

**STREET FRONTS:
WAR, STATE LEGITIMACY AND URBAN SPACE, PRAGUE 1914-1920**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines daily life in the city of Prague during the First World War and in its immediate aftermath. Its aim is twofold: to explore the impact of the war on urban space and to analyse the relationship of Prague's inhabitants to the Austro-Hungarian and then Czechoslovak state. To this end, both the mobilization for the war effort and the crisis of legitimacy experienced by the state are investigated. The two elements are connected: it is precisely because of the great sacrifices made by Praguers during the conflict that the Empire lost the trust of its citizens. Food shortages also constitute a major feature of the war experience and the inappropriate management of supply by the state played a large role in its final collapse. The study goes beyond Czechoslovak independence on 28 October 1918 to fully grasp the continuities between the two polities and the consequences of the war on this transitional period. Beyond the official national revolution, the revolutionary spirit in Prague around the time of regime change reveals the interplay between national and social motives, making it part of a broader European revolutionary movement at the time.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AdR: Archiv der Republik (Archives of the Republic)
AHMP: Archiv hlavního města Prahy (Municipal Archives of Prague)
AVA: Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (General Administrative Archives)
BDIC: Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine
BMfV: Bundesministerium für Volksernährung (Federal Ministry for the Alimentation of the Population)
č. j.: číslo jednotky (number of archival unit)
CV: Cirkuláře a vyhlášky (Memoranda and Announcements)
FO: Foreign Office
GFM: German Foreign Ministry
inv. č. or i.č: inventurní číslo (inventory number)
K or ka: karton (carton)
KA: Kriegsarchiv (War Archives)
KM: Kriegsministerium (War Ministry)
KÜA: Kriegsüberwachungsamt (War Surveillance Office)
Mdl: Ministerium des Innern (Ministry of the Interior)
MHMP: Magistrát hlavního města Prahy (Prague municipality)
MKV/R: Ministerstvo kultu a vyučování/Rakousko (Ministry of Cult and Education/Austria)
MRP/R: Ministerská rada presidium/Rakousko (Council of Ministers, Presidium/Austria)
MV I SR: Ministerstvo vnitra, stará registratura (Ministry of the Interior, Old registry)
MZd/R: Ministerstvo pro zdraví lidu/Rakousko (Ministry for the Population's Health/Austria)
MZV VA: Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí – výstřižkový archiv (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Press Cutting Archive)
NA: Národní Archiv (Czech National Archives, Prague)
NAL: National Archives, London
ÖStA: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Austrian State Archives)
PM: Prezidium českého místodržitelství (Presidium of the Bohemian Governor's Office)
PMV: Prezidium ministerstva vnitra (Presidium of the Ministry of the Interior post-1918)
PMV/R: Prezidium ministerstva vnitra/Rakousko (Presidium of the Ministry of the Interior/Austria)
PP: Prezidium policejního ředitelství (Presidium of the Prague Police Headquarters)
PP-HSt: Prezidium policejního ředitelství Hauptstelle
SK: Spolkový katastr (Associations' register)
SÚTOM: Státní ústav pro tuky, olej a mléko (State Agency for fat, oil and milk)
Terr: Territorialkommanden
sig: signatura (call number)
VHA: Vojenský historický archiv (Military Archives)
ZČK: Zemský pomocný spolek Červeného kříže (Regional branch of the Red Cross)
ZSt: Zentralstellen

NOTE ON LANGUAGE USE

Following the recent trend in scholarship on the Bohemian Lands,¹ I have referred to places in both of the languages spoken by their inhabitants at the time (Brünn/Brno, Plzeň/Pilsen). In the translation from a quote, I left place names in the original language of the writer only. When an easy English translation was available, I used it: hence Prague for Praha/Prag, Wenceslas Square for Václavské náměstí/Wenzelsplatz, Old Town Square for Staroměstské náměstí/Altstädter Ring. Out of convenience, the adjective Prager refers to the inhabitants of Prague (in a broad sense). Although many suburbs on the outskirts of Prague were inhabited by a great majority of Czech-speakers, I have decided to consistently use both Czech and German names for all the suburbs throughout the text (Karlín/Karolinenthal, Smíchov/Smichow for example²). I find that this reflects better the linguistic diversity of my sources. I have shortened Královské Vinohrady/Königliche Weinberge in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge, as was usual at the time. I have rendered místodržitelství/Statthaltereie as Governor's Office, policejní ředitelství/Polizeidirektion as Police Headquarters (I thank Christopher Brennan for the suggestion) and vojenské velitelství/Militärkommando as Military Command.

Translations are, unless otherwise noted, my own. I have privileged the original meaning to the detriment of elegance. For example, I translated 'an meine lieben Prager Mitbürger deutscher und tschechischer Zunge' by 'to my dear Prague compatriots of Czech and German tongue'. However cumbersome, this formulation renders more faithfully the original meaning than 'to my dear Czech-speaking and German-speaking Prague compatriots'. The map used in illustrations is from 1911 and was published in Leipzig (Wagner&Debes).

¹ See: Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. iv; Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. xvii.

² For a full list see Figure 1.

INTRODUCTION

The word ‘front’ (*fronta* in Czech, *Front* in German) gained particular currency in Prague during the First World War: newspapers were of course full of reports on the different military ‘fronts’³ but the word also took on a civilian meaning as it became increasingly used to designate the long queues that formed in front of every shop and marked the city landscape like lines on a map. ‘Fronta’ appeared as part of the specific wartime vocabulary⁴ and in German ‘Front’ was considered as a ‘praguism’ to refer to what was commonly known as ‘Anstellen’.⁵ An interwar testimony on the resilience of women during the war linked the two types of ‘fronts’: women’s duty had been ‘to not run away from the hinterland battlefield where near-battles occurred in the lines (*fronty*) for work, for food coupons and various wartime rations.’⁶ This military language applied to life in the hinterland echoes the work of historians writing about the ‘home front’: the totalising effect of the First World War implied mobilization for the conflict even on the part of civilians at the rear who were not directly fighting.⁷ The social and cultural historiography of the war has turned the history of civilians and of spaces beyond the battlefronts into an integral part of our understanding of the war.⁸

³ In the context of the Western front, the term ‘front’ is also a relatively new word to describe the battlefields, see interview with John Horne in *Le Monde*, 29 October 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/centenaire-14-18/article/2014/10/29/john-horne-le-front-c-est-le-blocage-militaire_4514548_3448834.html [accessed 31 October 2014]

⁴ ‘Sbírejme válečná slova’, *Naše řeč*, 4 (1920), p. 17.

⁵ Presented in an overheard dialogue full of ‘praguisms’: *Prager Tagblatt*, 31 August 1917, p. 5. Also for an article entitled ‘Fronten, nichts als Fronten!’ (‘Queues, nothing but queues!’), *Prager Tagblatt*, 3 November 1917, p. 3. A police report in German also uses the word ‘Fronten’: NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/23, no 29164, Report from the Police Headquarters to the Governor’s Office, 7 September 1917.

⁶ *Duch české ženy za války* (Praha: Ženský obzor, 1928), p. 105.

⁷ From the notion of ‘other front’ to the discussions on the dichotomy between ‘home’ and ‘front’: *1914-1918, l’autre front*, ed. by Patrick Fridenson (Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1977); *Heimat-Front: Militär und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Zeitalter der Weltkriege*, ed. by Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verl, 2002).; Pierre Purseigle, ‘1914-1918: les combats de l’arrière. Les mobilisations sociales en Angleterre et en France’, in *1914-1945: l’ère de la guerre, violence, mobilisations, deuil*, ed. by Nicolas Beaupré, Anne Duménil, Christian Ingrao (Paris: Agnès Viénot, 2004), pp. 131-151.

⁸ For example: Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

In this context, the Austro-Hungarian ‘home front’ appears however relatively under-researched. A large part of the historiography has focused either on a narrative of the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire⁹ or on the birth of the new nation states.¹⁰ Both visions only give a partial account of life during the war for an ordinary inhabitant of this region. Yet the situation there was very critical, with food shortages reaching unsustainable levels by 1917, and the popular protests, which multiplied in the last two years of the conflict, put cities at the centre of the struggles, thus creating an ‘inner front’ to quote Austrian historian Richard Plaschka.¹¹ In her study of wartime Vienna, Maureen Healy highlights the role of the home front in the eventual demise of the Habsburg Empire.¹²

A number of other very recent studies examine Austria-Hungary during the First World War beyond the traditional narrative of decline and national liberation.¹³ Soldiers’ experiences on the various fronts¹⁴ as well as the different occupations by Austro-Hungarian troops have been the subject of fresh investigations.¹⁵ Two books explore the lives of prisoners of war in Russia

⁹ Oszkár Jászi, *The dissolution of Austria-Hungary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929); Zeman, Zbyněk A. B. *The break-up of the Habsburg empire 1914-1918: a study in national and social revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Arthur May, *The passing of the Hapsburg monarchy: 1914-1918* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966); François Fejtő, *Requiem pour un empire défunt: Histoire de la destruction de l’Autriche-Hongrie* (Paris: Seuil, 1993); Manfred Rauchensteiner, *Der Tod des Doppeladlers. Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1993).

¹⁰ For example: Karel Pichlik, *Bez legend: zahraniční odboj 1914-1918: zápas o československý program* (Praha : Panorama, 1991); *The Creation of Yugoslavia, 1914-1918* ed. by Dimitrije Djordjevic (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio, 1980).

¹¹ Horst Haselsteiner, Richard Plaschka, and Arnold Suppan, *Innere Front: Militärassistenz, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918*, 2 vols (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1974).

¹² Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹³ John Deak recently described very well the lasting legacies of nationally separate historiographies and the idea of decline but ignored the most recent studies on Austria-Hungary during the war that question this paradigm: John Deak, ‘The Great War and the Forgotten Realm: The Habsburg Monarchy and the First World War’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 86 (2014), 336-380.

¹⁴ *Jenseits des Schützengrabens: der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung – Wahrnehmung – Kontext* ed. by Bernhard Bachinger, Wolfram Dornik, (Innsbruck: Studien-Verl, 2013).

¹⁵ Jonathan E. Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Tamara Scheer, *Zwischen Front und Heimat: Österreich-Ungarns Militärverwaltungen im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009). On front propaganda see: Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

while new work on the refugees is now emerging.¹⁶ The home front is also increasingly at the centre of new research: from the role of the Church in the Slovenian Lands¹⁷ to new local studies on Tyrol¹⁸ and Styria.¹⁹ All of these new trends encourage a re-examination of the Austro-Hungarian experience at war to not only enrich our understanding of the region in this period but also enlarge our understanding of what the First World War was. When we shift the focus to the East of Europe, the war emerges as a complex event that does not end in 1918 and involves much more mobility, circulations and porosity between front and home front than was previously thought.²⁰

Much of this revival of the literature on Austria-Hungary during the war has focused on German-speaking regions of the Empire, and adopting a broader view could be expected to lead to further productive comparisons. Ivan Šedivý's general synthesis on the First World War in the Bohemian lands has led to a 'rediscovery' of the home front in this region.²¹ Building on his own work on loyalty to the Emperor in wartime,²² he outlined the complexities and ambiguities of 'high' and 'daily' politics. A recent study of the working-class in the Bohemian Lands during the war offers a very innovative look at wartime shortages and their implications on gender and self-perception among the working-class.²³ Recent research on the attitude of Czech soldiers²⁴ would

¹⁶ Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Reinhard Nachtigal, *Rußland und seine österreichisch-ungarischen Kriegsgefangenen (1914 - 1918)* (Remshalden: Greiner, 2003); on refugees see Beatrix Hoffmann-Holter, *'Abreisendmachung': Jüdische Kriegsflüchtlinge in Wien 1914-1923* (Wien: Böhlau, 1995); Rebekah Klein-Pejsová, 'Among the Nationalities: Jewish Refugees, Jewish Nationality, and Czechoslovak Statebuilding' (unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2007) and Francesco Frizzera's forthcoming work on refugees from the South of the monarchy.

¹⁷ Pavlina Bobič, *War and Faith: The Catholic Church in Slovenia, 1914-1918* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012).

¹⁸ Oswald Überegger, *Zwischen Nation und Region: Weltkriegsforschung im interregionalen Vergleich ; Ergebnisse und Perspektiven* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 2004); on Tyrol see also: Oswald Überegger, *Der andere Krieg: die Tiroler Militärgerichtsbarkeit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Tirol im Ersten Weltkrieg, 3, 1 vols. (Innsbruck: Wagner, 2002).

¹⁹ Martin Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden: Der deutsch-slowenische Nationalitätenkonflikt in der Steiermark 1900-1918* (Innsbruck : Studien, 2007).

²⁰ For a recent overview of the literature see: Alan Sked, 'Austria-Hungary and the First World War', *Histoire@Politique. Politique, culture, société*, 22 (2014); on new directions of the research see: *Frontwechsel: Österreich-Ungarns 'Großer Krieg' im Vergleich* ed. by Wolfram Dornik and others (Wien: Böhlau, 2014).

²¹ Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka, 1914-1918* (Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001).

²² Ivan Šedivý, 'České loajální projevy 1914-1918', *Český časopis historický*, 97 (1999), 293-309

²³ Rudolf Kučera, *Život na příděl: válečná každodennost a politiky dělnické třídy v českých zemích 1914-1918* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013).

stand to gain a worthwhile complement from investigations of the developments at home. Two different master's theses on Prague during the war have provided some elements on the problem of food shortages (based on published primary sources for the American thesis).²⁵

In this historiographical context of renewal and exciting new directions, this study aims to explore daily life on the home front, integrating research questions on the war effort during the First World War developed for other contexts and the new understandings of the region and the nature of the Habsburg Empire. The investigation of daily life means approaching the understanding of the conflict by non-elite groups, which have been key to the new understanding of nationalism in the region.²⁶ Historians of daily life have methodologically linked their inquiries to the exploration of a specific place: 'we are interested in the appropriation of places: how humans adapt, engage, shape, and experience these places.'²⁷ Michel de Certeau had already shown the profound ties between spaces and practices.²⁸ Choosing a city as the focus of our study enabled an examination of larger issues in very concrete and mundane ways. Two main questions structured our research: the presence of war in Prague's public space and the relationship of citizens to the state(s) during the period.

In Czech memory, the First World War is often perceived as a foreign war, detached from the concerns of the Czechs.²⁹ Yet, men from Prague and all the Bohemian lands fought under the uniform of the Austro-Hungarian Empire while the situation on the home front was very critical. Clearly, war was not a 'cold' element, without impact on Praguers' lives. On the contrary, the

²⁴ Especially Richard Lein's book: Richard Lein, *Pflichterfullung Oder Hochverrat?: Die Tschechischen Soldaten Osterreich-Ungarns Im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2011).

²⁵ Špačková, Romana, 'Život obyvatel Prahy za první světové války: studie k dějinám každodennosti v Praze v letech 1914-1918' (unpublished master's thesis, Charles University, 1992); Joshua A. Kysiak, *Reluctant Dissidents: War, Hunger, and Resistance in World War I Prague*, (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 2002). I thank Joshua Kysiak for sending me his manuscript.

²⁶ Pieter Judson, Tara Zahra, 'Sites of Indifference to Nationhood', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 43 (2012), 21-27.

²⁷ The work of reference on history of daily life is: Alf Lüdtke, *Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Rekonstruktion Historischer Erfahrungen Und Lebensweisen* (Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 1989). For new directions and possibilities in this field see: Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett. 'The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter', *The Journal of Modern History*, 80 (2008), 358-378 (p. 363).

²⁸ Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard, *L'invention du quotidien. I Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

²⁹ Otto Urban, 'La guerre 1914-18 dans la mémoire tchèque', in *Allemands, Juifs et Tchèques à Prague 1890-1924*, ed. by Maurice Godé, Jacques Le Rider and Françoise Mayer (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1996), pp. 115-124.

Austro-Hungarian war experience brought in this urban community profound disruptions and transformations, which were not limited to national independence. This conception can sometimes be found in the historiography as well, as when Jiří Musil for example explains: ‘World War I in 1914-1918 had not touched Czech territory, and Prague was hit *only* indirectly by such phenomena as hunger, disease, and death of young soldiers fighting in the Austrian army [our emphasis]’.³⁰ Showing the impact of war itself on the city can help us to better understand the role of the First World War in the transformation of Bohemian society in the 20th century.

The hinterland is often portrayed as a separate sphere for women and children preserved from the reality of war. However, contacts between the front and the hinterland made war, and warriors, visible and present in the cities. Our wish to reduce the dichotomy between front and home front also explains the reluctance to put gender categories at the centre in the history of Prague during the war. The intention was to write a history of Praguers that would not reify any predefined categories (man/woman, German/Czech, Jew/Christian).

Our second main research question concerned the sources of the state’s legitimacy during the war years and in the transition to the Czechoslovak Republic. How did the relationship between the state and its citizens evolve throughout the conflict and was it affected (or not) by the regime change? Looking at the way Prague’s inhabitants relate to the state means examining the mobilization around the war effort on the one hand as well as the crises of legitimacy experienced during the war by the Austrian state and then again by the young Czechoslovak state during its stabilization period. Michel Dobry has underlined how loss of legitimacy is not only a cause of political crises but a phenomenon that is nurtured by the crisis itself.³¹ This explains the difficulties for the new Czechoslovak state to establish its legitimacy. Making the state such a central actor requires defining who represented the state authority during these years. This question cuts to the heart of the wartime transformations in the Habsburg monarchy. The military played an increasing role in civilian life while the local bureaucracy in Bohemia had to adapt to this new situation (see Chapter 1). The relationship of common citizens to the state ranged from

³⁰ Jiří Musil, ‘Growth and stagnation in 20th century Prague’, in *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. by John Czaplicka, Blair Ruble (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003), pp. 321-340 (p. 326).

³¹ Michel Dobry, *Sociologie des crises politiques : La dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1986).

the abstract allegiance to the Emperor down to daily interactions with civil servants. We tend to use the word citizens rather than subjects (unless referring specifically to the dynastic loyalty) to underline the new dynamics introduced by universal male suffrage in 1907. The personnel of the bureaucracy did not change much with the creation of the Republic and therefore, to some extent, the state that Praguers encountered after 1918 on a daily basis was not so dissimilar to the previous regime.

Revisionist historians of the Late Habsburg Empire have recently challenged the traditional conceptions of nationality politics in Austria-Hungary and the anachronistic character of the Empire,³² affording a fresh look at wartime politics beyond a simplistic dichotomy between German and Magyar approval of the war effort and Slavic resistance to it. In the Austrian half of the Empire (the Hungarian half being quite different), the state was not an agent of nationalization, favouring one nation (the Germans) over the others. The nationalization process was not a linear process but the purpose of the ‘hard work’, in the words of Pieter Judson, of national activists³³ who had to fight national indifference among the population.³⁴ The complexity of national allegiances, instead of being neatly clear-cut by the end of the 19th century (as ethnic maps of Austria-Hungary would lead to conclude), remained well into the 20th century.³⁵ The insights of this new historiography invite to a re-examination of the First World War in this context. The population of the Bohemian lands was not divided between anti-Habsburg Czechs and pro-Habsburg Germans during the conflict. The loyalties of Czech-

³² On the revisionist history of the Habsburg Empire that challenged the decline and fall paradigm of a monarchy destroyed by nationality politics: Gary Cohen, ‘Neither Absolutism nor Anarchy: New Narratives on Society and Government in Late Habsburg Austria’, *Austrian History Yearbook* 29 (1998), 37-61; Gary Cohen, ‘Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914’, *Central European History* 40 (2007), 241-278; Earlier works in this direction: Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918* (London: Longman, 1989); John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-97* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

³³ Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the nation: Activists on the language frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

³⁴ On national indifference see Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

³⁵ For the study of the national fluidity in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia during the Second World War see: Chad Bryant, *Prague in black: Nazi rule and Czech nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

speaking citizens could be manifold and Czech nationalism and Habsburg loyalty³⁶ were compatible at least until a certain point during the war. The German-speaking populations in Austria in general also abandoned the Habsburg state toward the end the war.³⁷ The legitimacy crisis in the Empire can therefore not be seen as limited to the Slavic-speaking populations.

State legitimacy has been preferred to the concept of loyalty because loyalty became itself a category used by the state in wartime to determine the reliability of individuals or groups. In attempting to determine the loyalties of the population, are we not reproducing the prejudices of state officials and post-war nationalists and obscuring the opportunism and variety of behaviours in wartime?³⁸ The question of legitimacy and of the relationship of citizens to their states broadens the spectrum to include a wider range of attitudes in the population. We would like to suggest that a transfer of loyalty from the Habsburg Empire to the Czechoslovak Republic that can be perceived as ‘switching loyalties’ could constitute a logical response for an individual attached to a local form of patriotism. Attitudes to the war came to complicate the traditional configuration of loyalties. Loyalty remains a useful tool to understand other forms of affiliations independent of nationalism but it risks being reified as rigidly as national identities.³⁹

The new studies of the Bohemian Lands have led to a growing suspicion of nationalist narratives of the region that have shaped its historiography for too long.⁴⁰ Rather than trying to undermine the Empire, Czech and German nationalists were shown ‘competing in their Habsburg

³⁶ On loyalty as a useful category to study this region: *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, ed. by Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007). *Loyalitäten in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik, 1918-1938. Politische, nationale und kulturelle Zugehörigkeiten*, ed. by Martin Schulze Wessel (München: Oldenbourg, 2004).

³⁷ On the collapse of imperial legitimacy in Vienna see Maureen Healy. *Vienna and the fall of the Habsburg Empire: total war and everyday life in World War I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

³⁸ I thank Jonathan Gumz and Ke-Chin Hsia for pointing this out to me.

³⁹ Tara Zahra makes this point in her essay on national indifference: Tara Zahra, ‘Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis’, *Slavic Review*, 69 (2010), 93-119 (pp. 109-110).

⁴⁰ Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008). Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen. Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)* (München: Oldenbourg, 2012).

loyalty’.⁴¹ Rather than fighting each other, they were fighting the indifference of individuals they claimed for their own nation. The existence of national indifference highlighted the nationalist bias of many sources on the region which superimposed nationalist understandings of potentially non-national events. This historiographical shift can be compared to the caution advised by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker in looking at interwar testimonies on the First World War.⁴² National indifference appears then as a productive starting point to understand the history of the region far from confining individuals to one identity or another or from considering ambivalent attitudes as marginal and anachronistic.⁴³ Concrete everyday language practices in local contexts show the prevalence of bilingualism (even in Prague where in the official census the overwhelming majority indicated Czech as their language of daily use). In this study of Prague, we have attempted to take into account the new findings on nationalism but not take national categories or the absence thereof as the focal point. Nowhere in the following pages is there a section on how the German-speaking community or the Jewish community experienced the war.⁴⁴ German-speakers are part of this story but not considered as a group, we have resorted to mention the language of a specific source in the footnote. In general we have used the term German or Czech only to refer to explicitly nationalist associations or individuals or to refer to the perceptions of an institution (the military for example). It proved however impossible to completely leave aside these questions, especially since the research on this aspect during the war is still limited.

Considering the period 1914-1920 as a whole and examining the transition years after the creation of Czechoslovakia as directly linked to the war experience is an innovative approach that will shed new light on the First Czechoslovak Republic.

⁴¹ Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, p. 12.

⁴² Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, *14-18, Retrouver la guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), pp. 259-272.

⁴³ Zahra, ‘Imagined Noncommunities’. For other studies of national fluidity in East Central Europe see: James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Dominique Kirchner Reill, *Nationalist Who Feared the Nation: Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012); Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴ On the Jewish Praguers during the war see: Martin Welling, *‘Von Hass so eng umkreist’: Der Erste Weltkrieg aus der Sicht der Prager Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2003).

Studies of the ‘sortie de guerre’⁴⁵ have shown that, depending on specific situations, cultural demobilization could take months or even years. In the case of Prague, the end of the war is often associated with the onset of independence on 28 October 1918. It seems however essential to consider the immediate aftermath of the war in continuity with the war years to better understand what is at stake with the coming of demobilization (both material and cultural) and the establishment of a new order.⁴⁶ The 1918 transition deserves to be analysed in its entirety (i.e. until the stabilization of the regime and the return to peacetime standards for the economy) to take into account the direct consequences of the four years of war. This study goes up to the end of 1920 which is marked by the December strike. The December strike follows two years rich of demonstrations and social unrest and constitutes the climax of these movements, while at the same time, paradoxically, establishing the Czechoslovak government because of the latter’s success in repressing it. It also directly succeeds to the peak of national hatred with the anti-German and anti-Jewish riots of mid-November 1920. This strike originated in the tensions between the radical wing of the Social-Democratic party and its moderate leaders. The radical Left called for a general strike on 10 December but the movement lost momentum quite quickly. By the 17th, order had prevailed. Communist historians considered this strike as a central event because it led to the creation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. However, its significance goes beyond party politics. As Victor Mamatey puts it in his classical history of the Czechoslovak Republic, ‘the December 1920 strike and its suppression represented an important turning point in the history of the First Republic. It marked the high point of postwar social and political radicalism and a return to law and order. The authority of the government, previously wavering, was firmly established [...]’⁴⁷

Focusing on a specific city is, for different reasons, a fairly common choice in both the historical research on East Central Europe and the research on the First World War. Historians of East Central Europe have been attracted to cities because they afford the possibility to think

⁴⁵ *Sortir de la Grande Guerre: le monde et l’après-1918*, ed. by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Christophe Prochasson (Paris: Tallandier, 2008); Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty, ‘Sorties de guerre: jalons pour une histoire en chantier’, *Histoire@politique*, 3 (2007).

⁴⁶ On cultural demobilization see: John Horne, ‘Démobilisations culturelles après la Grande Guerre: Introduction’, *14-18 aujourd’hui, today, heute*, 5 (2002), pp. 45-53.

⁴⁷ Victor Mamatey, ‘The Development of Czechoslovak Democracy, 1920-1938’, in *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, ed. by Victor Mamatey, Radomír Luža (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 106.

beyond traditional national narratives in terms of bilingualism and daily encounters.⁴⁸ Gary Cohen's book on Prague in many ways pioneered the urban monography on multilingual cities.⁴⁹ Jeremy King's analysis of Budějovice/Budweis in Southern Bohemia illuminated the evolution of national allegiances over a century.⁵⁰ Nathaniel Wood, on the other hand, recently took the city as unit of analysis to depart from research questions around nationalism altogether and focus instead on the birth of a metropolitan feeling.⁵¹ Other studies examined very concrete aspects of urban landscape (streets and parks) to shed new light on Habsburg politics.⁵²

The coming together of First World War historiography and urban history is a relatively recent but very fruitful one. Several monographs on individual European cities or comparative studies have been published in the past fifteen years pointing to many useful research directions. The first volume of the collection *Capital Cities at War*, published in 1997, with a focus on social issues constitutes a first milestone in the developing field of the urban war experience.⁵³ The focus on cities during the conflict is often linked with an interest in the rhythm of everyday life in the city and the living conditions of its inhabitants. Belinda Davis's monograph on Berlin could be seen as a model of the genre.⁵⁴ Her analysis of the food issue in the capital during the war sheds useful light on the way German women survived the war years and influenced the political decisions at the local level. Based on street-level police reports, *Home fires burning* explores the different implications of the food shortages not only in terms of popular protest but also of national identity and gender dynamics. A major contribution of this book is to reveal the central role played by food supply issues during the First World War in the Central Powers and to

⁴⁸ Chad Bryant, 'After Nationalism? Urban History and East European History', *East European Politics and Societies*, 25 (2011), 774-778.

⁴⁹ Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914*, 2nd. ed., rev. (West Lafayette, Ind: Purdue University Press, 2006). It was first published in 1981.

⁵⁰ King, *Budweisers*.

⁵¹ Nathaniel D. Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan: Urban Selfhood and the Making of Modern Cracow* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

⁵² Markian Prokopovych, *Habsburg Lemberg: Architecture, Public Space, and Politics in the Galician Capital, 1772-1914* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009).

⁵³ *Capital cities at war: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* ed. by Jean-Louis Robert and Jay Winter, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007).

⁵⁴ Belinda Joy Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 2000).

expand our definition of politics to include these struggles for subsistence. Maureen Healy's book on Vienna⁵⁵ shares a similar analysis of the food penury in the capital of the Habsburg Empire. These two books are an essential point of reference for the discussion of food shortages and politics in Prague.

The wartime centrality of food supply and distribution issues in Central Europe should not overshadow other aspects of the transformed daily lives of city inhabitants during the war. In the first volume comparing London, Paris and Berlin⁵⁶, other material changes in the citizens' living conditions were studied, explaining difficulties regarding coal, housing and wages. The most comprehensive account of daily life in a town during the conflict is Roger Chickering's monograph on Freiburg.⁵⁷ Chickering doesn't limit himself to a description of the food issue (although he does that too), he strives to recreate the world of Freiburg during World War I, especially through a pathbreaking inquiry into the sensory world of the city. Though this form of total history was beyond the reach of a doctoral thesis, many of Chickering's insights have inspired developments in the following pages.

Another approach to the disruption brought by war into the lives of civilians on the home front is to study the processes of social and cultural mobilization for the war effort. War invaded the public space with state propaganda and reports of the front. The shift from a concern with economic living conditions to the cultural representations of the conflict in cities can be illustrated by the transition from the first to the second volume of *Capital Cities at War*.⁵⁸ The term mobilization is used here in a very broad sense and not limited to the enrolment of soldiers for the front. To borrow John Horne's definition in the introduction to his edited volume on wartime mobilizations: the mobilization under study is 'the engagement of the different belligerent nations in their war efforts both imaginatively; through collective representations and the belief and value systems giving rise to these, and organizationally, through the state and civil

⁵⁵ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁵⁶ *Capital cities at war* (1997).

⁵⁷ Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁵⁸ *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919. The Cultural History of Nostalgic Modernity* ed. by Jean-Louis Robert, Jay Winter, and Paul Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

society.’⁵⁹ A new generation of historians have been examining the particular forms that the war culture took in an urban setting. In his comparison of Béziers and Northampton, Purseigle shows how local communities reinterpreted and re-appropriated national propaganda on the war or the enemy through frameworks that would resonate in the local imagination.⁶⁰ Moreover, as the war went on, local communities focused more and more on their own suffering. The charities created for war relief were often meant to help local victims of the conflict; a preference was given to local solidarity over national solidarity. His account also challenges the notion of a state-led propaganda by looking at how mobilization for the war occurred through the civil society, especially associations around the notion of common sacrifice. Looking at the actors of this mobilization allows for a new conception of the relationships between state and civil society in wartime discourse. Focusing on an analysis of the variations of discourse in the city of Münster during the First World War, Christoph Nübel’s *Die Mobilisierung der Kriegsgesellschaft* looks at the propaganda produced by the local elite to observe the means of fostering unity throughout the conflict within the urban community.⁶¹ This effort to maintain a ‘discourse of unity’ was more and more undermined by the realities of war and the impossibility to sustain a community of sacrifice. The different modalities of cultural mobilization and the chronological evolution of its success constitute a very intriguing field of research which can fruitfully be applied to the Austro-Hungarian case.

By studying popular protests in cities during the war and the appropriation of state propaganda in the local discourse, many of these studies invite a rethinking of the relationship between the individual and the state and its evolution during the conflict. Davis’s account of Berlin includes a discussion of the state’s response to the growing demands for better food supplies. She argues that the state authorities reacted to the women’s grievances but rather than resolving the problem, they gave legitimacy to the popular claims. In her study about Vienna, Healy similarly investigates of the state the role in its citizens’ lives during the last years of the

⁵⁹ John Horne, ‘Introduction: mobilizing for total war, 1914-1918’, in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, ed. by John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.

⁶⁰ Pierre Purseigle, *Mobilisation, Sacrifice et Citoyenneté: Angleterre-France, 1900-1918* (Paris: Belles lettres, 2013).

⁶¹ Christoph Nübel, *Die Mobilisierung der Kriegsgesellschaft: Propaganda und Alltag im Ersten Weltkrieg in Münster* (Münster: Waxman, 2008).

Habsburg Empire. She contends that, paradoxically, the Empire was never as present in their lives as just before its demise. Vienna's inhabitants, still very much influenced by a paternalistic conception of power, expected the state to come to their rescue. Its failure to do so and to maintain a decent living standard for most of the city's population undermined its legitimacy and led to the implosion of the Empire. This approach suggests a new conception of what a study of the state at war implies, away from a top-down perspective (with a description of the officials' decisions and motives) to a more dynamic picture of the interaction between state administration and civil society. An earlier study by Mary Macauley examined the creation of the Bolshevik state in the city of Petersburg complements an investigation of the relationship between state and individual with an analysis of state building.⁶²

Very recently, some historians of East Central Europe have started to contribute to the urban history of the First World War. The home front experience in the East is even more often characterized by occupation than it is in the West of Europe and, as a result, many of these studies focus on cities which were occupied by the enemy. This provides a different picture of the urban experience not limited to cities lying in the hinterland.⁶³ Reflecting the structure of cities in East Central Europe, the work of these scholars addresses the challenges posed by war to multi-ethnic urban communities. Christoph Mick, for example, who looked at the city of Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv, argues that the conflict accelerated the nationalisation of the local population and the resentment between the various groups.⁶⁴ Instead of focusing on one predefined ethnic group and observing its behaviour during these years in isolation from the others⁶⁵, Mick and others have researched these cities as wholes, analysing the interethnic

⁶² Mary Macauley, *Bread and Justice. State and Society in Petrograd, 1917-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

⁶³ See the articles on Riga, Vilnius and Lemberg in 'Über den Weltkrieg hinaus: Kriegserfahrungen in Ostmitteleuropa 1914 – 1921', *Nordost-Archiv*, 17 (2008). See also on Łódź: Andreas Hoffmann, 'Reweaving the urban fabric: multiethnicity and occupation in Łódź, 1914-1918' in *Endangered cities: military power and urban societies in the era of the world wars* ed. by Roger Chickering, Marcus Funck (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), pp. 81-94; Jovanna Lazic Knezevic, 'The Austro-Hungarian Occupation of Belgrade during the First World War Battles at the Home Front' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2006).

⁶⁴ See Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914-1947* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010).

⁶⁵ For such an approach to the Prague Jewish community see Martin Welling, 'Von Hass so eng umkreist' : *Der Erste Weltkrieg aus der Sicht der Prager Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2003).

relations and the reconfigurations of these sub-communities throughout the war.⁶⁶ In this respect, it is important not to consider these communities as fixed but as moving with changing identifications and loyalties in this time of upheaval. Andreas Hoffmann in his article about Łódź insists on the many movements of population during the war (to and from the city) and their consequences on the redefinition of the urban community. The movements to and from the city are also at the core of this study on Prague looking at wounded soldiers and refugees in particular.

One of the most important of these movements is from the city to its rural immediate surroundings in search of food. Chickering, and Healy to a lesser extent, touch upon this issue by describing the city-dwellers' growing resentment towards the rural population, who was relatively better off. Analysing the development of this cleavage in greater detail illuminates the specificity of the urban war experience. Benjamin Ziemann, in his study of rural war experiences in Bavaria, gives the peasant perspective on the rural/urban divide during the war and elucidates their attitudes toward the revolution and popular protests in the cities.⁶⁷

The novelty of the second volume of *Capital Cities at War* is not only to suggest a cultural perspective on this issue but also to structure its analysis around various sites and places in the cities themselves like hospitals, cemeteries or railway stations. Looking at the geography of the city, historians can identify key places where the wartime culture is embodied. Elise Julien, in her monograph on war memory in Berlin and Paris, centres part of her investigation on specific war memorials in factories, churches, etc.⁶⁸ This approach, following the topography of the city, allows a better understanding of the reconfigurations of urban space during the war. While our work on Prague is not structured on that model, railway stations, the streets, cemeteries, hospitals and other key sites of the wartime experience feature prominently in our account.

⁶⁶ With the example of the social democratic movement in Bratislava, Pieter van Duin recently investigated the relationships between various ethnic groups during the 'revolution' of 1918. Pieter Van Duin, *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

⁶⁷ Benjamin Ziemann, *War experiences in Rural Germany 1914-1923* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), pp. 166-209.

⁶⁸ Elise Julien, *Paris, Berlin la mémoire de guerre 1914-1933* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

Except for Martin Geyer's study of Munich, most studies of cities at war either focus on the war itself or on its immediate aftermath and the process of demobilization.⁶⁹ In this study, the war period is linked to the first years of the new regime. Looking at the literature on cities in the 'sortie de guerre' can help identify the slightly different set of issues at stake here. The first key concept used by historians to understand the end of the war is the idea of a process of cultural demobilization. Each aspect of the cultural mobilization of societies has its opposite equivalent in the demobilization process.⁷⁰ Adam Seipp's comparison of Munich and Manchester at the end of the war shows that this process happened over several years and that this period saw many negotiations between state and citizens about the demobilization.⁷¹ The most important point of contention for citizens in both cities was the expectation of a form of 'reciprocity' after the extraordinary sacrifice they had consented to during the war years. Seipp argues that this problem of 'reciprocity' led to the crisis of the immediate post-war.

This study does not provide an overview of politicians' activities during the war. These politicians' own dilemmas and support for the Empire or the independence have been covered elsewhere.⁷² Their attitudes might have, to some extent, reflected the opinions in some parts of the population but their position made their options different. Instead, the evolution traced here reflects the experience of broader sections of Prague's population.

The city chosen as the focus of this study needs to be briefly introduced. Although Prague as a municipality was less extensive at the beginning of the century, the immediate suburbs of Prague were included in the research. Prague will therefore be defined according to its 1922 limits (which roughly corresponds to the limit of the territory under the jurisdiction of the Prague Police Headquarters [policejní rayon/Polizeirayon]). At the beginning of the 20th century, the

⁶⁹ Martin H. Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

⁷⁰ See John Horne, 'Démobilisations culturelles après la Grande Guerre'

⁷¹ Adam R. Seipp, *The Ordeal of Peace: Demobilisation and the Urban Experience in Britain and Germany, 1917-1921* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁷² Z. A. B. (Zbyněk A. B.) Zeman, *The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire, 1914-1918*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Christopher Brennan, 'Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond His Control or beyond His Capacities? The Domestic Policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916-May 1917' (unpublished doctoral thesis, London School of Economics, 2012).

most prominent of the suburbs (předměstí/Vororte) were integral parts of the city (Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge, Žižkov/Žižkow, Smíchov/Smichow, Karlín/Karolinenthal) and included working-class districts as well as more bourgeois areas. During the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Prague was the capital city of the crownland (region) of Bohemia and the third city in the Empire. In 1918, Czechoslovakia became an independent country and Prague became the new capital. In 1914, Prague was a city of about 200,000 inhabitants (for the very center) and 600,000 including the suburbs.⁷³ In the 1910 census, 7% of the population declared German as their language of daily use. The overwhelming majority of the population registered as Catholics with a Jewish minority representing 5% and a very small Protestant minority.⁷⁴

⁷³ Jiří Pešek, *Od aglomerace k velkoměstu: Praha a středoevropské metropole, 1850-1920* (Praha: Scriptorium, 1999), p. 169.

⁷⁴ Jan Havránek, 'Structure sociale des Allemands, des Tchèques, des chrétiens et des juifs à Prague, à la lumière des statistiques des années 1890-1930', in *Allemands, Juifs et Tchèques à Prague 1890-1924*, p. 72.

Figure 1: Number of inhabitants in Prague according to the 1910 census (Source: *Statistická zpráva hlavního města Prahy, spojených obcí, Karlína, Smíchova, Vinohrad, Vršovic a Žižkova a 32 sousedních obcí a osad Velké Prahy za rok 1921* (Praha: Nákladem hlavního města Prahy, 1926), p. 41)

City borough or locality	Number of inhabitants
Staré město/Altstadt (I)	35,523
Nové město/Neustadt (II)	82,826
Malá Strana/Kleinseite (III)	22,474
Hradčany/Hradschin (IV)	7,361
Josefov (V)	3,384
Královský Vyšehrad/Königlicher Wyschehrad, (VI)	5,254
Holešovice-Bubny/Holleschowitz-Bubna (VII)	39,727
Líbeň/Lieben (VIII)	27,192
Prague I-VIII	223,741
Karlín/Karolinenthal	24,230
Královské Vinohrady/Königliche Weinberge	77,120
Smíchov/Smichow	51,791
Vršovice/Wrschowitz	24,646
Žižkov/Žižkow	72,173
Prague and suburbs	473,701
Bohnice/Bohmitz	2,264
Bráník/Branik	3,616
Břevnov/Břewnow	11,116
Bubeneč/Bubentsch	10,657
Dejvice/Dejwitz	6,582
Hloubětín/Hloubetin	3,266
Hlubočepy/Hlubotschep	4,168
Hodkovičky	940
Hostivař	2,276
Hrdlořezy	1,655

Chuchle Malá	572
Jinonice/Jinonitz	2,234
Kobylisy	3,199
Košíře/Koschitz	12,293
Krč	3,200
Liboc	1,587
Malešice	1,114
Michle	8,287
Motoly/Motol	273
Nusle	30,874
Podolí	4,048
Prosek	2,164
Radlice	3,370
Sedlec	1,019
Strašnice Staré/Straschnitz	4,062
Střešovice/Střeschowitz	2,862
Střížkov	352
Troja	2,195
Veleslavín	1,340
Vokovice	1,780
Vysočany/Wysotschan	6,896
Záběhllice/Zaběhlitz	2,669
Greater Prague – Total	616,631

While the coexistence in Prague of German-speakers and Czech-speakers is not the main topic of this study, this aspect certainly plays a role in the following pages. Some parts of the urban space in Prague had, by the outbreak of the First World War, acquired national connotations and it is important to describe this topography here. Two ‘competing poles’ emerged at the end of the 19th century with their respective promenades: the Ferdinandová/Ferdinandstraße on the one side of Wenceslas Square and Am Graben/Na příkopě on the other.⁷⁵ The Sunday promenades of the bourgeois classes were divided nationally on one avenue or the other. These avenues also housed important buildings linked to both national movements: the Czech National Theatre (Národní divadlo) on the river bank and the German House (Deutsches Haus/Německý dům). However, the view of a segregated city should not be exaggerated and it is important to underline that these avenues were at no point exclusively ‘Czech’ or ‘German’. Gary Cohen’s work on daily interactions before the war has been now complemented by Ines Koeltzsch’s study of contacts during the interwar period.⁷⁶ Both studies show that on street level, there was more interpenetration between the two linguistic elements than nationalist memoirs describe.

Although the non-Hungarian half of Austria-Hungary was not officially called Austria until 1915 but the kingdoms and regions represented in the Reichsrat, we have chosen to use this term to refer to the Cisleithanian half of the monarchy. The adjective Austrian does not refer to the Republic of Austria created after 1918 but to the entire Cisleithanian part of Austria-Hungary. This is done as much out of convenience as to make the argument that an Austrian patriotism did exist.

The sources to document daily life in Prague during the war and the immediate aftermath are varied and not limited to one precise type of archive. The National Archives in Prague have produced several collections of primary sources that have been very useful: weekly summaries of police reports on events in Bohemia in 1915 to 1918 and 1919 to 1920 respectively were

⁷⁵ Xavier Galmiche, ‘Multiculturalité et uniculturalisme: Le paradoxe de Prague’, in *Les Villes multiculturelles en Europe centrale*, ed. by Delphine Bechtel and Xavier Galmiche (Paris: Belin, 2008), pp. 41–63 (pp. 49–50).

⁷⁶ Gary B. Cohen, ‘Cultural Crossings in Prague, 1900: Scenes from Late Imperial Austria’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 45 (2014), 1–30; Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen. Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)* (München: Oldenbourg, 2012).

published in the late 1950s.⁷⁷ This was completed in the 1990s by a 5 volume publication of sources relating to domestic politics in the Bohemian Lands from 1914 to 1918.⁷⁸ The summaries have been particularly exploited in Chapter 5 where the demonstrations in Prague during these years are analysed.

Police sources form the bulk of archival records used in this study: police reports on daily events in the city (*Vorfallenheitsberichte*, called after 1918 *zprávy o událostech*) and reports on 'mood' (*Stimmungsberichte*) can be found in Prague in the archives of the Austrian Ministry of the Interior (PMV/R), of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior (PMV) and of the Bohemian Governor's Office (PM). Furthermore, the archives of the Prague Police Headquarters contain a wealth of collected information (leaflets, posters), reports and depositions: not only on issues such as public order or demonstrations but also on the general monitoring of life in the city during the war. This includes information on schools, transportation, exhibitions, theatres, celebrations, military affairs, refugees, censorship, and associations among others.

At the Prague Municipal Archives, the records of the Municipal Council have provided information on the war relief activities undertaken by the Council but also on other aspects of life in wartime Prague. Smaller holdings from individuals or associations gave us an insight of participation in the conflict of different actors. For example, the municipality of Karlín had gathered documents about the war in the locality that have proven useful.

In Vienna, we have accessed several holdings of central institutions to complement our findings in Prague. The records from the Office for Alimentation proved especially useful in this respect. Several letters sent to or from Prague were found in the War Archives (through the censorship reports).

We were not able to access military archives to the extent that we would have liked for this project. The holdings of the Military Command in Prague are not inventoried and the Military Archives were closed during part of the time of our research. We have only accessed a few boxes from the year 1918. The *Stimmungsberichte* produced by the Military Command, however, can

⁷⁷ *Souhrnná hlášení presidia pražského místodržitelství o protistátní, protirakouské a protiválečné činnosti v Čechách 1915-1918*, ed. by Libuše Otáhalová (Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1957).; *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení presidia zemské správy politické v Praze o situaci v Čechách 1919-1920*, ed. by Alois Kocman (Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1959).

⁷⁸ *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914-1918*, ed. by Eva Drašarová, Jaroslav Vrbata, 5 vols (V Praze: Státní ústřední archiv, 1993-95).

be found in other archival holdings and the published orders of the Military Command remained in Vienna. A better access to these sources could have given us more information on the returnee soldiers who come back to the hinterland.

A copy of the reports sent by the consul from the German Empire in Prague can be found in the National Archives in London and they provide a counterpoint to the vision of the Austrian authorities.

The press published in Prague constituted another source of information on the city. Despite heavy censorship, newspapers reflected many aspects of the daily life in Prague: concerns over food provisioning, participation in the war effort.⁷⁹ A systematic analysis of all the major daily newspapers was not possible and we relied especially on the titles available online (*Národní listy*, *Národní politika*, *Prager Tagblatt*).

Finally, contemporary publication came to complement our research (pamphlets, reports, plays or exhibition catalogues). Memoirs and a few novels were exploited to give a fuller picture of the city during these years. They represent a challenging source as the post-war often informs the authors' interpretation of the war. Nonetheless, they proved indispensable to apprehend the experience of different groups. For example, Vašek Kaňa's autobiographical novel, which was published in the 1950s and provides a very positive account of his discovery of Communism at the end, nonetheless describes the lives of homeless adolescents, which are difficult to get at through police reports alone.⁸⁰

This study is divided broadly into three main parts: this division is inspired by Jay Winter's reflection on the impact war had on cities and their status as 'places of heightened experience' of war.⁸¹ The first part examines the performance of the war effort in urban space. The first chapter deals with the militarization of urban space through war and shows the growing presence of the military in the city and the implications of this presence. The second chapter

⁷⁹ For an interesting take on the information contained in Vienna's daily newspapers: Maureen Healy, 'A Thursday Before the War: 28 May 1914 in Vienna', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 45 (2014), 134–49.

⁸⁰ Vašek Káňa, *Válkou narušení* (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1953).

⁸¹ Jay Winter, 'Conclusion: Metropolitan History and National History in the Age of Total War', in *Cities into Battlefields. Metropolitan Scenarios, Experiences and Commemoration of Total War* ed. by Stefan Goebel, Derek Keene (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 219–224 (p. 222).

studies the different manifestations of an Austrian patriotic mobilization in Prague during the war. The various expressions of patriotism in the public space go against the idea that no cultural mobilization happened in the Bohemian lands.

In the second part, the reconfiguration of the urban community is examined. The goal of the third chapter is to study the links between the front and the hinterland and to determine the type of identity that Prague developed during the war through its relationship to the front. It explores the relationship that Praguers developed with war victims coming to the city (refugees and wounded soldiers). The fourth chapter then turns to the social breakdown and the new tensions that arose between various communities during the conflict, breaking the unity of the wartime community. Beyond the Czech and German antagonism, we observe the resentment against the countryside, and the new profiteers as well as cleavages along religious lines.

The third part then concentrates on the various social conflicts generated by the war that were expressed in the urban setting. The fifth chapter examines the many riots and protests fuelled by insufficient food supply in the last years of the war and the reappearance of these social movements in the first years of the Czechoslovak Republic. The final chapter analyses the continuities between the two regimes and the status of 1918 as a revolution.

CHAPTER 1

MILITARIZATION OF THE URBAN SPACE

‘For a while there, we saw more uniformed men on the street than civilians’,⁸² reported the *Prager Tagblatt* on the first day of partial mobilization. The start of the war in 1914 meant a redefinition of the relationship between the military and the civilian worlds. The city was one of the spaces where this interaction took place: the prominence of the military in pre-war times was for example visible in the parades that frequently featured in urban celebrations.⁸³ As Austria-Hungary went into a conflict whose scale continued to grow over the last months of 1914, Prague had to adjust to the change. In his analysis of the Habsburg Empire during the war written in the 1920s, Austrian statesman Josef Redlich already spoke of a ‘militarisation’ of the hinterland that had gone further than in other belligerent countries.⁸⁴ He was then referring to the increased role of the military in government. ‘Militarisation’ has also been used to characterize the lives of civilians near the front in the First World War, as total war invaded their everyday existence. In this context, it not only reflects the exposure to military administration or the violence of bombardments but also the encounter of civilians with soldiers.⁸⁵

This chapter will explore the different aspects of militarization by showing how the war involved a new presence of the military in the city, starting with a description of the mobilization days. It will then attempt to point out what was new in the contacts between soldiers and city-dwellers and the impact of Austrian military culture on Prague. Laurence Cole has recently shown that, in the second half of the 19th century, Austria-Hungary had undergone a process of ‘societal militarization’ comparable to other European countries and he examined the ‘pervasiveness of a culture of the military in Habsburg society at large.’⁸⁶ This ‘military culture’,

⁸² *Prager Tagblatt*, 27 August 1914, p. 2.

⁸³ For the role of the military institutions in pre-war Europe see: James J. Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone?: The Transformation of Modern Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), pp. 3-21; Jakob Vogel, *Nationen im Gleichschritt: der Kult der ‘Nation in Waffen’ in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1871-1914*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

⁸⁴ Josef Redlich, *Austrian War Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 84.

⁸⁵ Alex Dowdall, ‘The Militarisation of Civilian Life on the Western Front, 1914-1918’ [Draft].

⁸⁶ Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (New York, NY: OUP Oxford, 2014), p. 308; 3.

and its position in society, was both exploited and transformed during the war. We will analyse it through the example of incidents with soldiers and the use of uniforms. Finally, this chapter will engage with the ongoing discussion on the nature of the Habsburg military government to inquire into the army's role in the hinterland. In his study of occupied Serbia, Jonathan Gumz explained the goal of militarization: 'The Army wanted militarization through a hierarchically directed coercive straitjacket that avoided popular mobilization and the potential claims for rights that could be made through such mobilization.'⁸⁷ This conception determined much of the wartime repression in Bohemia which we will analyse.

Chronologically, this chapter will cover the major events of the first year of the war (broadly until November 1915). It will also introduce some general contextual elements on Bohemia during the first years of the war that will illuminate further chapters.

I - The summer of 1914 and the mobilization

A - The proclamation of war and soldiers' departure from the front

The fascination with the quick transition from peace to war in 1914 has not faded away a hundred years later, as the flow of recent publications on that summer shows. The main focus often remains on the main actors of the international crisis but the reaction of the European populations is also part of that narrative.⁸⁸ While 'August 14' is the key word to describe the war outbreak in Western Europe, this specific atmosphere started earlier in Austria-Hungary. Indeed, the announcement of the ultimatum to Serbia on July 23rd already generated a considerable agitation among the population. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand one month earlier came back to the forefront of the news. As writer Max Brod explains in his memoirs: 'the common people (at least in Prague) and with it almost the whole population reacted to the

⁸⁷ Jonathan E. Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 16.

⁸⁸ On the crisis of that summer among others: Christopher M. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012); Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013); Gerd Krumeich, *Juli 1914. Eine Bilanz* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013); Forthcoming about France's entry into war: Bruno Cabanes, *Août 14. La France entre en guerre* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2014).

announcement made months ago very simply: we forgot it. We were completely surprised when it resurfaced that Friday in the most beautiful July weather and took the heretofore practically unknown form of an ultimatum.⁸⁹ The hope that Serbia would accept the ultimatum remained until 6 pm on 25 July. The newspaper *Bohemia* even carried the news that it had.⁹⁰ During the night from Saturday to Sunday morning, preparations for the partial mobilization started. In Prague, July 26th corresponded to the anniversary of the introduction of the Saint Anne's Patents one year previously. The provincial diet had been adjourned and the land was ruled by a special committee.⁹¹ Demonstrations were planned to request their withdrawal. The Bohemian authorities were however worried those demonstrations in this context would lead to 'criticisms of the external situation'⁹² and forbade them. While social-democratic circles had planned meetings, many Catholics were celebrating the Saint Anne festival with various pilgrimages to different holy places in Bohemia.

That Sunday, yellow posters in Czech and German announcing the partial mobilization were hung all over Prague.⁹³

⁸⁹ Max Brod, *Streitbares Leben. Autobiographie* (München: FA Herbig, 1960), p. 84.

⁹⁰ *Bohemia* (evening edition), 25 July 1914, p. 1.

⁹¹ Mark Cornwall, 'The Wartime Bohemia of Franz Kafka: The Social and National Crisis', in *Kafka, Prag und der Erste Weltkrieg*, ed. by Manfred Engel and Ritchie Robertson (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2012), pp. 37–47 (p. 38).

⁹² NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, Memorandum from the Governor, 24 July 1914.

⁹³ Poster in Czech, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, 26 July 1914.

Figure 2: Poster for partial mobilization.

Newspapers describe the city in the effervescence of these first few days.⁹⁴ The streets were filled with people and the trains for excursions to the countryside were empty. The word ‘mobilization’ could be heard everywhere while people gathered around mobilization posters to see who was called up.⁹⁵ The announcement provoked a ‘prodigious bustle’ with reservists gathering in high numbers at the town hall or in front of barracks on Josef Square.⁹⁶ More and more men in uniform appeared on the streets and stores selling military equipment were full of new clients.⁹⁷

One interesting source on the atmosphere in Prague is Josef Žemla’s account in a small pamphlet entitled *Prague in the mobilization!* and published in 1914. In the preface dated August 3rd 1914, he explains that his goal was to describe the atmosphere in Prague as if a man from the

⁹⁴ ‘Vzrušena Praha’, *Hlas národa*, 27 July 1914, p. 3.

⁹⁵ *Národní politika*, 27 July 1914, p. 5.

⁹⁶ *Národní listy*, 27 July 1914, p. 2.

⁹⁷ *Prager Tagblatt*, 27 July 1914, p. 2.

countryside had asked him: ‘what did it look like in your home?’⁹⁸ This source, while published in the war context and therefore potentially silencing conflicts, at least does not suffer from the post-war distortion common to many memoirs. He describes the crowds gathering around the mobilization posters in the early morning of July 26th but also the confusion of many young men who did not know exactly where to go. A geography of this mobilization day emerges from his account, between the main barracks of Pohořelec on top of a hill to the Military Command in Malá Strana/Kleinseite and the military section in the new town hall (Old Town). On Neruda Street, linking the military command and the barracks, automobiles carrying military officers circulated constantly.

Noise, shout, fear, anxiety – opposites meet. The military section in the town hall is full. Young workers, artisans, clerks, postmen, etc, all of them either fill the offices looking for information or arrive on the corridors – with the mouth open to ask how to behave.⁹⁹

Special editions of newspapers were published carrying new developments and Praguers waited at newspapers offices to get the latest information. The train stations also constitute a focal point of the tumult, with men coming to Prague to report for duty and the first departures of troops.¹⁰⁰

The report from the Prague police also underlines the great attention with which news was followed. No anti-Austrian demonstration is to be observed but ‘the atmosphere in the population is very depressed, which is however only explained by the military measures that concern more or less every family.’¹⁰¹ Moving scenes of separations between husbands and wives or parents and children also belong to common descriptions of these first few days. Jaroslav Knotek-Domě, from the working-class district of Libeň/Lieben who was five in 1914, remembers how his father departed to the front:

My dad also had to report to the barracks at Pohořelec. They were there several days. We went there every afternoon with my mum to look at him. But only to the iron gates of the barracks’ courtyard where dads were there like convicts. Behind bars. After a few days we arrived again one afternoon and the courtyard was empty. They had

⁹⁸ Josef Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci! Týden pražského života v době mobilisace* (V Praze: Reyl, 1914), p. 1; See also *Národní listy*, 27 July 1914, p. 2: the town hall was the ‘centre’ of the agitation with reservists asking for information.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Prager Tagblatt*, 28 July 1914, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, report from the Prague Police, 27 July 1914.

gone to Vienna during the night. I really cried that time. I couldn't be calmed on the whole way back. From Pohořelec to Libeň.¹⁰²

The overall picture of the mobilization days in Prague seems to have been characterized by this mixture of sadness and agitation. The governor remarks that the atmosphere does not show signs of enthusiasm but can be described as 'dignified and serious'.¹⁰³ The publication of the Emperor's manifesto on July 28th justifies the decision to go to war. This text, prefaced as usual 'to my people[s]' (*An meine Völker, Mým národům*), legitimizes the war against Serbia, to which the Emperor was compelled despite his desire to preserve peace.¹⁰⁴ The poster was placed on every street corner. The police report from July 29th, while emphasizing the 'depression' in the population, mentions that the manifesto was 'fervently read and a deep emotion was perceptible by many. The manifest has reinforced in every strata of the population the already widespread opinion of the necessity of the monarchy's actions'.¹⁰⁵ While this police statement might be optimistic and exaggerated, Žemla also confirms that the manifest was widely read and made 'a deep impression' on the reader.¹⁰⁶ The general mobilization on July 31st marked the generalisation of the conflict with the involvement of Russia. Žemla describes the fear the mobilization posters provoked.¹⁰⁷

The early reactions to the war outbreak in Prague thus resemble the scenes in other European cities. Jean-Jacques Becker's work on France had shown that resignation and a sense of duty characterized soldiers' departure to the front.¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey Verhey's more recent work on

¹⁰² From an oral testimony gathered by a team of anthropologists: Jaroslav Knotek-Domě, 'V líbeňském zázemí za první vojny', *Etnografie dělnictva*, 9 (1977), pp. 223-235 (p. 224).

