

The Revolution Begins: All Was Seemingly at Risk

The Revolutions of 1848 began for the imperial government with a wave of fear brought on by the growing assertiveness of the Estates opposition and the outbreak of popular political violence in Italy, France, and the German principalities. The imperial court and its government quickly lost its confidence as that of the opposition grew by bounds. All that had once seemed solid, immutable, was now shown to be fragile, temporal. As the previous decade's expansion of the periodical press was rapidly closing the distance between Europe's main centers of population in this moment of political contest,¹ events occurring elsewhere, particularly in Paris, were reenvisioned as events that could happen anywhere.

In the case of Bohemia, the cultural developments of the preceding several decades had pointed toward an environment that would be increasingly defined in mutually exclusive German and Czech national terms. The old Bohemian patriotism of the Estates and its supporters were not yet dead; the Bohemian Diet was, as yet, the only formal political institution in the province, but its claim to represent the province had already been intellectually and even culturally undermined. Still, the flagging of national identity had not extended into the realm of formal political contest. The pre-revolutionary status quo simply had not presented an opportunity for formal popular political participation or an environment conducive to the scale of risk-taking that would have been necessary for an overt, popular, political act. It also, and this is perhaps most important, had not allowed for the raising of nationality-relevant political

questions sufficiently important to a broad enough spectrum of the public to cause a hardening of popular nationalist sentiment.

However, with the fall of the government on March 13, and with the emperor's announcement that "freedom of the press is preserved through our announcement of the suspension of censorship in all states where it exists" and his promise of a constitution on March 15, a political vacuum was created and a tremendous public space was opened for the discussion of virtually all issues that could have a bearing on public life. Freedom of the press, of course, was among the foremost demands of liberalism in Bohemia as elsewhere in Europe—going back to the work of Montesquieu, Kant, and others—since it was seen as among the vital prerequisites to many other freedoms and moreover essential to the ideal of publicizing a Czech national identity.² It was, of course, central as well to the notion of a public sphere wherein public issues of concern to private persons could be rationally debated. Its antipode, censorship, had been a central component of the anti-liberal state and press freedom, as stated by Olechowski, the most important current of the revolutionary era.³

The new opening appeared, but, contrary to the picture painted by Olechowski,⁴ it did not, at least in Bohemia, signal a violent rupture in the culture of the province's leading political literary actors. Moderation ruled the day. The liberals, who could be divided increasingly into separate national camps, first worked to prevent the devolution of political power into the hands of individuals who might not be expected to use it responsibly, and, on their part, sought changes that fit with their previous worldview. While they used terms like "freedom" and "liberation," they used these words within the current liberal lexicon. They were not an invitation to anarchy.

Still, the attachments of the liberals and the issues raised by the revolutionary tumult set Bohemia on a more and more perilous course where the question of popular unanimity and harmony were concerned. The cultural and intellectual developments of the preceding decades had left the liberal leaders of what was becoming the Czech national movement in the best position from which to claim to speak for the province as a whole and to contest power before the public. Still in March, they organized a new executive authority for Bohemia, and the already successful journalists among them, foremost Havlíček, Jakub Malý, and Josef Kajetán Tyl, quickly widened the scope of journalistic activity and the conduct of public debate through the periodical press.⁵ Their efforts

were met with burgeoning sales, a corresponding rise in their public stature, and a message of increasing importance. In the process, despite early attempts at maintaining amity between Czech and German nationalists, the logic inherent in the questions raised set the course of the Czech national movement to become a more overtly assertive political force and, in the process, to build a stronger constituency among the Czech-speaking populations of Bohemia.

The new freedom of the press marks the beginnings of a profound transformation of the periodical press from a cautious and usually passive participant in public affairs to an agent for immediate change. Among the German liberals, it became increasingly clear that this growing Czech assertiveness constituted a major threat to their vision of a centralized Habsburg state operating within a larger German liberal-dominated existence.

At the center, and often overlooked in these narratives, stood the imperial state, whose announcements of press freedom and constitutional rule created the legal environment within which most of the liberal press of the period sought to exist. It now lay in the hands of both the central imperial authorities in Vienna and their subordinates in the provinces to attempt to manage the transition to a yet-to-be-defined new legal order. The very moderation of the leading political and journalistic lights of Bohemia defined, at least temporarily, the political environment in which they worked.

In the absence of a formal system of censorship, what we find is, quite naturally, erstwhile journalists imposing their own sense of the limits of free expression. Among the important realizations, however, that must be recognized is that newspapers had never been “mere institutions for the publication of news” but rather had always been “vehicles and guides of public opinion as well,” although perhaps before the late eighteenth century in Bohemia, they had not been “weapons of party politics.”⁶ Now, they would become so. But again, context is essential. Political consequence had long been associated with the written word, hence the endeavor of political powers to control it, but even when newspapers were officially licensed and subsidized in Bohemia, their printers and publishers endeavored to profit from them and this meant that they and their writers sought to produce content that would meet market demand. There had always been an attempt to produce what people were willing to pay to read, even when it was risky to do so. Hence, the distinction between independent and government periodicals proves

insufficient because the great majority of writers involved in a published discussion of public affairs were writing for government-licensed newspapers, which were themselves published under contract by private businesses. When freedom of the press was proclaimed in the spring of 1848, these individuals took their habitual practices of “responsible self-censorship” with them into the new public sphere.

The revolutionary year, from March 1848 to March 1849, can be described as the year of freedom of the press. However, it was not a year of recklessness in the publishing world of Bohemia, but a year when the contemporary culture of journalistic restraint was fully evident. To understand the role of censorship in the development of the Bohemian public sphere and the politics thereof, it is necessary to review affairs as they unfolded in Bohemia in order to then understand the role of journalists therein.

A DECIDEDLY LIBERAL REVOLUTION

Although the court’s renunciation of censorship on March 15, 1848 constituted the first statement of legal force announcing a change in press policy, the process of defining freedom of the press and enshrining it in legislation took several months. The first city to experience an unfettered press was Vienna, where a breakdown of public order on March 13 prevented the enforcement of the still-current press legislation. In Italy, press conditions were determined by the military situation and lack of central control. In Hungary and Bohemia, where the opposition remained as yet civil, the impetus was toward a negotiated solution, with the dominant liberal reformers supporting liberation of the press with the proviso that there remain protections against its “misuse.” The imperial government, at this crucial juncture, thus faced a liberal opposition as much concerned with the maintenance of public order as with an expansion of individual freedoms. In this regard, at least, the two sides could agree on much.

In Bohemia, with the diet out of session, the governor, Graf Rudolph Stadion, fearing that the diet would play a dangerous role in promoting a further fragmentation of the monarchy, cancelled its scheduled meeting for March 30. The imperial court promised, in the Cabinet Letter of April 8, that a newly elected diet would meet in the near future.⁷ These maneuvers notwithstanding, the debate on press freedoms took place instead in an ad hoc assembly at the Inn of the St. Václav Baths

(Svatováclavské lázně/Wenzelsbad), thereafter known as the St. Václav Baths Committee. Even here, however, there was a pronounced liberal attention to order.

The revolution in Bohemia had begun on March 8, when the Prague radical underground organization, Repeal, put up posters advertising a public meeting to be held on March 11 at the St. Václav Baths Inn. In handwritten invitations and publicly posted placards, Repeal listed demands for a reorganization of public administration, the convocation of the Bohemian Diet with the inclusion of representatives of the royal cities and the peasantry, the arming of the people, and the abolition of the censor. Although the wording of the demands and the choice of the meeting's location constitute a direct appeal for worker and peasant support, Repeal also made clear its interest in creating a united front with the far more accomplished and respected liberal leaders of the Czech national movement. Not only had Repeal exhorted the public to respect private property in its invitation posters, but it had also sought and received the direct assistance of the noted liberal František August Brauner to edit its demands for the March 11 meeting.⁸

By the time of the March 11 meeting, Repeal had surrendered much to the liberals, and the entire conduct of the meeting reflected an overriding concern for order and respectability. The chairmanship of the meeting was given to the government official and secretary of the *Průmyslová Jednota* (Industrial Union), Alois Pravoslav Trojan, who, together with the noted liberal innkeeper, Petr Fastr, read Brauner's draft of the petition to the assembly.⁹ The original Repeal petition had included a demand for the end of the *robot*, excise taxes, and stamp taxes, the shortening of military conscription periods, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, the organization of labor and wages, and the creation of a free and self-governing society.¹⁰ From this list, Brauner had eliminated, most notably, the demand for the organization of wages and labor and altered the demand for unlimited freedom of speech to a demand for freedom of speech but with some restrictions to guard against its abuse.¹¹ In addition to moderating the list of demands, the liberals also took steps to ensure order in the meeting hall. Ushers were given instructions to keep out persons who were poorly behaved or poorly dressed¹² and the list of speakers was composed with the purpose of preventing the most radical elements from addressing the assembly. Although some radicals, such as Emanuel Arnold, who spoke strongly against clerical power and in support of the peasantry, Karel Sladkovský,

who spoke against the privileges of the nobility and advocated the creation of a federation of democratic republics, and Josef V. Frič, who was also a republican, were allowed to speak, other radical figures were denied this privilege.¹³

Voting issue by issue, the assembled body accepted the Repeal petition but with alterations that restored many of the radical positions, including the original demand for an unqualified freedom of the press and the organization of wages and labor. Before disbanding, the assembly elected a committee to edit the final text of the petition, but here again the emphasis was on respectability, and so the tone of the petition again gravitated toward greater moderation.¹⁴ The committee selected Adolf Maria Pinkas to compose the final draft, and, on March 12, the committee elected Count Vojtěch Deym its chairman. The authority of the St. Václav Baths Committee (later renamed Národní výbor/National Committee), remained, throughout the revolutionary period, little contested by outside opposition figures.¹⁵ In fact, Jíří Kořalka maintained that “[i]n the Czech areas of Bohemia the Prague National Committee enjoyed such an unshakeable authority that there was no need to found political associations.”¹⁶ There were, of course, German committees that were formed in opposition, but they were unable to successfully challenge the National Committee. Throughout the remainder of the revolutionary period, the patriotic nobility never regained the political initiative nor did workers or peasants form their own long-lasting or particularly effective independent political associations. Political power in both a formal and informal sense thus passed substantially from the traditional authorities of the noble estate to the commoner intellectuals who posited competing national rather than provincial patriotic visions of the future.

