

Karl Türk, The Development of German-Czech Relations, 1898
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Karl Türk, Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien. (Der Kampf um das Deutschtum, 6. Heft.) (München: Lehmann/Alldeutscher Verband, 1898) [Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. (The Struggle for Germandom)], pp. 17-36. Translated by Jeremy King & Rachel Coll, 2001. Explanatory remarks and original German phrasing provided in brackets [].

Chapter II:
Development of German-Czech Relations
from 1848 until the Present,
under the Badeni Cabinet.

The time of the German heroes was come,
But of no avail to the *Volk* of the Eastern Marches.
A German empire arose in sublime greatness,
But to the Southeast nothing.
There the *Volk* of the Eastern Marches found no room,
And since then its strength cannot recover.
Are we Germania's outcast sons,
That the Slav oppresses and scorns us so?
Is the bright sun to shine on us no more,
Are we to mourn our own decline?
To arms! We wish to fight and win,
Not to succumb slavishly to Slavdom.

The events of the revolution in 1848 and 1849 had already revealed and proven a decidedly national, Pan-Slavic impulse and character to the Czechs of Bohemia and Moravia. This was in contrast to the merely Liberal efforts, blurred by cosmopolitanism, of the Germans. The holding of a Slavic Congress in Prague, forcibly disbanded by imperial troops after the bombardment of the city on 15 June 1848, had already borne witness to this Pan-Slavism. And the behavior of the Slavic spokesmen, Dr. Rieger, Palacky, and others, in the Parliament in Vienna had made their aims clear – as had their intervention in favor of removing the Parliament to Kremsier, a small provincial town in the middle of the Czech-speaking area. Together with the Poles, namely, they wished to place the Slavs [*das Slawentum*] at the core of the Austrian Monarchy. And yet, at that time, the Czechs were still relatively modest and respectful toward their German fellow-inhabitants, in comparison to their current behavior. Rieger and Palacky proposed that Austria be broken up into eight national groups, among which there was to be only a loose connection. Bohemia and Moravia were to be divided into a German territory, called Bojerheim, and into a Czech territory, called Tschechowien. The Czechs thus acknowledged not only the justification but also the possibility for a national compromise and separation, according to the actual holdings [*Besitzstände*] of the two races.

After the suppression of the revolution and the suspension of all constitutional activities and freedoms, Austria was ruled once again in centralistic and absolutist fashion, with a German administration. Now, though, the leading statesman was called not Metternich but Schwarzenberg, and then Bach. And in place of the Josephinian remnants of religious enlightenment, one allowed churchly, ultramontane influences to rule side by side with the State. The pressure of the Church, in

other words, was placed next to that of the police. That, of course, did not prevent that system of government from attempting to pass itself off as an enlightened absolutism. Together with government forces, then, clericalism was to suppress and hold together the *Volk*, while the German language was seen as a means of communication, and taught in all schools.

After the Italian war of 1859, which ended badly for Austria, and after the bankruptcy of the Bach Cabinet, it became necessary to introduce constitutional forms of government once again. Incomprehensibly, the Goluchowski Cabinet, i.e. a Pole, was appointed to lead off with constitutional experiments. They now followed one another in rapid succession. The first was the issuance of the so-called October Diploma, which rested on a federalist foundation and aroused joyous celebration among the Slavs – who had been lying in wait for just such a thing. This constitutional document, as well as every utterance and deed of the Goluchowski government, signaled a tender care and consideration for the historical-political individualities. By those were meant above all the Slavic races, for which was now intended the leading role in the new Austria, in place of the Germans.

Because the matter won strong support on no side and gathered no steam, however, Schmerling was appointed to the head of the cabinet, to the great annoyance of the Slavs. He elaborated the centralistic, pro-German February Constitution, and attempted with it to repair the damage done by Goluchowski's mistakes. It was too late, however, because the greed and self-confidence of the Slavs had been awakened. The authority of the State had been weakened by its vacillations and uncertain soundings, such that the Hungarians, together with the Poles and the Czechs, wanted nothing to do with this German-led, all-state parliamentarianism. Schmerling fell from power, and the February Constitution was suspended by the Belcredi Cabinet, which had Slavic inclinations and ruled once again in absolutist fashion. Rieger and Palacky, the acknowledged leaders of the Czech *Volk*, now energetically promoted Pan-Slavic sentiments, seeing in them the most effective means to inflame the Czechs' arrogance and delusions of grandeur, as well as to spur them to the greatest possible resistance against the German government. By this point, the Czechs, ever more on the advance, had the support of the greater part of the Bohemian aristocracy and Catholic clergy. In the time of the Hussite movement, that same clergy had been persecuted and hunted by the Czechs in the most barbaric fashion. And after the Battle of the White Mountain, it had been invited back by Ferdinand II and had set itself with the utmost effort to recruiting Catholic Southern Germans to settle in Bohemia. The goal had been to establish a wholesome counterweight to the Czechs in the interior, still Hussite and Protestant, and to contribute to the ultimate victory of Catholicism.

