of cooperatives which split with the Young Czechs in 1898 to form the Agrarian party.⁵³ They then were able to garner the support of many smaller organizations, including the *Selska jednota pro Kralovstvi Česke* (Peasant Union of the Kingdom of Bohemia), the *Zupni jednota hospodarskych spolecenstev stredoceskyh* (Regional Union of Central Bohemian Economic Societies), and the *Vychodoceska jednota* (East Bohemian Union).⁵⁴ The Young Czechs attempted to keep agricultural organizations under their umbrella in the 1890’s, but were unsuccessful. The ability of the Agrarians to organize many different organizations made them a mass party, taking 19.8% of the vote in 1907 and 27.6% in 1911, making them the largest Czech party in the Reichsrat.⁵⁵ While Bohemia and Moravia were heavily industrialized, the rural population was still large and by the 1890s was able to assert itself politically. The Agrarians responded to the demands of their supporters such as legislation affecting tariffs, insurance and agricultural schools. Their desire for united action was compared by *Naše Doba* to the existing “659 regional and local business groups that have seen the need for strong agitation.”⁵⁶ Despite having come to politics later than business

⁵¹Ibid., p.70.

⁵²Ibid., p.359.

⁵³Garver, op.cit., p.288-90.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Urban, *Kapitalismus a česká společnost*, op.cit., p.301.

⁵⁶*Naše Doba*, 1899, pp.779-780.

organizations, they ended up having the largest party in both the Reichsrat and Bohemian Diet.

The Agrarians formed from pre-existing networks of agricultural associations at the grass roots level throughout the Czech lands.⁵⁷ The agrarians reached their audience through their journal *Venkov* (Countryside) which took input from and dealt with issues affecting rural people throughout the Czech lands.⁵⁸ There were soon other journals aimed specifically at farmers and peasants, including the journal *Rolník* (Farmer), launched in 1899 and specifically not at the “cities or youth... but at every farmer.”⁵⁹ At the same time, agrarian organizations attempted to work with agricultural organizations from other lands, attending an international agricultural congress in Vienna and Budapest in 1897 and maintaining contacts with other organizations throughout the next decade.⁶⁰ The Agrarians met in local meetings that same year in towns such as Hradec Kralove and České Budejovice to discuss issues affecting rural people, including trade, health care and education.⁶¹ This grass roots support also gave local chapters strong influence on the party. In 1905 pressure from their constituents caused the Agrarians to shift their focus from the concerns of wealthier farmers to those of the middle and small-holders.⁶² These were some of the same groups who earlier had felt neglected by the Young Czechs. The ability of the Agrarian party organization to respond to the vital local needs of their constituents helped them grow in strength until they became the largest Czech party after 1907.

⁵⁷Urban, *Kapitalismus a česká společnost*, op.cit., p.288.

⁵⁸*Naše Doba*, 1906, p.533.

⁵⁹*Lidové Noviny*, July 12, 1889, p.2.

⁶⁰*Naše Doba*, 1897, p.70 and 1907, pp.296-297.

⁶¹*Naše Doba*, 1897, pp.359-360.

⁶²Garver, op. cit., pp. 291-292.



The formation of cooperatives led to an underpinning of support for the formation of agrarian parties, but it took some time for them to gain national recognition. The organization of agrarian interests first began to make itself felt politically in local elections in the 1880s.⁶³ The first Czech agrarian parties to make an appearance in the Imperial *Reichsrat* were the *Česka strana agrarní* (Agrarian Party) and the *Katolické strany* (Catholic Party), which had a majority agrarian base. These two parties gained 6 and 2 seats respectively in the 1901 elections.⁶⁴ The Czech Agrarian Party in particular grew in the pre-war years, from 6 seats in 1901 to 28 in 1907 and 37 in 1911.⁶⁵ Their grass roots organization began almost unnoticed by the Young Czechs until the 1890's. By 1907 the Agrarians were the largest Czech party in the *Reichsrat*, and they were able to influence politics in Vienna, representing Czech agrarian interests to the imperial government.⁶⁶

The Agrarians did not always agree with other Czech parties, and intra-Czech disputes were common. One heated exchange in the *Reichsrat* in 1907 had the Clerical delegate Myslivec refusing to applaud Agrarians and the Agrarian delegate Spacek accusing him of not listening to fellow Czech colleagues, at which point Myslivec stated that all Agrarians were essentially dogs (Pomeranians to be precise).⁶⁷ That same year, the Agrarians were invited to an International conference of Agricultural workers as the representative of the Czechs, alongside German organizations from within the Empire.⁶⁸ The Agrarians still sometimes worked with other parties and were the first direct

⁶³Peter Heumlos, *Agrarischen Interessen und Nationale Politik in Böhmen 1848-1889* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), pp.173-174.

⁶⁴Jenks, op.cit., p.215.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Efmertova, op.cit., p.118, and *Lidove Noviny*, July 17, 1907, p.1.

⁶⁷*Lidove Noviny*, July 19, 1907, pp.1-2.

⁶⁸*Lidove Noviny*, June 1, 1907, p.1.

representation of Czech agrarian interests in the Reichsrat. In one incident they demanded more meetings with the minister for Trade in Vienna because they were “not too small to be kept from meetings with the government.”⁶⁹ They kept the interests of their constituents in the minds of the government, and their existence made other parties take note of the desires and needs of the agricultural population, attempting to gain back the support they had lost.

