

**THE LIMITS AND CONCEPTIONS OF AUSTRIANNESS:
THE BOHEMIAN GERMAN PRESS DURING
FRANCIS JOSEPH'S JUBILEE IN 1908**

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Submitted to
Central European University
Nationalism Studies Program

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Advisor: Professor Mária Kovács

Budapest, Hungary
2013

Abstract

This thesis argues that among early-twentieth century Austro-German nationalists in Bohemia, the national and supranational “realities” were not separate, but concurrent. Because the Habsburgs’ supporters in Vienna relied almost exclusively on a constructed image of Francis Joseph to create and promote a feeling of Austrianness among the state’s diverse citizenry, Bohemian German nationalists who were loyal to the Habsburg monarch could manipulate the imperial conception of Austrianness to promote their own nationalist conception of it that centered on the necessity and supremacy of Austria’s Germans. The analysis is based on four Bohemian German newspapers and, specifically, their coverage and commentaries about Emperor Francis Joseph and events about him during 1908, the year of the sixtieth anniversary of his reign.

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Introduction

In late July 1914, on the eve of the First World War, the front pages of Austria-Hungary's major newspapers carried Emperor-King Francis Joseph's address "To My Peoples!" in which he explained his decision to go to war with Serbia. Towards the end he stated, "I trust in my peoples, who in all storms have always in unity and loyalty gathered around my throne and were ready for the most difficult sacrifices for the honor, greatness, and power of the Fatherland." Responding to the "beautiful words" of the emperor's war manifesto, the Prague city council declared that "the population in loyal devotion accepts the decision of its beloved monarch."¹ At an official reception in Budweis/Budějovice, the colonel of the town's infantry regiment addressed his troops in German as a captain translated his words into Czech. Referencing Francis Joseph's declaration, he called upon them to fulfill their duty faithfully and then led the men in a cheer for the emperor as they threw their caps into the air.²

In mid-October 1918, the twilight of the Habsburg Monarchy, the front pages of Austria-Hungary's major newspapers carried Emperor-King Charles's address "To My Loyal Austrian Peoples!" in which he proclaimed that the empire would be federalized on the basis of national self-determination. At the end of his announcement, he declared, "May our Fatherland, therefore, strengthened through the harmony of the nations within its borders, come out of the storm of war as an association of free peoples."³ This storm was, however, one the Habsburg Monarchy was unable to weather. Upon hearing the proclamation of the new, American-backed Czechoslovak state at the end of October 1918, Czechs in Prague took to the streets and attacked the symbols of Habsburg authority and the city's German

¹ *Bohemia*, Evening Edition, July 31, 1914, pg. 4.

² *Bohemia*, Evening Edition, July 31, 1914, pg. 4; *Prager Tagblatt*, Evening Edition, July 31, 1914, pg. 2.

³ *Wiener Zeitung*, October 17, 1918, Extra Issue.

minority. In Budweis/Budějovice, the new Czech National Committee had Francis Joseph Square renamed Freedom Square and led the ceremonious removal of the Austrian eagle from the town hall.⁴

The differences between the situations, words, and actions in July 1914 and October 1918 could perhaps not be any starker. Francis Joseph noted the unity of his “peoples” (*Völker*) around the throne, while Charles looked to the unity of the “nations” (*Nationen*) through self-determination. There had been official and popular expressions of loyalty to the emperor and of enthusiasm for the war in 1914, but after four years of what was arguably – until then – the worst war in European history, the Habsburg Monarchy could not withstand the internal pressures of social discontent, economic hardships, and the reinvigorated national movements who were seeking some form of political autonomy. Looking back on the last decades of Habsburg Austria, one could consider July 1914 and October 1918 as two extremes in a long tug-of-war between two forces. While the integrative tendency of dynastic-based, supranational state patriotism appeared to prevail at the beginning of the Great War, uniting a diverse population around the emperor and a common cause, the disintegrative tendencies of competing national movements won out in the end.

This struggle between state consciousness and nationhood, however, was not necessarily so clear-cut between what the Hungarian historian, politician, and émigré Oscar Jászi (1875-1957) famously described as the centripetal and centrifugal forces in the Habsburg Monarchy.⁵ In their introduction to *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Habsburg Monarchy* (2007), Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky point out that historians of Habsburg Central Europe have not only left the centripetal forces – in particular the dynasty – vastly understudied compared to the

⁴ Nancy Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 136.

⁵ Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).

centrifugal ones – notably the national movements – but they have also not “explicitly questioned the assumption of inherent opposition between national consciousness and imperial loyalty, which is at the heart of Jászi’s approach.”⁶ Cole and Unowsky then refer to Péter Hanák’s paradigm of “parallel realities” in which he claimed there was a “national reality” based on language and ethnicity and a “supranational reality” based on loyalty to the dynasty and state, the latter being a “sham reality” by the end of the nineteenth century.⁷ In response to the renowned Hungarian scholar, they make the following assertion:

In practice, however, it remains to be discovered in detail how these parallel realities worked, not just within Habsburg society as a whole, but within provinces, social classes, ethnic groups, and even individuals. And just as pertinent, it is further open to question as to whether these realities were indeed simply ‘parallel’ and therefore ‘separate,’ as Hanák seems to imply, or whether there was not in fact overlap between the national and dynastic or ‘supranational’ spheres.⁸

This thesis argues that among Bohemian German nationalists, as evidenced through their newspapers, the national and supranational realities were not separate, but concurrent. Because the Habsburgs’ supporters in Vienna relied almost exclusively on a constructed image of Francis Joseph to create and promote a feeling of Austrianness among the state’s diverse citizenry, Bohemian German nationalists who were loyal to the Habsburg monarch could manipulate the imperial conception of Austrianness to promote their own nationalist conception of it that centered on the necessity and supremacy of Austria’s Germans. The analysis is based on four Bohemian German newspapers and, specifically, their coverage and commentaries about Francis Joseph and events about him during 1908, his sixtieth jubilee year, in particular, the visit of the German princes on May 7-8, the Imperial Tribute Parade

⁶ Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky, *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 2.

⁷ Cole and Unowsky, *The Limits of Loyalty*, 2-3; Péter Hanák, “Die Parallellaktion von 1898: Fünfzig Jahre ungarische Revolution und fünfzig Jahre Regierungsjubiläum Franz Josephs,” *Der Garten und die Werkstatt: Ein kulturgeschichtlicher Vergleich Wien und Budapest um 1900*, (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992), pp. 101-115.

⁸ Cole and Unowsky, *The Limits of Loyalty*, 3.

on June 12, the emperor's birthday on August 18, and the anniversary of his accession on December 2.

Before the official and unofficial outpouring of support for the emperor in July 1914, the 1908 jubilee festivities arguably provided the Habsburgs' supporters in Vienna with the greatest opportunity to transform dynastic loyalty into state patriotism. The first chapter will examine the imperial conception of Austrianness and its basis, the constructed image of Francis Joseph as a man and a ruler. This chapter will show how Bohemian German newspapers supported this aspect of Austrianness, but did not believe that loyalty to the monarch could be turned into state consciousness. The second chapter will look at the Imperial Tribute Parade in Vienna and how Bohemian German newspapers hindered the dissemination of Vienna's conception of Austrianness through their coverage of the parade and how they politicized it through their commentaries. The final chapter will briefly examine how Bohemian German nationalists nationalized the image of Francis Joseph, who Vienna sought to portray as supranational monarch, and promoted a German-centered conception of Austrianness.

Before looking at the German nationalist manipulation of Austrianness, however, it is necessary to illustrate first the historical context in which this effort was rooted and then the Bohemian German newspapers utilized in this thesis.

Historical Context

As national movements developed and nation-states formed during the long nineteenth century, many in Europe perceived the Habsburg Empire as an anomaly. The centuries-old Habsburg dynasty ruled over many "nations" – none of which constituted an absolute majority of the population – and thus, unlike other dynasties and states in Europe, it

did not identify itself with a particular form of nationhood. Until the empire's dissolution in 1918, debates over whether the state should be centralized or federalized became a constant theme in imperial politics as the non-German national movements pressed for some form of national autonomy. In 1867, following a series of military and foreign policy defeats for the Habsburg Empire, the *Ausgleich* (Settlement) between Vienna and the Hungarian elite created the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, the last political restructuring of the Habsburg realm. This dualist system granted the Kingdom of Hungary almost complete autonomy and allowed it to develop as a nation-state. The *Ausgleich* did not end tensions between Vienna and Budapest, but Emperor-King Francis Joseph (r. 1848-1916) remained committed to the political deal, viewing it as the guarantor of imperial stability and thereby dashing the hopes of other national movements, in particular the Czech.

Opposed by the emperor, the Hungarian elite, and German liberals, Czech nationalists wanted a similar arrangement for the Bohemian Crown Lands of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia based on their claim of Bohemian state rights, of “the unity and independence of the Bohemian Crown Lands as guaranteed by the Habsburg king in 1526 and disregarded thereafter.”⁹ Instituting this idea would essentially federalize the empire. German liberals, Pieter Judson writes, were “strict political centralists,” who, during a time of a strict franchise in the 1870s, believed “federalism would allow noble dominated diets to trample on the civic rights, educational policy, and religious reforms that had just legislated.”¹⁰ Unable to achieve autonomy, in the final decades of the Habsburg Monarchy, Czech nationalists sought to nationalize the Bohemian Crown Lands as they gained political power on the local and provincial levels. They pushed especially for the use of Czech as a language of education

⁹ Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815-1918*, (New York: Longman, 1989,) 219.

¹⁰ Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 12.

and administration, which irritated German nationalists who believed German should remain Austria's undisputed *lingua franca*.