Despite its good behavior, the official attitude toward the St. Václav Baths Committee did not improve after March 11. From its announcement on March 8, the call for the St. Václav meeting had been opposed by the leading officials responsible for public order and security: the governor, Count Rudolf Stadion; the police director, Joseph Heyde; and the mayor of Prague, Joseph Müller. The influential members of the Merchants’ Casino, which was the central institution of Prague’s German liberal elite, also requested that the meeting be forbidden and that armed citizens’ patrols be formed to guard against mob violence. Although the governor refused these requests, he did attempt to limit the meeting’s exposure.¹⁷ On March 9, he issued a bilingual edict warning against public disturbances, and later requested that landlords lock their doors

early and guild masters keep their apprentices off the streets on the night of March 11. Perhaps in response to the rather uncertain nature of the times, Stadion chose to neither authorize nor forbid the meeting.¹⁸ On the night of March 11, Heyde and Müller sat in the nearby New Town Hall, receiving reports from police informants and even a late evening visit from Trojan, who assured them that the meeting had ended in good order. Despite the fact that there had been no violence, the St. Václav meeting constituted an organizational victory for the new, popular opposition, and Müller quickly took steps to organize a counterweight from among the conservative members of the Merchants' Casino and to prepare his own petition to the emperor.

As both Müller and Pinkas set to work preparing their petitions, events in Vienna intervened. On March 13, the imperial court dismissed the government of Prince Metternich, and on March 15, the emperor declared the end of censorship and announced the promise of a constitution. Whereas in Hungary, these events had led to a surge of radical activity in Pest and a quickening of the pace of the reform effort in Pressburg/Pozony/Bratislava, their effect in Bohemia was to immediately strengthen the position of the liberal leaders of the St. Václav Baths Committee. The radicals, who might have been expected to pursue greater advantage at this juncture, fell silent with the news of bloodshed in Vienna,¹⁹ and the mayor's anti-St. Václav Baths Committee chose rather to join its rivals, who appeared to have much greater support among the city's inhabitants.²⁰ The decision to join the St. Václav Baths Committee also reflects the realization that the committee might be useful in maintaining order.

In the immediate aftermath of the events in Vienna, the imperial authorities in Prague feared a similar workers' uprising. Consequently, Stadion asked the military commander to immediately fortify the main customs building on Hybernergasse/ulice Hybernská and the tobacco warehouses on Heinrichsgasse/Jindřiská ulice. The military commander ordered additional cavalry from nearby garrisons to proceed to the workers' suburbs of Karolinenthal/Karlín and Smichow/Smíchov.²¹ As the imperial officials took precautions against a workers' uprising, civilian notables endeavored to calm the students. Here was a much greater danger, but the efforts of the president of the law school, Dr. J. Fischer, the rector of the Strahov Monastery (Strahovský Klášter/Kloster Strahov), Zeidler, Dr. Gabler, and the university alumnus Uffo Horn²² appear to have been sufficient. In the end, the fall of Metternich produced neither

a worker revolt nor a student revolt. The crowds that gathered on March 14 and 15 and marched past the headquarters of the military garrison did not carry banners of protest but rather cheered and praised the emperor and the military commander, Archduke Karl Ferdinand.²³

It was not violence but its expectation that drove Müller and his cohorts into alignment with the St. Václav Baths Committee, strengthening its moderate elements. Consequently, the tone of the Pinkas draft swung further to the right with the final draft making no reference to the organization of work and wages and expressing far greater loyalty than its earlier editions. The radicals failed to oppose this swing and the committee quickly adopted this edition.²⁴ Subsequently, the committee decided on March 15 to submit both the Pinkas draft and the preliminary draft of March 11, as well as a separate petition from the students, but the dominant position of the liberal leaders remained unaltered. In a note to Vienna on March 15, Stadion declared that both sides (the St. Václav Baths Committee and the Merchants' Committee) had united,²⁵ but the reality was that the liberals of the St. Václav Baths Committee were quickly becoming the dominant element in Bohemian politics and the German liberal Casino members had been reduced to a faction therein, serving as a counterweight to the already declining Czech radicals.

Violence then had played only an indirect role in these affairs. Moderation was also the order of the day in the periodical press. It is noteworthy that the only existing Czech-language newspaper, *Pražské noviny*, while carrying reports on revolutionary events beyond the borders of the monarchy, remained silent concerning the March 11 meeting at St. Václav Baths Committee.

With the emperor's announcement of March 15, the end of pre-publication censorship was achieved without the input of any representative bodies, whether official diets or unofficial assemblies. In yet another display of caution, political discussion in the periodicals began only on March 16, when Governor Stadion published a front-page announcement in *Pražské noviny* of the emperor's promise of a constitution, accompanied by news of the fall of Metternich and other events in Vienna.²⁶ From this point until the promulgation of a new press law on May 18, 1848, in the absence of a clear legal requirement, the Prague publishers began to push past their former limitations regarding the content within their existing papers, but, in what was perhaps a concession to order, still operated within the bounds of the former regulations

regarding the founding of new periodicals. A great hesitancy remained in what were clearly uncertain times.

THE OPPOSITION ACHIEVES MARKET SUCCESS IN THE BOHEMIAN PERIODICAL PRESS

With freedom of the press, however, the Bohemian periodical press experienced a fundamental transformation in two stages, the first primarily qualitative and the second primarily quantitative, each of which would cause new challenges for the officials responsible for the maintenance of public order and security. The first transformation took place after the emperor's announcement of freedom of the press—not the March 11 meeting of the St. Václav Bath Committee²⁷—and the second after the promulgation of a new press law on May 18. That each of these transformations, taking place in the course of a revolution, was catalyzed by the actions of the very court whose authority was under question speaks to the nature of the revolution in Bohemia as fundamentally a process of renegotiating the limits of existing political authority, not its destruction. Again, when we think about the notion of the rise of the bourgeois public sphere, we see that it is occurring in a dialogue between the periodical press and the state with the former mostly responding to initiatives undertaken by the latter.

In Bohemia, these negotiations of the limits of political authority took place within the St. Václav Baths Committee and between that body, the provincial governor, and the imperial government. Although the committee's meetings with the legally constituted authorities and the reception of their petitions at court were not open to the public, the meetings of the St. Václav Bath Committee were. Still, the meeting hall at the St. Václav Baths Committee could only accommodate so many people, and it thus fell to the periodical press to publicize the committee's work. During the revolutionary year, the periodical press, whose products were marked by the overwhelming dominance of political reporting and political editorials, functioned as a forum for the recording of political positions and their debate before the public.²⁸

The first periodicals to introduce this less restrained political journalism were actually the government's own daily newspapers, *Pražské noviny* and *Prager Zeitung*, which already before March 15 had become well known for editorials increasingly critical of the government.²⁹ In

1847, Havlíček, the editor of *Pražské noviny*, had twice received written warnings, but the government had not silenced criticism even here in the only government-sponsored Czech-language newspaper. Once the court announced the end of censorship, these official newspapers became even more strident. In the absence of clear direction, the authorities in Bohemia were at a loss. Should they follow Habsburg administrative practice and assume the old law to be in effect until its official supersession or should they abide by the direct words of the emperor that censorship was ended? While Heyde expressed himself in favor of the former, Stadion chose the latter course and refused to order the newspapers' suppression. In the meantime, he urgently pressed Vienna to promulgate a new press law. Unlike Heyde, who saw the greater danger in the open expression of opposition, Stadion had a greater fear of the unrest that might result should the state violate the announcement of March 15.³⁰

The political administration therefore followed the gentler course of appealing to the newspaper publishers to curb their papers voluntarily. In the case of *Prager Zeitung*, the governor merely requested that the publisher, C.W. Medau, fire the editor, Eduard Brier. During the *Vormärz*, this would certainly have resulted in either the dismissal of the editor or the loss of Medau's franchise and the closing of the paper. Medau, however, refused and the paper remained open. On March 23, Medau took the further step of changing the name of his periodical to *Constitutionelle Prager Zeitung*, and, on May 30, he ended his relationship with the government. After a month's interval, on July 1, he opened a new paper, the *Constitutionelle Allgemeine Zeitung von Böhmen*. Rather than dismiss the editor who had raised subscriptions to a remarkable 3,500 copies,³¹ Medau chose to surrender his government franchise. Medau's actions were extremely significant, marking not only his professional independence but also the realization that such independence rested upon the fact that a publisher could now, suddenly, publish a newspaper with confidence that he did not need a government franchise to guarantee its financial security. This is of tremendous importance when we think about the role of the press in society.