¹⁰³ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, report from the Prague Police, 27 July 1914.

¹⁰⁴ Poster in German available on the website of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek: <http://www.bildarchivaustria.at/Preview/14300609.jpg>, [accessed 10 June 2014].

¹⁰⁵ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, report from the Prague Police, 29 July 1914.

¹⁰⁶ Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre: contribution à l'étude de l'opinion publique, printemps-été 1914*, (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977). On the atmosphere in Paris see Manon Pignot, *Paris dans la Grande guerre: 1914-1918* (Paris: Parigramme, 2014), pp. 14-29.

Germany also demonstrated that enthusiasm was a limited phenomenon¹⁰⁹ and that the crowds gathering in Berlin and other cities were often curious crowds, anxious to get news.

Figure 3: Main sites where crowds gathered during the mobilization: green: military sites; red: public buildings; blue: newspapers' offices.

B - A patriotic atmosphere in Prague?

Looking at the atmosphere in Prague in the summer of 1914 raises the question of the Czechs' loyalty to the Habsburg Empire. The Czech tradition presents soldiers rejecting the Austro-Hungarian war, leaving Prague with Anti-Austrian slogans. This perception of the mobilization days was in line with the post war interpretation of the Czech experience under Habsburg rule. Czech accounts of resistance coincided with German accusations of treason to explain the defeat in the interwar period. Attempting to uncover contemporary attitudes in this context proves difficult. Recent studies on wartime loyalty in the Bohemian Lands lead to a reevaluation of Czech behaviour. Historian Jan Galandauer does not detect any war enthusiasm in Prague but rather a dutiful response to mobilization.¹¹⁰ This reaction, far from isolating Czechs

¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹¹⁰ Jan Galandauer, 'Wacht am Rhein a Kde domov můj: válečné nadšení v Čechách v létě 1914', *Historie a vojenství*, 5 (1996), 22–43.

from other European nations, places them firmly within the European First World War experience.

It is also important to differentiate between the Czech experience of nationalistically minded individuals and the experience of the majority of Prague's inhabitants. The attitude of Czech politicians and Czech educated circles does not tell us much about the war outbreak for most of the city. Czech national culture before the war had often included a vague feeling of Pan-Slavism and affinity with other Slavs which could lead to a degree of sympathy for Serbs or Russians. This feeling was, however, mostly present in the most educated sections of society and could be compatible with a sense of duty towards the monarchy. As Prime Minister Stürgkh explained to German Bohemian representatives, Czechs had lower motivation to fight against Slavs, just as Germans would have if they had to fight against Germany.¹¹¹ This supposition does not seem so far-fetched if one considers that the last war fought by the monarchy in 1866 (when Prague was occupied) was against Prussia.

The assessment of Czech loyalty or disloyalty is also complicated by the prejudices of the military authorities who were unsure of their Slav recruits and tended to over interpret some incidents. Czechs were deemed unreliable by the Army High Command. These fears were based on minor antimilitaristic demonstrations during the Balkan wars.¹¹² The mobilization in Prague, however, went smoothly. As Czech politician Albert Pražák later admitted, 'and yet we all enrolled and went' adding to explain it 'maybe out of survival instinct faced with the numerous massacres'.¹¹³ A Czech activist living abroad at the time also marvelled: 'The Czechs went. [...] My closest friends and good Czechs, whose friendship I was proud of, became fratricide. They went, they had to go. If I were them, I would obviously also have gone. The suggestive force of war is terrible'.¹¹⁴ As another point of explanation, the motif of the duty to fulfil recurs in

¹¹¹ Quoted in Christopher Brennan, 'Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond His Control or beyond His Capacities? The Domestic Policies of Emperor Karl I November, 1916-May 1917' (unpublished doctoral thesis, London School of Economics, 2012), p. 62.

¹¹² Martin Zückert, 'Imperial War in the Age of Nationalism: The Habsburg Monarchy and the First World War', in *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), pp. 500–518 (p. 501).

¹¹³ Albert Pražák, *Politika a revoluce: paměti* (Praha: Academia, 2004), p. 29.

¹¹⁴ The origin of this document is uncertain: published after the war, it is presented as a leaflet written in Lisbon, which circulated during the war. Karel Horký, *Americký leták: teď anebo nikdy* (Praha: Nákladem V. Rytíře, 1918), pp. 7-8.

Žemla's description of the mobilization days: 'the duty calls' is repeated throughout the text. He even expresses patriotic emotions related to Austria: 'one feels with his heart at this moment his larger fatherland (*širší vlast*)'. This term was a traditional way in Czech to refer to Austria in opposition to more local affiliations like Bohemia. He presented this opinion as one of the opinions of the people on the streets: 'Austria was forced into war [...] yes one must feel "austrianly" in this historical moment.'¹¹⁵

Civilians accompanied men to the train stations, waving and chanting 'Hoch' and 'Sláva' as they departed. Fruit sellers from the market on Tylovo náměstí/Tylplatz collected apples, pears and plums during the week to distribute to the soldiers at train stations and fill their pockets before they went away.¹¹⁶ Patriotism is certainly not the only explanatory factor for these types of actions but they show an involvement with local soldiers and a participation in the war effort. 'It even caused men in Vienna to be astonished at how the mobilization happened quickly and normally'.¹¹⁷

The only real scenes of war enthusiasm in Prague occurred in the first days of August (between 3rd and 9th).¹¹⁸ A few hundred demonstrators gathered around the Radetzky monument and the German consulate and sang patriotic songs. They were also greeted by the Mayor of Prague. Presented as demonstrations from both nationalities by Governor Thun, they also took pan-Germanist undertones with a demonstration of loyalty to the Reich German consul and the singing of the *Wacht am Rhein*. The presence of Czech-speaking men among the crowd is disputed. The official municipal bulletin mentions speeches around the Radetzky monument in both Czech and German.¹¹⁹ A Czech source published after the war mentions that the nobility paid a group of men to attend.¹²⁰ Clam-Martinić also confirmed his involvement with Thun in organizing this display of loyalty.¹²¹ Were the nobles thus trying to prove the existence of a

¹¹⁵ Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci!*, p. 18.

¹¹⁶ *Venkov*, 26 August 1914, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ *Domov za války: svědectví účastníků*, ed. by Alois Žipek (Praha: Pokrok, 1929), I, p. 136.

¹¹⁸ They follow the first news of German victory on the Western front in Liège see Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*, p.108.

¹¹⁹ *Věstník obecní královského hlavního města Prahy*, XXI, 13-14, 27 August 1914, p. 250.

¹²⁰ F.P. Vožický, *Kronika světové války 1914-1919* (Na Král Vinohradech: F.P. Vožický, 1919-21), I, p. 18.

¹²¹ Brennan, 'Reforming Austria-Hungary', p. 62.

failing Czech loyalty to the Empire? It seems more enlightening to look at this meddling in continuity with pre-war practices. Thun, as a representative of the Conservative nobility, was wary of any form of nationalism, German or Czech and was worried that these ‘patriotic’ demonstrations would turn into pan-German demonstrations. As historian Jan Galandauer emphasizes, pan-Germanism was considered anti-Habsburg before the war and only tolerated during the war because of the alliance. This overt manifestation of pro-German (pro-Prussian) feeling was very new in the Prague context.¹²² Interestingly, Thun decided to ban further demonstrations with an announcement on August 9th to his ‘dear Prague compatriots of Czech and German tongue’, explaining that the proofs of patriotism were very touching but had to cease to maintain public order.¹²³ He did not want the war enthusiasm to be integrated into the fierce fight between German and Czech nationalists in the Bohemian Lands from the pre-war years. Czech politician Tobolka reports in his diary another patriotic demonstration on Wenceslas Square on September 9th, organized by a student from a Czech school, in honour of the Emperor and the army, which also did not meet with Thun’s approval. Tobolka comments: ‘[he] wanted a brave fight in unity for the Habsburg Monarchy but did not wish it to be linked, with consideration to both nations in the Bohemian Lands, with manifestations from the civilian population.’¹²⁴

¹²² Galandauer, ‘Wacht am Rhein a Kde domov můj’, pp. 34-35.

¹²³ Announcement published in newspapers and reproduced in various sources. For example: *Národní politika*, 10 August 1914, p. 3.

¹²⁴ Zdeněk V. Tobolka, *Můj deník z první světové války* (Praha: Karolinum, 2008), p. 18.

Figure 4: Departing troops and patriotic demonstrations (end of July – beginning of August 1914).

During one of these demonstrations on August 6th on the Graben, as an artillery section leaving the city was cheered by the crowd, a lawyer named Brouček exclaimed in Czech: « the poor boys! ». The man next to him objected to his remark and Brouček was arrested shortly after. Although this man was not condemned in the end, as it was determined that being part of the cheering crowds, he could not be suspected of anti-patriotism and had probably uttered these words out of human sympathy, this incident reveals the atmosphere of suspicion that prevailed after the war outbreak.¹²⁵ The image of Czech disloyalty indeed also emanates from numerous denunciations sent to the authorities or to newspapers. The climate of intense fear of spies prevalent at the beginning of the war accounted for many dubious reports on treason and Russophilia. A German-speaking denunciator warned on August 5th of the preparation of big demonstrations in Prague, mentioning that he overheard planning for an insurrection and the words: ‘the Germans have enough money. The crowd will show them.’¹²⁶ ‘A concerned patriot’ denounced his neighbour who had been hosting a Russian for three weeks.¹²⁷ Denunciators were sometimes struggling to find any reliable proof of the Czechs’ disloyalty. A German-speaking

¹²⁵ NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182, no 13805/14, 6 October 1914.

¹²⁶ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5043, sig. 8/1/90/27, no 17221/14, Anonymous letter, 5 August 1914.

¹²⁷ NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2255, sig. P 5/10, no 18889, 2 August 1914.

'patriot' considered that some 'circles' were too friendly to the Montenegrins and Serbs but he had to admit that everything seemed in order and that people were displaying loyalty. He warned against this apparent tranquillity but the only disturbing incident he could report was a young man singing the Czech anthem 'Kde domov můj' with the words 'Serbian paradise' instead of 'Czech paradise' and who then embraced a soldier.¹²⁸ The Czech press sometimes refuted those claims, as did for example the daily *Venkov*, which was shocked by a denunciation published in the *Berliner Tagblatt*, when: 'it is known everywhere that our people's behaviour in Bohemia during the mobilization is exemplary'.¹²⁹ These denunciations were, as we shall see, taken more seriously by the military authorities than by the civilian authorities but did not necessarily reflect anything more than their writers' anxiety (or enmities).

To conclude, the atmosphere in Prague during the first week of mobilization was characterized by a lack of incident. Though outright patriotic enthusiasm seems to have remained limited, the population showed its support for the departing troops. A film footage from 1915 shows crowds still cheering the departing troops on the streets of Prague and Wenceslas Square and leads to suppose that the crowds were even larger at the beginning of the conflict.¹³⁰ The situation in Prague could perhaps be compared to the cheering crowds who sent off soldiers in Dublin. In both cases, despite fears and accusations to the contrary, the population rallied behind the war when it broke out.¹³¹

C - Panics and restrictions

The transformations brought on by the mobilization were immediately visible in Prague's urban space. 'Mobilization changed everything: streets, houses, people's mindset'¹³², as Vašek Káňa described it in his autobiographical novel. The agitation and the crowds of the first week were accompanied with new restrictions on street life. The militarization of space meant both an

¹²⁸ Anonymous letter to the Governor's office, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2255, sig P 5/9, n° 17104, 31 July 1914.

¹²⁹ *Venkov*, 30 July 1914, NA, PM 1911-1020, ka 5050.

¹³⁰ <http://film.nfa.cz/portal/avrecord/3901168-01>[accessed 14 June 2014], I thank Volker Zimmermann for pointing to me the existence of this source.

¹³¹ Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 166.

¹³² Vašek Káňa, *Válkou narušení* (v Praze: Československý spisovatel, 1953), p. 7.

intensification of military traffic and a reduction of 'normal' urban activity. For Paris, London, and Berlin, Emmanuelle Cronier contrasts the 'great animation' of late July, early August and the 'calm' that came later on.¹³³ The situation in Prague was comparable. Civilian traffic on railways was limited. Praguers, accustomed to taking the train for excursions in the countryside in the summer, were now queuing at the Police Headquarters to obtain a travel permit. Only those with a specific family or health reason were permitted to purchase a ticket.¹³⁴ Military vehicles had priority of circulation in the city.¹³⁵ Horses were requisitioned for the military: the owners had to bring them in on a specific day depending on their area in the city.¹³⁶ Cyclists and persons using carts had to get a special pass from the police and could be arrested in the street by the military for control.¹³⁷ Public lighting on bridges was eliminated in early September for security reasons¹³⁸ and, to save fuel, part of the public lighting had to be out after 9 pm.¹³⁹ These first restrictions on city life would soon be followed by more drastic savings, as the war progressed (see chapter 4).

The limitation of traffic led the City Council to realize very early on how the city's food supply was at risk of being disrupted by the war, and it created a supply commission on July 29th. On the same day, the governor's office had introduced a maximum tariff for the most necessary commodities. This measure was, however, immediately cancelled after protestations from merchant circles and replaced with an obligation to clearly publicize prices.¹⁴⁰ The high demand for flour, bread and other food items in the first days after the mobilization created an immediate small penury. On July 29th, one hundred kilograms of flour already cost 7 crowns more than a

¹³³ Emmanuelle Cronier, 'The Street', in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007), II, pp. 57-104 (p. 58)

¹³⁴ *Národní listy*, 10 August 1914, p. 2.

¹³⁵ Order from the Military Command, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, no 18789, 13 August 1914.

¹³⁶ *Národní politika*, 27 July 1914, p. 3.

¹³⁷ *Národní politika*, 10 August 1914, p. 3.

¹³⁸ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3016, sig. M 34/1, no 17545, 4 September 1914.

¹³⁹ NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2233, sig. L 18/29, 30 September 1914.

¹⁴⁰ *Věstník obecní*, XXI, 13-14, p. 255. They were reintroduced in December 1914: *Aprovisace obce pražské za války a po válce 1914-1922* (Praha: Aprovisační ústav hlavního města Prahy, 1923), p. 14.

few days earlier (it went from 43 crowns to 50 crowns).¹⁴¹ The panic of the first few days and the disruption on the markets receded in the following months, however, and the Austrian government did not make sufficient plans for the forthcoming penury. The 1914 harvest was not as abundant as the 1913 harvest because of the manpower shortage common all over Europe. Students and boy-scouts from the city had been called up to replace men in the fields and help with the harvest. In the first days of August, people from the cities also sometimes went to the countryside in search of grain. For instance, the district officer from Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge near Prague complained about bands of suburban inhabitants who went to the outskirts of Prague to steal the freshly harvested grain. The mobilization of gendarmerie rendered the surveillance of fields more difficult.¹⁴² The economic balance of the city and its chain of supply were thus disturbed by the new war conditions as city-dwellers feared for their sustenance.

These fears also led small-savers to rush to the banks to make sure their money was safe or to retrieve it. Men departing for the front were contributing to this movement as they also went in high numbers to cash in money before they left.¹⁴³ Authorities again attempted to limit the panic created by the declaration of war. Several posters from the Bohemian governor or the Mayor of Prague were hung in Prague to limit this phenomenon. These announcements were trying to reassure citizens that their savings were not in danger but also appealed to their patriotic spirit to not impede the smooth mobilization. They were also underlining the priority given to military needs over civilian ones in terms of bare cash. Banking institutions were also often asked to change paper money into gold, and the Bohemian governor was reasserting the value of the state currency.¹⁴⁴ The necessary multiplication of these warnings attests to their relative failure. On August 10th, Thun denounced ‘thoughtless’ people spreading rumours that Austro-Hungarian money was not valid anymore and encouraged the population to report such individuals¹⁴⁵. This defiance against paper money also meant that coins were quickly missing. Some shoppers were thus prevented from buying the most common goods as no one would accept debts at such a time

¹⁴¹ *Domov za války*, I, p. 309.

¹⁴² NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 18727, 10 August 1914.

¹⁴³ *Prager Zeitung*, Nr 171, 28 July 1914, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, Vyhlašky, 30 July 1914; also *Národní politika*, 1 August 1914, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, no 17973, 10 August 1914.

and banknotes could not be changed.¹⁴⁶ These collective panic phenomena illustrate the rupture caused by the war outbreak in these first weeks and epitomize the atmosphere of uncertainty in the city.¹⁴⁷

Prague had to reflect the seriousness of the times and entertainments of all kinds were gradually suppressed. The first theatre to suspend representations was the theatre Uranie, a large arena in the suburb of Holešovice/Holleschowitz, on August 2nd.¹⁴⁸ A memorandum from the Bohemian governor recommended a ban on dancing entertainments and concerts ‘in these serious times’.¹⁴⁹ To limit the consumption of alcohol by soldiers, the sale of spirits was forbidden after 5 pm.¹⁵⁰ In a climate of growing disinformation, rumours abounded. All sorts of alarming news circulated. Rural newspapers reported for example that Prague was burning and being bombarded.¹⁵¹

D - Mobilization in the autumn of 1914

The mobilization of troops in July and August 1914 proceeded without any trouble and in an atmosphere of seriousness. Reservist men reported to their regiments and crowds escorted them through the streets. The first incidents in Prague occurred on September 23rd 1914. Troops left the military barracks in Pohořelec in a disorderly way, often drunk and accompanied by women and children. Some were wearing the Slavic tricolour on their caps and Bohemian red and white flags were present. These demonstrations were worrying in themselves but also because they happened in the streets of Prague and could hence have much more repercussion. As Bohemian governor Thun noted: ‘Any illicit demonstration occurs much more openly here and

¹⁴⁶ Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁷ On the larger context of financial crisis of 1914 see: Richard Roberts, *Saving the City: The Great Financial Crisis of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁴⁸ Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁹ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/1, 6 August 1914.

¹⁵⁰ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 17288, 8 August 1914.

¹⁵¹ *Věstník obecní*, XXI, 13-14, 27 August 1914, p. 267.

can come to the notice of larger circles.’¹⁵² How can we interpret this change and what do these disturbances reveal?

First, it is important to note that even military authorities were satisfied with Bohemian troops at the beginning of the war. The military commander remarks for instance that ‘against expectations, reservists reported for duty on time and in high numbers’ during the partial mobilization and that until the middle of August, departing troops were acclaimed by the local population in Prague.¹⁵³ Several reports note a change of atmosphere in September. Thun names a combination of factors to explain the troops’ turbulent departure. The men called up at that time were older, mostly married men, and led by reserve officers who did not have the same experience in disciplining men as career officers. Wounded soldiers had brought back stories from the battlefield to Prague. Thun insisted on their detrimental effect to the general mood: ‘The wounded [soldier] not only willingly relates his experiences but tends to exaggerate his complaints’.¹⁵⁴ The first transports of wounded soldiers had arrived in Prague between the end of August and the beginning of September.¹⁵⁵ Despite censorship in the newspapers and biased reporting of the war events, news of the first Austro-Hungarian defeats in Galicia filtered through. As Lemberg/Lwów/L’viv, fifth city in the Empire, had fallen to the Russians on September 3rd, rumours amplified the Russian successes and gave Cracow as taken and Eastern Moravia as threatened.¹⁵⁶ This climate of fear and lack of reliable information fostered the formation and spread of these rumours. This situation of uncertainty and alarming reports on the progress of enemy troops is similar to the process of rumour formation observed in Berlin by Florian Altenhöner.¹⁵⁷ Although German nationalists and post war Czech nationalists have invited us to see Czechs as expecting and welcoming the Russians, the attitudes towards the

¹⁵² Letter from the Bohemian Governor to the Minister President, 24 September 1914, *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914-1918*, ed. by Drašarová, Eva, Jaroslav Vrbata, 5 vols (V Praze: Státní ústřední archiv, 1993-95), I 1914 (1993), no 33, p.89.

¹⁵³ Mood report from the Military Command, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182, no 14991, 19 October 1914.

¹⁵⁴ Letter from Bohemian Governor to the Minister President, 24 September 1914, *Sborník dokumentů*, I, no 33, p.88.

¹⁵⁵ *Zpráva o činnosti pražského dobrovolného sboru ochranného za správní rok 1914* (V Praze: Nákladem Vlastním, 1915), p. 10, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1; *Prager Tagblatt*, 4 September 1914, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ Mood report from the Military Command, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182, no 14991, 19 October 1914.

¹⁵⁷ Florian Altenhöner, *Kommunikation und Kontrolle. Gerüchte und städtische Öffentlichkeiten in Berlin und London 1914-1918* (München: Oldenbourg, 2008), p. 168.

possible invasion seem to have been more ambiguous. A gendarmerie report notices for example that exclamations such as ‘The Russians won’t do us anything because we are Slavs’ were more the expression of a fear than of a threat. He also underlined how the population in Prague was above all satisfied that order was maintained.¹⁵⁸ While we cannot presume from this report on the whole attitude of the Bohemian population, it can show the complexity of what the army understood as ‘russophilism’ in the first months of the war. The role of the wounded soldiers is here once again underlined as demoralizing the hinterland. As Martin Zückert points out, this situation was not dissimilar to other European cases where the first casualties and the arrival of the first wounded soldiers turned the mood and shaped the new departures.¹⁵⁹

The demonstrations during the mobilization in September were certainly exaggerated by Czech radicals abroad. Zeman interpreted them as showing the influence of the Czech national-socialist party in Prague’s working-class suburbs.¹⁶⁰ The contentious presence of flags that were seized by officers and sometimes given by civilian bystanders¹⁶¹ could also demonstrate a will to go to war with familiar signs of one’s nationality. Some flags were pan-slavic but some were simply red and white Czech flags while black signs of mourning and red flags were drawing on pre-war antimilitaristic practices.¹⁶² The few incidents observed in Prague during the departure of troops do not reveal a deep opposition to the state or the war. They are to be understood in the uncertain context of the rapidly moving battlefield in the Eastern part of the Empire and as an expression of national affiliation. Besides, the incidents were often limited to politicized individuals.

During the first months of the war, Prague saw the progressive departure of many soldiers to the front. The city adapted to the new circumstances imposed by the military necessities. The

¹⁵⁸ Report from the Gendarmerie Commander to the Bohemian Governor, NA, PMV/R, ka 182, no 13369, 26 September 1914.

¹⁵⁹ See reference to Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 27 quoted in Zückert, ‘Imperial War’, p. 512.

¹⁶⁰ Z. A. B. Zeman, *The break-up of the Habsburg Empire, 1914-1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 52.

¹⁶¹ See an incident on 27 September, *Sborník dokumentů*, I, no 35, p. 92.

¹⁶² See Martin Zückert, ‘Antimilitarismus und soldatische Resistenz: Politischer Protest und armeefeindliches Verhalten in der Tschechischen Gesellschaft bis 1918’, in *Glanz – Gewalt – Gehorsam: Militär und Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie (1800 bis 1918)*, ed. by Laurence Cole, Christa Hämmerle, and Martin Scheutz (Essen: Klartext-Verl., 2011), pp. 199–218.

conflict subordinated civilian needs to military ones in every domain. How was the presence of the military felt in the city during the first years of the war?

II - The border between civilian and military realms

The home front is often portrayed as a space deprived of men and the mobilization certainly feminized the cities but the military's presence in Prague took many forms: new recruits, soldiers on leave or convalescing, troops sent to maintain law and order.¹⁶³ Officers and soldiers demanded from civilians a new form of respect due to their service for the fatherland. What were the continuities with the pre-war period in the perception of the military? The frequent encounters between civilians and soldiers in urban space during the war mark a redefinition of the border between the military and society. As some studies have already shown, the relationship was more complex than a simple dichotomy between hatred and solidarity.¹⁶⁴

A - The soldiers' presence in public space during the war

Numerous clashes, especially at night, exemplify the often tolerated violence practiced by military troops in the city. The police reports on daily incidents give us a fuller picture of the scenes involving soldiers in the city. The debate around the transmission of violence during and especially after the war is still shaped by the discussion of George Mosse's concept of 'brutalization'.¹⁶⁵ He argued that frontline soldiers brought back the violence of the battlefield into the civilian European societies. However, the violence observed here by men who had very different experiences in the battlefield or in the hinterland could be explained by other factors: a

¹⁶³ On the gendered division between front and home front see: Domansky, Elisabeth, 'Military and Reproduction in World War I Germany,' in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930*, edited by Geoff Eley, (University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 427–64: For a critique of that approach see: Rudolf Kučera, *Život na příděl: válečná každodennost a politiky dělnické třídy v českých zemích 1914-1918* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013), pp. 100–101.

¹⁶⁴ Meteling, Wencke, *Ehre, Einheit, Ordnung. Preußische und französische Städte und ihre Regimenter im Krieg, 1870/71 und 1914-19* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010); Emmanuelle Cronier, 'L'échappée belle: permissions et permissionnaires du front à Paris pendant la Première Guerre mondiale' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne, 2005).

¹⁶⁵ George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

new sense of entitlement, or a need for temporary release after the tensions of the front. We will examine the dynamics of wartime violence in Prague and see how they could be revealing of a broader military culture, and shed light on the unrest of these years.

These incidents labelled by the authorities as ‘*Militärexzesse*’ (military excesses) ranged from verbal confrontations with civilians or policemen to acts of physical violence. The various weapons carried by these men meant that conflicts could easily escalate. While these public disturbances are in continuity with conscription rituals and pre-war military behaviour¹⁶⁶, they also mark the militarization of civilian space during the war. Compared with soldiers on leave in Paris, the resort to death threats and violent assaults seems to have been more prevalent in Prague.¹⁶⁷ One infantryman even killed a policeman by stabbing him from behind with his bayonet in December 1915 after the former had accused him of stealing a watch.¹⁶⁸ Women could also be the victims of this violence. I have only found one case of rape¹⁶⁹ and one attempted rape¹⁷⁰ in the police reports but this does not necessarily reflect the reality of the prevalence of sexual assault as this crime could be underreported. From the police reports I accessed, I found 50 incidents in Prague involving military persons in the year 1915 (with physical wounds in 16 cases).¹⁷¹

These ‘excesses’ often happened in the context of pub brawls with civilians or among soldiers themselves. Alcohol features prominently in the cases described by the police and drunkenness forms the background for most of them. Soldiers were assiduous patrons of cabarets, cafés and beer halls during the war years. In his memoirs, cabaret artist Jiří Červený recalls the overwhelming presence of men in uniform in these establishments.¹⁷² During a military police raid after hours in the cabaret ‘*Lucerna*’ in 1917, the inspecting major ‘to his surprise’ finds many

¹⁶⁶ For instances of military excesses in Trient at the turn of the century see Nicola Fontana, ‘Trient als Festungs- und Garnisonsstadt: Militär und zivile Bevölkerung in einer k.u.k. Festungsstadt 1880-1914’ in *Glanz – Gewalt – Gehorsam*, pp. 177-198 (pp. 194-197).

¹⁶⁷ See Cronier, ‘*L’échappée belle*’, p. 565.

¹⁶⁸ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5078, sig. 8/1/92/19, n° 51878/15, Vorfällenheitsbericht, 20 December 1915.

¹⁶⁹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5072, sig. 8/1/92/19, n°38612, Vorfällenheitsbericht, 24 August 1915.

¹⁷⁰ NA, PMV/R, ka 186, 22 Böhmen, n° 22706, 22 Octobre 1915.

¹⁷¹ This number falls to 3 in 1916 but that probably only reflects a change in reporting: data from the daily police reports transmitted to the Ministry of Interior: NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182-190.

¹⁷² Jiří Červený, *Červená sedma* (Praha: Orbis, 1959), p. 125.

soldiers and even officers among the guests hiding in one of the secret cellars of the club.¹⁷³ The restrictions on the serving of alcohol could sometimes be the source of the violence. For example, two soldiers who were refused beer at 11.30 pm in Neruda Street broke a tree that was standing at the entrance of the pub.¹⁷⁴ Another soldier who did not get served beer and was reminded of the restrictions ‘provoked such an excess’ that a policeman had to be called in. He did not relent and threatened the policeman with his bayonet.¹⁷⁵

The violence was accompanied with a sense of entitlement which equated military service with a new form of impunity. Fighting for the fatherland gave them a right to act in public space according to their own wishes. The authority of the law and of the policemen enforcing it was not recognized anymore. A soldier who was encouraged to stop singing at night while drunk retorted to the police officer: ‘I am a soldier, I am allowed to sing’.¹⁷⁶ Thefts by soldiers who then turned violently on their accusers could also reflect this mentality. For example, two soldiers gave a blow to the face of a man who tried to prevent them from picking cherries in a private garden.¹⁷⁷ The civilian authorities were also in a difficult position to limit these excesses as the soldiers had to be referred to the military, which undermined their own influence. On a night in October 1915, a military patrol in charge of sending soldiers away from pubs was itself drunk (!) and behaving ‘excessively’. Interestingly, the men from the patrol tried to flee when two artillery officers came to help discipline them but later threatened the intervening policeman with their bayonets.¹⁷⁸ The undermined authority of civil servants could be paralleled with similar cases in France where provocation by military officers in the hinterland was frequent and looked upon with leniency.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3137, sig T 15/3, Report from the military police, 4 January 1917.

¹⁷⁴ NA, PMV/R, ka 185, 22 Böhmen, no 14418, 30 June 1915.

¹⁷⁵ NA, PMV/R, ka 186, 22 Böhmen, no 22602, 21 October 1915.

¹⁷⁶ NA, PMV/R, ka 185, 22 Böhmen, no 14230, Report from the Police Headquarters, 6 July 1915.

¹⁷⁷ NA, PMV/R, ka 185, 22 Böhmen, no 14418, 29 June 1915.

¹⁷⁸ Police report on daily incidents, 15 October 1915, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 186, no 22228.

¹⁷⁹ Emmanuel Saint-Fuscien, *À vos ordres?: la relation d'autorité dans l'armée française de la Grande guerre* (Paris: Editions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2011), p. 119.

In Prague, the Military Command for example asked the police not to use chains when arresting soldiers because it was felt as dishonouring.¹⁸⁰

Soldiers arrested by the police were immediately released to the military authorities who were then judging their own men and seemed to have, on the whole, behaved relatively leniently. In an incident in front of military barracks where a postal employee was repeatedly stabbed by a soldier and had to be taken to the hospital, the police could not find any witness among the officers, who described the whole affair as ‘insignificant’ (*belanglos*).¹⁸¹ The introduction of a military police in October 1916 seems to have been as much to discipline the men in the city as to locate potential shirkers and check men’s status regarding the military.¹⁸² The declining occurrence of violence by soldiers in the streets of Prague after 1916 could be attributed to actions of this new institution but it is difficult to confirm this hypothesis. The generalization of the leave system in 1916 could have been expected to lead, on the contrary, to an increase in disturbances. By then the police were also gradually more confronted with civil unrest, and, with fewer men, could perhaps have simply underreported these incidents. The Prague Military Command noticed that the ‘fast daily affairs, which sometimes degenerated into serious assaults, have rarely occurred in the year 1916’. The Military Command’s assumption that it revealed better relations between civilians and military personnel seems however doubtful.¹⁸³

This conflict between Praguers and the soldiers stationed there sometimes assumed national overtones. Many reports incriminate Hungarian soldiers for these violent actions and the language barriers probably played a role in the greater distance between the two groups. A few Hungarian soldiers, who had woken up near-by residents by banging on the door of a brothel, started throwing stones at the complainers who appeared at their windows.¹⁸⁴ In June 1915, after the Habsburg troops recovered the city of Lemberg/Lwów/L’viv in Galicia, a group of Hungarian soldiers loudly celebrated the victory in a hotel in Malá Strana/Kleinseite. As the police escorted

¹⁸⁰ Prague Military Command to Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 25/2, no 32569, 12 November 1915.

¹⁸¹ NA, PMV/R, ka 189, 22 Böhmen, n° 28716, 10 December 1916.

¹⁸² Prague Military Command to Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3013, sig M 30/20, n° 35572, 2 November 1916.

¹⁸³ Military Command in Prague, Stimmungsbericht, NA, PMV/R, ka 190, 22 Böhmen, n° 1115, 31 December 1916.

¹⁸⁴ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, sig. 8/1/92/19, n°28937, Vorfällenheitsbericht, 15 June 1915.

them to the military authorities they met their corporal who had participated in the celebration earlier and who commanded his men to attack the police officers with their bayonets in order to let them free. The policemen were wounded in the stomach and were left there.¹⁸⁵ The prejudices of the military against the Czech-speaking population could also surface in those instances. A corporal, who wanted to forbid a trading agent from speaking Czech, gave him a blow to the face and called him a ‘Czech dog’ (*böhmischer Hund*).¹⁸⁶ This insult (sometimes linked to the alleged surrender of Czech troops in the field)¹⁸⁷ crops up in several of these altercations between civilians and military men. The animosity between these two groups could thus intersect with national rivalries.

These outbursts of violence in the streets generated various types of reaction amongst the public. Drunken soldiers who threatened civilians with their weapons were perceived as a threat as was the case of warrant officer Josef Žák who was taken to the police because, inebriated, he threatened passers-by on the avenue Am Graben/Na příkopě in the middle of the afternoon.¹⁸⁸ The small fleeting crowds who gathered around the soldiers could sometimes take their side or, more frequently, try to defend the victims. The violence thus became a form of public spectacle in the city. As a soldier was reluctantly escorted by a patrol through the streets of Malá Strana/Kleinseite, a group of 50 people came to his help to resist his arrest.¹⁸⁹ This ambivalence towards soldiers in Prague contrasts with the Parisian crowd’s unwavering support of soldiers on leave.¹⁹⁰ Nancy Wingfield has shown how the tension between civilians and the military in Cisleithania could crystallize around the question of prostitution with officials seeing the hinterland as dangerous for soldiers (with regard to venereal diseases) and locals blaming the soldiers.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, sig. 8/1/92/19, n°30635, 23 June 1915.

¹⁸⁶ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5069, sig. 8/1/92/19, n°34130, 14 July 1915.

¹⁸⁷ On the 28th regiment see below and Richard Lein, *Pflichterfüllung oder Hochverrat? Die tschechischen Soldaten Österreich-Ungarns im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2011).

¹⁸⁸ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5072, sig. 8/1/92/19, n°38453, 22 August 1915.

¹⁸⁹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5072, sig. 8/1/92/19, n°38454, 22 August 1915.

¹⁹⁰ Emmanuelle Cronier, *Permissionnaires dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Belin, 2013), p. 164.

¹⁹¹ Nancy M. Wingfield, ‘The Enemy Within: Regulating Prostitution and Controlling Venereal Disease in Cisleithanian Austria during the Great War’, *Central European History*, 46 (2013), 568–98 (p. 586).

Could this low-level violence by soldiers be the sign of a brutalization that men stationed or convalescing would bring back from their frontline experience? This phenomenon is difficult to evaluate. The motives for these fights vary but have in common the presence of weapons in public space. Soldiers coming back from the front brought back all sorts of ammunition and weapons with them. The curiosity of the public for these prompted the Prague Military Command to search arriving wounded transports for ammunition.¹⁹² An officer took out his sabre and gave a blow to the hand of a café owner who woke him up early in the morning after he had fallen asleep.¹⁹³ The reaction of the military hierarchy to this incident (who dismissed it and argued that the owner had himself grabbed the sabre) reveals the tolerated character of this violence.

This last case, with its characteristic use of the sabre, puts some of these incidents (when officers were involved) in continuity with pre-war practices. Austro-Hungarian officers could defend their honour by directly attacking a man who had made an insulting remark about him or the army if this man could not be invited to a duel. However, this use of the *Ehrennotwehr* (honour emergency) by officers seems to have been relatively limited as it was still condemned by civilian courts.¹⁹⁴ A few pre-war incidents clashes between military and civilians show that this tension was not new. Two officers had a clash with German students in Prague in 1909 for example. In a case from 1911, a lieutenant who felt offended by a remark from a man while swimming asked for his name and, after a verbal spat about respect, reported him.¹⁹⁵ In the case of Prague, nevertheless, none of these incidents seem to have been as frequent or violent as in 1915. In this respect, the war marked a new departure and the incidents were the product of a wartime culture that subordinated the civilian world to the military values.

B - Uniforms and their meaning

The presence of the military in public space in pre-war Europe was manifest with the different uniforms worn by soldiers and officers. Officers in the German Empire would wear their

¹⁹² ÖStA, KA, Terr Befehle, K62, Nr 7047, 10 May 1915; for a similar attempt at control on the traffic of weapons in France see Cronier, 'L'échappée belle', p. 160.

¹⁹³ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 21557, 8 May 1915.

¹⁹⁴ István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 128-130.

¹⁹⁵ NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 25/2, no 23958, 7 November 1911 and 3 August 1911 (report from k.u.k. Regiment Freiherr von Czibulka).

uniform in public space; it symbolized their status in society.¹⁹⁶ The uniform's prestige was enhanced by the sabre worn on the side.¹⁹⁷ The role of this 'folkloric militarism'¹⁹⁸ has only been very recently studied in the case of Austria-Hungary (in contrast to the German case) but the military institution also had a similarly important standing in society.¹⁹⁹ Recollections from men who were children at the turn of the century mention the various uniforms of different regiments stationed in Prague and the colours of their parade uniforms in the streets of the city:

The blue tunics of the infantry, the light blue of the cavalry, the brown ones of the artillery and train brightened up by colourful lapels on the collar and the arms, the ash grey of the 'eleventh' [regiment], red orange of the 'seventy fifth', grass green of the 'hundred and second', dark green of the 'twenty eighth' (of the Prague Pepici²⁰⁰), cherry red of the 'seventy thirds'.²⁰¹

These testimonies come from German-speaking residents but recent work on novels and popular literature has shown that a positive image of the military could also be found among the Czech-speaking public.²⁰² With the outbreak of the war, uniforms became an even more common sight everywhere and symbolically defined the boundaries between the civilian and military realms in wartime.²⁰³ Among the uniforms 'populating the Graben [main German-speaking

¹⁹⁶ Sabina Brändli, 'Von "schneidigen Offizieren" und "Militärerinolinen": Aspekte symbolischer Männlichkeit am Beispiel preußischer und schweizerischer Uniformen des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Ute Frevert (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1997), pp. 201-228.

¹⁹⁷ Ute Frevert, *Die kasernierte Nation. Militärdienst und Zivilgesellschaft in Deutschland* (München: Beck, 2001), p. 244.

¹⁹⁸ Jakob Vogel, 'Military, Folklore, Eigensinn: Folkloric Militarism in Germany and France, 1871-1914', *Central European History*, 33 (2000), 487-504.

¹⁹⁹ Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism*; as he shows, this militarism could also be a factor of cleavages in Austria-Hungary see Christa Hämmerle, 'Ein Gescheitertes Experiment? Die Allgemeine Wehrpflicht in Der Multiethnischen Armee Der Habsburgermonarchie', *Journal of Modern European History*, 5 (2007), 222-243.

²⁰⁰ The Prague Pepík (diminutive for Josef) is an archetype of the Prague working-class.

²⁰¹ Oskar von Zaborsky 'So war's in Prag um 1900', *Prager Nachrichten*, 9 V, September 1954, p. 4 The journal *Prager Nachrichten* published after the Second World War in Munich gathered many recollections from German-speaking Praguers reminiscing about their youth before the First World War. All these accounts are very nostalgic and provide a very selective vision of the past in the context after the expulsion but they are nonetheless an interesting source. On the military in pre-war Prague see also Wilhelm Weizsäcker, 'Altprager Erinnerungen', *Prager Nachrichten*, 2 II, February 1951, p. 3, D. Rest 'Das k.k. privilegierte Scharfschützen-Korps zu Prag', *Prager Nachrichten*, 11/12 III, December 1952.

²⁰² Věra Brožová, 'Edmondo de Amicis versus František Josef Andrlík. K funkci armády a boje v české literatuře pro děti v 2. polovině 19. a na počátku 20. století', in *Armáda a společnost v českých zemích v 19. a první polovině 20. století*, ed. by Jiří Rak and Martin Veselý (V Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J.E.Purkyně, 2004), pp. 95-110; Blanka Hemliková, 'Luděk Archleb: veselá vojna v 19. století' in *ibid.*, pp. 111-121.

²⁰³ For a gendered reading on uniforms during wartime see Kučera, *Život na příděl*, p. 110.

thoroughfare] every evening instead of the student caps' were those of the train, cavalry, infantry and medical corps.²⁰⁴ As Viennese author Alfred Polgar noted, 'it is surprising how swiftly everyone got used to the uniform. Yesterday still, we could not picture Mr. so and so in uniform. Eight days later, it is difficult for us to imagine him in civilian clothes'.²⁰⁵ This new overwhelming presence of uniforms in public space was also accompanied by a new prestige.

The increased importance that the military took in the lives of civilians was indeed visible in the new respect demanded by men in uniform. The change from civilian to military identity could mean a new legitimacy and hierarchy in public space. František Langer thus recalls that one of his friends, as a punishment, was obliged to go back and forth on Ferdinand Street and each time salute a young corporal. He was only 'freed' eventually by a higher ranking officer of his acquaintance who could in turn treat the corporal in the same way.²⁰⁶ An officer brutalized the manservant of another officer on the street after he had failed to salute him properly.²⁰⁷ These traditional hierarchies took on a heightened significance during the war.

Civilians were often keen to demonstrate their participation in these military values. The illicit use of uniforms that has been studied by Laura Ugolini in the case of Britain²⁰⁸ reveals both the attraction of these garments and the various motives of those who wore them illegally. The disguise could simply serve criminal purposes. A man thus entered a printing shop in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge in the uniform of a sergeant, he pretended to have a military order and stole 40 crowns.²⁰⁹ The authority conferred by the uniform could be of great use. Wearing a military uniform without serving was of course punished and represented a transgression of the division between civilians and the military. A 22-year old woman was, for example, arrested at the Franz-Joseph train station where she was attempting to depart to the front in a uniform she

²⁰⁴ Walter Michalitschka, 'Wenn die Blätter fallen... Streiflichter der Erinnerung an den August 1914', *Prager Nachrichten*, 8 V, August 1954, p. 2.

²⁰⁵ *Prager Tagblatt*, 5 August 1915, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ František Langer, *Byli a bylo: vzpomínky* (Praha: Akropolis, 2003), p. 66.

²⁰⁷ NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 185, no 20420, Police report 11 August 1915.

²⁰⁸ Laura Ugolini, 'The Illicit Consumption of Military Uniforms in Britain, 1914-1918', *Journal of Design History*, 24 (2011), 125-38.

²⁰⁹ *Čech*, 11 August 1915, p. 8.

bought. She was sentenced to 48 hours in prison.²¹⁰ A prostitute was similarly arrested and punished in Žižkov/Žižkow for wearing the uniform of one of her clients.²¹¹ While the goals were presumably very different, these two cases show the sanction against women who stepped into the military realm. Children sometimes wore special ‘military’ costumes. *Národní listy* reported the many children or youth in grey uniforms in the streets of Prague around Christmas 1914.²¹²

Men at the rear could also appropriate military symbols and decorations to situate themselves within the imperial war effort. As Ugolini has explained in the English case, they ‘claimed a sense of entitlement to the items they wore’.²¹³ Engineers who did not serve were, for example, allowed to wear a similar uniform to the military engineers with a white armband²¹⁴. The military regulated these uses and made sure that a certain hierarchy was respected. When a battalion gave black and gold armbands to men who had been exempted from service, the Military Command strongly condemned the practice.²¹⁵ The local City Corps (*Bürgerkorps/měštanské sbory*) constitutes an example of civilian war activism. The formation was not created during the war²¹⁶; it was part of a longer tradition of municipal guards in the Habsburg Empire. The Prague Corps dated back to the 15th century and had maintained public safety during the Prussian invasion in 1866.²¹⁷ By the early twentieth-century their function was more honorific than military. For middle-aged men too old to serve, it was a way to accomplish their military service in wartime. Hanuš Burger, however, suspected his father to have joined the corps to avoid conscription. He describes it in the following way: ‘the uniform of the City Guard was magnificent. It was black and resembled a staff officer’s. My father looked wonderful in it. [...] [O]n the street he was mistaken by soldiers for a lieutenant. I was extremely ashamed when I

²¹⁰ *Dělnické listy*, 14 July 1915, p. 7.

²¹¹ Police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 23491, 17 May 1915.

²¹² *Národní listy*, 22 December 1914, p. 3.

²¹³ Ugolini, ‘The Illicit Consumption of Military Uniforms’, p. 129.

²¹⁴ *Prager Tagblatt*, 1 February 1915, p. 4.

²¹⁵ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3032, sig. M 34/11, Copy of a Military Command Order, 17 January 1917.

²¹⁶ This could be contrasted with the volunteer corps in England: for a fuller analysis see Pierre Purseigle, *Mobilisation, sacrifice et citoyenneté: Angleterre-France, 1900-1918* (Paris: Belles lettres, 2013), pp. 352-360.

²¹⁷ *Dějiny c. k. v. s. sboru měštanské pěchoty v Praze ve stručném výtahu; Kurzgefasste Geschichte des k. k. priv. Bürgerl. Infanterie-Corps in Prag* (Praha: n.pub., 1880).

saw him salute back'.²¹⁸ The men decorated during the war were at any rate older men (born in the 1850s and 1860s).²¹⁹ Their wartime service seems to have consisted of help to the Red Cross, generous donations to the war loans and the military training of the youth.²²⁰

In June 1915 under the impulse of the Defense Ministry, they created a youth defense organization (Jugendwehr/Junobrana) that was supposed to prepare schoolboys for war. Members of the various municipal corps were instructors and taught pupils from the different Prague secondary schools several times of week. On Sundays, the Corps would organize manoeuvres in various military grounds of the city (Motol or Pískový vrh/Sandberg).²²¹ The organization even possessed its own band. Some of these parades were organized in uniform and some in civilian clothes. The Bohemian regional authorities had refused to provide official uniforms for financial reasons and also because they did not want to make it look like playing soldiers (*Soldatenspielerei*). Armbands in black and gold or regional colours were authorized.²²² The search for uniforms for the Jugendwehr/Junobrana seems to have been a struggle, as it was difficult for the corps to raise funds for this purpose.²²³ One of these manoeuvres, organized at Letná on January 1st and 2nd 1916, was open to the public to attend against a small fee. The goal was both to raise funds and to show the usefulness and successes of the initiative.²²⁴ The Jugendwehr/Junobrana acted as a local transition mechanism from peace to war for young

²¹⁸ Hanuš Burger, *Der Frühling war es wert: Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1981), p. 30.

²¹⁹ See the police's lists for decorations: NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/4 and NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2895, sig. A 18/37.

²²⁰ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2895, sig. A 18/37, no 15450.

²²¹ Letters from the City Infantry Corps to the Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/I, no 25672, 1 September 1915 and no 27427, 10 September 1915 (numerous other examples in that file for August, September, October ; examples for July in file B 41 4).

²²² Memorandum from the Bohemian Governor, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3129, sig. St 34/11, 5 November 1915.

²²³ See NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/II, no 3930, 20 April 1917.

²²⁴ Bohemian Governor's Office to Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/I, no 36835, 27 December 1915.

men.²²⁵ Other youth organisations during the war anticipated the wartime service of those who would be called up in the near future.²²⁶

*Figure 5: Secondary school students during a Jugendwehr/Junobrana parade (1916).*²²⁷

While the military authorities attempted to delimit clearly between a civilian and military sphere (with the uniform being one means to achieve this), the various uses and misuses of uniform in wartime bring to light the individual strategies of civilians and the penetration of a certain military culture into urban life.

²²⁵ On the Jugendwehr in Freiburg see Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 512-515.

²²⁶ On the Wandervögel's role during the war see: Mark Cornwall, *The Devil's Wall: The Nationalist Youth Mission of Heinz Rutha* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 51-79.

²²⁷ Still from a newsreel available on the Czech National Film Archive's website: <http://film.nfa.cz/portal/avrecord/0064307>, [accessed 14 June 2014].

III - Military rule in the city

Historians of Austria-Hungary during the war have been grappling with the nature of the war government. Did the war mark a significant break in this respect when the Parliament was already adjourned as early as March? Were the military or the civilian authorities more responsible for the establishment of a 'bureaucratic-military dictatorship'?²²⁸ How did the military understand its role in occupied territory and on the home front?

Jonathan Gumz has recently shown that the Austrian military attempted to take advantage of the wartime situation to impose its own depoliticized concept of rule in occupied Serbia and that this goal also applied to the hinterland. The role of the military in this new course in Austria-Hungary remains, however, debated. Looking at the repression of 1914 in Styria, Martin Moll has highlighted the involvement of the gendarmerie and, to an extent, of the civilian authorities. Irina Marin underlines this aspect in the Hungarian half of the monarchy.²²⁹ How does the case of Bohemia fit into this picture? We will briefly outline the effects of the new rules on Prague and look at the conflict between the military and civilian authorities and the repression to answer these questions and attempt to integrate the Bohemian case into the discussion.

A - Control of the city by the Military Command?

The last days of July (25th to 31st) saw the introduction of numerous laws pertaining to government in wartime. The main citizens' rights were suspended for an indefinite period of time (freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, right of association and free assembly, and the sanctity of the home and correspondence).²³⁰ These measures were more extreme than in other belligerent countries. This set of laws and the systematic use of paragraph 14 of the 1867 constitution form the basis of what historians, following Josef Redlich's lead, have termed military dictatorship²³¹

²²⁸ Mark Cornwall, 'Disintegration and Defeat the Austro-Hungarian Revolution', in *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary: a Multinational Experiment in Early Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. by Mark Cornwall (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), pp. 167-196 (pp. 181-182).

²²⁹ Irina Marin, 'World War I and Internal Repression: The Case of Major General Nikolaus Cena', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 44 (2013), 195-208.

²³⁰ Martin Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden. Der deutsch-slowenische Nationalitätenkonflikt in der Steiermark 1900-1918* (Innsbruck: Studien, 2007), p. 184; for the original texts of the laws: *Reichsgesetzblatt für die im Reichsrathe vertretene Königreiche und Länder 1914*, Nr 156-158, 26 July 1914, p. 821-826.

²³¹ Redlich, *Austrian War Government*, p. 84.

or war absolutism.²³² Judgment by military courts was extended to civilians in the case of political crimes (high treason, lese-majesty, disturbance of public order). According to Christoph Führ, these exception measures were planned in the preceding years by the War Ministry, the General Staff and the Austrian government.²³³ The creation of a War Surveillance Office (*Kriegsüberwachungsamt*)²³⁴ in the War Ministry responsible for the Austrian half of the monarchy (and Bosnia-Herzegovina) completed the new tools in the hands of the military to monitor any activity that could be damaging to the war effort. As John Deak underlined, these measures constituted a major shift in Austrian politics, setting it apart from other belligerents and undermining the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of its citizens. The political administration's role changed and it became the 'handmaiden and executive of the military'.²³⁵

While Prague was situated firmly at the rear of any combat zones during the whole war, and thus not in a region situated under military jurisdiction,²³⁶ the military came to play an increased role in the administration of the city. The Military Command which was located on Malostranské náměstí/Kleinseitner Platz, not far from the seat of the Governor's Office (*Statthaltereimístodržitelsví*), became, more than during peace time, one of the centres of power in the city. Its name changed with the start of the war: the Eighth Corps Command became the Military Command. The former chief of the Prague Landwehr Justice describes the building in his memoirs: 'The grey building in front of the portal of Saint-Nicholas Church in Malá Strana/Kleinseite, seat of the Corps Command in peacetime and its successor's, the Military Command during wartime, turned more and more grey as the war went on. [...] as soon as you stepped in the interior, you felt as in a labyrinth'.²³⁷ From this privileged position, the military

²³² Petronilla Ehrenpreis, *Kriegs- und Friedensziele im Diskurs. Regierung und deutschsprachige Öffentlichkeit Österreich-Ungarns während des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2005), p. 67.

²³³ Christoph Führ, *Das k. u. k. Armeekommando und die Innenpolitik in Österreich: 1914 - 1917* (Graz: Hermann Böhlau, 1968), p. 17.

²³⁴ On the *Kriegsüberwachungsamt* see Tamara Scheer, *Die Ringstraßenfront. Österreich-Ungarn, das Kriegsüberwachungsamt und der Ausnahmezustand während des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Wien: BMLVS, 2010).

²³⁵ John Deak, 'The Great War and the Forgotten Realm: The Habsburg Monarchy and the First World War', *The Journal of Modern History*, 86 (2014), 336-380 (p.374).

²³⁶ Which was the case of Galicia, Bucovina, Dalmatia, East Silesia, Northern Moravia and extended to Tyrol, Styria, Salzburg, Vorarlberg, Carinthia, Carniola and the Littoral in 1915 see Führ, *Das k. u. k. Armeekommando*, p. 23.

²³⁷ Antonín Licht, *Válečné vzpomínky z doby persekuce* (V Praze: Alois Wiesner, 1925), p. 17.

observed the city and subordinated many aspects of civilian life to military necessities. Factories considered of strategic importance for the war were put under the control of the military. This was the case, for example, with the Breitfeld-Daněk factory in Karlín/Karolinenthal.

The information circulating in the monarchy during the war was strictly controlled, as in other belligerent countries. The centralized War Press Headquarters (*Kriegspressequartier*) determined which military news could be published in newspapers. The War Surveillance Office instructed regional censors to suppress any unpatriotic content or discussion of the situation in the hinterland in the press.²³⁸ Blank spots alerted newspapers' readers to the passages banned by the censor. This strong press censorship established by the emergency laws meant that rumours abounded in the city about the war events. This 'black market of information' became an alternative source for a population anxious about the evolution of the conflict.²³⁹ As we have seen, Praguers were nervous about the possibility of a Russian invasion at the end of 1914. The authorities attempted to quell this phenomenon, as they did not want worrying news from the front reaching the hinterland. From June 1915, if a person was overheard by a soldier spreading worrying rumours, it could lead to their arrest.²⁴⁰ New routes of information were created through the war circumstances and cities like Prague constituted a hub where news were exchanged and transmitted. Cafés, markets, newspaper offices were the centres of these new channels. Alternative information networks sprang up: bank clerk Martinek, who was arrested for high treason afterwards, was at the heart of such a circle gathering every day at the restaurant 'Na Bašce' in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge in September 1914. Fluent in several languages, he would there spread news about the progression of the war, as he read about it in foreign newspapers, often contradicting official reports.²⁴¹

This new regime of uncertainty also favoured the development of denunciation. As loyalties were more and more suspect, people sent letters to the authorities denouncing any behaviour perceived as unpatriotic. Martin Moll showed how this phenomenon very suddenly

²³⁸ Mark Cornwall, 'News, rumour and the control of information in Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918', *History*, 77, 24 (1992), 50-64 (pp. 53-54).

²³⁹ For Vienna see Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 132.

²⁴⁰ Military order: ÖStA, KA, Terr, Befehle, K 62, Nr 8686, 14 June 1915.

²⁴¹ He was arrested in the context of the leaflet affair: report from the Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no 31971, 4 November 1914.

took massive proportions in the summer of 1914; the motives could vary from personal rivalries to greed or national-political hatreds.²⁴² In Prague, the letters could reflect the Czech-German national conflict: for example, the owner of Café Kontinental, mostly frequented by German-speakers, reported to the Military Command that preparations for celebrating the Russians' arrival had been discussed in the café of the nearby Representation house.²⁴³ False rumours about Austria were also spread by a clique in that café, according to another German-speaking accuser.²⁴⁴ A letter from 'Austriacus' in Vienna denounced the welcome planned for Russians by Praguers and recommended the replacement of civil servants by Germans.²⁴⁵ Whereas civilian authorities seem to have often identified the motives behind the letters (Thun condemned the widespread practice of denunciations without grounds and did not want to automatically launch an enquiry)²⁴⁶, the military took them more seriously. For example, the Prague Military Command sent to the Municipal Council an anonymous letter they had received, which accused the Prague municipality of Russophilism and of hiding shirkers. The military demanded explanations to the council, which responded by defending its personnel.²⁴⁷ This suspicion of autonomous municipal authorities could be paralleled with the conflict that opposed the military to the civilian bureaucracy.

B - The conflict between civil and military authorities

The increased role of the military in the hinterland created a potential contentious situation between the civilians and the military authorities. The military who had gained expanded powers with the outbreak of the war tried to encroach on the civilian authorities' prerogatives. The civilian authorities acknowledged the primacy of military interests in wartime

²⁴² Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden*, pp. 208-229.

²⁴³ The Representation house (today municipal house, *obecní dům*) was inaugurated in 1912 by the Young Czech municipality and considered rather as a 'Czech' site in Prague. NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 23/99, no 380, 15 February 1915.

²⁴⁴ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, 8/1/92/19, no 21449, 31 August 1914.

²⁴⁵ Anonymous letter, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182, no 17569, 28 November 1914.

²⁴⁶ The negative word *Denunziation* used here by Thun is to be differentiated from the more neutral *Anzeige*. Bohemian Governor to Ministry of Interior, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5052, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 28566/14, 13 October 1914.