In Austria, the Habsburg dynasty and its non-nationalist supporters in the military, court, and imperial administration attempted not only to remain above the nationalist conflicts which intensified during the last decades of the Habsburg Monarchy, but also to combat the seemingly constant state of political crisis by promoting, through various means, a supranational state consciousness that sought to embrace and unite the diverse elements of the realm based on a common loyalty to the emperor. The mission of encouraging Austrians to feel Austrian was not an easy task in an age when people increasingly began to see the world composed of sharply defined linguistic and cultural groups called “nations.” According to traditional nationalist historiography, the nineteenth century was the time of “national revivals,” when – it was believed – people were “reawakened” to the “fact” that they belonged to a particular nation that had existed for centuries. For the last several decades, however, scholarship in general and Habsburg historiography in particular have begun to turn away from this line of thinking, instead viewing nations as modern constructs and emphasizing the variety and fluidity of identifications and the creation and propagation of – and indifference and ambivalence towards – nationhood.¹¹

This thesis will use terms like “Czech,” “German,” and “nation” without the constant use of quotation marks, but that does not mean the thesis implicitly argues that these categories and identities were real, strictly defined, and inherent in everyone. Not to be confused with the German Empire, “German nationalists,” as used in this thesis, is a shorter version of saying “Austro-German nationalists,” those people in Austria who identified with

¹¹ Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002); Tara Zahra, “‘Each nation only care for its own’: Empire, Nation, and Child Welfare Activism in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1918,” *The American Historical Review*, Volume 11, No. 5 (December 2006), pp. 1378-1402; Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*.

and promoted a conception of Germanness that included loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty and the Austrian state. “Pan-Germanists” in Austria identified with and promoted a conception of Germanness that emphasized and argued for the unity of all Germans under the Hohenzollern-led German Empire and was thus antagonistic toward the Habsburg emperor and Austrian state. As a Pan-Germanist stated in the *Reichsrat* in 1902, “I say it aloud, we want to belong to the German Empire . . . Today anyone who is a patriot in Austria is a fool.”¹² Pan-Germanist parties, however, were a very small, yet loud force in Austrian politics.

Post-*Ausgleich* Austria witnessed a gradual expansion of people involved in the political process, culminating with the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1907 for elections to the *Reichsrat*, which did not, as Francis Joseph had hoped, simplify politics and quell nationalist conflict.¹³ Due to Austria’s restrictive franchise in the 1870s, German liberals originally dominated the government, but in 1873 a Europe-wide economic depression began in Vienna and caused people to turn against political and economic liberalism. The liberal era ended in 1879 when Francis Joseph called on Count Eduard von Taaffe to form a new government which became known as the “Iron Ring,” a coalition of conservative, clerical, Polish, and Czech nationalist parties. Fueled by economic discontent and a limited expansion of the franchise in 1882, anti-liberal political movements developed in the 1880s, such as Georg von Schönerer’s Pan-German Party, which had a small following due to its leader’s erratic behavior, its anticlericalism, and its antipathy towards the Habsburgs and the Austrian state.

In 1880, the introduction of the decennial Austrian census provided national activists gained a tool with which to frame and promote national conflict. For the first time Habsburg

¹² Franko Stein; quoted in Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 226.

¹³ Jean-Paul Bled, *Franz Joseph*, trans. Teresa Bridgeman, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 275.

authorities inquired about the “language of daily use” (*Umgangssprache*), forcing people to choose one language, even if they were bilingual.¹⁴ National activists quickly equated declarations of language on the census with declarations of national identity, and made filling out the census a political issue. The results allowed national activists to map out the strength and location of their nations, viewing areas where their nation was not a majority as a “language frontier,” a site where, for example, German nationalists felt that had to actively promote Germanness and defend their “national property” (*Nationalbesitzstand*), a term they used to “refer both to the national ownership of specific geographic places and to the wealth, power, and cultural capital produced by Germans in those places.”¹⁵ For the mostly middle and upper class German minority of Prague, the census results showed just how much the provincial capital was becoming a “Czech city,” and, as Gary Cohen has argued, became defensive, forming a group solidarity in response to the Czech national movement and mass politics.¹⁶

The results from the census gave further aid to the nationalization of everyday life that was underway in the nineteenth century. Alongside political organizations, national activists formed their own cultural institutions such as choirs and student groups. In Bohemia, the administration of education on the local level, educational institutions (such as the University of Prague and the College of Physicians), associations (such as one for apothecary

¹⁴ According to the census of 1900 and 1910 and the nationalist interpretation of the data, Bohemia’s growing population was about 62% Czech and 37% German, with the rate of increase slightly higher for Czechs. In 1910, there were 4,242,000 Czechs and 2,468,000 Germans. Bruce Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System*, (New Haven: London University Press, 1978), 323.

¹⁵ Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*. Pieter Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 204.

¹⁶ Gary Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague 1861-1914*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

assistants), and agricultural institutions were divided into Czech and German sections.¹⁷

Although German liberals declined as a force in parliamentary politics, Judson argues that they still wielded great influence in nationalist associations, “the premier site where German identity was most effectively constructed, where Germanness was defined, where differences between Germans and Czechs, or even Germans and Jews, were elaborated and spread.”¹⁸

The headquarters of the German Liberal Party in Bohemia and the center for German cultural activities in Prague, for example, was the German Casino, which housed “a reading room restaurant, game rooms, several assembly halls, and a garden.”¹⁹ Although they had refused for decades to recognize nations as a legal category, Habsburg authorities began to relent and support nation-based compromises as a way to resolve nationalist conflict. In 1905 the Moravian Compromise was the first successful compromise to split a province legally and institutionally based on national autonomy and would serve as a template for other regions such as Bukovina (1910) and Galicia (1914). Individual Moravians who had not chosen and adhered to a national identity were forced to decide if they would become Czechs or Germans, thus making them members of separate political constituencies and educational systems. By 1908, therefore, national activists had established the idea of nations in the legal, institutional, and cultural aspects of everyday life, and especially through newspapers.

The Bohemian German Press

The nineteenth century witnessed a communications revolution with the inventions of the telegraph and telephone and an increase in the production of inexpensive pamphlets,

¹⁷ Gerald Stourzh, “Ethnic Attribution in Late Imperial Austria: Good Intentions, Evil Consequences,” *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective*, eds. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 72.

¹⁸ Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*, 255.

¹⁹ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, 53.

books, and newspapers thanks to the development of the rotary printing press. As the primary vehicles for communicating information, newspapers allowed an increasingly literate public to receive information from around the world, but they were also often connected to, produced by, and spoke in favor of certain political, national, and economic interests. Historians have looked at the relationship between Austrianness and nationhood in education, veterans' associations, imperial visits, and especially imperial celebrations.²⁰ With the exception of Steven Beller's work on the commentaries of the *Neue Freie Presse* and Karl Kraus about the 1908 Imperial Tribute Parade, analyses of newspaper reports and editorials as sites for communicating conceptions of the relationships between nationhood, Austrian state consciousness, and dynastic loyalty are rare.²¹ While historians often cite Viennese newspapers, this thesis will analyze the German-language press in Bohemia, specifically the *Prager Tagblatt*, *Bohemia*, *Pilsner Tagblatt*, and *Reichenberger Zeitung*.²² They represent different geographic areas and political and national interests, but, as Lothar Höbelt notes, the political background of newspapers was not always obvious.²³

The *Bohemia* (1828-1938) and the *Prager Tagblatt* (1877-1939) were the two major German-language newspapers that were produced at least twice a day in Prague, Bohemia's

²⁰ Cole and Unowsky, *The Limits of Loyalty*; Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916*, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2005); *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001).

²¹ Steven Beller, "Kraus's Firework: State Consciousness Raising in the 1908 Jubilee Parade in Vienna and the Problem of Austrian Identity", *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001).

²² The *Bohemia* and the *Reichenberger Zeitung* are available online thanks to the Czech National Library (<http://kramerius.nkp.cz/kramerius/PShowChars.do>) and the *Prager Tagblatt* and *Pilsner Tagblatt* are also available online thanks to the Austrian National Library (<http://anno.onb.ac.at/>).

²³ Lothar Höbelt, "Die Deutsche Presselandschaft," *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, Band VIII: Politische Öffentlichkeit und Zivilgesellschaft, 2. Teilband: Die Presse als Faktor der politischen Mobilisierung, eds. Helmut Rumpler und Peter Urbanitsch, (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 1870.

largest city and administrative center, which had a German minority (7% in 1910).²⁴

Advertising itself as “Bohemia’s oldest German daily newspaper,” the *Bohemia* was the official newspaper of the German Progressive Party, but, Kateřina Čapková notes, it “increasingly became a conservative newspaper by the end of the century” and, refusing to engage in Antisemitism, “it often fell back on German chauvinism.”²⁵ In 1908, the newspaper stated that it was for “officials and officers, industrialists and workers, townsfolk and farmers,” and emphasized that it “had always put the idea of national unity above all party differences.”²⁶

By the end of the nineteenth century, the *Prager Tagblatt* began to outsell the *Bohemia*. In 1900 the *Prager Tagblatt* produced 17,000 copies a day while the *Bohemia* turned out 13,500; the numbers increased to 26,000 and 18,500, respectively, by 1914.²⁷ Founded and edited by Heinrich Mercy (1826-1912), a prominent member of the German Liberal Party who had helped found Prague’s German Casino in the 1860s, the *Prager Tagblatt* represented liberal, bourgeois interests and, though it promoted Germanness, it was typically the least nationalist newspaper of the four.²⁸ Considered the unofficial mouthpiece of the German Democratic Liberal Party, Čapková writes, this was the newspaper for “Prague German intellectuals with a progressive orientation and German-minded Jews.”²⁹ Many Jewish journalists worked for both newspapers, but the *Prager Tagblatt* in particular became

²⁴ According to the 1910 census, 33,332 people out of a population of 442,017 in Prague and its suburbs declared “German” as their “language of daily use.” This was a decrease of people from the 1880 census, in which “Germans” accounted for 15.3% of the population. As Gary Cohen notes, the decline “resulted from the combined effects of immigration, natural increase, assimilation, and migration out of the city.” Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, 91-93, 100.

²⁵ Kateřina Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews?: National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia*, trans. Derek and Marzia Paton, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 71.

²⁶ It also supported the Dual Alliance with Germany and opposed a federalized Austria-Hungary in the interests of the alliance. *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, Band VIII/2, 1791, 1793, and 1798.

²⁷ *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, Band VIII/2, 1792 and 1870, footnote 174.

²⁸ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, 66.

²⁹ Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews?*, 71.

the paper in which Jews in Prague and the surrounding area placed advertisements, obituaries, and wedding announcements.³⁰

To the southwest of Prague was Bohemia's second-largest town of Pilsen/Plzeň, which, like Prague, also had a German minority (12.5%).³¹ Of the four newspapers, the *Pilsner Tagblatt* (1900-1918) was the newest and most similar to the *Bohemia* in its strong emphasis on Germanness. Unlike the other newspapers, it had only one edition each day and a circulation of no more than 4,300.³²

To the northeast of Prague, near Austria's border with the German Empire, was Reichenberg/Liberec, which, unlike Prague and Pilsen/Plzeň, had a German majority (90.5%).³³ Published twice a day, the *Reichenberger Zeitung* (1860-1938) was the leading German-language newspaper of northern Bohemia with a circulation of 14,000 in 1900 that increased to 20,000 by 1910.³⁴ In 1881, the newspaper became the official organ of the German National Party in Bohemia. Four years later, the party created its own newspaper, the *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, but the *Reichenberger Zeitung* continued to include on its masthead "Organ for the German National Party in Bohemia," even though, as Adéla Hall notes, it "became a little more liberal."³⁵ In 1908, it is clear, however, that unlike the other German nationalist newspapers that were explicitly and enthusiastically loyal to Emperor Francis Joseph and Austria, the *Reichenberger Zeitung* exhibited Pan-German leanings.