Several clerical parties formed during this time period, including the *Katolicke strany* (Catholic Party), the *Krestansko-socialni strana pro Čechy a Moravu* (Christian Social Party for Bohemia and Moravia) and the *Narodni strana katolicka v kralovstvi Českem* (National Catholic Party of the Kingdom of Bohemia).⁷⁰ One of the reasons for the formation of these parties was a reaction to socialism, which the Catholic Church considered atheistic.⁷¹ The Catholic Party reached its peak in the 1907 elections with 17 seats, but took only 7 in 1911.⁷² The Catholic party lost ground due to increased anticlericalism as well as defection to other parties. Through grass roots organization, the Catholic Party was able to influence local politics where it felt appropriate. Examples of this include local control of schools and the advancement of Slavic culture, both for the nation and the Catholic religion.⁷³ In the town of Zidlochovický in 1889 for example, the Clerical party worked to keep schools Catholic, while still making them “Czech Catholic.”⁷⁴ Czech clerical parties ultimately devoted themselves more to the nationalist cause than the Church hierarchy, both before and after the creation of Czechoslovakia.⁷⁵

⁶⁹*Lidove Noviny*, July 17, 1907, p.1.

⁷⁰Efmertova, op.cit., p.100.

⁷¹Urban, *Česke společnost*, op. cit., pp.482-483.

⁷²Efmertova, op.cit., pp.118-121..

⁷³*Lidove Noviny*, July 12, 1889, p.2 and July 13, 1907, p.1.

⁷⁴*Lidove Noviny*, July 12, 1889, p.2

⁷⁵Garver, op.cit., p.288.

While not matching the numbers of supporters of the Social Democrats and Agrarians, the clerical parties represented the interests of substantial segments of Czech society.

Other parties emerged at this time as well, but did not have as broad support. Other than the major parties mentioned above, all other parties managed to get 3.7% of the total vote in 1907 and 4.7% in 1911.⁷⁶ The progressives, or the Realist party under Tomáš Masaryk, were the most famous and influential of the small parties. The Realists were an intellectual party which took on unpopular issues such as anti-Semitism and women's rights. The realists were formed in 1886 over the *Kralove Dvůr* and *Zelena Hora* (Queen's Court and Green Mountain) manuscripts. These manuscripts were forged in the early nineteenth century by the Czech romantic poet Vaclav Hanka. They subsequently became part of Czech national mythology, and were taught in schools as part of Czech history. Exposing the manuscripts as forgeries made Masaryk and the Realists very unpopular.⁷⁷ Masaryk himself was nearly hounded out of the university and called a traitor to the nation.

Masaryk's stance on the Hilsner blood libel case in 1899 likewise singled him out for personal attacks, particularly at Prague University. Masaryk took a principled stance that anti-semitism, particularly the belief in ritual murder, was a disgrace to the Czech nation.⁷⁸ Shortly after the first guilty verdict was declared in this case, Masaryk published a pamphlet attacking the trial and the idea of ritual murder as a whole. This unpopular position, in opposition to the Young Czech organ *Narodni Listy*, was based on Masaryk's conception of the Czech nation as a modern rational one. Masaryk fought anti-semitism his entire life, but saw the medieval blood libel belief as especially disgraceful to an emerging nation he wanted to be progressive, not superstitious. His own views on Jews

⁷⁶Urban, *Česke společnost*, op. cit., p.301

⁷⁷Garver, op.cit., pp.142-143.

⁷⁸Rothkirchen, op.cit.,p.17.

were somewhat complex. While he welcomed them into the Czech nation, Masaryk still viewed Jews as a separate group which would be culturally assimilated, a somewhat contradictory position. Masaryk admitted in his writings that he came from a culture where anti-semitism was pervasive and was not fully able to eradicate the legacy of these attitudes.

The Realists were led by Masaryk and most of their supporters were intellectuals. They won few elections, but their strong stances on controversial issues won them much praise. Masaryk advocated improved conditions for workers, but was hostile to socialism. The Realists called for greater autonomy within the Monarchy, but not for its dissolution, a position Masaryk would only take up during World War One. The Realists supported universal suffrage, including women, a very radical position at the time. Masaryk worked to make the most progressive European ideals part of Czech nationalism. Masaryk saw knowledge and ideas as part of Czech nationalism. "In order to be true to our heritage we must make the work of education and enlightenment part of our national life, we must seek our salvation in the progress of knowledge and science," he argued⁷⁹ While not a mass party, the realists were able to influence the political leaders as well as the discourse of both Bohemia and Moravia.

The expansion of the franchise to include all males over 24 was a major factor in bringing other interests into the political sphere and thus causing this fracturing. Although 1907 was the final step, the process had been a generally progressing expansion of suffrage for decades. The reform of 1873 substituted direct election to the lower house of the *Reichsrat*, whereas previously delegates had been chosen by the provincial diets.⁸⁰ The newly expanded system allowed for four curias, each allotted a specific number of seats for each province. The four curias were: the great landowners paying taxes of 50-

⁷⁹Tomaš G. Masaryk *Česka otazka* (Prague: Čin, 1936), p.156.

⁸⁰Jenks, op.cit., p.15.

150 florins, urban males over 24 paying at least 10 florins in taxes, members of chambers of commerce and industry, rural males over 24 paying more than 10 florins in taxes.⁸¹ The requirements for the second and fourth curias were lowered to 5 florins tax paid in 1882 and 4 in 1896.⁸² In 1896 a fifth curia, allowing for any male 24 years of age who had lived in a given district for 6 months prior to the election to vote, was created.⁸³ This curia allowed many who voted in other curia to vote also, creating multiple voting opportunities for upper classes.⁸⁴ This expansion of the franchise runs very much parallel to the political fracturing occurring in this period.

Dissatisfaction with this arrangement led to increasing calls for universal male suffrage, granted in Cisleithania in 1907. (In addition, there were calls for female suffrage, but they were a minority. Tomáš Masaryk's Realist party and the National Socialists were two major exceptions.) The granting of voting rights to the majority of the adult male population only stimulated interests in universal and equal suffrage. The newly politically active segments of society demanded in demonstrations and the press that they be given equal political representation. The great economic changes, as well as increased literacy, created a desire and ability for political mobilization which put pressure on the government to respond, lest they face revolutionary turmoil.⁸⁵ Another factor was the desire on the part of the government to threaten the Magyars with the possibility that the Emperor (in his capacity as king of Hungary) would introduce such a measure in Hungary.⁸⁶ The Magyars were trying to force a change in the position of

⁸¹Ibid., pp.15-16.