The case of *Pražské noviny* was even more difficult for the authorities. On March 19, Havlíček wrote the first opposition political program to appear in a Bohemian periodical. The manifesto began with these ringing lines:

All true Czechs in Prague as in the countryside are called upon to admonish this new constitution, to abandon, upon its honor, its German style and adornments and instead to wave a Czech flag in order to raise with us a worthy change from within. All true patriots in Prague also must take care to make certain that their co-residents, who probably do not take this paper, will quickly come to take up this task as well: provide proof to the world that the Czechs after two hundred years of slumber—are not extinct!³²

Havlíček's manifesto went far beyond any of the petitions yet to emerge from the St. Václav Baths Committee and challenged not only the political arrangement of the monarchy but several aspects of its social structure as well. Havlíček demanded (1) the severing of the connection between the Czech crown lands and the German confederation, and its anchoring in Austria; (2) the immediate full administrative autonomy of the Czech lands with an independent administration and representative organs; (3) the enforcement and respect of absolute national equal rights in all areas of public life; and (4) the removal of the medieval estates representation and creation of organs in which the opinion of all strata of the population would be represented.³³

Two weeks later, on April 3, Havlíček strengthened the security of his independent position by resigning from *Pražské noviny* to open his own daily newspaper, *Národní noviny* (The National Gazette). The new paper was financed by his friend, Count Vojtěch Deym, who paid the 2,000 fl. deposit required in accordance with the current press law, but gave Havlíček independent editorial direction.³⁴

On April 5, the government named Karel Sabina editor of *Pražské noviny*. The choice of Sabina remains something of a mystery, however. Sabina was a well-known literary figure and thus his skills were sufficient to justify his assignment. This is not the odd point. What is strange is that the government should place its trust in a man whose political perspective was well known to be consistently to the left of Havlíček's. His selection must have been made either without cognizance of this consideration, or, more conspiratorially, with an eye toward splitting the Czech national opposition. In either case, under Sabina's direction, *Konstituční Pražské noviny* (The Constitutional Prague Gazette), as Sabina renamed the paper on April 28, remained in the hands of the opposition and enjoyed lively sales.³⁵

From the announcements of March 15 until July 1—less the exception of the short-lived Czech-language newspaper *Pokrok* (Progress)—the government lacked a periodical that was truly its own. In July, however, the printing firm G. Haase und Söhne resumed publication of both *Pražské noviny* and *Prager Zeitung* under a government contract with the “more suitable” Josef Jireček as editor for *Pražské noviny* and Dr. Leopold Hasner von Artha as editor for *Prager Zeitung*. In the case of the German-language newspaper, G. Haase und Söhne agreed to publish it as an official daily newspaper, which would present “a pro-government perspective and defend liberalism, endeavor to awaken the true popular will and preserve the full sovereignty and integrity of the Austrian Empire, and, in this, the full development of each existing nation.” The contract further provided that the governor would have the right to confirm or reject the publisher’s choice of editor.³⁶ With the reopening of *Prager Zeitung*, the government regained control of its German-language organ, but the paper itself lost all significance in the process. Similarly, the Czech-language paper also declined, despite Jireček’s talents. Throughout the remainder of the period under study, the government continued to experience difficulties with *Pražské noviny*. The central problem, as government officials testified, was that the great majority of writers qualified to run a Czech-language newspaper already embraced some form of Czech national feeling, and each of the editors, employed by the government all the way through the 1850s, found ways of advancing a Czech national perspective in spite of the fact of their newspaper’s official standing. We cannot therefore think of official newspapers as merely the voice of the government. There is simply no clear dividing line between official representation, as Habermas would style it, and the functioning of an independent press. There is obviously a difference, but also a great deal of overlap. During the remainder of the revolutionary period, however, while an opposition alternative existed and while *Pražské noviny* abstained from the kind of aggressive journalism that generated high sales for the opposition press, its subscription rates dropped into the double digits and the paper lost all influence.

In contrast to the *Vormärz*, when opposition sentiment sometimes appeared despite the restrictions of pre-publication censorship, in the spring of 1848 the opposition dominated the Bohemian periodical press. While the government was largely unable to present its perspective and promote an official interpretation of events, the opposition press thrived. At the forefront of opposition were the Czech-language

papers. In addition to Havlíček's *Národní noviny*, which was the most explicit in its criticisms of the current system, Sabina's more radical *Konstituční Pražské noviny* Malý's *Poutník* (The Pilgrim), and Tyl's *Pražský posel* (Prague Post) all reflected their editors' attachment to the liberal wing of the national movement and its leadership in the St. Václav Baths Committee. Even though Havlíček's programmatic statements of March 19 and series of articles, *Naše politika* (Our Policy), went beyond the demands of the committee, the editor remained strictly loyal to that body and firmly supported its work.³⁷ During the early months of the revolutionary period, the Czech-language newspapers thus exhibited a restraining influencing, endeavoring to advance liberal ideals without challenging the general order of society.

Opposition periodicals also appeared in the German language. In addition to Breier's *Prager Zeitung* and preceding Havlíček's *Národní noviny* was the German-language *Constitutionelle Blatt aus Böhmen*, which first appeared on April 2.³⁸ The paper was published by G. Haase und Söhne and edited by Franz Klutschak and had as its goal "to enlighten the people of all conditions and urge the peasants to peace and orderliness." Like Count Deym in the case of *Národní noviny*, G. Haase und Söhne obeyed the *Vormärz* regulation and submitted a request for a license to publish the paper on March 18, which it received with the proviso that the new paper would adhere to the regulations of the previous press law.³⁹ Also appearing were *Stadt und Land*, edited by Julius Hirsch, which began publication in late May, and *Slavische Centralblätter*, edited by Dr. Karl Caspar and Dr. Jan Peter Jordan.

As the title of the last periodical suggests, the simple fact that a given periodical appeared in the German language does not necessarily indicate that its publisher or editor adhered to any defining notion of German national identity.⁴⁰ German was, of course, still the traditional language of the bureaucracy, the military, and academia, and all the leaders of the Czech national movement spoke it well, often more fluently than their "native" Czech. Throughout this period, the great majority of Bohemia's periodicals continued to appear in the German language and were widely read throughout Bohemia, experiencing lively sales even among the villagers of predominantly Czech regions. All of these papers carried reports on the affairs of the Czech national movement, which were often rich in detail and non-polemical in tone.⁴¹

The same, however, cannot be said of the Czech-language press, whose major figures were all Prague intellectuals imbued with the

romantic assumptions and goals of the national movement. This does not mean that they were, to a person, anti-German Czech nationalists; rather, they accepted the notion of national struggle and understood that in the end decisions would have to be made that would benefit one putative nation over the other.

THE EXPANSION OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE FREE PRESS

The single most divisive issue to divide Bohemian journalists and exercise the worst fears of the province's officials during the revolutionary year was nationalism. Here is the area wherein the largest chasm was likely to open between the independent periodical press and the government. But, again, moderation was attempted.

For more than a century prior to the revolutions, Czech-language periodicals had been involved in the building of a conception of Czech national culture, which assumed that the Czechs were a singular people with their own language, history, and ethnicity. In these formulations, the emphasis was usually placed upon expanding the national consciousness of fellow Czech speakers and increasing the use of the language in public affairs: rarely had there been an overt assault on the monarchy, Catholicism, or the "Germans." With freedom of the press, however, the explosive national and social questions, which would have to be addressed in any future political settlement, became dominant issues in the periodical press and a defining characteristic of the revolutionary year in Bohemia.

In the first weeks of press freedoms, however, in the work of the journalists, the deputies of the committee, and even the students of the university an active effort was taken to smooth over national differences and avoid any detailed treatment of social questions. On March 15, students meeting at the university composed a petition that included equal Czech and German linguistic rights in university lectures and exams and, on March 18, a group of fifty Czech- and German-language writers assembled at the Archduke Stephan Hotel and asserted that the demand for equal linguistic rights for the Czechs was not "a disturbance against unanimity."⁴² Similarly, the National Guard and the Students' Legion were formed with members "of both nationalities," as was an association of Prague citizens called Concordia (Svornost/Eintracht). On March 19,

Havlíček wrote that his front-page appeal in the previous day's edition of *Pražské noviny*, in which he had suggested that Czech merchants should replace their German signs with Czech ones, had not been intended as an assault on the Germans but rather as an appeal for bilingualism.⁴³ Despite the fact that his explanation was compromised by his own statements in the same issue that the numerical strength of the monarchy's Slavs should be translated into political power and that the constitution should be shorn of its German elements,⁴⁴ it does indicate some reluctance to initiate open hostilities. On March 21, Havlíček made a further conciliatory effort with the publication of a declaration of national equality and Bohemian territorial loyalty drafted jointly by Czech and German writers.⁴⁵ When, on April 1, a provincial German-language paper, the *Reichenberger Wochenblatt*, spoke out against the perceived mistreatment of Germans in Prague, a number of Czech and German writers in Prague as well as a number of Germans in Reichenberg/Liberec refuted the claims and denied any manifestation of national hostility in the province.⁴⁶ On April 7, the St. Václav Baths Committee again attempted to display a picture of national harmony, and as late as April 8, Havlíček published another manifesto signed by Vojtěch Deym, Petr Fastr, Alois Pravoslav Trojan, and Uffo Horn expressing support for equal rights for both nationalities.⁴⁷ And on April 23, the *Prager Meisterkollegium* was founded, made up of some 1,800 artisans, again of both "nationalities."⁴⁸