To be sure, there was now little trace of churchly-liberal Hussitism and Protestantism among the Czechs – most of whom had returned to the Catholic Church as repentant and obedient sheep. In Prague, it was Cardinal Schwarzenberg and in Budweis, Bishop Jirsik who focused their efforts on reducing the number of Germans who set out to become priests. They also sought to establish Czech schools everywhere, and to injure Germanism in every way, while at the same time expanding and promoting Czechdom. In Moravia, the Archbishop, Landgrave Fürstenberg, who was the offspring of an Imperial German family, worked in much the same way. Thus in 1893, the Archbishop's seminary in Olmütz had only 37 Germans among 202 students, although the number of German parishioners in the diocese far exceeded 600,000. "No German who wished to remain faithful to his nationality could last four weeks in the seminary in Budweis," Gehre wrote in his book about the German language islands. And the situation is not much better in the seminary in Olmütz. That the Czech curates and priests assigned to purely German areas would agitate for the Czech cause

whenever possible is self-evident, and demonstrated a thousandfold by experience. Especially pernicious, however, are their activities along the linguistic border. There, supported all too often by Czech teachers, they assist in bringing about Slavic mixed marriages. They influence women to bring up their children in Slavic fashion, and agitate at elections to the local school board and Town Council. Often they succeed with surprising speed in those bodies at converting a German school first into a *utraquist* (mixed-language) school, and then into a completely Slavic one. Through Czechization of religious services and the Town Council, to which the vicar contributes, the fate of such a community is then sealed, and it falls to the Slavs. But now communities are putting up desperate resistance, because national sentiment has grown mightily.

Although the Czech clergy wish to make it impossible for the Germans to pray to their God in their native tongue, they will find the ways and means to do so. Protestantism, which was suppressed in Bohemia with fire and sword, has deeper roots than many think. Whoever has seen the ancestral bibles that are kept in many houses as the holiest of holies knows that the evangelical [Lutheran] faith requires only a little bit of rain in order to yield a rich crop. The evangelical faith is the sanctuary of a pure doctrine, and thus also the surest and best sanctuary of the German *Volk*.

Quite like the Catholic clergy, the nobility – which is mostly Czech-minded – was and is intent on providing energetic assistance to the Czechs at the court in Vienna and in all representative bodies. The nobility is also intent on bestowing all possible advancement on the Czechs through the power of its wealth, through the Czechizing influence of its officials and of its Czech service personnel, and through other means of agitation that present themselves. Prince Schwarzenberg, whose enormous estate is known colloquially as “the Schwarzenberg Kingdom,” distinguishes himself in this field. Perhaps he intends someday to play a ruling role in the Czech diet of an autonomous Bohemian Kingdom, and to shape tax legislation and practice even more favorably for himself than has already been the case. After all, that extraordinarily rich landowner’s estates are taxed at far lower rates than the land of the poorest peasant!

After the defeat of Austria in 1866, Count Beust, the retired Saxon minister and enemy of Prussia, was called to Vienna as imperial Chancellor and Foreign Minister. He brought about the implementation of Austro-Hungarian dualism. Not only was the western half of the Empire separated from Hungary but – far more important and disastrous for the Germans – its organic and political link with the German Empire and the German *Volk*, which had lasted without interruption for more than a thousand years, was severed. The State thus took on a completely different political form, and its interests and power relationships were displaced. The Germans in this State, excluded from their earlier, loose common citizenship with the Germans of the Empire and stranded amidst foreign races that had never been well disposed toward them, were left to their own devices and at the tender mercies of the government.

At that time, the Czechs again cultivated with especial zeal the idea of Pan-Slavic unity, and made no attempt at concealing it. To the contrary, Dr. Rieger and several of his comrades attended the ethnographic exhibit in Moscow in as conspicuous a fashion as possible. There Rieger gave a public speech about how the Czech race belonged to Pan-Slavism, was willing to fulfill its Slavic mission at its western post. This national pilgrimage showed quite clearly and instructively that the Czechs’ hatred for the Germans had set itself the goal of fighting Germanism in Austria to the death. So did the well-known Czech memorandum sent to Emperor Napoleon III from Prague, in which Dr. Rieger explained to him in the most inviting terms how a French army might easily reach Prague from the Vosges, and from there proceed to Berlin. Dr. Rieger openly called on France to make war against

Germany, inasmuch as he assured Napoleon of the aid of Czechdom. A further goal of the Czechs, then, was to serve as a link between the French and the Russians, for the purpose of inflicting a death blow to Germanism in the Empire as well – and thereby liberating themselves from the nightmare of the Pan-Germanism that threatened them and gave them no rest. Today, the Czechs do not dream only about establishing a Czech national state in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. They strive also to Slavify the German Alpine lands, with the help of Slavs who extend their hands from the South. The aim is to restore Slavic rule over the whole of the region stretching from the Fichtel Range to the Adriatic Sea, as was once actually the case under Ottokar II.