²⁴⁷ Prague Municipal Council to Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3015, sig. M 34/1, 22 November 1914.

and accepted the new regulations but could have a more balanced interpretation of the situation on the ground.²⁴⁸ As Mark Cornwall pointed out, Stürgkh himself had suspended any democratic process.²⁴⁹ The relationship between civilian and military authorities was different from crownland to crownland, depending, it seems, mostly on the personalities involved. Martin Moll has shown Clary's role in the repression of Slovenes in Styria in 1914 while Bleyleben in Moravia was more subservient than Thun in Bohemia.

The conflict between Thun and the military concerned the behaviour of the Czechs and the attitude to adopt towards them. The army suspected the Czechs of disloyalty and treason on the front and in the hinterland. An officer reported to the Army High Command: 'The political mood of the Czech population in Prague, particularly the educated part, is the worst imaginable and must be bluntly characterized as hostile to Austria (*österreichfeindlich*) and treacherous.'²⁵⁰ He then described several cases of disloyalty including Russian leaflets being distributed in Czech theatres or rumours that the Czechs would welcome the tsar in the municipal Representation house. Ten days later, Thun refuted one by one all the accusations from the military and explained for example that only one leaflet had been found on the stairs of a theatre and had led to a police investigation or that the Prague elders and mayor Karel Groš had behaved loyally and could not be suspected of intending to welcome the tsar.²⁵¹ Thun responded to these suspicions all the more vehemently because he saw them as a personal attack questioning his administration of the crownland.²⁵² A Prague case from February 1915 illustrates this distrust: a captain complained to the Prague Military Command that in a cinema, as a picture of Emperor Wilhelm II appeared on screen and many in the room applauded, others went 'pst' to silence

²⁴⁸ See Oswald Überegger, *Der andere Krieg. Die Tiroler Militärgerichtsbarkeit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, (Innsbruck: Wagner, 2002), p. 87.

²⁴⁹ Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 19.

²⁵⁰ Quoted in a report from the Prague Military Command to the Minister President, 9 December 1914, *Sborník dokumentů*, I, no 67, p. 144.

²⁵¹ Report from the Bohemian Governor to the Minister President, 19 December 1914, *Sborník dokumentů*, I, no 72, p. 155.

²⁵² For more details on the civil-military conflict at the decision-making level see: Brennan, 'Reforming Austria-Hungary'; Frank Benjamin Michael Fowkes, *The Policy of the Habsburg Monarchy towards the Bohemian Question, 1913-1918*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1967); Zbyněk A. B. Zeman, *The Czechs and the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1956).

them and that the picture had quickly disappeared afterwards; the owner had then refused to show the film once again. The military reproached the Governor's office that no policeman was present during the screening and that the officers at the nearby police station reacted impassively to the exhortation to act against these 'demonstrations bordering on disloyalty'.²⁵³ Thun refuted the army's claims: a police officer was present and had testified that part of the public had cried 'pst' because the music had started; he also pointed out that the police would certainly have received anonymous denunciations about the incident if the rest of the public had felt it was disloyal. The governor went on in his report to ask what an army staff captain was doing in a cinema owned by the Social-Democrats.²⁵⁴ The antagonism between the army and the civilians was running so high at the time that such a small event could act as a trigger.

It is not helpful to see this clash in terms of nationality with a pro-Czech civilian administration on the one side and an anti-Czech (or even pro-German) military elite on the other. Governor Thun²⁵⁵ was a representative of the Bohemian aristocracy, absolutely not identifying as German or Czech²⁵⁶, with a considerable knowledge of the nationalities' conflict in Bohemia and trying to deflect both sides. The main basis of his claims against the military was his expertise on the region. He would, for example, recognize that many denunciations could be based on national hatreds and not truth. The administration under him at the local level included 'Czech' elements – individuals who identified themselves as Czechs – but, as research on Austrian civil servants has shown²⁵⁷, they mostly formed a united corps that cannot be considered as an integral part of the nationality conflict. How are we to interpret the anti-Czech attitude of the army then? General prejudices against specific nationalities (Czechs foremost among them) certainly played a role²⁵⁸, combined with a fear of soldiers of Slav origin in a war against Slavs,

²⁵³ Prague Military Command to Governor's Office, 6 February 1915, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 184, no 4087.

²⁵⁴ Bohemian Governor's Office to Ministry of Interior, 20 February 1915 and Prague Police Headquarters to Bohemian Governor's Office, 16 February 1915, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 184, no 4087.

²⁵⁵ For a biography of Thun see Jan Galandauer, *Franz Fürst Thun. Statthalter des Königreiches Böhmen* (Wien: Böhlau, 2014; Czech orig. 2007).

²⁵⁶ On the Bohemian aristocracy's allegiances see Eagle Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005).

²⁵⁷ For a study of the Moravian case with references to the Bohemian case see Aleš Vyskočil, *C.k. úředník ve zlatém věku jistoty* (Praha: Historický ústav, 2009), pp. 61-67.

²⁵⁸ Historian Jan Havránek cites the case of a university professor at the German university in Prague who ordered retreat to his troops in Serbia and whom the military mistook for Czech, suspected thus of treason and launched an

but the concern over Czechs as Russophiles and traitors also revealed the Austro-Hungarian army's conservative mindset. Jonathan Gumz's explanation of the military's attitude towards nationalism in Serbia could, to some extent, be applied to Bohemia. The army targeted any expression of political or national mobilization (associations, newspapers) and saw mostly the 'intelligentsia' (*Intelligenz*) as potentially dangerous in subverting the population.

Thus, their conflict during the war did not run on national lines but on a conception of the running of the Empire. The military tried to subordinate the civilian world to its vision and the latter reflected a certain paranoia of civilian mobilization (although it was inevitable by the early 20th century). The civilian administration, in this context, understood the erroneous reading of the situation by the military. As an example, Thun cites a colonel mobilized in the 8th corps (Prague) who said in Vienna that revolution prevailed in Prague and that the population was maintained under the bridle by guns. Other reports in Vienna spread rumours of chaos and turmoil in Bohemia.²⁵⁹ This fear of insurrection could be linked to the post-1848 military culture of the Austro-Hungarian officers. It explains their insistence on introducing summary justice (*Standrecht/stanné právo*) to the Bohemian Lands. This measure (characterized by speed and death penalty if guilty) was to act as a deterrent for Czechs²⁶⁰. In January 1915, Stürgkh already complained about the measures that the military wanted to impose in Bohemia, 'which would correspond to a threatening rebellion or one that had broken out'.²⁶¹ In March, the Army High Command requested again summary justice for Bohemia.²⁶²

That same month, Franz Joseph asked Thun to resign as governor of Bohemia.²⁶³ His dismissal was justified by his poor health. He was indeed very sick²⁶⁴ (and would die a few

enquiry. He killed himself before the verdict, Jan Havránek, 'Politische Repression und Versorgungsengpässe in den Böhmisches Ländern 1914 bis 1918', in *Der erste Weltkrieg und die Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen, Slowaken und Deutschen*, ed. by Hans Mommsen, Dušan Kováč, Jiří Malíř, Michaela Marek (Essen: Klartext-Verl., 2001), pp. 47–66 (p. 49). See also, Daniela Strigl, 'Schneidige Husaren, brave Bosniaken, feige Tschechen. Nationale Mythen und Stereotypen in der k.u.k. Armee', in *Zentren, Peripherien und kollektive Identitäten in Österreich-Ungarn*, ed. by Endre Hars et al. (Tübingen-Basel: A. Francke Verlag 2006), pp. 128-143.

²⁵⁹ Bohemian Governor to Minister President, 26 January 1915, *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no 10, p. 38.

²⁶⁰ Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse*, p. 106.

²⁶¹ *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no 13, p. 43.

²⁶² *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no 18, p. 51.

²⁶³ For the order see *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no 23, p. 66.

²⁶⁴ Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka*, p. 161.

months later) but there was also a political element in this decision, as the fight for his succession would show. The military considered his resignation as a victory: ‘the departure of Prince Thun was considered in military circles as an achievement on the part of Prague military commander Schwerdtner’.²⁶⁵ Thun was made honorary citizen of Prague the following month.²⁶⁶ The Army High Command wished to replace Thun with a general but Minister President Stürgkh managed to impose Coudenhove, another Bohemian noble. Prague Chief of Police Křikava’s early retirement at fifty five in July 1915, also on health grounds (his ‘notorious sickliness’), continued this ‘purge’ of Bohemian administration.²⁶⁷ The German consul concedes his illness but remarks that his departure was ‘not a voluntary one’.²⁶⁸ The head of the presidium at the Prague Governor’s Office Freiherr von Braun, also deemed too ‘Czech’, was moved to another position. The growing influence of the military in Bohemia could be seen through a new wave of arrests. In May 1915, Karel Kramář (Young Czech politician) and Josef Scheiner (Head of the Czech Sokol) were arrested for high treason by the military. The civilian authorities were only informed at the last minute. By July, Alois Rašín (Young Czech politician) joined them in prison.²⁶⁹ These most famous examples of the Austrian repression in the Bohemian Lands point to a more pronounced role of the military but we need to look at a broader picture to grasp the dynamic between civilian and military repression.

C - Repression against the Czechs

The systematic suspicion against Czech-speakers and the disbandment of associations was a new phenomenon in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which is why it was perceived at the time as an injustice.²⁷⁰ As we have seen, the military often gave the impulse for the questioning of Czech loyalty but many searches, arrests and interrogations were conducted by the civilian authorities.

²⁶⁵ Licht, *Válečné vzpomínky*, p. 22.

²⁶⁶ *Věstník obecní*, XXII, no 8, 30 April 1915 p. 111.

²⁶⁷ ÖStA, AVA, MdI, 20, K 1875, Nr 15783, 23 July 1915.

²⁶⁸ NAL, GFM 6/45, Ö101 Böhmen, 36, 24 August 1915.

²⁶⁹ H. Louis Rees, *The Czechs during World War I: The Path to Independence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 16.

²⁷⁰ See for example Zdeněk Tobolka, František Staněk, *Chování se vládních kruhů k českému národu za války*, (Prague: Pražská akciová tiskárna, 1917).

War meant new criteria in the definition of loyalty to the Empire and new potential crimes against the state.

One of the most prominent trials in wartime Prague was the so-called 'leaflet affair'. In the autumn of 1914, there appeared in Prague, according to the authorities, suspicious leaflets of Russian provenance and treacherous content. In Prague, two versions of this Russian proclamation circulated: a manifest from the Russian tsar and a declaration from the Russian general Rennenkampf. Both promised liberation for Czechs at the hands of the Russians insisting on their common Slavic roots. The original 100,000 manifestos had been scattered in Galicia by the Russians but the leaflets that made their way to Prague were just as likely to be Czech copies.²⁷¹ The versions found by the police in the city were not printed but either handwritten or typewritten.²⁷² Their circulation retraces a geography of alternative information in the city: many culprits had obtained it in a café or a restaurant; shop attendants in bookshops and general stores had distributed it. Bank clerks and other employees had shown it at their offices. Schoolboys and technical students disseminated them in various places, including during a class on first aid to wounded soldiers in a hospital in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge.²⁷³ For example, a military officer arrested two 17-year old boys reading the leaflet on Jungmann Avenue in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge after he overheard them explain that it had been brought by wounded soldiers from Galicia and thrown down by Russian aviators.²⁷⁴ An anonymous letter denounced a certain Malík who held antipatriotic speeches in a pub in Karlín/Karolinenthal and possessed a copy of the manifesto.²⁷⁵ The trial in Prague involved around thirty persons, many of whom admitted that they had read and copied the proclamation. Twenty of them were condemned to prison sentences ranging from six months to fourteen years.²⁷⁶ It should be noted that this verdict

²⁷¹ Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, p. 41.

²⁷² Police report NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2257, sig. P 10/2, 21 November 1914.

²⁷³ Indictement by military prosecutor Ant. Licht NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no 12165, 11 January 1915.

²⁷⁴ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no 29502, Deposition by Leutnant Philipp IR 102, 27 September 1914.

²⁷⁵ Anonymous letter in Czech addressed to the police, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no 32807, 6 November 1914.

²⁷⁶ 'Phonogramm' from the Police Headquarters NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no 8684, 19 February 1915.

was more lenient than in Moravia where seven people were sentenced to death over the leaflets.²⁷⁷ According to the police chief, many of the accused were dismayed to learn the seriousness of their offense and had not realized the consequences of their actions.²⁷⁸ The Prague case provoked scandal because a municipal building officer was among the accused and leaflets had circulated in his office at the Prague town hall. After the appearance of new flyers in December 1914, newspapers notices warned Praguers that they should immediately return any found leaflet to the authorities.²⁷⁹ By May 1915 the Prague military court had taken up some 650 cases including 48 dealing with high treason.²⁸⁰ However, many of these cases had more to do with pub talk than serious treasonable actions. A drunken journeyman was for example arrested for shouting: ‘There is a nice order in Austria; we have enough of everything and yet penury because we support Germany and everything is taken to Germany. The lords have everything in their hands [...] Hail to Russia, may Russia win’. He was condemned to eight months imprisonment.²⁸¹ These individual arrests in case of unpatriotic statements or lese-majesty were complemented by a more systematic targeting of Czech institutions.

Many of the institutional pillars of the Czech national movement, which were fully legal before 1914, were suddenly under attack. School books in the Czech language were scrutinized for expression of Pan-Slavism and insufficient expression of Austrian patriotism.²⁸² The idea of the commission in charge of this cleansing was both to eliminate potentially harmful influence for the youth and to foster Austrian patriotism.²⁸³ National associations with potential links to Pan-Slavism were disbanded.

²⁷⁷ Claire Morelon, ‘Loyautés dans un Empire multinational: la ville de Brünn / Brno à l’épreuve de la Première Guerre mondiale’ (unpublished master’s thesis, Institut d’Etudes Politiques Paris, 2007), p. 61.

²⁷⁸ Deposition by Police Chief Slavíček, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no 8684, 10 April 1915, p. 8.

²⁷⁹ See *Prager Tagblatt* (Mittag-Ausgabe), 22 December 1914, p. 2; *Národní listy*, 22 December 1914, p. 3; *Čech*, 22 December 1914, p. 7.

²⁸⁰ Rees, *The Czechs*, p. 17.

²⁸¹ Police report NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182, no 17277, 21 November 1914.

²⁸² Jan Havránek, ‘Die rigorose Überprüfung der tschechischen Schulbücher im Jahre 1916’, in *University – Historiography – Society – Politics: Selected Studies of Jan Havránek*, ed. by Jiří Pešek (Praha: Karolinum, 2009), pp. 483-488; for an example of censor’s report on Czech schoolbooks see BDIC, *Slabikář B.*, 1916-1917.

²⁸³ See NA, MKV/R, ka 3, no 3524, 12 October 1915.

In this context, the Sokol (Falcon),²⁸⁴ a very popular Czech national gymnastics organization, appeared suspicious to the army. Military commander Schwerndter writes in October 1914 that he ‘cannot suspect the activity of the Sokols on the basis of any concrete information but believes that they are a hotbed of pan-Slavists. It is therefore unfortunate that we had to rely on their practice halls [...] for the hospitalization of the many wounded soldiers here in Prague and in the countryside’.²⁸⁵ The Sokol was at the forefront of Czech nationalism and had indeed organized big rallies before the war where Sokols from other Slavic nations (including Slavs in the monarchy but also Serbs and Russians) had participated.²⁸⁶ However, the vague romantic notion of Slavic solidarity defended by the Sokols would not automatically trigger a treacherous behaviour in wartime. In fact, many Sokols went to the front and the association played a prominent role in the war relief in Bohemia.

The Sokols were disbanded in November 1915 because of their pan-Slavic links and the prominent role of members in the creation of Czechoslovak legions fighting in Russia on the side of the Entente. However, their suppression seemed, in many respects, at odds with their wartime record. As their leader pointed out in a bid to cancel the decision, they had volunteered and participated financially in the war effort as well as provided military training for the youth.²⁸⁷ [The blurry frontier between gymnastics and military preparation was part of the Sokol’s history.]²⁸⁸ This letter alerts to the devastating effect that the news had on the members and how it was felt as an injustice. While acknowledging pre-war ties with Slavic nations, they denied any anti-state activities. Because of their wartime actions, they felt that the Sokol should be preserved for the benefit of the state itself as it had rendered a great service to the state through its involvement. They also referred to their wartime service: ‘Our ranks show whole hecatombs of

²⁸⁴ The goal of the Sokol founded in 1862 was to invigorate physically and morally the Czech nation. On the Sokol see: Claire Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

²⁸⁵ Mood report from the Military Command in Prague, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 183, no 14991, 19 October 1914.

²⁸⁶ Claire Nolte, ‘All for One! One for All!: The Federation of Slavic Sokols and the Failure of Neo-Slavism’, in *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, ed. by Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit, (New York: Berghahn, 2005), pp. 126-140.

²⁸⁷ Česká Obec Sokolská to Interior Ministry, NA, PMV/R, 15/5, ka 91, no 1582, 16 December 1915.

²⁸⁸ On the debate around the military significance of the Sokol since founder Miroslav Tyrš see Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands*, pp. 94-95.

fallen and wounded soldiers, [...] the impressive work done in the field of war action, [...] crowds of self-sacrificing men and women in the charity services, and great financial sacrifices devoted to these goals.²⁸⁹ While this defence of Sokol members obviously serves a purpose, other voices could commend their military record. The newspaper *Venkov* quoted a German colonel's aide who praised the Sokols for their soldierly qualities: 'We have the best experience with Sokols. They are conscious of their duty, understand their responsibility, fearless [...] [and] reliable'.²⁹⁰

The equal wartime service of the Czech-speakers was their main argument against the Austrian measures. The persecution was perceived as poor retribution for the sacrifices made in the name of Austria-Hungary.²⁹¹ Yet, it was precisely their wartime record on the front that was attacked by the military. The repression against the Czechs in the hinterland was intensified by the supposed defection to the Russians of part of the infantry regiment 28 (from Prague and surroundings) in April 1915. Historian Richard Lein has now definitely demonstrated that the high losses during that battle were not caused by an en masse surrender and that the Austrian military had overreacted in dissolving the regiment, as it was too happy to shift the blame of defeat onto Czech units. As he shows, the alleged desertion of Czech soldiers would have an unusual good fortune in the hinterland. False orders from the Emperor or another member of the imperial family relating to the regiment's disbandment with an invented text circulated in the monarchy and especially in Bohemia. The war ministry decided not to pursue the propagators of such rumours.²⁹² A false army order from Archduke Josef Ferdinand casting 'dishonour, shame, contempt and opprobrium' on the traitors and calling for a bullet or a hanging rope for them was for example sent to the Prague Mayor in August 1915.²⁹³ Official authorities distanced themselves from this act of treason and mayors from the Prague suburbs came to proclaim their

²⁸⁹ Česká Obec Sokolská to Interior Ministry, NA, PMV/R, 15/5, ka 91, no 1582, 16 December 1915.

²⁹⁰ Quoted in Vožický, *Kronika*, p. 162. (February 1915).

²⁹¹ This language of sacrifice and the negotiations it generated in wartime can be found in other contexts: see Purseigle, *Mobilisations, sacrifice et citoyenneté*, pp. 263-272; Adam R. Seipp, *The Ordeal of Peace: Demobilisation and the Urban Experience in Britain and Germany, 1917-1921* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

²⁹² Lein, *Pflichterfüllung*, pp. 160-161; see also Josef Fučík, *Osmadvacátníci: spor o českého vojáka Velké války 1914-1918* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 2006).

²⁹³ Anonymous letter sent to the Prague Mayor in German, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3018, no 25179, 27 August 1915.

loyalty to the governor.²⁹⁴ The Mayor of Prague sent a manifesto to the Minister President where he condemned the desertion and expressed his regret that some of them were from Prague, when the city had ‘so many times’ demonstrated its devotion to the dynasty.²⁹⁵ The Czech local authorities felt the danger of this perception, which can explain the extraordinarily high number of loyalty manifestos sent to the authorities from Bohemia on the occasion of the Emperor’s birthday in August 1915.²⁹⁶

The repression against Czech-speakers was in many ways the result of an impulse from the military and reflected the subordination of civilian authorities to military goals. The Austrian bureaucracy was ready because of the extraordinary war circumstances to lead a persecution of civilians in total contrast with what had previously been accepted or tolerated. The crucial role of the civilian administration in carrying out this repression should be underlined, even if it was partially motivated by a desire to defend itself, in a context where it was suspected by the army leadership. Did the repression undermine the loyalty of Czech-speakers to the Empire? The civilian authorities were in any case wary of this consequence as they thought the repression could turn the population against the state.²⁹⁷ This suspicion alienated the population from Habsburg rule.²⁹⁸ It was probably especially true for the Czech political class but as we will see in chapters 4 and 5, other factors undermined Praguers’ confidence in the Austro-Hungarian state.

The smooth mobilization in Prague in the summer of 1914 arguably constitutes the greatest test of the Austrian’s state viability. The reasons for this success are probably varied: a sense of duty, a feeling that the Emperor had no choice linked to dynastic loyalty, social pressure... But the very fact of asking this question highlights an important point: the situation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was comparable to that of nation-state belligerents. The first incidents occurred only in September and this gap is important. It had much more to do with the military situation than with a lack of loyalty.

²⁹⁴ Bohemian Governor to the Minister President, NA, MRP/R, ka 70, no 3188, 30 May 1915.

²⁹⁵ Prague Mayor to the Minister President, NA, MRP/R, ka 70, no 2663, 6 May 1915.

²⁹⁶ ÖStA, AVA, MdI, 1/3, ka 1243, 19 August 1915.

²⁹⁷ For example Bohemian Governor to Minister President, 26 January 1915 in *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no 10, p. 39.

²⁹⁸ For a similar process in Tyrol: Gerd Pircher, *Militär, Verwaltung und Politik in Tirol im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1995).

Building on a pre-war military culture which gave a preeminent position to the army in Austrian society (not without tensions with the civilian world), the encounters between soldiers and civilians in wartime Prague reveal both a latent conflict and a new prestige. This low-level violence was the product of a wartime culture that subordinated the civilian world to military values. This phenomenon mirrored the attitude of the military in the hinterland, which aimed to impose, through repression, a regime that would neutralize civilians. This is arguably how the military participated in the loss of legitimacy of the Empire. However, their efforts were not entirely successful, at least in Bohemia. If the military attempted to impose a 'straitjacket' on the civilian population, the popular mobilization for the war effort in Prague showed the vitality of civil society in Austria-Hungary, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

AUSTRIAN PATRIOTIC MOBILIZATION

Olga Machleidt, aged five at the beginning of the war, recalls that, when asked by her teacher if she could spell her own name, she came proudly to the front of the class and explained that she could also spell another word. She then proceeded to write ‘der Krieg’, the war, on the blackboard.²⁹⁹ This simple childhood memory symbolizes the increasing presence of the conflict in Praguers’ visual landscape. The war was everywhere and civilians were constantly reminded of its reality and asked to join in the common effort.

This chapter explores the invasion of Prague’s public space through the Austrian patriotic culture. Historians have conceived the Austrian war effort as an ill-fated endeavour which failed, confronted with the lack of a common Austrian *Staatsidee*. The mobilization in Austria could thus not be compared to the mobilization in other European countries.³⁰⁰ According to this view, a specific Austrian (and not German) identity was a concept not sufficiently established to allow for an Austrian patriotism to develop.³⁰¹ The efforts of the state to foster such a feeling were inadequate.³⁰² This problem of the Austrian cultural mobilization was exacerbated in the non-German speaking regions of the Empire and particularly in the Bohemian Lands.³⁰³ However, looking at the war experience in Prague, a prevalence of the war effort in daily life emerges. Victories were marked through public celebrations; collections for war aims were present in every street while posters on the walls constantly reminded passers-by of the conflict. How can we reconcile this picture with the failure of Austrian mobilization? Did a specific Austrian

²⁹⁹ Olga Machleidt, ‘Erinnerungen eines Kindes’, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Sudetendeutsches Archiv, Heimatberichte, 1715.

³⁰⁰ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 14-15.

³⁰¹ Steven Beller, ‘The tragic carnival: Austrian culture in the First World War’, in *European culture in the Great War: the arts, entertainment, and propaganda, 1914-1918*, ed. by Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 127-161.

³⁰² Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

³⁰³ Claire Nolte, ‘Ambivalent Patriots: Czech culture in the Great War’, in *European culture in the Great War*, pp. 162-175.

patriotic culture develop during the war and what forms did it take? Who were the promoters of this discourse?

The interaction between state and civil society in Late Imperial Austria is at the centre of many recent studies on the monarchy. Gary Cohen has shown that this relationship was more dynamic than previously perceived and that the flourishing civic activism (voluntary associations, national and political movements) in Austria worked within the system and not against it.³⁰⁴ Ke-Chin Hsia has examined how this situation evolved during the war by looking at veterans' care and how the state had to rely on non-state actors to provide the welfare expected from its citizens in exchange for their sacrifice.³⁰⁵ In the context of an increased control by the military on civic life, we will see how the state, individuals, and associations articulated their participation in the war effort.

The term of 'patriotic mobilization' was chosen as the title to this chapter because it focuses on the everyday actions for the Austrian war effort that participated in the social and cultural mobilization around the conflict during wartime.³⁰⁶ The mobilization of belligerent societies on the home front has been the topic of many studies,³⁰⁷ especially on the French, German and British cases but Austria-Hungary, as a multinational entity that disappeared after the war, is sometimes seen as lacking a unified 'fatherland' and common patriotic symbols. As opposed to a discussion of Austrian identity which is often confined to intellectual debates,³⁰⁸ the existence of a concrete and everyday culture of patriotism during the war challenges these assumptions. That does not mean that this imperial patriotism took the same forms throughout Austria-Hungary. As has been demonstrated in other imperial contexts, the imperial culture was

³⁰⁴ Gary Cohen, 'Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914', *Central European History* 40 (2007), pp. 241–278.

³⁰⁵ Ke-Chin Hsia, 'Who Provided Care for Wounded and Disabled Soldiers?: Conceptualizing State-Civil Society Relationship in First World War Austria', in *Others Fronts, Others Wars?: First World War Studies on the Eve of the Centennial*, ed. by Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Joachim Bürgschwentner, Matthias Egger (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 303–328. I thank the author for sending me his chapter.

³⁰⁶ I borrow the term from the conclusion of Laurence Cole's recent book: Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³⁰⁷ *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, ed. by John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

³⁰⁸ Fredrik Lindström, *Empire and Identity: Biographies of the Austrian State Problem in the Late Habsburg Empire* (West Lafayette: Purdue University, 2008).

always mediated through the local.³⁰⁹ Hubertus Jahn uses the term ‘patriotic culture’ in his book on Russia during the First World War and it refers in his definition to the expression of patriotism in the arts.³¹⁰ The ‘patriotic mobilization’ examined here encompasses, in a broader sense, all the manifestations of support for the war effort that were visible in the city’s public space. While the military, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, was keen to report treason from the Czech-speaking population, they acknowledged the popular participation in the war effort in the hinterland: there was ‘a strong division between national attitude and humanitarian activity. The support of the care of wounded soldiers and the sums collected for it are extremely commendable.’³¹¹ The objects of this involvement were indeed varied: collections, welfare work, public ceremonies and celebrations.

In investigating this phenomenon, it is very important to take into account the chronology of the war. The fading financial effort for these campaigns was linked with the general declining support for the war. Increasingly, concerns over material issues that are explored in chapter 4 dulled the patriotic mobilization. The examples in this chapter are therefore mostly from the first half of the war (the years 1915 and 1916 especially), as this reflects the evolution of the Austrian home front’s morale.

I - The different sources of a legitimate patriotic discourse

In a city like Prague, provincial centre in the Empire, the patriotic impulse that accompanied the war should not be viewed as a top-down effort imposed from Vienna and with no local declensions. The interpretation of what a ‘good’ Austrian behaviour in wartime constituted varied from one institution to another (as we have seen with the military) and even from one individual to another.

³⁰⁹ Brad Beaven, *Visions of Empire: Patriotism, Popular Culture and the City, 1870-1939* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2012).

³¹⁰ Hubertus F. Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 4.

³¹¹ Military Command, *Stimmungsbericht*, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182, no 15472, 19 October 1914.

A - State initiatives to further loyalty

The Austrian state-sponsored efforts to promote patriotism through positive propaganda during the war remained limited and ultimately inefficient.³¹² Mark Cornwall showed how the film and literature output was too weak to generate war enthusiasm and how most efforts to influence public opinion were concentrated on press censorship. In Prague, while official war films were shown in cinemas, it is indeed difficult to notice many examples of propaganda initiatives coming directly from the Austrian state. The *Kriegspressequartier* (War Press Office, controlled by the Army High Command) did organize an exhibition of war paintings at the Rudolfinum in November 1916³¹³ but it is doubtful that this type of event would draw large crowds.

Yet Bohemia, and the Czech-speaking population especially, was of particular concern in an attempt to promote patriotism in the general population. Coudenhove, the new governor of Bohemia, launched in the summer of 1915 a campaign to nurture the Austrian spirit in the Czech population. In the memorandum sent to local authorities, he underlines the necessity of concrete actions taken by local authorities to ‘elevate and stimulate the Austrian state idea (*Staatsgedanken*)’.³¹⁴ He recommends that civil servants and local personalities publicize news of military victories and make sure that they are celebrated, that lectures with a patriotic content are held, that local cinemas and newspapers carry patriotic programmes and military music be played in garden concerts. Loyalty became a criterion to evaluate any subsidy claim or to grant a license. In this context, it is possible to question the spontaneity of patriotic displays but in any case Coudenhove was a few months later very pleased with the results of this action.³¹⁵ He conceived it not as an imposition from the top (and reprimanded functionaries who had forced the inhabitants to put flags on their windows) but rather as an influence from the authorities on a ‘receptive’ population.

³¹² Cornwall, *Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, pp. 27-28.

³¹³ *Kriegsbilderausstellung. K.u.k. Armeekommando Kriegspressequartier. Prag 1916. Rudolfinum.* (Prag: Fürstbischöfl. Buchdr., 1916).

³¹⁴ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5172, sig. 8/1/92/19, n° 31083, 10 July 1915.

³¹⁵ Memorandum from Coudenhove to local authorities 23 September 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5172, sig. 8/1/92/19, n° 40476.

The discussion on the involvement of the population in the war effort in the Bohemian Lands has, since the war itself, been shaped by the debate on the signing of war bonds. During the war, German Bohemian deputies already accused the Czechs of having contributed significantly less to the state-sponsored war bond campaign, compared with their German counterparts.³¹⁶ Some historians used these figures to show that Czech opposition to the war was already visible in 1914.³¹⁷ This conception has been since revised and, more recently, Czech historians have shown that many other factors than opposition to the war could explain the more modest Czech contribution to the war bonds. Economic considerations and uncertainty seemed to have played a much bigger role.³¹⁸

Civil servants at all levels were to participate demonstratively in this patriotic effort as embodiments of the Austrian bureaucracy and we find here again this mix between forced and sincere loyalty. In various local offices, the employees were at the forefront of the war effort and consistently gave to various institutions and charities. Officials from the Finanzprokuratur in Prague, like most of their colleagues in various chancelleries, offices and inspections decided for example in September 1914 to give one percent of their salary to 'patriotic causes'.³¹⁹ The postal directorate introduced this possibility for its employees after being asked 'from several sides' to centralize the collections.³²⁰ The donations remained voluntary even though the many drives to participate certainly created a pressure to join in. Czech-speaking teachers from Prague schools and universities also contributed monthly. The Prague Chief of Police even supported his claim to a raise in 1916 by the expense generated by his obligations to attend and contribute to any action organized for the benefit of the war (which, as he notes, were multiplied with German and Czech associations organizing separate events).³²¹ This involvement with the war effort also explains

³¹⁶ *Dotaz německých poslanců o chování se českého národa za války* (Praha: J. Skalák, 1918), p. 100.

³¹⁷ Bernard Michel, 'Le sabotage des emprunts de guerre autrichiens par les banques tchèques (1914-1916)', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 15 (1968), pp. 321-339.

³¹⁸ For a discussion of this question see Šedivý, *Češi, České země a Velká Válka*, p. 242.

³¹⁹ Finanzprokuratur to Bohemian Governor's Office 3 September 1914, PM 1911-1920, ka 5453, sig. 10/32/2, no number.

³²⁰ Postal directorate to Bohemian Governor's Office 17 September 1914, PM 1911-1920, ka 5453, sig. 10/32/2, no 429.

³²¹ Request from the Prague Chief of Police to the Ministry of Interior, 5 July 1916, ÖStA, AVA, MdI, 20, K1875, no 16981.

their bitter disillusionment with the regime later on in the war as inflation made their livelihoods more and more difficult.

Local government also played an important role as a relay of mobilization on the home front. In Prague, the mayor Karel Groš, elected since 1906 and considered as one of the main representatives of the Czech nation, attended every ceremony celebrating the war effort in the city. He was often the initiator of demonstrations of loyalty to the Emperor and ‘did not leave out an occasion to pay homage’, according to Šedivý.³²² The Prague City Council also organized collections and events for the benefit of soldiers from the city. The Okresní válečná pomocná úřadovna (Local war help office) raised funds for the war effort. The local character of many of these fundraising efforts was similar to what is observed in France or Great Britain at the same time.³²³

The key governmental institutions of war relief organized after the outbreak of the war and with their headquarters in Vienna were the War Help Bureau (*Kriegshilfsbüro*) and the War Relief Agency (*Kriegsfürsorgeamt*). These two agencies were centralizing the donations in the entire monarchy and could benefit from this legitimacy. The War Relief Agency could for example ask the bishop in Prague to encourage churchgoers to give to the Christmas action in the priests’ sermons.³²⁴ The reality of the war relief was, however, often more complex and left more room to initiatives from below.³²⁵ The mix between public and private, local and imperial was frequent. The Red Cross for example was officially linked with the imperial war relief and had a local bilingual Bohemian branch with its headquarters in Prague, supervising activities in the region but it still remained a private entity. Initiatives from the central authorities in Vienna should thus be paralleled from local initiatives stemming both from local government and an active network of associations.

³²² Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka, 1914-1918* (Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001), p. 205. See also Ivan Šedivý, ‘České loajální projevy 1914-1918’, *Český časopis historický*, 97 (1999), 293-309.

³²³ Pierre Purseigle, *Mobilisation, sacrifice et citoyenneté: Angleterre-France, 1900-1918* (Paris : Belles lettres, 2013), p. 211.

³²⁴ Kriegsfürsorgeamt to Archbishop Ordinariat, 11 November 1916, NA, Archiv pražského arcibiskupství III, ka 1210, n°14291.

³²⁵ Joachim Bürgschwentner, ‘War relief, Patriotism and Art: the State-run Production of Picture Postcards in Austria 1914-1918’, *Austrian Studies*, 21 (2013), 99-120.

B - The role of associations: making the war national?

Looking at the patriotic efforts of the state gives only a very partial picture of the nature of the war effort in Austria. As has been shown in the case of other belligerents, the war mobilization of societies was often a 'self-mobilization'. The role of associations in this context, a key component of civil society in Austria,³²⁶ needs to be further examined. Building on their prewar activities, associations joined in the war effort on the home front by organizing fundraising for war-related charities. As Roger Chickering has shown in the case of Freiburg, local organizations 'adjusted their agenda to the demands of war, if only to serve as conduits of information and morale-building'.³²⁷ Established local associations, in keeping with pre-war activism³²⁸, often followed national lines and entered the war effort as representatives of a specific nation. The dynamic between private and public in the promotion of the war effort was rendered more complex by the involvement of national activists. Tara Zahra has for example shown how the imperial Widow and Orphan Fund in Bohemia was in fact entrusted to the care of the private Czech and German Provincial Commissions for Child Protection and Youth Welfare.³²⁹ These nationalist actors, far from withdrawing from the common effort, extended their pre-war competition to the realm of war welfare.

The attitude of the Czech Sokols, a nationalist gymnastics organization which played a very important role in Czech national activism before the war, illustrates this involvement of national associations in the Austro-Hungarian war. The Sokols immediately turned their numerous practice halls into hospitals and organized help at the train stations of the city to welcome wounded soldiers. After they were banned by the military authorities in November 1915 because of accusations of Pan Slavism (see chapter 1), the Sokols put posters in the city detailing in numbers their participation in the war effort.³³⁰ Entitled 'Samaritan actions of the Sokols in the

³²⁶ Gary Cohen, 'Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1867–1914', *Central European History* 40 (2007), pp. 241–278.

³²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 401

³²⁸ See Gary Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861–1914*, 2nd. ed., rev. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006).

³²⁹ Tara Zahra, "'Each Nation Only Cares for Its Own': Empire, Nation and Child Welfare Activism in the Bohemian Lands 1900–1918", *The American Historical Review*, 111 (2006), 1378–1402.

³³⁰ Report from the Prague Military Command, 7 December 1915 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv, Kriegsministerium, Kriegsüberwachungsamt, K96, 1915, Nr 52126.

war', these lists enumerated the amount of money gathered by various branches of the Sokols in diverse actions: 200,000 crowns were thus given for the establishment and maintenance of hospitals in Prague (II, III and VIII), and 40,000 crowns for the creation of prostheses in Žižkov (Prague suburb) and Brno. The poster also listed the number of Sokol 'brothers' and 'sisters' who joined the nursing help or the voluntary safety service, the number of Sokol branches who created hospitals, pharmacies, children wards on their premises and the results of their collections for the 'war help action'. The military command seized these posters not because of their 'completely harmless' content but because it was a direct reaction to the ban and because of the crowds they attracted. It would then seem that in late 1915 the participation in the war effort was enough of a consensus in the population that the Sokols felt the need to demonstrate it not only to the authorities who were persecuting them but also to the whole city. They were claiming their innocence and showing to the Prague public that they were not only on the side of the war effort but one of its main pillars in Bohemia. Even after their official suppression, they continued to be active. The Sokol in the suburb of Košiče/Koschir for example still donated money to the Widow and Orphan Fond or gave clothes to a Red Cross hospital in 1916.³³¹

Private initiatives to support the war effort also came from the German-speaking community in Prague. The erection of the statue of a warrior to be nailed in the garden of the German House in Prague demonstrates both the role of private incentives to promote patriotism and the potential nationalization of a patriotic discourse. The *Wehrmann in Eisen* represented an armoured warrior ready for the defence of the fatherland. Praguers could buy a nail that they would come to place on the statue, thus covering it with iron. A committee to build such a monument had been set up by influential members of the German cultural community (national activists). The inauguration of the statue on 27 June 1915 was an occasion to showcase the patriotism of the local German community to the war and was attended by many of the city officials (the governor, the chief of police).³³² Beyond this more official monument, several of these nailing landmarks appeared throughout 1916. The German women of Prague had installed another *Wehrmann* in the garden of the German theatre.³³³ The café Continental (which was

³³¹ AHMP, Sokol Košiče, sig. III 4.

³³² *Prager Tagblatt*, 28 June 1915, p. 3.

³³³ Letter from Isabella Herrmann, 28 May 1916, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, S 11/2/94, no 9665.

located on the German-connoted thoroughfare Am Graben/Na příkopě) also boasted such a nailing shield.³³⁴ This practice of iron-nail war landmarks was modelled on the example from Vienna and could be compared with similar landmarks in Germany studied by Stefan Goebel. These nailing landmarks made tangible the unity of home and front. As the result of local initiatives, it shows how ‘ordinary people were agents rather than victims of propaganda’.³³⁵ This practice also inscribed the common effort to support the war victims in the landscape of the city itself. Even though the Prague *Wehrmänner* were rather placed in landmarks of the Prague German community (German casino, German theatre, café Continental) than in a public square like in Brunn/Brno for example, they still create a geography of communities of sacrifice.

The nationalizing aspect of many of these actions should not obscure the numerous initiatives and committees that were not affiliated nationally and reflect other divisions (religious for example). The case of the War Help Committee (*Prager Hilfskomitée/Pražské pomocné sdružení*) which proclaimed to be ‘utraquist’ would be, in this respect, an interesting one.³³⁶ The utraquists were the part of Prague society in the 19th century which refused to choose any national affiliation, Czech or German.³³⁷ By 1914, they were considered to have more or less ceased to exist in Prague and yet the creation of such a committee attests to the resilience of this phenomenon. Created in September 1915, it organized concerts and other events to collect funds for the war relief. It claimed to help in the patriotic duty with the ‘interests of the Empire’s unity’ in mind, having observed ‘a fragmentation of forces because of party political ambitions’. The idea was to create a platform where both upper middle-class Czech speakers and upper middle-class German speakers could donate without feeling that they were supporting one or the other national agenda. Understandably the president of the local Prague branch of the imperial War Relief Agency felt that this committee was unnecessary competition for his imperial (and thus

³³⁴ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, S 11/2/100, no. 32345, 18 November 1916.

³³⁵ Stefan Goebel, ‘Forging the Industrial Home Front: Iron-Nail Memorials in the Ruhr’, in *Uncovered Fields. Perspectives in the First World War Studies*, ed. by Pierre Purseigle, Jenny MacLeod (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 162-163.

³³⁶ File on the Committee: NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S11/2/74.

³³⁷ Robert Luft, ‘Nationale Utraquisten in Böhmen. Zur Problematik nationaler Zwischenstellungen am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in *Allemands, Juifs et Tchèques à Prague 1890-1924*, ed. by Maurice Godé, Jacques Le Rider, and Françoise Mayer (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1996), pp. 37-51; Jeremy King has studied in detail the case of the Budweisers who refused national affiliations in Budějovice/Budweis: Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

nationally neutral) institution.³³⁸ The competition between the various associations concerned with war relief (among themselves and with state-sponsored entities) was not limited to this specific case but emerges as a recurring feature of welfare actions during the war. Many small war committees and other help offices mushroomed during these years and they were all vying for donations from the same population. They also testify to the dynamism of these actions and show that in Prague, as much as elsewhere in Europe, the mobilization for the war effort was not a state-sponsored vain enterprise imposed on a passive society.

C - Promoting patriotism from below: denunciations

Common citizens also shaped the meaning of patriotism during the war years. The state authorities (and particularly the civilian bureaucracy) had to recompose definitions of what constituted patriotic behaviour during the war and individuals played an important role in this process. Here again, the idea of a bureaucracy imposing an official meaning of Austrian patriotism to a reluctant and passive population would be misleading. The many letters of denunciation received by the authorities during the war constitute an interesting source with regard to the notions of loyalty and treason. The Prague Police Headquarters received many letters from citizens who denounced the unpatriotic character of their neighbours. For instance, a 'loyal Austrian' accused some members of the administrative commission in Břevnov/Břewnow to have been absent at the meeting organised to celebrate the birthday of the Emperor.³³⁹

The interpretation of these acts of denunciation is perilous because the self-professed loyalty or patriotism of the letter-writers can hide many more personal motives or rivalries unknown to the historian. However, the dimension of doing one's duty in wartime propelling to denunciation should not be underestimated, as Maureen Healy has shown in the Viennese case.³⁴⁰ In the context of occupation or totalitarian regimes, denunciation has been described as a means for citizens to use the power of the state to further private interests.³⁴¹ Examining this practice in

³³⁸ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S11/2/74, no 12385, 19 April 1916.

³³⁹ Letter translated into German (from Czech presumably), PP 1908-1915, ka 2255, sig P 5/12, 22 August 1915.

³⁴⁰ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 154.

³⁴¹ Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: the Soviet conquest of Poland's western Ukraine and western Belorussia*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1988. p. 117-121.

other contexts reveals a more complex picture where denunciation could be part of the civic culture.³⁴² The numbers of denunciations that do not mention a specific person or do not call for a specific punishment encourages viewing them in light of the letter-writer's relationship to the state.

The 'patriots' were not always targeting a specific person but were also concerned with the patriotic character of the city itself. Some street names or shop names were a frequent topic of complaint in denunciation letters. Serbian streets or Russian streets in some Prague suburbs would offend the author's sense of patriotism. The letters were often anonymous, signed with a pseudonym underlining the patriotic spirit of the author. This practice would continue in the interwar period as Czech-speaking denouncers in the new Czechoslovak capital signalled German-speaking signs to the Prague City Council.³⁴³ In both cases, authorities acted upon the urge to purge public space. In order to render the city more patriotic, the police responded to these prompts by enforcing the removal of any name of cafés or streets with a reference to the enemy states: Russia, France and England.³⁴⁴ This measure was a reaction to the complaints of several anonymous 'patriots' who had been shocked to see English and French still displayed in the streets of Prague. They considered it a shame for Prague in the eyes of the rest of Austria. 'Einige gute Patrioten' (a few good patriots) for example, complained about the instructions in the Russian language at several hotels and cafés in the centre of Prague. They remarked on the fact that Russia had banned inscriptions in a language other than Russian and that the owners of these establishments being patriots themselves would not object to the removal. These signs thus served 'no practical purpose and simply provoke[d] every good Austrian'.³⁴⁵ The fact that the writers mention the owners without animosity shows that the main quibble here was genuinely with the way the city looked. The vigilance of common citizens was supposed to supplement the police efforts.

³⁴² Sace Elder, 'Murder, Denunciation and Criminal Policing in Weimar Berlin', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2006, 401–19.

³⁴³ Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen. Eine Geschichte Der Tschechisch-Jüdisch-Deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)* (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012), pp. 127–128.

³⁴⁴ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, sig. F 8/3.

³⁴⁵ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, sig. F 8/3, letter 22 June 1915.

The Prague Police Headquarters then instructed the officers to pay attention to these signs during their rounds and ask for their removal.³⁴⁶ In September 1915, the police station in the Upper New Town reported the removal of any signs in Russian, English or French from various cafés and establishments: a pub called ‘At the English queen’ had to take off its sign while the Café Louvre, one of the most prominent coffeehouses in Prague, also considered eliminating its street sign.³⁴⁷ Presumably the same group of patriots mentioned above (as can be assumed from the letter format and the pseudonym) wrote to the Chief of Police in November: while praising the elimination of Slavic colours from urban space, they noticed that a few French names such as ‘Le Chic Parisien’ could still be found on the main streets of Prague.³⁴⁸ This campaign shows the reciprocal influence of the public on the police in matters of patriotism. The police, in a context of manpower shortage, were helped by the common citizens who brought to their attention contraventions to the wartime spirit. Denunciators ensured the uniform execution of official decisions. A woman remarked, for instance, that the ‘Russian’ street in Vršovice/Wrschowitz had been renamed in honour of Franz Joseph but that the street signs had not yet been changed.³⁴⁹

The definition of ‘Austrian’ and ‘patriotic’ could shift depending on the letter-writer. The anonymous writer ‘Austriacus’ denounced for example the flags hung in front of the Czech Women’s Help Committee which included the Bohemian and Prague flags but failed to display the Austrian colours, black and gold.³⁵⁰ This institution devoted to war charity and patriotic goals had not intended to contravene any rules.³⁵¹ The meaning of Austrian patriotism during the war was thus the subject of a contest between different institutions and groups who had a different conception of what constituted appropriate behaviour in wartime. This particular example typifies the national tensions between Czechs and Germans in Prague (a German-speaking writer accusing a Czech association) but shows them competing in their Austrian loyalty. This process

³⁴⁶ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, sig. F 8/3, memorandum by the Chief of Police to the central inspectors and district leaders, 2 July 1915.

³⁴⁷ From the Upper New Town Police Station to the Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2999, sig. L 20/5, ZI 3223/III, 13 September 1915.

³⁴⁸ Letter to the Police Headquarters 3 November 1915, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, sig. F 5/16, no 4099.

³⁴⁹ Letter from Berta S. in German, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2999, sig. L 20/5, no 32997, 16 November 1915.

³⁵⁰ Letter received 16 April 1917, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3094, sig S 11/2/49, no 8420.

³⁵¹ Deposition by Vilma Nováková, ebenda.

of national competition for 'loyalty' can be found in other imperial contexts during the war. Catriona Pennell has shown how recruitment into the army highlighted this competition in Ireland.³⁵²

Denunciations show that urban public space was considered as a reflection of one's identity (or at least ideally). Denunciators found a dissonance between their sense of self or of the polity to which they belonged and the current appearance of the streets and wished to redress this. The complex interplay of loyalty observed in Habsburg subjects (dynastic, national, local) was also visible in these denunciations.³⁵³ For instance, the participation in the control of urban space by citizens could be motivated by the civic pride of its inhabitants who were worried about the respectability of Prague. Tomáš B. thus wrote to the Prague Mayor to suggest him to forbid citizens from hanging laundry out of their windows during the days of city-wide flag decoration. Concerned with the upcoming Emperor's birthday, he wrote 'in the interest of the royal city of Prague' to eliminate this 'bad habit which disfigures the metropolis'.³⁵⁴ This example highlights the possible integration of a local patriotism into the larger state patriotism. It also reveals an engagement with popular imperial symbolism in wartime.

II - Public celebrations and patriotic display

The war transformed the use of public space in cities at the rear, as the patriotic support for the war effort was displayed in main streets and buildings. State authorities attempted to 'impose their own "official" meanings on that space',³⁵⁵ as Jon Lawrence has shown in the case

³⁵² Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 189.

³⁵³ On loyalty in the Habsburg Empire see: Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky, *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

³⁵⁴ Letter to the Prague Mayor in Czech, NA, PP 1916-20, ka 2931, F 13/2, no 24358, 14 August 1915.

³⁵⁵ Jon Lawrence, 'Public space, political space', in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007), II, pp. 280-312 (p. 280).

of Paris, London and Berlin and ‘wartime identities were configured and displayed on the street’.³⁵⁶

A - Street names, flags and festivals during the war

As elsewhere in Europe, patriotic symbols colonized urban space during the war. The renaming of several streets in Prague to fit the patriotic agenda of the Habsburg authorities constituted one of the means to give a more patriotic character to the city. Names that referred to enemy states were avoided and replaced by more neutral ones. In the suburb of Košiče/Koschiř, Belgrade and Cetinje streets were given more neutral names in September 1915.³⁵⁷ Clearing the streets of any reference to the enemy states participated in this conception of a public space in unison with the fighting happening on Austria-Hungary’s borders; another measure was to display loyalty to the dynasty by naming streets after members of the imperial and royal family. One of the main squares in the city, formerly called Josef Square was renamed after Franz Joseph I while the avenue linking Wenceslas Square to the train station was renamed in honour of the new heir to the throne, and after 1916 Emperor, Charles. Another square in the centre took the name of his wife Zita.³⁵⁸ The motives for these name changes could be very strategic: the Czech Commission for Child Protection and Youth Welfare also decided to name a new children’s hospital in honour of Zita to make sure that the contributions would not be diverted to the Vienna hospital that had just taken her name.³⁵⁹ As we shall see, the new Czechoslovak government would make the changing of street names to erase the Habsburg past one of its first measures, demonstrating the importance of imprinting the new regime in urban space.

The display of flags and banners constituted another visible sign of the city’s involvement in the war. The mayor encouraged the city inhabitants to decorate their houses with flags for the celebration of victories or of the Emperor’s birthday or jubilee.³⁶⁰ The question of which flags people hung at their homes or on official buildings was not a trivial one in late imperial Austria.

³⁵⁶ Emmanuelle Cronier, ‘The Street’, in *ibid.* p. 58.

³⁵⁷ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium rady a magistrátu, ka 844, sig. 41 1, no 3365, 13 September 1915.

³⁵⁸ *Domov za války: svědectví účastníků*, ed. by Alois Žípek (Praha: Pokrok, 1929), V, p. 470.

³⁵⁹ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 867, sig. 68/9, no 1258, 17 April 1917.

³⁶⁰ Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka*, p. 211.

It attested to one's loyalties, to the state or to the nation. Both were not incompatible and more than one flag could be displayed on a building. Thus, since the end of the 19th century, people had hung various flags for patriotic celebrations: the black and yellow flag, symbol of the Habsburgs (imperial colours), the red and white flag, symbol of Bohemia and the Czech nation (provincial colours) or the black, red and gold flag, symbolising the German nation.³⁶¹

The regional authorities took the flag decorations as a reliable sign of political loyalty. When Governor Coudenhove assessed the success of his initiative to promote Austrian patriotism in September 1915, he considered the increase in numbers of black and yellow flags displayed in Bohemian districts as a clear signal.³⁶² Whether genuine or forced, this movement seems to have been well followed in Prague during the first years of the conflict. Overall, the wartime imperial celebrations contrast with the 1908 jubilee where Prague was the only provincial capital not illuminated and the celebrations were overshadowed by Czech/German national riots.³⁶³ During the war, the illuminations were again relinquished but the purpose was this time to donate the money instead to the War Widows and Orphans Fund and thus participate in the patriotic effort. The population in Prague was invited to 'limit the expression of the festive mood to the hoisting of flags'.³⁶⁴ The war saw a last flourish of the imperial rituals that had cemented the dynastic loyalty in the late 19th century around the figure of Emperor Franz Joseph.³⁶⁵

Franz Joseph's 85th birthday in August 1915 was equally honoured throughout the city. Not only the central authorities but every suburb hoisted imperial and provincial flags on its main buildings. Shops and offices were closed and all the churches held celebratory services in the morning. The German-speaking community organised a large concert in one of the major parks

³⁶¹ Nancy Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 131. For flags as symbol of loyalty in the interwar context see: Elena Mannová: "“Sie wollen keine Loyalität lernen!”: Identitätsdiskurse und lokale Lebenswelten in der Südslowakei 1918-1938", in *Staat, Loyalität und Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa 1918-1941*, ed. by Peter Haslinger and Joachim von Puttkamer (München: Oldenbourg, 2007), pp. 45-67.

³⁶² Memorandum from Coudenhove to local authorities 23 September 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5172, sig. 8/1/92/19, n° 40476.

³⁶³ Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, pp. 127-130.

³⁶⁴ Posters in Czech and German inviting to donate a gift, undated, either 1915 or 1916, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, sig. M 34/1.

³⁶⁵ Daniel L. Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005).

on the outskirts of Prague which attracted around 40,000 people.³⁶⁶ On one of the islands of the Vltava/Moldau, concerts and illuminations dazzled the crowd gathered on the river banks. The Czech-speaking theatre in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge closed the day with a representation of Smetana's *Bartered Bride* preceded by a *tableau vivant* featuring the Emperor and the city of Prague.³⁶⁷ The vitality of these ceremonial traditions during the war challenges the idea that the 1908 jubilee was a symbol of a failed Austrian identity.³⁶⁸ At a time of heightened patriotism in Europe, Habsburg festivals were also able to generate mobilization.

Military victories added new occasions to the usual calendar of patriotic celebrations. In June 1915, after the recovery of Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv, the Prague mayor announced the victory with posters on the city walls and an announcement that called for every homeowner to put a flag on his window.³⁶⁹ The victory was celebrated with a procession of 1000 school children, military parades and religious celebrations.³⁷⁰ The city was thus living to the rhythm of the progress of the conflict and drawing on imperial forms of festivity to celebrate it. At that period, even the consul from the German Reich, who cannot be suspected of any pro-Czech sympathies, mentioned the zeal with which houses were decorated with flags with more presence of the black and yellow colours.³⁷¹

The element of coercion from the authorities and the presence of the military played naturally a role but these flags were so much part of Austrian political culture that they could be appropriated by citizens. For the Emperor's birthday in 1917 some Czech-speaking citizens in the suburb of Smíchov/Smichow complained to the governor that they had not seen the Bohemian (provincial) red and white flag on the town hall for this occasion. They felt offended, explaining that: 'the population of Smíchov is most loyal and it is the duty of a government to respect their

³⁶⁶ *Prager Tagblatt*, 19 August 1915, p. 8.

³⁶⁷ *Národní listy*, 19 August 1915, p. 4.

³⁶⁸ Steven Beller, 'Kraus's firework: State Consciousness Raising in the 1908 Jubilee Parade in Vienna and the Problem of Austrian identity' in *Staging the Past: the Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, ed. by Maria Bucur, and Nancy Wingfield (West Lafayette : Purdue University Press, 2001), pp. 46-74.

³⁶⁹ *Národní listy*, 25 June 1915, p. 3.

³⁷⁰ *Prager Tagblatt*, 25 June 1915, p. 5.

³⁷¹ Report from the German consul, 24 August 1915, NAL, GFM 6/45, Ö101 Böhmen, 36.

national feelings most carefully.³⁷² Loyalty and national feelings were not conceived as antagonistic as long as they could be both correctly represented in public space.

B - Colours and the monitoring of public space

Colours displayed in everyday life acquired a special significance during the war. Michel Pastoureau has established colours as a worthwhile historical object by examining their changing status through different periods.³⁷³ In the context of Bohemia, the First World War represented a shift from previous attitudes. In public notices, the Chief of Police warned against the display of the Slavic tricolour (blue, red and white).³⁷⁴ People were arrested for selling matches or other objects containing these colours. Matches were commonly sold for the benefit of national associations such as the *Malice Česká* in the pre-war period.³⁷⁵ As a result, these matchboxes were decorated with national motifs.³⁷⁶ A firm selling ink was also accused of treason because of the use of these colours in its advertising campaigns.³⁷⁷ Shop windows and items that were apparent in the streets were particularly regulated. For example, the police forbade the sale of toy soldiers wearing the flags of enemy countries in several stores in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge.³⁷⁸ More inventive businessmen could find ways to continue selling their merchandise despite the prohibition. A company with a large stock of sardine boxes labelled with the forbidden colours told the police that they were of Norwegian origin and that the blue, red, and white colours were thus a reference to the flag of a neutral country. The police authorised the sale of the stock on the condition that it was not displayed in the shop windows.³⁷⁹ With this

³⁷² Anonymous letter, April 1917, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4878, sig. 3/18/4, no 12895.

³⁷³ Michel Pastoureau, *Bleu: histoire d'une couleur* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2000).

³⁷⁴ NA, PP, 1908-1915, ka 2178 sig F 5/16, no 23739, 26 August 1915.

³⁷⁵ For an example in another part of the monarchy see: Stefan Wedrac, 'L'ira dell'aquila: lo scioglimento della società scolastica "Lega Nazionale" nel Litorale austriaco', *Storia e Futuro*, 19 (2009) (www.storiaefuturo.com).

³⁷⁶ Example of matchboxes sold in Karlín/Karolinenthal: NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5089, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 26994, 2 September 1916.

³⁷⁷ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, sig F 8/1, no 13759, 20 August 1917.