⁸²Ibid., pp.17-25.

⁸³Ibid., p.24.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp.30-31.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp.28-30.



German as sole language of command of the army as well as making their national militia or *Honved*, an independent force. The threat of expanded suffrage was a powerful check to the Magyars, who maintained a very restrictive franchise and were barely half the population in their half of the empire.

The major result of the electoral reform for Czech politics was the election of 1907, where the Young Czechs lost their previous majority of fifty-three seats in the lower house and were reduced to 21 out of 85.⁸⁷ The Young Czechs, with a predominantly middle class and anti-clerical base, lost out to agrarian and clerical interests as well as workers parties. The Agrarians and Social Democrats became the leading parties in the *Reichsrat*.⁸⁸ The results were mixed however, as the political infighting in the *Reichsrat* led to much obstruction and was frequently used as an excuse by the Imperial government to dismiss the *Reichsrat* and rule directly through the infamous paragraph 14 of the 1867 constitution. This happened several times in the last decades of the Habsburg Empire.

These new parties represented a diverse new political order in the Czech lands. No longer would one or two parties have a monopoly of political power or control over political discourse. The Young Czechs lost out because they could not demonstrate to these divergent interests of society that they would adequately deal with their concerns and were seen as the party of urban middle class interests.⁸⁹ Organizations representing financial, commercial, worker, peasant, clerical interests and others made their appearance and helped reshape the political sphere. The countryside as well as the cities were full of new and expanding organization. These organizations would be the basis for new parties like the Agrarians, National Socialists and Social Democrats. By 1907 social

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 189.215.

⁸⁸Efmertova, op.cit., p.118.

⁸⁹Urban, *Česke společnost*, op.cit., p.531.



issues had assumed a vital importance for Czechs, creating strength for the new political parties.⁹⁰

The fracturing of the political sphere did not necessarily mean the weakening of the national movement. In fact the overall national feeling of Czechs as demonstrated in the press, political battles, gatherings, organizations and street demonstrations, can be said to have been steadily growing during this period. Despite the many political parties, the Czech delegates to the Reichsrat and Diets were still able to work together. Even during the upheaval of 1907, the *Lidove Noviny* was able to report that Agrarians, Social Democrats and Catholics from Bohemia and Moravia were meeting to discuss common political action against the Germans.⁹¹ What had changed was the nature of the relationship of civil society to that national movement. The national movement was no longer the property of a few intellectual and political leaders who controlled its shape, but was something broader than the overtly political, a complex multiplicity of discourses that many people from many segments of society drew from and added to on a daily basis.

The new political parties grew from and were supported by grass roots organizations across the spectrum of Czech society. These organizations were fundamental in creating the need and providing the support for the diverse array of political organizations that appeared around the turn of the century. The numerous Czech clerical parties, for example, formed from popular support both for church policy and in favor of changing it from within.⁹² For all the diverse political parties emerging in this period, grassroots organizations had developed over several decades since the 1860's, only reaching the stage of supporting significant political parties in the 1890's. The

⁹⁰Urban, *Kapitalismus a české společnost*, op.cit., pp.300-302.

⁹¹*Lidove Noviny*, June 1, 1907, p.1.

⁹²Garver, op.cit., p.283.

Young Czechs were slow to realize the strength of this grass roots organization, and their political power suffered as a result.

The ability of Czech civil society to create and support a diverse political sphere was evidence of the strength and importance of many segments of the new economy and society developing as modernity came to the Czech lands. While many new parties were based on specific economic interests, there were also small parties formed around idealistic programs of intellectuals, the best known of which is Thomas G. Masaryk's Realist Party (*Realistické strana*).⁹³ The social and economic differentiation of society meant that the fairly monolithic political sphere represented by Young Czech dominance was not capable of adequately representing the interests of society.⁹⁴ The split between the Young Czechs and the Old Czechs merely foreshadowed this fracturing. Like the Young Czechs before them, the Agrarians were originally a faction within a larger party, in this case the Young Czechs. They split off because they felt the party no longer represented their interests adequately. The previously constrained political sphere fractured as it came to mirror the divisions already existing in Czech society.

Economic and social divisions along with politics were part of the changes modernity was bringing to much of Europe at this time, and Czech society was no exception. Political life in the Czech lands was being remade by the shift to a modern industrial economy.⁹⁵ Czechs were conscious that these economic changes brought strength to their community, and thus the Czech nation.⁹⁶ The newly diverse Czech political sphere had mass parties such as the Social Democrats, Agrarians and National Socialists that mirrored developments in other lands.⁹⁷ All political parties in the Czech

⁹³Garver, op.cit., p.299.

⁹⁴Ibid., p.271.

⁹⁵Urban, *Česke společnost*, op.cit., p.295.

⁹⁶*Nase Doba*, 1900, pp.299-301.

⁹⁷Garver, op.cit., pp.306-307.

lands, with the exception of the Social Democrats, organized themselves as national parties representing the interests of the Czech nation as well as special interest parties representing economic and other interests. By 1911, even the Social Democrats were forced to respond to the pressure from their constituency to recognize the strength of national sentiment among the population. In the Czech case, the development of a modern civil society was closely linked to and dependent on influence of the national movement.

Czechs disagreed on much politically, but generally shared a common vision of political and cultural strength within the Czech lands. The Old Czechs were a party of the old elites, which saw Czech nationalism as a revival of Bohemian States rights. The Young Czechs were more liberal, drawing strength from the professional classes. They saw the Czech nation as embodied in the people, represented by a liberal elite. The Social Democrats originally saw nationalism as bourgeois, and were concerned with worker solidarity. But as we have seen, they modified this due to the strong influence of nationalist ideals, becoming more of a national working class party, similar to the National Socialists. The Agrarians worked to bring the interests of the countryside into a political scene dominated by urban elites. They saw the nation as embodied in the traditional peasant, even though the parties were often led by more prosperous farmers. The Clerical parties ostensibly worked for Church, rather than national interest, but they too had to modify their program and generally worked for the nationalist interests of their Czech followers. The Realists were a small party of educated elites that saw the Czech nation in very inclusive terms, but had a strong sense that their ideas were best to lead them.