After the so-called Compromise with Hungary, the December Constitution was worked out for the West Austrian (West Leithanian) crownlands, and approved by the Emperor. Either as a result of wishes and orders transmitted from on high or as a result of irresponsible recklessness and the befuddlement congenital to cosmopolitanism, it was neglected in that Constitution to declare German the official State language. This was despite the fact that German had been the State language without interruption since the times of Maria Theresa; after the separation from Hungary, furthermore, a leading political role in West Leithania had been quite definitely intended and allocated to the Germans. On the other hand, Paragraph 19 of the Constitution stated that all races of the Empire had an equal right to the unobstructed use of their language, and that the protection and the free development of their nationality was guaranteed. This was truly a double-edged and fateful provision for the Germans, with its rubbery elasticity and nebulous, indistinct uncertainty – especially given the lack of any legal regulation of the question of a State language! Was it not possible to foresee the complications and dangers that had to follow, for the Germans on the one hand and for the State as well on the other? Or did one foresee those complications and dangers, and purposely prepare this Pandora's box in order to be able to open it at an opportune time, and to play the Slavs against the Germans?

The Burghers' Cabinet, greeted by Germans with high hopes, did not dare to create supplementary German protective laws, or even to attempt to create them. This was clearly because the cabinet was not sufficiently sure of its support from above, and feared the hatred of the Czechs. Nonetheless, it was only of short duration, and there soon followed a so-called Compromise Cabinet under the Polish Count Potocky. Yet it could not come to terms with the Czechs, because they made demands that were all too high. Potocky was too conscientious to hand over the Constitution, newly sanctioned and just beginning to take on life, to the Czechs so that they could rip it up. He was relieved by the anti-German cabinet of the feudal-federalist-minded Count Hohenwarth. The point, it seems, was to impress on the German Austrians, who had been inspired by the victory of the Imperial German Army against the French in 1870, that it would be child's play for the government to put a tight rein on the Austrian Germans and to put a decisive stop to any Pan-German or Greater German cravings – whether domestic or foreign – by privileging the Slavs and delivering the Germans into Slavic hegemony.

Without much ceremony or consideration, Count Hohenwarth composed the so-called Fundamental Articles, which conceded to the Czechs in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia a position similar to that of the Magyars in Hungary. The Fundamental Articles were submitted first to the Bohemian Diet, in which the Czechs already had a majority. The Diet gave its approval most willingly. Now the decision lay with the Emperor himself, who had already announced, in a communication to the Cabinet, his intent to have himself crowned King of Bohemia. As a result, the Czechs had thought that they could set their own conditions. Those were indeed neither modest nor

trifling. Approval of the Fundamental Articles would have released Bohemia, together with its *partes adnexae* Moravia and Silesia, from association with the Empire, and would have transformed those lands into a nearly independent State, outfitted with the most far-reaching rights of autonomy, taxation, and legislation – all this, of course, in the hands of a ruthless, self-confident Czech majority in the Diet. Of what significance would the Germans have been in this State, modeled on the Hungarian one? Without doubt, they would have been quickly crushed under the weight of a legislature and administration that stood at the disposal of that majority. They would have been forced to emigrate or to give up their *Volkstum*, as had been the case with the Protestants under Ferdinand II. The only difference was that in their case, the matter at stake had been religion.

If Ferdinand II had succeeded in Bohemia and Moravia, through the application of ruthless force, in extirpating Hussitism and Protestantism and in carrying out the Catholic Counter-Reformation, then there can be no doubt that Czech national fanaticism, allied with the Austrian bureaucracy (which certainly would have been no more particular in its choice of methods than had Ferdinand II), would have succeeded in wrestling the German *Volk* minority in the three lands to the ground and in denationalizing it. For the most stubborn and obstinate Germans, finally, there would have remained the option of emigration, to which they would have been driven as a matter of policy. It would be foolish to object that it would have been no easy matter to de-nationalize such a large part of the population, especially when that part belonged to a *Volk* as fit, cultured, and self-confident as is, thank God, the German one. De-Germanization had already begun. In Prague, Pilsen, and in many Moravia towns that had long been predominantly German, as well as in many German villages and language islands, Germandom had already succumbed to the first, elementally powerful wave of Slavdom. Germans had been drowned and swept away as in a spring flood. And elsewhere, where the threat was not so direct, the Germans faced the Slavic movement passively, at a loss.

Had not the Germans always learned to feel and act in Austria not as a national party but merely as an Austrian, State one? Whence, then, might they now have suddenly summoned sufficient strength, courage, and tenacious perseverance as to offer steadfast resistance? For all too long, they had been accustomed to leaving everything in the wise care of the most esteemed bureaucracy and the paternally benevolent i.r. State Government – which supposedly knew best about when it was time to defend their *Volkstum*. After all, the founding of Austria, its history, and everything that made its existence possible both now and forever more was bound up with the fate and existence of Germandom. It had always been the German *Volk* that had created this State with its toil, and had held it together with its streams of spilled blood! In the German *Volk*, this belief stood as firm as belief in the Gospel.