³⁰ Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews?*, 70-71.

³¹ According to the 1910 census, 10,036 people out of 80,445 declared "German" as their "language of daily use." Arnold Suppan, "'Germans' in the Habsburg Empire: Language, Imperial Ideology, National Identity, and Assimilation," *The Germans and the East*, eds. Charles Ingrao and Franz Szabo, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2008), 181.

³² *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, Band VIII/2, 1685.

³³ According to the 1910 census, 32,893 people out of 36,350 declared "German" as their "language of daily use." Suppan, "'Germans' in the Habsburg Empire," 181.

³⁴ Its closest competitor in terms of numbers had a circulation of 5,000 in 1900. *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, Band VIII/2, 1639-1640.

³⁵ Adéla Hall, *Deutsch und Tschechisch im sprachpolitischen Konflikt: Ein vergleichende diskursanalytische Untersuchung zu den Sprachenverordnung Badenis von 1897*, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008), 51-52.

Chapter 1: The Imperial Conception of Austrianness

On the evening of December 2, 1908, the sixtieth anniversary of Francis Joseph's accession to the throne, the emperor and the imperial elite gathered in Vienna's Court Opera House to attend a performance of *The Emperor's Dream*. This one-act play begins with Rudolf "the Founder," who in the thirteenth century established the Habsburg dynasty in Austria and became the first Habsburg elected Holy Roman Emperor. Worried about the future of his realm, he falls asleep on the throne. Future, a female figure, then appears and leads him through scenes depicting great moments in Austria's forthcoming history. Rudolph then wants to know, however, whether the people will love his heir because this, he believes, determines the greatness of a ruler. Future replies that his descendant is the most adored monarch ever and that when he hears the cheering of the masses, he will be able to rest assured. "What you have planted, you see it bloom again," she states, "The love that once founded the power of Habsburg, this love also binds people and ruler." The figures of Love and Loyalty then accompany Rudolf to the jubilee festivities for Francis Joseph as the people thank and salute him and their "beloved Austria." After Rudolf falls asleep, actors representing the present – such as the regions of Bohemia, Hungary, and Galicia – enter the stage. "This vision of the monarchy as a harmonious mosaic of peoples and cultures moving into the future with confidence, guided by the experience of the sacred House of Habsburg," Daniel Unowsky states, "reaches a crescendo with the collective singing of the state hymn."³⁶ As this play was taking place before the emperor in Vienna, Prague's New German Theater was performing it for the local and provincial elite. The following day, the *Prager Tagblatt* opined that "the festival production was a joyous inspiration, in which the past and present

³⁶ Daniel Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916*, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2005), 87.

combine and provide the rich opportunity to muster all arts of the theater and to put it in the service of patriotism.”³⁷

In the late-nineteenth century, the Habsburgs and their supporters at court, in the administration, and in the military sought to promote a supranational state consciousness (*Gesamtstaatsbewusstsein*) that could provide a means of unity for the peoples of Austria against the divergent tendencies of national movements. *The Emperor's Dream* was a typical demonstration of this “Austrian state idea.” Originally written by the author and playwright Countess Christiane Thun-Salm for the emperor’s fiftieth jubilee in 1898, the play was the brainchild of members of the court and imperial government who debated which historical moments should be included in the work because, apart from aesthetic reasons, certain scenes in history could potentially upset nationalists, who developed their own interpretations of history, and thus hinder the mission to foster unity.³⁸ In creating Austrianness, proponents of state consciousness often had to negotiate between the empire’s diversity and the dynasty’s history because its main pillar was the emperor, who stood at the helm of a centuries-old dynasty and realm and to whom every subject was expected to be loyal. Although a basis for Austrian state consciousness could potentially be found in the rule of law, the modern state, economics, and international politics, Peter Urbanitsch states, Habsburg authorities believed “the dynasty – and its corollaries such as the army and the bureaucracy – was the only bond that held together the disconnected parts of the state; the dynasty was the only agency that

³⁷ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, December 3, 1908, pg. 12.

³⁸ The scenes selected were the 1515 marriage pact that led to the acquisition of Bohemia and Hungary, the victory over the Ottomans at the 1683 siege of Vienna, the announcement of the Pragmatic Sanction which guaranteed Maria Theresa the right of succession, a gathering of Maria Theresa and her many children to hear Mozart perform, and the Congress of Vienna in 1814-15. Due to the murder of Empress Elisabeth in September 1898, the play was only published for public use, but not performed for the emperor, who cancelled all official jubilee festivities. Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism*, 85-86. Timothy Snyder, *The Red Prince: Secret Lives of a Habsburg Archduke*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 7-28.

could demand supranational loyalty from all of its subjects.”³⁹ The mission of the dynasty’s supporters was thus to transform the loyalty of subjects to their monarch into the patriotism of citizens for their state and to create a feeling of Austrian consciousness that could coexist with nationalist identifications.

By the late-nineteenth century, an image of Francis Joseph had developed that focused on his being both a man and a ruler. These two aspects of the emperor were not always mutually exclusive. As Urbanitsch notes, “For the general public, the man (Francis Joseph, a human being) and his function (being emperor) coincided.”⁴⁰ Francis Joseph, Unowsky writes, became “both idealized ruler – prince of peace, first soldier, living embodiment of the benevolent state – and idealized human being, dedicated to working for the good of his subjects, a model of suffering and patience, bowed but not broken by personal tragedy.”⁴¹ On August 18, 1908, Francis Joseph’s seventy-eighth birthday, the *Prager Tagblatt* stated that the emperor’s birthday belonged “in the sphere of the purely human,” providing a moment when reflecting on the historical and political meaning of the sixty-year reign “steps back from the image of Francis Joseph the man, from the honorable figure of the aged emperor, which rises far above the terms ‘ruler’ and ‘monarch.’” The editorial, however, also took the opportunity to laud Francis Joseph the ruler. Ignoring the emperor’s absolutist past and present leanings, the *Prager Tagblatt* claimed that as the first constitutional monarch of the Habsburg Monarchy, Francis Joseph “has always been a master and example” of a ruler who puts the rule of law before his personal desires.⁴² Later that year, for the sixtieth anniversary of the emperor’s accession to the throne, the *Bohemia* printed an original contribution by Otto Julius Bierbaum (1865-1910), a Silesian-born journalist, editor,

³⁹ Peter Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities: The Dynastic Myth of the Habsburg Monarchy – a Futile Exercise in the Creation of Identity?” *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 35 (2004), 105.

⁴⁰ Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities,” 130.

⁴¹ Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism*, 94.

⁴² *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

and writer. In his piece – titled “About the Emperor” – he points out that the outdated belief in the divine right of kings has been waning and that princes “today must provide their certificate of competence,” which means “that they think and then are able to act like a statesman.” They do not need to be geniuses or have great talents, he argues, but they need to have wisdom, determination, self-restraint, and modesty. “It appears to me,” Bierbaum concludes, “that, without offending the truth, one may pay homage to the venerable ruler of Austria-Hungary with the whole quotation from *Macbeth*”:

The king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude . . .⁴³

Although Bierbaum was describing Francis Joseph the ruler, he could have arguably been describing Francis Joseph the man in that the “king-becoming graces” could also be considered values of bourgeois society, which, Urbanitsch notes, was “the group that was the main target for all endeavors at creating ‘Austrian’ identity.”⁴⁴

Due to the centrality of Francis Joseph as a man and a ruler in the creation and promotion of Austrianness, this chapter will examine further the image of the emperor as it had developed by the late-nineteenth century and, more importantly, how it was promoted in the Bohemian German press. The following sections will be based largely on editorials on two major days – already mentioned above – for reflecting on the emperor, especially during a jubilee year: his birthday, August 18, and the anniversary of his accession to the throne, December 2. The first section will look at the cult of personality that developed around the emperor and how the Bohemian German press helped foster the image of an aged, admirable man around which all Austrians could rally. The second section will examine Francis Joseph

⁴³ *Bohemia*, Supplemental Periodical, December 2, 1908, pg. 2.

⁴⁴ Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities,” 122.

as a ruler by the beginning of the twentieth century and how the Bohemian German newspapers viewed the emperor as a means of unity, but a unity that remained unfulfilled.

Francis Joseph the Man

In its editorial on the emperor's birthday in 1908, the *Prager Tagblatt*, after praising Francis Joseph as a constitutional monarch, opined that "it lies in the nature of Austrians to foster next to the sober constitutional relationship of the citizen to his emperor a purely personal one, too, which joins love to the respect and admiration of the head of state."⁴⁵ Reflecting the common image of Francis Joseph as it had developed by the late-nineteenth century, Bohemian German newspapers often noted the emperor's advanced age, his admirable personal characteristics, and his family tragedies, aspects that humanized him and made him someone with whom people could relate and sympathize regardless of their identifications. The *Bohemia* used the most colorful language, calling Francis Joseph the "noble, silent sufferer on the throne" and "the aged, lonely man, whom fate has forced into the hands of an eighty-year-old the steering wheel of the leaky ship of state in a dangerous, stormy time." In addition to this nautical imagery, the newspaper even invoked Christian allegories, portraying Francis Joseph as a Christ-like sufferer and martyr. "As a human – as a good, generous, quiet, noble human," the *Bohemia* opined, "we love the man, who through six decades has worn Austria's crown of thorns with biblical humility and has gone upright like a hero on the way of the cross (*Passionsweg*) of his life."⁴⁶

The emperor's personal characteristics, "whether real or the fabrication of the propagators of his myth," Urbanitsch states, "point in the same direction: his personal

⁴⁵ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

⁴⁶ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

modesty, his strong sense of duty, and his family-mindedness.”⁴⁷ The *Pilsner Tagblatt* emphasized his character traits the most. On December 2, the newspaper noted the image of the old, “always restlessly active” emperor dedicated to conducting the business of state diligently from the early morning into the night; “in this way we see the emperor daily, thus his external image has become fixed in our memory.” It then turned to the “internal image”:

Gentleness, kindness and fairness, a truly noble soul, strength and greatness of character, sincere in conviction, elegance and correctness, truthfulness and loyalty, adorn [the image] as the brightest colors on a base coat of innermost piety and of an enduring trust in God.⁴⁸

There was also the physical image of the emperor, which, of the newspapers utilized for this thesis, only adorned the front pages of the *Pilsner Tagblatt* on Francis Joseph’s birthday and the anniversary of his accession.⁴⁹ The emperor’s portrait could be found seemingly everywhere throughout the empire in homes, schools, and government offices, and on everyday objects, such as stamps and currency. “It became a myth in itself,” Urbanitsch notes, the “friendly face . . . familiar and well-known, snow-white bearded under the general’s hat,” “the clear blue eyes and the benevolent face, its features glowing with a mellowed, distinguished calm and mild understanding.”⁵⁰

Sometimes the emperor’s public image was a slight twist of the truth. “Although we know today that his family life was far from harmonious,” Urbanitsch writes, “it is clear that it was necessary to depict him as a loving (grand)father in order to live up to the expectations of an ideal standard of bourgeois values.”⁵¹ Crown Prince Rudolph, who was frustrated with his father both politically and personally, committed suicide with his mistress at the

⁴⁷ Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities,” 129-130.