³⁷⁸ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3017, sig. M 34/1, no 35386, 9 December 1915.

³⁷⁹ Report from the Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5084, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 15316, 13 May 1916.

explanation, the firm was probably above all trying to avoid losing money rather than defending pan-Slavism.

Figure 6: Label from a sardine box in 'pan-Slavic' colours.

Many of these actions were not actually linked to a political statement on the conflict and the police could be, at times, overzealous. Thus, the policeman František Holopírek noticed on a wall in a Prague suburb that an advertisement for a nearby pub contained the three forbidden colours as the text was in blue on a white background and underlined in red. The report from his superior, however, concluded that this sign did not correspond to a Slavic tricolour as it was mixed with other colours.³⁸⁰ These 'offenses' could lead to an arrest and sometimes a prosecution. Public space was thus highly monitored by the local police who tried to preserve its patriotic aspect.

The three Slavic colours had not been a particular subject of offense before the war and were thus very widespread in public space. The novelty of this treatment for Czech-speakers can be illustrated by a letter received by the Prague Police Headquarters demanding confirmation of the order to remove Slavic colours:

'Today's issue of the newspaper in Graz published an article, saying that the Prague police headquarters made an announcement forbidding wearing the Czech tricolour. As the Czech public does not even want to believe it, I would like the [glorious] police directorate to tell me what the truth of it is. Regards, Fr. Beneš, Sergeant.'³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, F 5/16, no 35252, Report from the suburb of Nusle, 13 October 1915.

³⁸¹ NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, F 5/16, no 25683, 2 September 1915.

The reaction of many incriminated ‘traitors’ was similar and ranged from disbelief to annoyance. For the police themselves, the criminalization of these colours was not without problem. Not only were they common in many advertising campaigns for various objects, from coffee to packaged soup which made the effort to remove them completely from sight difficult but the alliance of blue, red and white could have many other meanings. They were also the colours of the crownland of Carniola for example. Unfortunately, the fight against visible Pan-Slavism seems to have produced a certain alienation in part of the Czech public rather than the imposition of a uniform patriotic meaning they were aiming at.

The astonishment of the new ‘traitors’ was matched by the amazement of the ‘patriots’ when they saw the incriminated colours in public space. An anonymous writer shared his feelings upon noticing the colours at the station in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge: ‘that on the platform boards and other signs the blue-white-red celebrates its joyous existence in silent toleration [...] is the object of an unpleasant amazement.’³⁸² The shock to see the signs remaining in a small suburban train station points to the new taboos created by the war atmosphere.

In the second half of the war, the resentment created by the ban of pan-Slavic colours could fuel disaffection toward the Austrian state for Czech-speakers. An anonymous denunciation reports that the sign of an association in pan-Slavic colours that had been removed was reinstated in its former place in 1917.³⁸³ In the absence of more evidence, it is difficult to assess if this was done on purpose but the gesture of the draper Václav Moora in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge was much less ambiguous. On 16 May 1918, he hoisted two small flags in pan-Slavic colours from the window of his apartment and refused to take them down when asked by the police. Instead, he added another small flag. The district leader came to visit him and he then relented. Nevertheless, he sent an angry telegram to the Ministry of Interior justifying his actions: ‘the police station here torments me for the display of flags in Austrian colours and yet they do not move a finger for the display of pan-German treasonous colours. I ask for protection.’³⁸⁴ The consequences of his actions were mild (an explicit reference to the imperial amnesty in the report explained this leniency) and he was soon afterwards released. This

³⁸² Anonymous letter in German, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2999, sig. L 20/5, no 34300, 27 November 1915.

³⁸³ Anonymous letter in German signed ‘Austriacus’, NA, PP 1916-1920, F 8/1, 7 February 1917.

³⁸⁴ Police report (including the telegram in Czech), NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, F 8/1, no 6861, 1 June 1918.

act of defiance was pointing to the internal contradictions of the Habsburg authorities' wartime policy. Interestingly, this protest was still expressed as an Austrian citizen and addressed to the central authorities in Vienna. The contest over colours in public space did not only stem from a top-down dynamic but was also instigated by ordinary citizens.

Patriotic culture in the streets of Prague was not limited to the monitoring of flags and colours in public space; it was also evidenced by the display of the city's contribution to the war effort. The war was everywhere and civilians were constantly reminded of its reality and asked to join in the common effort.

III - Participation in the war effort through collections

A - Making the war more visible in urban space

Charity actions requiring the participation of citizens were a constant of the war years. Praguers contributed to collections for soldiers or widows and orphans and were constantly expected to participate in the common sacrifice. Public official collections were organised in the streets of the city: from the metal collections in the first years of the conflict to the 'sacrifice days' of October 1916. In 1914, there were two 'flower days' on 4 October and 1 November. On the latter day, Bohemian Governor Thun drove through Prague giving a coin to every volunteer he encountered and encouraging them in their work. He apparently came back to his palace with his car full of flowers.³⁸⁵ In 1915, collections were organised during the 'May Help' on 13 May and the 'Golden Spike' in September. The week of the Red Cross (30th April – 7th May 1916) constituted a high point of the collection drive.³⁸⁶ Volunteers standing on street corners raised money for the benefit of various charities connected with the war (Imperial War Widows and Orphans Fund, Red Cross, Black Cross). The conflict became thus unavoidable in everyday life: its representation displayed in posters suggesting giving more for the war victims. Volunteers for the war relief constituted a reminder of the war in every public space in the city. Collection boxes were placed in schools, cafés and cemeteries inviting participation from everyone. They were

³⁸⁵ *Národní politika*, 3 November 1914, p. 4.

³⁸⁶ List of the collections available in the report entitled 'How the commune of Prague and the Local War Help Office with the corporations established at the Old Town Hall participate to the war relief', AHMP, MHMP I Presidium rády a magistrátu, ka 894, sig. 83/214, no date (probably end of October 1916).

also present during special events organised to support the war effort: several concerts in public parks and theatrical representations, religious services in the different churches of the city.³⁸⁷

The little badges sold in support of the various war charities and worn on jacket lapels demonstrated one's commitment to the war effort. They testified to the involvement of Praguers in the war. A Czech author, writing in 1918, complains about the ubiquity of these badges on the streets of Prague during the conflict: 'And Czech [...] cowards [...] started to adapt, attaching on their coats little flags with a white U (Unterseeboot) or at least the emblem of the Red Cross. [...] It was painful to walk through the streets of Prague.'³⁸⁸ Knowing what the people wearing these badges associated with them is complex: some did it out of loyalty to the state, others to show their solidarity with the soldiers, others because they had avoided army service and were thus demonstrating their involvement in the war effort. Civil servants were sometimes obliged to contribute to these collections. On the Emperor's birthday in August 1915, flowers were sold on the streets by ladies from the local war help offices in Prague's suburbs.

War symbols also abounded in popular entertainment. Orchestras played the imperial anthem regularly in cafés, restaurants and pubs to celebrate news from the front.³⁸⁹ The anthem was so regularly performed that it gave rise to a new type of denunciations of those who did not stand up during it.³⁹⁰ As these incidents often occurred in pubs late at night, the police attempted to prevent the anthem from being performed after a certain hour.³⁹¹ After the shutdown of dance and music halls in the first months of the war,³⁹² entertainment resumed gradually with the excuse of raising money for the war effort. Many theatres and cabarets in Prague during the war staged plays for the benefit of the Imperial fund for widows and orphans or for the benefit of the Red Cross³⁹³. Some theatres also organized patriotic events such as *tableaux vivants* glorifying the soldiers in field. In the suburban theatre Urania, one of these tableaux represented the glorious

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Jaroslav Nauman, *Válečné glossy. Prosy 1914-1918* (Praha: Sokolské besedy, 1918), pp. 44-45.

³⁸⁹ See a report from the Police Headquarters to the Governor's Office, NA, PP, 1916-1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/2, no 27515, 26 May 1915.

³⁹⁰ An example in *Čech*, 10 December 1914, p. 9.

³⁹¹ Memorandum from the Bohemian Governor, NA, PP, 1916-1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/2, 19 July 1916.

³⁹² Memorandum from the Bohemian governor August 6th, 1914 NA, PP, 1916-1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/1, no 17129.

³⁹³ See all the donations made by theaters to war charities during the war NA, PP, 1916-1920, ka 3137, T15-19.

return of soldiers and their welcome at home by women and children. Children from the local schools were enrolled to play their own roles and thus participate in the patriotic representation of the fatherland.

*Figure 7: Red Cross and Widow and Orphan Fund badges, 1916.*³⁹⁴

An event like the week of Red Cross (simultaneous in all the major towns of Cisleithania) from April 30th to May 7th 1916 represented a moment of more intense engagement with these actions. The local committee of the Red Cross tried to both get more contributions and new members by selling badges on the street. Around 100,000 of these badges were sold during that week in Prague.³⁹⁵ Local male school children were supposed to accompany their teachers door to door to appeal to the generosity of the population while girls helped to raise money in the streets, distributing flowers to anyone who made a contribution.³⁹⁶ Marie Schäferová recalls how, as a teacher, she was obliged by the authorities to participate in many of the collections, canvassing the neighbourhood near her school.³⁹⁷ Theatres, cinemas, concert halls, and other

³⁹⁴ AHMP, Jiří Čarek – Dokumentace, ka 21, inv. č. 271.

³⁹⁵ NA, ZČK, ka 49, Týden Červeného kříže Summář.

³⁹⁶ Letter from the Prague City Council NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/89, no 13103, 26 April 1916.

³⁹⁷ AHMP, Marie Schäferová, ka 1, inv. č. 5, p. 14.

venues were hosting special performances during that week. The Czech National Theatre organized for example a special show of a Smetana opera for the benefit of the charity while a garden party on the main island of the river Vltava/Moldau attracted most of the city's elite.³⁹⁸ In Smíchov/Smichow, a representation in the local theatre took place, as well as a popular celebration in a public garden on the last day.³⁹⁹ Propaganda efforts included the display of posters but also Sunday homilies in Catholic churches.⁴⁰⁰

Figure 8: Collection points in the city during the Red Cross Week (30 April to 7 May 1916) and, a month later, on 1 June 1916 (fundraising for returning soldiers).

³⁹⁸ *Venkov*, 2 May 1916 and *Hlas národa*, 2 May 1916, NA, ZČK, ka 49, Týden Červeného kříže, Výstřižky z novin.

³⁹⁹ Letter from the committee of ladies in Smíchov/Smichow, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/93, no 13184, 27 April 1916.

⁴⁰⁰ Instruktionen für die Vorbereitung der Roten Kreuz Woche (30. April bis 7. Mai 1916), S. 3, NA, ZČK, ka 49, Týden Červeného kříže Summář.

This map shows the different locations in the city where money was collected during the Red Cross Week.⁴⁰¹ The same points of collection were used one month later in a fundraising drive for the benefit of returning soldiers. Most of them were located on busy street corners where passers-by were likely to stop. There was a high concentration in the centre of the city, especially around the frequented avenues Ferdinandová/Ferdinandstraße and Am Graben/Na příkopě. Train stations and restaurants or cafés constituted other central points for the fundraising efforts. Some of them could also be found outside of churches. Walking through the streets of Prague on these days, it would have been difficult to avoid the collections, be it on the city's bridges, in public parks, or in front of the main shops.

B - A different language of mobilization in Prague?

The language used to mobilize the local population in Prague often relied more on the motive of help and suffering of the soldiers or orphans rather than on the glorification of the war deeds. The support for the war effort was more often framed in terms of a support for the soldiers from Prague rather than more general concepts. Hubertus Jahn has shown similar features in the Russian patriotic culture during the war.⁴⁰² In many of the images used to sell and promote the war effort, the enemy is conspicuously absent. The heroization of Austrian soldiers, very present in the images produced by the official relief effort, does not feature so frequently in material produced in Prague.⁴⁰³ Does this suggest the existence of another type of 'war culture'?⁴⁰⁴ The concept in itself can be useful but not applied blindly from the French model, thus leaving more space for specific wartime representations of the conflict and ways in which people made sense

⁴⁰¹ List of collection points in the different districts of Prague for the Red Cross Week: 'Street Collections 30 April and 7 May 1916', NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/89. Similar list for the collection on June 1st for returning soldiers (with bilingual signs): AHMP, MHMP I, ka 907, sig. OVK.

⁴⁰² Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia*, pp. 63-83.

⁴⁰³ On the images in the official Austrian postcards see Bürgschwendter, p. 114.

⁴⁰⁴ On the image of the enemy in French 'war culture' see Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18, retrouver la guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

of it.⁴⁰⁵ As Jay Winter underlined, ‘war cultures’ should be understood in the plural, even within the same society.⁴⁰⁶

The ‘nostalgic turn’ to local tradition, identified in the case of London, Berlin, and Paris, was also one aspect of the mobilization in Bohemia.⁴⁰⁷ The representation of Saint Wenceslaus, medieval ‘king’ and patron saint of Bohemia, was used in war relief actions. The Provincial War Help Office (for Bohemia) produced a badge representing a riding figure of the saint to be sold for the war effort. It bore the inscription: ‘Saint Wenceslas, intercede for our army and for us’.⁴⁰⁸ This badge was sold around the time of the annual celebrations of the saint which were very popular in Prague. It was to be sold to the students of a secondary school in the hope that they would wear it around that day and encourage others to buy it.

The emphasis in representations was put much more on images of grief rather than on a demonization of the monarchy’s enemies. Neither did exaggerated jingoistic caricatures figure in the official postcards produced by the central agencies like the War Aid Office (*Kriegshilfsbüro*) in Vienna. Rather, they represented an ideal depiction of the war.⁴⁰⁹ The drawing used by the Local War Help Office in Prague to promote its Christmas gifts to servicemen is an interesting case to contrast with more official images of the war. Executed by the artist Max Švabinský, it showed a tired dragon soldier riding on his horse in the middle of the snow.⁴¹⁰ The image was first used in 1914 in posters displayed in the streets of Prague with the slogan: ‘Remember your brothers in the field!’. It appealed to the viewer’s empathy with the soldiers in the middle of winter. The *Prague Municipal Bulletin* credited the poster with the success of the collection, explaining that, after its appearance on street corners, citizens brought their gifts in ‘like bees to

⁴⁰⁵ See the definition of ‘war culture’ in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, ‘Violence et consentement: la “culture de guerre” du premier conflit mondial’, in *Pour une histoire culturelle* ed. by Jean-Pierre Rioux, Jean-François Sirinelli (Paris: Seuil, 1997), pp. 251-271.

⁴⁰⁶ Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, ‘Conclusion’, in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007), pp. 468-481.

⁴⁰⁷ Jay Winter, ‘The practices of metropolitan life in wartime’ in *ibid.*, pp. 1-19 (pp. 10-11).

⁴⁰⁸ Letter from the Provincial War Help Office to the secondary school Minerva, AHMP, Dívčí gymnásium ‘Krásnohorská’ Praha II, ka 16, inv. č. 961, 20 September 1916.

⁴⁰⁹ Bürgschwendter, p. 119.

⁴¹⁰ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig.OVK.

the hive'.⁴¹¹ Having commissioned the work, the municipality might not have been the most objective judge but the success of Švabinský's drawing can be inferred from its subsequent uses. In early 1915, it was reproduced in postcards which served as vouchers in a charity lottery organised by the municipality. These postcards were available in schools, cinemas, cafés and concert halls.⁴¹² Later that year, 50,000 stickers with the same image sold very quickly in primary schools around Prague and the suburbs.⁴¹³ This work of art by a prominent Czech artist of the time became one of the vehicles of a representation of the war centred on emotions and compassion.

Figure 9: Max Švabinský's lithograph to send gifts to soldiers (1914).

The collection of stamps and stickers gathered by the archivist Jiří Čarek shows an emphasis on similar themes. Born in 1908, the future archivist collected as a child during the conflict various items related to the war effort that can be found (without commentary) in his personal papers.⁴¹⁴ It gives us an idea of what a Czech-speaking middle-class child in Prague might have been exposed to. Four out of sixteen stamps bear a text in Czech (the others are in German). Several of them feature members of the imperial family or Habsburg heroes (Prince

⁴¹¹ *Věstník obecní královského hlavního města Prahy*, XXI, 22, 24 December 1914, p. 419.

⁴¹² *Národní listy*, 10 January 1915, p. 4.

⁴¹³ *Národní politika*, 17 December 1915, p. 3.

⁴¹⁴ AHMP, Jiří Čarek – Dokumentace, ka 21, inv. č. 270.

Eugene). Others represent children or soldiers in the care of the war welfare agencies, insisting on the orphans, widows or wounded soldiers deserving help. The illustrations used in the stamps rely on a sense of tradition or on the usual tropes of charity.

A large poster used by the local branch of the Imperial Widow and Orphan Fund represented a crying mother veiled in black and holding her child. She is comforted by an angel. The accompanying text invited every Czech to do his duty to the homeland by helping these children.⁴¹⁵ This image, also used in campaigns in Vienna⁴¹⁶, shows a similar use of suffering as a means of patriotic mobilization. This study of the images for the war effort circulating in Prague would need to be expanded (especially with more commercial postcards or products) but the official production shows an attempt to mobilize society through solidarity with the soldiers and their dependents.

The Austrian war effort in Prague was not inexistent or exclusively the result of actions by German-speakers but represented an important part of daily life in the city. As usual, it is difficult to evaluate how much this activism was spurred by genuine involvement or a sense of social (or even military) pressure. The motivation behind these actions is maybe not as important as the different forms it took and the impact it had on the city landscape. It is also interesting to see what was considered to be able to touch broader sections of the population.

If the official propaganda of the Austrian state is often seen as missing or failing during the war years, these actions whose goals were more modest could be considered to have enjoyed a relative success in the first half of the war. 1916 seems to constitute a high point in this respect. By 1917, the activity around the war relief had quietly reduced. The deteriorating conditions in Prague could explain this disaffection; many inhabitants could simply not afford any more to support the war effort. If they did, they were more likely to support other causes. The teachers of the industrial school in Prague explained in December 1917 that they could not donate a portion of their salary to the war relief as they had already given that month to the Czech association *České srdce* (Czech Heart, see chapter 4). The remobilization process in favour of the war that

⁴¹⁵ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig. 83/116.

⁴¹⁶ For example in this poster from 1917: http://www.bildarchivaustria.at/Pages/ImageDetail.aspx?p_iBildID=14666400, [accessed 19 October 2014].

historians observed in England and France did not happen in Austria-Hungary in the years 1917 and 1918. Instead, a counter-mobilization against the Empire occurred, often shifting allegiances to the national causes.⁴¹⁷

The Austrian patriotism fostered during the war relied to an extent on a form of dynastic loyalty linked to the personality of the Emperor. When Franz Joseph died in November 1916, the Emperor who had reigned throughout the lives of most of his subjects passed away. It is difficult to isolate his death to assess the role it played in the Empire's progressive loss of legitimacy. Confronted with mass death on the battlefield, Praguers could not be expected to react as they would have in peacetime. Maureen Healy explained that Viennese residents were already too dulled by their own war experience to mourn the Emperor.⁴¹⁸ In Prague, every public building displayed a mourning flag, of course. Black flags were also seen on private houses, even many houses according to the *Prager Tagblatt* and the City Council in Žižkov/Žižkow.⁴¹⁹ *Národní politika* and *Národní listy* only mentioned that some private homes were also decorated with black flags.⁴²⁰ The patriotic mobilization during the war years engaged Praguers' identity but also their sense of solidarity with the victims of the war which is the subject of the next chapter.

⁴¹⁷ John Horne, 'Public Opinion and Politics', in *A Companion to World War I*, ed. by John Horne (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 289-290 and Mark Cornwall, 'Austria-Hungary and "Yugoslavia"', in *A Companion to World War I*, pp. 371-385.

⁴¹⁸ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 282.

⁴¹⁹ *Prager Tagblatt*, 22 November 1916 (evening edition), p. 2; Meeting of the City Council in Žižkov/Žižkow: NA, PP 1916-1920, ka sig. G 5/5, no 32925, 23 November 1916.

⁴²⁰ *Národní politika*, 22 November 1916 (afternoon edition), p. 4; *Národní listy*, 22 November 1916 (evening edition), p. 3.

CHAPTER 3

LINKS BETWEEN THE FRONT AND THE HINTERLAND: THE WAR AT HOME

Describing the atmosphere in Prague around Christmas 1914, the newspaper *Národní politika* remarked on the amusing presence of a snowman at the top of Wenceslas Square. It commented on its surroundings: ‘Here and there, a carriage with a red cross drove by, a group of refugees weaved in with the striking figures of the Polish Jews, an invalid hobbled with difficulty – sights (*zjevy*) to which Prague is slowly getting accustomed’.⁴²¹ This description illustrates how the conflict made its presence felt in the everyday urban landscape. Cities located in the hinterland appeared sheltered from the reality of war. As Roger Chickering explained, ‘the war’s basic discursive divide folded locality into a protected, nurturing realm of non-combat called the homefront’.⁴²² Prague represented this ideal of the homefront as it was never, at any point during the war, in danger of being invaded or closer to combat. However, this did not mean that the city did not experience the consequences of war. In recent years, historians of the First World War have challenged this dichotomy between the protected, oblivious hinterland and the battlefield. Focusing on the links between soldiers and the civilian world helps show the repercussions of war in the wider society.⁴²³ The urban setting provides an interesting lens to examine the back and forth movements between front and rear, as it became the centre of many types of wartime mobility. The city also constituted one of the institutions that could mediate the war experience back to non-fighters (among others, from the family circle to the nation).⁴²⁴

This chapter aims to show how the urban space was invaded by war and the suffering that goes with it. First, by looking at the link between local identity and soldiers, we examine its role in mobilization. Our second focus is on the visible transformations the cityscape undergoes

⁴²¹ *Národní politika*, 27 December 1914, p. 7.

⁴²² Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 365.

⁴²³ Emmanuelle Cronier, *Permissionnaires dans la Grande Guerre*, (Paris: Belin, 2013). See also: Clémentine Vidal-Naquet, *Couples dans la Grande Guerre. Le tragique et l’ordinaire du lien conjugal* (Paris : Belles Lettres, 2014).

⁴²⁴ Pierre Purseigle, *Mobilisation, sacrifice et citoyenneté : Angleterre-France, 1900-1918* (Paris: Belles lettres, 2013).

through the arrival of war victims. The goal is to reveal the city as a more porous space receiving some of the casualties from the front. In Chapter 1 we explored the increased military presence in the city, now we turn to the evidence of suffering in the form of wounded soldiers and refugees either passing through the city or stopping there during the conflict.

I - Urban identity in the war effort

Focusing on the role played by a specific Prague identity in the war effort seems to be taking for granted that such an identity pre-exists. But we must in fact abandon the myth of a homogenous Prague identity that would define feelings of belonging for all or even most of the city's inhabitants. At a time when the city was not administratively unified, local neighbourhoods could act as more powerful frames of reference. The pitfall of reifying identity as a category of analysis was pointed out by Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper.⁴²⁵ And yet, in the East Central European context in the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing on urban identifications has been a way to avoid an exclusively national understanding of identity.⁴²⁶ Nathaniel Wood's recent study of Cracow has highlighted the prominence of urban identification in the context of modernization at the turn of the century.⁴²⁷ In a similar way, Prague represented another aspiring metropolis (*velkoměsto/Großstadt*) in the Austro-Hungarian Empire where affiliation with the city became part of the modern experience. The official title of the city reflected its relative importance: the royal capital of Prague (*královské hlavní město Praha/königliche Hauptstadt Prag*), the word capital referring here to Bohemia. In the context of the war, urban identity became a powerful tool to mobilize citizens around the conflict. Thus, while not claiming to give a definitive picture of a Prague identity at war, we aim to enquire into the concrete ways in which the city represented itself in the war effort through the solidarity it deployed for its own soldiers.

⁴²⁵ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000), 1-47.

⁴²⁶ Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁴²⁷ Nathaniel D. Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan: Urban Selfhood and the Making of Modern Cracow* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

A - Helping Prague's soldiers: collections for 'Prague's children'

As for other European city-dwellers, the departure of men to the front constituted the most obvious impact of the war for Praguers. The soldiers who left from Prague sometimes expressed a strong link with their hometown.⁴²⁸ As we saw, local recruits were escorted by popular crowds to the train station. A police report notes that 'S bohem Praho' (Farewell Prague) belonged to the usual cries of waving soldiers.⁴²⁹ Homesickness on the front was a common experience for many soldiers of the Great War.⁴³⁰ Serving on the Serbian front, Prague journalist Egon Erwin Kisch regularly expresses in his war diary the particular longing for loved ones but also for the city as a whole, which came to symbolize all of civilian life. He describes for example the mixture of jealousy and melancholy as two medical students received leave to take their exams: 'Going to Prague! The warm longing (*Sehnsucht*), everyone's thought'.⁴³¹ He also recounts the death of a fellow Prager who called him by his side and said: 'Greet Prague for me – I will not make it to Prague anymore'.⁴³² The newspaper *Národní politika* similarly stresses the soldiers' nostalgia: 'it is even moving [to see] how Praguers, who often like to complain about this or that, remember abroad their 'little mother' and look forward to returning there! 'Convey greetings to our little mother Prague', soldiers write to us from the battlefield.'⁴³³ These testimonies, to be sure, cannot be generalized and some men had more complex relations to Prague⁴³⁴, but this city identity was often taken for granted in the involvement with local soldiers on the home front.

⁴²⁸ On soldiers' connection with their home cities see: Jay Winter, 'Paris, London, Berlin: capital cities at war, 1914-1919', in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007), I, p. 7.

⁴²⁹ NA, PMV/R, ka 183, sig. 22 Böhmen, no 1748, Police report 16 January 1915.

⁴³⁰ For homesickness among rural soldiers see Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007), p. 117-121.

⁴³¹ Kisch served in the IR11 so not all soldiers were from Prague. Entry from 7 September 1914, Egon Erwin Kisch, *Schreib das auf, Kisch!*, in *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, ed. by Bodo Uhse and Gisela Kisch, (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1963-), I: *Der Mädchenhirt. Schreib das auf, Kisch! Komödien* (1966), p. 244.

⁴³² Kisch was fully bilingual and he does not mention whether this sentence was pronounced in Czech or German. Kisch, *Schreib das auf, Kisch!*, p. 279 (24 September 1914).

⁴³³ *Národní politika*, 31 January 1915, p. 7.

⁴³⁴ Stanislav Neumann for example explains his ambivalence towards his hometown. He does not like to answer where he is from. 'Another one asked "Where are you from?" and when I answered "From Prague" he asked further "Where from in Prague?" and was very offended when I answered "From the whole Prague".' This quote also points

The Prague municipality played an important role in maintaining the link between soldiers and their homeland. As early as August 1914, it created a special Local War Help Office (*Okresní válečná pomocná úřadovna*)⁴³⁵ to coordinate welfare actions for the benefit of soldiers and their families. Among other tasks, it organised regular collections of gifts to be sent to the soldiers at the front. As Jeremy King showed, municipalities in late Habsburg Austria were often agents of nationalization at the local level.⁴³⁶ In the case of Prague, which had been in Czech hands since the 1860s, municipal authorities functioned in many respects as heads of the Czech nation.⁴³⁷ However, the various charity actions undertaken by the Council were not systematically framed in national terms.⁴³⁸ The Christmas gift collections for example were advertised for men of the Prague regiments.⁴³⁹ An appeal from October 1914 called for the ‘humane feeling of the whole population of the royal capital of Prague without distinction of class or nationality’.⁴⁴⁰ It was aimed mostly at individuals, but also at Prague firms who could donate their products. The gifts (clothes, chocolate, cigarettes, tea, coffee and others) or money had to be sent (or directly brought) to the town hall on Old Town Square. The donors were then invited to specify whether the gifts were intended for soldiers from Prague regiments, for soldiers of the 8th army corps (half of Bohemia) or for soldiers in the field in general. The suburbs around Prague were urged to participate in these donations but they were also each coordinating their own relief efforts. Even during the first months of the war, the inhabitants would not all have the

to the more complex identifications with specific neighbourhoods or districts of Prague. Stanislav Neumann, *Válčení civilistovo*, in *Sebrané spisy*, ed. by Lída Špačková (Praha: Svoboda, 1948-), VIII: *Válčení civilistovo* (1949), p. 97.

⁴³⁵ The German appellation *Bezirkskriegshilfsbureau* can be found in some correspondence but most of the paperwork of the *Okresní válečná pomocná úřadovna* was in Czech, as opposed to imperial welfare institutions. A useful guide to language use and bilingualism in welfare institutions is: *Rádce v době světové války: okresní válečná pomocná úřadovna v Praze ve prospěch svých humanitních účelů* (Praha: vlast. nákl. : Praesidiál. kancelář král. hl. m. Prahy, 1916); For the meeting about the creation of the Local War Help Office see *Věstník obecní královského hlavního města Prahy*, XXI, 13-14, 27 August 1914, p. 261.

⁴³⁶ See Jeremy King, ‘The Municipal and the National in the Bohemian Lands, 1848-1914’, in *Nationalism and the Reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848-1914*, ed. by William Whyte and Oliver Zimmer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 17–46.

⁴³⁷ See Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914*, 2nd. ed., rev. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006), p. 36.

⁴³⁸ Delegates from the German population were for example invited to a meeting of the Local War Help Office, from the minutes of the Local War Help Office meeting, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1, 29 August 1914.

⁴³⁹ Donations in kind or financial contributions see *Národní politika*, 10 November 1914, p. 6.

⁴⁴⁰ Text in German, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1, 27 October 1914.

means to take part in such actions. The suburb of Bubeneč/Bubentsch refused to organize a collection of Christmas gifts explaining that the local population was not as rich as in Prague (inner city) and could not participate in another collection after the efforts of the previous weeks.⁴⁴¹ In Smíchov/Smichow, the local council explained that they organized their own collection.

In 1914, the municipality sent each soldier a parcel containing a lithograph of the Charles Bridge, a wooden tobacco pipe, zwieback, chocolate and warm clothes.⁴⁴² The accompanying text (in Czech) read: ‘The royal main city of Prague is day and night with you, brave Czech soldiers, with all its heart and in every breath’.⁴⁴³ The reactions to these gifts show a range of emotions and relationships to the city. The overwhelming majority of the several hundreds of cards received was written in Czech, with a few written in German.⁴⁴⁴ Many in their thanks expressed their gratitude to the ‘little mother Prague’ (*matička Praha*),⁴⁴⁵ thus maintaining the symbolic link with the homeland. ‘We children of the little mother Prague will never forget the blissful feelings that you ignited in us’, read one card for example.⁴⁴⁶ Other clichés like ‘golden Prague’ or ‘beautiful Prague’ abounded. Soldiers sometimes signed mentioning their regiment or unit; at other times with their addresses in Prague or the neighbourhood they came from. A soldier even mentioned his peacetime occupation. Czech identity was sometimes emphasized: ‘I cried at the thought that a Czech heart prepared it carefully for a Czech’⁴⁴⁷ but more local identities could be on display: ‘The undersigned thanks for the Christmas gift that I received as a

⁴⁴¹ City Office Bubeneč to Prague City Council, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, OVK, no 3879, 10 November 1914.

⁴⁴² Described by Kisch see Kisch, *Schreib das auf, Kisch!*, p. 385 (24 December 1914).

⁴⁴³ The mention of ‘Czech’ soldiers disappears from the text in 1915 and 1916. AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK.

⁴⁴⁴ Many cards simply thanked the Council: AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1. The thanks were published in newspapers see for example, *Národní listy*, 2 January 1915 (evening edition), p. 3.

⁴⁴⁵ This formula is a traditional way in Czech to refer to Prague. The German translation (*Mütterchen Prag*) does not appear in the cards but was sometimes also used, most famously by Kafka: ‘Dieses Mütterchen hat Krallen’ (this little mother has claws) in *Brief an Oskar Pollak* [Prag, Stempel: 20. XII. 1902], in Franz Kafka, *Briefe 1902-1024*, ed. by Max Brod (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer, 1958), p. 14.

⁴⁴⁶ Card signed Josef Pyšna, 23 December 1914, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1.

⁴⁴⁷ Card signed Josef Herman, New Year’s 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1.

Prague citizen (*příslušník*)⁴⁴⁸ or in another one: ‘we rejoice in the luck that you still just remember your good citizens (*občany*)’.⁴⁴⁹ The letters often convey strong emotions (joy, tears) and the desire to be able to come back. An interesting testimony on the gifts’ reception from a German-speaking Prague soldier, explaining how the war made him feel more like a Prager, was published in the *Prager Tagblatt*: ‘The feeling of home (*Heimatsgefühl*) has become even stronger [...] We are even more well-disposed toward the Prague Council’.⁴⁵⁰ The Council managed to send 5000 bags but continued to receive more gifts after December and organized a new expedition in February 1915. For three days all the gifts were exhibited in the town hall so that the public could admire its own offering.⁴⁵¹ This display of the gifts was repeated for the next distributions. This exhibition was a proof to the Praguers themselves of their own generosity and participation in the war effort. It presumably reinforced a sense of community witnessing the quantity of gifts that symbolised the whole city’s participation.

Subsequent Christmas collections did not enjoy the same success even though the Council continued the practice.⁴⁵² Roger Chickering also noted that the ‘orgy of public giving’ during the first Christmas constituted an ‘early highpoint’ in Freiburg.⁴⁵³ Soldiers also wrote letters to the Council to ask to be included in the distributions: some because they had been missed out earlier and some because they had appreciated the previous gift and hoped it to be renewed. In these requests, the men underline their connection (emotional or factual) to Prague. By 1917, as the economic situation on the home front deteriorated, the solidarity for soldiers fighting could not be maintained at such a high level. Interestingly, a letter of thanks for the Christmas gifts included a reference to these conditions: ‘[The Prague children] were very happy that little mother Prague remembered them; they also remembered little mother Prague and its children having sent on

⁴⁴⁸ Card signed Fr. Richter, 10 January 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1.

⁴⁴⁹ Card signed Režny (?) no date, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1.

⁴⁵⁰ *Prager Tagblatt*, 30 December 1914, p. 4.

⁴⁵¹ *Věstník obecní*, XXII, 4, 25 February 1915, p. 48.

⁴⁵² The numbers given by reports do not seem very reliable but around 3500 parcels were sent for Christmas and Easter actions in 1915. A report from the end of October 1916 mentions these numbers and also that 8500 parcels were sent for these actions since the beginning of the war, ‘How the commune of Prague and the Local War Help Office with the corporations established at the Old Town Hall participate in the war relief’, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig. 83/214.

⁴⁵³ Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life*, p. 369.

January 1st money for hungry children to the centre for Czech women. Gift for gift, love for love'.⁴⁵⁴ At the end of 1917, the Christmas collection was renamed 'for the benefit of soldiers in the field and the young poor youth', equating the suffering on the front and on the home front.⁴⁵⁵ There was also no certainty that packages would reach their destination in the disorganized war transportation system. Three boxes of gifts from Prague were for example robbed on their way to Békéscsaba (Hungary) in January 1917.⁴⁵⁶ During the third year of war, Stanislav Neumann, who served in the 28th regiment, indicates that they only received the Christmas *liebesgaben* (gifts) in March 1917, and that these did not come from 'home' but from Hungary, with calendars in Hungarian.⁴⁵⁷

The Prague Council's welfare actions demonstrate both dimensions of its role, a narrower local role serving Praguers (which could be seen also in the protection of Prague war orphans) as well as a broader role at the level of the Czech nation. It was indeed the Council which coordinated the collection of books and newspapers in Czech to be sent to wounded soldiers all over the monarchy. Individuals took part, but also several publishers. As the Local War Help Office explained: 'every pedestrian around Prague is nowadays familiar with the collecting boxes dispatched in frequented places (former voting urns whose former purpose was substituted in wartime) with their famous red inscription: newspapers for wounded soldiers...'⁴⁵⁸ By 1916 they had already sent 80,000 volumes of books and newspapers to 1388 hospitals.⁴⁵⁹ Despite its success, demonstrated in the many letters of thanks received by the Council, this initiative was also showing signs of dysfunction in 1918. Soldiers for example noticed that half the contents of the package had been stolen before it arrived.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁴ Quoted in the press release of the Prague City Council, 19 January 1917, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1.

⁴⁵⁵ *Věstník obecní*, XXIV, 23, 6 December 1917, p. 333.

⁴⁵⁶ Letter from Proviantur des k.u.k. Ersatzbataillons no 102 to Prague City Council, 4 April 1917, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1, no 1165.

⁴⁵⁷ Neumann uses the German term: Neumann, *Válčení civilistovo*, p. 270.

⁴⁵⁸ *Rádce v době světové války.*, p. 31.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 37.

⁴⁶⁰ See for example, letter from Ignác Skopal, 23 June 1918 and letter from Ant. Forst, 10 July 1918, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 908, sig. OVK.

Figure 10: Christmas card from the Prague Council to soldiers with an illustration by T. F. Šimon, 1914.

Figure 11: Christmas card from the Prague Council to soldiers with an illustration by T.

*F. Šimon, 1916.*⁴⁶¹

Among the different Prague soldiers, the link that tied the urban elites to the 28th Infantry regiment requires further examination. The 28th IR was the local Prague regiment (*Hausregiment, domácí pluk*) and its soldiers were nicknamed 'Prague children' (*Pražské děti, Prager Kinder*).

⁴⁶¹ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 893, sig. 83/1.

The veteran association of the regiment bore the official title of 'Pražské děti'.⁴⁶² Before the First World War, 95% of the regiment were Czech-speakers.⁴⁶³ This attachment to local regiments could be paralleled with the situation in England where the experience at the front was mediated to the city through its own regiment.⁴⁶⁴ In Prague, the mayor celebrated the local servicemen's accomplishments.⁴⁶⁵ Newspapers also ran articles written by soldiers from the 28th regiment recounting their lives at the frontline and participation in combat.⁴⁶⁶ The café 'Corso' on the Graben/Na příkopě, largely frequented by a German-speaking clientele, collected money among its regulars to send tobacco to the 28th regiment during the first Christmas.⁴⁶⁷ The connection was thus not only institutional and could transcend national allegiances. Soldiers naturally turned to the city for specific requests such as musical instruments.⁴⁶⁸ As we saw in the first chapter, part of the 28th regiment was accused of desertion in April 1915, and the entire regiment was disbanded by the Emperor. Some Czech politicians then refused to sign a condemnation of the regiment, doubting the official version of events. Jan Herben explains that the officers campaigning for reinstatement expected that 'Prague would stand by the Prague children' and that a statement would look bad in that context.⁴⁶⁹ As it was reinstated in January 1916, after one remaining reserve battalion had fought with exemplary bravery on the Italian front, the city authorities received several telegrams from officers and men informing them of the regiment's

⁴⁶² Created in 1896, see Josef Fučík's regimental history of the 28th regiment: Josef Fučík, *Osmadvacátníci: spor o českého vojáka Velké války 1914-1918* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 2006), p.439.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 9 (and for more background on the pre-war history of the regiment).

⁴⁶⁴ Purseigle, *Mobilisation, sacrifice et citoyenneté*, pp. 181-200.

⁴⁶⁵ For example speech made on 23 November 1914 at a meeting of the municipal Council, *Věstník obecní*, XXI, 21, 3 December 1914, p. 399.

⁴⁶⁶ For example, 'First baptism of fire of the "Prague children" in Galicia' and 'The "Prague children" in the fire': 'První křest ohněm "Pražských dětí" v Haliči', *Národní politika*, 11 October 1914 (supplement), p. 2; 'Die "Prager Kinder" im Feuer', *Prager Tagblatt*, 1 December 1914, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁷ *Prager Tagblatt*, 8 January 1915, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁸ For example: Letter from Karel Tomek, 25 April 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 889, sig. 80/6, no 1627; *Prager Tagblatt*, 30 March 1916 (evening edition), p. 5.

⁴⁶⁹ Jan Herben, *Lístky z válečného deníku 1914 až 1918*, (V Praze: Milena Herbenová, 1933), p. 20.

celebration at the news.⁴⁷⁰ The mayor wrote to congratulate them, praising the soldiers' courage.⁴⁷¹ The constant support of the city's elites was appreciated by the officers:

Throughout the whole war, the Prague Council has shown our regiment the greatest courtesy. The real motherly care of the men in the k.u.k. 28th regiment secures our greatest gratitude to the royal capital of Prague. For the reinstatement of our regiment, the royal capital of Prague was among the first who rejoiced in this meaningful moment. [...] all these proofs of sympathy can only raise the spirit of the men in the fulfilling of their difficult duty, which they readily accomplish with great love for our supreme warlord, the dear fatherland, and for the honour of the royal capital of Prague.⁴⁷²

In the following months, the city continued to pay homage to the 28th regiment by sending a hero album and finally a silver horn in February 1917.⁴⁷³ The patronage of the regiment by the city authorities reveals this Czech elite's reaction to accusations of Czech disloyalty: they still defended 'their' soldiers' bravery.

The Prague City Council, through its war relief work, demonstrated a strong city identity displayed in gifts to soldiers from Prague. This involvement with local soldiers, to whom Praguers sent tobacco, chocolate or warm clothes, could show the relative efficiency of the Austrian mobilisation on the home front through local communities. The Council started its help to local soldiers within the framework of its experience of charity work with the poorest sections of the population. As the war progressed, however, a new concept of solidarity between the front and the home front became the guiding principle of the relief actions.

B - Soldiers' graves and public mourning

Remembering the city's soldiers also meant paying homage to the war dead. By the end of 1917 3 064 men from the inner city had died in combat, 9 902 including the nearby districts.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ Telegrams 3258, 1048, 1308, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 889, sig. 80/6.

⁴⁷¹ Letter from the Prague Mayor, 11 February 1916, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 889, sig. 80/6.

⁴⁷² Letter from the commander of the reserve batalion, received 21 March 1916, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 889, sig. 80/6, no 1076.

⁴⁷³ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 889, sig. 80/6, no 4044, 2141.

⁴⁷⁴ Karlín/Karolinenthal, Král.Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge, Smíchov/Smichow and Žižkov/Žižkow. This number includes the entire districts which were larger than the suburbs belonging to the Prague agglomeration (population of 737.193 in 1910 for Prague and the four districts and 557.817 for the Prague agglomeration). *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, ed. by Adam Wandruszka and others, 11 vols (Wien: Verl. der Österr. Akad. der Wiss., 1973-2014), XI: *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg*, Teilbd 2: *Weltkriegsstatistik Österreich-Ungarn 1914-1918*, ed. by Helmut Rumpler (2014), pp. 170-172.

Most of the monuments commemorating the First World War in Prague were constructed after the war and would reflect the ambiguity of celebrating men who fought wearing the Austro-Hungarian uniform in the new Czechoslovak republic. As Mark Cornwall has observed, the individual plaques on one of the walls in the main Prague cemetery of Olšany mix legionaries who fought on the side of the Entente and those who died in the Austro-Hungarian army. The general emphasis is on the legionaries' experience with the central monument dedicated to them.⁴⁷⁵ Interestingly, however, part of the memorial that can be seen today in the Olšany cemetery was erected in 1917.

The small plaques indicating the name, unit, rank, date and place of birth and death of fallen soldiers represented Praguers whose bodies could not be repatriated. This initiative called 'Hrob v dáli' (far-away grave) was a way to link grieving families in Prague to their loved ones who had been killed at the front. This celebration of the dead is very typical of the trauma of the First World War where bodies could not be recovered by the families.⁴⁷⁶ At the time of unveiling, only 170 names featured on the wall⁴⁷⁷ (nowadays there are about 1000). The nearby monument built by the city, partially with the help of donations,⁴⁷⁸ showed two mourning female figures crying over the soldiers' deaths. The inscription, somewhat paradoxically, reads: 'Prague to the heroes, 1914-1917' with a representation of the city's emblem (three towers).⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁵ On this topic : Mark Cornwall, 'Mémoires de la Grande Guerre dans les Pays tchèques, 1918-1938', *14-18 aujourd'hui, today, heute*, 5 (2002), 89–101.

⁴⁷⁶ Élise Julien, *Paris, Berlin: la mémoire de la guerre, 1914-1933*, (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009) pp. 79-82.

⁴⁷⁷ *Národní politika*, 30 June 1917, p. 5.

⁴⁷⁸ Collections were organised on All Souls Day in 1916 see Prague Municipal Council to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3096, sig. S 11/9, no 30641, 28 October 1916.

⁴⁷⁹ The inscription has been erased since. Invitation to the inauguration: AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig.83/39, no 1996, 22 June 1917. Photograph: Ibid, no 3055, 23 October 1917.

Figure 12: Monument in Olšany cemetery.

The monument was unveiled on 29 June 1917 during the traditional ‘May celebrations’ (*májové slavnosti/Maifest*). This Prague festival in local cemeteries, created at the beginning of the 19th century in the midst of Romanticism,⁴⁸⁰ celebrated the resurrection, linking homage to the dead and to nature in spring. Flowers were an important feature of this holiday. Incidentally, *Národní listy* complained about the profiteering prices of flowers sold by vendors near cemeteries to people who could not go in without a bouquet, which gives us an indication of the atmosphere

⁴⁸⁰ *Prager Tagblatt*, 17 June 1916, p. 7.

in 1917.⁴⁸¹ The memorial was inaugurated in the presence of local and military authorities, the municipal guard and chaplains of diverse faiths. The attendance was ‘enormous’ according to the newspapers. Two grenadiers were standing guard near the monument, while the Czech national anthem ‘Kde domov můj?’ was accompanied by sobbing widows and orphans. The procession laid flowers at the ‘Far-away Grave’ memorial and then attended a military mass near the honorary graves.⁴⁸² The military section of the cemetery hosted honorary graves where soldiers who died in hospitals in Prague were buried (308 until January 1915).⁴⁸³ By June 1917, 1700 men and officers were buried there and another 627 in private graves. On average three soldiers a day were inhumed in the Olšany cemetery at that time.⁴⁸⁴ For the following All Souls’ Day, a composer from the Prague music academy dedicated a hymn entitled ‘Hrob v dáli’ to be used in all church memorial services ‘to remember the members of our country (*vlast*) who rest in foreign lands, far from their homeland (*domovina*)’.⁴⁸⁵ During the ceremony, which was ‘more mournful than the year before’, a local ‘Hlahol’⁴⁸⁶ choir sang the new hymn.⁴⁸⁷ As the number of soldiers dying in Prague grew, a new military section of the municipal cemetery in nearby Strašnice/Straschnitz was also created.⁴⁸⁸

The association organizing these various mourning celebrations in cemeteries was called ‘Black Cross’, and had been launched in 1915. It aimed at both taking care of soldiers’ graves in Prague (and later Bohemia) and at helping family members to locate the graves of their loved ones abroad or in other regions.⁴⁸⁹ The action was intended for everyone ‘without distinction of

⁴⁸¹ *Národní listy*, 30 June 1917, p. 4.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.* and *Národní politika*, 30 June 1917, p. 6.

⁴⁸³ *Věstník obecní*, XXII, 1, 14 January 1915, p. 15.

⁴⁸⁴ *Národní listy*, 30 June 1917, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁵ Black Cross to Prague Municipal Council, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig.83/39, no 2904, 14 October 1917.

⁴⁸⁶ Prager Czech national singing association created at the end of the 19th century.

⁴⁸⁷ *Národní politika*, 3 November 1917, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁸ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig.83/39, no 2996, 24 October 1917.

⁴⁸⁹ On the role of associations in mourning: Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 30.

nationality or religion'.⁴⁹⁰ This syncretism appeared for example at the 1915 Christmas ceremony where various regiments sang Czech, German, Hungarian, and Polish carols as well as the imperial anthem.⁴⁹¹ The committee visited Jewish war graves as well as Christian ones on their inspection of the cemetery in January 1917.⁴⁹² Financially, the 'Black Cross' relied on contributions from its members but also heavily on the help of the Prague Municipal Council. During the 'May celebrations' of 1916, families from Moravia, Hungary or Croatia who had a member buried in Prague were invited to participate and the Council provided them with food and accommodation.⁴⁹³ In 1918, the association asked the Council to create a subscription for local families to be able to visit the grave of their son, husband or father.⁴⁹⁴

Other projects of monuments to the fallen soldiers were presented during an exhibition at the Museum of Decorative Arts in July 1916. The exhibition material in both languages explained the organization of the contest open to all artists from Bohemia.⁴⁹⁵ Over 300 entries were submitted. A monument to the 28th regiment and its battles on the Italian front entitled 'To our heroes, 1916' was, for example, envisioned in the Rieger gardens in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge. Many proposals were stylistically inspired by the recently unveiled monuments to the historian František Palacký (Slanislav Suchard, 1912) and to the Protestant reformer Jan Hus (Ladislav Šaloun, 1915).⁴⁹⁶ Šaloun himself was supposed to design a monument to fallen soldiers in the Saint-Nicholas Church in the Old Town.⁴⁹⁷ This baroque building, used as a Russian orthodox church before the war, had been consecrated as a Catholic garrison church in 1916.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁰ The main language used in the association seems to have been Czech, see Statutes of the association and accompanying declaration of intention 31 December 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig.83/39; for material in German see a letter from Black Cross to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3096, sig. S 11/17, 28 May 1918.

⁴⁹¹ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig.83/39, no 4029, 20 December 1915.

⁴⁹² Ibid., no 174, 27 January 1917.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., no 1667, 2 May 1916.

⁴⁹⁴ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3096, sig. S 11/17, 1 May 1918.

⁴⁹⁵ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2894, sig. A 17/3, 17 July 1916.

⁴⁹⁶ *Zájem veřejného zdravotnictví*, 10 August 1916, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁷ *Zájem veřejného zdravotnictví*, 10 March 1917, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁸ *Věstník obecní*, XXIII, no 17, 7 September 1916, p. 264.

The First World War introduced what Carine Trévisan and Elise Julien have termed the ‘militarization of the cemetery’,⁴⁹⁹ whereby traditional mourning sites became the focus of collective and public mourning. In Prague, the very local ritual of the ‘May celebrations’ took on a new meaning with the homage paid to soldiers. As a sign of this collective investment in the ceremony, the number of tramways leading to the Olšany cemetery was increased to accommodate the population attending in 1915.⁵⁰⁰ The celebrations were, as we have seen, well attended in 1916 and 1917. Both the Prague City Council and the voluntary association ‘Black Cross’ were the primary instigators of this community of mourning.

The city, both as a symbol and as an institution, acted as a mediating factor between civilians at home and ‘their’ soldiers in the field. This role built on pre-war local ‘Praguer’ identification to stimulate solidarity for the men at the front. This urban identification and solidarity was not exclusive, it could be linked to national or imperial understandings of the war effort. The Prague municipality itself led actions both for the benefit of Prague soldiers and for the benefit of Czech soldiers. These local identities, however, played an important role in the mobilization of the home front in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where different levels of allegiances coexisted. The progressive exhaustion of these efforts paralleled the increasingly desperate situation on the home front (see Chapter 4). As the urban community was rallying around its fighting or killed soldiers, the arrival of ‘strangers’ in its midst also implied a redefinition of its boundaries.

II - Wounded soldiers and refugees: mobility and the imprint of war in the city

The evacuation of both wounded soldiers and civilians to the hinterland generated a continuous flow of arrivals into the city since the beginning of September 1914. These thousands of newcomers appeared as a novelty in the cityscape. Their appearance revealed the physical and

⁴⁹⁹ Carine Trévisan and Elise Julien, ‘Cemeteries’, in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007), II, p. 446.

⁵⁰⁰ *Národní politika*, 19 June 1915, p. 6.

psychological effects of war. Buildings needed to be converted for their accommodation. Municipal authorities attempted to both welcome them as victims of the conflict and to shield Praguers from the impact of war. The spread of epidemics became a major concern, which links the First World War both to previous conflicts in the 19th century (the American Civil War⁵⁰¹ or the war of 1866) but also to pre-war hygiene considerations.

A - The care of wounded soldiers in Prague

The influx of wounded and sick soldiers into the city transformed the use of public space. Many major buildings were turned into hospitals and convalescence homes. Train stations were full of these men who were daily reminders of the realities of war in the field. Praguers were thus confronted with the immediate impact of the conflict and the way the state was taking care of its soldiers.

Bohemia, situated at the rear of any front line throughout the war, was a prime destination for wounded soldiers. The overall capacity in Bohemia for military and Red Cross hospitals reached 65,000 in the autumn of 1915.⁵⁰² The crownland housed between 16% and 33% of the beds in Red Cross hospitals in Cisleithania (depending on the stage of the conflict). It had the highest number of hospitals for most of the war (only overtaken by Lower Austria in 1916).⁵⁰³ This fact is hardly surprising in the light of Bohemia's weight within Cisleithania and the number of hospitals in the pre-war period⁵⁰⁴ but it highlights its role in the war effort. The number of beds grew during the first two years of the war (from 2754 at the beginning of the war to 20,707 at the end of 1915) to decline in 1916, 1917 and 1918 (14,528 in October 1918). In Prague, it seemed that the number of soldiers arriving in the city followed the same pattern. While the number of wounded soldiers arriving bordered on more than a thousand a day in 1915, by 1917 and 1918,

⁵⁰¹ James Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵⁰² Brigitte Biwald, *Von Helden und Krüppeln: das österreichisch-ungarische Militär-sanitätswesen im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 2 vols. (Wien: Öbv & Hpt, 2002), p. 21.

⁵⁰³ *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, XI, 2, p. 194.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

there were more convalescents arriving at the train stations and often only a few hundred (not all of them would stay in the city).⁵⁰⁵

The first big transport of wounded soldiers arrived at the Franz Joseph train station on August 30th 1914.⁵⁰⁶ Praguers went to the train station to witness their arrival in these first few weeks, partially out of curiosity but also to get news of the front or potentially of their relatives. *Národní politika* describes such a scene of welcoming in September 1914:

The wounded soldiers arrive! [...] it goes from mouth to mouth and already one runs to the railway to be able to greet from close the brave soldiers coming back from combat and look at these men whose deeds and sufferings one read about in the newspapers. Slowly the first tramway with a red cross on the lamp moves on Wenceslas Square away from the Museum. In a few moments it is surrounded from all sides by a crowd waving handkerchiefs and shouting 'Na Zdar!'. It sounds heartfelt and sincere but a bit muffled. [...] everyone remembers that these are wounded people, who at that moment suffer physical pain. Still one wants to welcome them and somehow manifest one's sympathy.⁵⁰⁷

The author also depicts the chalk inscriptions on the trains in Czech, German, Hungarian or Polish. 'Here are the Prague children...' read one of them. The police, as in Berlin, took measures to keep the crowds out of the stations.⁵⁰⁸ 'Legitimations' from the police or the City Council were needed to help with the transports.⁵⁰⁹ The authorized personnel consisted of medical military men who moved the soldiers, policemen who regulated the traffic and Red Cross women wearing a white armband with a red cross. The Prague railroad commander complained that too many people were present and hindering the process.⁵¹⁰ Red Cross volunteers provided refreshments to the wounded soldiers (soup or sandwiches, beverages like tea or coffee but also cigarettes). Alcohol was strictly forbidden.⁵¹¹ The main train stations of arrival were the Franz

⁵⁰⁵ Very incomplete data from a sample of daily police reports (27 for 1915, 6 for 1917 and 6 for 1918) : NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4971, 4972, 5062, 5064, 5065, 5067, 5068, 5069, 5070, 5071, 5072, 5078, 5089, 5095, 5097.

⁵⁰⁶ *Zpráva o činnosti pražského dobrovolného sboru ochranného za správní rok 1914* (V Praze: Nákladem vlastním, 1915), p. 10, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1.

⁵⁰⁷ *Národní politika*, 13 September 1914, p. 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Adrian Gregory, 'Railway stations: gateways and termini', in *Capital Cities at War*, ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, II, p. 28.

⁵⁰⁹ An example of a Sokol legitimation delivered by the Prague City Council: AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1.

⁵¹⁰ Railroad commander to the Prague Military Command, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3016, sig. M 34/1, no 17508, 6 September 1914.

⁵¹¹ See instructions from the Red Cross to the chief physician for the North-West station and the state train station, NA, ZČK, ka 94, Nádražní pomoc pro nemocné vojíny, no date.

Joseph station, the state train station, and the North-West train station. Some wounded transports also arrived at the Bubny/Bubna station (but not after 1915) in the north of the city. A station for wounded soldiers (*Krankenhaltstation*) was created at the Smíchov/Smichow train station in the South-West. Accommodation also had to be organized for some soldiers in the railway buildings for men who had to continue their journey. The division between officers and men in the treatment of wounded can be observed in the mention in the daily police reports of the number of officers who arrived in the city but also in the request to have them accommodated separately at the State train station.⁵¹² Special tramways were chartered for the transport of wounded soldiers within the city and new tracks led them directly from the main train station to the garrison hospital.⁵¹³ The Prague Voluntary Safety Corps (first aid service) coordinated the use of automobiles for ambulances (borrowing vehicles especially from the local firemen but also from individuals and firms).⁵¹⁴

To be sure, Prague's welcoming atmosphere for wounded soldiers could not be sustained throughout the war. The trains overcrowded with sick and wounded soldiers could bring infectious diseases to the hinterland, as we shall see.⁵¹⁵ As early as the end of September 1914, a memorandum warned against the risk of contacts between the wounded soldiers and the population for the spread of infections.⁵¹⁶ In 1916, a physician remarked on the change of attitude in the public: 'Everyone certainly remembers the huge crowds of people hustling to see the transports of wounded. Today barely anyone notices it.'⁵¹⁷ The curiosity and novelty wore off, and as the war went on a form of indifference replaced it. However, when in June 1915 a Reich German train stopped in the working-class neighbourhood of Žižkov/Žižkow, it was acclaimed by the nearby inhabitants (with cries of 'Na Zdar' and 'Sláva') from their windows waving their

⁵¹² Letter from the Railway Direction in Vienna to the Bohemian Red Cross section, *Ibid.*, 25 September 1914.

⁵¹³ Letter from the transportation society to the Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3033, sig. M 34/15, no 17495, 28 August 1914.