Despite their different origins and agendas, these Czechs from different segments of society and different political parties shared the ideal of increasing Czech political and cultural autonomy within the Czech lands. Czechs could have many identities at once, worker, Catholic, Czech. They could work for their specific interests while still being

concerned about the Czech nation as a whole. They shared a vision of a Czech nation united in the goal of gaining this autonomy, displacing the Germans who had previously dominated the political and economic life of the territories. Czech nationalism was tied to this territory for historic reasons, yet the nation did not seek an exclusive presence there. Czechs were motivated by animosity towards Germans, yet willing to live beside them. Despite their internal divisions, Czechs were able to generally work together towards this goal of becoming the dominant ethnic group within this territory, a goal generally accomplished by the First World War.

CONCLUSION

CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONALISM IN THE CZECH LANDS

The Czech lands underwent great social, economic and political changes in the late nineteenth century. These changes resulted in large part from the transformation to a modern industrial society which created a strong civil society. These changes were occurring throughout Europe in this period, but in the Czech lands, the relationship between civil society, economic changes, and politics formed a new domain within the Czech nation. As Czechs formed their own organizations, they were aware that this was part of the project of Czech nationalism as they conceived it.

Czech nationalists conceived of the nation as asserting itself within the territories where Czechs were historically rooted. They did not seek an independent or homogeneous nation state, yet was focused on achieving dominance for the Czech nation. Full independence was considered too radical and unachievable a goal, and nationalist leaders actively discouraged such ideas. Tomáš Masaryk, who eventually led the Czech nation to independence, said in the 1890s that “our national renaissance will be complete only after we have achieved a certain degree of political independence.”¹ Czechs saw the nation as embodied in the Czech speakers residing in these territories. While language was the primary identifier of nationality, Czech nationalists also perceived of Czechs as physical descendents of ancient Slavic tribes, attitudes demonstrated through a lack of effort to assimilate Germans and a strong strain of ethnic anti-semitism that remained part of Czech national identity in this period.

Czech nationalists were not focused on creating an ethnically homogeneous or independent state, factors that make it unique in Central Europe in this period. Czech nationalists generally sought to displace a perceived dominance by Germans with Czech control of the political, cultural and economic life of the Czech lands. Yet they did not

¹Masaryk, *Česka otazka* op.cit., p.131.



envision a fundamental shift in the ethnic makeup of these territories, i.e. expulsion or cultural assimilation of Germans.

Czech nationalism did share many attributes with other Central European examples. Language was the primary identifier of nationality for Czechs, as it was in much of Europe. Czechs often focused on education as a major source of the strength of the nation. Yet Czechs also saw themselves as the physical inheritors of a Slavic past, stretching back to the mythic father Čech, who led Slavic tribes into the area. The persistent strength of Czech antisemitism in the period also demonstrates a racialized view of the nation that is found in Polish, Russian, German and other nationalisms in this period.

Czech nationalism was not however, based upon religious identity. Czech antisemitism was primarily based on an identification of Jews as Germans. There were exceptions, such as the 1899 Hilsner blood libel case, which brought out superstitious religious based antisemitic attitudes. In general, religion was not a component of Czech nationalism. Most Czechs were Catholic, but the view of the Hussite wars and the battle of White Mountain as defeats for the Czech nation meant that protestant symbols were deemed more patriotic. The erection of the Hus monument is a good example of this. The Catholic Church was also closely associated with the dynasty.

This goal of autonomy and even dominance within the Czech lands was generally achieved by politically active Czechs from different social groups and political parties, even as they disagreed on many specifics. As with any national actors, Czechs could have multiple identities without weakening the strength of the national movement. Indeed, during the period of this study Czechs made great gains as a nation while fracturing into many political organizations that grew stronger at the same time.

The formation of modern Czech nationalism occurred simultaneously with the changes brought about by a modern industrial society, as well as expansion of political participation. The changing of the national movement into a mass phenomenon, coupled



with less restrictive franchise laws, brought many new parties into political life. These new parties represented many interests, yet were still influenced by shared ideas of the Czech nation. Each brought the interests of their constituents into the political sphere, and by extension the national movement. Czech political parties generally agreed that they should seek greater political and cultural autonomy within the Czech lands.

This process involved the Czechs reshaping the political and social landscape within the Czech lands. The Czech national movement sought political and cultural autonomy in a pluralistic society rather than an independent nation state. The Czech case thus varies from most contemporary national movements. Examining this process helps us understand the diverse nature of nationalism. There are many examples of national movements in this time period and each must be examined for its unique features. Nationalism takes many forms and describes a range of ideas and objectives.

Civil society was a necessary component of the changes involved in the creation of a modern industrial society. The organizations created included new economic institutions such as banks and lending institutions, credit associations, cooperatives, trade and professional associations, as well as voluntary organizations of a cultural/political nature. All these organizations and institutions were necessary for modern Czech society to function. Czechs formed their own separate organizations, even when they were ostensibly purely economic, such as banks and credit associations. It was important to Czechs that they had their own separate institutions and associations. This separate civil society was part of their conception of the Czech nation, a nation economically autonomous and strong.

The great economic and structural changes brought about by industrialization were occurring throughout the Europe and in the Habsburg Empire, and were especially strong in the Czech lands. The Czech lands were well situated to become major industrial and trade centers. The Czech lands' economic strength and mineral wealth as well as the pre-industrial "putting out" systems helped lay the groundwork for "take-off"

into self-sustaining growth in this period. While originally supported by German and Jewish capital, the late nineteenth century saw an increasing amount of Czech economic strength and investment, aided by the development of Czech investment and lending institutions. The Czech lands were an economic and industrial powerhouse not only within the Empire, but compared to Europe as a whole. And all these changes had a large effect on Czech society.