⁴⁸ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, December 2, 1908, pg. 1; also see *Pilsner Tagblatt*, December 2, 1908, pg. 1.

⁴⁹ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, August 18, 1908, pg. 1; *Pilsner Tagblatt*, December 2, 1908, pg. 1.

⁵⁰ Felix Salten, *Das österreichische Antlitz*, (Berlin, 1908) & Eugen Ketterl, *Der alte Kaiser wie nur Einer Ihn sah*, (Vienna, 1908); quoted in Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities,” 123.

⁵¹ Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities,” 130.

Habsburg hunting lodge at Mayerling on January 30, 1889. Empress Elisabeth, who did not have the happiest of marriages, was murdered by an Italian anarchist in Geneva on September 10, 1898. “His pain was the pain of all,” the *Pilsner Tagblatt* stated on December 2, 1908, “this sympathy, however, always turned into admiration when one saw the amount of emotional strength it took for the emperor to master his grief.”⁵² For Francis Joseph’s birthday, the *Pilsner Tagblatt* opined that the public mourning after these deaths showed that “the emperor and the people are one.”⁵³

Francis Joseph was not only the patriarch of the Habsburg family, but he also became the figurative father of his subjects. According to a book on how to teach history, the second edition of which was published in 1907, the pupil “should learn to venerate [the emperor] as the father of the fatherland and to extend this reverence to all the members of the majestic family.”⁵⁴ The paternalistic image of the ruler as “father of his peoples” was especially promoted in 1908 in connection with an effort to instill the imperial conception of Austrianness in children. For the jubilee year, the city of Vienna had a small book published for the capital’s youth, which showed through photographs how their “Father-City” (*Vaterstadt*) had become a great, modern, world metropolis in the past sixty years thanks to the emperor.⁵⁵ Under Francis Joseph’s patronage, the Imperial Union of Patriotic Youth Organizations of Austria was created to promote “patriotic sentiment, physical development, and religious-moral values of Austrian youth.” The emperor also called for an empire-wide donation campaign called “Everything for the Child” to raise money for orphanages and

⁵² *Pilsner Tagblatt*, December 2, 1908, pg. 1. This paper also noted the death of his first-born child, Sophie (1855-1857) and the execution of his brother Maximilian of Mexico (1832-1867).

⁵³ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

⁵⁴ Emanuel Hannak, *Methodik des Unterrichtes in der Geschichte*; quoted in Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities,” 132.

⁵⁵ *Wien seit 60 Jahren: Ein Album für die Jugend*, (Vienna: Gerlach & Wiedling, 1908), 5.

programs for children.⁵⁶ In her work on the Viennese home front during the First World War, Maureen Healy has argued that the dynasty and state's inability to alleviate the hardships of the people and adequately address their concerns and demands "revealed the limits of symbolic paternalism, exposing the imperial image as illusion."⁵⁷

Francis Joseph the Ruler

In 1897, Prince Max Egon Fürstenberg of the centralist Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners Party, looking toward the emperor's fiftieth jubilee the following year, noted in a letter to his fellow nobleman, Prince Karl Schwarzenberg of the federalist Feudal Conservative Party, that "whether we celebrate our emperor in German, Czech, Polish, or Croatian, it should make no difference . . . We all can survive, only if we rally around the emperor *viribus unitis* [with united forces]." Given the heated nationalist turmoil over the Badeni language ordinances that year, Fürstenberg, invoking the emperor's motto, urged Schwarzenberg that the Bohemian nobility should overcome their political differences through their common loyalty to Francis Joseph for the sake of the monarchy's survival.⁵⁸ Having long maintained that German should be the only official language of administration throughout Austria, the emperor's apparent support of the Badeni ordinances – which would make both Czech and German official languages in Bohemia – frustrated those members of the political elite who were both loyal to the emperor and wanted to maintain a centralist Austria with German as the undisputed official language. In the interest of solving the issues

⁵⁶ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 217.

⁵⁷ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 283.

⁵⁸ Max Egon Fürstenberg to Karl Schwarzenberg, December 30, 1897; quoted in Eagle Glassheim, "Between Empire and Nation: The Bohemian Nobility, 1880-1918," *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, eds. Pieter Judson and Marsha Rozenblit, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 76.

between the nationalist movements, Eagle Glassheim states, “Francis Joseph had no consistent strategy, sometimes yielding to national demands if he thought it would bring some domestic peace, sometimes standing fast against nationalists.”⁵⁹ His concessions to the non-German national movements frustrated politicians such as Count Oswald Thun, the leader of the conservative, centralist Constitutionals. “It is sad that no human being knows what the monarch really wants and what the government should thus do,” he lamented at the end of 1897, “Patriotic today means merely that one does not make a scandal . . . We are patriots only when we are blind and dumb.”⁶⁰

Thun’s grievance points to the challenge of distinguishing between the constructed image and reality of Francis Joseph as ruler and to the realization that the constructed image did not solve problems, but only papered over them. After complaining about the dire situation of the Germans in Bohemia, the *Bohemia* echoed Thun, admitting that it did not know what the emperor thought about the situation in the province.⁶¹ The emperor thus remained a rather distant, veiled figure, not out of choice, but out of necessity. Within the political structure of the late Habsburg Austria – a constitutional monarchy – the emperor still retained significant powers, but what was more important than his political power, Christiane Wolf argues, was his symbolic power; he had to be – or at least appear to be – apolitical in order to provide a symbol of unity and a means of integration in the empire.⁶² While she notes that the trend of depoliticizing Francis Joseph did not contribute to actually settling

⁵⁹ Glassheim, “Between Empire and Nation,” 76.

⁶⁰ Oswald Thun to Alain Rohan, December 22, 1897; quoted in Glassheim, “Between Empire and Nation,” 76.

⁶¹ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

⁶² Christiane Wolf, “Representing Constitutional Monarchy in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-century Britain, Germany, and Austria,” eds. Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky, *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 210-211.

nationalist conflicts, “it did establish the emperor as a focal point for an emotional connection to the state” and thus “did have a stabilizing effect on the Habsburg Monarchy.”⁶³

The Bohemian German newspapers generally agreed with the idea that the emperor provided a means to bridge the divisions in society, a way to unite not just competing national movements, but also generations and classes. The *Pilsner Tagblatt* noted that in the Habsburg Monarchy, the emperor’s birthday was the only day of the year in which “all differences and animosities are extinguished and peace is allowed to reign on the most hotly disputed field of battle” where “all passions and desires remain silent” because everyone is focused on Francis Joseph, who “knew to win as no other the love and admiration of his subjects.”⁶⁴ On the emperor’s birthday, the *Bohemia* claimed that Austrians loved their monarch as no other people on earth loved theirs because “this love was planted for us in the blood of two generations of our families.”⁶⁵ That same day, the *Prager Tagblatt* noted that “generations come and go, grandfather, father, child – before their eyes hangs only the one picture; they all know only the one emperor.” The newspaper also emphasized that everyone – “whether farmer, town dweller, industrialist, businessman, scholar, or worker” – knows the emperor is guiding the state and has a personal connection to him, even in the furthest reaches of the realm, where “the last Galician peasant” knows to say “his emperor.”⁶⁶ Writing about Czechs and Germans, the *Prager Tagblatt* emphasized the role of Francis Joseph as a unifier, stating that “each people in its own way, each people with a special feeling for its own thinking and own customs, and here [in Bohemian and Moravia] the person of the emperor stands in the center of thinking and feelings, unhindered by national differences.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Wolf, “Representing Constitutional Monarchy,” 211.

⁶⁴ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

⁶⁵ *Bohemia*, August 18, 1908, Morning Edition, pg. 1.

⁶⁶ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

⁶⁷ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

The *Reichenberger Zeitung* and the *Bohemia* were critical of the capability of common loyalty to the emperor to be transformed into a state consciousness, believing the Austrian state idea to be impossible to instill in the population earnestly and completely. The *Reichenberger Zeitung* did not comment at all about the emperor on his birthday, but the Pan-German newspaper, with its anti-Habsburg leanings, did subtly criticize Francis Joseph as a hypocrite on the anniversary of his accession. It pointed out that he had been raised as an absolutist, but then supported universal male suffrage, something that won him praise from the Social Democrats. “Seldom has the state idea under a ruler undergone such profound changes as has happened during the sixty-year reign of Francis Joseph,” the newspaper also stated. After quoting the emperor’s proclamation on the day of his accession in 1848, in which he stated that all the areas of the monarchy were to be united, the *Reichenberger Zeitung* pointed out that now Hungary is virtually independent. Noting the well wishes for the monarch resounding throughout the empire, the newspaper hoped that a “makeshift unity” would at least be produced “among the colorful mix of races and confessions of his lands” to maintain Austria-Hungary’s position in the world.⁶⁸

On the emperor’s birthday, the *Bohemia* portrayed Francis Joseph as a symbol and means of unity, “the focal point in which the divergent beams of the Austrian community of peoples (*Völkergemeinschaft*) meet and from which the reflection of so much poignant love and sacrifice beams back on them.” The newspaper had opened its front-page reflection, however, with a stinging criticism of the imperial conception of Austrianness:

The Austrian is a timid (*schüchtern*) patriot. In the dull monotony of the year all of his feelings and thoughts are absorbed almost exclusively with economic and national concerns, which arise from the native soil and rarely let such a thing as imperial consciousness (*Reichsbewusstsein*) or Great-Austrianness (*Grossösterreichertum*) become alive in him.