⁵¹⁴ *Zpráva o činnosti pražského dobrovolného sboru ochranného za správní rok 1914* (V Praze: Nákladem Vlastním, 1915), p. 8, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1, see also list of vehicles in the same file.

⁵¹⁵ Biwald, *Von Helden und Krüppeln*, p. 187.

⁵¹⁶ Memorandum from the Bohemian Governor, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3033, sig. M 34/15, no 17852, 28 September 1914.

⁵¹⁷ Richard Čech, *Lékař ve válce* (V Praze: Ústřední dělnické knihkupectví a nakladatelství (Ant. Svěcený), 1916), pp. 93-94.

handkerchiefs. A hornist then started to play the Austrian anthem and was applauded. This scene should be paralleled with the much more individual signs of waving to transports of Russian prisoners of war that were sharply monitored by the police at the time.⁵¹⁸ Sympathy for the Russian POWs from the Czech public was interpreted as a support to the enemy but people might have been waving at transports for a variety of unpolitical reasons.

Public empathy with the wounded could turn against the military authorities in view of the treatment the soldiers received. A policeman reported frequent complaints from local inhabitants near the Pohořelec barracks who saw wounded soldiers waiting on the square in tramway cars for someone to take them inside. They could lie there for a long time in bad weather or at night and people from the neighbourhood would sometimes step in to help them to walk into the hospital. 'Such scenes [...] provoked among the present public bitter feelings of indignation',⁵¹⁹ indicated this policeman. He insisted in his report on the recurrence of the phenomenon and his statement was undersigned by several other police officers. This case shows how, despite efforts to keep civilians away from the arrival of wounded soldiers, the latter could be very present in Prague's urban space. They were daily reminders of the damage caused by the war. Moreover, as the number of wounded transports coming into the hinterland grew, Praguers witnessed first-hand the increasing strain on the state and the inadequate care it provided for its citizens.

⁵¹⁸ Report on daily incidents, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, no 28435, 13 June 1915; For incidents with Russian POWs see for example ka 5067, no 31400, 26 June 1915 or ka 5069, no 33394, 10 July 1915.

⁵¹⁹ Deposition from the police officer Rudolf F., NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3033, sig. M 34/15, no 1283, 9 January 1915.

*Figure 13: Tramways for the wounded at the Franz Joseph train station, 1914.*⁵²⁰

To accommodate these growing contingents of soldiers, the army needed to find buildings to house them. Prague possessed a garrison hospital on Charles Square and its affiliates in Albrecht barracks and on Hradčany/Hradschin.⁵²¹ There were different categories of medical institutions set up to take care of the wounded: hospitals (*Krankenanstalten*), military hospitals, Red Cross reserve hospitals, military and Red Cross affiliate hospitals, other medical institutions and private care facilities.⁵²² The Ferdinand army barracks in Karlín/Karolinenthal were the largest reserve hospital in the city with 1600 to 2000 beds. Civilian buildings were requisitioned to be transformed into hospitals. Hospitals and sanatoriums were, of course, supposed to clear some of their beds for military purposes. Larger school buildings were also extensively used.⁵²³ The Straka Academy (*Straková Akademie/Straka'sche Akademie*), an institution for poor noble

⁵²⁰ Pavel Fojtík, *Zmizelá Praha: Tramvaje a tramvajové tratě, Historické centrum a Holešovice* (Praha: Paseka, 2010), p. 128 (from the Archiv Dopravního podniku hlavního města Prahy).

⁵²¹ List of hospitals for wounded soldiers, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3016, sig. M 34/1, no 17508, 25 August 1914.

⁵²² Biwald, *Von Helden und Krüppeln*, pp. 205-206.

⁵²³ *Pomocná činnost c. k. českého ústavu ku vzdělání učitelek v Praze ve válečných letech 1914-1916*, (Praha: Nákladem učitelského sboru, 1916), p. 3.

students on the banks of the Vltava, provided, for example, 475 beds for wounded soldiers. The changes inside buildings introduced by this new function were not always welcomed by the institutions owning them. For example, the Straka Academy was trying to preserve some room for its students and did not want the whole garden to be transformed into a vegetable plot for the hospital.⁵²⁴ The Institute for the education of female teachers lamented the loss of the parquet-floors in the gymnasium.⁵²⁵ Religious institutions also provided spaces in the city: catholic monasteries, but also an evangelical deacon house and a Jewish association. National institutions were involved as well. As we have seen, the Czech Sokol lent many of their practice halls in the city and suburbs. The German house also lent part of its building. The German student home ran a convalescence station for German students. Convalescing soldiers were sometimes accommodated in private houses or villas of citizens who accepted to take care of them (in many cases they requested to be rather sent officers than regular men).⁵²⁶ The Praguers who helped with the care of wounded had access to a new range of buildings and institutions that had been previously closed to them (monasteries, palaces, schools): the new purpose of the buildings thus also transformed the lived experience of the city.

⁵²⁴ NA, Akademie hraběte Straky Praha, ka 4, I/10, no 540 Dir, 16 March 1915.

⁵²⁵ *Pomocná činnost*, p. 4.

⁵²⁶ See the different lists of Red Cross hospitals: NA, ZČK, ka 94, file Prag und Vororte.

*Figure 14: The diversity of institutions welcoming wounded and convalescing soldiers.*⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ This map does not represent an exhaustive list of all the buildings housing wounded or sick soldiers at one point or another during the war. It merely suggests the diversity of buildings converted for this purpose. For example, more schools were used that I could not properly locate. Lists in: NA, ZČK, ka 94 (for Red Cross hospitals); NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3016, sig. M 34/1, no 17508, 25 August 1914.

Moreover, these arrangements favoured contacts with the local civilian population. The rare men who were staying in private houses were not the only ones who came into contact with Praguers. First, women brought various gifts to soldiers in the hospitals: food, cigarettes, warm clothes or reading material. Students from the Institute for the education of female teachers were for example making slippers and baking for 'their' soldiers (meaning those housed in their building).⁵²⁸ The Prague City Council organized a collection of fruit, especially in nearby estates, and middle-class women were cooking preserves for soldiers in Prague hospitals. 1 734 litres of compotes, jams and pickled vegetables were, for instance, distributed in the different garrison hospitals in December 1916.⁵²⁹ The Café Continental created a resting home for convalescing soldiers on its premises in 1915⁵³⁰ while the League of Germans in Bohemia opened a reading room for them.⁵³¹ The men would also visit civilians in their homes. Marie Schäferová recalls how her mother was welcoming soldiers into her house, especially those from her town in the countryside but also a man from Bosnia:

The wounded were lying in hospitals on top of each other, there was little room, awful things were told about unimaginable suffering and horrible injuries, cigarettes, food, bandages were collected, whole rows of voluntary workers took over service in hospitals and the wounded, when they were allowed to go out, would find refuge with acquaintances who tried to alleviate their suffering. To our house came men from Černovice, whom we previously were bringing food and cigarettes to [...]. And with them came one day a soldier from Bosnia [...] who got used to come to us like to his home.⁵³²

Thus, wounded soldiers brought war back with them into the hinterland, through their stories and their own sufferings. The Bohemian authorities worried about the potential of alarming reports on the battlefield situation and the army, circulated by sick and wounded men that could feed Czech antimilitarism.⁵³³ This fear of their role in spreading rumours was combined with a concern for deserters and shirkers in hospitals. For example, two cases of

⁵²⁸ *Pomocná činnost*, p. 11-13. On women's work for soldiers in the Austrian context see: Christa Hämmerle, *Heimat/Front : Geschlechtergeschichte/n des Ersten Weltkriegs in Österreich-Ungarn* (Wien: Böhlau, 2014).

⁵²⁹ Military Command to Prague City Council, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig. 83/67, no 3997, 4 December 1916.

⁵³⁰ Abolished in 1917, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, S 11/2/133, no 17715, 14 October 1917

⁵³¹ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3015, M 34/1/I, no 26492, 15 December 1914

⁵³² AHMP, Marie Schäferová, ka 1, inv. č. 5, p. 20.

⁵³³ Presidium of the Bohemian Governor's Office to Police Headquarters, 10 January 1915, *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914-1918*, ed. by Drašarová, Eva, Jaroslav Vrbata, 5 vols (V Praze: Státní ústřední archiv, 1993-95), II 1915 (1994), no 3, p. 21.

soldiers deserting while convalescing were reported in police files.⁵³⁴ In hospitals, men would sometimes simulate illness to not have to return to the front. Czech shirkers in hinterland hospitals feature prominently in Hašek's description of the war in *The Good Soldier Švejk*, both in reality and in the prejudices of the Austrian military, with one military physician even exclaiming: 'the whole Czech nation is a gang of shirkers (*das ganze tschechische Volk ist eine Simulantenbande*)'.⁵³⁵ Determining the extent of the phenomenon proves difficult, as Sophie Delaporte has shown in the French context,⁵³⁶ and would be beyond the scope of this study. However, the debate on the prevalence of simulation among patients suffering from nerves already structured Austrian psychiatry before the war.⁵³⁷ A doctor's post-war testimony confirms the blurry limits between psychologically traumatized soldiers and shirkers. Army physicians tended to diagnose truly ill individuals as simulating ailments to avoid conscription (including men weakened by typhus or tuberculosis).⁵³⁸

⁵³⁴ *Souhrnná hlášení presidia pražského místodržitelství o protistátní, protirakouské a protiválečné činnosti v Čechách 1915-1918*, ed. by Libuše Otáhalová (Praha: Nakl. Československé akademie věd, 1957), no 1308 p. 163 (9-16 juillet 1916) and no 1477 p. 183 30/10 – 5/11/1916.

⁵³⁵ Jaroslav Hašek, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*, 37th ed. (Praha: Baronet, 1998), p.63.

⁵³⁶ Sophie Delaporte, 'Discours médical et simulation', in *Vrai et faux dans la Grande Guerre*, ed. by Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), pp. 218–233.

⁵³⁷ Hans-Georg Hofer, *Nervenschwäche und Krieg: Modernitätskritik und Krisenbewältigung in der österreichischen Psychiatrie (1880-1920)* (Wien: Böhlau, 2004), pp. 231–235.

⁵³⁸ Jaroslav Květ, 'Magoři' in *Domov za války: svědectví účastníků*, ed. by Alois Žipek (Praha: Pokrok, 1930), III, pp. 52-55.

Figure 15: Stamp 'for the wounded soldiers in Prague'.⁵³⁹

The central challenge posed to local authorities by the presence of wounded soldiers in Prague, however, was the risk of epidemics. As statistics from the Military Command show, the men coming in carried different types of infectious diseases with them (typhus, diphtheria, dysentery, scarlet fever, trachoma).⁵⁴⁰ Hospitals were a particularly dangerous place for civilians to catch diseases brought by soldiers. Epidemics were a constant threat during the American Civil War that would spread to cities via wounded soldiers.⁵⁴¹ In 1866, the Prussian invasion had been accompanied by an epidemic of cholera in Bohemia. As a case of cholera broke out in the Straka Academy, the institution asked for sick soldiers to be more systematically separated and sent to an infectious diseases hospital.⁵⁴² Similar measures of exclusion and sorting out were taken in

⁵³⁹ AHMP, Jiří Čarek, ka 21, inv. č. 270.

⁵⁴⁰ ÖStA, KA, Terr, Befehle, Nr 67540, 2 October 1915.

⁵⁴¹ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), p. 138.

⁵⁴² NA, Akademie hraběte Straky Praha, ka 4, I/10, 27 October 1914.

Vienna.⁵⁴³ They could not, however, always be efficiently carried out. The director of the German university clinic in Prague complained for example about the state of soldiers who came into his service and had not been previously quarantined; they were full of lice and could not all be washed rapidly. The difficulty in communicating with them, as they were Bosnians, aggravated the situation. He concluded his report by warning about the risk of epidemics and declining responsibility.⁵⁴⁴ The director of Prague's general hospital faced the same problem and also feared typhus from soldiers who had not been properly disinfected. 420 beds were reserved for the military in Prague's largest civilian hospital, originally designated for soldiers who required a particular expertise, but convoys arrived directly from the front.⁵⁴⁵

The wounded soldiers were revealing of attitudes to the war effort and its changes over the course of the conflict. They brought into the hinterland a piece of the reality of the battlefield. They were both the target of relief actions and a potential threat to the health conditions in the city. By 1918, the city, which had already devoted many of its public buildings to medical care, did not want another military hospital. A movement of opposition rejected the project of installing new Red Cross medical barracks in the imperial gardens, considering this move as an offense to the Czech national feeling.⁵⁴⁶ The other main group of people coming from the battlefield zone into the city, refugees from Galicia and Bucovina, faced ambivalence on the part of Prague's inhabitants much earlier.

B - Refugees: from war victims to scapegoats

From August 1914, the invasion of Galicia and Bukovina by Russian troops caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee into the hinterland of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, either because of evacuations from the army or fear of the Russian advance. Some went to nearby Hungary but most made their way to Vienna and the Bohemian Lands, as they were citizens of Cisleithania.⁵⁴⁷ The first arrival of these refugees in Prague in September 1914 put into contact

⁵⁴³ Biwald, *Von Helden und Krüppeln*, pp. 211-212.

⁵⁴⁴ NA, MZd/R, ka 11, 2 February 1916.

⁵⁴⁵ NA, MZd/R, ka 11, no 3770, 7 February 1916.

⁵⁴⁶ AHMP, MHMP II, SK, ka 14, II/20, no 5278, 27 July 1918.

⁵⁴⁷ Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 66; Hungary did not provide state support for refugees and the official

populations that had until then not been much confronted to each other. In contrast to Vienna, a destination for many migrants from Galicia in the pre-war era, this influx was not linked with the economic migrations of the pre-1914 period.⁵⁴⁸ What forms did the encounters between the refugees from the Eastern provinces and the Bohemian authorities take? How did the local population welcome them?

The first refugees arrived in Prague in September 1914 but, hindered by slow transportation, their numbers remained limited until November and December of the same year. Prague had only received 1878 refugees by the end of October but the number had risen to 17,667 by the end of the year.⁵⁴⁹ These figures (from the police files) are not entirely reliable because many refugees did not register with the police when they arrived, so that the actual number of refugees present in the city was probably higher. The communication between the military and civilian authorities was often imprecise regarding the number of refugees to expect. As a result, civilian authorities tended to underestimate the potential arrivals.⁵⁵⁰

The Austro-Hungarian authorities had intended to separate evacuees into two groups: those who had means to support themselves (*bemittelt*) and those who did not (*mittellos*). The ones who had to rely on state support were to be sent to internment camps in Bohemia, Moravia and Lower Austria, while the better-off were allowed to settle in big cities like Prague, Brünn/Brno or Vienna. Moreover, the refugees were to be segregated according to nationality: Ruthenes (Ukrainian-speakers) were sent to villages and camps in Lower Austria and Carinthia, Poles to Bohemia and Moravia (and in the camp of Choceň/Chotzen in Bohemia) and Jews to Moravia, Bohemia, Lower and Upper Austria (with camps in Moravia).⁵⁵¹ This plan, as could be

policy was to send them to Austria: Rebekah Klein-Pejšová, 'Among the Nationalities: Jewish Refugees, Jewish Nationality, and Czechoslovak Statebuilding' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 2007), p. 19.

⁵⁴⁸ On refugees in Vienna see Beatrix Hoffmann-Holter, '*Abreisendmachung*': *Jüdische Kriegsflüchtlinge in Wien 1914-1923* (Wien: Böhlau, 1995).; David Rechter, 'Galicia in Vienna: Jewish Refugees in the First World War', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 28 (1997), 113–30.

⁵⁴⁹ Letter from the police Headquarters to the Prague City Council, NA, PP 1916-1920, M 23/63, 3 November 1914.

⁵⁵⁰ Walter Mentzel, 'Weltkriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien, 1914-1918', in *Asylland wider Willen. Flüchtlinge in Österreich im europäischen Kontext seit 1914*, ed. by Gernot Heiss, Oliver Rathkolb (Wien: Jugend und Volk, 1995), pp. 17-44.

⁵⁵¹ Francesco Frizzera 'Population Displacement in the Hapsburgic Empire During the First World War: From Military Need to Solution for Internal Problems' [Draft], I thank the author for giving me access to this paper. For more on the national division of refugees: Julie Thorpe, 'Displacing Empire: Refugee Welfare, National Activism and State Legitimacy in Austria-Hungary in the First World War', in *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial*

expected, did not materialize. The camps had to be built first, before refugees could be sent there, and many of them fled to the big cities either in search of relatives (in Vienna for example) or because they thought they could find work there. As a result, the refugees who found themselves in Prague at the end of 1914, far from being all 'bemittelt', were much more diverse in nationality (roughly half of them were Jewish and the nationality of the remaining Christians was not indicated at the time).

Galician refugees were considered by the Bohemian civilian administration as war victims on a par with the wounded soldiers who also arrived in the hinterland at the time. Refugees were allotted 70h a day per person paid through local authorities. The Prague City Council made room for the impoverished ones in two municipal houses and a former army building.⁵⁵² The Bohemian governor Count Thun published an announcement in the newspapers appealing to the population's patriotic feeling to help with refugee relief. He called for donations of warm clothes and food as winter was coming, and expressed his confidence in the patriotic response in Bohemia.⁵⁵³ This discourse on refugees as war victims could be paralleled, at this early point in the war, with the mobilization in favour of refugees in France and Great Britain during the war.⁵⁵⁴

Voluntary associations complemented official support and often offered help along national or religious divisions. The Jewish community in Prague organized quickly to take care of coreligionists arriving from the East. They created a Help Committee as early as September 1914⁵⁵⁵ and offered to take care of the Jewish refugees.⁵⁵⁶ The local Jewish religious community (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*) would pay the state subsidies directly to the refugees, to be later reimbursed by the state (the Prague City Council was fulfilling this role for the other refugees).

Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century, ed. by Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 102–26.

⁵⁵² *Věstník obecní*, XXII, no 1, 14 January 1915, p. 2.

⁵⁵³ *Čech*, 17 November 1914, p. 6.; see both Czech and German versions of this appeal, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3017, sig. M 34/1/I, no 26337, 15 November 1914.

⁵⁵⁴ Pierre Purseigle, "'A Wave on to Our Shores": The Exile and Resettlement of Refugees from the Western Front, 1914–1918', *Contemporary European History*, 16 (2007), 427–444.

⁵⁵⁵ Martin Welling, *'Von Hass so Eng Umkreist': Der Erste Weltkrieg aus der Sicht der Prager Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2003), p. 123.

⁵⁵⁶ On the activity of the Jewish community see: Jiří Kuděla, 'Die Emigration galizischer Juden und osteuropäischer Juden nach Böhmen und Prag zwischen 1914-1916/17', *Studia Rosenthalia*, 12 (1989), 119-134, and Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, pp. 65-81.

Their action was motivated both by solidarity with fellow Jews and a will to support the Austrian war effort. To house the destitute refugees, they rented out apartments in the Old Town and placed them in the Taussig almshouse.⁵⁵⁷ The main organization offering help to non-Jewish refugees (except for the Prague City Council) was the committee of Polish refugees (*Komité uchodźców polskich*), created by refugees themselves (local notabilities). A Czech-Polish secretariat was also created and a more official Regional Help Committee for War Refugees, especially Poles (*Landeshilfskomitee für Kriegsflüchtlinge, insbesondere Polen*). Rooms in Prague schools were devoted to refugee pupils receiving teaching in Polish or even in Ukrainian (the Jewish community had also organized schools for Jewish refugees).⁵⁵⁸ There was even a newspaper published in Prague in Polish (*Wiadomości Polskie z Pragi*) and a Polish section appeared in the Czech newspaper *Národní listy*.⁵⁵⁹ Smaller nationality groups also established committees. A welfare committee for German refugees was born in September 1916 supported by the local German associations.⁵⁶⁰ A Romanian committee was also established in 1916. Other welfare initiatives emerged: the association of German private teachers, for example, collected money and distributed food and clothing to refugees.⁵⁶¹ A refugee cultural life even developed in the city: a Polish-Jewish theatre played in a hotel⁵⁶², while the Czech National Theatre organized a Polish evening (playing music by Polish composers) to raise funds.⁵⁶³ Overall, though, help for these objectives was not always as readily available as it was for wounded soldiers: fewer associations mobilized for this purpose. For example, the organization of refreshments at train stations did not generate the same involvement from the population. Early in the war, the Prague City Council had to make an emergency purchase of 200 loaves of bread for hungry refugees

⁵⁵⁷ Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3015, sig. M 34/1/I, no 17850, 5 October 1914.

⁵⁵⁸ On the refugee schools see the file: NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3129, sig. St 34/4.

⁵⁵⁹ *Národní listy*, 26 February 1915, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁰ Activity report from September 1916 to September 1917, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3096, sig. S 11/17.

⁵⁶¹ *Prager Tagblatt*, 9 January 1915, p. 6.

⁵⁶² Called Orfeum see programme, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3117, sig. T 15/4, no 1174, 7 January 1917. On theaters by refugees in Vienna see: Eva Krivanec, *Kriegsbühnen: Theater im Ersten Weltkrieg Berlin, Lissabon, Paris und Wien*, Theater (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012), p. 200.

⁵⁶³ *Národní politika*, 20 January 1915, p. 7.

arriving at Smíchov/Smichow railway station.⁵⁶⁴ The Jewish community regularly distributed food to travelling refugees but this activity stopped in 1915 when bread prices increased.⁵⁶⁵ A physician even wrote in November 1914 to the newspaper *Prager Tagblatt*, shocked at the lack of any proper welcome at the Buschtiehrad train station for refugees who had to get⁵⁶⁶ warm water from the locomotive boiler.⁵⁶⁷

Despite efforts - official and private - to provide for their welfare, the refugees were often regarded by the inhabitants of the Bohemian Lands as quite foreign. They were felt to belong almost to the Orient. Help was given with a degree of condescension toward these 'less developed' countrymen. A newspaper from the Western-Bohemian city of Plzeň/Pilsen applauded the civilizing effect of these new contacts: 'At first they did not like our order. Our work ethics seemed excessive to them [...] and our cleanliness and love for education were striking for many of our Polish brothers. But, in little time, there were Polish voices in the newspapers claiming that the Poles learned to appreciate Czech hospitality and Czech work and cleanliness and that they will profit from it.'⁵⁶⁸ *Národní politika* quoted a Cracow newspaper mentioning the positive influence of their stay in Prague on Polish students who now used some Czech words and hopefully also learned the Czech ardour to work (*pracovitost*).⁵⁶⁹ Jewish welfare activists could also show a form of ambivalence toward Galician Jews. While they tirelessly contributed financially and practically to the relief effort, especially at the beginning of the war, the assimilated Prague Jews sometimes complained about the backwardness of the more traditional Galicians. The fact that Hasidic men wore side-curls and long coats raised concerns over anti-Semitism. They expressed the same hopes as the Czechs that this exposure to Western culture would somehow make them abandon their customs.⁵⁷⁰ This attitude was in stark contrast

⁵⁶⁴ Prague City Council to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3015, sig. M 34/1/I, 13 November 1914.

⁵⁶⁵ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3017, sig. M 34/1/I, no 28278, 23 September 1915.

⁵⁶⁶ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3020, sig. M 34/1/I, no 28374, 20 October 1916.

⁵⁶⁷ *Prager Tagblatt*, 14 November 1914 (2nd supplement), p. 1.

⁵⁶⁸ *Čech*, 15 April 1915, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁹ *Národní politika*, 14 August 1915, p. 6.

⁵⁷⁰ Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, pp. 77-78.

with the Viennese Jews, many of whom had relatively recently emigrated from Galicia, who welcomed the refugees with much less criticism.

Daily interactions with Praguers also underline this distance between the two groups.⁵⁷¹ Even a positive description of the newcomers in the *Prager Tagblatt* includes a picturesque description of the ‘long bearded Galician Jews with their long caftans’ and of the more rarely seen Galician peasants, ‘several of them wearing their colourful national costume and walking on the pavement with their high solid boots’.⁵⁷² The relationship could turn more hostile. Refugees could even be attacked on the street.⁵⁷³ Their presence in shops was sometimes resented. For example, a group of shopkeepers from a shopping arcade wrote to complain to the Prague police about the ‘flood of refugees’ not only endangering their safety but turning away other customers: ‘with this flood of refugees, who are absolutely not used to standing in line (*řádné vystřídání*) and order, the frequentation by the public buying or passing through is made impossible’.⁵⁷⁴ Growing food shortages also led to new tensions in the long queues to get food. Refugees signing as ‘Poles from Brewnow’ (a Prague suburb) wrote to the Polish refugees’ Committee with complaints that Czech store owners refused to serve them claiming that they had nothing for Poles.⁵⁷⁵ Jewish refugees complained in Vienna in 1917 that they were prevented from buying food in Prague. Police investigations in several Prague neighbourhoods showed that the refugees were indeed often excluded from queues by other buyers. The police did not seem very keen to intervene and sometimes even defended the other shoppers’ behaviour (their fear of being contaminated by vermin, for example).⁵⁷⁶ The refugees also appeared as a visible sign of the Empire’s defeat: in an

⁵⁷¹ On tensions between refugees and the local population in France see Philippe Nivet, *Les réfugiés français de la Grande guerre, 1914-1920: les ‘Boches du Nord’* (Paris: CFHM, Commission française d’histoire militaire ISC, Institut de stratégie comparée Economica, 2004). And for a local study in the Western regions of France: Ronan Richard, “‘Étrangers’ et ‘indésirables’ en temps de guerre: Représentations, politiques et pratiques à l’égard des populations nouvelles dans l’Ouest de la France en 1914-1918”, *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l’Ouest*, 109-4 (2002), 147-161.

⁵⁷² *Prager Tagblatt*, 25 December 1914, p. 7.

⁵⁷³ See for example: police report on daily events, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 22614, 13 May 1915 and police report on daily events, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 29356, 17 June 1915.

⁵⁷⁴ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3017, sig. M 34/1/I, no 162, 20 January 1915. For a similar complaint in a bank, *Ibid.*, no 80, 13 January 1915.

⁵⁷⁵ Letter in Polish, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3021, sig. M 34/1/I, no 283, 1 April 1917.

⁵⁷⁶ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3021, sig. M 34/1/I, no 4406, 12 February 1917.

anti-Semitic anonymous letter, the writer mocked the official propaganda, ironically proclaiming: 'For sure we win, that's why refugees come from Cracow.'⁵⁷⁷ Through their stories but also through their mere presence, they potentially challenged official news on the progression of the battlefronts and therefore helped undermine the trust in the state.

The city's authorities were also concerned about the refugees' standards of hygiene of as they feared they might contribute to spreading epidemics. The municipal physician even recommended that the public avoid contact with refugees in order to prevent infections.⁵⁷⁸ Municipal authorities worried about their lack of cleanliness and required them to be regularly checked by the municipal physicians.⁵⁷⁹ Soldiers coming from the front were just as likely, however, to bring diseases to the hinterland (27 cases of typhus among soldiers were reported in September 1915, for example)⁵⁸⁰ but the measures taken against them do not seem as drastic. Furthermore, the poor hygiene conditions in the buildings where the city let them stay could explain the refugees' health situation.⁵⁸¹ The Prague Council created a special delousing station in Bulovka for refugees in May 1916.⁵⁸² The process was to last for a maximum of three hours: the refugees had to take off their clothes, which were disinfected, and had their hair examined and shaved if lice were found. Finally, they were washed in hot water. The physician recommended patience, and that violence should be avoided at all cost.⁵⁸³ This recommendation suggests that many refugees were reluctant to go along with this treatment. They had to undergo many regular medical inspections and developed strategies to avoid this confrontation. A physician going on rounds in the suburb of Žižkov/Žižkow complained that many were absent from the flats where they were supposed to live, and that he could examine only two thirds of the persons registered.⁵⁸⁴ Fear of epidemics led the city to protective disinfections. A newspaper reported in

⁵⁷⁷ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, no 23/747/15, 17 May 1915.

⁵⁷⁸ *Věstník obecní*, XII, no 1, 14 January 1915, p. 6.

⁵⁷⁹ NA, PP 1916-1920, M 34/1/I, ka 3017, no 378, 1 March 1915.

⁵⁸⁰ ÖStA, KA, Terr, Befehle, 2 October 1915.

⁵⁸¹ For example see a report by the municipal physician on the new refugees housed in various beer halls, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3020, sig. M 34/1/I, no 19208, 3 July 1916.

⁵⁸² *Věstník obecní*, XIII, no 10, 26 May 1916, p. 169.

⁵⁸³ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3020, sig. M 34/1/I, 8 May 1916.

⁵⁸⁴ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3020, sig. M 34/1/I, no 5114/B, 3 May 1916.

March 1917 that due to a potential epidemic of typhus among Galician refugees, families had been transported to Bulovka to be disinfected, and would only be taken back to their homes when the risk of infection was eliminated.⁵⁸⁵ Paul Weindling has shown how such hygiene discourse and concern over the spread of disease turned into a racialized discourse in the case of East European Jews (and sometimes Slavs), seen as primary carriers of disease.⁵⁸⁶

The Prague authorities were attempting to limit contact between the local population and the refugees for a variety of reasons. As living proof of the defeats of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they could highlight the state's shortcomings. In 1916, when refugees escaped from the Choceň/Chotzen internment camp and came begging into the city, officials urged the population not to believe their stories, worried that they could 'discredit the state refugee welfare'.⁵⁸⁷ The suspicion towards refugees could also concern their loyalty to the Empire. Some Ukrainian-speaking inhabitants of Galicia were suspected of harbouring pro-Russian tendencies, and in the main cities of the Empire many were suspected of spying.⁵⁸⁸ The refugees were also accused of buying too much food in order to then resell it at higher prices. They were scapegoated for the increasing food prices. A common fear was that they were shirking military service. The military in Prague proceeded with examinations of men from Galicia and Bukovina. An invalid denouncing various strategies to avoid military service accused 'Polish Jews' of undergoing inoculations in order to get infected.⁵⁸⁹ These various accusations were often grouped together and marked the exclusion of refugees from the urban community. The mayor of the suburb of Král.Vinohrady/Kgl.Weinberge complained about Jewish refugee presence in urban space. In a public announcement to be posted on the suburb's streets, he called for a precise list of those staying in the borough to be given to building managers, and forbade the raising of poultry:

The number of Galician immigrants of Jewish faith in Král.Vinohrady is constantly growing. Some houses are full of them [...] These Galician emigrants are very mobile and fully use our public facilities. In particular, they

⁵⁸⁵ *Právo lidu*, 3 March 1917, p. 5.

⁵⁸⁶ Paul Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe, 1890-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁵⁸⁷ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3020, sig. M 34/1/I, no 26564, 19 June 1916; published in the press for example, *Národní politika*, 21 June 1916, p. 6.

⁵⁸⁸ For example NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3020, sig. M 34/1/I, no 33702, 28 October 1916.

⁵⁸⁹ Letter from invalid Gottfried L., NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3013, M 30/12, no 1907, no date.

come in flocks to the main market hall and touch the merchandise. Demanding a very low price for it, they then go to another stand.⁵⁹⁰

The mere presence of refugees in the city is perceived here as hostile and endangering the 'health' of the community. The mayor of Karlín/Karolinenthal complained about the refugees in very similar terms, accusing the 'fluctuating creatures' of incessantly moving from one apartment to another, thus rendering medical control very difficult.⁵⁹¹ Authorities in Žižkov/Žižkow declared that 8000 Jewish refugees were staying in the neighbourhood, driving up prices and endangering the health of the population in apartment buildings, tramways and 'other social places', avoiding work and conscription into the army; officials finally recommended that they should be kept completely separate from the rest of the population.⁵⁹²

As we can see, the discourse of defiance against refugees was often more specifically directed at Jewish Galician refugees. While at the beginning of the war the discourse on refugees often mentions them as 'Galician refugees', the term 'Jewish' appears more and more often toward the end of the war. This does not necessarily reflect the evolution of their proportion among refugees at the time. From around half in the last months of 1914, the proportion of Jewish refugees went up to 68% in August 1915 but down to 38% in March 1917. Non-Jewish refugees were probably overwhelmingly Polish-speaking. As we have seen, Poles were sent by the authorities to Bohemia. For Prague, the police recorded the nationality of refugees only from January to March 1917. In March, there were for example 6621 Poles, 990 Ruthenes, 928 Germans, 90 Hungarians, 175 Czechs, and 435 others.⁵⁹³ The Hungarians may have come from Transylvania, as some refugees also came from this region in 1916. These numbers should not be regarded as more than an indication of what the individuals chose to declare.⁵⁹⁴ After the war with Italy started, a few hundred refugees (682 at the highest point) also came from the South-Western regions (almost none of them were relying on state support, however). The presence of

⁵⁹⁰ Announcement poster in Czech, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, 15 January 1915.

⁵⁹¹ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3017, sig. M 34/1/I, no 8416, 16 February 1915.

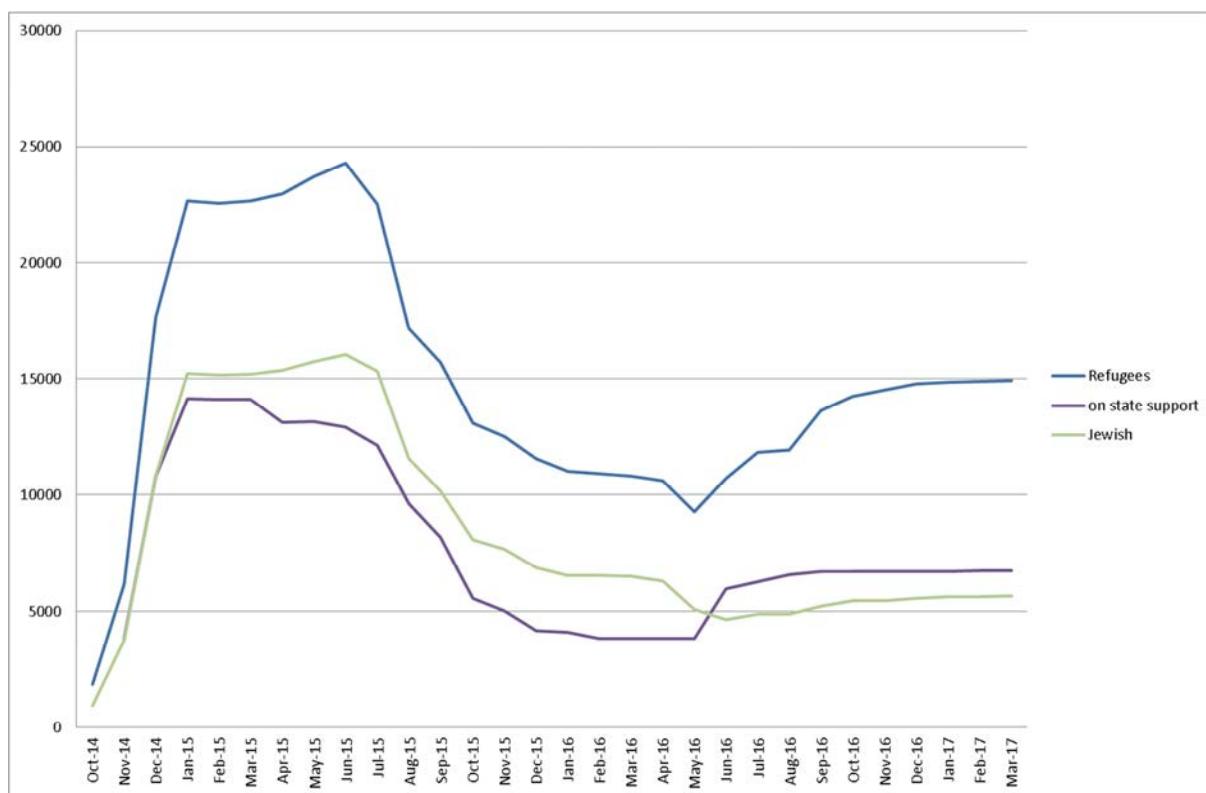
⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, no 676, 23 April 1915.

⁵⁹³ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3021, no 6825, 3 April 1917.

⁵⁹⁴ Kuděla mentions for example that some Jewish refugees reported as Polish: Kuděla, 'Die Emigration galizischer Juden', p. 125.

the refugees in the city followed the variations of the Eastern front. After the Austrians and Germans recovered territories in the East in the summer of 1915, some of them went back home. The Brusilov offensive in 1916 brought a new wave to Prague. A few thousand refugees from the internment camp at Choceň/Chotzen also came to Prague at that time, which explains the increase in destitute refugees. Their number gradually diminished after that until the end of the war. The highest point was in June 1915 when 24,295 refugees were in Prague. By May 1918 there were only 2688 refugees on state support remaining in the city (including 2415 Jews).⁵⁹⁵

Figure 16: Refugees from Galicia and Bukovina in Prague, 1914-1917.⁵⁹⁶



At several points during the war, the Prague municipal authorities attempted to limit the number of refugees present in the city. As early as January 1915, the city was officially closed to

⁵⁹⁵ Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/34, no 15263, 6 May 1918.

⁵⁹⁶ Collected from the monthly reports on the numbers of refugees scattered in NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3015, 3018, 3020, and 3021. After March 1917, the police adopted a new system to count refugees, which did not include the refugees who did not rely on state support. I was unable to find these new reports except for the information for May 1918. On the new regulations see Memorandum from the Governor's Office, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3021, sig. M 34/1/I, no 9028, 22 April 1917.

further arrivals of refugees, which of course did not prevent them from coming.⁵⁹⁷ The authorities tried to send them to internment camps and encouraged their repatriation when Austro-Hungarian troops recovered Galicia in 1915. Toward the end of the war, municipal authorities repeatedly demanded their departure.⁵⁹⁸ The public also condemned their continuous presence. As an example, this anonymous letter was sent in September 1917 to the Bohemian Governor: ‘We workers from Prague demand for the last time that the Governor of Bohemia Count Coudenhove expel all the refugees from the East, because all these cities are free, at the most until the end of October, otherwise we will stop work and it could come to scandals [...]’.⁵⁹⁹ In September 1917, an article in the Social-Democrat newspaper *Právo lidu* demanded that refugees leave because of the ‘universal hatred that prevails against them’ due to the difficult food supply situation.⁶⁰⁰ The refugees’ reluctance to go back to their former home could be explained by the destruction the war had brought on villages and towns in Galicia, and the family disruptions caused by the conflict. Many towns in Galicia and Bukovina were completely annihilated.⁶⁰¹ Some refugees had managed to find a job or were not healthy enough to undertake the journey. The higher proportion of Jewish refugees who stayed behind can be explained by the fear of pogroms in the region (and the rumours of actual violence filtering through). Some of them even came back after November 1918 and the pogroms in Galicia.⁶⁰² Applications to the police for a prolonged stay in Prague recount the traumatic aspect of the departure from Galicia and the often difficult living conditions in Prague. Many refugees were too sick to travel (due to food shortages) or did not want to leave sick family behind. These petitions also show a certain degree of integration into Prague society through work.⁶⁰³ The creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 gave

⁵⁹⁷ *Národní politika*, 17 January 1915, p. 6.

⁵⁹⁸ *Prager Tagblatt*, 18 March 1918, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁹ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3022, sig. M 34/1/I, no number, 28 September 1917.

⁶⁰⁰ *Večerník práva lidu*, 1 September 1917, p. 3.

⁶⁰¹ Walter Mentzel, ‘Weltkriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien’, p. 37.

⁶⁰² On the pogrom in Lemberg/Lwów/L’viv see Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914-1947* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), pp. 232-255.

⁶⁰³ Many examples in NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3023, sig. M 34/1/I.

a new pretext to demands for departure as these refugees were no longer considered as members of the same state and could thus be expelled as foreign nationals.⁶⁰⁴

The anti-Semitic character of both the Prague City Council's policies and the local population's reactions grew more and more visible as the war went on. For example, Jewish refugees were specifically banned from public tramways in 1917.⁶⁰⁵ As with earlier measures of exclusion, this was justified by a concern for public health and the spread of disease. We see here the small shift from measures concerning all of the refugees to a ban targeting only the Galician Jews. This measure was however revoked after a public outcry on the topic.⁶⁰⁶ In October 1918, the Prague Municipal Council reported that only Jewish refugees remained in the city and accused them of profiteering and taking advantage of the state subsidies they were getting. The Council's recommendations included suspending state aid and the distribution of rationing tickets to refugees.⁶⁰⁷ In assessing the shift towards Anti-Semitic measures on the part of the Prague City Council, we must be aware of the pre-war precedents. Cathleen Giustino showed how the clearance of the Jewish ghetto in Josefov at the end of the 19th century already revealed the intertwining of modern hygienic concerns about public health with anti-Semitism.⁶⁰⁸ Prejudices against Jews on economic grounds were not new either in Czech society.⁶⁰⁹ In the next chapter, we will see how this anti-Semitism targeted at refugees could influence anti-Semitism against the Prague Jewish population.

The arrival in Prague of Galician refugees represented another visible sign of the invasion of public space through war. The support they received, and the efforts the population accepted on their behalf constituted a test of the mobilization in the Austrian war effort. While there were private and public welfare actions undertaken to help them, a hostile attitude prevailed from

⁶⁰⁴ Margarete Grandner, 'Staatsbürger und Ausländer. Zum Umgang Österreichs mit den jüdischen Flüchtlingen nach 1918' in *Asylland wider Willen*, pp. 60-85.

⁶⁰⁵ *Věstník obecní*, XXIV, no 3, 2 February 1917, p. 41.

⁶⁰⁶ Rozenblit, *Reconstructing National Identity*, p. 79.

⁶⁰⁷ The report indicates that Žižkov/Žižkow introduced a similar measure not long before that was repelled by the Interior Ministry. AHMP, MHMP I, Protokoly sboru městské správy, 17 October 1918.

⁶⁰⁸ Cathleen M. Giustino, *Tearing down Prague's Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle-Class Ethnic Politics around 1900* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 2003).

⁶⁰⁹ On Czech anti-Semitism before the war see: Michal Frankl, *'Emancipace od Židů': Český antisemitismus na konci 19. století* (Praha; Litomyšl: Paseka, 2007).

relatively early on and grew worse as the conflict progressed. The concern over infectious diseases on the part of both municipal authorities and the population showed a will to preserve the city from the consequences of war. The city enclosed itself within a sense of community that excluded newcomers. This discourse of foreignness was also linked to an Anti-Semitic discourse which blamed the refugees for many of the evils of the war. The Prague Municipal Council's growing animosity for example is revealing of this shift from patriotism to overt anti-Semitism. Anti-Jewish riots in 1918 and in the following years would show that this conflict was carried through into the post-war period, as we shall see.

The war effort in Prague relied on local solidarity and identification to both help the soldiers at the front and make the war more present in the hinterland. These actions reduced the division between front and home front and they highlight the links between the two in wartime. The sense of urban community could be reinforced by this involvement with local soldiers, while the war imbued local rituals with new meaning (like the May celebrations). The wounded soldiers and refugees who came to the city also generated fundraising efforts and direct help from Praguers who felt compassion for their sufferings. However, these live witnesses of the horrors of war could challenge the Austrian official propaganda by their mere presence and were ambivalently received by the authorities. Prague's inhabitants could hence see how deficient the state was at taking care of its own citizens. As the war went on, support for all these causes dwindled (local soldiers, war graves, the wounded and sick, refugees), more rapidly so in the case of refugees who were also facing growing animosity. The home front was less and less able to play the role of comforting assistance to the front as civilians were no longer sheltered from the impact of war in the shape of a looming food crisis. As the growth of anti-Semitism in Prague shows, the First World War could represent an intense moment of coming together for the urban community as well as a falling apart. We will explore this process in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

NEW DIVISIONS WITHIN THE URBAN COMMUNITY

Writing in January 1917 on the issue of profiteering, Josef Čihák remarked on the growing antagonisms the phenomenon created within the population: ‘Townspople envy people from the country, telling themselves wonderful stories about their affluence [...] People from the country complain about unbearable requisitions [...] Artisans and workers are either deprived of work or suffer from shortage of money [...] In a word: everyone complains about high prices, injustice, disaffection and profiteering but nobody wants to be the profiteer.’⁶¹⁰ The difficult war conditions created unsustainable levels of shortage in Austria-Hungary. Though food concerns were an issue for many large European cities⁶¹¹, they became the defining wartime problem in Central European cities. Maureen Healy described the experience of World War I in Vienna as a ‘falling apart’ around the food crisis.⁶¹² Christoph Mick, in his study of wartime Lemberg/Lwów/L’viv, showed how national tensions radicalized during the conflict while food shortages created parallel social tensions.⁶¹³ Urban communities put to the test of war were splitting along pre-war cleavages.⁶¹⁴

The First World War is often seen as an accelerator of national conflicts⁶¹⁵, but this exacerbation of national hatreds is rarely analysed in the context of the various social tensions that structured wartime societies. This chapter will explore how divisions in Prague’s urban community evolved from 1914 until the first years of the Czechoslovak Republic.

⁶¹⁰ Josef Čihák, *Lichva na soudu dějin a mravního zákona* (Praha: Čs. akc. tiskárna, 1917), p. 1.

⁶¹¹ Thierry Bonzon, Belinda Davis, ‘Feeding the cities’, in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 305-341.

⁶¹² Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 4.

⁶¹³ Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in Einer Multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914-1947* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010).

⁶¹⁴ On socio-political cleavages see the work of Stein Rokkan and Seymour Lipset.

⁶¹⁵ Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka, 1914-1918* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001), p. 280.

I - Tensions around food supply: profiteers and victims

The centrality of the food question in Germany and Austria-Hungary during the First World War is not to be questioned.⁶¹⁶ The priority given to supplying the army meant civilians had to endure a severe hunger crisis.⁶¹⁷ However, evaluating the food supply levels during the war remains a difficult enterprise. The official state organization of supply only reveals part of the reality as many people had to rely on alternative modes of provision.

A - Official organization of the food supply

As the war went on, the difficulties in food provision in Austria-Hungary became worse and worse. The Habsburg Empire had not entered the conflict prepared for a war of this length. The labour shortage caused by mobilization meant reduced harvests in a context where army requisitions put further strains on the system. As Maureen Healy clearly demonstrates, the main causes of penury in the Austrian half of the Empire were the suspension of imports from Hungary, the loss of foodstuff coming from agricultural Galicia, and the Allied blockade. Before the war, Hungary was exporting its agricultural products to the more industrialized half of Austria. Importation levels fell considerably with the war, especially after 1915, which also had repercussions in the Bohemian Lands. The Prague municipality even travelled to Hungary in February 1915 in the hope to buy flour there but was unsuccessful everywhere.⁶¹⁸ In addition, the occupation of Galicia and the fact that part of its population had fled meant that Cisleithania was deprived from its potential production. Lastly, the Allied blockade prevented Austria from compensating these losses by diversifying its imports.⁶¹⁹ Under these circumstances, state management could only play a relative role in alleviating the shortages.

In this context, the measures implemented by the Austrian government seem to have been, on the whole, too slow and uneven. Maximum prices were introduced in December 1914 but

⁶¹⁶ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*; Belinda Joy Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 2000).

⁶¹⁷ Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War*, *The Making of the Modern World*, 1 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 155.

⁶¹⁸ *Aprovisace obce pražské za války a po válce 1914-1922* (Praha: Aprovisační ústav hlavního města Prahy, 1923), p. 18.

⁶¹⁹ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, pp. 49-51.

were not unified on the whole Austrian territory.⁶²⁰ The administration's first concern was the supply of grain and flour. The War Grain Control Agency (*Kriegsgetreide-Verkehrsanstalt*), created in February 1915, administered the state monopoly for these products. For other foodstuffs, there gradually emerged a system of 'central agencies' (*Zentralen/ústředny*) devoted to specific commodities. These bodies functioned like government-sponsored cartels run by private businesses.⁶²¹ No concerted policy on the food situation emerged at the highest level until the creation of the Food Office (*Amt für Volksernährung*) on 13 November 1916. As Ottokar Landwehr von Pragenau, who was in charge of the Joint Committee for Food until the end of the war, points out: 'when an attempt was made in the year 1917 to unite in one hand the provision of food for the whole monarchy, it was already much too late.'⁶²²

Much of the organization of the food provision happened at the local level. In Austria-Hungary the municipalities played an important role (see Chapter 3) and were responsible for supplying food for their inhabitants.⁶²³ This meant that, beyond the centralized system, many variations existed from one town to another. In Prague, a supply commission was created at the start of the war, followed in 1915 by supply agencies (*aprovisační ústavy*) (which started their activity in 1916).⁶²⁴ The poor information to the population with regard to the food supply left people in the dark and led to rumours. As criminologist Vladimír Solnař explains, 'the beginning of the war was not yet a period of real penury but it was a period of expected penury. We remember the alarming news that this or that good would be missing.'⁶²⁵ Following the first shortages in 1915, the municipality started to mill flour and bake bread, sold in public selling points for the poorest sections of the population. In March 1915, at one of these selling points,

⁶²⁰ *Aprovisace obce pražské*, p. 15.

⁶²¹ Josef Redlich, *Austrian War Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), pp. 117-119; Healy, p. 46.

⁶²² Ottokar Landwehr von Pragenau, *Hunger: die Erschöpfungsjahre der Mittelmächte 1917/1918* (Zürich: Almathea-Verlag, 1931), p. 6.

⁶²³ Joseph Redlich, *Austrian War Government*, p. 114.

⁶²⁴ Barbora Lašťovková, 'Zásobování Prahy za první světové války', in *Mezi liberalismem a totalitou: komunální politika ve středoevropských zemích 1848-1948*, ed. by Václav Ledvinka and Jiří Pešek (Praha: Scriptorium, 1997), pp. 111-116.

⁶²⁵ Vladimír Solnař, *Zločinnost v zemích Českých v letech 1914-1922 z hlediska kriminální etiologie a reformy trestního práva* (V Praze: Nákladem Knihovny sborníku věd právních a státních, 1931), pp. 112-113.

two persons were injured and a few more fainted in a stampede.⁶²⁶ The first rationing tickets for bread (*chlebenka/Brotkarte*)⁶²⁷ were introduced in April 1915,⁶²⁸ progressively followed by other goods in the following years. In 1915, the city's food supply was still more or less assured. The progression of the penury was, however, not linear. New harvests brought temporary improvements. Conditions worsened markedly in the spring of 1917. The Prague municipality organized a system of war kitchens for the most destitute Praguers.⁶²⁹ In March 1917, for example, around 9000 lunches per day were distributed to poor inhabitants of the city (less than a fourth of those classified as 'poor' by the municipality).⁶³⁰

In his memoirs, a physician from Prague sums up the evolution of the situation in these words:

In the first two years, there was enough of everything, and then everything slowly disappeared. In 1916 the shortages were already substantial. By 1917 it was already hunger. Money was no use. You had to know ways to get goods. Those who haven't lived through 1917 and 1918 don't know what hunger is.⁶³¹

The dwindling quantity of food supply was not the only issue with the wartime situation: the quality of products also went down. Food substitutes were used as one solution to the growing shortages. As early as 1915, for example, bread could no longer be made from pure wheat flour. It had to be mixed with flour from other cereals like barley, oats or corn. Other substitutes included malt products, potato starch and sugars. By 1916, bread contained 60% of substitutes.⁶³² The poor quality of the bread was a frequent cause of complaints. An anonymous

⁶²⁶ *Aprovisace obce pražské*, p. 24.

⁶²⁷ These tickets had to be bilingual after 1916, *Aprovisace obce pražské*, p. 100.

⁶²⁸ *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914-1918*, ed. by Drašarová, Eva, Jaroslav Vrbata, 5 vols (V Praze: Státní ústřední archiv, 1993-95), II 1915 (1994), p. 67.

⁶²⁹ Rudolf Kučera, *Život na příděl: válečná každodennost a politiky dělnické třídy v českých zemích 1914-1918* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013), p. 42.

⁶³⁰ Pavel Scheufler, 'Zásobování potravinami v Praze v letech 1. světové války', *Etnografie dělnictva*, 9 (1977), 143-197, p. 147.

⁶³¹ Vladimír Vondráček, *Lékař vzpomíná (1895-1920)* (Praha: Avicenum, 1978), p. 274.

⁶³² Martin Franc, 'Bread from Wood: Natural Food Substitutes in the Czech Lands during the First World War', in *Food and war in twentieth century Europe*, ed. by Iva Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Rachel Duffett and Alain Drouart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 73-83.

writer explained to the Bohemian governor: 'In Nusle we have for supply (*aprovisace*) completely black flour that is not even [fit] for cattle.'⁶³³

Comparing the conditions in Prague with other cities at the same time proves difficult, especially since official rations did not necessarily correspond to what people were receiving. However, Austria experienced worse shortages than other countries, including Germany. Within Cisleithania, Vienna concentrated the largest urban population and probably suffered from shortages earlier on than other regions. In 1916, the Prague municipality proudly compared its better results in the domain of food supply to those of the capital city.⁶³⁴ Though there is no definite study comparing the conditions of food supply in the different parts of the monarchy, it would seem that the relatively prosperous state of pre-war agriculture in Bohemia meant that it was considered as a land to get food from rather than to send food to.⁶³⁵ This representation of the Bohemian lands as a fertile zone proved a disadvantage at the end of the war when supplying Vienna was considered a priority while Bohemia and Moravia were viewed as self-sufficient. The countryside might have fared better than other parts of the monarchy but the cities, and Prague above all, were neglected by this system. As a result, by 1918, the food provision in Prague was, according to the Prague 'grain central agency' (*Getreidezentrale*), worse than in Vienna.⁶³⁶ The Prague municipal council attributed these difficulties to the overestimation of the number of 'self-supporters' in Bohemia.⁶³⁷ As these agencies were, of course, trying to obtain more grain for their own city their assessment should be viewed in this light. In a report from July 1918, the Prague supply agencies described in detail the situation in the city and conveyed the feeling that Prague had been abandoned by the Austrian state. The flour tickets were not honoured and even a weekly half ration of flour products of 250g per person could not be delivered. In the span of nine weeks, from May 1st to June 30th, the half ration (hardly sufficient for anyone to survive on) was only delivered for two weeks. The half bread ration, introduced in Vienna in June, existed in Prague

⁶³³ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2891, sig. A 15/1, no 6534, Received 25 February 1918.

⁶³⁴ *Aprovisační věstník královského hlavního města Prahy*, I, no 2, 1 November 1916, p. 6.

⁶³⁵ The level of requisitions for the army and Vienna was higher than in the other crownlands see Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka 1914–1918* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 2001), p. 259.

⁶³⁶ Report from the centre of the Prague communes, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Volksernährungsamt, K151, no 34711, 1 February 1918.

⁶³⁷ Presidium of the Prague Municipal Council to the Ministry of Alimentation, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Volksernährungsamt, K151, no 21689, 11 February 1918.

since April. The distribution of fat (butter, margarine, pork fat) was minimal: only 90g per person for the month of March, 50g in April and 70g in May. Milk did not fare much better with a total provision of 20,810 litres in May 1917 which went down to 7877 litres a year later.⁶³⁸

These catastrophic conditions could not be improved from one day to the next with the arrival of peace. The first Austrian building seized by the Czech National Committee in Prague on 28 October 1918 was the Office for Grain. In the first years of Czechoslovakia's existence (until 1921), the state, through the Office for Grain, subsidized the market for cereals and paid a higher price for bread which was then sold to the population at a lower price.⁶³⁹ Despite new conditions and foreign aid, food shortages marked the first two post-war years (see chapter 6).

B - From shortages to hunger: the consequences of deprivation

The difference in intensity between the deprivations of the first years and the penury of 1917-1918 can be expressed by the distinction between shortage and hunger. The mayors of Prague suburbs writing to the Ministry of Food explained: 'Shortage is to be borne with patience but hunger is not' because it led to despair.⁶⁴⁰ The newspaper *Právo lidu* described the situation during the conflict in a similar way: 'During the war the population of Greater Prague suffered immensely. There was hunger, not shortage'.⁶⁴¹ Language reflected the new conditions: the technical Czech word '*aprovísace*' became part of daily use to describe the new difficulties in securing necessary food items.⁶⁴² Vašek Kaňa, in his autobiographical novel about his childhood on the streets during the war, mentions the ubiquitous use of the new term at the time.⁶⁴³

Queues became the defining characteristic of Prague's streets as well as the key experience for many on the home front. Women and children sometimes had to queue all night in

⁶³⁸ Petition from the Prague Supply Agencies to Ministry of Alimentation, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Volksernährungsamt, K151, no 115718, 18 July 1918.

⁶³⁹ Alois Rašín. *Les finances de la Tchécoslovaquie jusqu'à la fin de 1921* (Paris: Editions Bossard, 1923), pp. 152-153.

⁶⁴⁰ From the Mayor of Vinohrady, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Volksernährungsamt, K151, no 13096, 24 January 1918.

⁶⁴¹ 'Byl hlad, ne nedostatek', *Právo lidu*, 22 January 1920, p. 6.

⁶⁴² See an article on wartime vocabulary published in 1920: 'Sbírejme válečná slova', *Naše řeč*, 4 (1920), p. 17. The German equivalent 'Approvisation' can also rarely be found, for example in an advertisement for renting a room with food in exchange: *Prager Tagblatt*, 7 December 1918, p. 6.