The ideal of national amity, however, was perhaps ill-suited to the times. Already on March 18, the *Svatobratrský bratrstvo* (St. Václav Brotherhood, later renamed *Svornost*, Concordia—some names showed up multiple times identifying different organizations) was created as a purely Czech national guard. A purely Czech student organization, Slavie, also quickly formed, as did the *Řemeslnická jednota* (Artisans' Association), made up exclusively of nationally active Czech-speaking artisans.⁴⁹ On March 20, J.B. Riedl, the head of the German faction in the St. Václav Baths Committee, warned of impending national division.⁵⁰ On the next day, Stadion reported to Minister of the Interior Baron Frederick Pillersdorf that the Czech and German intelligentsia within the St. Václav Baths Committee were beginning to split on the labor question.⁵¹ By the end of March, any participation in the St. Václav Baths Committee that could be described as German had slackened and no self-identified Germans signed the March 28 petition demanding administrative union for the Bohemian crown lands and the creation

of a separate ministry. Outside of Prague, German speakers had already formed regional clubs and submitted their own counter-petitions,⁵² while in Prague Mayor Müller and some conservative members of the Merchants' Casino had already made an attempt to defend a German national position through the creation of a rival citizens' committee. A Czech and German united front was becoming more and more difficult to maintain, but the issue that would turn national consciousness to national violence originated, like the revolution itself, beyond the borders of the province.

On March 31, the Frankfurt Pre-parliament resolved to extend its conception of German national territory to encompass those provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy that had been part of the Holy Roman Empire and Post-Napoleonic Germanic Confederation, and to invite representatives from these lands to Frankfurt.⁵³ Among these lands were the Bohemian crown lands, where the majority of the population spoke Czech as its first language, and Carniola, where Slovene was the most widely spoken language.⁵⁴ This issue then presented a direct challenge to the efforts to maintain national harmony and would thus orient the public sphere away from any notion of a place of rational discourse and toward the expression of greater and greater subjectivity and enmity and place the officials in an increasingly difficult position. František Palacký and Franz Schuselka were invited to represent Bohemia in the pre-parliament. Palacký's reply of April 11, which was quickly printed in the major newspapers, refuted the notion that Bohemia was ever an integral part of the Reich, and ought to look to Vienna, not Frankfurt, to protect the peace, freedom, and rights of Bohemians. Numerous leaflets quickly appeared in response to Palacký's address and *Constitutionelles Blatt aus Böhmen* printed Alfred Meissner's reply, *Ein Brief an Herrn Franz Palacký*.⁵⁵ In general, however, opposition to the "Czech" position grew stronger the further one moved from Prague.⁵⁶ For the nationally conscious Czechs, the prospect of inclusion in an avowedly German national state was clearly unacceptable and antithetical to their goals of national progress within a reconstructed Habsburg dynastic state.

The news of the Frankfurt Pre-parliament's decision sent shock waves throughout Bohemia, where the prospects of further Czech-German cooperation were already tenuous. On April 19, the *Constitutioneller Verein* was formed to further the pro-Frankfurt cause.⁵⁷ This, according to Gary Cohen, was the "first clear sign of a genuine German group consciousness in Prague."⁵⁸ Although it ultimately adopted a *Grossdeutsch*

and *Kaisertreue* orientation, it still suffered from a lack of support among the German-speaking elite due to the perception of its challenge to the imperial status quo. In the end, even the *Constitutioneller Verein* chose not to participate in the elections to the Frankfurt Parliament.⁵⁹ Far more effective than any of these, however, was the expatriate *Verein der Deutschen aus Böhmen, Mähren, und Schlesien zur aufrechterhaltung ihrer Nationalität* (Association of the Germans of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia for the Safeguarding of Their Nationality) formed in Vienna by Ludwig von Löhner, Josef Rank, and Franz Rossler in response to the St. Václav's Committee petition of March 28. The first recorded action of this group was on April 9, when its leaders presented a statement to Pillersdorf publicly opposing the March 28 petition of the St. Václav Baths Committee on the grounds that it would lead toward the Czechification of Bohemian Germans.⁶⁰ The *Verein* made a sincere attempt to attract members, especially from among the aristocracy, but by the second half of April, it could claim only eight hundred supporters from the ranks of the middle classes and the aristocracy. Although the *Verein* was influential in Vienna, first winning recognition from Pillersdorf who accepted its petition and then playing a pivotal role in the fall of the later Ficquelmont government, it had only limited influence in Bohemia. Throughout the revolutionary period, a German national association approaching the political significance of the St. Václav Baths Committee never developed within the province.⁶¹ The defense of German national interests remained the task of the Vienna-based *Verein* and the German national periodicals in Bohemia, Vienna, and the German principalities.⁶²

The exodus of nationally conscious Germans from the St. Václav Baths Committee only hastened its constitution as a Czech national association. On April 10, the St. Václav Baths Committee changed its name to the National Committee, and on April 18, it made its first definitive, albeit cautious, statement on the Frankfurt elections, suggesting that decisions concerning the Frankfurt Parliament should be left to the next session of the Bohemian Diet. On April 24, the National Committee took a more determined stand, passing a resolution to boycott the elections to the Frankfurt Parliament. By the beginning of May, such notable German liberals as Uffo Horn, Karl Ebert, Alfred Meissner, and Alois Borrosch had left the St. Václav Baths Committee,⁶³ and by mid-month, the National Committee was a solidly Czech national body.⁶⁴ Similarly, the Students' Legion and Concordia split into separate Czech

and German branches, the Czech now calling itself *Spornost* and the German Concordia (the name change in German was from *Eintracht* to Concordia, which, to make it more complicated, is also used in English for the earlier combined organization). The issues raised during the revolutionary year also led to changes in history writing. German-language writers who had previously taken a great interest in earlier, “Czech” periods of Bohemian history, such as Karl Ebert, Moritz Hartmann, Uffo Horn, and Alfred Meissner, now turned away from these subjects.⁶⁵ In a similar vein, Palacký, who had previously written his *Geschichte von Böhmen* (History of Bohemia) in German, now switched to Czech and changed the title to *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě* (History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia).

The Frankfurt issue led, of necessity, to an increase in nationalist provocations in the press and provided direction to the wave of popular violence that had accompanied the breakdown of public order beginning in mid-March. Havlíček took the lead as the most outspoken opponent of the Frankfurt Parliament.⁶⁶ In *Národní noviny*, Havlíček defined national equality thusly:

We do not mean that the Germans should have one-half [of Bohemia] and we the other; we should consider such a *divino iniquitous*, since the Czechs constitute three-quarters of the population and the Germans only one-quarter....You [the Germans] repeat incessantly that liberty must not be sacrificed to nationality, but in fact the liberty you claim is the liberty to oppress us. Liberty without nationality is nothing but a poisoned morass for us, a beautified suicide.⁶⁷

Throughout the remainder of the spring, Havlíček’s tone became increasingly aggressive, escalating from a defensive anti-Frankfurt argument to an overwrought anti-German harangue.⁶⁸ Sharing a basic aversion to the efforts of the pre-parliament was Tyl, the editor of *Pražský posel*, who distrusted the motives of the men in Frankfurt and saw in Bohemia’s accession a benefit for the Germans alone.⁶⁹ On the German side, strongly supporting the Frankfurt Parliament was Breier (still the editor of *Prager Zeitung*), Franz Schuselka, Alfred Meissner, and Ignaz Kuranda, the Bohemian-born editor of the *Grenzboten*, a newspaper published in Leipzig. Each wrote in defense of Frankfurt and exchanged barbs with Havlíček.⁷⁰

For the Germans, the center of nationalist activity, however, was not so much Prague as the German-majority border regions around Reichenberg/Liberec, Saaz/Žatec, and Teplitz/Teplice, where nationally conscious Czech advances were received as discriminatory attacks on German nationality. In Prague itself, German national agitation was limited, perhaps in recognition of dangers involved in provoking the far larger Czech population.⁷¹ Still, growing tensions led to extreme changes in temperament, and German radicals and liberals alike, such as Alfred Meissner, who had been a strong supporter of the Czech national movement before March, became dismissive and arrogant opponents of the National Committee, and denigrators of everything Czech.⁷²