It is questionable whether Austria indeed could survive in the absence of the German influence and without the cement of Germandom. Only future experiences will show. Certain, though, is that any *Volk* attacked and threatened in its very existence as hard and relentlessly as is the German *Volk* in Austria should have realized from the start that it was a serious mistake to rely on such incalculable things as the Austrian administration and State interests. The Germans in Austria have always been forced by the power of circumstances, more than Germans elsewhere, to take their cause into their own hands and to trust only in themselves and their own resistance against their enemies. Only once the Germans possessed a national consciousness as strong as that of the Czechs, and only once they could toss that consciousness just as defiantly on the scales of fate, could they defend undiminished all that they had acquired by way of national assets [*Besitzstand*] in the course of time. In the meantime, the Germans could wait passively and hope that a different, more friendly wind would blow again from on high, and that a better understanding would gain ground there. But even in the

best case, when such a change from above did set in and the pressure did let up, they still had to give up as lost forever all that had been torn away from them during the time of distress. What the Germans had lost in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia by that time, and by now, will be difficult to win back. Every German loss increases the weight of the opposing power, such that ever greater efforts are required in order to preserve a tolerable balance.

And what were the thoughts and ideas of governing circles, to the extent that they stood over the changing cabinets as something lasting within the State? Clearly a guiding idea and a firm, purposeful will had been lacking for some time – at least since 1860. Otherwise it would not have been possible to have such a variety of systems and cabinets follow one another in such short order, each tearing down what its predecessor had barely begun to build up. Much, though, had changed in the circumstances of the Austrian Monarchy, especially since the beginning of constitutional governance. As late as the early 1860s, the Emperor had convened a congress of German princes in Frankfurt in order to organize the German Confederation more tightly. He had also probably intended to take up again the German imperial crown that Franz II had doffed at a time of German internal strife and disloyalty. But then Austria, which had formerly commanded the Presidency of the German Confederation, suddenly found itself forced out of it, defeated by the old rival, Prussia. Already in Maria Theresa's time, Prussia had done serious harm to Austria, and had taken from it a nice German province [the bulk of Silesia]! The Hohenzollerns rose triumphantly in Germany, while Austria was advised by Germany to shift its center of balance to Pest-Ofen [Budapest] and Hungary, and to direct its policies toward expanding its influence and zone of power in the East and the Balkan Peninsula. Henceforth the German West was closed to it.

The Balkan peoples [*Völker*], however, were Slavic. Did this not create a necessity for Austria to switch over from the primarily German system of government to a Slavic one, and to give the State a Slavic, federalist character in order to make it more appealing to the Balkan peoples? After the battle of brothers in 1866, should and could Austria have continued to trust its German population, and to seek its strength and security mainly in them? Or should it have thrown itself into the arms of the Slavs, and sought salvation and future security in their loyalty? It may be assumed quite safely that such thoughts were pursued quite assiduously at the time in the Viennese *Hofburg*. Indeed, it is certain that Austrian policy had made all preparations for siding with France in the German-French war, and that only the swift success of German arms brought an end to the matter. The victorious House of Hohenzollern gained the imperial title in Germany – which became a powerful State, united politically and militarily from the North Sea to the Vosges and the Tyrolean Alps. And most Germans in Austria expressed their sympathies openly and without restraint for the newly established and reestablished German Empire, without regard for the feelings and sensitivities provoked thereby in the Viennese *Hofburg*. They celebrated the successes of the German *Volk*, as though the battle of brothers in 1866 had never occurred.

Thus it was all too human, natural, and understandable when leading figures in Vienna gave serious consideration to a political shift in favor of the Slavs. And the German *Volk*, on which all Habsburgs had hitherto depended for their expansionist policies and which the Habsburgs had considered their own ancestral people [*Stammvolk*], now became an object of concern, if not mistrust. Indeed, the Germans may even have become a threat to the future of Austria! That, at least, is how the matter may have been seen then, and may still be seen now, in Austria's highest circles. Fears must also have been present in the Viennese *Hofburg* as to whether Prussia-Germany would satisfy itself with the successes already achieved, or whether it would strive instead to extend the German imperial

boundaries so as to make them correspond to earlier traditions and relations. That would have meant, above all, pulling Bohemia into its sphere of influence. And had this been attempted in a new war like that of 1866, would not doubts have been justified as to whether Austria's government could rely under all circumstances on the loyalty of its German subjects in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia? As is well known, the law of gravity and the attraction exerted by larger bodies over smaller ones has validity not only in astronomy and physics but also very often in politics, regarding the developmental path taken by peoples and States. For that reason, was not a precautionary policy appropriate? Could one not forestall future advances by Teutonism toward the Southeast by endeavoring to raise and strengthen Slavdom at the expense of Germanism in Austria, in such a way as to lay the latter lame? In short, was it not expedient, given the changed circumstances, to reshape German Austria into a Slavic Austria, and to assign to the Slavs the mission of being the driving force in maintaining and protecting the Austrian State idea?