⁶⁴³ Vašek Káňa, *Válkou narušení* (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1953), p. 65.

the hope of receiving some food in the morning. Standing in line came to take over the days. Jaroslav Knotek-Domě, who was seven or eight at the time, described in the 1970s his daily life in the working-class neighbourhood of Libeň:

Children often even smaller than me, their mums, grannies and granddads would seat on the ground maybe several times a week during the whole night in the very quiet street [...], in winter wrapped in blankets and various shawls. Seating and lying on the pavement in front of the bakery so that they would not miss their turn in the morning, when they opened the shop. My mother of course also went to the queue in the night [...]. I often came to replace her for two or three hours so that she could get some sleep. [...] In the morning when the baker pulled up his roller shutter, he would sell for maybe just one hour or not even and the roller shutter would fall back to the ground and we were told that there was no more bread.⁶⁴⁴

The number of children arrested for begging in the streets went from 50 in 1914 to 253 in 1917 (only until September).⁶⁴⁵ The newspaper *Právo lidu* commented on the increased numbers of beggars on the streets of Prague. 'On average ten to fifteen people come to knock on the door every day; a number that previously was not even reached on Fridays, day of beggars.' Children were overrepresented among those having to beg for food.⁶⁴⁶

The food shortages were accompanied by shortages in other common goods. Coal, especially, which was necessary for cooking and heating became very scarce in the last two years of the conflict. To add to the difficulties of Prague's inhabitants, the winter of 1917 was especially cold with temperatures reaching -20°C in February 1917 (and an average of 5 degrees below normal values for that month).⁶⁴⁷ As early as September 1917, some factory workers were reported to have burnt their entire furniture to be able to cook.⁶⁴⁸ The theft of coal at train stations and on train wagons became a regular offense. Bands of teenagers specialized in this activity and were nicknamed 'coal barons' (*uhlobarony*). Vašek Kaňa described his life as one of them, watching trains during the night and sleeping in the streets during the day.⁶⁴⁹ Another 'coal

⁶⁴⁴ From an oral testimony gathered by a team of anthropologists: Jaroslav Knotek-Domě, 'V libeňském zázemí za první vojny', *Etnografie dělnictva*, 9 (1977), p. 226.

⁶⁴⁵ Scheufler, 'Zásobování potravinami v Praze', p. 186.

⁶⁴⁶ *Právo lidu*, 3 March 1917 (supplement), p. 4.

⁶⁴⁷ *Statistická zpráva hlavního města Prahy, spojených obcí, Karlína, Smíchova, Vinohrad, Vršovic a Žižkova a 16 sousedních obcí Velké Prahy za léta 1915-1918* (Praha: Nákladem hlavního města Prahy, 1921), p. 1.

⁶⁴⁸ Mood report Military Command NA, PMV/R, ka 193, 22 Böhmen, no 20491, 30 September 1917.

⁶⁴⁹ Kaňa, *Válkou narušení*, p. 82.

baron' recalls the dangers involved in running on train tracks in search of coal.⁶⁵⁰ In January 1918, a 13-year boy was killed by a soldier while stealing coal on a train in Libeň.⁶⁵¹

The combination of these factors had disastrous consequences on Praguers' health. Malnutrition made people more vulnerable to diseases. For example, the prevalence of tuberculosis, which had started to decrease in the pre-war years, went up again in the last three years of the war. Tuberculosis was the first cause of death in Prague (accounting for 22,9% of mortality in the city). This development is summarized in a health survey as follows: '[tuberculosis] was always significant, but the wartime penury and undernourishment augmented it prodigiously.'⁶⁵² Hunger oedema, a sickness linked to low levels of protein and characterized by a swelling of the skin, was encountered in Prague (although it was not as prominent as in other regions of the monarchy). Inmates in lunatic asylums were particularly affected by this illness because, as one report noted: '[they were] the only people in the monarchy who actually had to live on the rations which the state had established, and who could not procure for themselves anything more.'⁶⁵³ Though the overall influence of the shortages on mortality is difficult to assess directly, mortality in Prague clearly increased during the period: 6777 civilians died in the city in 1915 and 8486 by 1918.⁶⁵⁴ The mortality of the Spanish flu was probably influenced by the general undernourishment: 893 people died of the disease in 1918 (with a peak of deaths in the month of October).⁶⁵⁵ Old people who could not queue for long hours to get food were excluded from the food supply and more susceptible to undernourishment.⁶⁵⁶ An old woman, for example, was found lying unconscious in one of the city parks, exhausted from undernourishment,

⁶⁵⁰ Knotek-Domě, 'V líbeňském zázemí za první vojny', p. 230.

⁶⁵¹ NA, MRP/R, ka 82, no 7861, 26 May 1918.

⁶⁵² Philip Skinner Platt, *Přehled veřejného zdravotnictví Velké Prahy* (V Praze: Ministerstvo sociální péče, 1920), p. 33. The fact that tuberculosis was still prevalent before 1910 in Prague reminds us of the difficult living conditions in pre-war societies see Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2008), pp. 278-279.

⁶⁵³ Report from the Governor's Office to the Ministry of Health, NA, MZd/R, ka 5, no 2374, 29 August 1918. For a similar phenomenon in World War II France see Isabelle von Buelzingsloewen, *L'hécatombe des fous: la famine dans les hôpitaux psychiatriques français sous l'Occupation*, (Paris: Aubier, 2007).

⁶⁵⁴ *Statistická zpráva 1915-1918*, p. 99.

⁶⁵⁵ 1176 including military and 'foreigners', *Statistická zpráva 1915-1918*, p. 156.

⁶⁵⁶ 'Morts d'inanition': *Famine et exclusions en France sous l'Occupation*, ed. by Isabelle von Buelzingsloewen (Rennes : PUR, 2005).

according to the doctor who examined her.⁶⁵⁷ The municipality reported that of the 334 old isolated persons who came into the care of the Office for the poor from January to August 1916, 161 died shortly after their arrival.⁶⁵⁸ Beyond the death rates, the spread of diseases generally intensified. In May 1918 the municipal physician reported the prevalence of tuberculosis in poor working-class households, including among children. He also explained how inflation had an impact on living conditions as families had to move to a smaller flat or even a cellar to match the growing prices for foodstuffs. His concluding paragraph gives a vivid picture of despair at the end of the war:

The awful worries about the securing of the most necessary food items, the worries of mothers, about how to cook without the most essential ingredients mainly without fat, when to cook when it is necessary to spend most of the day and night on food lines, what to cook on when it is impossible to get coal or even wood, the lack of sleep [...], the sight of hungry children and their lament, all of that has a deleterious effect on the nerves [...] and certainly causes either an awful outburst of despair or a spread of mental illnesses [...].⁶⁵⁹

Despite postal censorship, women sometimes tried to communicate their worries to men at the front or in captivity. A police report warned that slips of papers containing description of the penury could be sent in hollowed out nuts.⁶⁶⁰ A woman writing to her husband expresses as follows the despair of women left in the hinterland: ‘What will the end be when it is now so miserable?’⁶⁶¹

C - The reality of food supply: a flourishing black market

The regulations introduced by the central and local government did not necessarily translate into reality. It had soon become impossible to survive on state rations alone and Prague’s inhabitants had to resort to other strategies to get food. ‘We would like to know here in Prague what dim head managed to calculate that half a loaf of bread made of 50% corn flour and 50% wood can suffice for a person for a whole week’⁶⁶², commented one angry city-dweller.

⁶⁵⁷ The short newspaper notice is entitled: ‘A picture from nowadays’, *Právo lidu*, 5 September 1917, p. 3.

⁶⁵⁸ *Věstník obecní královského hlavního města Prahy*, XXIV, no 18, 27 September 1917, p. 271.

⁶⁵⁹ Report from the health commission to the Prague City Council, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K112, no 103303, 28 May 1918.

⁶⁶⁰ NA, PP HSt, ka 28, sig. H 1/11, no 4777, 10 October 1916.

⁶⁶¹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5152, sig. 8/1/92/19, file Grund, Elsa Grund to Ladislav Grund, 23 June 1916.

⁶⁶² Anonymous letter to the Bohemian Governor in Czech, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2891, sig. A 15/1, no 8370, Postmark 6 July 1918.

Moreover, rations to which one was officially entitled were often unobtainable, as the Prague municipality did not have enough stocks available. The population had thus an often ambivalent position toward the black market, perceived as the origins of the problem but also as a way to alleviate suffering. As Hans Loewenfeld-Russ, who would later head the Imperial Food Office, acknowledged: 'because nobody could struggle along with these rations, the population was forced to obtain complementary food in dubious ways to satisfy the most primitive life necessities'.⁶⁶³

Alongside supplying municipalities, the central agencies could also distribute food directly to various corporations or institutions, which would request specific amounts for their employees. The correspondence of the local Office for fruit and vegetables shows many examples of such behaviour.⁶⁶⁴ Though these requests were not systematically met, the official rationing system would occasionally accept this form of patronage. A journalist in Žižkov commented on this process: 'everyone, whether director, physician, or factory owner, looks for an influential acquaintance to have patronage and get food (*aprovisace*) more easily, without queues.'⁶⁶⁵ Accusations that civil servants were getting preferential treatment were also levelled by the general public.

Thus, food supply was just as much, if not more, determined by alternative routes and even illegal trade. Black market and food trafficking became an important component of access to commodities and, more generally, of life in the city.⁶⁶⁶ A department for the prevention of food profiteering (*ústředna pro potírání lichvy potravinami/Zentrale zur Bekämpfung des Lebensmittelwuchers*) was created at the Prague Police Headquarters in May 1916.⁶⁶⁷ The efficiency of this unit and of control organs was, however, questioned by the population. An article published in the German newspaper *Bohemia* reported on a reader who had twice attempted in vain to alert nearby policemen about illegal prices at fruit stands. In the second case,

⁶⁶³ Hans Loewenfeld-Russ, *Die Regelung der Volksernährung im Kriege* (Wien : Hölder Pichler Tempsky, 1926), p. 97.

⁶⁶⁴ NA, Zemská úřadovna pro ovoce a zeleninu, ka 1.

⁶⁶⁵ *Žižkovské zájmy*, 29 April 1917, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁶ See the study of similar processes in World War II France: Fabrice Grenard, *La France Du Marché Noir (1940-1949)* (Paris: Payot, 2008).

⁶⁶⁷ *Domov za války: svědectví účastníků*, ed. by Alois Žipek (Praha: Pokrok, 1929), III, p. 422.

on the marketplace in Tyl Square, he was even arrested by the police for causing a stir.⁶⁶⁸ More lenient commentators pointed to the staff shortage which rendered the department for the prevention of food profiteering ‘completely powerless’ and meant that ‘the biggest profiteering escapes justice’.⁶⁶⁹ Others accused the police of corruption. ‘The police accepts bribes and palm-greasing, and close their eyes for a box of sugar’⁶⁷⁰, explained one anonymous letter. Overall, the action of the police in this field was deemed insufficient.⁶⁷¹

If they sometimes escaped police vigilance, black market activities went on in the centres of cities. The published confessions of a black marketeer reveal cafés and train stations as the converging points for various types of trafficking. According to him, café waiters, as hubs of information, were playing an important role in the development of this trade.⁶⁷² The investigation around a singer in the Czech National Theatre in 1916 revealed the common networks of the black market. This individual, nicknamed ‘flour worm’ by other members of the theatre, had offered to provide food to acquaintances he met in various cafés. He had contacts in the town of Brandeis/Brandýs where he would get his supply.⁶⁷³ Reports for seized butter and pork fat in Prague from August 1917 to the end of 1919 also show how these traffics were part of daily life in the city.⁶⁷⁴ Most cases involved small quantities of butter (less than 10kg) smuggled at train stations or discreetly at market halls. The fine paid was not always enough of a deterrent. The local Office for fat recommended to the police an exemplary punishment in the case of a repeat

⁶⁶⁸ *Deutsche Zeitung Bohemia*, 2 August 1918, p. 4.

⁶⁶⁹ From a meeting of the political club ‘Rovnost’ on 12 August 1918, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Volksernährungsamt, K113, no 123857, 28 August 1918.

⁶⁷⁰ Anonymous letter to the Bohemian Governor, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2891, sig. A 15/1, no 4789, Received 11 February 1917.

⁶⁷¹ See the *Prager Tagblatt*’s comments on the department’s activity at the end of 1918, *Prager Tagblatt*, 9 January 1919, p. 4.

⁶⁷² Kamil Gollin, *Keťasová zpověď’: autentické líčení života, zákulisí a tajů řetězového obchodu po dobu pěti měsíců ve válce od 1. srpna 1917 až do ledna 1918* (Praha: A. Svěcený, 1918).

⁶⁷³ He was also accused to help get exemptions from military service see his file in NA, PMV/R, ka 189, 22 Böhmen, no 27602, 28 November 1916.

⁶⁷⁴ NA, Státní ústav pro tuky, oleje a mléko (SÚTOM), ka 6.

offender who had continued her trafficking after being caught.⁶⁷⁵ In another case in Žižkov/Žižkow, a man had misappropriated flour destined for the local supply centre.⁶⁷⁶

The reality of these small-scale dealings did not necessarily coincide with the growing anger at the 'profiteers'. As Jean-Louis Robert has shown, this image of the profiteer could include different sections of population who were perceived as not taking part in the common sacrifice.⁶⁷⁷ Anyone richer or better-fed than oneself could be seen as a profiteer. In search of scapegoats for the penury, the population in Prague often identified the Jews with profiteers. A report from the Prague Police Headquarters in April 1917 remarks on this anti-Semitism: 'the anti-Jewish attitude is present in the same proportion in all strata of population without distinction of nationality'.⁶⁷⁸ Access to food determined new cleavages within the urban community.

Figure 17: 'The visitors of the Department for prevention of profiteering in Prague'.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁵ Letter from the Local Office for Fat to the Governor's Office, NA, SÚTOM, ka 6, no 11133, 8 November 1917.

⁶⁷⁶ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4979, sig. 8/1/25/4, no 23080/17, 20 July 1917.

⁶⁷⁷ Jean-Louis Robert, 'The image of the profiteer', in *Capital cities at war : Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919*, ed. by Jean-Louis Robert and Jay Winter (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 104-132.

⁶⁷⁸ ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Volksernährungsamt, K111, no 105972, 14 April 1917.

⁶⁷⁹ *Týdenní Kronika*, 6 March 1919, p. 1.

II - The antagonism between urban and rural populations: dissolution into national unity?

A - Disruption of social hierarchies: food shortages and the countryside

Faced with growing shortages, city-dwellers also attempted to find food through more legal means, growing their own vegetables or rearing their own farm animals in their homes. The city was thus invaded by a more rural lifestyle, a process that Roger Chickering has termed 'ruralization' in the case of Freiburg during the war.⁶⁸⁰ Many urban-dwellers had to learn or relearn farming techniques. Looking at the titles published during the war in Prague, it is striking to notice the sheer number of handbooks explaining how to rear and cook small poultry or rabbits in a city setting, or how to dry vegetables. For example they recommend that rabbits should be kept on the inner balcony (asking the neighbours' permission first) and that all sorts of waste should be saved to feed them. Some of the titles reveal much about their object and their audience: 'Practical tables for the cultivator of vegetables and grains, small and big', 'The Home grocer: a short introduction to the cultivation, care, harvesting of all types of vegetables and roots in the home garden: for the usage of the broadest classes', 'Cheap providers of meat, fat, butter, milk, cheese and eggs: practical advice for breeders of rabbits, guinea pigs, goats and poultry'.⁶⁸¹ Contemporary satire also references hidden geese found in the neighbour's apartment.⁶⁸² Parks were planted with vegetables to help provide the city. In the suburb of Karlín, in the year 1915, 6800 lettuces, 11560 kohlrabi, 3840 celery and other vegetables were cultivated in public parks and sold at the local market.⁶⁸³ The Red Cross hospital in the Straková Akademie also grew vegetables in its gardens to feed the wounded soldiers it accommodated.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸⁰ Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 181.

⁶⁸¹ Alois Josef Kulišan, *Praktické tabulky pro pěstitele zelenin a semen v malém i ve velkém* (Praha: A. Neubert, 1918); František Odložilík, *Domácí zelinář: stručný návod ku pěstování, ošetřování, sklizení a přezimování všech druhů zelenin a koření v domácí zahrádce* (Praha: A. Neubert, 1918); Josef Kafka, *Levní dodavatelé masa, sádla, másla, mléka, sýra a vajec: praktické rady pro chovatele králíků, morčat, koz, vepřů a drůbeže* (Praha: F. Šimáček, 1916).

⁶⁸² Josef Skružný, *Bubnová palba. Humoresky z válečné doby* (Praha: J. Vilímek, 1918), p. 183.

⁶⁸³ AHMP, Archiv města Karlín, ka 390, sig. 8/2, no 3557/16, 17 April 1916.

⁶⁸⁴ NA, Akademie hraběte Straky Praha, ka 4, I/10.

Progressively, from 1916 on, Prague inhabitants went on trips to the countryside to buy food directly from the producers, as standing in queues was proving insufficient to get their daily bread. These trips outside the city, also called rucksack traffic (*Rucksackverkehr/baťohové zásobování*), were often physically demanding for the city-dwellers who had to bring home all the goods they could get. The peasants would sometimes take money for the goods but a form of barter often existed: clothes, tobacco, jewels; every object that Praguers still possessed could be bargained against food. A woman farmer living in the countryside near Prague explained to her husband that she would not accept money: ‘There are a lot of people, who bring everything that we might need.’⁶⁸⁵ To find ways to eat, one would reactivate all the social links one had with villages outside of Prague. A memoirist explains how everybody rediscovered relatives in the countryside: ‘They dug up and connected again with old family relations.’⁶⁸⁶ These rural acquaintances appear in contemporary satire. For example a cabaret play features the character of the ‘uncle’ coming from the countryside to Prague, discovering the black market in the city.⁶⁸⁷ In a contemporary joke, a teacher asks his students for synonyms of potatoes and gets as an answer ‘books’: the pupil explains that when his ‘uncle’ sends a package of potatoes, the word ‘books’ is always inscribed on it.⁶⁸⁸ Trains were crowded with city-dwellers in search of food. A provincial newspaper described the great rush of people at the train station in Prague in August 1917: a crowd of people remained behind, not able to board any trains and the window of the counter was crushed in the process.⁶⁸⁹ Marie Schäferová, a Prague school teacher, describes the train stations full of women coming back from these trips to the countryside: ‘Daily at the train station you could see cans of milk or empty milk cans. Empty, they were travelling to the countryside and they came back full. They had a little lock so that no one unauthorized could open them.’⁶⁹⁰

The police remained ambivalent toward this type of self-provisioning. Officially, it was of course forbidden and considered as black market but in practice a certain leniency could be

⁶⁸⁵ Letter from Marie K. in Lhota to her POW husband, 10 July 1918, ÖStA, KA, Feldakten, Armee Ober Kommando, Evidenzbüro des Generalstabs, K 3800, n° 3216.

⁶⁸⁶ Vondráček, *Lékař vzpomíná*, p. 274.

⁶⁸⁷ AHMP, Divadélko Rokoko, ka 1, i.č. 3, “Potulky Prahou“ by Charley Linge, 1918.

⁶⁸⁸ *Humorické listy* 40 (1917), p. 516.

⁶⁸⁹ *Teplitz-Schönauer Anzeiger*, 12 August 1917, p. 2.

⁶⁹⁰ AHMP, Marie Schäferová, ka 1, inv. č. 5, p. 17.

observed, changing throughout the course of the war. The ban on such food trafficking was not very coherent and varied throughout the conflict, especially in its enforcement. A newspaper article complained in July 1918 about the renewed prohibition to transport potatoes in backpacks when a few weeks earlier the Ministry of Food had promised to allow food transport for self-supply.⁶⁹¹ A report from the Military Command in Prague dated 14 September 1918 mentions the ‘draconian prohibition’ of the *Rucksackverkehr* which generated ‘a certain agitation among the civilian population’.⁶⁹² In a report two weeks later, the situation is described as slightly improved through the ‘alleviated application of the rucksack interdiction’.⁶⁹³ As public supply systems failed to provide the most basic goods, citizens were forced to act illegally just to get by. This situation made controls more complicated because these practices were very widespread.

The war brought an inversion of traditional social hierarchies, which was particularly difficult to accept for the inhabitants of cities. Having to beg peasants for food during their trips to the countryside and being sometimes turned down constituted a humiliation for the urban workers and petit bourgeois who, before the war, had felt superior to their rural counterparts. Caricatures mocking or criticizing the peasants who had become rich selling their products at a high price to hungry urban-dwellers were common in Prague’s satirical papers. Cabaret artist Eduard Bass, for example, wrote a little piece entitled ‘The song of the Czech peasants of 1918’: ‘I am the Czech peasant; today I am a big master. [...] I give to whoever pays. At my house I accumulate whole piles of banknotes. [...] Who wants a bit of grain, takes off at least his shirt, I already have here full stocks and I want more.’⁶⁹⁴ Accusations of selfishness and profiteering against peasants from hungry workers and housewives created a major social rift between city and countryside during the war. Workers in factories in the Prague suburbs, for example, compared their fate with that of farm workers, pointing out that the latter were at least able to get food.⁶⁹⁵ City-dwellers had the impression that farmers were profiteering from their misery and

⁶⁹¹ *Večer*, July 3, 1918, p. 3.

⁶⁹² ÖStA, AdR, BMfV, Volksernährungsamt, K151, no 134865, Stimmungsbericht, Militärkommando in Prag, 14 September 1918.

⁶⁹³ ÖStA, AdR, BMfV, Volksernährungsamt, K151, no 144153, Stimmungsbericht, Militärkommando in Prag, 30 September 1918.

⁶⁹⁴ Eduard Bass, *Letáky, satiry, verse, písničky*, ed. by Adolf Branald and Jarmila Víšková (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1958), pp. 130–133.

⁶⁹⁵ Mood report from the Prague Military Command, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 190, no 5172, 14 March 1917.

refusing to share their abundance of food. In the last months of the war, attacks against supplies in the countryside multiplied. Mills were especially targeted. In an incident dated May 1918, a miller whose black market flour was being seized by a state agent called to the crowd for help, but the crowd instead turned against him.⁶⁹⁶

The hatred toward the rich peasants who sometimes refused to sell their food products could be reciprocated by the rural populations, who often did not sympathize with the urban inhabitants coming to their villages and looked upon at them as potential trouble. Farmers had to guard their fields against thieves looking for food and they considered the real profiteers to be in the cities. A March 1917 report from the censor mentions this animosity against town people: 'The divide between town and countryside is sharp and the people from the country look with envious eyes at the life of the town-dwellers. In the countryside there are many complaints about hunger, illness and death by starvation.'⁶⁹⁷ This circle of mutual envy was born from the illusion that another group was living a much better life, sheltered from supply problems. This mechanism is common in times of penury: the hatred toward the profiteers is grounded in the conception that while some go empty-handed, someone else is making a profit.⁶⁹⁸ A German newspaper seemed to reflect the general opinion after the war when it mentioned that 'certainly, of the 15 billion notes circulating in the Czech state, a substantial amount lies in the chests of the Czech peasants. It is a known fact'.⁶⁹⁹ In reality, the discrepancy in Bohemia between the rich class of farmers and poor peasants meant that the profits were the preserve of a minority. The Bohemian Governor explained the situation in the countryside: 'It is a known fact, made even more acute by the sharp separation in Bohemia between the agriculturally rich and the agriculturally poor part of the population, that the agricultural sector in wartime makes a profit selling food that very significantly exceeds its peacetime profits'.⁷⁰⁰

The war disrupted the social hierarchies that had shaped pre-war societies until then. Inflation had devalued employees' wages and many petit bourgeois households found themselves

⁶⁹⁶ ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K151, no 67149.

⁶⁹⁷ ÖStA, KA, ZSt, KM, KÜA, 1917, K186, no 101692.

⁶⁹⁸ Robert, 'The image of the profiteer', p. 126.

⁶⁹⁹ *Bohemia*, February 15, 1919, p. 5.

⁷⁰⁰ Report by the Bohemian governor, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Volksernährungsamt, K110, no 1952, 29 August 1916.

in a very difficult position. This new dependence on the countryside was often experienced as a humiliation. The old values of social status seemed turned upside down by the war experience. The sense of injustice and social degradation was strong among the middle classes as social hierarchies were no longer based on education and tradition but on access to food. The teacher Marie Schäferová recalls her reaction when one of her students, the son of a painter, expressed the wish to become a grocer when he grew up: 'That is how the tragedy of the family, of the period and of everybody shone through.'⁷⁰¹ Food shortages were not only difficult to survive physically, they undermined the certainties that bourgeois societies had been resting on. Civil servants and clerks on fixed income were particularly affected. The widow of an imperial tax officer wrote to the Bohemian Governor exposing her reduced circumstances: she insisted on their demeaning aspect for her, having to stand in line 'in the crowd'. She considered it was more difficult for her than for working-class women to get coal as they 'were used to carrying burdens'. She, on the other hand, could neither carry a basket on her back nor get a maid.⁷⁰² The threatened middle-class position illustrated here was one of the casualties of the war in Austria-Hungary. The following caricature, from the time of the regime change, mocks the new reverence for peasants in urban households. A bourgeois family welcomes like a high dignitary (carpet, flowers, music) the woman who provides them with food. 'How we celebrated the namesake day of Terezie Homolková, who brings us butter, eggs and milk from the countryside...', the caption reads.

⁷⁰¹ AHMP, Marie Schäferová, ka 1, inv. č. 5, p. 13.

⁷⁰² NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3157, sig. W 50/8, 12 February 1917.

*Figure 18: Caricature from the weekly newspaper Humoristické listy, 1 November 1918.*⁷⁰³

⁷⁰³ Available on the website of the Czech Academy of Science, <http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=HumL/61.1918/45/417.png>, [accessed 28 August 2014].

Though it levelled social relations, the food penury did not bring a new form of equality. On the contrary, it excluded even more those standing on the margins of society. For example, those who could not count on family relations in the countryside for their supply were greatly disadvantaged in their quest for food. In Prague in 1918, when many weeks went by without any distribution of bread or potatoes in the shops, not having access to an alternative mode of supply meant going hungry. A woman from Prague in a letter to her husband commiserates with those whose social network did not reach to the countryside: 'The one who doesn't have anybody in the countryside, he is unhappy.'⁷⁰⁴ Praguers, who had developed a sense of pride in their city as a modern metropolis at the turn of the century, saw their status reduced compared to the villagers around them.

B - Reconstructing the link between the city and the rural world: the Czech case

The anger against rural inhabitants generated by the war conditions was sharply monitored by politicians. The figure of the peasant had indeed been at the core of the creation of national identities in the 19th century. In the Herderian model of a nation as a particular national spirit, the peasantry who had kept ancestral traditions was supposed to embody the purest essence of this spirit.⁷⁰⁵ In the Czech case, this model was reinforced by the absence of a national nobility and by the fact that the first national activists, the 'awakeners' in the first half of the 19th century, had peasant origins.⁷⁰⁶ In the Czech historical narrative that emerged, peasants were the ones who had preserved the Czech language and the Czech customs after the Battle of the White Mountain. As Jiří Rak has shown, this idealization of the Czech countryside as unaltered source of the nation was in fact the product of the urban middle-classes who 'rediscovered' their own roots.⁷⁰⁷ This self-representation was still very much alive at the time of the First World War, and Masaryk himself, the future first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, presented the Czechs to

⁷⁰⁴ Letter from A. Rejlek (Prague VII) to Johann Rejlek, 9 October 1917, ÖStA, KA, Feldakten, Armee Ober Kommando, Evidenzbüro des Generalstabs, K 3797, no 2457.

⁷⁰⁵ Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales* (Paris: Seuil, 2001).

⁷⁰⁶ Hugh LeCaine Agnew, 'Noble Nation and Modern Nation: the Czech case', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 23 (1992), 50–71.

⁷⁰⁷ Jiří Rak, *Bývalí Čechové: české historické mýty a stereotypy* (Jinočany: H&H, 1994), pp. 85–96.

the governments of Western Europe as a nation of peace-loving democratic middle-class farmers.⁷⁰⁸

The case of the Bohemian lands during the First World War exemplifies a very clear strategy by politicians from the countryside to defuse the urban anger through a national narrative. The Czech Agrarian Party, aware of the resentment against peasants in the urban population, tried to offset this hatred by emphasizing the peasants' role in the national community. They tried to shift the blame for the poor provision of food either onto the authorities or onto the German part of the population. From 1917 onwards, in an attempt to 'canalize the hatred nationally', they spread the rumour that the supply difficulties originated in the exportation of food outside the Bohemian lands to Germany and German Austria.⁷⁰⁹ A report from the Prague Police headquarters states: 'The [Agrarians] assert that not only the main but the only cause for the food penury lies in the exportation to the German Reich and the German regions of Austria.'⁷¹⁰ The report goes on to accuse them of having a hidden agenda: their goal being to reduce the military requisitioning for big landowners in Bohemia. The German consul in Bohemia explains that 'when the Agrarians lay the exclusive blame for the grievances on the governor, it is to divert the attention of the public from themselves'.⁷¹¹ The Agrarians themselves complained in their newspaper *Večer* about the 'terror' launched against the rural population by the Czech Social-Democrats. The Social Democrats were accusing the peasants of making profits while urban workers starved. *Večer* pointed out that this 'terror' was threatening to divide the nation,⁷¹² thus emphasizing the argument that these recriminations were detrimental to the Czech nation as a whole. The German-speaking press was also accusing the Czech Agrarians of profiteering during the war, commenting ironically on Agrarian politician Staněk's gift to the

⁷⁰⁸ Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 32.

⁷⁰⁹ Peter Heumos, "'Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution': Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massenproteste in den böhmischen Ländern, 1914-1918', in *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen, Slowaken und Deutschen*, ed. by Hans Mommsen, Dušan Kováč and Jiří Malíř (Essen: Klartext, 2001), p. 263.

⁷¹⁰ Report from 8 August 1917, *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914-1918*, ed. by Drašarová, Eva, Jaroslav Vrbata, 5 vols (V Praze: Státní ústřední archiv, 1993-95), IV 1917 (1994), p. 146.

⁷¹¹ Report from the German consul in Prague, NAL, GFM 6/46, Österreich 101, 39, 24 August 1917.

⁷¹² *Večer*, 2 July 1918, p. 2.

National Theatre that 'the Agrarians [were] in the position to make gifts very easily thanks to their lucrative business'.⁷¹³

In addition to this campaign about the source of the shortages, the Agrarians gave their support to a new association created at the end of October 1917 that aimed to help the hungry children of Prague. This association, called *České srdce* (Czech Heart)⁷¹⁴, had as its implicit goal, the recreation of a form of solidarity among the Czech nation. To do this, they decided to help the poor hungry inhabitants of Prague by linking a family from the city to a family from the Czech countryside, the latter sending bread to the former once a week.⁷¹⁵ Their appeal for help to the Czech public 'Don't let them perish' established the failure of the state and the necessity for the nation to take matters into its own hands.⁷¹⁶ *České srdce* did not only act efficiently to give food to hungry city-dwellers, it also produced leaflets, posters and articles about their achievements to raise more funds. The Prague Police Department monitored this activity with great suspicion: '[Their] main goal seems to be to divert the anger of the population away from the Czech Agrarians. They want to induce a direct connection between the country districts and the cities. This way the good will of the Agrarians would be demonstrated.'⁷¹⁷ The action of this association supports Tara Zahra's thesis that by undertaking welfare provision, national associations gave legitimacy to national claims and further discredited the supranational Austrian state.⁷¹⁸ In a context where food supply was so central, being able to provide for hungry children and adults was a key factor in cementing loyalty to the Czech cause.

The success of *České srdce* can be seen in the many collections organized for the benefit of the association in Prague at the time. The Military Command remarked on these 'conspicuous' collections in the city in August 1918.⁷¹⁹ Street collections appealed once again to the generosity

⁷¹³ *Deutsche Zeitung Bohemia* (evening edition), 4 July 1918, p. 2.

⁷¹⁴ For the significance of the heart symbol in Czech culture see Robert Pynsent, "'The Heart of Europe': The Origins and Fate of a Czech Nationalist Cliché", *Central Europe*, 11, 1 (2013), 1-23.

⁷¹⁵ *Domov za války: svědectví účastníků* (Praha: Pokrok, 1929), V, p. 419.

⁷¹⁶ *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914–1918*. Praha: Státní ústřední archiv v Praze, 1995. vol. 4, 199.

⁷¹⁷ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5102, no 6088, 6 November 1917.

⁷¹⁸ Tara Zahra, "'Each nation only cares for its own': Empire, Nation and Child Welfare Activism in the Bohemian Lands 1900-1918", *The American Historical Review* 111, no 5 (2006), 1378–1402.

⁷¹⁹ Mood report from the Prague Military Command, ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, K112, no 11209, 1 August 1918.

of Praguers. Volunteers went from door to door. Those who had given could wear the badge of the association to display their support, as they had done previously for the Red Cross or other war charities.⁷²⁰ On Saint Wenceslas Day in September 1918, the Czech public was invited to demonstrate its ‘national sense of sacrifice’ and participate in the collections.⁷²¹ New branches of *České srdce* were rapidly created in many of the Prague suburbs (Smíchov, Nusle, Kral.Vinohrady, Žižkov).⁷²² The activity of the Nusle branch included the distribution of free lunches, a partnership with a wood seller to supply free fuel, and the creation of a meeting hall.⁷²³

České srdce also advertised in newspapers in November 1917 to convince Czech peasants to welcome one or several ‘national hosts’, children from the cities, into their homes. A play entitled ‘Czech heart’, whose profits went to the association, showcases the positive effect of being taken to the countryside for two pale Prague orphans who discover the kindness of the rural inhabitants.⁷²⁴ The appearance of the mythical figure ‘Čechie’ at the end of the play, taking the children into their protection, confirms the national dimension of this charity enterprise. In a letter to the association, one of the peasant women who took such a child into her home confirms that being a hostess was a way to display her Czechness: ‘We aren’t all profiteers and black-marketeers (*lichváři a keřasové*), as they have berated us, we have a Czech heart and Czech feeling and we share [...] with the poor children and they finally realise how virtuous the Czech villager is.’⁷²⁵ Although throughout the period it was easier to find children candidates than hosting families, the Agrarian Party's support in April 1918 gave a new impulse to this initiative.⁷²⁶ In the following three months, 7,857 children were sent to the countryside compared

⁷²⁰ *Národní politika* reports on the badges being sold out: *Národní politika*, 7 April 1918, p. 4.

⁷²¹ *Prager Tagblatt*, 25 September 1918, p. 3. (quoting the Czech newspaper *Večer*); the collections on Wenceslas Day are also mentioned in police reports, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3074, sig. P 55/35, no 11897, 26 September 1918.

⁷²² AHMP, MHMP II, SK, II/384, II/390, II/388, II/455.

⁷²³ AHMP, *České srdce*, místní skupina Nusle, inv. č. 1, kn 1.

⁷²⁴ Vojtěška Baldessari Plumlovská, *České srdce: časový obrázek z nynější doby o 3 jednáních s dohrou* (Praha: Ústřední nakladatelství, knihkupectví a papírnictví učitelstva, 1918).

⁷²⁵ *Pět let Českého srdce*, p. 40.

⁷²⁶ This would coincide with the moment when the Agrarian Party Chairman seemed to have given up on the monarchy see Daniel E. Miller, *Forging political compromise: Antonín Švehla and the Czechoslovak Republican Party, 1918–1933* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), p. 40.

to 1,350 in the first three months of the action.⁷²⁷ By July, 12000 children had been taken to the countryside by this or other welfare organisations.

Emperor Karl had promoted an imperial welfare system to get poor children into other regions of Austria-Hungary.⁷²⁸ For example, German-speaking children from industrial Northern Bohemia were sent to Hungary. There was also a project to send destitute German-speaking and Czech-speaking children from Prague to imperial castles in Bohemia.⁷²⁹ When the monarch visited the emergency regions (*Notstandgebiete*) of Northern Bohemia in March 1918, the Mayor of Prague went to ask him to help children from Prague and accommodate them in the former refugee camp in Německý Brod/Deutschbrod.⁷³⁰ This action was then carried out, organized by the Prague City Council, with the help of the imperial administration and financial help from *České srdce*: 2000 children had travelled to Německý Brod/Deutschbrod by July 1918.⁷³¹ Interestingly, the fact that imperial organizations cooperated with *České srdce* meant that the latter was the one receiving recognition in the Czech press. Describing the departure of 836 children to Německý Brod from the Prague North-Western train station, *Národní politika* called it ‘one of the most beautiful moments in our national life’.⁷³² The action was framed here in Czech national terms and not understood as an act of imperial charity. Commenting on *České srdce*'s child programme, the German-speaking *Prager Tagblatt* hoped that it would encourage the same type of initiative on the part of the Germans.⁷³³ Some other voices considered that this generosity masked unearned profits.⁷³⁴ Although *České srdce* presented this programme and its results in a very positive light, the relationships between urban children and rural peasants could be tense.

⁷²⁷ *Pět let českého srdce 1917–1922* (Praha: České srdce, [1922]), p. 30.

⁷²⁸ Friederike Kind-Kovács, ‘The “Other” Child Transports: World War I and the Temporary Displacement of Needy Children from Central Europe’, *Journal of the History of Irregular Childhood*, 15 (2013), 75-109. As Tara Zahra has shown, however, by 1918 this imperial welfare system was largely in the hands of national activists see Tara Zahra, “Each nation cares for its own”.

⁷²⁹ *Böhmerwald Volksbote*, 21 April 1918, p. 3.

⁷³⁰ *Prager Tagblatt*, 28 March 1918, p. 2.

⁷³¹ *Národní politika*, 24 July 1918 (afternoon), p. 2.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷³³ *Prager Tagblatt*, 12 April 1918, p. 4.

⁷³⁴ The Germans on the one hand: *Deutsche Zeitung Bohemia*, 14 June 1918, p. 3 ; but also the Social-Democrats, this article quotes *Právo lidu* and see the caricature below from *Týdenní kronika*.

Vašek Kaňa gives a more nuanced account of his time as a ‘national host’: he describes the impression of opulence when they arrived but also how he missed his family, and the various ill treatments that children received in the countryside.⁷³⁵

The activity of the Czech association *České srdce* at the end of the war and in the immediate post-war period shows a successful attempt at recreating a national community in a society where food shortages had created many cleavages. In so doing, it legitimized the efficiency of national solidarity over imperial bureaucracy.

Figure 19: Caricature (1918): ‘Why did you have to give a shirt and much money for potatoes, mum? – Because apparently Mister gave two golden coins for České srdce.’⁷³⁶

⁷³⁵ Kaňa then became a Communist and his testimony bears the mark of this ideological colouring, Kaňa, *Válkou narušení*, pp. 36-51.

⁷³⁶ *Týdenní kronika*, 12 December 1918, p. 5.

Figure 20: A *České srdce* badge (1918).⁷³⁷

III - Toward a further nationalization?: Czechs and Germans

Hunger reconfigured belonging in the urban community and national antagonisms played a role in this process. We did not want to tell a story of wartime Prague that would describe a foregone conclusion of national radicalization. National indifference persisted well into the 20th century and 1918 does not mark the end in this respect.⁷³⁸ The end of this chapter constitutes an attempt to offer some reflections on the role of the national issue in Prague. We would like to present it as one among others of the growing cleavages in the urban community.

⁷³⁷ NA, PP HSt, ka 32, sig. H 1/25, no 7052, 2 September 1918.

⁷³⁸ On national indifference: Zahra, Tara, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008). See also: Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

A - How issues became national: an assessment of the nationalization

As Maureen Healy has shown, food shortages created a ‘community of sufferers’⁷³⁹ which excluded the outsiders blamed for the penury. The boundaries between the ‘victims’ and the ‘victimizers’ differed from one individual to another. They also evolved throughout the conflict. Pre-existing cleavages (between town and country, rich and poor, Czech and German) took on a new virulence with the food question. National antagonism was one of the main events of pre-war political and social life in Bohemia.⁷⁴⁰ During the war, as Pieter Judson explains, nationalism became a ‘lens through which people might make sense of their particular circumstances, when it provided them with compelling explanations for the particular forms of material hardship they endured.’⁷⁴¹ Caitlin Murdock has recently analysed the growing importance of nationalist interpretations in the Saxon-Bohemian borderland.⁷⁴² German nationalists, as we have seen, accused Czech peasants of hoarding grain and making profit while the industrial regions of Northern Bohemia starved. Czech nationalists, and especially the Agrarian press, claimed that food from Bohemia was being sent to Germany.

This claim deserves to be further examined because of its widespread appeal during the war. Anonymous letters to the Bohemian Governor often mentioned alleged exportations to Germany and demanded for them to cease. One letter signed by workers from several Prague factories accused him of having been paid 6 million crowns by Germany.⁷⁴³ Another even revealed ‘food fantasies’⁷⁴⁴ on the conditions in the neighbouring country: ‘Food and coal are requisitioned in Bohemia and the Viennese central agency gives it to Germany. In Prague there is not even a kilo of potatoes on the market, no fruit, the smoker gets two puffs of cigarette, in

⁷³⁹ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 301.

⁷⁴⁰ Jan Křen has classically described the coexistence of Czechs and Germans as a conflictual community: Jan Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft: Tschechen und Deutsche, 1780-1918* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1996).

⁷⁴¹ Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 220.

⁷⁴² Caitlin E. Murdock, *Changing Places: Society, Culture, and Territory in the Saxon-Bohemian Borderlands, 1870-1946* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 81-111.

⁷⁴³ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2923, sig. D 18/7, no 16359, received 20 August 1917.

⁷⁴⁴ On ‘food fantasies’ see Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 69.

Germany there are wagons of Czech potatoes, full of fruits, full packs of Austrian cigarettes'.⁷⁴⁵ In a meeting of the Political Workers' Club in September 1918, the speaker also criticized the export of food to Germany.⁷⁴⁶ This complaint also surfaces in food riots and demonstrations. The Military Command denounced the ubiquitous use of the 'catchphrase "export to Germany"' in all social circles to further their own interests.⁷⁴⁷

The Bohemian authorities saw the potential danger of these rumours and tried to avert them. The local branch of the War Grain Agency offered a special prize to anyone who would be able to give proof of shipments going to Germany.⁷⁴⁸ A memorandum insisted resolutely that no grain was sent to Germany and that the mistake may have stemmed from people spotting trains transporting stocks from Romania to Germany through Bohemia.⁷⁴⁹ Trains bringing food from Linz to Germany were indeed escorted by the military through Prague and Bohemia to avoid theft and plunder.⁷⁵⁰ The German consul in Prague confirmed that a very small amount of food was still exported to the Reich and that there were actually more German imports coming into Bohemia.⁷⁵¹

There was a clear discrepancy between the importance that these shipments of food to Germany took in the Czech-speaking public and the reality of Austrian foreign trade. In fact, the exportations of goods to Germany continued at the beginning of the war because Austria did not realise that food goods would soon be scarce, but these exports stopped early on. Later on Germany steadily provided help to Austria⁷⁵². The 'myth' nevertheless proved to be lasting since *Narodní listy* mentioned it after the regime change, revealing the amount of food that was shipped out of the Bohemian lands during the conflict.⁷⁵³ The lack of information from governing

⁷⁴⁵ Anonymous letter in Czech to the Prague Police Chief, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2891, sig. A 15/1, no 14604, 14 August 1917.

⁷⁴⁶ ÖStA, AdR, BMfV, Volksernährungsamt, K113, No 134399, 30 September 1918.

⁷⁴⁷ Mood report from the Military Command in Prague, NA, PMV/R, ka 195, 22 Böhmen, no 3438, 16 January 1918.

⁷⁴⁸ *Prager Tagblatt*, 21 August 1917, p. 3.

⁷⁴⁹ NA, CV II, ka 71, Instructions for various offices, no date.

⁷⁵⁰ VHA, 8. sborové velitelství, Presidium, ka 1?, sig. 14 ¾ 51, no 15320, 22 August 1918.

⁷⁵¹ NAL, GFM 6/45, Ö101 Böhmen, 39, 27 August 1917.

⁷⁵² Hans Loewenfeld-Russ, *Die Regelung der Volksernährung im Kriege*, pp. 374-375.

⁷⁵³ *Narodní listy*, 13 November 1918, p. 4.

circles about food policy enabled the Agrarians to impose their own interpretation of the food crisis on the public, ultimately serving their political goals. This constituted a definite victory in the control of information, which would be decisive for the demise of the monarchy.

Increased national tensions around food supplies came to reinforce other grievances on the unequal treatment that had developed during the war. Czech-speakers felt victimized by the repressive measures taken by the military administration (see Chapter 1). The reopening of Parliament in April 1917 and the loosening of censorship gave more room for national demands to be expressed. Czech members of parliament posed various parliamentary questions on the treatment of Czechs in the war years.⁷⁵⁴ In an unpublished introduction to one of them, Young Czech politician Zdeněk Tobolka insisted on Czech sacrifice in the war and the poor retribution for it:

We were aware that in the most critical situation when our state [*soustátí*] fought for its existence, it was our duty to suppress our heart and give fully to the state what is due to it and what it indispensably needs for its defence. When the deceased monarch gave the order for the Habsburg nations to take up arms, the Czech nation did it immediately, without hesitation and to such an extent like no other nation of the Habsburg monarchy. [...] We could have expected that for this fulfilment of our citizens' duties, there would be regard for our self-denial. We did not live to see it. The war, which Austria participated in, was pronounced as a war of Germandom against Slavdom.⁷⁵⁵

The sacrifice of the nation in the war is here presented as poorly repaid by a state, which persecuted its Slavic population.

The complaints about the lack of retribution for sacrifice were sometimes also framed in national terms, targeting Germans who were oppressing Czechs in Bohemia. An anonymous leaflet, hung on trees in Pohořelec in 1916 and urging Czechs to 'wake up', underlined this inequality: 'What have we done to the Germans for them to persecute us so? [...] We fight just as much as the Germans, starve and die for their glory just as much as they do.'⁷⁵⁶ The anti-Czech measures were presented as unfair in light of the equal sacrifice of the nation during the war.

⁷⁵⁴ See for example Zdeněk Tobolka, František Staněk, *Chování se vládních kruhů k českému národu za války* (Praha: Pražská akciová tiskárna, 1917).

⁷⁵⁵ Zdeněk V. Tobolka, *Můj deník z první světové války [k vydání připravil Martin Kučera]* (Praha: Karolinum, 2008), p. 402.

⁷⁵⁶ Leaflet to the 'Czech-Slavic nation' that seems to have been written in Vienna, Mood report from the Prague Military Command, NA, PMV/R, ka 190, 22 Böhmen, no 207, 14 December 1916. On a side note, this leaflet is also interesting in its tone, full of contempt for the 'indolence' of the Czechs. This tone reminds of national activists' frustration with their own national population, which is observed in studies of national indifference. See the 2012 issue of the *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (April 2012) on 'Sites of Indifference to Nationhood'.

Their repercussion in society at large is difficult to evaluate: the banning of small newspapers or even the arrest of national leaders might have had less impact than forbidden songs for marching troops or the prohibition of certain colours.

The trajectory of nationalization during the war proves complex to chart because it does not follow a linear path. The role of the rhetoric of war sacrifice in radicalizing attitudes should not be underestimated. In the usually segregated Prague bourgeoisie, the war had first brought a modicum of intercourse between both nationalities. Musical concerts for the benefit of one or the other war charity were attended by members of both nationalities.⁷⁵⁷ This phenomenon was not new but had become rarer in the years before the First World War.⁷⁵⁸ Furthermore, a voluntary war-help committee was formed uniting both nationalities, meeting in the 'neutral' territory of the Hotel Central. It stemmed from the actions at train stations in the summer of 1914 that had assembled both Czech and German volunteers in the same places and 'united' both nationalities.⁷⁵⁹ The self-declared 'utraqvist' Prague Help Committee organized 18 concerts in 1915 and 27 in 1916.⁷⁶⁰ The old 'utraqvism' was thus revived in Prague for a brief moment during the mobilization of civilian bourgeois society in the war.⁷⁶¹ Nationalization was not a foregone conclusion of modern 20th century warfare. It was the product of communities who more and more framed their sacrifice against their neighbour's.

Czech nationalists' accusations against the Prague police force at the end of the war bring to light their perceived victimization. Addressing Parliament, National Socialist deputy Jiří Stříbrný⁷⁶² criticized the new Chief of Police Gottfried Kunz (promoted in 1915) for being too German and hiring only anti-Czech Germans. As well as denouncing police treatment of Czech political prisoners, he also raised the idea that the police was trying to bring the Czechs into

⁷⁵⁷ Example of a concert in Rudolfium, *Prager Tagblatt*, 2nd supplement, 20 February 1915, p. 3; See an article that criticises this wartime 'utraqvism' in music concerts: *Národní listy*, 3 January 1918, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁸ See Gary B. Cohen, 'Cultural Crossings in Prague, 1900: Scenes from Late Imperial Austria', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 45 (2014), 1–30, pp. 12-19.

⁷⁵⁹ AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1, no 432, 3 February 1915, see Chapter 2.

⁷⁶⁰ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/74, no 1742, 12 December 1916.

⁷⁶¹ On utraqvism see Robert Luft, 'Nationale Utraqvisten in Böhmen. Zur Problematik nationaler Zwischenstellungen am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts' in 37-51.

⁷⁶² One of the 'men of the 28 October' [1918], he went on to create a radical nationalist movement in the interwar period.

disrepute. For example, he suggested that the police might have helped spread the Russophile leaflets, which were, to his mind, produced by the German-speaking newspaper *Bohemia*.⁷⁶³ This conspiracy theory is interesting because it goes contrary to the post-war consensus on Czech disloyalty. In 1917, Czech nationalists were still supposing that Czech Russophile actions could be the construction of German nationalists. In the same vein, Stříbrný also condemned the lack of proceedings against a German student who had shouted on the street that all Czechs were Russophile. He saw it as a proof that ‘under his [Kunz’s] regime in Prague the Czech nation can be insulted in broad daylight without punishment’.⁷⁶⁴ Disloyalty is here presented as a malicious accusation from German nationalists that Czechs took offense to. Many of his accusations seem exaggerated (the personnel of the police did not completely change during the war years, for example). They reveal, however, a growing alienation from the state authorities understood increasingly in national terms.

Other parliamentary questions underline the same concerns over a ‘Germanized’ Prague police persecuting Czechs. Usual concerns over language use, in continuity with pre-war nationalist agendas, feature prominently: for instance, policemen closing pubs in mostly Czech-speaking areas at 11 pm with the words ‘police hour’ made the announcement first in German and then in Czech.⁷⁶⁵ The National Theatre Jubilee in May 1918 was another occasion where a ‘heavily accented’ police force was accused of mishandling the Czech crowd and of attempting to undermine this national festival.⁷⁶⁶ These nationalist worries about the Germanization of Prague during the war echo a pre-war discourse on national gains and losses.⁷⁶⁷ The city, which had become the capital of Czech nationalism since the second half of the 19th century was, in the view of Czech nationalists, in danger of becoming a German city during the war. Another example is the suggestion that street signs could be replaced by bilingual Czech/German signs in order to

⁷⁶³ I have found another instance of this ‘conspiracy’ theory on *Bohemia*’s role in the leaflet affair in Václav Chaloupecký’s correspondence see Jaroslav Bouček, ‘Rok 1915 v dopisech Václav Chaloupeckého’, *Historie a Vojenství*, 52, 1, (2003), 49-58, p. 56.

⁷⁶⁴ NA, PMV/R, ka 131, sig. 20, no 25162-17, 6 December 1917.

⁷⁶⁵ Interpellation Rydlo und Genossen, 13 March 1918, NA, PMV/R, ka 133, sig. 20 Böhmen, no 20421.

⁷⁶⁶ Interpellation Rydlo und Genossen, 16 July 1918, NA, PMV/R, ka 133, sig. 20 Böhmen, no 18376.

⁷⁶⁷ On the battle of national activists in Bohemia see : Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*.

help soldiers coming to Prague from the rest of the Empire find their way in the city.⁷⁶⁸ For the Czech nationalists, this measure would have constituted a backward move since they had successfully fought for the municipality to put Czech-only street signs in 1893.⁷⁶⁹

B - The new capital of a new country

This fear of Germanization was paralleled by an urge to 'Czechify' the city after the independence in 1918. After the creation of Czechoslovakia, Prague was conceived as an exclusively Czech, Slavic space. German-speaking signs were removed and German was not to be spoken on the street. These actions culminated in the riots of November 1920. While the following two chapters will present the growing unrest in the city and the 1918 transition in more detail, we would like to succinctly point out here the mirror effects between Czech national victimization during the war years and German national victimization in the immediate post-war years.

The atmosphere of heightened nationalism in the first post-war years could be seen in the effort to cleanse the urban space of signs of Germanness. The Czech nationalists' 'victory' had to be visible in the urban space. In the novel *The Slavic Song*, the narrator describes a scene in Prague where some onlookers watch the replacement of a German shop sign by a Czech one: 'The new sign, which is being fixed, reads: "Zikmund Vaincír! ". On the old one, leaning on the wall near the frame, we can read: "Siegmond Weinzierl! ".⁷⁷⁰ Czech youths in Prague occasionally insulted or even attacked passers-by speaking in German on the street. The American journalist Kenneth Lewis Roberts shared this impression that German was highly suspect in the public space: 'There was a period during the early months of 1919 when a person who couldn't talk Czech simply couldn't get anywhere at all in Prague. The Czech national feeling was so strong that Czechs who spoke perfect German or French refused to speak anything but Czech.'⁷⁷¹ These attitudes were not always adhered to as German was still the second

⁷⁶⁸ *Domov za války*, V, p. 470.

⁷⁶⁹ Gary Cohen. *The politics of ethnic survival: Germans in Prague*. 2nd ed. rev. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006), p. 111.

⁷⁷⁰ Franz Carl Weiskopf, *Das Slawenlied* in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Grete Weiskopf and others, 8 vols. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1960), III, p. 181.

⁷⁷¹ Kenneth Lewis Roberts, *Europe's Morning After* (Harper & Bros.: New York & London, [1921.]), p. 142.

language most widely spoken. A Prager German-speaker recalls that, despite a great admiration for France in the post-war period, the Czech-speakers who did not speak French would have to resort to German to communicate with the Frenchmen who came to Prague.⁷⁷² The animosity was directed at any potential German symbol: two Danes were insulted on the streets as they were mistaken for German fraternity students because of their caps.⁷⁷³

The November 1920 riots constitute the high point of this post-war nationalist agitation.⁷⁷⁴ They are a complex event directed both against Germans and against Jews.⁷⁷⁵ On 16 November 1920, around 600 people went to Wenceslas Square to protest against the suppression of a Czech school in the Northern Bohemian region of Eger/Cheb.⁷⁷⁶ The crowd soon grew to 1500 and headed to the German Estate theatre with a deputation of soldiers wounded at Eger/Cheb and children at its head. A group of soldiers and civilians occupied the theatre, installing a Czech red and white flag. An actor from the Czech National Theatre made a speech to the crowd from the balcony declaring the theatre seized for Czech art. Soon other symbols of German culture in the city were attacked by the mob. The crowd attempted to prevent the newspaper *Bohemia* from publishing in the morning. Another group went inside the building of the *Prager Tagblatt* and pillaged the offices. In the Jewish town hall, archival material was destroyed. Portraits of Bismarck and Wilhelm II were taken out into the street. The next day, German-speaking passers-by were mishandled by the crowd.⁷⁷⁷ The level of violence can be illustrated by the following incident where a young man whispering in German to his female companion got beaten by the mob until he fell unconscious.⁷⁷⁸ The crowd continued to target German institutions, heading for the German Turnhalle (gymnastics hall) and the seats of German student associations. They attempted to remove remaining German-speaking signs in the city, on an insurance building or on

⁷⁷² *Prager Nachrichten*, XI, no 5-6, (1960), p. 12.

⁷⁷³ *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení presidia zemské správy politické v Praze o situaci v Čechách 1919-1920*, ed. by Alois Kocman (Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1959), p. 258, no 85B.

⁷⁷⁴ For a description of the riots see: Bernard Michel, *Prague, Belle Époque* (Paris : Aubier, 2008), pp. 282-288.

⁷⁷⁵ Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen. Eine Geschichte Der Tschechisch-Jüdisch-Deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)*, (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012).

⁷⁷⁶ On the clashes in Eger/Cheb see Nancy Wingfield, 'Conflicting constructions of memory: attacks on statues of Joseph II in the Bohemian Lands after the Great War', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 28 (1997), 147-171, p. 156.

⁷⁷⁷ Police report, NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, no 322, 17 November 1920.

⁷⁷⁸ Deposition by Ernst Plöschke from 11 December 1920, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D6/30.

the German Embassy. In the German House, the crowd entered and ripped off every sign, broke the dishes and mirrors of the restaurant, hoisted the Czech flag and declared the building confiscated for Czech students.⁷⁷⁹ The police were overwhelmed and the attitude of the Mayor of Prague Karel Baxa was, to say the least, very ambiguous. He published an announcement both sanctioning the buildings' annexations and calling for a return to order. The rioters felt that their actions were vindicated. These riots showed the will to purge all German presence out of the public space and to conquer symbolic sites (the placing of flags on the buildings is an interesting gesture in this respect). German students published a pamphlet detailing the attacks against the fraternity buildings and physical attacks against several students: they described especially the active participation of the police.⁷⁸⁰ As we shall see, the composition the Prague police personnel did not change much with the creation of Czechoslovakia. Yet, German nationalists, as Czech nationalists had done just two years earlier, accused police agents to target them.

The worsening food supply in Prague meant that by 1917 many residents in the city were going hungry. The public could not rely on state rations and had to go to the nearby countryside to survive. The government in Vienna in 1918 even considered the rich hinterland around Prague a factor to take into account in attributing rations. The growing parallel economy worsened inequalities and generated an overall hatred of the 'profiteers'. For Praguers, peasants who sold food at high prices belonged to that category. Czech national activists, who perceived the threat posed by this antagonism, attempted to recreate a link between urban-dwellers and the rural population by sending hungry children to the countryside. The role of the association *České srdce* (created in 1917) cannot be overestimated. By getting support from the Agrarians and providing food to poor Czech-speakers, it shifted wartime mobilization along national lines. The parallel imperial actions for destitute Prague children did not get the same visibility especially because Czech national activists were also involved. Imperial welfare was thus nationalized. Moreover, national discourse gained momentum after the opening of the Parliament when Czech and German nationalists stressed their greater sacrifice in the war. The nationalist press also participated in this interpretation of the conflict. The Czech national activists' fears that the war

⁷⁷⁹ AHMP, Neměcké kasino, ka 1, inv. č. 223.