The social changes brought about by this transformation were immense and hit Czechs as well as Germans and Jews in the Czech lands. Czech society became more urban, educated, and relatively wealthy and differentiated than ever before, and at rates which severely challenged the previously dominant position of Germans. The nature of these changes created a need for organizations and associations to discuss and deal with their common interests. Czech civil society developed at the same time as the national movement became a mass phenomenon. Economic and educational advancement gave more Czechs the opportunity and ability to participate in the public sphere, particularly in political life.

The organizations Czechs formed were shaped by the national movement and their perception of the Czech-German conflict. Czechs and Germans usually formed separate associations even when they were ostensibly of a purely economic nature. This was done despite the fact that the economy depended on Germans and Czechs doing business on a daily basis. Thus while it was in the best economic interests of the Czech millers of Bohemia to have their own separate organization, it was not necessarily in their best interest to have one separate from the German millers. Those who identified themselves as Czechs felt that nationalism itself was a compelling self-interest which could override other concerns. This pervasive belief influenced the ways in which people organized their everyday affairs.

Political life in the Czech lands was dominated by the national movement for most of this period, but these social and economic changes greatly transformed the

political landscape. The Old and Young Czechs, acting as intellectual and political leaders, had controlled political discourse and by extension the national movement, at least visibly, for decades. The coming of political parties representing more specific social and economic interests began a fracturing of the political sphere that on the surface appeared to shatter the national movement politically. While it did greatly diversify the political landscape, this fracturing did not result in an actual weakening of the Czech national movement, but was part of an ongoing process of reshaping society and politics which transformed both. For Czechs of this period, the fracturing of the political sphere allowed them to deal with their other economic interests, while simultaneously letting more of the population participate in political life. This ultimately gave the individual more of a stake in the political process, and political life in this period witnessed increased mass participation.

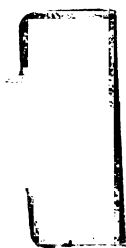
No matter how Czechs organized themselves, it was almost always done in a self-consciously ethnic framework. The nature of Czech, German and Jewish identity in this period, while sometimes shifting, was a very strong part of the society. This was due to German as well as Czech ideas of society and nationalism in this period. The apparent unity of the political sphere was shaken by the appearance of many interests trying to influence the political parties. These interests existed precisely because of the major economic and social changes affecting the Czech lands and Czech society. When these diverse interests of society began to form their own political parties, the grass roots organizations developed by civil society made such organizations effective at the local and national level.

The uniqueness of the Czech experience of civil society and nationalism resulted from this complex interchange of forces. Czechs as individuals and a nation adapted to the changes of modernity within a cultural framework of increasing national feeling and unity. This unity was not strictly political, as seen in the case of political fracturing, nor was it based on strict economic and social unity. On a daily basis Czechs were separated

by class and occupation as well as geography, and shared much with German and Jewish neighbors, friends and coworkers. The national movement was not the primary concern of all Czechs at all times. But the general strength of the national movement, which seemed to grow stronger not weaker as these new divisions appeared and asserted their unique interests, belies a somewhat ephemeral, somewhat measurable (such as street demonstrations, cultural and political events) unity of national consciousness among the Czech people which was constantly being reshaped but ultimately strengthened by the influence of this diverse and dynamic civil society.

Through this process of expanding civil society, mass political participation and political fracturing, the evolving nature of Czech nationalism is evident. What it meant to be Czech involved much more than merely a linguistic or historical affiliation. To identify oneself as Czech was to internalize the ideals of the national movement. Czech nationalism during this period involved a strong perception of the cultural, political and economic strength of the group. This consciousness of group strength is witnessed in mass political participation and national identification of organizations and political parties despite other disagreements between them. Individual Czechs disagreed on political needs and goals. Individuals could belong to many different cultural and/or economic organizations. The ways in which they did this demonstrate the existence of a group consciousness whereby the nation was important to their sense of themselves and the organization of their society.

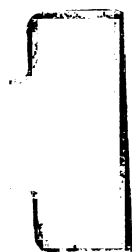
This dissertation adds to our understanding of the process of nation forming through an examination of the relationship between civil society and nationalism. To fully understand nationalism, we must look at it as a phenomenon with many forms. While the goal of an ethnically homogeneous nation state has been a driving force for many national movements, this was not always the main objective of nationalist leaders. In order to more fully understand what nationalism is the teleology of the nation state must be put aside. Nationalism should be understood within the context of the time and



the goals and possibilities which shaped the actions of nationalist leaders as well as the masses.

The Czech case during this period gives an example of a national movement whose primary goal was not independence, but autonomy and even dominance within a limited territory, while still accepting a pluralistic society within a larger Empire. This assertion of cultural control tied to a historic territory without seeking independence or ethnic homogeneity is an intriguing feature of the Czech case. While some thought of eventual independence, this was rarely mentioned as a goal in the period before World War One. Czech nationalists generally did not envision an end to the Empire, rather a change in the political and cultural situation within their territories. They sought autonomy alongside the Germans, rather than their expulsion or cultural elimination. While this autonomy in effect would mean Czech dominance in many areas, Czech nationalists did not seek a fundamental change in the ethnic makeup of their territory. The Germans retained their own cultural and political autonomy even as the Czechs gained control of much of the territory of Bohemia (and to a lesser extent Moravia). The Czech case demonstrates a national movement that remained the dominant cultural and political force while fracturing into many groups with different agendas. Czechs maintained a general consensus on what the nation was and what its goals were as they reshaped their society according to this conception.

The characteristics of the Czech case help demonstrate the variegated nature of nationalism. Nationalism can be many things at once: cultural, political and economic. Nationalism can have limited goals while still mobilizing people against a perceived common enemy. When they reach “stage C” or mass nationalism, nations are shaped by a diverse array of voices emanating from society. Czech nationalists sought to reshape the cultural, economic and political landscape. Their goals were to alter the status quo within the territory without either changing the ethnic balance or overall political framework. Taking this into account gives us a better understanding of the possibilities and forms



nationalism can have. Nationalism is not one single easily defined phenomenon, but an array of ideas and objectives, a process which transforms societies.