This path, however, immediately implied a federalization of the Austrian lands, a breaking up of the Empire into individual groups of lands that would be only loosely connected to one another and to a nearly nonexistent central administration. For this was the only way that the Germans could be torn from their organic connection and solidarity rooted in a common citizenship, robbed of their former strength, and reduced to insignificance. Yet giving pause both then and now, was the consideration that the federal dismantling of Austria's West Leithanian lands might in fact increase the danger and conjure up the very disaster sensed from afar. For clearly, the gravitational pull and the historical tradition exercised by the powerful German Empire next door would have been far stronger and palpable over an Austria broken up into its former parts than over today's West Leithanian consolidated State [*Gesamtstaat*]. The smaller the body, the more it falls into the orbit of the large one. Consider, furthermore, the implications of disinheriting the German race in Austria of its hard-won rights and of de-nationalizing and suppressing the Germans in the Sudeten lands – a powerful process perhaps not desired by the government, but hardly capable of hindrance once the stone started rolling. Such a process would be quite suited to provoking not only a powerful national uprising among those Germans, but also a storm of indignation and sympathy in all Germany for the sufferings of fellow members of the race. And that could then lead to political entanglements and even to war, which in turn could degenerate into a decisive battle between all of Slavdom with the Teutons. In such a war, would not the House of Austria be confronted with an existential question, fate's answer to which no one on earth can calculate with any degree of probability? Finally, had not Austria been built on a German foundation from the times of Rudolf I, the founder of the House of Habsburg? Had not its greatest and wisest rulers, especially Empress Maria Theresa, Joseph II, and Franz II, ruled and administered in the German spirit and with the German State language? And had not Austria defied all storms and the most difficult and obstinate of wars, and in fact always emerged from them unweakened? Historical evidence for the viability of a Slavic Austria, meanwhile, does not exist. And should not such an Austria be required first to survive a test of its powers of resistance, and provide proof of its viability?

Accordingly, the Emperor decided in the end against the Fundamental Articles. And the refusal to sanction them resulted in the cancellation of the ceremonial coronation in Prague – which had probably been intended as a check against the reestablishment of the German Empire. The Hohenwarth Cabinet fell. Contributing much to this fortunate averting of a great danger was the unanimous and indignant opposition of the Germans in Austria – supported by the Magyars, who had raised constitutional objections. But without doubt, foreign policy considerations also dictated the decision. The assault of the Slavs had been averted once again, and the German cabinet of

Auersperg took the helm. It achieved a reasonably satisfactory ordering of relations, at least in political affairs, although its activity in the realm of the economy can by no means be praised. Direct elections to the Viennese Parliament were introduced, such that it was made more independent of the diets. Now the German voters in Bohemia and Moravia could send their representatives to Vienna, unhindered by the opposing resolution of the Bohemian Diet and unaffected by the Czech policy, now reinstated, of boycotting the Imperial Constitution and Parliament.

This cabinet too, however, failed to issue powerful regulations and create laws that could have prevented a repetition of the barely averted danger and a future victory of the Slavic cravings for separation. Just like the Burghers' Cabinet, this one demanded the greatest constraint of the German *Volk*, and a renunciation of any sort of national politics. The old, absolutist pattern of a colorless Only-Austriandom was applied now as well, such that Germandom was unfortunately not restored from the inside out and not rendered more capable of resistance against Slavdom. Had one wanted that, and had one wished to secure oneself for the longer term, then one would have needed to permit strong German-national agitation and an enlightenment of the *Volk*, and indeed to open all sluices to such measures. Yet the cabinet clearly feared accusations of German partisan rule, accusations that the Czechs raised often enough in any case. It also feared that, by pursuing a more decisive German-national policy, it might lose indispensable support from above. The establishment of the German-Austrian alliance naturally strengthened the position of the Germans in Austria domestically as well. But thus far it has not brought those Germans the protection for which they had hoped – although they have always spoken up in favor of the alliance vigorously and in good faith. Rather, it seems that the alliance had the effect of lulling back to sleep both the emergent German consciousness of the *Volk* and the recognition of the need for active national work at the local, daily level. The Slavs, by contrast, were spurred to still greater and more successful efforts for their *Volkstum*.

The occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, undertaken by Austrian foreign policy against the resistance of the Germans, visibly boosted the prospects of the Slavs, and increased their influence, especially vis-à-vis those on high. The expansion of Habsburg power was made all the more important by the loss of Lombardy-Venetia and by the situation in Germany, for which Bosnia and Herzegovina alone offered compensation. The notion of rendering Austria more appealing to the Balkan Slavs by creating Slavic groups of lands within Austria resurfaced, strengthened. This was why the Auersperg Cabinet was dismissed, and Count Taaffe appointed.

His Minister of Justice, Stremeyer, issued a language ordinance on 19 April 1880, in partial fulfillment of Slavic wishes. To be more specific, the Czechs demanded that even in solidly German-speaking areas, the few Czechs who were resident there should be able to make use of the Czech language in court proceedings, public records (land register, etc.), or any other official proceeding. The courts and other i.r. offices should accept Czech communications, and respond to them in Czech. In a word, all government offices in purely German areas had to become bilingual. For this there was need only in the rarest of exceptions, because those few Czechs who lived in German areas were surely fluent enough in German to understand a German trial document and to follow official or court proceedings in German. For the Czechs, this demand had precious little to do with meeting an actually existing need, and much more to do with penetrating and destroying the solidly German-speaking area. That area had always been a horror to them, for they understand Bohemia to belong entirely to the Czechs, and do not wish to acknowledge the concept of purely German assets [*Besitzstand*] in Bohemia.