⁷⁸⁰ *Die verzweifelte Lage der deutschen Studenten in Prag* ed. by Hermann Richter (n.p.: n.pub., [1920])

would lead to a Germanization of Prague were reversed after 1918 when they felt they could finally conquer the whole city. The anti-German and anti-Jewish riots of 1920 were the culmination of this process and of street violence in Prague. However, these riots cannot be understood in isolation; this event needs to be replaced in the context of the social movements of the two post-war years, which we will explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE NATURE OF URBAN CONTENTION

In August 1918, the apostles of the famous Prague astronomical clock, which every hour since the fifteenth century moved above the dial to mark the passing of time, stopped working. A little sign placed beside the clock explained the ‘strike’: ‘with half the bread, the work is hard to accomplish. When there is no bread, we are not bound to anything. Hunger brings evil that is difficult to avert. We strike and death will end it all.’⁷⁸¹ The ‘protest’ of the apostles expressed the sentiments of many in Prague. Exhaustion and hunger led the population to demonstrate against the state’s management of the food crisis and of the war. In the previous chapter, we explored the consequences of the wartime shortages within the urban community; we will now turn to the examination of how they undermined the legitimacy of the state.

Historians over the last decade have underlined the link between wartime unrest (food riots specifically) and the fall of Empires.⁷⁸² Belinda Davis showed in the case of Berlin that the war had created ‘a set of public expectations about the role of the state that had much to do with the government’s loss of legitimacy among the wider population, and with the political landscape that emerged after the revolution’.⁷⁸³ The connection with the unrest of the first post-war years is not always clearly established.⁷⁸⁴ What did the demonstrations during the war and shortly after have in common? Did the legitimacy crisis also affect new states? Examining the different protests and demonstrations in Prague between 1917 and 1920 can help shed new light on these questions.

The social conflicts that the wartime conditions generated were primarily acted out in urban spaces. Not only were cities disproportionately impacted by food shortages, they also

⁷⁸¹ *Prager Tagblatt*, 18 August 1918, p. 4.

⁷⁸² Belinda Joy Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 2000). Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Barbara Engel, “‘Not by bread alone’: subsistence riots in Russia during World War I”, *Journal of Modern History*, 69, 4, (1997), 696-721.

⁷⁸³ Davis, *Home Fires Burning*, p. 237.

⁷⁸⁴ An exception would be: Adam R. Seipp, *The Ordeal of Peace: Demobilisation and the Urban Experience in Britain and Germany, 1917-1921* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

concentrated the seats of power. The crisis that affected Central Europe can best be understood through a local approach by looking at the constant unrest of these years. Small or larger crowds took over city centres and suburban squares on an unprecedented scale.

By analysing the occupation of urban public space during these years, we encounter different types of crowds and gatherings, not limited to social demonstrations or nationalist rallies.⁷⁸⁵ An examination of the ‘street politics’, as Thomas Lindenberger did for pre-war Berlin, shows the variety of public expression and the difficulty to sometimes impose one category on a specific event. His notion of ‘public dis-order’ underlines the centrality of the relationship between unrest and the intervention of the police.⁷⁸⁶ The following chapter attempts to chart the numerous demonstrations in Prague and explore the shifting relationship of Praguers to the state(s).

In the case of the Bohemian Lands, the protests at the end of the war have often been interpreted as either primarily national or primarily social in nature. Ines Koeltzsch recently underlined the Anti-Semitic dimension of many of these movements. We would like to suggest that the two aspects need not be antagonistic and were much blurred during these years. Working-class unrest focusing on issues of fairer distribution of food could also involve anti-Jewish and anti-German rhetoric. The Police Headquarters in Prague in 1917 commented that the ‘proletarianisation of the middle-class (*Mittelstand*)’ had led to a ‘socialisation of the national-socialist party and a nationalisation of the social-democrats’.⁷⁸⁷ What was true for party politics could be observed in the ‘street politics’.

The popular protests during these years were multifaceted and cannot be reduced to one aspect. Robert Blobaum, in his analysis of the ‘barefoot movement’ in Warsaw and during the war, has underlined its different components: a social and economic protest against shortages, in solidarity with the working classes, that was often framed in anti-Semitic terms and also advocated a national ‘return’ to Polish traditions.⁷⁸⁸ This type of protest does not easily fit into

⁷⁸⁵ For an analysis of crowds in pre-war Hungary see: Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848-1914* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press ; Baltimore, 2000).

⁷⁸⁶ Thomas Lindenberger, *Strassenpolitik: Zur Sozialgeschichte der öffentlichen Ordnung in Berlin, 1900-1914* (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz, 1995).

⁷⁸⁷ Stimmungsbericht, NA, PMV/R, ka 194, sig. 22 Böhmen, no 25627, 13 December 1917.

⁷⁸⁸ Robert Blobaum, ‘Going Barefoot in Warsaw during the First World War’, *East European Politics & Societies*, 27 (2013), 187–204.

our pre-established categories. Looking for a term to characterise the unrest of that period, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau's description of lingering social issues at the end of the war seems to come close: 'given the scale of the catastrophe that the world had just endured, no nation, victorious or vainquished, could go out of this war without a profound social melancholy'.⁷⁸⁹ 'Social melancholy' reflects the vague aspirations of the times and the despair that propelled them. It conveys both the great hopes of the period and the inevitable disappointments without providing a unilateral meaning (Bolshevik, nationalist, socialist) to it. However, it seems too passive to describe a very agitated period where protests became so regular.

This episode of contention⁷⁹⁰ in Prague drew on many pre-existing forms of popular protest from the pre-war period but also developed new features related to the war experience. This chapter explores the nature of this contention and the ways in which it occupied urban space. The various street protests are first examined in detail to see the demands expressed and the trajectories of demonstrations in the city. The shift in legitimacy visible in the protests also gave rise to a new conception of citizenship where popular participation was considered more legitimate.

I - Street protests: from imperial legitimacy to violent despair

The numerous demonstrations in the streets of Prague from 1917 to 1920 can be analysed in more detail than has been previously done. The summary of reports collected and published in the 1950s gives a good overview of the different types of unrest present in the city. The analysis of this source is here complemented by reports and depositions from the Governor's Office files or the Police Headquarters' files, which occasionally even give access to the voice of the protesters. A chronological description of food riots during the last years of the Empire demonstrates the progressive undermining of the state's legitimacy. The location of these protests also underlines this relationship with the state, which was the target of much discontent. The

⁷⁸⁹ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Christophe Prochasson, 'Sortir de la guerre en vainqueurs?', in *Sortir de la Grande Guerre: le monde et l'après-1918*, ed. by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Christophe Prochasson (Paris: Tallandier, 2008), p. 24.

⁷⁹⁰ On 'contention' see Charles Tilly's work, for example: Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

continuation of the demonstrations after 28 October 1918 shows the renewed crisis of legitimacy after the war.

A - Food riots: the collapse of the Austrian state

The first food-related incidents in Prague took the form of orderly deputations to the Bohemian Governor. On 5 May 1915, for example, 200 women who wanted to go to the Governor's Office were dissuaded by the police and sent a deputation to the economic department of the municipality instead. Later that day, 100 women from Smíchov/Smichow who also tried to reach the Governor's Office were prevented by the 'amicable persuasion' of the policemen. The report notes that they were reluctant at first but dispersed after fifteen minutes.⁷⁹¹ At that stage the police were still able to maintain public order through discussion and negotiation with the crowd.⁷⁹²

In the summer of 1916, just before the new harvest, the atmosphere in the city became tense due to the poor supply in potatoes. As crowds gathered more and more often in front of official buildings, the Governor's Office recommended that local authorities (district officers) calm and inform the population.⁷⁹³ In Smíchov/Smichow, the authorities complained about the renewed presence of crowds of women in front of the district officer's building (*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*): 'we do not know what they want. [...] When they come to see me in my office, I calm them by saying that on our side everything is done that can be done. The people go away but stay in front of the building.'⁷⁹⁴ The next day, the Police Headquarters noted that reassuring words on improvement would not be sufficient as flour was missing and potatoes, that people had come to rely on, were now also unavailable: 'the population was until now very patient and has let itself be appeased. Yet now that people must go hungry [...] mere promises cannot suffice to maintain order.'⁷⁹⁵ Shipments of potatoes meant a reprieve that lasted only a

⁷⁹¹ Report on incidents, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 21438, 6 May 1915.

⁷⁹² On the idea that 'public order' is created by the dynamic relationship between the police agents and the public see Quentin Deluermoz, *Policiers dans la ville: la construction d'un ordre public à Paris, 1854-1914* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012).

⁷⁹³ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D 6/1, no 20321, 26 July 1916.

⁷⁹⁴ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4976, sig. 8/1/18/14, no 23834, 3 August 1916.

⁷⁹⁵ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4971, sig. 8/1/16/7, no 24132, 4 August 1916.

few days. The situation was soon 'critical again', leading to renewed gatherings.⁷⁹⁶ The authority of local officials, constantly renewing reassurances of better supply, was at this point already in danger of being eroded by the reality of worsening conditions. The new harvest as well as the authorization of 'self-supply' in the countryside brought, however, a relative improvement of the situation in the autumn of 1916.⁷⁹⁷

As Peter Heumos has shown for Bohemia, the number of demonstrations increased in 1917.⁷⁹⁸ They also took a more violent turn. In Prague, from 27 February to 2 March, attacks on bakeries and bread carts multiplied throughout the city. 34 persons, mostly women and adolescents, were arrested during those days. The movement started in the working-class suburb of Žižkov/Žižkow where crowds gathered in front of the town hall to request bread without ration cards. A woman, trying to lead the others into the town hall (shouting 'come, so that they give us something to eat'), was arrested, which led to more protests. On the same day, another group of women stole loaves of bread on a cart and threw the corresponding money in it. The authorities in Žižkov/Žižkow decided that night to give in and distribute leftover bread. The next day, in Libeň/Lieben, people gathered in front of bakeries and asked for bread without ration cards as was done in Žižkov/Žižkow. They attempted to forcefully get inside the shops and attacked policemen trying to prevent them. During one of these attacks, a worker from the brickworks encouraged the crowd: 'Don't be afraid of them, smash everything and take what you come across'. These protests also led in Libeň/Lieben to the delivery of pulses, potatoes and swedes. News about demonstrations, though absent from newspapers, travelled from one neighbourhood to the next and had an impact on the course of action there. For example, a member of the bread commission in Holešovice/Holleschowitz told a woman that it was necessary to 'stir yourself like they did in Žižkov and Libeň' to receive anything.⁷⁹⁹ Demonstrations, although heavily repressed, could achieve their goals.

⁷⁹⁶ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4971, sig. 8/1/16/7, no 24495, 8 August 1916.

⁷⁹⁷ *Aprovisace obce pražské za války a po válce 1914-1922* (Praha: Aprovisační ústav hlavního města Prahy, 1923), p. 103.

⁷⁹⁸ Peter Heumos, "'Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution': Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massenproteste in den böhmischen Ländern, 1914-1918', in *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen, Slowaken und Deutschen*, ed. by Hans Mommsen, Dušan Kováč und Jiří Malíř (Essen: Klartext, 2001), pp. 255-286, here p. 256.

⁷⁹⁹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4971, 8/1/16/7, no 6785, 2 March 1917.

The spring of 1917 also sees the occurrence of ‘polite thefts’ where the robbers gave money in exchange for what they took, as we have seen in one case in Žižkov/Žižkow. Two weeks later, a group of women in Holešovice/Holleschowitz waited for a bread vendor and ambushed her in front of her shop, then quickly took 114 bread loaves but left six of them on her cart. As the vendor tried to push them away, the women explained: ‘Madam, we don’t cheat you of anything, we are hungry, we give you money’.⁸⁰⁰ They indeed put money into her pockets and threw the rest in her store; she found more coins than the bread was worth. The apparent planned aspect of this action shows the loss of confidence in official modes of supply. These cases⁸⁰¹ represent a transition into violence and illegality and reveal the lassitude brought on by hunger.

Thefts could also arise in the context of constant queuing that marked the experience of Praguers during the war. Maureen Healy has underlined the centrality of the phenomenon in Vienna. The mayor in the imperial capital considered that irrational thinking caused people to stand in line all night.⁸⁰² A Prague entertainment weekly journal also judged harshly the women who let their children stand in line all night and considered that they would be tempted to steal from the people leaving cafés and other establishments at night.⁸⁰³ The crowds created by the queues could be unpredictable. Police agents found it often difficult to control crowds that would reach a few thousand people and some of whom might leave empty-handed. For example, 3000 people were queuing for butter in the municipal market hall as a woman got into an argument with an agent regarding her rank in the queue.⁸⁰⁴ The well-fed look of police officers could also feed animosity against them.⁸⁰⁵ In a report from September 1917, describing lines with thousands of people, the Prague police warned against the ‘steady growth of the queues (“*Fronten*”) in front of stores’: ‘these crowds of people stand in the most lively streets of the city and are so

⁸⁰⁰ Police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4971, sig. 8/1/16/7, no 7784, 11 March 1917.

⁸⁰¹ See two other cases of ‘polite theft’, one of an individual woman who took bread (25 April 1917) and another of milk being emptied from cans in Michle (1 May 1917), *Souhrnná hlášení presidia pražského místodržitelství o protistátní, protirakouské a protiválečné činnosti v Čechách 1915-1918*, ed. by Libuše Otáhalová (Praha: Nakl. Československé akademie věd, 1957) no 1808, p. 226 and no 1836, p. 229.

⁸⁰² Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, pp. 73-76.

⁸⁰³ *Lucerna*, 19 June 1918, p. 5.

⁸⁰⁴ Deposition by Josef Jonák, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, D 6/1, 26 September 1916.

⁸⁰⁵ *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914-1918*, ed. by Eva Drašarová and Jaroslav Vrbata (V Praze: Státní ústřední archiv, 1993-1997), IV (1996), no 17, p. 63.

embittered, that they could, with the smallest provocation, get violently agitated.⁸⁰⁶ The queues could turn to rioting by a simple incident.

In April and May 1917, regular demonstrations to local or regional authorities expressed grievances about food supply. Demands for peace sometimes accompanied demands for bread as was the case in Vršovice/Wrschowitz on April 30th and in Smíchov/Smichow on May 14th.⁸⁰⁷ A strike movement in mid-April in machine and textile factories and another at the end of May also formed part of the protest landscape at the time. Local authorities observed this discontent with concern. Circles of power in Vienna even feared a potential revolution.⁸⁰⁸ The composition of one of these women deputations shows that anger went beyond working-class circles: the wives of a bank clerk, a musician, and a post office clerk came to speak with the governor who then came outside to address and reassure a crowd of 1200 women. One of them then held a talk, back in Vršovice/Wrschowitz, encouraging the crowd to not listen to agitators and to still hold out for the short time remaining.⁸⁰⁹ The repetition of these protests led the Prague police Headquarters to publish an announcement on May 15th discouraging women from further demonstrations. It underlined their uselessness and warned that the police would intervene against them: while small deputations were welcome, ‘there [was] no need for demonstrations to induce the authorities, in compliance with their duty, to do everything that is necessary to eliminate the well-known shortages.’⁸¹⁰ Two weeks later, a strike broke out along with large demonstrations that prompted a renewed public announcement from the Prague police: ‘it is brought to the general notice that processions and demonstrative gatherings of any kind on public squares and in public streets will not be tolerated anymore and will be dispersed without further warning with the force of arms’.⁸¹¹ The direct threat to the population appeared here much more clearly. Some of the posters of this police warning on Prague’s street corners were adorned with derogatory comments. On

⁸⁰⁶ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/23, no 29164, Report from the police department, 7 September 1917.

⁸⁰⁷ *Souhrnná hlášení*, no 1805, p. 225 and no 1906, p. 239.

⁸⁰⁸ Christopher Brennan, ‘Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond His Control or beyond His Capacities? The Domestic Policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916-May 1917’ (London School of Economics, 2012), p. 175.

⁸⁰⁹ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, D 6/1, 1 May 1917.

⁸¹⁰ Text in both languages, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, D 6/1, no 9345, 15 May 1917. See also its publication in the German-speaking press: NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4954, 8/1/5/9, no 17058, 16 May 1917.

⁸¹¹ *Vyhlaška/Kundmachung* in both languages, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4954, 8/1/5/9, 31 May 1917.

Jungmann Square, in the centre of the city, someone had written: 'Away with Austria, give us bread'.⁸¹²

The demonstrations of May 30th and May 31st (on the day of the reopening of the Parliament) were the first massive protests in the Bohemian capital. 8000 people (or 15,000 according to the German consul) gathered on Old Town Square: striking workers from the munition factories, women and adolescents together. As the crowd attempted to cross to the Governor's Office, it was stopped by the military sent to control the bridges. The troops only let a deputation of twelve workers go through. The workers voiced complaints about food conditions, demanded peace, but also asked for the release of Friedrich Adler (Social Democrat who had assassinated Prime Minister Stürgkh) and Václav Klofáč (National Socialist politician). The rest of the protesters waited for them in front of the Town Hall and sang Czech national songs including the forbidden 'Hej Slované'. Reports mentioned that cries of 'Long live the Russian Revolution' were heard.⁸¹³ The Social-Democratic party called for a return to work but the next day saw new demonstrations. This event shows the blur between national and social motives that would define many of the demonstrations in these years. The poor food supply led to a challenge of the Austrian authorities that called into question the long war the state had embarked on. The demands of the deputation to the governor reflect this state of affairs. Asking for the release of Viennese revolutionary Friedrich Adler showed a common concern with Austrian politics. The nationalist component of the demonstration was visible in the singing during the march. In the street Celetná/Zeltnergasse, locals cheered from their windows and an observer exclaimed: 'That's the type of songs they should sing!'⁸¹⁴ Rocks were thrown at the German House and anti-Semitic slogans were shouted.⁸¹⁵ The Prague police Chief interpreted the whole demonstration as an attempt from a few radicals (former National Socialist members) to 'jolt the large masses from the national indifference that they had fallen into during the war.'⁸¹⁶ His report brings to light the

⁸¹² *Souhrnná hlášení*, no 1990, p. 251 (two more examples are given here). For a further case: *Ibid.*, no 1996, p. 255.

⁸¹³ Reports on the demonstration: From the police: NA, PMV/R, ka 192, 22 Böhmen, no 11674, 23 June 1917. From the German consul: NAL, GFM 6/45, Ö101, no 39, 2 June 1917.

⁸¹⁴ *Souhrnná hlášení*, no 1964, p. 247.

⁸¹⁵ The Anti-Semitic cries are not mentioned in the police report but in Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka, 1914-1918* (Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001), p. 321.

⁸¹⁶ Report from the Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PMV/R, ka 192, 22 Böhmen, no 11674, 12 June 1917.

perception of the police: they were convinced that workers were manipulated by ‘agitators’ who used calls for better food supplies to mobilise and then introduced new national slogans. It is difficult to assess to what extent protesters adhered to a more national discourse but animosity against Germans and Jews also feature in later demonstrations. This protest was violently repressed by the Prague police who sent military units and would have introduced summary justice if the strikes had continued.⁸¹⁷

The cry in favour of the Russian Revolution raises the question of the reception of this political upheaval in Prague. The police report underlined that, despite the danger of imitation that the hunger riots in Petersburg held, there had not been a ‘favourable moment’.⁸¹⁸ The news of the revolution had mostly brought the hope for an earlier peace.⁸¹⁹ The Chief of Police emphasised the role played by the local conditions in the agitation of spirits. The Russian example could be used as a threat. For example, an anonymous letter to the Emperor warned that something worse than in Russia would happen: the ‘Austrian democratic impulse (*demokratismus*)’ would punish the guilty men more severely.⁸²⁰ It is interesting to note that the letter-writer still framed this revolutionary longing within an Austrian context. In comparison, however, the October revolution seemed to have had less of an impact. Czech nationalist circles even attempted to discredit the Bolsheviks.⁸²¹

The police warnings had some effect in June 1917. On June 4th, a small deputation of twelve women came to complain to the district officer in Žižkov/Žižkow but without any larger gathering.⁸²² However, in July, demonstrations erupted again. In Žižkov/Žižkow, 600 women broke windows at the mayor’s house and in Král.Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge, a police officer wounded a boy with his sabre as he was trying to manage the crowd.⁸²³ At the beginning of August, a wave of strikes went beyond the munition factory workers to encompass 20,000

⁸¹⁷ NAL, GFM 6/45, Ö101, no 39, 9 June 1917.

⁸¹⁸ *Sborník dokumentů*, IV, no 17, p. 62.

⁸¹⁹ In Žižkov, the district officer also did not notice an influence of the Russian revolution but remarked that peace was expected with confidence, *Souhrnná hlášení*, no 1811, p. 226.

⁸²⁰ Letter in Czech, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2891, sig. A 15/1, no 8909(?), received 21 April 1917.

⁸²¹ Mood report from the Military Command, NA, PMV/R, ka 194, 22 Böhmen, no 25627, 12 December 1917.

⁸²² NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4979, sig. 8/1/25/4, no 17830, 4 June 1917.

⁸²³ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4979, sig. 8/1/25/4, no 22832, 17 July 1917 and sig. 8/1/24/11, no 22982, 19 July 1917.

workers. The Prague public transportation did not run for a few days. The workers' demands to the Governor included the halt to exports out of Bohemia and the better regulation and organization of food supply.⁸²⁴ Rudolf Kučera has shown how this movement, in contrast to strikes in Plzeň/Pilsen, could not be sustained because it failed to integrate other types of protesters like women or older workers.⁸²⁵ As was the case the previous year, the new harvest induced a temporary lull in the unrest. The improvement of food supply meant less demonstrations but the atmosphere remained tense during the autumn.⁸²⁶ A delegation of fifty women asking for coal in November 1917 threatened to use violence if their demands were not met within two days.⁸²⁷ That same month, a leaflet in Smíchov/Smichow announced that the Ringhoffer factory would be blown up in the next few days: 'we have all had enough, we will go to Malá Strana to see if the governor is also hungry.'⁸²⁸

After this relative respite, January 1918 saw an intensification of the protest movement. The police warned at the beginning of the month that the nervous atmosphere of despair could lead to outbursts that the authorities would not be able to control.⁸²⁹ The impulse came from the reduction of the flour ration by half announced on the 14th. A wave of strikes broke out throughout the monarchy (from Vienna to Trieste and Galicia): overall, 700,000 workers participated during the second half of January.⁸³⁰ Prague joined the strike movement relatively late but the agitation in the city from the 17th to the 30th revealed a discontent that went beyond the strikes themselves. On the 17th, two separate deputations visited the Bohemian governor: the first one was composed of women from the suburbs who complained about the flour situation, the second one of eighty workers with six social-democrat deputies and one national-socialist. The

⁸²⁴ NA, PMV/R, ka 193, 22 Böhmen, no 18251, 4 August 1917.

⁸²⁵ Rudolf Kučera, *Život na příděl: válečná každodennost a politiky dělnické třídy v českých zemích 1914-1918* (Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013), p. 150.

⁸²⁶ See the mood reports from the Military Command in September: NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5102, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 34431/17, 15 September 1917 and no 34753/17, 30 September 1917. On the calm but excitable atmosphere see Mood report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5104, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 38914/17, 28 October 1917.

⁸²⁷ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D 6/1, 2 November 1917.

⁸²⁸ Found on 27 November 1917 by a concierge on her doorstep, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5104, sig. 8/1/92/19, no 40019/17, 13 December 1917.

⁸²⁹ Report from the Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/28, no 604, 5 January 1918.

⁸³⁰ Richard Georg Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner and Arnold Suppan, *Innere Front, 1: Zwischen Streik und Meuterei*, (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1974) p. 89, pp. 61-90.

latter delegation proclaimed its solidarity with the political demands of the workers in Lower Austria (Vienna) and asked for an improvement in the supply of food and coal. The deputies also emphasised the desire for a fair peace and self-determination. They pointed to their own discredit among the population after they had called for calm in May and warned that this could be the last plea as these actions seemed ineffective. The Governor assured them that everything was done, especially by the Emperor, to achieve peace very soon.⁸³¹ In the afternoon of the same day, 200 women came to express similar demands for bread and peace to the Mayor of Prague and asked him to convey these to Vienna. In the rush in front of the town hall, the rumour spread that the janitor controlling the crowd had called for the women to be shot.⁸³² In both events, the still respectful deputations were marked by distrust towards the authorities.

On 22 January, 30,000 workers were striking in Prague: workers from the militarised factories but also from the tramways, the printing shops, part of the railway workshops and other factories.⁸³³ Every shop was closed, 'work stopped in the whole police district'. At least 50,000 people⁸³⁴ demonstrated through the streets of Prague. It was in any case the largest demonstration since the movement for suffrage in 1905.⁸³⁵ On Old Town Square, the crowd gathered and listened to speeches. The square was absolutely full of people⁸³⁶ to the point where it was difficult to access it and to move across.⁸³⁷ Several speakers held speeches from the balcony of the Town Hall. One observer noticed that the crowd applauded mostly to cries of bread and peace and less so to political statements.⁸³⁸ Over the next few days the demonstrations turned into riots, where shops were plundered and cafés attacked. In Vršovice/Wrschowitz, a few hundred people

⁸³¹ Report from the Bohemian Governor, NA, PMV/R, ka 195, 22 Böhmen, no 1874, 18 January 1918.

⁸³² A few women complained about this to the Mayor but the janitor denied it: Deposition from Václav D., NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2619, D 6/1, 18 January 1918.

⁸³³ *Souhrnná hlášení*, no 2399, p. 309.

⁸³⁴ 50,000 in the police reports, 70,000 according to *Národní listy* (23 January 1918, p. 1).

⁸³⁵ 100,000 participants on 28 November 1905, see Jakub Beneš, 'Czech Social Democracy, František Soukup, and the Habsburg Austrian Suffrage Campaign 1897-1907—Toward a New Understanding of Nationalism in the Workers' Movements of East Central Europe', *Střed/Centre*, 2 (2012), 9-33.

⁸³⁶ See a photograph, NA, Fotodokumentace, ka 1, no 22, 'Demonstrace na Staroměstském náměstí', 22 January 1918.

⁸³⁷ See description in *Prager Tagblatt*, 24 January 1918, p. 2.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*

tried to convince other buyers to refuse the reduced bread ration. The protesters gathered again, despite having been scattered several times by the police. At the end of the day several shops and cafés were stormed in the centre of the city.⁸³⁹ Restaurants had to close at 9 pm.⁸⁴⁰

The months of February and March were marked by many incidents involving minor violence: demonstrations about food issues had taken a turn towards a more violent type of protest. A leaflet addressed to ‘working men and women’ urged them to work only on the condition that they receive food. It expressed the disillusionment with the local authorities’ ability to intervene: ‘Gradually dying of hunger, you have called imploringly for help! You have been however shamefully fed with promises! Your women and children suffer with you! You are supposed to sink prematurely into the grave with them.’⁸⁴¹ The crowd could not as easily be calmed as previously and violent confrontations with the police became more commonplace. Their relative impotence in fully suppressing these movements is visible in one of the public announcements published by the Police Headquarters in May 1918 (Figure 21): ‘the events of the last days force the police headquarters once again to emphatically point to the repeatedly issued interdiction of gatherings’.⁸⁴²

The spontaneous character of many of the protests transpires from the police investigation around a gathering in Smíchov/Smichow in May 1918 where a crowd of 1000 people listened to a woman speaker who called for revolution. Josefa Kohnová was a single mother who suffered from tuberculosis. She stated to the police that she participated in the protest because of the ‘enormous misery we live in’. In her speech she had contended that the war would be brought to an end through revolution in the hinterland. The people could not be satisfied with the king who did not care for them or with the Bohemian governor; a king from the people was needed. The police found pamphlets at her home that she had collected at various meetings and protests. She and other women called this social movement the ‘hungry movement’ or the ‘popular movement’. A witness had seen her address a crowd near the river a few days earlier where she had asked the crowd: ‘who would want our monarch at the castle?’ As many of them expressed

⁸³⁹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/28, no 3778(?), report on the events of the day, 26 January 1918.

⁸⁴⁰ *Národní listy*, 26 January 1918 (evening edition), p. 2.

⁸⁴¹ Found in the Ringhoffer works in Smíchov in February 1918, Letter from the Military Command, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/15, no 18118, 1 February 1918.

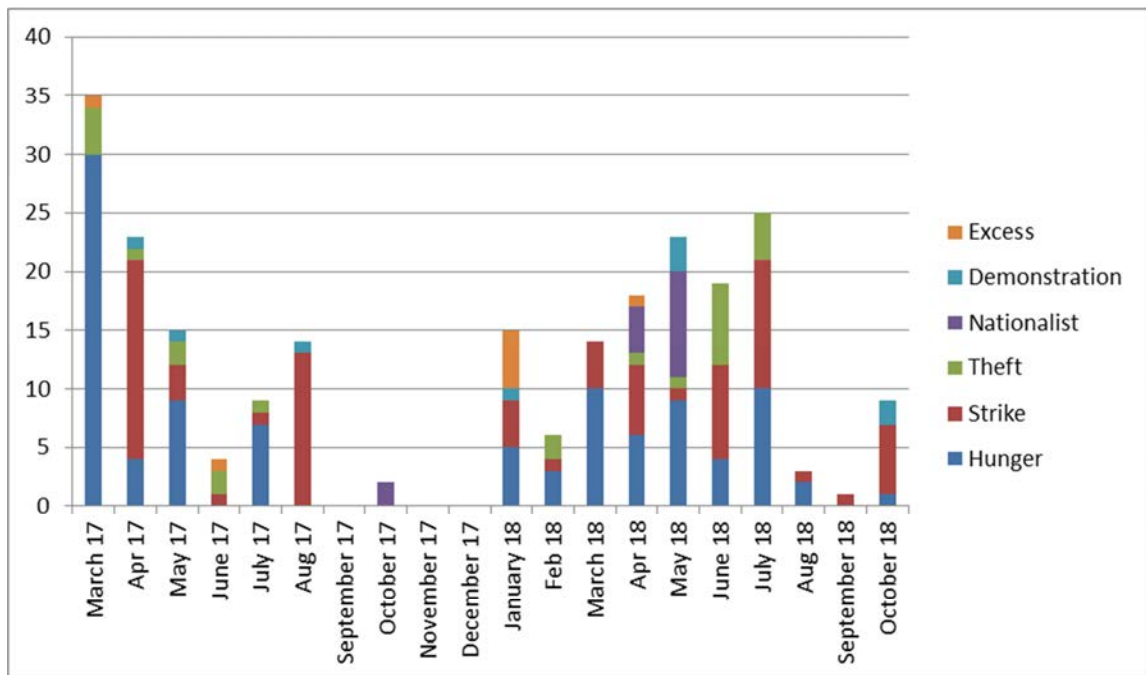
⁸⁴² NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D 6/1, no 5395, 10 May 1918.

their wishes to see the Emperor in Prague, she explained that it would not improve the situation.⁸⁴³ This movement born around food concerns led to broader discussion throughout Prague among women and adolescents on the state at war and the political future of the country.

⁸⁴³ Several depositions by policemen and the women: NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4976, sig. 8/1/18/14, no 15998, 9 May 1918.

Figure 21: Posters in both languages with the police announcement, 10 May 1918

Figure 22: Popular unrest in Prague from March 1917 to October 1918.⁸⁴⁴



The level of unrest remained very high until the middle of August 1918. Among the various protests of these months, the celebrations of the 50 year anniversary of the Czech National Theatre in May stand out in their decidedly national character. Large crowds gathered around the theatre and other central squares of the city, singing national songs. National costumes were to be seen everywhere. A censored letter described the atmosphere: ‘Prague is full of Croats, Italians, and Slovaks in national costumes. You cannot imagine how beautiful it is. Also for us, costumes are again in fashion. Every other person has a costume.’⁸⁴⁵ The participants were different from the other protests, often members of the bourgeoisie or young students.

The progression of unrest in Prague in 1917-1918 does not follow a linear development. The table we have produced from the police reports is not a precise guide to the number of demonstrations during the period. The reporting is more precise for some events than others

⁸⁴⁴ The data corresponds to a collection of the events described in weekly police reports gathered in *Souhrnná hlášení*. I have established the categories based on the descriptions in the reports. As many events could be of ambiguous meaning, this chart only has an indicative value.

⁸⁴⁵ Letter from Franz Š. in Prague to Vojtěch V. in Zürich, 18 May 1918, ÖStA, KA, Feldakten, Armee Ober Kommando, Evidenzbüro des Generalstabs, K 3800, no 3098.

(which partially accounts for the spike in March 1917). It gives, however, a general sense of the continuous unrest in 1918.

In September 1918 there were almost no demonstrations reported in the city. This lull could correspond to a seasonal change that would account for a relative improvement of supply or it could indicate that peace seemed nearer during these months and that the population was waiting. A big uprising was planned for October 14th, with intention to proclaim the Czech Republic from the balcony of the Prague town hall. The Austrian military was well informed about this attempt.⁸⁴⁶ The military encircled the inner city and every access point, giving the last impression of power of the monarchy. An announcement from the Governor's Office posted on the streets warned against the attempt of a violent coup and any participation in demonstrations. It aimed at dispelling rumours of state transformations by reaffirming the monopoly of the state over legitimate violence. The military dispersed the crowd on Wenceslas Square. However, even during this last show of force, the control of public space by the authorities was limited. The demonstrations were repressed in the centre but happened in the suburbs. A discontented 'Austrian' wrote to the police to complain about the gathering on Purkyňovo náměstí/Purkyněplatz in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge: there were American and Pan-Slavic flags in front of the (Czech) National House and no policeman in sight. Referencing the governor's announcement, the letter writer also showed his declining trust in the state: 'The poster says that they (*man*) have the means to keep order. The scenes on Purkyněplatz are the first sneer against it.'⁸⁴⁷ The strong state intervention in the centre of the city was the last effort of the Habsburg state and stands in stark contrast with the non-interference of authorities two weeks later on October 28th, as Czechoslovakia became independent. While the demonstrations of the 14th were contained in the suburbs, the movement on the 28th started on Wenceslas Square. Regime change had to proceed through an invasion of the city centre by the crowd. It was not only the number or the slogans that mattered in these demonstrations but also their location in urban space.

⁸⁴⁶ About this see Richard Georg Plaschka, *Cattaro-Prag: Revolte und Revolution: Kriegsmarine und Heer Österreich-Ungarns im Feuer der Aufstandsbewegung vom 1. Februar und 28. Oktober 1918* (Graz: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1963), pp. 198-201.

⁸⁴⁷ Anonymous letter in German signed 'Ein Österreicher', NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3074, sig. P 55/35, no 33314, 14 October 1918.

*Figure 23: Police controlling a queue in Vodičková/Wassergasse Street, 1918.*⁸⁴⁸

B - Trajectories of protest in the city

The location of the protests across the city reveals a particular geography of social conflict on several levels. Danielle Tartakowsky has shown, in the case of Paris, how specific movements would select specific areas of Paris for demonstrations and how these itineraries and their evolution constituted a language in itself.⁸⁴⁹ Demonstrations during the First World War both reused old locations and rituals as well as found new ways of occupying urban space. Some of the symbols and rituals appearing in the First World War protests (the singing of national songs, for example) were used in late 19th century national demonstrations to mark the city's territory.⁸⁵⁰ By 1914, the symbolic power of Wenceslas Square had already been established: this 674 meter long boulevard had become the stage for political and social events, the 'riot square'.⁸⁵¹ Protests in the working-class suburbs and in the centre of the city did not have the same significance.

⁸⁴⁸ Pavel Macek, *Dějiny policie a četnictva 1. Habsburska monarchie (1526 - 1918)* (Praha: Themis, 1997).

⁸⁴⁹ Danielle Tartakowsky, *Manifestes à Paris: 1880-2010* (Seysse: Champ Vallon, 2010).

⁸⁵⁰ Hugh LeCaine Agnew, 'Demonstrating the Nation: Symbol, Ritual, and Political Protest in Bohemia 1867-1875', in *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the 19th century* ed. by Matthias Reiss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 85-103.

⁸⁵¹ Zdeněk Hojda, 'Der Wenzelsplatz in Prag – Bühne moderner tschechischer Geschichte', in *Die Besetzung des öffentlichen Raumes: politische Plätze, Denkmäler und Straßennamen im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. by Rudolf Jaworski and Peter Stachel (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2007), pp. 101-114; For a detailed study of Wenceslas Square in the interwar period see Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen*.

While some of them remained local, others took their participants to the main avenues and squares of Prague either to demonstrate on the city's main squares or to reach the edifices of power. As the suburbs were not yet administratively incorporated into the city, the act of 'going to Prague' (meaning going from the suburbs to the centre) still represented a powerful symbol.

Despite the gradual erosion of trust in the authorities, official buildings remained throughout 1917 and 1918 the first goal of demonstrations. The town halls of the various suburbs, Prague's town hall, the Governor's Office, and the district offices were the sites where citizens came to make their complaints and asked for better food provisioning. They sometimes were not able to meet with the officials and took their anger elsewhere. At other times, part of the crowd stayed in front of the building while a small delegation was admitted inside. According to my rough estimations, slightly less than a third of demonstrations in Prague in 1917 and 1918 occurred in front of such official buildings, where protestors came to plead to the authorities. To this number should be added the protests in front of the private houses of officials. In around 18% of demonstrations, the crowd headed to institutions responsible for food distributions or distribution of other goods. Another 18% were concentrated in public spaces (like the major squares in the city) and this includes the nationalist celebrations of May 1918. Finally, less than a third concerned shops and food carts that were attacked or plundered.⁸⁵² Religious institutions were more rarely the targets of demonstrations: in the case of a synagogue, it took an anti-Semitic character, accusing Jews of hoarding food in the building.

This repartition underlines the role of a dialogue with the state in these demonstrations. Obtaining adequate food supply was not only a matter of riot and plunder but also a negotiation with central and more local authorities. The repeated visits of hungry women and children that the officials had to reassure could be taxing for ill-prepared civil servants. The district officer in Žižkov/Žižkow explained, for example: 'Three or four times a week I am obliged to deal with big deputations of hungry agitated women from Žižkow. There are scenes that demand strong nerves and great self-denial.' He explained further that he stopped reporting these incidents to the Governor's Office as he was aware that the situation was just as bad in other parts of Prague but

⁸⁵² Data gathered from all the weekly reports available in *Souhrnná hlášení*. The categories do not correspond to contemporary categories. As the reporting from the police was not always consistent, it should not be viewed as more than an indication. For example the March 1917 demonstrations are very much overrepresented because of the precision in their reporting.

that it had now reached a point where the ‘agitation and exasperation of the poorest sections of the population’ made the handling of ever bigger delegations more difficult. The official required both more police assistance and better supply of food products for his district.⁸⁵³ This reaction shows how overwhelmed Habsburg authorities found themselves in dealing with these deputations. The case of protesters who turned to the private residences of mayors and resorted to direct threats to the person of officials (sometimes with rocks thrown) could be indicative of the latter’s avoidance of protesters in their offices. In a few cases in 1918, demonstrators (including the mayor of the suburb of Bubeneč/Bubentsch on one occasion) went to the summer palace of the Bohemian Governor in the Stromovka/Baumgarten Park in the north of Prague. The expedition to this residence, which marked the difference of status between the hungry masses and the noble elite, could be linked with earlier claims ‘to see if the governor was hungry’. Ecclesiastic authorities were occasionally also asked to intervene on behalf of the people. In March 1918, a group of women went to the archbishop’s palace to voice their grievances on the food supply crisis.⁸⁵⁴ However, the state and municipal officials still seemed the first point of call, even though their efficiency was more and more questioned. Praguers could legitimately feel abandoned by their civil servants. Alon Rachamimov’s conclusion about the Austro-Hungarian POWs could be applied to other groups in the monarchy: ‘it was clearly the Habsburg state that had abandoned them rather than the other way around.’⁸⁵⁵ The legitimacy of the power was undermined by the food crisis but this was a progressive process. Comparing with Russia, it would seem that hungry citizens in Austria-Hungary attempted to negotiate with the state for longer. While Barbara Engel describes scenes of assault on policemen as early as 1915, incidents where rocks are thrown at the police become more commonplace in Prague only in 1918.⁸⁵⁶

The crowd during many of the demonstrations remained at one particular location and was then dispersed by the police. However, the demonstration itself sometimes moved through the city. In May 1917, in a queue in the suburb of Holešovice/Holleschowitz, a few hundred people who left empty-handed decided to walk to the Governor’s Office in Malá

⁸⁵³ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4979, 8/1/25/4, no 16211, 15 Mai 1918.

⁸⁵⁴ Phone call from the Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/28, no 9869, 21 March 1918.

⁸⁵⁵ Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War : Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), p. 213.

⁸⁵⁶ Engel, “‘Not by bread alone’”.

Strana/Kleinseite to complain. As they were not received there, sixty of them took their complaints to the mayor of Prague in the Old Town and were calmed by the food supply referent at the town hall.⁸⁵⁷ Crossing from one level of authority to the next, the demonstrators looked for an interlocutor who would respond to their complaints. Even when the police managed to keep the demonstration local, the crowd often threatened to go to the Governor's Office, which represented the main seat of power in Prague.

The riots on 4 March 1918 illustrate the various trajectories that a single event could take. In the morning, 600 women went to the mayor's office in Král.Vinohrady/Kgl.Weinberge to ask for help. They then went to his private residence and finally to the local branch of the War Grain Office. At the same moment, in the nearby suburb of Vršovice/Wrschowitz, 1000 people gathered in front of the town hall and got into skirmishes with the police. Later that day, 1000 women and youths demonstrated on the main square in Král.Vinohrady/Kgl.Weinberge (Purkyňovo náměstí/Purkyněplatz) with shouts and whistles. Part of the crowd attempted to break into a shop in a nearby street and broke the main window. In another street, merchandise worth a hundred crowns was stolen from a grocer. Rocks were thrown at the police officers, who suppressed the protest.⁸⁵⁸ Within the span of a day, we can observe different strategies played out in the urban space: pleading with the authorities in front of official or private buildings, occupying the main sites to protest, and directly looting shops.

Violent intrusions into shops, which had become more frequent by 1918, had a clear goal: acquiring the food that had become otherwise unobtainable. Yet, cafés, which were also sometimes attacked, constitute a more intriguing target of the food riots. In January 1918, rocks were thrown into three coffeehouses as the crowd from the suburbs made its way to Wenceslas Square.⁸⁵⁹ A window was broken in the café Hlavka during a riot in Král. Vinohrady/Kgl. Weinberge in March 1918.⁸⁶⁰ The café culture (*Kaffeehaus/kavárna*), which had become an integral part of large cities of the Habsburg Empire, remained by and large a bourgeois

⁸⁵⁷ *Souhrnná hlášení*, no 1908, p. 239.

⁸⁵⁸ Reports in NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4979, sig. 8/1/24/11, no 7658 and 7662, 5 March 1918.

⁸⁵⁹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/28, no 3778, 25 January 1918.

⁸⁶⁰ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4979, sig. 8/1/24/11, no 7477, 3 March 1918.

phenomenon.⁸⁶¹ During the war, they represented a symbol of abundance and material well-being that hungry protesters were excluded from. As a group of adolescents attacked a café in Brunn/Brno during a riot, a young man cried: ‘that’s where the most of the paunchy ones sit!’⁸⁶² As we have seen, cafés were also rumoured to be a hub of black market traffics during the war. The equation of coffeehouse with material well-being continued after the war. In May 1920, during a demonstration, a group of 300 people stood in front of the café in the Municipal House and condemned the lifestyle of the guests: ‘Some here eat cakes while others have nothing to eat’, exclaimed one of the protesters.⁸⁶³

Some of the unrest of the immediate post-war period was happening around the same sites but the new Republic did introduce new landmarks in the city landscape. For example, the former Rudolfinum gallery became the National Assembly and constituted a new point of rally for protests. The Ministry for the Alimentation of the Population (*Ministerstvo pro zásobování lidu*) housed in the Straka Academy, formerly used as a Red Cross hospital (see Chapter 3), was a target for complaints about the still inadequate food supply.

C - Demonstrations in the new Republic

The social tension which had generated many demonstrations and strikes in the last years of the war did not disappear overnight and was still present in the first years of the new Republic. Between 1919 and 1920, there were around 300 demonstrations in the streets of Prague, including political rallies (but not including workers’ strikes).⁸⁶⁴ The number of strikes in the Bohemian lands went up after 1918: from 184 that year to 242 the next year and 590 in 1920.⁸⁶⁵ The Prague police had forbidden demonstrations and gatherings in the last two years of the war

⁸⁶¹ *The Viennese Cafe and Fin-de-Siecle Culture*, ed. by Charlotte Ashby, Tag Gronberg and Simon Shaw-Miller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013). On Prague see: Eva Bendová, *Pražské kavárny a jejich svět* (Praha: Paseka, 2008).

⁸⁶² Claire Morelon, ‘Loyautés dans un Empire multinational: la ville de Brunn / Brno à l’épreuve de la Première Guerre mondiale’ (unpublished master’s thesis, Institut d’Etudes Politiques Paris, 2007), p. 108.

⁸⁶³ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N 1920, no 133, 12 May 1920.

⁸⁶⁴ *Souhrmná týdenní hlášení presidia zemské správy politické v Praze o situaci v Čechách 1919-1920*, ed. by Alois Kocman (Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1959), p. 9.

⁸⁶⁵ Afterwards, the number of strikes started to decrease see table in Peter Heumos, “‘Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution’”, p. 271.

and the lift of these restrictions in the post-war period partially explains the prevalence of these movements. Looking at the demonstrations in Prague in this period, we can see the new variety of causes that mobilised crowds: from anti-clerical rallies to meetings in public space organized by a political party.

The food riots also continued throughout the year 1919. Protesters gathered on main squares to appeal to the authorities (sometimes sending deputations to the newly founded Ministry for the population's food supply) or forced shopkeepers to sell their food at peacetime prices. In some cases, they brought the gallows to scare the 'profiteers'. In Prague, during protests on May 22nd, the gallows bore the sign: 'Last warning for the profiteers'.⁸⁶⁶ Some shopkeepers had to put their neck through the noose in front of the crowd in an act of public humiliation. The hopes that the birth of Czechoslovakia would bring an end to the system of food distribution were disappointed. The common feeling was that peace should not have implied the continuation of the war economy and the war prices. The demands during these protests were thus not much different from what they had been in the previous years. Striking workers wanted higher wages to compensate for the inflation and all classes protested against the high prices and the penury of certain goods. The foundation of a new republic did thus not change fundamentally the relationship of citizens to the state and their general impression on the inefficiency of the food supply.

Ines Koeltzsch has also highlighted the anti-Semitic dimension of many of these protests.⁸⁶⁷ Slogans directed against the Jews (and particularly the remaining Galician Jewish refugees) were heard during demonstrations and Jewish shops were especially targeted. In August 1919, for example, a crowd of women in Prague chanted: 'Away with the [food-controlling] agencies. Away with the Jews. Give us groceries. We want potatoes'.⁸⁶⁸ The Anti-Semitic aspect of some the protests already featured during the war. A rioting crowd of women, for instance, shouted 'shame on the Jews' (*Hanba židům*) in May 1918 and directed its anger especially at the Jewish refugees.⁸⁶⁹ The high point of Anti-Semitic violence in Prague took place

⁸⁶⁶ *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení*, p. 57.

⁸⁶⁷ Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen. Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)*, (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012).

⁸⁶⁸ *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení*, p. 87.

⁸⁶⁹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4972, sig. 8/1/16/34, no 69446, 6 May 1918.

immediately after the 28th of October, in December 1918. This periodicity (shortly after the regime change) is a characteristic which it shares with other more violent pogroms in Eastern Europe⁸⁷⁰ and in the Bohemian Lands.⁸⁷¹ The riots on 1 and 2 December 1918 also presented an anti-German character⁸⁷² but the anti-Semitic component prevailed. Jewish shop owners were pulled out onto the streets and beaten by the crowd. Anti-Jewish slogans calling for violence were shouted and the German consul remarked on the riots' 'strong Anti-Semitic fundamental tone (*Grundton*)'.⁸⁷³ The police, which internally referred to the riots as 'anti-Jewish excess' (*výtržnosti protižidovského rázu*), had to call thirty gendarmes for backup to repress the movement.⁸⁷⁴ Newspapers and announcements called for appeasement. The atmosphere was, however, menacing. The Jewish pianist Alice Herz-Sommer recalls the anxiety of her parents around the 1919 New Year's celebration.⁸⁷⁵ Anti-Jewish violence did not disappear afterwards: many of the demonstrations or riots in the post-war period incorporated an anti-Semitic discourse or even physical assaults on Jewish citizens.⁸⁷⁶ On 2 March 1919, for example, several Jews were slapped on the street in front of a café.⁸⁷⁷ However, the violence on that day reveals other aspects of post-war unrest like the paranoia around German agitators and the role of returning veterans, as we shall see.

The veterans were particularly vocal in the demonstrations of the immediate post-war period. Returning home from four or five years of combat, they struggled to reintegrate into the

⁸⁷⁰ For example in Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv: Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in Einer Multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914-1947* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), pp. 232–255.

⁸⁷¹ The most violent pogrom occurred in Holešov/Holleschau in Moravia in December 1918. On anti-Jewish violence see: Kateřina Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews?: National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), pp. 110–111.

⁸⁷² The German House was, for example, occupied by the military police on 2 December 1918: AHMP, Německé kasino, ka 1, inv. č. 220, 'Ereignisse betreffend dem Verein "Deutsches Haus"', 2 December 1918.

⁸⁷³ *Deutsche Gesandtschaftsberichte aus Prag: Innenpolitik und Minderheitenprobleme in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik*, ed. by Manfred Alexander (München: Oldenbourg, 1983-2009), I: *Von der Staatsgründung bis zum ersten Kabinett Beneš 1918-1921* (1983), pp. 108-109.

⁸⁷⁴ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5043, sig. 8/1/90/32, no 37353, 2 December 1918 and no 1219, 12 January 1919.

⁸⁷⁵ Melissa Müller and Werner Piechocki, *Alice Herz-Sommer - 'Ein Garten Eden inmitten der Hölle': ein Jahrhundertleben* (München: Droemer, 2006), p. 74.

⁸⁷⁶ Observation based on the reports of all the demonstrations in Prague in 1919 and 1920 in *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení*.

⁸⁷⁷ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5043, sig. 8/1/90/32, no 6985, 3 March 1919.

society. They felt entitled to respect and gratitude from the fatherland and had trouble conforming to the rules of the new state. This phenomenon echoes the return home of many soldiers in Europe during those years⁸⁷⁸ but the situation here was complicated by the divide between the veterans who had fought for the future Czechoslovakia and those who had remained in the Austro-Hungarian army. The legionaries who had deserted on the Russian or Italian front to join the legions or who had joined special units in France wanted to control the 'new' city and participate in the creation of its new Czech identity under the Republic. Having fought for the creation of Czechoslovakia, they felt robbed of their victory by politicians.

In many cases, the legionaries acted as surrogate policemen, defending their own vision of what was good for the nation, which could coincide or clash with the conception of the police. On 2 March 1919, a crowd of 1000 people gathered to disrupt a meeting held in the café Elektra to protest against the suspension of German-speaking newspaper *Bohemia*. By the time policemen and legionaries intervened, the crowd had moved to another restaurant where it intended to remove a statue of German Emperor Wilhelm II. A German student was apparently lightly wounded in the shuffle. The legionaries from Russia then cleared the street Am Graben/Na příkopě and interrupted a dancing evening in the German House after the suspicion that someone had fired on a legionary. They also closed all the nearby cafés and sent their guests home.⁸⁷⁹ They arrested several people but the police did not have more information. These events show both the feverish atmosphere of the first months of Czechoslovak power where fears of German conspiracies were ripe. It seems highly unlikely that an armed person would have fired a shot from the German house (a cultural institution). The other interesting feature of this event is the fact that legionaries considered it within their purview to maintain public order to the detriment of the local police.

The public sometimes supported legionaries in this role as is visible from the following case. In April 1920, a legionary, upon seeing a long queue to buy milk, exclaimed: 'Is that what we fought for five years for?' A woman in the queue witnessing his reaction asked him to go and slap the saleswoman; a demand that he carried out.⁸⁸⁰ The government was often ambivalent

⁸⁷⁸ For a study of the homecoming of French soldiers see Bruno Cabanes, *La Victoire endeillée : La Sortie de guerre des soldats français, 1918-1920* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

⁸⁷⁹ *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení*, pp. 34-35; NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5043, sig. 8/1/90/32, no 6985, 3 March 1919.

⁸⁸⁰ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, 1920, č. j. 104, Police report on the events of the day, 13 April 1920.

towards the legionaries, treating them as official heroes of the new state but fearing their potential for upheaval.⁸⁸¹ Looking at their actions in the city in the first two years after the conflict brings the question of the role of violence in post-war societies. George Mosse's hypothesis of a 'brutalization',⁸⁸² of civilian societies through the return of soldiers who bring back with them the violence of the front seems useful to analyse the daily violence in Czechoslovakia in the period. Martin Zückert has pointed out the relative success of the new Czechoslovakia in pacifying its society when comparing its demobilization process with its neighbouring countries.⁸⁸³ Indeed there are no equivalents in the Bohemian lands to the paramilitary units active in Hungary, Austria or Germany⁸⁸⁴. However, as John Paul Newman has argued for the Croatian case⁸⁸⁵, the absence of an open conflict between Reds and Whites shouldn't prevent us from studying the existing violence which came out the Great War. Czech veterans in this period were both instigators of low-level violence in the streets in some cases and regulators of the violence of citizens in others.

The women's movement of Hussite women (*husitské ženy*, in reference to the protestant reformer Jan Hus) is a good example of a group that does not fit traditional political labels as nationalist or socialist, being for example fiercely Anti-Semitic and anti-government. They organized demonstrations and printed flyers to voice the complaints of women on the material situation in the city. As historian Antonín Klimek describes the movement, it was born out of the anger from the Prague 'pavlač'.⁸⁸⁶ A woman explains that she heard about the movement from another woman on the Old Town Square and came then to a meeting.⁸⁸⁷ Another, coming home

⁸⁸¹ Ivan Šedivý, 'Zur Loyalität der Legionäre in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik', in *Loyalitäten in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik 1918 – 1938: politische, nationale und kulturelle Zugehörigkeiten*, ed. by Martin Schulze Wessel (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), pp. 141-152.

⁸⁸² George L Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁸⁸³ Martin Zückert, 'National Concepts of Freedom and Government Pacification Policies: The Case of Czechoslovakia in the Transitional Period after 1918', *Contemporary European History* 17, 3 (2008), 325-344.

⁸⁸⁴ Robert Gerwarth, 'The Central European Counter-revolution: Paramilitary violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War', *Past and Present*, 200 (2008), 175-209.

⁸⁸⁵ John Paul Newman, 'Post-imperial and Post-war Violence in the South Slav Lands, 1917–1923', *Contemporary European History*, 19, 3 (2010), 249-265.

⁸⁸⁶ Antonín Klimek, *Vítejte v první republice* (Praha: Havran, 2003), p. 46.

⁸⁸⁷ Statement by Marta Lenertová, 11 September 1919. NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D 6/11.

through a passage met an acquaintance who explained that a meeting was happening in the nearby pub. She found out that the women were wearing a black armband with a red chalice (symbol of the Hussites), which she went back home to fabricate for herself.⁸⁸⁸ The movement was not composed of women only and legionaries were often present in their meetings and protests. In a column intended for the newspaper, the editor Jaroslav Motyčka explained their goal refusing any political affiliation: ‘Our group was founded according to and follows only humanitarian goals, not at all clerical, Bolshevik or monarchical goals’.⁸⁸⁹ Their interpretation of the situation separated the good elements of the Republic (Masaryk and the legionaries) from the civil servants who were the cause of all wrong. In a leaflet calling for a demonstration, the ‘father’ president Masaryk was presented as a hostage of the German Jews and the German Austrians in the ministries. The Hussite women invited men and women to protest ‘against the profiteering, the central agencies, the “Austrianity” (*rakušáctví*) in the administration and in the army’.⁸⁹⁰ On September 5th 1919, 10,000 women, soldiers and legionaries responded to their call and gathered on Old Town Square.⁸⁹¹ The social movements of the post-war period were not limited to the actions of the main parties. Rather, political leaders were attempting to canalise spontaneous outbursts of civil discontent. Many of the movements emerging during these years were largely improvised.

⁸⁸⁸ Statement by Marie Siglová 10 September 1919. NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D 6/11.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁰ Leaflet for a demonstration on 5 September 1919, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D6/5 IX.

⁸⁹¹ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D 6/5, report on the events of the day 5 September 1919.

Figure 24: Leaflet calling for a demonstration of the 'Hussite women' (September 1919).

II - New conceptions of social justice

The wartime and post-war contention was shaped by material concerns and the challenges faced by Praguers in their daily lives. Citizens made increasing demands on the state in return for their sacrifice, asking for what Adam Seipp has termed 'reciprocity'.⁸⁹² Food was not the only issue which affected the city's inhabitants: housing soon became a pressing question. As we have seen, the inflation of common goods' prices meant that many working-class families had to move to smaller homes. During the war the problem was already considerable⁸⁹³ and it was amplified in the post-war. The phenomenon of frequent expulsions that occurred at the time denotes a new form of invasion of public space. It signals a blur between the private and the public realm.⁸⁹⁴ It also epitomises the new conceptions of social justice present in Prague at the time where a crowd could decide who should live where. The new relation to the state and participation in public order that appears was directly the product of the war. The role that veterans played in this shift of legitimacy shall be further examined.

A - Housing crisis: scapegoating and direct action

Prague was confronted with a housing crisis in the immediate aftermath of the war. This crisis was partly due to the freeze of rents imposed by the Austrian government in 1914. Rents had thus not increased despite the growing inflation. As a result, investors were not building dwellings which would provide them with few gains.⁸⁹⁵ Another cause of the shortage was the influx of various populations to Prague in the immediate aftermath of the war. Returning soldiers gravitated toward the new capital city in search of employment. Civil servants from Vienna came to Prague to staff the new ministries. Some of the wartime refugees were still in the city at that time or came back after the upheavals in the East. Overall, 100,000 additional inhabitants were

⁸⁹² Seipp, *The Ordeal of Peace*.