In the countryside, the single most important issue was not specifically one of nationality but much more a matter of practical, material importance. Regardless of language, sources speak loudest about the need to end the system of labor obligations, the *robot*. Nevertheless, the existence of this and then other compelling practical issues created an opportunity for the national movement to enhance its rural connections. As we will see later, with the onset of industrialization in the 1850s, the context of these issues constituted a great advantage for Czech nationalist vis-à-vis German nationalist opinion-making. Brauner, a leading member of the Czech national movement, who, when invited to edit Repeal's demands for the March 11 meeting of the St. Václav Baths Committee, had championed the end of the *robot*, had also previously, in 1847, published a book opposing all rural labor obligations. Opposition to the *robot* in the petition was particularly important, given that otherwise, the events in Prague were, in the words of Roubík, "completely foreign" to the countryside. As events progressed, however, the people of the countryside became ever more closely connected with Prague and the urban nationalist intellectuals through the flood of leaflets, which began to appear already in March, associating the work of Prague intellectuals with an effort to wrest power from the nobles and place it in the hands of the people and with the increasing volume of periodical literature that operated to the same end.⁷³

While rural interests remained predominantly practical, the tensions of the time and the context of the rural issues lent themselves well to the nationalist framework. When, for instance, a procession of the "German" bürgerers in Aussig/Ústí nad Labem was interpreted by Czech-speaking railroad workers as including a mockery of their economic plight, they

rioted, causing local officials to define the event as “a demonstration of national hatred against Germans.”⁷⁴ Similarly, expressions of aristocratic support for Frankfurt and/or German unification were described as an issue of “Germans” opposing a common Czech urban/rural front.⁷⁵ And in treating the issue of ending labor obligations, Czech-language newspapers took up both sides of the debate concerning compensation for the landlords. Radicals opposed compensation, standing firmly on the grounds that the peasants had long since paid their dues, while the liberals, including Havlíček, argued that the payment of compensation by the peasants constituted a show of their economic strength. For its part, local officials continually begged for a solution to the issue in order to remove the most incendiary issue in the rural districts.⁷⁶

Through all of this, the Czech nationalists spoke to rural issues in the newspapers, and, through the work of the St. Václav Baths Committee/National Assembly, which created a specific section to treat rural issues, endeavored to bring the people of the countryside more and more to the nationalist ideal. In response in April alone, hundreds of petitions were sent to the National Assembly, mixing demands regarding specifically rural issues with others that echoed ideas previously put forth in the Czech-language press. Among the interesting images expressed in these was the warning to those who would oppose the National Assembly that the “Czech flail and the Czech mace still exist!”⁷⁷ The specific demand for “freedom of the press” also certainly speaks to this important relationship.⁷⁸ In the area of journalism, a firm bond was established at this time between Havlíček and his rural readers, who responded to his articles with a copious volume of correspondence.⁷⁹ Finally, as the government was slow to enact legislation on rural labor obligations, trust was further transferred from the local officials to the newspapers and the new political institutions in Prague.⁸⁰ The very nature of the political questions and the success of the Czech nationalist journalists in tying them into a broader national-cultural movement profoundly changed the nature of public discussion and created an entirely new dynamic with which the officials would have to cope.

Back on the streets in Prague, tensions over the Frankfurt issue were manifested in several popular acts of violence against the supporters of the Frankfurt elections. Already in mid-March, Bohemia had experienced a rise in violence, with harassment and even physical assaults upon unpopular individuals; the appearance of popular justice in the countryside, where, in a few instances, the crowd summarily executed suspected

criminals; and a rise in the incidence of verbal and physical assaults upon Jews.⁸¹ Although most of this violence was random and opportunistic—resulting from a breakdown in public order—some particular instances were the direct consequence of political events. There was a direct correspondence, for example, between the reception in Prague on March 27 of the crown's evasive response to the St. Václav Baths Committee's petitions of mid-March and the immediate outbreak of a riot in place of the planned public celebration.⁸² In the case of the Frankfurt issue, popular violence became more sharply focused, the targets more easily identifiable and its justifications more clearly articulated. On May 3, during the visit of the Frankfurt delegation of Shilling, Wachter, and Kuranda, a number of Czech nationalists forcibly broke up a meeting of the German *Constitutioneller Verein*. On May 10, a crowd of forty to fifty persons, mostly students and guardsmen, assembled before the Old Town Hall and violently protested the arrest of the printer František Groll, who they assumed, in the spirit of the times, had printed something against Frankfurt. Ironically, Groll's leaflet had nothing to do with the Frankfurt issue, but was democratic and republican in nature, heaping insult upon the dynasty, government, nobility, clergy, bureaucracy, military, constitution, forthcoming parliament, and the Jews. It appeared in both Czech and German and urged both sides to work together and against reaction. Still, for a short time, Groll became a symbol of personal freedom, freedom of the press, and the anti-Frankfurt struggle.⁸³ More violence followed as Czechs forcibly interfered with the casting of ballots for the Frankfurt Parliament, from May 20 to 24,⁸⁴ and incidents of caterwauling continued at the residences of official personages.⁸⁵ Outside of Prague, riots also erupted in Königgrätz/Hradec Králové, Brünn/Brno, and Ostrau/Ostravá during the first week of May.

Taking up the nationalist challenge, the *Constitutionelle Blatt aus Böhmen* warned of the danger of a new Hussite War against all "foreigners."⁸⁶ This *Furor Tschechicus* was not the only assault on German national feeling during the spring of 1848. Combined with this overt assault on everything German was the undisguised advance of the Czech national movement in the St. Václav *cum* National Committee. By this time, not only had the National Committee become a purely Czech nationalist body, but it had also begun to function as a de facto executive board for the provincial government,⁸⁷ and, in the Cabinet Letter of April 8, it had achieved the court's acceptance of the major principles of its reform agenda.⁸⁸ This caused, of course, greater fears among those

who identified as Germans since the Cabinet Letter did not specifically allow for German representation in the province. The previously mentioned Vienna-based *Verein der Deutschen aus Böhmen, Mähren, und Schlesien zur aufrechterhaltung ihrer Nationalität* responded by opening branches in Prague, and then over the next months it expanded its activities and changed its name to *Verein der Deutschen in Österreichisch* to reflect an interest in the monarchy as a whole.⁸⁹

Just as the Frankfurt issue had raised the specter of Bohemia's inclusion in a larger German national state, the corresponding summoning of an All-Slav Congress to be held in Prague in June introduced the prospect of greater Slavic cooperation and raised the bugbear of Pan-Slavism. The issue of an All-Slav Congress first appeared before the Bohemian public in the April 30 edition of *Národní noviny* in an article, *Politika Jihoslovanu* (Yugoslav Politics), by Ivan Kukuljevic, translated from Croatian. On May 5, Havlíček published the proclamation and invitation to a Congress of Austrian Slavs in *Národní noviny* scheduled to begin on May 31, the same date as the opening of the Frankfurt Parliament.

The German response was immediate and vehement. Contemporary leaflets denounced the congress as anti-Austrian, separatist, and Pan-Slavic.⁹⁰ On May 2, three days before the invitation had appeared in the pages of *Národní noviny*, the *Augsberger Allgemeine Zeitung* announced the following:

To admit the rise of a Slav state in Bohemia would mean to thrust a poisoned sword into the chest of Germany. To liberate Bohemia from the German state association and abandon it to Russian influence and Pan-Slavic propaganda would mean the suicide of Germany. The Czechs in Bohemia don't have any choice to be German or not to be German. We give them their language, their customs, their memorials, in the end even their hopes, but we demand that they accept our German law and renounce all attempts to disassociate themselves from German history.⁹¹

In Vienna, *Die Constitutionelle* referred to the Slavs as “brutes.” In an article in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, Alfred Meissner called the Slavs “reactionary barbarians.” And the Viennese *Der Freimutige* reported that the Czechs were intent on joining the Russians in the destruction of all European civilization. In Vienna, only the semi-official *Wiener Zeitung* remained dispassionate, and in Prague the German-language press remained far more restrained than its Czech-language counterpart, rarely going beyond condescension in its treatment of the All-Slav Congress.⁹²

During the spring of 1848, the issue of Bohemia's inclusion in a self-conscious German national state constituted an immediate threat to the Czech national movement's ideal of a national homeland within the territorial boundaries of the historic Czech crown lands. In the face of this direct challenge to their ideal, the nationally conscious Czech journalists and their confederates in the St. Václav/National Committee responded with recriminations and denunciations of the Frankfurt Pre-parliament and its supporters. Similarly, in defense of Frankfurt and then in consequence of the analogous fear of Pan-Slavism motivated by the All-Slav Congress, German journalists raised the standard of national defense. As much as opposition to royal absolutism, the expression of divisive political nationalism on the part of both German-language and Czech-language journalists came to characterize the Bohemian periodical press during the Revolutions of 1848.

POKROK OR A REARGUARD ACTION?

The challenges of the spring certainly created a heavily contested public sphere, with political bodies increasingly taking stances that allowed progressively less room for compromise. The Bohemian officials of the imperial government tasked with the maintenance of public order and security, while unsure of the ultimate orientation that they were to take, initiated a response echoing all that was occurring around them. They opened a new periodical.

In the midst of the growing national strife, the government attempted to reassert its presence in public debate and build an alternative public opinion based upon state interest and national cooperation. On April 30, Pillersdorf, now minister-president, authorized Governor Leopold Thun to open a new official Czech-language newspaper, stating that it would be "the most reliable means of reviving confidence, concord, and the idea of the common good."⁹³ *Pražské noviny* was still nominally a government newspaper, but under the editorship of Sabina it had become a major contributor to the strife surrounding the Frankfurt question and remained, of course, in the opposition.