EPILOGUE: CZECH NATIONALISM AFTER 1918

Czech nationalism went through many changes during the decades after 1914. World War One was a time of major stresses on society, which radicalized Czech nationalism. The idea of independence and union with the Slovaks of Hungary gained strength during the war. Afterwards the creation of Czechoslovakia brought many new dimensions to the national situation in the Czech lands. The growth of German irredentism during the interwar period portended the destruction of Czechoslovakia during World War Two. Czechoslovakia was recreated after the war, but ultimately Czechs ended up after 1993 living in a predominantly homogeneous Czech nation state. These dramatic shifts in the situation of Czechs and goals of Czech nationalism are an example of the many possibilities of what the nation can be.

The situation in the Czech lands in 1914 was one of ethnic tension, but was peaceful, with no major movements by Czechs for independence or an ethnically homogeneous territory. When war broke out, most Czechs answered the call up to join their units, and the subsequent conscriptions to follow. There were suspicions among many in the military and government about Czech loyalties, but the emperor refused requests to institute martial law in the Czech lands.¹

The war did bring out pro-Russian sympathies which existed in the Czech lands. Panslavism had originally been favored by Czech intellectuals in the mid nineteenth century, but had never really become popular among Czechs. Many Czechs did think of the dynasty as German however, and the war with Russia caused anger at Germans to bring out pro-Russian sentiment. The first signs of this were pro-

¹H. Louis Rees, *The Czechs During World War I* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1992), p.15.

Russian pamphlets distributed among Czech troops at the front. Then in September during the mobilization of troops from Prague there were large crowds waving Czech national colors and troops chanting pan-Slav slogans.²

The greatest single evidence of this sentiment was the wholesale defection to the Russians in April 1914 of the 28th regiment from Prague. While historians have debated whether everyone involved truly defected or were merely exhausted and surrendered, this defection was taken by Czechs and Germans at the time as evidence of Czech sympathy for Russia.³ Czech historians continue to look at this as a watershed event in the shift among Czechs on the road to independence.

During the war, conditions deteriorated in the Czech lands, and martial law was imposed by the army after initial resistance from the emperor.⁴ Thousands were tried for treason and many death sentences were imposed.⁵ It was during the war that Tomáš Masaryk went abroad and began working with Czech exiles in France, Britain, Russia and the United States. In Russia he was able to convince the provisional government to form a Czech legion from the many Czech prisoners of war. The Russian government had already been recruiting Czechs in 1916, but in 1917 Czech volunteers were sent to the front to fight as Czech units representing the Czech

²Ibid., p.12., According to Rees, the government believed some of these were forged and others may have actually come from Russian agents.

³Ibid., p.16.

⁴Ibid., p. 15.

⁵Ibid., p.17.

nation. They distinguished themselves in Russia's ill-fated offensive in the summer of 1917.⁶

Masaryk and the exile leaders he worked with began by 1917 to work for an independent state allied with the Slovaks. This new idea, Czechoslovakia only came about because of the unique situation of the war. And while Western governments became convinced by Masaryk and others that the Czechs were very disloyal to the monarchy, in fact most Czechs continued to serve in the army. There were strikes and disturbances in the Czech lands, but these also occurred throughout the Monarchy. The strong government repression, as well as the stresses of the war helped turn anger against the monarchy into a drive for independence.⁷ By 1918 however, the idea that Czechs should break away from the Monarchy had become very popular.

In the end, the creation of Czechoslovakia happened very rapidly. Masaryk and others had convinced Western governments to support the creation of Czechoslovakia. When it became clear that Austria-Hungary was going to seek an armistice, a meeting of Czech leaders in Prague declared independence on October 28. The local army commander considered using force, but decided against it. On October 30 a meeting of Slovak leaders proclaimed the Slovaks independent of Hungary and part of the "Czechoslovak nation."⁸

⁶John F.N. Bradley, *The Czechoslovak Legion in Russia, 1914-1920* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1991), pp.55-56. The story of the legionnaires is an interesting one. After the October revolution, they attempted to escape Russia through the trans-Siberian railway. Western governments attempted to get them to fight the Bolsheviks and they ended up taking over the railway without orders in a nearly spontaneous operation. They did have to fight the Bolsheviks, and were ultimately expatriated by the west by 1920. The formation of the Czech legion was one of the bargaining chips used by Masaryk to get co-belligerent status for the Czechs.

⁷Rees, op. cit., p.128.

⁸Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* op.cit., pp. 170-171.

Czechoslovakia was a state few had advocated creating before 1914. It was conceived of as a semi-national state, with a Czechoslovak nation at its core. It was in fact multinational, consisting of more Germans (three million) than Slovaks (two million). In addition there were 750,000 Magyars, 500,000 Ruthenes and 80,000 Poles.⁹ Czechoslovakia was a democracy, the only peaceful functioning democracy to survive in Eastern Europe in the interwar period. While there was violence in December 1918 when several German areas attempted to declare independence, generally the republic saw internal peace in this period.

The idea of a Czechoslovak nation can be traced to the pan slavism of nineteenth century intellectuals. The very close affinity between the Czech and Slovak languages made this seem a realistic possibility to many intellectuals. Yet there were vast differences between the Czech and Slovak regions of the country. The Slovak lands were predominantly agricultural, and few Slovaks had an advanced education, the Magyars having maintained a near monopoly on wealth, power and education. Another problem was a tendency of Czechs to look down on Slovaks as simple country cousins, and to many the idea of a Czechoslovak nation was often a larger Czech nation. This attitude, coupled with a Prague based government run almost entirely by Czechs, left many Slovaks feeling as if it were a colonial relationship. This attitude persisted in the post-war period, with Slovaks perceiving themselves as a minority nation, and ultimately Czechoslovakia broke up in 1993.¹⁰

⁹Zacek, op.cit., p.193.