Czech secondary schools, established hastily and in excess, produced and continue to produce a great mass of mediocre intellects. Given the weakness of Czech big industry and the paucity of other employment opportunities, graduates prefer to throw themselves into a search for State offices. The Czech *Volk* must thus be called the hungriest *Volk* for offices in Austria. And this is relevant, because if one could impose bilingualism on all the government offices that heretofore had been German, then positions would open up in the German area for a mass of assiduous little Czechs. For only in the rarest of cases do German officials speak and write Czech, and German gymnasium and university students scorn the Czech language. And once civil servants were completely Czechized, Czech attorneys would gain a wide field for activity. All in all, a huge and decisive step toward the further Czechization of German regions would be made. To be sure, one might object that the Germans could escape most of the dangers and disadvantages arising from bilingualism in government offices. Germans, or to be more precise, gymnasium and university students, could learn Czech too, and thereby comply in full with the State's requirements. But here the fact must be noted that the German student can learn the Czech language perfectly only with great difficulty. He approaches the task reluctantly, because in Czech he acquires not one of the great cultural languages of the world but rather only an inferior language spoken by at most six million people. The heart of the matter, though, is that thousandfold experience in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia shows that bilingualism, or so-called utraquism, is almost always only a stepping stone to complete Slavization. For the Germans in those crownlands who wish to defend their *Volkstum*, it is almost a duty to raise their children in purely German fashion and to prevent them from learning Czech, regardless of the economic consequences.

Stremeyer's language ordinance, then, ordered that in all Bohemia – meaning in the German-speaking area as well – Slavic submissions had to be accepted, as well as answered in Slavic. Furthermore, criminal proceedings had to be conducted in the language of the accused, and public record entries that were submitted in the Czech language had to be accepted. According to this ordinance, a defendant knowing only the German language was exposed to the risk of having to answer a Czech accusation that was incomprehensible to him – and thus to make use of an agent fluent in Czech. The permitting of Czech entries in public records made those records unintelligible to German interested parties, and thereby created another disadvantage and constraint for the German inhabitants. But the principal objection, leveled already against this first language ordinance of Stremeyer, was that the cabinet, through a mere ordinance, was usurping the regulation of a question so important that it could be decided only by the legislature. The cabinet was thereby opening the door wide to future, much worse interventions by Slavic-minded cabinets. Furthermore, the concept of the "language customary in the land" [*landesübliche Sprache*] had been interpreted as the Czechs understood it. Namely, the Czech language was supposedly customary throughout the entire crownland, when in actuality the population in the German-speaking area of Bohemia is purely German. The Czech minorities there are smaller than in other German crownlands of Austria, particularly Vienna and Lower Austria – and thus it follows logically that the Czech language must be declared customary there as well.

The first language ordinance differed from the current Badeni language ordinances primarily by not requiring that all officials be fluent in Czech. Rather, it required that one or more officials fluent in Czech be in every court, according to need. Furthermore, it applied only to court and political officials, and left German as the internal language of administration [*innere Amtssprache*], i.e. the language used by officials among themselves and with higher authorities. And yet, all Germans of Austria received this first ordinance by Stremeyer with bitterness and pain, as a humiliation and a

blow to Germandom. But the *Volk* was soothed with claims that the ordinance was an unavoidable necessity, and surely would not have been issued by a minister who had always been reliably German unless higher German interests and goals had not demanded it inexorably. But this supposition soon became untenable, because once the German minister had issued the anti-German ordinance, he was quickly demoted, and replaced by a Czech. Count Taaffe had always been an enemy of Germandom, while in politics he was a cynic who liked to express himself with stale jokes about the most difficult of political relations. He treated everything with a sort of gallows humor, and in the meantime worked with great perseverance at undermining and weakening Germandom in Austria. He succeeded at bringing the Czechs into the Parliament at last – although they refused to abandon their adherence to Czech State rights, and came only because they hoped, slowly but surely, to attain their wishes at last under this cabinet.

That cabinet, meanwhile, had set as its next task reducing and undermining the German Liberal Party, whose men sat more than 110 strong in the Parliament, and were thus still of great importance, even in opposition. The Iron Ring of the governing party was formed, out of the Polish Club, the Czech Club, the Slovenes, and the Club of Count Hohenwarth – among whom were clerical German representatives from the Alpine lands. In exchange for the promise of pork, in the form of confessional schools, they placed themselves willingly at the disposal of the Slavic majority against their German but Liberal fellow members of the *Volk*. The German Liberal opposition prevented Count Taaffe from engaging in some all too slapdash constitutional experiments. But they did not and indeed could not prevent, even by taking more decisive action, the growing Slavization of Bohemia and Moravia. This occurred above all in the educational system, as well as in the civil service and the German municipalities. The Prague University was divided already in 1882. Czech secondary schools, established by the State, sprang up everywhere, even in towns that until then had been purely or predominantly German. The fanatic teachers and other hangers-on of those schools, with their agitation, increasingly tipped the scales in favor of Czechdom, which the government favored. Czech State railroad officials and white-collar employees did their share. Czech tradesmen were drawn to German towns and given work; Czech savings bank associations were established there, and furnished with beautiful buildings and capable agitators for the Slavic cause. The Czech clergy, meanwhile, had everywhere long been paving the way, and had fertilized the Slavic soil. Thus success was now had in quickly wresting most of the rural towns – German since time immemorial – from the Germans, especially in Moravia.