The first difficulty, however, was finding an editor. Here there exists some disagreement concerning who first approached whom with the project, but in the end, Václav Vladivoj Tomek, a moderate member of the Czech national movement, was named editor. Assisting him was another moderate, Josef Jireček, who had been a co-worker of Havlíček

at *Pražské noviny* and then *Národní noviny*.⁹⁴ In a letter dated May 19, Jireček described to Thun his vision of the paper as follows:

The essential basis of a constitutional state is the free development of all life, freedom in everything. But this freedom may not be erratic. Alongside it, there must be a strong government, whose main role is to direct this freedom and prudently preserve it with Liberal guidance, and defend it against absolutism....The strength of the government, if it is going to reach its goals, must be based on the trust and the conviction of its citizens. Therefore, all secrecy must be renounced, the actions of the government may not be concealed from the public, but always stand before the eyes of the nation so that the nation sees that trust may be repaid with trust. The reasons motivating its actions equally may not be concealed in order that public opinion inclines of its own accord towards its (the government's) convictions....In a land where political education is still weak, the common people must be given assistance in arriving at a true conception of constitutional life, so that freedom can be used but not misused.... The way to achieve this end, more often than not, is through the public newspapers, therefore we should offer a government paper.

Jireček described the goals of the government paper as being to present the government's intentions to the public, to elucidate and defend its actions, and to educate the people and lead them to true legal freedom and aid the development of constitutional life. Jireček also noted the importance of serving the interests of both nationalities, the Czechs and Germans, and the creation of true equality. In closing, Jireček stated, however, that he wanted to stipulate that if Thun was going to entrust him with the editorship of a government newspaper in the Czech language, he should know that Jireček would always maintain the free will to resign if his opinions differed from those of Thun.⁹⁵

The first issue of the new periodical, *Pokrok* (Progress), appeared on June 6 with the same format, the same type, and the same paper as *Národní noviny*.⁹⁶ It was designed to look like *Národní noviny* and contained no mention of the fact that it was a government organ except that it carried official notices.⁹⁷ Even before this date, on June 3, Havlíček had criticized *Pražské noviny*, still under Sabina's editorship, for pursuing in the recent times a perspective in accordance with government interests. A government paper, argued Havlíček, served government interests, whereas freedom of the press demanded that a paper give its own opinion, favorable or unfavorable, of each step of the government. On

the very day of *Pokrok's* first issue, Havlíček declared this new paper to be the government's own, whereas his was now resolutely oppositional. According to Havlíček, the government was previously without defense and without experience with the constitutional challenge of a free press, but now, with this new newspaper, it had its defense, and he, consequently, would feel free to give his political opinions without reservation.⁹⁸ In earnest, *Pokrok* did constitute the government's first attempt after the declaration of freedom of the press to produce a newspaper in the Czech language to defend its actions and attitudes, and thereby influence public opinion, a province hitherto reserved for the opposition press.

The first issue of *Pokrok* established that it was not directed toward a reconciliation of Czechs and pro-Frankfurt Germans, but instead was competing for the same audience served by *Národní noviny*. In its programmatic article, *Pokrok* defended the constitution and the sovereignty and the integrity of the monarchy, and it advocated the equal rights of all Austrian nationalities, but it also came out against the excesses of Frankfurt and the Magyars and announced the rights of the remaining nationalities to ignore policies that would unleash civil war in the land, destroying the welfare of the monarchy. The paper strictly admonished the German and Magyar elements who oppressed the Slavs and encouraged the Slavs to resist these advances. In the first issue, the Croatian ban, Josip Jellacic, was even referred to as the Slavic Napoleon. This was, perhaps, not entirely what Pillersdorf had intended, but it suited Thun's Bohemian state's rights agenda. The question of whether *Pokrok* could have become a viable competitor to *Národní noviny* must, however, remain unknown. Its last issue came out June 12, the day of the June Uprising. *Pokrok* did not reappear after the Uprising. The entire run of the periodical was five issues.⁹⁹ The last words on *Pokrok* came on June 25 from Sabina when he berated the paper for having served the will of the government rather than the constitutional rights of the people.¹⁰⁰

After *Pokrok* closed, the governor returned to pressuring C.W. Medau to alter the publication of the government-licensed papers, *Pražské noviny* and *Prager Zeitung*, to replace their editors. This, however, only pushed Medau in the opposite direction. On June 25, Medau renamed his Czech-language paper *Konstituční Pražské noviny* (Constitutional Prague Gazette), and, on June 27, he announced that he had severed all ties with the government. According to Medau, the government wanted these papers to become "good little tools" and had even

threatened him with the withdrawal of the contract for the official papers if he did not comply. Medau, who was now selling 1,300 copies an issue of *Konstituční Pražské noviny* (up from 200 copies before mid-March), decided rather to end his relationship with the government and to place his faith in the market, independently publishing the renamed *Konstituční Všeobecné Noviny České* (Universal Constitutional Gazette of Bohemia). With the slogan “Everything for the people, everything for freedom,” Medau announced his paper’s movement into the opposition.¹⁰¹

Having appeared in only five issues, *Pokrok* probably created little dialogue with either the other papers or the public and therefore probably had little impact on public opinion. The importance of the periodical was rather that it stands out as an attempt “to merge the defense of government interests with limited Liberalism and the national spirit of contemporary Czech politics.”¹⁰²

CONCLUSIONS

It could easily be argued that the Revolutions of 1848 constituted the most profound threat to the existence of the Habsburg Monarchy between the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683 and its dissolution in 1918, but in this judgment there is much to be missed when applied to Bohemia. The public sphere in Bohemia had become increasingly divisive, illustrating the contradiction that Habermas had recognized would later occur with regard to class, but here it was first occurring with regard to the concept of the nation. Habermas’s “relativized form of the *bourgeois* public sphere”¹⁰³ was thus one of separate liberal nationalist camps. Expanding the publication of their views against rivals competing for the same space, often in the name of the same principles, became the norm. The public sphere was, nonetheless, still dominated by moderates who wished to reform rather than dissolve their ties with the state.

After the fall of the Metternich government on March 13, and the imperial court’s promise of a constitution on March 15, the state lost its singular role in the political affairs of Bohemia. In Prague—as elsewhere in the monarchy—liberal intellectuals quickly became the most significant public voice of the widespread opposition to the ancien régime. Although the radicals of Repeal were the first to set forth a public agenda, they quickly surrendered their role to the more established and more widely respected liberals. Organized as the St. Václav Baths

Committee/National Committee, the liberals thus quickly became the dominant popular political body in Prague.

Moderation also remained the order of the day among Bohemia's most influential journalists. With the announcement of press freedom on March 15, veteran Bohemian journalists endeavored to avoid undue public enthusiasm. Until the promulgation of a new press law on May 18, 1848, the publishers and editors of Prague remained reluctant to use the press to challenge the authority of the St. Václav Baths Committee or to show marked disloyalty to the imperial court. While they certainly expressed themselves more freely than before, the papers operated mostly as a communications medium for the various positions being negotiated within the committee and between it and the municipal, provincial, and imperial governments. The periodical press and the leading intellectuals sought a negotiated change in the censorship regime, not its full abolition, and endeavored to maintain national harmony between the Czechs and Germans.

Moderation, however, was under threat not only from the street but also from the very issues that defined the revolutionary moment. Already in March and more provocatively in April, the question of the province's possible political future in a German nation-state raised essential issues of identity. In the periodical press, as in political affairs more generally, Czech national liberals took the lead, attacking the Frankfurt Pre-parliament and its supporters in the province. The German-language press followed in turn with its support of Frankfurt, anger over the Cabinet Letter of April 8, and derision of the All-Slav Congress. With the introduction of a new, more lenient press law on May 18, a more radical press emerged, more confident of its legal security. In the struggles of March to June 1848, the journalists of Bohemia did not cause the events that led to the establishment of distinct and irreconcilable Czech and German positions. This was the unavoidable consequence of the ultimately intractable political, social, and cultural questions raised by the revolutions. The press, however, in its role as reporter and commentator, increasingly became the forum for the exposition of extreme opinions and gratuitous assaults. With the future political and cultural orientation of the province at stake, the goal of provincial harmony was at the moment unachievable, and the division of the Bohemian population into nationally conscious and ultimately hostile Czech and German elements advanced through the mediation of the free press. Not all Bohemians chose sides in the debate. Many "Germans," for instance,

remained opposed to Frankfurt and spoke against its objectives during meetings of the National Committee.¹⁰⁴ The point, rather, is that despite the continuing efforts of some conscientious advocates of national amity, national enmity became the more pronounced product of the free press, and one of the defining characteristics of the revolutions. Whereas the periodical literature of the *Vormärz*—despite the bold advances that took place in the Czech-language literary journals and in *Pražské noviny*—has been variously described as dull and tedious¹⁰⁵ or “a barren world,”¹⁰⁶ the new, independent press was distinctly political, overtly provocative, and increasingly popular. While it is difficult to establish a precise correspondence between the expressions of the press, the public mood, and popular action, a common trajectory and increasing audience for these papers is in clear evidence.