⁶⁸ *Reichenberger Zeitung*, December 2, 1908, pg. 1.

Compared to the “domineering, world-conquering” British, the “naive, childlike enthusiasm” of the French, and the Germans’ “impressive military enthusiasm,” the newspaper stated that these collective qualities were “foreign” to the Austrian, who was “the eternal provincial.” The empire, “which portrays a conglomeration of elements,” was forced together through history and not through “elective affinity,” it pointed out. Therefore, the *Bohemia* argues, the unchangeable, “bitter truth” is that the diverse components cannot become one.⁶⁹

The *Prager Tagblatt* touched on some of the same themes the *Bohemia* did, but while the *Bohemia* saw Austria’s diversity as an unconquerable obstacle to the development of Austrianness, the *Prager Tagblatt* was more optimistic:

No country in the world is so wonderfully various in its individual parts, so rich in differences, contradictions, geographic, social, and political organizations. All this diversity, however, born from chance, history, and plain desire, becomes one in the relationship of everything to the driver of the empire, who unites in himself the love of individuals to their particular homeland, to their language, customs, and character.⁷⁰

Later that year, on the sixtieth anniversary of the emperor’s reign, however, the *Prager Tagblatt* was willing to concede that the mission to promote unity remained unfulfilled.⁷¹ But as this newspaper pointed out, the emperor was the only thing uniting the diverse peoples of the empire. The apolitical image of an admirable old man and unifier of his peoples could and did promote attachment to the emperor, but it was not enough to instill Austrian state consciousness, especially when the image of Francis Joseph and events to turn dynastic loyalty into state patriotism became politicized.

⁶⁹ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

⁷⁰ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

⁷¹ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, December 2, 1908, pg. 1-2. The reason for this, it claimed, was the constant fighting caused by the rise of the “Slavs” and that, in pursuit of peace, the emperor listened to bad advisors and made concessions that went beyond the state’s needs.

Chapter 2: Austrianness on Parade

On the morning of June 12, 1908, 12,000 people paraded down the grand Ringstrasse toward the Hofburg. Several hundred thousand spectators had turned out to watch the Imperial Tribute Parade (*Kaiser-Huldigungs-Festzug*), which had been organized as the highlight of the yearlong celebration for the sixtieth jubilee of Francis Joseph's reign. Leading the procession were groups in historical costumes depicting great moments in Habsburg history from medieval times to the revolutions of 1848-49. Behind them marched the imperial capital's social, professional, and athletic associations. Lastly paraded the "Tribute of the Austrian Crown Lands," in which groups dressed in traditional costumes represented the various peoples of the Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy. At the Outer Gate of the Hofburg, where an elaborate platform and plaza had been set up for the event, the head of this colorful cavalcade of knights, burghers, and peasants halted before the monarch, and formalities commenced. Before members of the Austrian and foreign elite, Count Hans Wilczek, the honorary president of the parade committee, delivered an opening address to the emperor, proclaiming, "All of Austria's nationalities thank Your Majesty that they may pass loudly cheering in a parade, conscious to form a united Austrian people and to be the loyal subjects of an inexhaustibly kind ruler and emperor."⁷² Amid the excitement and pageantry, however, the Bohemian delegation would have certainly been a reminder to all of the spectators, including Francis Joseph, that even this joyful, patriotic demonstration, invented to portray a united Austria and to honor the emperor, could not escape disruptive nationalist tensions.

In attempting to understand national and state identifications in late Habsburg Austria, a number of scholars have looked at the Imperial Tribute Parade as an event that reflected the

⁷² *Prager Tagblatt*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 4.

Austrian state idea. They have concluded that even though the event had the potential to promote the imperial conception of Austrianness – and did to some extent – it also contained significant flaws, from the lack of Czech participation and the absence of celebrating anything that actually occurred during Francis Joseph’s sixty-year reign to the emphasis on the German contributions to Habsburg history and the overreliance on using the person of the monarch as the basis for promoting state consciousness.⁷³ Through newspaper articles and commemorative mementos about the parade, Daniel Unowsky states, “the message was clear: all the peoples of the monarchy could enjoy the security to develop their national cultures under the watchful eye of the Prince of Peace, Francis Joseph.”⁷⁴ The parade’s basic idea, however, was not necessarily unambiguous throughout Austria. This chapter will look at how Bohemian German newspapers reported and commented on the event and affected the dissemination of the imperial conception of Austrianness. The first section will survey how the parade developed in Vienna and how the Bohemian German newspapers reported the event for their readers. The second section will then look at the Bohemian German newspapers’ reactions to the lack of Czech participation in the tribute parade and how they politicized it.

Producing the Parade in Vienna, Reproducing it in the Bohemian German Press

Following Count Wilczek’s opening address in the *Kaiserfestplatz* on the day of the parade, Francis Joseph replied that he was delighted to be able to view the “patriotic

⁷³ Steven Beller, “Kraus’s Firework: State Consciousness Raising in the 1908 Jubilee Parade in Vienna and the Problem of Austrian Identity”, *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001); Peter Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities: The Dynastic Myth of the Habsburg Monarchy – a Futile Exercise in the Creation of Identity?” *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 35 (2004).

⁷⁴ Daniel Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916*, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2005), 179.

celebration” and thanked all the organizers and participants for making it possible.⁷⁵ In February 1908, however, he had made it known to the parade committee that he did not want to be the center of such a grand event, essentially terminating the plans, but he was persuaded the following month to allow the parade to go on as a means for raising state consciousness that would also have a positive effect on employment and tourism in Vienna.⁷⁶ In May 1907 a committee of men from the court and imperial government had begun to form as a private initiative to organize a celebration for the jubilee, and by October of that year its members had developed a plan that would include all the peoples of the monarchy.

The first major part of the procession was the “Historical Section” which – symbolizing the past – consisted of nineteen groups, each portraying scenes from Habsburg history. Dressed in historical costumes, a number of the participants were nobles playing the roles of their medieval ancestors. The parade highlighted the same figures and moments from Thun-Salm’s *The Emperor’s Dream* and then some: Rudolph the Founder and “the Germany army”; the Habsburg-Jagiellon marriage in 1515; the sieges of Vienna; the Thirty Years War – without the Battle of White Mountain because that would upset Czech nationalists; Eugene of Savoy; Maria Theresa; Joseph II; Archduke Charles; the wars against republican and Napoleonic France; the Congress of Vienna; Vienna in the 1830s; and lastly, the Habsburg army under Field Marshal Radetzky in 1848.⁷⁷

In the 1880s, Count Wilczek had worked with the late Crown Prince Rudolph on the twenty-four-volume *The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Word and Image (Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild)*, which would become known as the *Kronprinzenwerk*. The main objective of this encyclopedia, which described the lands and peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy, was to promote identification with a common Habsburg

⁷⁵ *Prager Tagblatt*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 4.

⁷⁶ Beller, “Kraus’s Firework,” 53.

⁷⁷ Beller, “Kraus’s Firework,” 59-60.

fatherland through the diversity of its peoples.⁷⁸ This supranational idea, of which Crown Prince Rudolph was a leading proponent, was reflected in the second major part of the parade: the “Tribute of the Austrian Crown Lands” which – representing the present – consisted of delegates from throughout Austria, arranged in the order of Francis Joseph’s imperial title.⁷⁹ Despite the official name of the section, the press often called it the “tribute of the nationalities,” either intentionally or unintentionally emphasizing and promoting the idea of national identities over provincial ones. Some national groups had complaints but still participated in the end. Croatians were not happy that the program portrayed the Croatians of 1848 as brigands. The delegation from Dalmatia grumbled about their poor accommodations, though the Ruthenes had been given none at all.⁸⁰ Due to national conflicts and nationalist interpretations of history, there were some issues that prevented certain nations from participating. Budapest decided not to send any delegates from the Kingdom of Hungary because it recognized 1867 and not 1848 as the beginning of Francis Joseph’s reign as the Hungarian king. Consequently, this prevented the parade from celebrating the entire Habsburg Monarchy. The small Italian minority from Tirol refused to participate due to the historical group commemorating Field Marshal Radetzky, who defeated the Italian uprising against Habsburg rule in 1848. Czech nationalists were offended that the first scene in the parade’s historical section was to feature Rudolf of Habsburg – and the “German army” – who, despite being the founder of the Habsburg dynasty in Austria, defeated Ottokar II, the King of Bohemia who died in battle against Rudolf in 1278.⁸¹ Their boycott, which will be elaborated on below, was not, however, due to the parade itself.

⁷⁸ Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities,” 126-127.

⁷⁹ Elisabeth Grossegger, *Der Kaiser-Huldigungs-Festzug Wien 1908*, (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), 244-249.

⁸⁰ Beller, “Kraus’s Firework,” 54.

⁸¹ Nancy Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 119.

Although newspapers theoretically provided a means for the imperial conception of Austrianness embodied in the Imperial Tribute Parade to reach people throughout Austria, in practice, this was not necessarily the case. If a person living in northern area of the province were to have read only the *Reichenberger Zeitung* in mid-June 1908, he or she would have probably thought the tribute parade for the emperor was a rather modest affair and certainly would not have known it had any deeper message apart from saluting Francis Joseph. While commentaries about the Imperial Tribute Parade were on the front pages of the *Prager Tagblatt*, *Pilsner Tagblatt*, and *Bohemia* the day after it occurred, the *Reichenberger Zeitung* opined on June 13 about the political situation in Portugal.⁸² The other Bohemian German newspapers printed very detailed accounts on the appearance of the different historical and national groups, the atmosphere along the route, and the content of the speeches; the *Reichenberger Zeitung*, however, provided no details about these aspects of the parade. This newspaper, in fact, gave the tribute parade the most minimal coverage in the middle and end of its pages. It mentioned the parade's most basic components and its route and noted that speeches were given thanking the emperor, the organizers, and the participants, but the *Reichenberger Zeitung* did not publish anything more about the content, such as Wilczek's statement about what the parade was supposed to symbolize.⁸³ In keeping with its sympathies for Pan-Germanism, the German Empire, and the Hohenzollerns, the leading northern Bohemian German-language newspaper clearly had no interest in commemorating the history of the Habsburg dynasty and celebrating the diversity of Austria's population.