Somewhat more slowly, the Czechization process unfolded in rural communities of Moravia as well, both in the solidly German-speaking area and in the German language islands. Brünn, at one time completely German, had been neighbored by 14 completely German villages. But now, parts of Brünn and all but two of those villages have been almost completely Czechized. In the German-speaking areas of Wischau and Austerlitz, only eight out of 30 German communities remain, and those have lost their connection with the German-speaking area in the North of Moravia. The large German language island around Iglau once had 130 German villages, but now 80 have been Czechized, while in Iglau itself, Czechs have made considerable inroads. In the language island of Olmütz, 30 German villages have been Czechized. And Olmütz itself, previously purely German, has become more of a mixed Czech nature, and presumably will soon have traversed, like so many other German Moravian towns, the path to complete Czechization. In the solidly German-speaking areas of the North and South of Moravia as well, along the Lower Austrian and Silesian border, 60 villages have become either Slavic or mixed. This storm tide, thank God, has now reached its apogee, and is breaking against the strength of a German population that has been steeled by national

distress and is now slowly closing ranks and offering brave resistance to the Czechs.

In Bohemia, where Prague and Pilsen had gained Czech majorities long ago, those swelled steadily, while Germanism dwindled. In Budweis, the Czechs worked feverishly, supported by Prince Schwarzenberg, and achieved ever greater gains. The language islands of Gitschin, with 10 German villages, and of Pardubitz, with 12, were completely lost. In the same way, along the language border that snakes from the South of the Bohemian Forest all the way to the northeastern border with the Prussian earldom of Glatz, individual German villages were either lost entirely to the Slavs or partly Czechized. Here, though, the resistance of the German inhabitants against the invading Slavs was much more tenacious and thus more successful. Losses in the solidly German-speaking area of Bohemia did not occur with the same speed or with so little struggle. The greatest damage occurred in the German-speaking area in the industrial North, as well as in the coal-mining regions of the Northwest, through the ever increasing immigration (which Czechs intensified artificially) of needy Czech working-class families and unmarried workers from the Czech interior of the land – where agriculture predominated, such that wages were lower and jobs fewer than in the German-speaking area. These Czech immigrants in the German North and Northwest were urged by their fellow Czechs not to let their children become German and not to send them to German schools, but rather to demand the establishment of Czech minority schools, for which the law provided. Thus Czech working-class families became the most dangerous pioneers of Slavdom in the purely German industrial North. The Czech school associations, nimble and insistent, were everywhere at hand, intent on establishing, in addition to the minority schools that the German municipalities were forced to establish by law, additional ones as well. Those were then saddled on the German municipalities as soon as the requisite number of students had been drummed up, with the help of the State authorities – always obliging toward the Czechs. The German School Association, a national defensive association of the Germans, was able but poorly to remedy this decline of Germanism, rooted partly in economics and partly in the far greater ruthlessness of the Slavs. Yet the School Association has accomplished much of exceptional value, and thanks to its support, dozens of German schools and German villages have been able to withstand Czechdom.

In the Viennese Parliament, the Germans attempted to remedy the steady decline of Germanism by having German legally declared the State language – which would have surrounded German with greater authority and defensive power. Neither the government nor the majority in parliament, however, took serious notice of these attempts. The motions in question were never referred to the appropriate committees for elaboration. This was quite natural. What the Germans had neglected to do in 1867 could not now be made good, given that half-measures and the tiptoeing around Slavic sensitivities by the erstwhile German government and parliamentary majority had borne such abundant fruit for the Slavs.

As a result of these increasingly intolerable conditions, the Germans demanded that Bohemia be divided into a purely German and a Czech administrative district, in order at last to gain some peace and security on the linguistic assets [*Besitzstand*] that were still theirs. In order to lend this demand emphasis, the Germans withdrew from the Bohemian Diet, where almost no notice had been taken of them in any case, and where all the proceedings in the committees, as well as in plenary sessions, were conducted in Czech. The Diet thus came to resemble more a Czech convention than a crownland assembly in which there sat the representatives of more than two million Germans. Count Taaffe was shocked a little out of his jovial good mood, and found himself obliged to commence negotiations for a compromise between the Czechs and the Germans, who had now shown

themselves to be serious. Discussed was a re-drawing of district court boundaries according to nationality, as well as a revision of the language ordinance issued in 1880 by Stremeyer, of blessed memory. A partial agreement was achieved, and put into writing in the so-called Compromise Punctations, which complied in some measure with the German demand for national separation by approving purely German court districts. On 3 February 1890, there appeared a decree by the Minister of Justice, Count Schönborn (another Czech-minded aristocrat of German lineage). It ordered the establishment of commissions for the re-drawing of boundaries along national lines and the division of the Prague Superior Crownland Court into a German and a Czech group of Counselors. Finally, in regard to the filling of civil service positions, it was ordered that for positions in which a knowledge of both languages of the crownland would probably not constitute a genuine necessity, that requirement could be waived. The far from pro-German cabinet of Count Taaffe and his Czech-feudal Minister of Justice thereby acknowledged something whose enlightening value should not be underestimated: that a solidly German-speaking area in Bohemia in fact does exist, and that in that area, administration can be conducted in German without any harm to justice.