In response, the government pursued a variety of tactics. During the uncertainty of March and under the fear of creating further unrest, the officials responsible for public order and security first remained silent in the face of the expanding political content of the periodicals, requesting only that the publishers practice moderation and where possible replace particularly troublesome editors. The very expansion of press freedoms, however, altered the power relationship between publishing houses and the government. Formerly, publishers were at the mercy of government censors, at risk of losing lucrative government contracts. Freedom of the press, however, supplanted government power with market forces. Now, periodicals could generate a sufficient audience and thereby a sufficient income to no longer be reliant upon government patronage. Indeed, government pressure now led many publishers to renounce formerly lucrative and often financially necessary government contracts. With the loss of publisher support and the departure of editors such as Breier, Havlíček, and Sabina to open their own independent papers, the government newspapers, *Pražské noviny* and *Prager Zeitung*, reverted to lifeless recitation of government communiqués and official news, read “by officials rather than by the public.”¹⁰⁷ Finally, having failed in all this, the government sought to create a new newspaper to directly compete with the Czech national press. Although the paper did not last long, the effort is, of itself, quite interesting. During the *Vormärz*, the government maintained an official monopoly on the periodical press, closely, though often inadequately, asserting the primacy of the state in determining what would be communicated through its pages. Now, with the sudden disappearance of this role, it quickly learned that it would need to fight in the

public sphere for its own interests, combating an increasingly confident independent press. The timing, however, was wrong and this newspaper, *Pokrok*, fell victim to the June Uprising and the political decline of its patron, Governor Thun, thereafter. While February to March had been a time when the government and its officials feared the worst, events in Bohemia had already unfolded in such a way that the monarchy had not only survived but remained the central factor in the province's politics and emerging public sphere. In the next year, as the revolution waned and the government's confidence waxed, it developed new conditions defining the limits of the public sphere, certainly not as free as in the spring of 1848 but also certainly not as constricted as in the *Vormärz*. In this new environment, the officials responsible for public order and security would have to learn new skills, adjusting to new regulations and indeed new restrictions on their own authority, which hampered, in their own estimation, their ability to enforce what they saw as the authority necessary to maintain public order and security.

NOTES

1. Haupt and Langeweische (2001, 2–3).
2. There is a very extensive historiography in German on the rise of liberalism in German-speaking Europe. With regard directly to Bohemia, the works of Miroslav Hroch are essential, one of which is available in English, Hroch (1985). Also in English, Agnew (1993), and Judson (1997).
3. Olechowski (2006, 1494).
4. Ibid., 1496.
5. Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821–1856) has long been regarded as the most significant Czech-language and Czech nationalist journalist of the nineteenth century. He first came to public attention with his portraits of Russian life, *Obrazy z Rus* (Portraits of Russia), published from 1843 to 1846 in the Czech-language journals *Květy* (Blossoms), *Česká včela* (The Czech Bee), and *Časopis českého musea* (Journal of the Museum of Bohemia), and with his stinging critique of Tyl's popular and previously critically acclaimed patriotic novel, *Poslední Čech* (The Last Czech), in the July 5, 1845 edition of *Česká včela*. In 1845, on the suggestion of František Palacký, Havlíček was hired as the new editor of *Pražské noviny* and *Česká včela*, the sole Czech-language political newspaper and its popular literary supplement, beginning his tenure with the January 1, 1846 edition. By March 1848, he had become of great concern to the

authorities responsible for public order and security in Bohemia. Josef Kajetán Tyl (1808–1856) was the first editor, beginning in 1833, of the literary supplement, which would later be entitled *Květy*, becoming one of the leading lights of the Czech national movement and a strong personality in Czech-language literary and drama circles. Jakub Malý (1811–1885) never rose to the prominence of either Tyl or Havlíček, but remained over a longer period a leading Czech-language poet, journalist, historian, and translator.

6. Habermas (1991, 402).
7. Kořalka (2001, 150).
8. Reinfeld (1982, 30), Pech (1969, 47–48).
9. Pech (1969, 52).
10. Kazbunda (1929, 40).
11. The text of the March 11 petition is available in Czech in Černý (1893, 1–6).
12. Pech (1969, 57–58).
13. Reinfeld (1982, 47).
14. Of the twenty individuals chosen to serve on the committee, the majority were members of the Czech middle classes, although the party also included three nobles, a Jewish banker, several Germans, and two radicals, Gauč and Ruppert. Among the signatories were three aristocrats: Count Franz Thun, Count Vojtěch Deym, and Count Jíří Buquoy; members of the liberal wing of the national movement: Petr Fastr, Antonín Štulc, Bernard Banset, František Augustín Brauner, Alois Pravoslav Trojan, Adolf Maria Pinkas, Josef Frič, and Leopold von Laemel; and among the radicals: Vilem Gauc and Ludvik Ruppert. Count Deym served as the chairman of the committee with Trojan, Pinkas, and Dr. Vilem Gabler as members of his presidium. Count Franz Thun was selected to present the petition to the emperor.
15. Kazbunda (1929, 19). The diet had, in May 1847, decided to demand the end of the censorship regulations and permission to publish its own paper.
16. Kořalka, *Ibid.*, 156.
17. *Ibid.*, 30–32. Stadion was transferred in November 1847 from the governorship of Moravia and Silesia to Bohemia in accordance with the suggestion of Kolowrat. The police director, Heyde, who took over from Moric Deym in November 1846, was in favor with Sedlnitzky but not Kolowrat, and Stadion would have liked to replace him with a member of the high nobility who was close to the Estates opposition. Although Stadion and Heyde differed in their attitude toward the Estates opposition, they were both disinterested in the extension of political participation to a wider segment of society. Müller, on the other hand, who had

become the mayor of Prague in the spring of 1839, was a known advocate of increasing the representation of the fourth estate in the diet.

18. Polišenský (1980, 111).
19. Pech (1969, 62–63).
20. Pech (1969, 64), Urban (1982, 25).
21. Kazbunda (1929, 54–55).
22. Ibid., 58.
23. Ibid., 59.
24. Pech (1969, 62–63).
25. Kazbunda (1929, 57).
26. *Pražské noviny*, 22, March 16, 1848.
27. Pech (1969, 60). For three days following the March 11 meeting, while censorship was still in effect, the papers made no mention of the event.
28. Roubík (1930, 12 and appendices 1–10), Roubík (1931, 150), Volf (1930, 432–433). Although only thirty-seven of the one hundred periodicals which appeared in Bohemia during the year 1848 were specifically characterized by their editors as political in orientation, all of the province's periodicals, whether devoted primarily to literary, scientific, commercial, or other subjects, found the inclusion of political commentary unavoidable. Czech-language journals such as *Včela* (The Bee), *Poutník*, and *Časopis českého musea* (Journal of the Bohemian Museum) each changed their editors and came out with political commentary. Among the German-language periodicals, the long-running *Bohemia* changed its format and as of April 1 appeared as a political newspaper. The quantitative transformation of Bohemian periodical literature also shows the dominance of political issues. Of the thirty-seven specifically political periodicals appearing in Bohemia, only six had appeared previous to the announcement of freedom of the press on March 15. The total number of literary journals rose from six in 1847 to ten in 1848, and the total number of journals devoted to science, religion, pedagogy, trade, and other subjects rose from fourteen to twenty-three. The remaining thirty periodicals appeared locally in the countryside.
29. Przedak (1904, 124).
30. Kazbunda (1929, 60 and 134–135).
31. Roubík (1931, 182), Przedak (1904, 124–126).
32. “Prohlášení ústavnosti,” *Pražské noviny*, 23, March 19, 1848 in Tobolka (1900–1903, 235–238), Kazbunda (1929, 59). The fact that the March 15 decree was exceedingly broad and vague was lost on none of the major figures in Prague. In addition to Havlíček, Palacký also made reference to this on March 19 in *Pražské noviny* and Stadion quickly contacted Vienna for clarification and to urge the government to quickly publish the promised press law “if they didn’t want the abolition of censorship to led to all kinds of disorders.”

33. "Korounev naše," *Pražské noviny*, 23, March 19, 1848 in Tobolka (1900–1903, 238–245).
34. Reinfeld (1982, 33), Kabunda (1929, 134). Count Deym himself submitted the petition for a license on March 28. Deym was also a member of the St. Václav Committee and active in the national movement before that time.
35. Butter (1930, 182). According to Butter, *Konstituční Pražské noviny* topped sales over 1,300 copies under Sabina.
36. Przedak (1904, 124–126).
37. Tůma (1886, 13–20), commented on in Reinfeld (1982, 32), Roubík (1931, 149), Volf, 433. In the first issue of *Národní noviny*, April 5, Havlíček began a four-issue series of articles, *Naše politika*, in which he demanded the true equality of nationalities, the unification of the Bohemian crown lands (Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia), the end of feudal privileges, equality of all estates before the law, a responsible ministry for the Bohemian crown lands and a single diet for the entire nation (again meaning the three provinces), a National Guard, a complete reform of the schools and administration, and even the renaming of "our association" (*naše spolek*), as he referred to Austria, in light of the current name's association with what he referred to as centuries of misrule and oppression. Despite the fact that the meeting of these demands would entail the complete reorganization of the monarchy, Havlíček maintained his attachment to the program of Austroslavism, firmly rejecting Pan-Slavism as Pan-Russianism but asserting the necessity of Slavic cooperation within the borders of the monarchy.
38. *Constitutionelle Blatt aus Böhmen* was the first independent newspaper to be licensed during the revolutionary period. It was later renamed *Correspondenzblatt aus und für Böhmen*, but continued publication until the middle of 1852.
39. Kazbunda (1929, 133–134).
40. From 1846 to May 30 and June 30, 1848, respectively, Medau published both the official Czech- and German-language Prague newspapers. Beginning July 1, G. Haase und Söhne published both of the papers. Similarly, Medau published both *Národní noviny* and *Constitutionelle Blatt aus Böhmen*.
41. Reinfeld (1982, 24), Roubík 1930, appendix 9). In 1848, there appeared in Bohemia forty-one Czech-language periodicals and fifty-nine German-language periodicals. These numbers declined during the next year to thirty Czech-language periodicals and fifty-eight German-language periodicals. This disequilibrium continued throughout the 1850s. In 1859, there were fifteen Czech-language periodicals and thirty German-language periodicals published in Bohemia.