Concerning the details of the parade, the other newspapers generally printed the same word-for-word reports before or on the day of the parade, such as the descriptions of the

⁸² *Reichenberger Zeitung*, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

⁸³ *Reichenberger Zeitung*, June 12, 1908, pg. 8 & June 13, 1908, pg. 13.

historical and national groups and the details of the elaborate platform for the emperor.⁸⁴

“The Bohemian group shows the old way of life (*Volksleben*) as it has still remained preserved in the woods and mountains of the German Bohemian forest” read the beginning of the standard description about the Bohemian delegation, which featured, it noted, a wedding procession, a group of reapers, lumberjacks, timber raftsmen, and peat-cutters. The *Bohemia* stated that this group led the others “with a cheerful scene from the Bohemian Forest and with merry country folk . . . 300 people, splendidly colorful and original (*urwüchsig*).”⁸⁵ Save for the *Reichenberg Zeitung*, all stated that the parade occurred “in a most impressive, most brilliant way” and that it was not just Vienna that “witnessed the historical spectacle, but all of Austria because . . . many thousands of curious people from all parts of the empire have come in order to be able to see the magnificent tribute for the emperor with their own eyes.”⁸⁶

Although the unity of Austria’s people was intended to be a major theme of the parade, newspaper reports often focused heavily on the pageantry and novelty of the event, as shown in the above quotes. The *Prager Tagblatt* stated that the national groups made a stronger impression on the public than the historical groups.⁸⁷ This paper along with the *Bohemia* and the *Pilsner Tagblatt* printed the same report the day after the parade that noted that the national groups “made an overpowering impression.” Stating how almost all the nationalities in Austria gathered together to offer a tribute to the emperor, this report continued, “the endless diversity of costumes, the wonderful groups, . . . the different

⁸⁴ *Bohemia*, however, did not provide the descriptions of the groups in the Tribute of the Austrian Crown Lands. *Prager Tagblatt*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 1; *Bohemia*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 1; *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

⁸⁵ *Bohemia*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 2. Budweis maintained a strong local identity in Bohemia; see, Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

⁸⁶ *Bohemia*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 1; *Prager Tagblatt*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 1; *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

⁸⁷ *Prager Tagblatt*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 1.

characteristic wagons made an indescribable, varied lovely impression.” This same write-up also noted how it was “impressive” that “the representatives of all the nationalities” cheered the emperor in their own mother tongues.⁸⁸ It was at this point that the editor of the *Pilsner Tagblatt* inserted “only the Czechs were missing” as a reminder that all of Austria’s peoples were in fact not there.⁸⁹

Politicizing the Parade and the Czech Absence

Perhaps the most significant blemish on the Imperial Tribute Parade and its intended message of Austrian unity was the lack of Czech participation. At the beginning of April 1908, it became known that as part of the jubilee celebrations, the Theater an der Wien would hold performances from other well-known theaters, including the Czech National Theater, which would perform Alois and Vilém Mrštík’s *Maryša*, Anton Chekov’s *Three Sisters*, and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. This plan quickly stirred German nationalists in Vienna and the surrounding area. Despite claiming that his actions involving the proposed performances were limited, Karl Lueger, the city’s popular, Christian Social mayor played a large role in having the performances cancelled. Despite the fact that Czech-language plays were nothing new to the capital, he argued that they did not fit the city’s “German character.”⁹⁰ Czech and German deputies then traded barbs in parliament, their arguments centering on the identity of Vienna. On one hand, German nationalists, fearing the “Slavicization” of what they considered to be German areas, claimed that Vienna was a German city. On the other hand,

⁸⁸ The *Pilsner Tagblatt*, however, made some minor, insignificant changes in this report. *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 2; *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 1; *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 13, 1908, pg. 4.

⁸⁹ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 13, 1908, pg. 4.

⁹⁰ Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 115.

Czech nationalists argued that Vienna was an imperial capital in which, as members of the empire, they should not be treated as guests.⁹¹

The directors of the two theaters met with Austrian Prime Minister Max Wladimir von Beck to discuss the situation. Assuring them that there was no opposition from imperial authorities to the performances, Beck noted the high quality of the Czech National Theater, that he had attended performances of non-German theaters in Vienna before, and that all of Austria's peoples should feel at home in the capital.⁹² Because it appeared that the plays would perhaps still take place, German nationalists from Vienna and the surrounding area held a demonstration against the plan on April 14, protesting against "the jubilee and the person of the monarch becoming exploited for Czech purposes."⁹³ Two days later, the director of the Theater an der Wien caved to the pressure from German nationalists and cancelled the Czech performances. The Czech National Theater's director noted that the plays would be performed in Prague because it would be impossible to hold them in Vienna.⁹⁴ In a symbol of solidarity with the Czech actors and against "anti-Slavic excesses," the city theater of Cracow and the Slovenian provincial theater decided not to hold their own guest performances at the Theater an der Wien.⁹⁵ In response to the cancellation, Czech nationalists severely criticized German nationalists and the municipal and imperial authorities and called for boycotts of anything and everything that was German.⁹⁶ The Czech Association of Gardeners decided to withdraw its participation in a horticulture exhibition

⁹¹ Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 115-116; *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, April 11, 1908, pg. 2.

⁹² *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, April 11, 1908, pg. 4; Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 116.

⁹³ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, April 16, 1908, pg. 4.

⁹⁴ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, April 17, 1908, pg. 4.

⁹⁵ Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 117; *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, April 17, 1908, pg. 4.

⁹⁶ Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 117-118.

that was to be held in Vienna for the emperor's jubilee.⁹⁷ More significantly, however, the Czech Association of Fine Arts decided to boycott the Imperial Tribute Parade. Without Hungarian and Czech representatives, Beller notes, "the two major groups in the monarchy, on whose reconciliation the rest of the monarchy's affairs depended, were thus not present at the event that was supposed to celebrate the reconciliation of the monarchy's peoples."⁹⁸

In June 1908, the reactions of the Bohemian German newspapers to the absence of the Czechs from the parade differed in their coverage and commentary. The *Reichenberger Zeitung*, which already reported very little about the parade, said nothing, not even pointing out, like the others newspapers, that the event was lacking Czech representatives. The *Bohemia* did not opine about the Czech absence at all, said very little about them in general, and took greater issue with the parade itself. Commenting that for weeks it was what everyone everywhere talked about – "hammered into the ear incessantly: parade, parade, parade" – the newspaper complained about the unattractive, seemingly ever-present wooden stands "risen from the earth like mushrooms from the ground after a rain" and the inability of average people to view the parade, not just due to the stands lining the route, but also to the cost for a place in one.⁹⁹

The *Bohemia* was the only newspaper to mention explicitly the specific reasons the Czech leaders chose to boycott the parade, but it did not comment on the lack of Czech representation. Quoting briefly from a Czech newspaper, the *Bohemia* reminded its readers that the Czechs were offended by the vehement opposition from German Radicals and Christian Socials to the Czech National Theater's performances in Vienna and the "clumsy arrangement" of having the parade begin with Rudolf of Habsburg.¹⁰⁰ The *Prager Tagblatt* and the *Pilsner Tagblatt* ignored the complaint about Rudolf and focused on the conflict over

⁹⁷ *Bohemia*, Midday Edition, April 21, 1908, pg. 2.

⁹⁸ Beller, "Kraus's Firework," 54.

⁹⁹ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 2.

Vienna's Germanness. The *Prager Tagblatt* stated that if the Czechs had known that the parade was not a "Viennese" (i.e. German) event and that the tribute of the nations and provinces "won the emperor's greatest interest and filled him with emotion," then they would have not stayed away. Ironically, the newspaper titled its editorial "The Viennese Parade" ("*Der Wiener Festzug*").¹⁰¹ An unnamed, high-ranking source, who was close to the court and quoted in the *Pilsner Tagblatt*, echoed this sentiment, arguing that the parade "did not take place for German Vienna, but for the aging monarch, the kind father of all his peoples."¹⁰²

Unlike the *Reichenberger Zeitung* and the *Bohemia*, the *Pilsner Tagblatt* and the *Prager Tagblatt* were openly critical of the Czech nationalist elite and their boycott. While criticism from the *Pilsner Tagblatt* was brusque and crude, that of the *Prager Tagblatt* was pointed and tactful. Both, however, politicized the parade and used the imperial celebration to question the loyalty of the Czech nationalists to the supranational monarch and Austria. The *Prager Tagblatt* in particular espoused the imperial conception of Austrianness. "Austria! That was the slogan of the tribute parade. Austria! That was the impression of all the participants, of all the spectators from near and far" and of those who read about them, the newspaper declared in its editorial the following day. Noting that the nationalities "testified through their differences most intensely for a united Austria," the *Prager Tagblatt* pointed out the lack of Czech participation while the other national groups paid tribute to the emperor. By emphasizing the importance of participating as a sign of loyalty to Francis Joseph and of the groups of nationalities as a sign of Austrian unity, the *Prager Tagblatt* suggested the Czechs were alienating themselves from their emperor and their state. The newspaper did, however, propose a way for Czech nationhood to be expressed through the jubilee festivities, posing the question of whether the jubilee of the emperor could not be

¹⁰¹ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

¹⁰² *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 15, 1908, pg. 1.

described also as a jubilee of the “Czech national revival” that occurred mostly under Francis Joseph’s reign.¹⁰³ “Was it not the greatest Czech who coined the phrase: ‘Austria would have to be founded, if it did not exist?’” the editorial asked, adding, “even today they still must endorse the words of [František] Palacký, and they cannot deny that Austria is a necessity of the first order for them.”¹⁰⁴ Although the *Prager Tagblatt* did refer to “Czechs,” it did make a point to distinguish between Czech nationalist leaders and the “Czech *Volk*.” Perhaps to insinuate that average Czechs were loyal and were there in spirit, the newspaper stated that it was not the Czech people who were missing from the parade, but their movers and shakers.¹⁰⁵

On June 16, 1908, the *Pilsner Tagblatt* harshly criticized the Czech nationalists’ decision to boycott the parade, calling it “madness” and “downright stupidity” because, due to their “national sensitivity,” they withdrew their participation from an event that was “for the person of the monarch and had nothing to do with politics and everyday rubbish.” The newspaper did not explicitly differentiate between the Czech political elite and the masses they claimed to represent.¹⁰⁶ The previous day, however, the unnamed source quoted in the *Pilsner Tagblatt*, noting that the absence “formed political discord,” claimed that “there is no doubt about the loyalty and patriotism of the Czech people.” Instead, the source blamed the Czech elite for not allowing the Czech people to participate, stating that “to exclude [the Czech people] from the tribute to the monarch, at which all of Austria’s people took part with enthusiastic love, must cause embarrassing disconcertment.”¹⁰⁷

Despite commenting on and criticizing the Czech absence, the *Prager Tagblatt* and the *Pilsner Tagblatt* believed that this did not ruin the parade and attempted to turn a negative into a positive. The *Pilsner Tagblatt* claimed that the absence of the Czechs became

¹⁰³ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

¹⁰⁵ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 16, 1908, pg. 1.