¹⁰Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1995), p.275.

The national situation in Czechoslovakia was also difficult for Jews. While most Jews in the Czech lands declared themselves Czech, this was not the case in other lands of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak census of 1921 allowed Jews to list Jewish as a nationality for the first time. Of 354,000 Jews in Czechoslovakia, 180,000 did so.¹¹ The numbers varied by territory. In Bohemia, only 13% declared themselves Jewish, while 48% did so in Moravia, 54% in Slovakia and 86% In Moravia. In the Czech lands most of those declaring Jewish nationality appear to have previously listed themselves as German speakers. Other Jews listed Czech, German, Slovak or Magyar as their nationality.¹² While most Jews in the Czech lands considered themselves Czech, there were many Zionist organizations, some with direct ties to the Yishuv in Palestine. Masaryk was a supporter of this, and visited Palestine in 1927.¹³ The idea of a separate Jewish nationality would be a cause for much concern among Jews, many of whom had worked hard to be accepted as Czechs.¹⁴ Whether Jews were members of the Czech nation or Czech speaking Jews was a question that would trouble many during the interwar period. This does not mean Czech Jews did not have multiple identities, and most seem to have considered themselves to be Jewish members of the Czech nation. Certainly the Czechoslovak state was accepting of this idea.

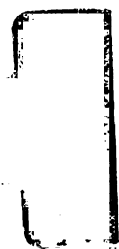
The Germans pose a particular problem for the study of interwar Czechoslovakia, and it is difficult to examine their situation without looking forward

¹¹Liva Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), p.29.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p.48.

¹⁴Ibid., p.49.



to 1938. The constitution asserted that Czechoslovakia was the creation of the “Czechoslovak nation” but had strong provisions for minority rights, especially regarding education and language.¹⁵ After the failed revolts of German territories in 1918, most Germans came to accept the Czechoslovak state and participate in politics. There were several German parties the strongest of which was the German National Socialist Worker’s Party (DNSAP). The great depression increased ethnic tensions, and after Hitler’s rise to power the DNSAP was disbanded, becoming the Sudeten Party (SdP) under Konrad Henlein. Henlein professed loyalty to Czechoslovakia publicly, but began organizing a campaign of demonstrations, aided by German propaganda which claimed Germans were oppressed by the Czechs.¹⁶

Czechoslovakia was occupied by Nazi Germany in two moves between September 1938 and March 1939. Slovakia was split off into a Nazi satellite state and the Czech lands were annexed to Hitler’s Third Reich. Over 75,000 Czech Jews were murdered by the Nazis, some three-quarters of the total Jewish population. After the war the Czechoslovak government was recreated, originally as a democracy. This lasted until 1948 when the Soviets launched a coup and put a satellite communist government in place.

The postwar period was marked by the expulsion of three million Germans from the Czech lands. This was done with the blessing of Moscow, but as Czechoslovakia was still nominally independent, the decision was made by Czechoslovak leaders. The expulsion of the Germans in 1946-7 was very popular among Czechs, and made the Czech lands ethnically almost entirely homogeneous for

¹⁵ Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., pp.178-180.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 195.

the first time. The separation from Slovakia in 1993 created an ethnically Czech nation state.

All these changes demonstrate the many possibilities of nationalism. Czech nationalism has evolved through many stages in this century. Prior to World War One most Czechs sought autonomy and a pluralistic society within the framework of a multi-national Empire. During World War One most Czechs came to support the idea of an independent Czechoslovak state. When this was created after the war Czechs for the most part accepted the new state while retaining the pluralistic society where they lived side by side with Germans. German support for the Nazi takeover shattered this idea permanently and by 1946 most Czechs readily accepted the expulsion of Germans who had lived in the Czech lands for centuries. The new Czechoslovak government attempted to create a Czechoslovak nationalism, but ultimately failed. The fact that Czechoslovakia lasted as long as it did does show that there was strong support for this idea. Czechoslovakia was a nationalism born of the twentieth century, one that didn't make it but demonstrates another possibility of what the nation can be.

Prior to World War Two, Czech nationalism was marked by general tolerance and willingness to live in a pluralistic society. Czech nationalism also had powerful strains of intolerance, particularly towards Jews and Germans. The anger that existed against Germans only occasionally resulted in violence such as street fighting in Prague in the early twentieth century. Yet this hatred of Germans was present in Czech nationalism. The antisemitism that was prevalent before the war continued in the interwar period. When the Germans occupied the border regions in 1938, a Czech fascist party emerged which advocated discrimination towards Jews in order to

placate the Germans. These attitudes continued after full occupation, with some Czechs collaborating in Hitler's extermination of Jews. While there was also resistance and attempts to aid Jews, overall Czechs seem to have neither helped nor greatly hindered the German plans. While Czech nationalism contained elements of antisemitism, the elimination of Czech Jews was undertaken by the Germans, and only after outside forces occupied the country.

The expulsion of the Germans can be viewed as the culmination of a century of ethnic tension between the two groups, but it is mostly an event born of the Second World War. Interwar Czechoslovakia saw continued ethnic tension, but it was predominantly peaceful, and neither side actively sought an ethnically homogeneous territory. Czech nationalism still retained anger at Germans, and the government worked to reduce the number of Germans in government.¹⁷ The government granted individuals full equality, but did not grant Germans rights as a national group.¹⁸ There were still tensions between the groups, and the growth of Henlein's party reflected German dissatisfaction with the situation in Czechoslovakia. Henlein's SdP party sought annexation to the Reich, but did not work for the expulsion of the Czechs. Czech leaders in this period almost always worked towards maintaining a pluralistic democracy, first under Masaryk and then his successor, Beneš. The Second World War so changed the trajectory of nationalism in the Czech lands that it is difficult to argue that the eventual emergence of a homogeneous Czech nation state was an inevitable product of the Czech national movement.

