

PREFACE

The following work originated in my dissertation, written under the guidance of Charles Jelavich, Barbara Jelavich, and Owen Johnson at Indiana University. My interest in the subject stemmed from the fact that histories of nineteenth-century Bohemia uniformly stated the importance of the periodical press in the rise of Czech nationalism, which often stood at the center of these works, but did not devote much space to an exploration of how the press functioned internally or interacted with its own public. As I began to read into the Czech- and German-language histories of periodical publishing in Bohemia, there appeared to be a uniform appraisal of Austrian imperial censorship as a crucial determinant of what would appear in published works, but again little analysis of how it functioned. I thus entered upon my dissertation research with the idea that in order to understand the role of the press in the rise of Czech nationalism I would begin by reading the archived documents that constitute the historical record of censorship in the province of Bohemia. This material proved remarkably rich, orienting my research increasingly in the direction of a study of censorship in the province and narrowing, of necessity, my period of study to the mid-nineteenth century. In the end, this work focuses on 1848 to 1871 because of the immense importance of this period in terms of constituting the first large-scale modern public challenge to the Habsburg old regime. It was also the period when that regime undertook its most important constitutional and administrative reforms, the period when liberalism and nationalism

emerged in tandem as new ideological challenges to the old regime, and the period when the public sphere arose, creating a space between private persons and the state wherein public issues were discussed, indeed, with increasing fervor. Along the way, my original interest in Czech nationalism also expanded to not only include German nationalism in Bohemia but to also more fully realize the place of each of them within a broader concept of the public sphere. Nationalism is still, of course, a central concern for this time period, but I hope that it appears here contextualized within a broader narrative.

Even the most recent, quite laudable studies of the Habsburg Monarchy and its various component parts still reflect a tendency to encapsulate the experience of the nineteenth century from above and from a critical perspective informed by thinking developed outside of that experience. What we still lack is a view of this experience from the ground up. It is only with great effort that we will come to understand how the remarkable changes of this period actually impacted people living at “street level.” It is my hope that my study gets us partway there.

This study makes extensive use, for the first time, of archival materials wherein the officials responsible for public order and security in the province explain to one another the efforts that they were undertaking to promote their vision of a positive public opinion and thwart what they deeply felt were false, misguided, and indeed malevolent efforts to alter all public life. This provides us a window into why certain works saw the light of day while others doubtlessly languished under official censorship or self-censorship. This work then brings the conduct of press policy down from a debate on policy to the level at which it impacted the public through its enforcement. The problem of assessing how the works that did appear in print impacted the public is not fully realizable here but is displayed, in part, in the fact that certain journalists, publications, and perspectives were indeed awarded by the public with market success, journalists and others promoted through the periodical press did win elections when elections were held, and, finally, in the *Tábory*, as well as in other events, broad public participation speaks to their interest in and often strongly evinced approval of actions recommended in the periodicals. There still seems to be more that can be said in this regard, but it will have to await a later work.

It is my hope that this work will help provide some of what scholars could hope for in terms of content in a work that delves into these topics and will help to stimulate their thinking regarding how we might better

approach the issue of how constitutional and administrative reform and their attendant policies impact people on the ground and how that very public's response to them then impacted the further progress of reform and policy implementation.

The monograph begins with an introduction, followed by two chapters discussing the importance of the Revolutions of 1848 for the initiation of broad imperial reform and for the rise of the periodical press first as an expression of the revolutionary impulse of those times but then under the reforming state as a legally recognized public sphere. The ways in which these developments occurred was, of course, a product of the dialectic between the culture that the periodical writers and officials brought to their tasks and the issues and opportunities that unfolded before them. Chapters four and five treat the period of Neoabsolutism, wherein the newly empowered centralized state, endeavoring to operate according to the rule of law, maintained—albeit under an ideally strict censorship regime—a place for the independent expression of civil society, even trespassing into the realm of politics. The sixth and seventh chapters treat the new constitutional era that opened in 1860 and the impact that its reforms had upon periodical publication and censorship, ending with the *Tábor*, a powerful expression of the success of the periodicals' efforts to enlist public support. The concluding chapter highlights the significance of these developments over the entire period of the study.

There are no suitable analogies to the process of writing an historical monograph. I have heard it equated to giving birth, which it is not! It takes far more time but certainly is less profound in every imaginable way. Besides which, book writing is a far less “normal” human activity. It is perhaps something like a pilgrimage or a quest, requiring sacrifice and dedication to a vision of what could be, but still it is grounded in material existence, which renders this analogy inadequate as well. It is, in the end, simply what one does as an historian.

While it is difficult to describe what the experience of writing a monograph is like, it is a pleasure, indeed a simple pleasure, to state my thanks to all who have assisted me in my education and its publication. This book is dedicated to them. My education was profoundly impacted by the efforts of the following professors: Charles Timberlake, Gennady (Gene) Barabtarlo, and Russell Zguta, who taught and advised me as an undergraduate, and Barbara Jelavich, Charles Jelavich, and Owen

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