¹⁰⁷ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 15, 1908, pg. 1.

shameful and embarrassing for them because the parade went off so well and was a “historical moment.” “Or should one say in a malicious way that it achieved such meaning because the Czechs were not there?” the newspaper asked.¹⁰⁸ At the end of its editorial, the *Prager Tagblatt* stated that “there were no holes in the splendid scene” and that “harmony was not disturbed” and painted those who boycotted the parade as selfish and risking alienation.¹⁰⁹

As Laurence Cole has observed, “public festival culture in Habsburg Central Europe played a vital role in definitions of the state and in attempts by political, social, and national groups to define their relationships both to the imperial center and to ethnic and ideological rivals.”¹¹⁰ In the examples shown above, the *Prager Tagblatt* and the *Pilsner Tagblatt* used the parade and the Czech boycott to shame the Czech elite for not participating in the tribute parade to the emperor, an event that also represented the imperial conception of Austrianness. Although it was not a major feature in the newspapers’ commentaries and coverage of the parade, the more nationalist newspapers did take the opportunity to not just put down the Czechs, but also to raise up the Germans. The *Pilsner Tagblatt* claimed that due to the presence of only Germans in the Bohemian group, “foreigners watching the parade knew where to find the loyal (*kaisertreue*), patriotic, state-supporting element in Bohemia.”¹¹¹ Although the *Bohemia* did not directly criticize the Czechs for their absence, it echoed the German nationalist sentiment of the *Pilsner Tagblatt*, pointing out that the historical section of the parade was a public display of how intimately the Germans were bound to the

¹⁰⁸ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 16, 1908, pg. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, June 13, 1908, pg. 1.

¹¹⁰ Laurence Cole, “Patriotic Celebrations in Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Tirol,” eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001), 75.

¹¹¹ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 16, 1908, pg. 2.

Habsburg dynasty and the Austrian state.¹¹² The Imperial Tribute Parade was not the only occasion that year in which Bohemian German nationalists and nationalist newspapers manipulated the image of the supranational emperor and state for their own nationalist purposes.

¹¹² *Bohemia*, Evening Edition, June 12, 1908, pg. 2.

Chapter 3: The German Nationalist Conception of Austrianness

On the evening of December 2, 1908, after *The Emperor's Dream* concluded at Vienna's Court Opera House, Francis Joseph was informed that martial law had been declared in Prague, where for several days Czech and German nationalists had taken to the streets in some of the worst nationalist violence since the Badeni crisis in 1897. Although Czech nationalist aggression was triggered by the provocative Sunday processions of German nationalist university students (the *Bummeln*) and directed at Prague's Germans, members of the radical, anti-Habsburg Czech National Socialist Party took a leading role in the melee. The statue of Field Marshal Radetzky – a symbol of Habsburg authority – became a site of Czech nationalist protest and a target for rocks, eggs, and apples. Imperial flags and banners for the emperor's jubilee were torn down, some of which were hurled into the Moldau/Vltava River to shouts of "Down with Austria!"¹¹³ That morning, in its front-page editorial titled "The Emperor's Dream," the *Prager Tagblatt* claimed that of all the emperor's dreams, the dream which he had harbored since his youth of creating peace among his peoples "had materialized the least and had become most cruelly destroyed."¹¹⁴

Among the Bohemian German newspapers, as shown in the previous chapters, the *Prager Tagblatt* appeared to be the only newspaper that optimistically endorsed Vienna's conception of Austrianness, one based on the equal importance and inclusiveness of all peoples around their common, supranational emperor. On December 2, 1908, however, in light of the nationalist clashes in the Bohemian capital, the newspaper now exhibited a pessimistic tone and the German nationalist conception of Austrianness, which emphasized the primacy of Germans in, and their necessity for, Austria. Indirectly, the *Prager Tagblatt*

¹¹³ T. Mills Kelly, "Taking It to the Streets: Czech National Socialists in 1908," *Austrian History Yearbook*, Volume 29 (1998), 110; Nancy Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 129.

¹¹⁴ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, December 2, 1908, pg. 1-2.

criticized the emperor for seeking to make peace based on concessions to the national movements and sought to portray Germans as the emperor's loyal victims in the nationalist conflict. "When the Germans approach the emperor today with congratulations and thanks," the newspaper claimed, "they are aware that they have made every sacrifice for the dream of peace among the peoples and that their sacrifices have always been made for the Austrian idea and its embodiment in Francis Joseph."¹¹⁵

Although the jubilee in 1908 was an ideal time for the supporters of the Habsburg dynasty at court, in the imperial administration, and in the military to promote their conception of Austrianness based on the supranational monarch, it also provided an opportunity for German nationalists to promote their own ideas about Germanness and Austrianness. "The commemorations of the 1908 jubilee clearly reflected a discursive gap between the imperial and the regional as well as local context," Wingfield argues, because "the most important celebration of the most important centripetal figure in the monarchy, the aging emperor, no longer exerted sufficient attraction to overcome national animosity."¹¹⁶ This chapter will briefly show how the festivities associated with the emperor's sixtieth jubilee in 1908 provided opportunities for Bohemian German nationalists to nationalize the supranational image of the emperor and promote a German-centered conception of Austrianness.

The German Prince

On April 17, 1908, the *Prager Tagblatt* announced that Emperor Wilhelm II and the kings, dukes, and other rulers of the German Empire would visit Francis Joseph in Vienna in early May to congratulate the monarch personally on his sixtieth jubilee. The newspaper

¹¹⁵ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, December 2, 1908, pg. 1-2.

¹¹⁶ Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 133.

noted that some people viewed the visit in different ways, but “the great majority” regarded the tribute as a sign of German unity in Europe and as a reminder that the Habsburgs were Germans, evoking, from the time before the creation of the German Empire, Francis Joseph’s claim that he was a German prince, “which continues to live in the memory of the nation.”¹¹⁷ The identification of the emperor as a German found its root in the fact, which the Bohemian German newspapers often reminded their readers, that he and his family had once led the German lands, whether in the shape of the Holy Roman Empire or the German Confederation. As the *Prager Tagblatt* noted, “We have had to accustom ourselves to see in our emperor, to whom we are devoted in loyalty, the Emperor of Austria and no longer the head of the German Confederation.”¹¹⁸ This did not necessarily mean that German nationalists would no longer view Francis Joseph as a German. “Over the decades,” the *Prager Tagblatt* stated, “the German *Volk* has proven itself strong enough to wear two imperial crowns.”¹¹⁹

“Although subsequent state visits by the monarchs of less controversial states somewhat diluted the impact of the German visit,” Steven Beller writes, “the obvious statement of German interest in the monarchy’s affairs and the implicit encouragement of the German character of the dynast and his state was bound to raise the hackles” of not only the non-German national movements, but also of the loyal Germans of Austria.¹²⁰ The visit, however, provided another opportunity that year for German nationalists to claim Francis Joseph as a German, despite Vienna’s effort to promote a supranational image of him.

¹¹⁷ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, April 17, 1908, pg. 1. The *Bohemia* reiterated Francis Joseph’s earlier statement that he was a German and claimed the King of Italy addressed him for his jubilee as a German. *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, May 8, 1908, pg. 1.

¹¹⁸ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, May 7, 1908, pg. 1.

¹¹⁹ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, April 17, 1908, pg. 1. The *Bohemia* reiterated Francis Joseph’s earlier statement that he was a German and claimed the King of Italy addressed him for his jubilee as a German. *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, May 8, 1908, pg. 1.

¹²⁰ Steven Beller, “Kraus’s Firework: State Consciousness Raising in the 1908 Jubilee Parade in Vienna and the Problem of Austrian Identity”, *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001), 55.

Throughout Bohemia, Unowsky writes, “most of the dozens of Kaiser busts, statues, and plaques unveiled in 1908 expressed Austro-German national sentiment rather than supranational ideals.”¹²¹ As Nancy Wingfield has shown, a similar effort had been underway concerning statues of Joseph II, the enlightened absolutist who in the 1780s instituted a central administration in Austria and made German the official language, policies supported by later German nationalists. “Claiming Joseph II exclusively for the German people,” she writes, “served to nationalize, to Germanize, not only the emperor but also the Habsburg dynasty, thus weakening this important centripetal force during the last decades of the monarchy.”¹²² In December 1908, the mayor of Reichenberg/Liberec declared that Francis Joseph “stands especially close to us Germans, he is after all of our tribe and blood.”¹²³ A poem published by Prague’s German Schools Association and printed in the *Prager Tagblatt* on December 2, called on the emperor, “as captain in Austria’s sea of peoples,” to stand strong like “a German oak.”¹²⁴ For Francis Joseph’s birthday, the *Bohemia* claimed that the emperor, “the scion of an illustrious German princely house [and] the most loyal friend and ally of Wilhelm II, will not and cannot forget how thankful Austria has to be for the Germans.”¹²⁵

¹²¹ Daniel Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916*, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2005), 180-181.

¹²² Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 47.

¹²³ *Amtsblatt der Stadt Reichenberg*, December 15, 1908; quoted in Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism*, 239 footnote 18.

¹²⁴ *Festhymne* by Dr. Otto Brill; quoted in *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, December 2, 1908, pg. 12.