42. Havránek (2000, 126).
43. *Pražské noviny*, 23, March 19, 1848 in Tobolka (1900–1903, 235–238), Pech (1969, 79–80).
44. *Pražské noviny*, 23, March 19, 1848 in Tobolka (1900–1903, 235–238), Reinfeld (1982, 32).
45. Urban (1982, 32–33), Zděnek 1963, 53). Among the German signatories were Karl Egon Ebert, Ignaz Kuranda, Moric Hartmann, and Alfred Meissner, and among the Czechs, Havlíček, Palacký, Šafařík, Sabina, Tyl, and Hanka.
46. Pech (1969, 87).
47. Kazbunda (1929, 138–139).
48. Stölzl (1971, 125).
49. Ibid., 126.
50. Kazbunda (1929, 78).
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid, 144–147. These petitions demanded that German be maintained as the language of education and administration in German-majority areas and protested the separation of the three provinces from the other German-speaking regions of the monarchy.
53. Urban (1982, 33 and 36), Pech (1969, 80). In the March 31 meeting of the Pre-parliament in Frankfurt, the decision was taken to invite six representatives from those parts of the Habsburg Monarchy that had belonged to the German Confederation and the earlier Holy Roman Empire to participate in the Pre-parliament. On April 9, 1848, the Austrian government agreed to the holding of elections for the Frankfurt Parliament within the Habsburg Monarchy, and thereafter followed a policy of neutrality on this issue in accordance with the advice of Count Leo Thun.
54. Kann (1974, 606).
55. Alfred Meissner (1822–1885) was a biographer and friend of Heinrich Heine.
56. Bugge (1994, 68).
57. Urban (1982, 35).
58. Cohen (2006, 31).
59. Ibid, 31–32.
60. Urban (1982, 33), Pech (1969, 87). In particular, they protested the separation of the Czech lands from the rest of Austria, the curtailment and neglect of Germans in the Czech lands (the establishment of Czech language in the elementary schools in German regions, the establishment of Czech language as the language of instruction in existing *gymnasias* and *realschule*, the Czechizing tendency at the Prague University, etc.), and the program of employing officials only in the lands in which

they were residents. Accompanying these protests were the requests that German be preserved as the language of the representative organs in the Czech crown lands and that not only the Czech crown lands but the area of German Austria be annexed to Germany proper.

61. Polišenský (1980, 131–132).
62. Macartney (1969, 350).
63. Urban (1980, 36), Kazbunda (1929, 157).
64. Pech (1969, 88).
65. Měštan (1984, 97)
66. Reinfeld (1982, 38), Pech, 89.
67. Reproduced in Reinfeld, Ibid.
68. Pech (1969, 89–90).
69. Zděnek (1963, 54–55).
70. Kazbunda (1929, 155–156).
71. Ibid., 138.
72. Ibid., 91.
73. Roubík (1928, 164–166), Roubík (1938, 185).
74. Roubík (1928, 174).
75. Ibid., 175.
76. Ibid., 180.
77. Ibid., 183–184.
78. Ibid., 188–189.
79. Roubík (1938, 185).
80. Roubík (1928, 201).
81. Kazbunda (1929, 45, 61–66, and 68). During the first weeks of March, knowing that civil unrest meant the targeting of minorities for violence, a representation of the Jewish community requested special protection from Police Director Heyde in the case that the mob should attack the Jewish quarter. During the remainder of March, while the garrison watched for signs of worker unrest, the citizenry of Prague, and in particular the students, forgot their fond feelings of March 14 and 15 and began to regard the soldiers as an occupation. Within weeks there was little trust between the military, the National Guard, and the public.
82. Polišenský, 1982, 113; Pech (1969, 73). The Cabinet Letter of April 8 had succeeded in quieting some of the hostility engendered by the government's March 23 letter. Of particular importance, the Cabinet Letter reiterated the March 28 decision to abolish the *robot* and further stated that in the next meeting of the Bohemian Diet decisions would be made to handle the problems associated with its implementation. Pech maintains that these actions were taken in direct response to reports of rural unrest.
83. Kazbunda, 172–174.

84. Urban, 1980, 37; Pech (1969, 93). Of the sixty-eight counties of Bohemia, no more than nineteen returned election results.
85. Kazbunda (1929, 175). On May 10, a caterwaul was held outside the home of the National Guard commander Andreas Haase for his presumed opposition to the participation of guardsmen in that day's protest.
86. *Ibid.*, 176.
87. Polišenský (1982, 113–115), Urban (1980, 27 and 29), Pech (1969, 71–72). On March 29, Count Stadion, after being forced to sign the March 28 petition, offered his resignation to Count Pillersdorf. While he did not intend to remain in office as had Mayor Müller, he did employ a similar tactic in trying to establish a rival representative committee. On April 1, he created the twenty-four-member Extraordinary Provincial Advisory Committee to serve as a counterweight to the St. Václav Committee. Among its members who were also members of the St. Václav Committee were Count Deym, František Brauner, František Palacký, and Antonín Strobach. The attempt, however, failed, and after the issuance of the April 8 Cabinet Letter, this group elected to join the St. Václav Committee as had Müller's committee. When the St. Václav Committee, freshly renamed the National Committee, met on April 13, Stadion was its presiding officer. On April 6, the Archduke Franz Joseph was named Stadion's successor. This change, however, like Stadion's selection as National Committee chairman, was purely ceremonial. For the time being, the duties of the governor were turned over to the Prague city government. The city government, however, was itself turned over to the National Committee on April 9 when the court named one of its leading figures, Antonín Strobach, mayor, and others, such as Petr Fastr, to the twenty-member city council. Until the arrival of Count Leo Thun as the new governor on May 1, the National Committee functioned as the chief executive of the Bohemian administration.
88. Macartney (1969, 349). In the Cabinet Letter of April 8 the court answered the demand of the St. Václav Committee's March 28 petition for the complete equality of the nationalities with the complete equality of the languages. It met the demand for the election of the Diet based upon the widest possible franchise with a statement that representatives of the towns and rural communities would be added to that body and that it should meet at the earliest possible date. In response to the demand for the complete unification of the three historic provinces of the Kingdom of Bohemia with a common diet and ministry, it offered a central administration of undefined rank or responsibility. The court stated that the issue of territorial reorganization could be raised at the

- next meeting of the *Reichstag*. The last point of the petition, the arming of the National Guard, had already been authorized on March 30.
89. Judson (1997, 42).
 90. Kazbunda (1929, 184).
 91. Quoted in Urban, 1980, 36.
 92. Pech (1969, 125), Reinfeld (1982, 45).
 93. Butter (1930, 181). Count Leo von Thun-Hohenstein (1811–1888) was a longtime supporter of Bohemian patriotic and Czech revivalist activities. In 1848, he was named provisional governor of Bohemia and then, in 1849, minister of education and religion. Although he supported the suppression of the June Uprising in 1849, he remained throughout his life close to the Czech nationalist leaders and a strong supporter of Austrian federalism, education, and the revival of the Czech language.
 94. Kazbunda (1929, 243), Butter (1930, 182 and 201). Butter attributes the high editorial quality of *Pokrok* to Jireček. According to Kazbunda, Tomek was approached by P.V. Štulc, but according to Tomek's own memoirs, it was Palacký himself who served as the go-between for Governor Thun. There also exists the question of whether Tomek was to be the permanent editor or merely a temporary editor with his fellow moderate Josef Jireček taking the permanent position. Václav Vladivoj Tomek (1818–1905) was an historian of Bohemia, editor at *Pražské noviny*, and member of the moderate wing of the Czech national movement. He served as a representative in the Bohemian diet in the 1860s and then in the upper house of the imperial parliament in 1898.
 95. Butter (1930, 182–185).
 96. Kazbunda (1929, 242–243), Butter (1930, 190 and 193). The publishing firm G. Haase und Söhne was chosen for the printing of this paper specifically for this purpose.
 97. Butter (1930, 193).
 98. Kazbunda (1929, 244), Butter (1930, 181 and 190).
 99. Roubík (1931, 161–162).
 100. *Konstituční Pražské noviny*, No. 47, June 25, 1848; Butter, 191, 193, and 195.
 101. *Konstituční Pražské noviny*, No. 48, June 27, 1848.
 102. Butter (1930, 192).
 103. Habermas (1991, 131–132).
 104. Pech (1969, 93).
 105. *Ibid.*, 66.
 106. Volf (1930, 432).
 107. Pech (1969, 224).

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