Yet even these concessions to the Germans, approved by Czech representatives and the government, soon fell through. Czech intransigence and fanatic anti-German megalomania prevented their implementation. The entire Old Czech Party, which had entered into these negotiations for a compromise, was swept away in new elections to the Parliament and Diet, and replaced by the still more radical and anti-German Young Czech one. The Czech nation [*Nation*] wanted not peace but war – war to the finish against the German nation, which to be sure had heretofore always been the weaker and losing side! The whole of the compromise was invalidated, and the re-drawing of court boundaries did not take place. At last it became clear even to the most blindly trusting and most esteemed and bourgeois [*höflichst gesinnten*] Germans in Bohemia that they could not rely on any promises or even binding declarations by the government, let alone on a barely tolerable agreement with the Czechs. Rather, those Czechs would continue the war until they had destroyed the Germans. As for the government, it would say Yes and Amen to everything that the Czechs wanted.

When Count Taaffe had finally had his fill of governing, probably as a result of mental and physical fatigue, he ensured himself a splendid exit, illuminated at least in passing by the Bengali flame of a false push toward freedom and popularity. He proposed an electoral reform that maintained all the privileges and caste prerogatives of the nobility, and reduced not at all the number of parliamentary seats controlled by the electoral bodies of the great landowners and the Chambers of Commerce. In the electoral bodies of the towns and rural communities, in contrast, he introduced general, equal, direct, and secret suffrage, thereby exposing bourgeois and national assets to the tireless agitation of the Social Democrats and grafting a young Social Democratic sprig onto the old tree of feudal aristocratic privileges. For 13 years, Taaffe had worked tirelessly at harming and weakening the Germans in Austria, and inflicted damage and losses to their national assets without letup. He had shown that one could rule in Austria without the Germans, and could in fact rule against them – although for the time being only in veiled fashion. And yet, unwittingly and inadvertently, by undermining the feebly German Liberal Party, he had done the German *Volk* a great favor, and hastened their national rebirth. The carriage of the State, meanwhile, he left stuck in a quagmire of unprecedented confusion.

Now there came the so-called Coalition Cabinet, welded together by fears of Social Democracy and an all too radical electoral reform. In it, Plener, the German Liberal leader, at last received a position, as the Minister of Finance – for the sole purpose, it seems, of compromising himself

irredeemably and of making more obvious and palatable to his big capitalist patrons and friends the necessity of opening up new economic resources to the State through a personal income tax. Under this Cabinet, though, nothing was accomplished except the betrayal of the German town of Cilli, located in Southern Styria on the Slovene linguistic border. A Slovene gymnasium was forcibly saddled on the town – a matter in which not only both of the German ministers, Plener and Wurmbrand, had a part but also a number of German Liberal representatives. In Bohemia and Moravia, meanwhile, everything remained the same. And yet, as a result of the unnatural fraternizing by the German Liberals with the Poles and clericals for the purpose of forming a governing majority, indignation against that party now stirred within the *Volk* as a whole. So did the realization that there had to be a settling of accounts with that party at last, and a parting of the ways.

After the brief interim rule of the colorless Cabinet of Officials under Count Kielmannsegg, the Polish Count Badeni arrived on the scene, as the new Prime Minister and head of the Ministry of the Interior. Preceding him from Galicia, where he had been Governor, was his reputation as an adroit and ruthless politician. He was supposed to play the role of Hercules: to clean out the Augean stables of the detritus piled up by mutually contradictory cabinets, and to erect a new building on the sound foundations that had thus been won. That building was supposed to please the Czechs and the Germans in the Sudeten lands in equal measure, as well as Badeni's fellow Poles, the Slovenes, and the Alpine Germans. And if the matter should not go right for reasons of obstinacy, then Count Badeni, who was reputed to have a strong hand, would bring the person in question to his senses. And yet this Count, who combined his not-so-ancient Polish ancestry with the craftiness of his Italian descent, had almost never been outside Galicia, and had never become acquainted with Austrian conditions except through Polish newspapers and from the Polish perspective. Only with difficulty could he find his way in the use of the German language. At first, he succeeded in bending the Germans to his will with the bait of ambiguous promises, such that he was surprisingly successful in getting the much disputed electoral reform through the Parliament, in a fashion more acceptable to the Liberals. He also succeeded in completing the tax reform undertaken but left behind unfinished by Finance Minister Plener. Count Badeni's intervention in the matter of the election of a new Mayor of Vienna, however, showed him to have a hand that was less strong than crude and clumsy. The election was decided by the municipal council – whose majority had become Christian Social and anti-Semitic – in favor of Dr. Lueger, who was unpopular with both the government and the Hungarians. In the end, Badeni had to content himself with an agreement that did not particularly enhance his reputation as a statesman, but got him out of the mess.

Chapter III: The Badeni Language Ordinances

Thus were outlawed in Austria
The German language and German rights.
The Slav is to be master, the German slave!
Thus is it now ordered and taught.
The Empire is being divided up into groups of lands,
Germandom and freedom are to be ended,
That followers of Rome might show their true colors,
And Czechs and Poles might feel happy.
Now Slavdom is to have free hand,
And together with the rosary will rule the club.