¹²⁵ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

Germans and Austria

After Austria's defeat in the Austro-Prussian War in 1866 and the creation of the German Empire in 1871, Austria's Germans were excluded from being part of a "German" political entity it had been a part of – and which the Habsburgs had led – for centuries. This did not keep German nationalists in Austria, whether Pan-German or pro-Habsburg and pro-Austria, from identifying with the wider "German nation" in Central Europe and viewing Austria as an inherently German state. As the *Prager Tagblatt* stated on May 7, Germans in Austria did not stop feeling German after 1866, instead, it argued, German-Austria was just like other German regions, such as Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg, and Prussia.¹²⁶ The Bohemian Germans, Nancy Wingfield writes, "under growing demographic and political pressure from the Czechs, increasingly identified themselves with *grossdeutsch* hegemony in *Mitteleuropa*." "More than a geopolitical entity," she adds, "*Mitteleuropa* also constituted a cultural identity in contrast to which these Germans constructed their Czech/Slavic Other."¹²⁷

On May 8, 1908 the *Bohemia* quoted from the previous day's edition of the *Národní politika* of Prague, which had opined about the visit of the German princes to Vienna. This conservative Czech newspaper stated that despite German nationalist elation about the arrival of Wilhelm II and the princes of the German Empire, "the Austrian Monarchy could never become a purely German state" because Germans were a minority of 9 million against the Slavic majority of 16 million. It further claimed that this majority "protests against every exploitation of this event for the advantage of the German or Pan-German idea in Austria" that would then make Austria a second-rate power to Germany. The *Národní politika* downplayed the significance of the visit and declared that it "would not weaken the most

¹²⁶ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, May 7, 1908, pg. 1.

¹²⁷ Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, 133.

pressing demand that full justice reign at last in the Austrian monarchy.” “This is Austria’s most correct mission because it suits its own interests,” it stated.¹²⁸

Although the *Prager Tagblatt*, as shown in the previous chapters, had been the most optimistic about unity in Austria and had promoted Vienna’s conception of Austrianness in its commentary about the Imperial Tribute Parade, it exhibited in light of the visit of the German princes the German nationalist conception of Austrianness, in which the Germans were to maintain a political and cultural hegemony in Austria. It was this idea of Austria being a “German state” that the *Národní politika* opposed. It was the job of Germans since the days of Charlemagne, the *Prager Tagblatt* stated, “to protect German nature for the sake of their own advancement and protection.” The newspaper believed the good rapport between Germany and Austria was based not just on the friendship between the two states, as shown through the gathering of German princes in Vienna, but also on “the influence of Germanness (*Deutschtum*) in Austria”:

A Slavic Austria will not be an ally of the German Empire; this can only be an Austria, in which the Germans maintain the prestige to which they are entitled by virtue of their history, their numbers, their culture, their economic importance and their interest in the preservation of the Habsburg Monarchy.¹²⁹

This German nationalist sentiment clearly conflicted with the imperial conception of Austrianness that emphasized a supranational state and the equality of its peoples.

The German nationalist assertion of German superiority and necessity permeated the reporting and commentaries of the Bohemian German newspapers throughout the jubilee year, even – as shown briefly at the end of the previous chapter – in relation to the Imperial Tribute Parade, which was intended to be the grandest manifestation of the imperial conception of Austrianness. A couple of days after the parade in Vienna, the *Pilsner Tagblatt* summarized what German nationalists considered the relationship between Germans and the Habsburg

¹²⁸ *Národní politika*; quoted in *Bohemia*, Evening Edition, May 8, 1908, pg. 1-2.

¹²⁹ *Prager Tagblatt*, Morning Edition, May 7, 1908, pg. 1.

Monarchy in an article for the summer festival of the German School Association's local women and girls' branch:

In no people of Austria has the sixty-year jubilee of our monarch generated such a heartfelt joy . . . than the Germans. They feel they are one with the dynasty and the monarchy, which is a German creation and will only remain a world power and a cultural power as long as its core remains German and German cement holds together the parts and attitudes that are pulling away from one another.¹³⁰

The *Pilsner Tagblatt* advocated using the jubilee festivities to promote German nationhood, claiming that the association “follows only good German tradition when it places this year's summer festival under the aegis of the imperial jubilee and with that not only expresses its loyal thinking, but also that of the whole German [community of] Pilsen.”¹³¹

Coverage and commentaries about the emperor on his birthday or the anniversary of his accession became politicized in Bohemian German newspapers, which used these occasions to directly or indirectly connect nationalist conflict to the emperor and Austria. On December 2, in between numerous non-political articles about different aspects of Francis Joseph's reign in the *Pilsner Tagblatt* was an article titled “The National Situation of the Germans in Bohemia” by Franz Perko, a leading figure in the German School Association. In his piece peppered with sentences in bold font, Perko promoted unity among the different German political groups against “the most dangerous enemy of the German . . . the Slav” because “Germanness (*Deutschtum*) in Austria stands and falls with Germanness in Bohemia!”¹³² On Francis Joseph's birthday, without naming the Czech nationalists and claiming to speak on behalf of Bohemian Germans, “for whom the national struggle daily increasingly becomes a struggle for existence,” the *Bohemia* portrayed them as the innocent, peace-seeking victims of a strengthening adversary who did not play fair. Although the newspaper admitted that it did not know if the emperor was aware of the situation, the

¹³⁰ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 14, 1908, pg. 2.

¹³¹ *Pilsner Tagblatt*, June 14, 1908, pg. 2.

¹³² *Pilsner Tagblatt*, December 2, 1908, pg. 13.

editorial advanced the idea of German loyalty, proclaiming that, “despite everything, German Bohemia stands in loyal love to the person of the monarch, and the emperor’s heart also beats with fatherly affection for the [Germans], who founded the greatness and glory of his empire and has defended it for centuries under heavy sacrifices and self-denial.”¹³³

¹³³ *Bohemia*, Morning Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 1.

Conclusion

On the evening of August 18, 1908, the *Prager Tagblatt* reported on that morning's festivities for Francis Joseph's birthday in the German-majority, western Bohemian town of Marienbad/Mariánské Lázně, where local dignitaries, politicians, volunteer firemen, and army veterans assembled in a park for the unveiling of a granite memorial stone with a marble plaque commemorating the emperor's sixtieth jubilee. The commandant of the volunteer firemen and the veterans' association, a Mr. Zischka, spoke before the crowd, emphasizing that the stone was to be a visible sign of loyalty and dedication to the monarch and proclaiming that "in this place today may German ways and customs be cultivated and the tribute to His Majesty be offered up in a German manner." Those who had gathered for the ceremony then processed to the Catholic church where they were joined by imperial authorities for a service. Afterwards, everyone walked to the memorial stone where Prince Eduard Liechtenstein, the imperial district commissioner, delivered an address in which he stated:

You, gentlemen, feel rightly as Austria's sons of German nationality, and there is the most outstanding characteristic virtue, the proverbial German loyalty. We want to remain loyal to our German tribe (*Stamm*), but loyal also to our Austria which is inhabited by many nations, and that is why we wish for nothing more than national peace.¹³⁴

In these two speeches before the same object commemorating the emperor, the conflicting relationships between German nationhood, Austrian state consciousness, and dynastic loyalty become visible. Without mentioning Austria, Zischka, a German nationalist, argues that dynastic loyalty could not only be expressed through Germanness, but it also should be. Within the context of praising the emperor, Liechtenstein, an aristocrat and imperial bureaucrat, appealed to the Germanness of the assembled men and claimed that they

¹³⁴ *Prager Tagblatt*, Evening Edition, August 18, 1908, pg. 2.

could be both German and Austrian and that, in the interest of Austria, they should want an end to nationalist conflict. But how? Liechtenstein did not specify, but neither could the creators and proponents of the imperial conception of Austrianness.

The supranational image of Francis Joseph as an admirable old man and father of his peoples was a centripetal force to which the diverse peoples of the empire could rally, but it was not enough to form a strong basis for promoting an Austrian state consciousness that could seriously challenge the centrifugal pull of competing nationhoods, especially when the imperial conception of Austrianness was designed to incorporate and coexist with differing identities. It did not provide any solution for nationalist conflicts over education and the language(s) of administration. Admiration for and loyalty to the monarch did not have to be expressed through being Austrian because dynastic loyalty could be, and was, articulated concurrently with expressions of individual nationhoods. Hungarian nationalists preferred to see Francis Joseph as the King of Hungary, not as emperor, and were more willing to embrace Empress Elisabeth as Queen of Hungary because she embraced Hungarian nationhood.¹³⁵ Czech nationalists wanted Francis Joseph to be crowned with their national symbol, the Crown of St. Wenceslas, and after the *Ausgleich*, as a sign of their opposition to it, went past the Austrian government to speak with Francis Joseph directly as King of Bohemia.¹³⁶

Similarly, German nationalists emphasized the “German” aspects of the Habsburg monarch. There was “no contradiction between being a German nationalist and a ‘good Austrian,’” Nancy Wingfield argues. “Indeed,” she states, “they believed that the Germans

¹³⁵ Alice Freifeld, “Empress Elisabeth as Hungarian Queen: The Uses of Celebrity Monarchism,” *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 138-161.

¹³⁶ Hugh LeCaine Agnew, “The Flyspecks on Pavilec’s Portrait: Francis, Joseph, the Symbols of Monarchy, and Czech Popular Loyalty,” *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 86-112.

of Austria could emphasize their belonging to the German nation without harming their love of the Austrian fatherland in any way.”¹³⁷ But which Austrian fatherland?

It is clear from the Bohemian German newspapers’ commentaries about dynastic loyalty, German nationhood, and Austrian state consciousness in 1908 that German nationalists did not subscribe to Vienna’s idea of an Austria composed of equal nations. Instead, they promoted the idea of a German-led Austria that had been built and maintained by Germans under a German dynasty. This was inadvertently reinforced by the imperial conception of Austrianness as shown, for example, through the historical section of the Imperial Tribute Parade. “By allowing Austrian history to remain identified with the German populace,” Steven Beller writes, “it confirmed German thinking that this state was really theirs, just as it justified contemporary non-German resentment against German hegemonic arrogance, once again made plain for all to see in the persons of the Austrian nobility.”¹³⁸

As a means of communicating both news and opinions, Bohemian German newspapers were thus important sites for German nationalists to hinder the spread of the imperial conception of Austrianness and manipulate and politicize it to promote a German nationalist version. It still remains to be seen through further investigation who the men behind these newspapers were, how closely they were connected to politicians and political parties, how the newspapers opined about Austrianness on occasions that did not involve the emperor, and how the commentaries of the Bohemian German press compared to other German nationalist newspapers in Austria. This thesis shows, however, that among Bohemian German nationalists, as evidenced through their newspapers, the national and supranational realities were not separate, but concurrent. Dynastic loyalty was as much a part

¹³⁷ Nancy Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 34.

¹³⁸ Steven Beller, “Kraus’s Firework: State Consciousness Raising in the 1908 Jubilee Parade in Vienna and the Problem of Austrian Identity”, *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001), 66-67.

of Germanness as it was of the Austrian state idea and could not be – and proved not to be – the sole basis on which to instill a supranational state consciousness among the diverse peoples of Austria.

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