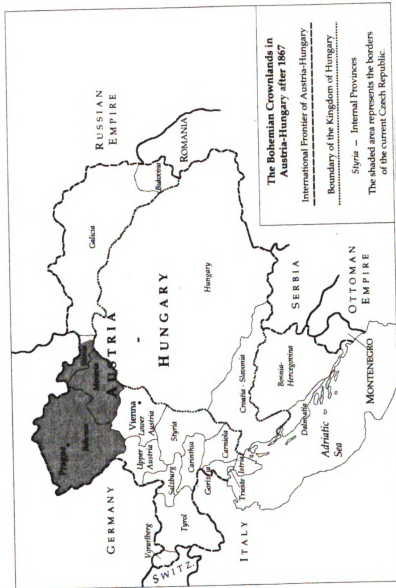
¹⁷Jürgen Tampke, *Czech-German Relations and the Politics of Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.38.

¹⁸Ibid., pp.43-3.

Czech nationalism took many forms throughout the twentieth century.

Looking at this process of nation forming helps us understand the possibilities of nationalism. Nationalism has many forms and no inevitable outcomes. Nationalism can be tolerant of others, but also carries within it a tendency towards intolerance of others. The poison of antisemitism is often prevalent in European nationalisms, and the Czech case was no exception. Nations are formed by groups with many different interests and other identities. The choice to put their loyalty towards the nation does not mean these other identities are subsumed. What the nation means to the individual can vary greatly and change over time.

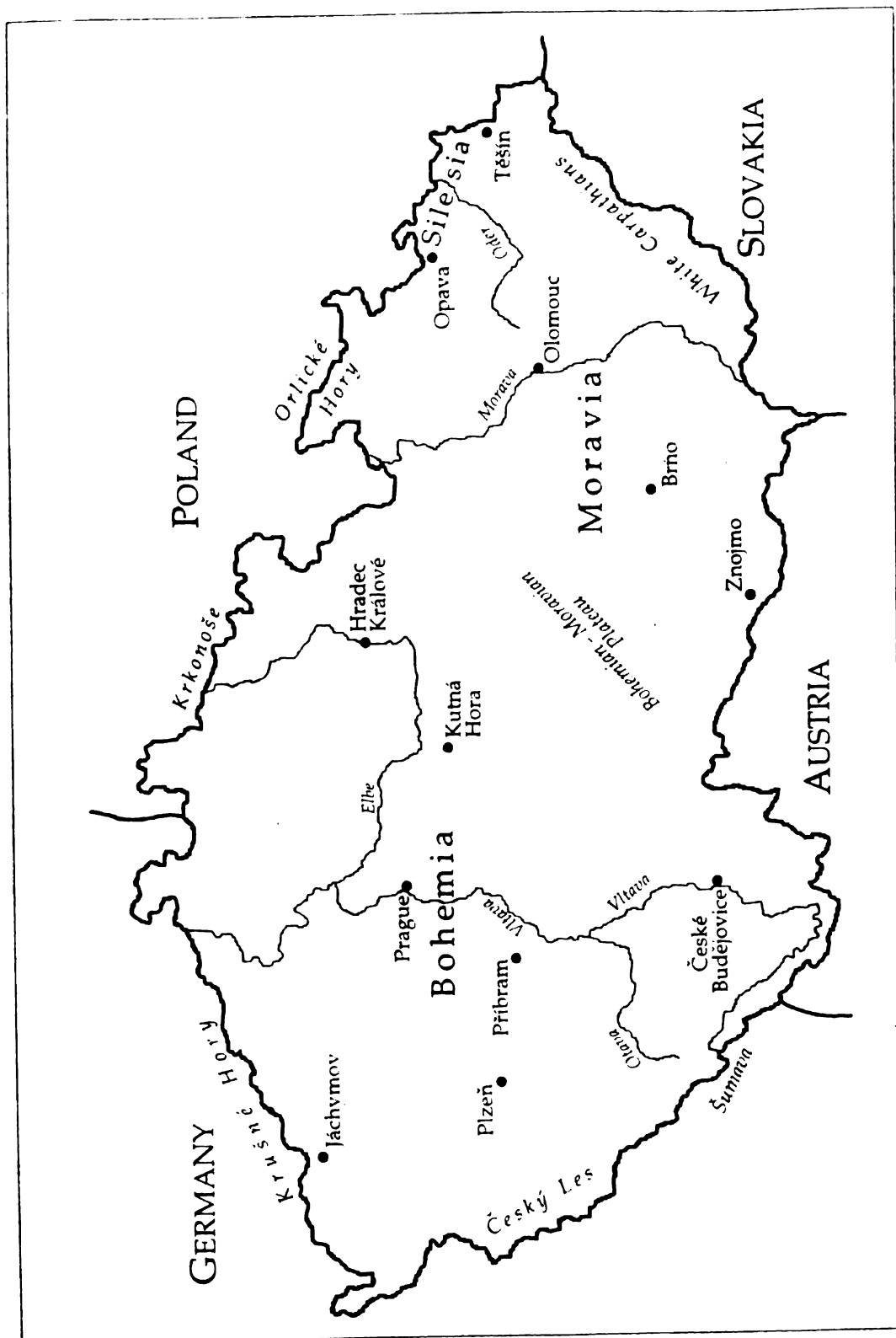
APPENDIX A



The Czech Lands and the Habsburg Empire

Source: Hugh Lecaine Agnew *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op. cit., p.160.

APPENDIX B



The Czech Lands Today

Source: Agnew *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, op.cit., p.5.

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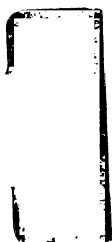
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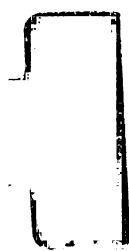
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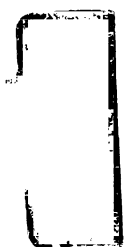
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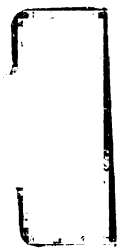
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