⁸⁹³ See letter in Czech from the 'organised workers in Karlín' the City Council, AHMP, Archiv města Karlín, ka 390, sig. 8/2, inv. č. 879, no 11969, 2 August 1918.

⁸⁹⁴ On the border between home and city see: Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (University of California Press, 1999).

⁸⁹⁵ Alois Rašín. *Les finances de la Tchécoslovaquie jusqu'à la fin de 1921* (Paris: Editions Bossard, 1923), pp. 215-216.

estimated to have arrived in 1919.⁸⁹⁶ The state intervened, creating in larger towns a Housing office, which distributed vacant apartments. This measure and the disruption in housing of the first post-war years could, to an extent, be compared with the situation in Soviet Petrograd.⁸⁹⁷ Of course, the ideological underpinning of requisitions and evictions did not exist in Czechoslovakia and the situation was not as difficult in Prague as in Soviet Russia. However, the great housing shortages and a reduced regard for the sanctity of private property was common in both cases. Contemporary caricatures in satirical newspaper *Humoristické listy* highlight the urgency of the situation. One of them (Figure 25) depicts the Old Town Square in the near future, absolutely full of people at every window and on every roof, while the sky is invaded by hot-air balloons where Praguers have set up their businesses.⁸⁹⁸ The overcrowding of flats, where several families would sometimes live together, posed a threat to the health conditions in the city.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁶ Press cutting: *Zprávy veřejné služby technické*, 1920, NA, MZV VA, ka 2517.

⁸⁹⁷ Mary McAuley, *Bread and Justice : State and Society in Petrograd 1917-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 268–275.

⁸⁹⁸ *Humoristické listy*, 28 March 1919, p. 105; other examples of caricatures on the same topic: 14 March 1919, p. 89; 11 April 1919 p. 125; 20 June 1919, p. 202.

⁸⁹⁹ Press cutting: *Čas*, 25 July 1920, NA, MZV VA, ka 2517.

Figure 25: 'Prague in six months – when the housing shortage will have reached its peak'.

A set of laws were voted at the National Assembly to protect tenants. The municipalities could requisition apartments or rooms under certain circumstances, if they were empty or only partially used.⁹⁰⁰ They would also control to whom flats were rented, to ensure that individuals would not rent an apartment too large for their use.⁹⁰¹ In practice, it was difficult to implement. Owners contested the requisition arguing that they were still using the dwelling.⁹⁰²

The inefficiency of the official policy was denounced and people were moving into apartments without warning or permission. Expulsions or partial expulsions, sometimes carried out by legionaries, aimed to reinstitute what they saw as a form of ‘social justice’ in the distribution of housing. The police reports indicate around forty cases of forced expulsion and another eight cases of resistance to eviction during the year 1920.⁹⁰³ Some of them were sanctioned by the Housing Office’s decision but, in its wake, people sometimes decided to forcibly move into empty rooms. These evictions generated gatherings on the street: a crowd of up to several hundred people witnessed the process in some cases. The sympathies of these bystanders could go with the expelled or with the person moving in. In January 1920, ten legionaries arrived at the apartment of a Galician Jewish family and took out the furniture to enable another legionary to move in. Their action was approved by many people queuing at a nearby office to get tobacco.⁹⁰⁴ In another case, the public sided with the expellee instead because he had a family.⁹⁰⁵ These expulsions could be seen as a sort of performance for the people assembled. As a rumour went around Smíchov/Smichow, that workers from the Ringhoffer factory would move someone into the parish building, a small crowd of 400 people began to form in expectation of the move.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁰ Dispatch, 31 October [1919], MZV VA, ka 2517.

⁹⁰¹ Josef Gruber, ‘Bytová politika v Rakousku a v republice československé’, *Obzor národohospodářský*, 27 (1922), 18-25, 65-73, 115-123, 208-214, 249-255, here pp. 70-71.

⁹⁰² Examples of letters of complaint sent to the Housing Office in Vysočany can be found: AHMP, Archiv města Vysočany, ka 101, sig. XV/2, Bytová komise, 1919.

⁹⁰³ Reports available in *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení*.

⁹⁰⁴ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 9, Police report on the events of the day, 9 January 1920.

⁹⁰⁵ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 236, Police report on the events of the day, 25 August 1920.

⁹⁰⁶ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 245, Police report on the events of the day, 1 September 1920.

Legionaries are overrepresented in the group leading the expulsions, which reflects their recent arrival in the city. It reveals, however, their sense of entitlement upon returning home. In a case from October 1920, a legionary asked a janitor to open an apartment for him, telling her that she should obey him as he was a military person. He then announced that he was taking two rooms in the apartment and pulled out the furniture from these two rooms with the help of his friends.⁹⁰⁷ It was not only empty apartments that were targeted but also rooms in dwellings deemed too large for their occupiers. A group of eight workers came to warn a councillor occupying four rooms with his servant in Žižkov/Žižkov that they would soon requisition them.⁹⁰⁸ The next month, a cab driver installed his furniture into two rooms of the three-room apartment belonging to an inspector.⁹⁰⁹ Finding a stranger sleeping in your living room seemed to be a not so rare event in the difficult economic context of the post-war period and the police often was at a loss to intervene. As 600 workers came to move one of them into a disused pub, they clearly pointed to the inefficiency of the Housing Office declaring that ‘they were acting thus because the Housing Office was not fulfilling its duty and because there is no trust in it’.⁹¹⁰ The official requisitions could create further confusion. A legionary, who had notified an empty apartment to the Housing Office in the hope of securing it for himself, prevented the new tenant assigned by the authorities to move in.⁹¹¹ The Office decided against the legionary in this case.

The very regular occurrence of these scenes of wild expulsions in the Prague of 1920 gives us an interesting clue not only on the dire housing situation in the city but also on the new idea of justice and the readiness to use minor violence. They also highlight how various groups (workers, legionaries) organised to take matters into their own hands to supplement the action of the state. This conception was indicative of a broader mindset at the time, which rested on the promises of a new Republic.

⁹⁰⁷ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 297, Police report on the events of the day, 23 October 1920.

⁹⁰⁸ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 255, Police report on the events of the day, 11 September 1920.

⁹⁰⁹ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 279, Police report on the events of the day, 5 October 1920.

⁹¹⁰ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 244, Police report on the events of the day, 31 August 1920.

⁹¹¹ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, č. j. 238, Police report on the events of the day, 25 August 1920.

B - Citizenship and entitlement: a transfer of legitimacy?

The first years of the Czechoslovak state saw an unprecedented engagement with the public sphere. Among the population prevailed a certain sense of entitlement to make claims and share a part of the power. The new democracy gave legitimacy to all sorts of protests. A report from January 1919 described the ‘widespread opinion that in the republic everybody can do as he pleases and that the political authority, if it asks to be notified about a meeting in order to know what it concerns, has nothing else on its mind other than to “harass in the Austrian way” the citizens.’⁹¹² As Ferdinand Peroutka remarked, ‘1919 was certainly the year when most efforts were done in favour of direct democracy and when direct democracy most existed. Politics then were a real popular movement. [...] The people, politically awakened, tried to have a direct influence on the administrative decisions. [...] The idea of democratic government prompted everybody to want to personally feel that he participated in the government.’⁹¹³ This new engagement was first visible in the regular rallies in pubs or on public squares organised by the various political parties which drew crowds of a several hundred people. The city in the two post-war years witnessed an effervescence of opinions and speeches that populated urban space.

The May 1st celebrations in 1919 epitomised this participation in politics. The two main socialist parties organised processions that culminated with meetings on the Old Town Square and on Havlíčkovo náměstí/Heuwegplatz. 60,000 persons attended the first rally and 12,000 gathered for the other, climbing statues and lampposts to listen to the orators. Various personalities gave speeches from the balcony of public buildings. The Sokols had arranged their own parade on the Exhibition ground. Popular celebrations closed the day on both islands of the Vltava/Moldau.⁹¹⁴ Beyond these large meetings, groups formed at the local level in the suburbs to discuss the events of the day. Several interest groups (students, invalids, apprentices, concierges) demonstrated to voice their specific complaints.

Furthermore, this involvement could sometimes imply a direct intervention in state affairs. Citizens substituted themselves as the bearers of authority in a world where this notion

⁹¹² Alois Kocman ed. *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení*. p. 18.

⁹¹³ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budování státu* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1991), quoted in Bernard Michel *Prague, Belle Époque* (Paris : Aubier, 2008), p. 278.

⁹¹⁴ NA, PMV, ka 50, sig. IV/K/36, I/2230, no 3116, 3 May 1919; see also a short film on the events available at: <http://film.nfa.cz/portal/avrecord/0064919> [accessed 24 October 2014].

had been undermined or at least redefined. For example, a voluntary corps of citizens was created in August 1920 to control food prices on marketplaces and in shops. Especially established for the Greater Prague area, it consisted of unpaid voluntary members who would tour the city in search of contraventions to the current regulations. They would then report these to the department for the prevention of food profiteering. Members were chosen from the six main political parties. A member of parliament complained that their searches were violating the freedom of those under suspicion, showing the conflicting usage of rights at the time.⁹¹⁵

The case of the legionaries was a particularly delicate one because they felt entitled to participate in the public management of the state. They had fought for the creation of the country and, as such, felt part of a new deciding elite. This created an inequality among the veterans, between those who had fought for Austria-Hungary and those who had joined the legions in France, Italy or Russia. Natali Stegmann demonstrated in the case of disabled soldiers that Austro-Hungarian veterans tried to establish their sacrifice for the nation, insisting on the notion of duty.⁹¹⁶ The privileged status of legionaries may have induced some men to falsely adopt their uniform. The association of invalid legionaries published a notice in *Národní listy* against individuals who did false collections.⁹¹⁷ More research would be needed on this phenomenon. A railway employee also complained in a letter about the lack of regulation on the wearing of legionaries' uniforms. Although his denunciation seems to have been primarily motivated by anti-Semitism (there is no indication from his description to indicate that the men he denounced were not real legionaries), it reveals the weight that the wearing of such a uniform had in public space and the authority carried with it.⁹¹⁸

This could mean sometimes that the legionaries tried to restrain the outbursts of the mob. As one lieutenant colonel was accused of throwing water from his window on a parade of Sokols and the crowd was breaking into his apartment, some legionaries intervened to get everybody

⁹¹⁵ See the file: NA, MV I SR, ka 278, sig. 12/373/40.

⁹¹⁶ Natali Stegmann, *Kriegsdeutungen, Staatsgründungen, Sozialpolitik. Der Helden- und Opferdiskurs in der Tschechoslowakei 1918-1948* (München: Oldenbourg, 2010).

⁹¹⁷ *Národní listy*, 29 June 1919, p. 4.

⁹¹⁸ Denunciation in the context of fears of Bolshevik plots: Letter by Karel S. to the Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3074, sig. P 55/40, no 409, 12 January 1919.

outside.⁹¹⁹ Nevertheless, they could also feel above the law as in the case of a journalist threatened of abuse in his office by two legionaries who didn't like the last article he published.⁹²⁰ This ambiguity in their role as both practitioners and regulators of violence is characteristic of the first years of the republic where democracy and republic were understood differently by elites and more radical groups on the ground.

The new freedom meant that the local authorities could also withhold their responsibility for actions led by the government. In December 1919, the municipality in Smíchov/Smichow refused any responsibility for the irregularities in food supply as it had complained to the relevant ministry. It put out on the walls an announcement to this effect that caused great indignation at the government in the population.⁹²¹ This distance at the local level from the decisions taken centrally undermined the legitimacy of the newly established government in the population. The threat to the stability of the new Republic did not only come from potential monarchist or Bolshevik coups but also from simple acts that could endanger the cohesion of the state.

The immediate post-war emerges as a period of flux where the new ideas of democracy and self-government led to dissolution of the centres of authority and power. There existed on the one hand a form of enthusiasm for the newly found freedom that was expressed in eager political debating. On the other hand, the new state was exposed to intervention and criticism from many sides. Soldiers coming home were a specific destabilising force in this context.

The end of the war and the immediate post-war period constitute a unique moment of occupation of public space through crowds. There were obviously mass demonstrations in the pre-1914 period but the frequency of unrest on a small scale was a product of the wartime period. The crowds became more and more daring as the war went on. From polite delegations to the local authorities demonstrations transformed into mass movements that reached the city centre. The street turned into a forum where the expectations of citizens towards their state were voiced. The increasing failure of the Austrian state to respond to this challenge contributed to its final demise. However, the new Czechoslovak state faced many similar challenges, if only increased

⁹¹⁹ 13 June 1920, *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení*, p. 214.

⁹²⁰ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, 1920, č. j. 27, Police report on the events of the day, 27 January 1920.

⁹²¹ NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4976, sig. 8/1/18/14, no 45183, 22 December 1919.

by the conviction that freedom and democracy meant more participation in the public space. Hunger riots were not only about hunger. They engaged a conception of the state. Similarly, nationalist demonstrations found sometimes their roots in economic difficulties. The strong role of anti-Semitism in these years shares this ambivalence: it sometimes stemmed from accusations of profiteering but could also be linked to a rejection of the German presence in Prague. The complex nature of urban contention in Prague from 1917 to 1920 has implications for the nature of the revolution in 1918. It was never purely a Czech national revolution (with the national feeling overriding any other concerns during these years) or an aborted Bolshevik coup. In the next chapter, we shall examine the regime change in 1918 and its relation to revolution.

CHAPTER 6

THE 1918 PŘEV RAT/UMSTURZ AS REVOLUTION?

A cabaret play in Prague in 1919 featured the following discussion between a worker and a typist, symptomatic of the atmosphere of the time in the city: ‘You know, sir, we had somehow imagined it differently, the whole thing. People always said republic, liberty, peace, independent state and everything – and what do you have now?’ To which the typist retorts: ‘Yes, yes, same old Austria, worse regulations, war in Slovakia and Poland, a couple of ministers and penury with poverty.’⁹²² The transition to the new state brought many disappointments to Praguers that explains the continued unrest analysed in the previous chapter. As Praguers pondered on the continuities between the Habsburg Empire and the new Czechoslovak Republic in their daily life, what picture emerges from the 1918 transition?

The various events of 1918 in Central and Eastern Europe are often divided between the social revolutions (Germany, Austria, Hungary) and the national revolutions (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania), the latter successful and the former eventually doomed to failure. For Otto Bauer, the war had sanctioned the victory of the bourgeois democratic forces in Europe. The national revolutions of the Czechs, Poles and Yugoslavs had led to the collapse of the Habsburg Empire leaving the Austrians and the Hungarians to invent their own national revolution.⁹²³ The term revolution is sometimes reserved for the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Given the ultimate failure of a Bolshevik takeover in the region, it is not even always applied to the upheavals of 1918. In the Bohemian lands, the term převrat/Umsturz (overthrow) is the most commonly used to refer to the birth of the Czechoslovak state. With the introduction of the notion of revolution, elements of continuity and discontinuity between the two systems can be re-evaluated.⁹²⁴

In the study of revolutions or transitions from one type of political system to another, the focus on continuities is often at the forefront. What did change and what did not change because

⁹²² Jiří Červený, Rudolf Jílovský, *Kapky jedu* (Praha: Josef Springer, 1919), p. 7.

⁹²³ Otto Bauer, *Die österreichische Revolution* (Wien: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1923), pp. 109-115.

⁹²⁴ See John W. Boyer, ‘Silent war and bitter peace: the revolution of 1918 in Austria’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 34, (2003), 1-56.

of the new political power? In his study of the French Revolution, Tocqueville already questioned general assumptions on the changes brought by the revolutionaries in order to highlight the modern institutions that pre-existed to 1789.⁹²⁵ In a process of transition from one regime to another, the question of the political legitimacy of the new state is essential. Through a symbolic break with the past, the new power attempts to distance itself from the discredited old regime while at the same time maintaining its newly found authority. The continuity of the state, partially a result of the continuation of war conditions in peacetime, undermined the legitimacy of the Czechoslovak Republic in the eye of the public.

As continuities with the Habsburg Empire were denounced, the official revolution of 1918 was sometimes perceived as too limited. The changes brought on by the war conditions, however, may have constituted a bigger transformation in the lives of city-dwellers than the political transformations. The perceptions that Prague's inhabitants had of the period they were living in as a change of era are more indicative of the changes in this respect. The Prague example will hopefully shed new light on the 1918 revolution. This event emerges as a more complex turning point in 20th century Europe than would suggest its traditional interpretation as either an aftershock of the Bolshevik revolution or a new wave of national self-determination.

I - Continuity and discontinuity between the two regimes and their perception

For Prague's inhabitants, the 'liberation' promised by the declaration of independence and the establishment of the Republic did not, in various respects, always represent a clean break with the war situation. Food shortages persisted and the state authorities continued to function as they had during the monarchy.

A - The transition from Empire to Republic

To gain a clearer understanding of the nature of the transition from Austria-Hungary to Czechoslovakia in 1918, it is necessary to take a closer look at the events of the 28th of October and the declaration of independence. As Richard Lein recently remarked, the action was not

⁹²⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).

planned and took the local Austrian authorities by surprise.⁹²⁶ In the morning, the National Committee seized the Office for Grain (*Obilní ústav*) on Wenceslas Square. Although the actors presented it after the event as the first political act of the Czechoslovak state⁹²⁷, it is not clear to what extent it can be considered to represent the beginning of the regime change.⁹²⁸ Czech politician Bohumil Němec even suggests in his memoirs that the taking over of the Office for Grain by a Czech administrative committee was agreed upon with Bohemian Governor Coudenhove for the date of October 28th.⁹²⁹ In the blur of Austria-Hungary's final months, the personnel of this office, which pledged an oath to the National Committee, could well have thought that it still acted according to the wishes of the central authorities.

The crowds, which gathered that morning on Wenceslas Square, were first attracted by a sign on the board of the newspaper *Národní politika* announcing: 'Armistice'.⁹³⁰ In fact, this information relied on a misunderstanding: Foreign Minister Count Andrassy had merely sent a note to the American president offering to start peace negotiations. Although the poster remained for less than an hour, the news spread very quickly. The official journal reported 'jubiling shouts of 'peace – peace!' from all sides' in Prague and the suburbs.⁹³¹ The situation soon took another turn.⁹³² Extra newspaper editions around noon reported that Austria-Hungary had accepted Wilson's conditions regarding the rights of Slavic nations.⁹³³ The red and white flags, symbol of Bohemia and of the Czech nation, invaded public space, featuring not only on buildings and private houses but also on tramways, on stands at markets or automobiles.⁹³⁴ In his

⁹²⁶ Richard Lein, 'Der "Umsturz" in Prag im Oktober 1918: zwischen Mythen und Fakten', in *Schlaglichter auf die Geschichte der böhmischen Länder vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by David Schriffel and Niklas Perzi (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2011), pp. 185–206.

⁹²⁷ Antonín Klimek, *Říjen 1918: vznik Československa* (Praha: Paseka, 1998), p. 185.

⁹²⁸ Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka, 1914-1918* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001), p. 349.

⁹²⁹ Bohumil Němec, *Vzpomínky* (Praha: Archiv Akademie věd České republiky, 2002), p. 527.

⁹³⁰ Richard Georg Plaschka, *Cattaro-Prag. Revolte und Revolution. Kriegsmarine und Heer Österreich-Ungarns im Feuer der Aufstandsbewegung vom 1. Februar und 28. Oktober 1918* (Graz: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1963), pp. 222-228.

⁹³¹ *Pražské noviny*, 29 October 1918, p. 1.

⁹³² For the most complete description of the events on 28 October in Prague see Klimek, *Říjen 1918*, pp. 182-224.

⁹³³ *Národní politika*, 28 October 1918 (afternoon edition), p. 1.

⁹³⁴ *Pražské noviny*, 29 October 1918, p. 1.

memoirs, Vladimír Vondráček describes this atmosphere where the flags started appearing at a few shops and then throughout the day ‘the red and white flags slowly popped up everywhere’.⁹³⁵ Several members of the Parliament held speeches in various locations; national songs were heard around the city. Wilson’s name was acclaimed by the crowd and American flags could be seen among Slavic colours. Praguers celebrated the proponent of self-determination who for that brief moment at the end of the war symbolised the hopes and aspirations of many in Europe and beyond.⁹³⁶ A red and white poster dated 28 October 1918 called for the ‘citizens’ to maintain ‘dignified calm’ during the demonstrations: ‘The Czechoslovak state finally became reality. We became free and you are the ones who should show that you are able to live like free citizens’. It affirmed the legitimacy of the National Committee as national government. The signature bore the names of several Czech politicians and national activist Jan Deyl with the mention: ‘in the name of Prague citizenry’.⁹³⁷ Similar appeals to preserve order would appear in the following days in the daily press while different sections of society (Sokols, students, soldiers) were called to help regulate the streets.⁹³⁸

Returning soldiers mixed in the crowd and removed the little round sign with a K on their caps referring to the Emperor Karl. If not spontaneously removed, these ‘apples’, as they were called, were soon forcibly taken by members of the crowd. The pressure for uniformed men to renounce Austria-Hungary in this manner was such that Hugo Bergmann preferred to walk the streets dressed as a civilian on that day.⁹³⁹ Klara Hofbauerová-Heyrovská describes the joy and smiles of people on the streets and the soldiers replacing the ‘K’ on their caps with a revolutionary cockade.⁹⁴⁰ Policemen also quit their feathered helmets. The German Consul, however, recounts more violent scenes in the removal of these insignia with slaps and blows

⁹³⁵ Vladimír Vondráček, *Lékař vzpomíná 1895-1920* (Praha: Avicenum, 1978), p. 358.

⁹³⁶ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁹³⁷ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3074, sig. P 55/35, 28 October 1918.

⁹³⁸ See *Národní listy*, 29 October 1918, p. 2.

⁹³⁹ Letter to Arthur Bergmann, 29 October 1918, in Hugo Bergmann, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, ed. by Miriam Sambursky (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag Athenäum, 1985), I: 1901-1948, p. 114.

⁹⁴⁰ Klára Hofbauerová-Heyrovská, *Mezi vědci a umělci* (Praha: Jos. R. Vilímek, 1947), p. 327.

given to the reluctant soldiers.⁹⁴¹ Several groups removed imperial eagles on the façades of public buildings. These coats of arms did not only signal state authorities; they had also adorned the front of secondary schools, firms supplying the imperial Court, tobacconists and lottery sellers.⁹⁴² The signs from the Court of Justice on Charles Square were thus triumphantly removed while the eagle of the Police Headquarters was carried by the crowd and thrown into the nearby Vltava/Moldau. Hofbauerová-Heyrovská remarks that the most enthusiastic in the crowd were those who recently cheered for Austria.⁹⁴³ The numerous flags and the changing uniforms of soldiers and policemen transformed the appearance of the city. The German-speaking newspaper *Prager Tagblatt* underlined this visual overthrow: ‘Anyone who walked on the street yesterday afternoon or night cannot anymore have the impression to be in an Austrian city.’⁹⁴⁴

Looking at the crowds on October 28th, we can see a will to celebrate both the peace and the collapse of the old regime. The scenes on the street are reminiscent of Armistice Day scenes in other cities. Victor Demiaux’s study on London, Paris and Rome highlights several elements that were also present in Prague a few days earlier. The celebration of ‘victory’ rather than armistice in Rome on November 3rd also saw many processions in the city and speeches by prominent members of the nation. Despite this national emphasis, in Rome, as in Prague, the inter-allied culture was an important feature of the celebrations. The Marseillaise was played on Wenceslas Square and American flags appeared here and there. Finally, Demiaux shows how the month of October (after the surrender of the Bulgarians) was a month of anticipation of the coming peace and its potential celebration.⁹⁴⁵ These comparative examples help us reframe the situation in Prague within the context of end of the war celebrations elsewhere in Europe. The goal here is not to detract from the rupture with the Habsburg Empire and independence but to underline the weight of the war and replace that experience within the frame of a victorious

⁹⁴¹ *Deutsche Gesandtschaftsberichte aus Prag: Innenpolitik und Minderheitenprobleme in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik*, ed. by Manfred Alexander (München: Oldenbourg, 1983-2009), I: *Von der Staatsgründung bis zum ersten Kabinett Beneš 1918-1921* (1983), pp. 31-34.

⁹⁴² From the memoirs from Wilhelm Weizsäcker who had a prominent career as Nazi researcher: Wilhelm Weizsäcker, ‘Deutsch-tschechisches Gegenspiel’, *Prager Nachrichten*, IV, no 5/6, 15 May 1953, p. 19.

⁹⁴³ Hofbauerová-Heyrovská, *Mezi vědci a umělci*, p. 327.

⁹⁴⁴ *Prager Tagblatt*, 29 October 1918, p. 3.

⁹⁴⁵ Victor Demiaux, ‘La Construction rituelle de la victoire dans les capitales européennes après la Grande Guerre (Bruxelles, Bucarest, Londres, Paris, Rome)’ (unpublished PhD thesis, EHESS, 2013), pp. 89-118.

Europe hoping for a better future (the independence suddenly placing the Bohemian Lands on the side of the victors).

The Emperor's manifesto on 16 October 1918, which announced a more federal system in Austria, had created confusion in the bureaucracy. Czech civil servants, in a meeting on 27 October, had already acknowledged the collapse of the Habsburg Empire and declared that they would deploy all their energies in the service of the new Czechoslovak state.⁹⁴⁶ This assessment explained the passive attitude of much of the administration on 28 October when they did not resist the Czechoslovak takeover. The defeat of the Habsburg Empire reinforced the conviction that the old state could not survive the end of the war. The crucial step of the handover of the Bohemian Governor's Office to the National Committee in the afternoon of the 28th happened in this context of relative confusion. As Governor Coudenhove was away in Vienna that day, his deputy Kosina talked to the National Committee but it is not clear what prompted him to accept the new state.⁹⁴⁷ The Military Command, on the other hand, was too surprised to act.⁹⁴⁸ Exile politicians who wanted to take most of the credit for the creation of Czechoslovakia pointed out the confusion exploited by the men of the National Committee.⁹⁴⁹ Without intervening in this debate, it is important to see how this revolution was institutionally a transition from one regime to the next.

It has often been noted that the National Committee's first concern on 28 October was to ensure the continuity of the state apparatus. Indeed, the first general law issued with the declaration of independence stated that all the current laws were to remain in effect, 'as if there had been no revolution at all', as Alois Rašín himself, one of the organizers of the regime change, explained.⁹⁵⁰ To avoid violence and avert the threat of civil war, which was the main concern for the provisional government in the first months, many of the civil servants in the army or the

⁹⁴⁶ *Národní politika*, 28 October 1918 (afternoon edition), p. 3.

⁹⁴⁷ Klimek, *Říjen 1918*, p. 198.

⁹⁴⁸ Lein, 'Der "Umsturz" in Prag im Oktober 1918'.

⁹⁴⁹ Jan Galandauer, 'Muži 28. října a "spor o zásluhu" na vzniku Československa', in *Muži října 1918: osudy aktérů vzniku Republiky československé*, ed. by Rudolf Kučera (Praha: Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR, 2011), pp. 193-203.

⁹⁵⁰ Ladislav Rašín, *Paměti dra Aloise Rašína* (Praha: Nakl. vlastním, 1929), p. 216 quoted in Gary B. Cohen, 'Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914,' *Central European History* 40, 2 (2007), p. 278.

police kept their jobs. Only the top of the hierarchy was removed as well as those who were too obviously linked with the previous regime (like the Chief of the Prague police headquarters for example). Ivan Šedivý's work on the personnel of the Interior ministry showed the continuity between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Czechoslovakia by demonstrating that the officials holding key functions remained in their position.⁹⁵¹ Samuel Ronsin's study of the police comes to the same conclusion: despite pressures to incorporate returning legionnaires into the police force, the police officers remained, for the majority, the ones who had served under the monarchy.⁹⁵² Superficial removal of top officials and efforts to accommodate legionnaires did not thoroughly change the system of leadership in the police. As for local state administrations in Bohemia, 90% of the personnel were preserved from cleansing.⁹⁵³ With growing unemployment and returning soldiers claiming a position in society, the retention of so-called 'Austrians' (former Habsburg civil servants) in their jobs was widely resented in the population. The few Czech-speakers who, having worked in the ministries in Vienna, came back to Prague after the war to work for the newly founded state were often deemed too 'Viennese' and accused of pro-Austrian orientation by other Czech civil servants.⁹⁵⁴ Legionnaires, who had fought for the newly won independence, were supposed to receive preferential treatment to enter the administration through the Legionnaires' Law voted in July 1919 (allocating to them 50% of available positions).⁹⁵⁵ However, the existing bureaucracy was reluctant to integrate them into its system. This opposition between those who served Austria-Hungary and the legionnaires was very prominent

⁹⁵¹ Ivan Šedivý, 'K otázce kontinuity nositelů státní moci: jmenování vedoucích úředníků v kompetenci ministerstva vnitra v letech 1918-1921', in *Moc, vliv a autorita v procesu vzniku a utváření meziválečné ČSR (1918-1921)*, ed. by Jan Hájek, Dagmar Hájková et al. (Praha: Masarykův ústav, 2008), pp. 184-197.

⁹⁵² Samuel Ronsin, 'Police, Republic and Nation: The Czechoslovak State Police and the Building of a Multinational Democracy, 1918-1925', in *Policing Interwar Europe: Continuity and Crisis, 1918-40*, ed. by Gerald Blaney (New York: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 136-158; see also Samuel Ronsin, 'Police, nation(s) et République: histoire sociale et politique de la police d'État tchécoslovaque sous la Première République (1918-1938)' (unpublished Phd thesis, Paris: EHESS, 2004).

⁹⁵³ Aleš Vyskočil, *C.k. úředník ve zlatém věku jistoty* (Praha: Historický ústav, 2009), p. 296.

⁹⁵⁴ See Zdeněk Kárník, *České země v éře první republiky (1918-1938)* (Praha: Libri, 2000), I: *Vznik, budování a zlatá léta republiky (1918-1929)*, p. 156.

⁹⁵⁵ Ivan Šedivý, 'Legionářská Republika?: k systému legionářského zákonodárství a sociální péče v meziválečné ČSR', *Historie a vojenství*, 1 (2002), 158-84.

in the army. The former Habsburg officers stressed their experience and professionalism while the legionnaires considered themselves as the true defenders of the new state.⁹⁵⁶

The continuity of personnel, necessary for the state to function properly, appeared to many as a symptom of the unchanged conditions in the new republic. This certainly had an impact on the policy of the new state in the immediate post-war period. Certain liberties, such as the freedom of assembly for example, were still limited despite the democratic ambitions of Czechoslovakia.⁹⁵⁷ Instead of a violent cleansing in 1918, most state institutions opted for a progressive transformation and by the middle of the 1920s, the situation had somewhat evolved.⁹⁵⁸

B - Street names, flags and festivals: the continuation of Austrian political culture after the war

As we saw in chapter 2, renaming streets was a powerful tool to express patriotism in the public space. The new Czechoslovak state made a very similar use of this tool, progressively removing traces of the old regime in the streets of Prague. Already on the day of the upheaval, in Holešovice/Holleschowitz, the sign of a street formerly known as Ruská (Russian), which had to change names during the war, was reinstated in its former place.⁹⁵⁹ As early as November 13th, a commission was created by the council to rename streets and public places.⁹⁶⁰ Avenues and squares took new names to honour the new heroes of Czechoslovakia such as the Czechoslovak legions who had fought for the country's independence.⁹⁶¹ The main train station became the Wilson station while the Franz Joseph square took the celebratory name of Republic square and not far from it, an avenue was renamed Revolution Avenue. More neutral names were also

⁹⁵⁶ See Martin Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität. Die tschechoslowakische Armee und ihre Nationalitätenpolitik, 1918-1938* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), pp. 80-112.

⁹⁵⁷ On Czech interwar democracy see Peter Bugge, 'Czech Democracy 1918-1938: Paragon or Parody?', *Bohemia*, 47 (2006/07), 3-28.

⁹⁵⁸ Aleš Vyskočil, *C.k. úředník ve zlatém věku jistoty*, pp. 321-323.

⁹⁵⁹ *Národní listy*, 29 October 1918, p. 1.

⁹⁶⁰ *Národní listy*, 13 November 1918, p.3.

⁹⁶¹ Václav Ledvinka, 'Die Namen von Prager öffentlichen Räumen als Spiegelung des Wandels der politischen Realität im 20. Jahrhundert', in *Die Besetzung des öffentlichen Raumes: politische Plätze, Denkmäler und Straßennamen im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. by Rudolf Jaworski, Peter Stachel (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2007), p. 338.

changed: The state train station became the Masaryk station and the North-West train station took the name of French Slavacist Ernest Denis. Two monuments linked to the monarchy were removed in 1919. The statue of Marshall Radetzky, which had been the site of patriotic demonstrations in August 1914, was first veiled and later transported.⁹⁶² The equestrian statue of Emperor Francis I on the Vltava was taken away in June 1919.⁹⁶³ The new names had to either refer to a national figure or have a more Slavic connotation (rather than German). Decisions in Prague could be paralleled with the case of Bratislava, studied by Peter Bugge. In a city where the majority of the population were Hungarian-speaking and German-speaking, a new name had to be found to emphasize the newly Slav character of the place. Bratislava was not the Slovak name of the city before the war but this is how it was officially renamed in March 1919. The introduction of this name ‘symbolically “Czechoslovakized” the city’.⁹⁶⁴ Renaming was not the only available strategy. The Slavic linden tree planted on Wenceslas Square had become a rallying point during the street demonstrations on October 28th to celebrate Czechoslovak freedom. Another ‘linden tree of freedom’ was planted in the courtyard of the army barracks at Pohořelec in June 1919. The festivities organised on this occasion by an army regiment included a procession, a reception and dancing. National costumes were welcome.⁹⁶⁵

The battle over the control of symbolic space is exemplified by the battles around the Old Town Square (one of the main squares in Prague) studied by Cynthia Paces. In 1915 a monument to Jan Hus, a 15th century religious reformer and Czech national hero, had been unveiled on the Old Town Square. Immediately after the upheaval, following the celebration of the Battle of White Mountain on 7 November 1918, Czech nationalists destroyed the Marian column, a baroque monument which they associated with the defeat of the Czech nobles to the Habsburgs in 1620. In their justification of this act, they proclaimed that this religious monument had been a symbol of the former regime and that they had ‘purified this public space for a Czech nationalist

⁹⁶² The monument was not, however, destroyed and is visible today in the Lapidarium of the Národní Muzeum.

⁹⁶³ *Národní politika*, 3 June 1919, p. 3.

⁹⁶⁴ Peter Bugge, ‘The naming of a Slovak city: the Czechoslovak renaming of Pressburg/Pozsony/Presporok in 1918-19’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 35 (2004), p. 8.

⁹⁶⁵ Invitation sent to the municipality, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 889, sig. 80/2, no 1461(?), 31 May 1919.

tradition'.⁹⁶⁶ This process of purification was not immediate and necessarily took some time, however. Some barracks in Prague only relinquished their dynastic appellations in 1920.⁹⁶⁷

Even in its most republican aspects, the new system could be seen as maintaining some similarities with the old regime. In many ways, the figure of the new president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk came to replace the image of the old emperor. Following the Habsburg custom, his birthday was celebrated as a national holiday.⁹⁶⁸ A circular stipulated that all official buildings in Prague should be decorated with flags for the occasion and that offices would be closed on that day.⁹⁶⁹ The return of Masaryk to his home country in December 1918 triggered a vast celebration.

Insults against the president were taken by the police as seriously as lese-majesty crimes in the former Empire. A woman was for example arrested for 'impertinent statement on the president'⁹⁷⁰ as a deputation of women approached Masaryk in August 1919. In another case, a journalist was denounced by a bank clerk for having insulted the president in a bar at 4AM during a lively discussion on political issues. He was then taken away to the police.⁹⁷¹ These were minor offenses and the perpetrators were soon released but they show how the new ruler could be viewed by the authorities and – to some extent – by the population through the lens of the old monarchy's political culture.

C - New battles: the continuation of the war effort for the border disputes

This institutional continuity was also necessary given the new battles that Czechoslovakia had to fight for its borders.⁹⁷² The German nationalist movements were not so ready to be

⁹⁶⁶ Cynthia Paces, *Prague panoramas: national memory and sacred space in the twentieth century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), p. 87.

⁹⁶⁷ From the Ministry of National Defence, NA, MV I SR, ka 279, sig. 12/427/14, no 33326, 2 June 1920.

⁹⁶⁸ Dagmar Hajková, "Dokud člověk jí klobásy, tak neumře." Oslavy narozenin T. G. Masaryka', in *Historik nad šachovnicí dějin. K pětasedmdesátinám Jana Galandauera*, ed. by Dagmar Hájková, Velek Luboš et al. (Praha: Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2011), pp. 218–235.

⁹⁶⁹ Memorandum, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2931, sig. F 13/11, 4 March 1920.

⁹⁷⁰ *Souhrnná týdenní hlášení presidia zemské správy politické v Praze o situaci v Čechách 1919-1920*, ed. by Alois Kocman (Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1959), p. 87.

⁹⁷¹ Police report on the events of the day, NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, no 297, 21 March 1920.

⁹⁷² Martin Zückert, 'National Concepts of Freedom and Government Pacification Policies: The Case of Czechoslovakia in the Transitional Period after 1918', *Contemporary European History* 17, 03 (2008), pp. 325-344 (p. 338).

incorporated into a new national Czech state and were pushing for their own independence while the Hungarians were trying to keep their hold on Slovakia. The disagreement over the Teschen question (around the duchy of Těšín/Cieszyn in Silesia) with the Poles added to the conflicts faced by the new power. The campaign in Slovakia necessitated the redrafting of war-weary men. With men still fighting and dying there, the war was far from over for Prague's inhabitants. The people who demonstrated in the streets of Prague in 1917 and 1918 had been asking for peace; and yet peace did not immediately follow the defeat of Austria-Hungary as new battles were waged to secure the borders of the new state. The continuation of war implied a continuation of the war effort on the home front and of the war discourse by the political elites and the press. The charity programmes for the benefit of soldiers and their widows continued even though they were renamed as for the benefit of 'legionaries'. During the war, part of the revenues from plays and entertainment had been transferred to charity organizations connected with the war effort.⁹⁷³ As early as November 3rd, the National Theatre advertised its performances as 'for the benefit of the bereaved families of legionaries'⁹⁷⁴, extending the wartime functions of entertainment. Similarly, the religious service celebrated in St Vitus Cathedral for the deceased soldiers simply became a memorial mass for deceased Czech legionaries.⁹⁷⁵ Moreover, the new Czechoslovak state also carried on the appeal for new war loans to save the finances of the new state thus continuing the Austrian policy in this realm.⁹⁷⁶

The Teschen conflict also mobilised the population in Prague. The temporary partition of the region between Poland and Czechoslovakia in November 1918 had been challenged by the Czech occupation in January 1919, following the announcement that Poles from Teschen would vote in Polish legislative elections. Short skirmishes between Czechoslovak and Polish troops followed. Rallies were organised in the city to protest against the cession of the region to Poland. The Mayor of Prague Karel Baxa even wrote a letter to the Peace conference to convey 'the

⁹⁷³ For a description of this practice in Vienna see Maureen Healy, 'Exhibiting a War in Progress: Entertainment and Propaganda in Vienna, 1914-1918', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 31(2000), pp. 57-85 (pp. 70-72).

⁹⁷⁴ *Věstník obecní král. hláv. města Prahy*, XXI, 14 November 1918, p. 307.

⁹⁷⁵ See an invitation by the Archbishop's consistory with the crossed out mention of 'warriors fallen in the present war' and replacement by 'Czech legionary soldiers': NA, Archiv pražského arcibiskupství III, ka 1298, no 15733, 16 November 1918.

⁹⁷⁶ *Národní listy*, 11 September 1919, p. 1.

sentiments of the whole population of Prague' on the subject and plead for Teschen to be part of Czechoslovakia.⁹⁷⁷

Volunteers going to fight in Slovakia were departing from the city's main train stations and accompanied by crowds, as troops had been during the war. In June 1919, for example, a group of 150 Sokols volunteering to go to Slovakia were cheered by an 'enormous groups of people' on their way to the Masaryk station.⁹⁷⁸ Alarming false rumours apparently circulated on the situation in the East.⁹⁷⁹ Refugees from Slovakia were arriving in Prague at the time. They were met by the association *České srdce* at the train stations and were eligible to receive state support, as refugees from Galicia had been during the war.⁹⁸⁰ The Czechoslovak government reused the former internment camp of Choceň/Chotzen to house them. Although their number remained probably very limited, it is nonetheless interesting to see how the authorities pursued their wartime welfare policy.

Although the situation in Czechoslovakia seems relatively stable compared with the rest of the region, the first two years of 'peace' were still characterised by a warlike atmosphere: the period was marked by the fears of coups by monarchists or German agents and by support for the fight at the borders. The level of violence is not comparable to the civil wars of neighboring countries but the demobilization was there also a gradual process.⁹⁸¹

D - Denunciations of the continuity of the 'Austrian' system

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the frustrations expressed by the population in Prague concerned the lack of change more than the changes. The new rallying cry of the Czechs was the concept of de-austrianization (*odrakouštění*) while German-speaking newspapers also criticised Czechoslovakia for being too much like old Austria. For example, censorship of the

⁹⁷⁷ NAL, FO 608/6, 1 September 1919.

⁹⁷⁸ Deposition from a policeman, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3039, sig. M 34/67, 6 June 1919.

⁹⁷⁹ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3039, sig. M 34/67, no 6007, 15 June 1919.

⁹⁸⁰ NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3025, sig. M 34/1/III.

⁹⁸¹ Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe After the Great War* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

private post continued in the post-war period and was denounced by the *Prager Tagblatt*.⁹⁸² As a memoirist recalls, ‘though nobody could say what exactly it was supposed to mean, “we must de-austrianize ourselves” became a favourite applause-winning formula and an unquestioned appurtenance of platform patriotism’.⁹⁸³ Many publications reflect the debate about this idea in the Czech public.⁹⁸⁴ What was to be understood behind this word, however, is not always as clear. It was to encompass all domains of life, political, cultural, and economic.⁹⁸⁵ This de-austrianization was to be undertaken both on a political level, as a democratization of institutions and habits, and on a nationalist level, as an affirmation of the Czech(oslovak) character of the new state. This injunction led to a number of denunciations of individuals for ‘complicity with Austria’ during the war.

The return of the legionaries could act as an indicator of the flaws of the society they were coming back to as celebrated heroes. For example, the satirical newspaper *Humoristické listy* published a cartoon following a legionary on a walk around Prague and ‘reading’ his thoughts: in front of the station he wondered at the line of unemployed men and untended dirty streets; he was shocked to see that the bridge toll was not abolished; looking at prices in a butcher shop, he cursed the owner. He was also surprised to see the monument to Marshall Radetzky still standing (although veiled).⁹⁸⁶ In this case, the legionary stands for an idealized version of the nation looking on the current conditions and disapproving of the remnants of the old order.

The impression of continuity between the two regimes was strong and shaped many responses to the current events. The adjective ‘Austrian’ referred to any behaviour that was seen as restraining individual freedom or tolerating profiteering. In an incident, reminiscent of *Leutnant Gustl*, a young man who was blocking the exit from the room in a theatre resisted when

⁹⁸² Censored letters from the period of the new Republic in NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3077, sig. P 56/1; on the *Prager Tagblatt* (11 June 1920), no 328, 24 June 1920.

⁹⁸³ Zikmund Konečný, *Changing fortunes: a Central European recalls: the memoirs of Zikmund Konečný* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 27.

⁹⁸⁴ Some examples of brochures: Alexandr Batěk, *Odrakouštit a převychovat!* (Praha-Břevnov, 1919); Albert Vojtěch Frič, *Odrakoušíte svoje duše!* (Praha, 1919); František Joklík, *Jak se odrakouštujeme* (Praha, 1920) quoted in Jiří Kořalka, *Češi v habsburské říši a v Evropě 1815-1914* (Praha: Argo, 1996), p. 27.

⁹⁸⁵ Emil Brix, ‘Die “Entösterreichung” Böhmens: Prozesse der Entfremdung von Tschechen, Deutschböhmen und Österreichern’, *Österreichische Osthefte*, 34, 1 (1992), pp. 5-12.

⁹⁸⁶ *Humoristické listy*, 7 February 1919, p. 54.

an inspection officer asked him to 'move on' putting a hand on his shoulder. The young man cried: 'Don't push me!' and after having been controlled by a policeman came back to the officer and told him in front of the public: 'Do you know how you behaved? Like an Austrian corporal.' This remark caused a stir among the people present who split into two camps, one for and one against, debating the incident.⁹⁸⁷ In many cases any attempt at authority was resented and seen as part of the old value system, which didn't make the work of the police easy. In another example, two drunken soldiers who had been breaking windows and threatening clients in a pub insulted the policeman who was trying to stop them calling him an 'Austrian murderer'.⁹⁸⁸ 'Austrian' thus became a popular insult, symbolizing both the desire for distance from the old regime and its persistence in the new order. Ferdinand Peroutka pointed to the increasing misuse of the concept of 'Austrianity' (*rakušáctví*) as an insult in public life, citing the example of a deputy who accused Alois Rašín (one of men of the 28th of October) of 'Austrianity' in Parliament.⁹⁸⁹

Agents of the state were often portrayed as foreign elements who tried to pass as loyal Czechoslovak citizens. As so many remained in service from one regime to the other, this was probably not far from the truth. Several plays showcase characters speaking a bad Czech full of German words and expressions that embody the new state institutions. This use of half German sentences is interesting as it underlines the duplicity of these characters. They have to give the appearance of good Czechoslovak patriots but under the veneer are revealed as Austrians. In *Drops of poison* the Viennese wife of a civil servant in a ministry complains half in German about the Czech patriotic parades that she has to attend. In another scene, a young lieutenant explains to another officer that he stupidly reported to his superior in German instead of Czech one day, according to the old custom. These satirized characters are balanced by the presence of a legionary in the background who closes the play by the leitmotiv: 'And that's what we fought for in faraway places?'⁹⁹⁰ The rightful legionary standing for the nation can only watch by the parody of Czechoslovakia that has been created. In a more humorous tone, Eduard Bass's play about a censorship officer presents the same type of character. The officer speaking Czech with a strong

⁹⁸⁷ Police report on the events of the day, NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, 1920, no 106, 15 April 1920.

⁹⁸⁸ Police report on the events of the day, NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, 1919, no 159, 8 June 1919.

⁹⁸⁹ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budování státu* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1991), II, p. 952.

⁹⁹⁰ Jiří Červený, Rudolf Jílovský, *Kapky jedu* (Praha: Josef Springer, 1919), p. 12.

German accent comes to the cinema Konvikt to see a film entitled 'Wilson against Wilhelm' and decides, out of respect for the German Emperor, to cut the scenes which are too critical of him.⁹⁹¹ This satirical piece refers to an actual event in May 1919 when scenes from this American propaganda film denouncing Wilhelm II's crimes in the war were deleted by an overzealous censorship officer.⁹⁹² During the projection of the film, the audience booed, shouting: 'Shame on the censorship! We want Czech censorship!' Afterwards, a crowd of 120 people went to the nearby police headquarters to complain about the ill-advised cuts in the film.⁹⁹³ This extreme example of an apparatus that continues to function as previously in changed circumstances demonstrates the chasm between state and society that had developed during the last years of the conflict and was not immediately resolved by the new Republic.

This impression of continuity with the old Austrian system and of disappointment with the potential changes did not fully disappear with the improvement of the economic conditions in the 1920s. The Communist leader Zápotocký for example alludes to it again in a text from 1946 where he addresses 'those who [...] know how the promised times looked when everything went according to the old legal and police order, which did not change from the old Austrian monarchy and which they took with her bureaucracy'.⁹⁹⁴ The big hopes for change generated by the First World War, disappointed by the return of the old system, would find a repercussion in the following decades.

II- The meaning of the revolution

Though the 1918 revolution was characterized by much institutional continuity and by a continuation of the war conditions (especially food shortages), the prevalence of the term revolution at the time invites us to examine the 'revolutionary' aspect of the period. Once again, the role of the war itself in creating this revolutionary atmosphere should be stressed. As Prague

⁹⁹¹ Eduard Bass, *Letáky, satiry, verse, písničky*, ed. by Adolf Branald and Jarmila Víšková (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1958), pp. 221-225.

⁹⁹² *Národní listy*, 13 May 1919, p. 5.

⁹⁹³ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, 1919, no 133, Police report on the events of the day, 13 May 1919.

⁹⁹⁴ Antonín Zápotocký, *Naše národní revoluce v roce 1918 a 1945* (Praha : Ústřední rada oborů, 1946), p. 5.

writer Johannes Urzidil later stated: ‘the four years of war shattered all the fundamentals of the old life.’⁹⁹⁵ This profound transformation of the society also generated aspirations that could not necessarily be resolved through the building of the new state.

A - Social uncertainty: the post-war atmosphere in the city

One of the most striking features of the postwar order was the upheaval it had brought to the city’s social structure. Fortunes were made overnight and the petite-bourgeoisie had been impoverished. The war had subverted many of the social hierarchies which the Habsburg Empire had been resting on in the ‘golden age of certainty (*Sicherheit*)’.⁹⁹⁶ Inflation had devalued employees’ salaries and many petit bourgeois households found themselves in a very difficult position. As the librarian of the German university remembers, ‘an even bigger number of families have witnessed the breakdown of their material circumstances. The responsibility for this lies with the unscrupulous profiteers who provoked the still prevailing inflation by abusing the unfavorable circumstances during and after the war. Those with set salaries in particular [...] became the victims of these hyenas.’⁹⁹⁷ Civil servants who had been one of the pillars of the Empire were particularly hit by the inflation. During a rally of state employees in October 1919, a speaker outlined their situation, insisting on the exterior signs of bourgeois behaviour that were not accessible to them anymore: they had disappeared from theatres and concert halls and pensioners had to find new jobs to support themselves. ‘The esteemed court councilor applies for a position as musician in a cinema! We cannot clothe ourselves, our families do not have anything to wear and around us, we see nouveaux riches and profiteers spend lavishly’, lamented the speaker.⁹⁹⁸

This loss of status of the bourgeoisie was by no means unique to Czechoslovakia and characterized much of Central Europe at the time. Martin Geyer in his study of post-war Munich describes the resentment against profiteers who embodied the inversion of all pre-war values. In caricatures, their taste for fast cars and modern art was derided as ignorant and their pursuit of

⁹⁹⁵ Johannes Urzidil, *Väterliches aus Prag, Handwerkliches aus New York* (Zürich: Artemis, 1969), p. 27.

⁹⁹⁶ Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1970), p. 15.

⁹⁹⁷ Richard Kukula, *Erinnerungen eines Bibliothekars* (Weimar: Verlag Straubing & Müller, 1925), p. 226.

⁹⁹⁸ *Národní listy*, 3 November 1919, p. 4.

wealth criticized in moral terms.⁹⁹⁹ Although the interwar period, and the stabilization that went with it, was marked by the reinforcement of the role of traditional elites,¹⁰⁰⁰ the impact of the years of social flux should not be underestimated. The set social divisions were disrupted as the nouveaux riches took the outward signs of richness of the old bourgeoisie. As Marie Schäferová deplored: ‘How many beautiful things moved from old bourgeois homes to the newly furnished apartments of these nouveaux riches who soon did not know what to do with their money as everyone gave everything they had for food.’¹⁰⁰¹ Mocking the quest for respectability of the profiteers allowed maintaining some of the former barriers of society. Weekly newspaper *Lucerna* remarked on the growing number of advertisements for courses on how to behave, keep a home and get the required education to be presentable.¹⁰⁰²

The general atmosphere in Prague immediately after the war was a reflection of this feeling of uncertainty which had come to replace the stability of the pre-war order. The nightlife and café culture mirrored this new reality. For example, the owner of the café Arco near the Masaryk train station posted on the walls of his café a set of twenty three rules for the ‘wartime and post-war nouveaux riches (*zbohatlíky*)’ who did not know how to behave properly in his establishment.¹⁰⁰³ The patrons were thus not supposed to tear off pages from newspapers or cut their nails in public. Wartime fortunes were followed by currency speculators who took advantage of the rapidly evolving exchange rates between the new currencies. The division of the Austro-Hungarian crown into different national currencies (when every successor state stamped the banknotes circulating on its territory) generated a situation rife for traffic and speculation.¹⁰⁰⁴ The British diplomat Bruce Lockhart described the consequences of these quick fortunes made as the Habsburg Empire disappeared on the nightlife in the city. ‘For every new bank there was a

⁹⁹⁹ Martin H. Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt. Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), p. 243.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

¹⁰⁰¹ AHMP, Marie Schäferová, ka 1, inv. č. 5, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰² *Lucerna*, 24 January 1918, p. 1. See also the satire: Josef Skružný, *Bon ton pro válečné zbohatlíky* (Praha: Jos. Vilímek, [1924]).

¹⁰⁰³ See AHMP, Jiří Vlasák, *Inventář Kavárna Arco*, no 529, (Praha: AHMP, 2011), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰⁴ On this aspect see: Stephen G. Gross and S. Chase Gummer, ‘Ghosts of the Habsburg Empire: Collapsing Currency Union and Lessons for the Eurozone’, *East European Politics and Societies*, 28 (2014), 252-265.

new Nachtlokal with a name as exotic as the mood of the moment. [...] Prague, however, with its sounder currency, showed the greatest transformation. When I arrived at the end of 1919, there was hardly a Nachtlokal in the place. Within a year and a half they were to be numbered by the score.¹⁰⁰⁵ The clientele of these establishments, according to Lockhart, was mixed between the desperate ‘new poor’ and the ‘new rich’, spending rapidly acquired wealth. ‘The Prague of those early post-war years never slept’¹⁰⁰⁶, remarked Lockhart himself a patron of these establishments. The ‘carnival of the post-war years’ should not detract, however, from the still very present misery.

The impression of abundance given by the life of nightclubs and restaurants was an illusion. American journalist Kenneth Roberts was more aware than other visitors of the deceptive external appearance of cities: ‘All the capitals of Central Europe, in spite of their misery, look normal. Berlin, Warsaw, Vienna, Prague, Budapest – all of them are big, roaring, magnificent cities with crowded streets and honking taxicabs and shops and cabarets and theaters.’¹⁰⁰⁷ Scratching beyond the surface, however, he soon realized the true reality of the conditions: people had to spend a disproportionate amount of their income on food or could not afford to wear underclothes anymore. The lavish spending of a minority in the context of continued penury and misery generated the resentment and disappointment of the post-war years.

B - A discourse of rupture with the past

Continuities may have dominated many aspects of life in the immediate aftermath of the war, but this was in stark contrast with a strong discourse of rupture and revolution which developed in these years. The revolution was either conceived as achieved on the 28th of October or yet to come.

The rhetoric of the new state installed the Republic in a new era. For many actors who had played a role in the establishment of the new order, a revolution had indeed happened. The title of Masaryk’s memoirs on the First World War indicates his own conception of 1918: according to

¹⁰⁰⁵ Bruce Lockhart, *Retreat from Glory [Reminiscences]* (London: Putnam, 1934), p. 116.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Kenneth Lewis Roberts, *Europe’s Morning After* (Harper & Bros.: New York & London, [1921]), p. 69.

him, a 'new Europe' had emerged from a 'world revolution'.¹⁰⁰⁸ In the interwar period a series of conferences were organized around the events of 1918 with the title: *Naše revoluce* (Our revolution).¹⁰⁰⁹ Various authors described their participation in the movement that brought about the new state.

An exhibition on the national resistance abroad helped establish the new values of the revolution in the population. Presented in Prague at the Municipal House from October to December 1919, the exhibition focused on the action of the legionaries in Russia, France and Italy (and of the Czechs in America). The 'life of the revolution', according to the catalogue, consisted in a dual process of destruction of old ways and thoughts and creation of new ones. The transformation happening was in its infancy but the legionary stood as a model, a hero and a martyr.¹⁰¹⁰ Paintings and statues by legionary artists depicting their odyssey in Siberia were on display during the exhibition. Newspaper *Národní listy* praised these artistic works and remarked that 'in this respect our revolution is unique'.¹⁰¹¹ This official presentation of the revolution interpreted it as an event both accomplished and to be perfected through an internal transformation.

This discourse of change and new beginnings around the national goals could alienate part of the population in Prague. German-speaking veteran Hans Kohn returned from his POW camp in Russia feeling estranged from his hometown: 'Prague, now a capital city, had lost much of its captivating quiet charm. The new Czechoslovak government was building on faulty foundations: it identified the new state with a single ethnic, linguistic group at the expense of the other groups living in what was now the new Czech state.'¹⁰¹² Although he had imagined before the war that he would spend his own life in Prague, he decided to leave. His personal case does not represent the experience of all the German-speaking returning soldiers but it illustrates how the political changes could be visible in the city itself. Many of the members of the local German gymnastics

¹⁰⁰⁸ See Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *Světová revoluce: za války a ve válce* (Praha: Čin a Orbis, 1925) and also Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *Nová Evropa* (Praha: Nakl. G. Dubského, 1920).

¹⁰⁰⁹ See *Naše revoluce* (Praha: Nákladem Čsl. obce legionářské, 1923-1937), 14 vol.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Náš odboj. Turné vystavy 'Památníku odboje'*, (Praha: odd. MNO, 1920), p. 8.

¹⁰¹¹ *Národní listy*, 1 November 1919, p. 3.

¹⁰¹² Hans Kohn, *Living in a world revolution: my encounters with history* (New York: Trident Press, 1964), p. 119.

association ‘Tafelrunde’ returning from the field also did not stay in Prague.¹⁰¹³ Mark Cornwall has described the problematic homecoming of German nationalist veterans who felt ‘shipwrecked’ in the aftermath of the war.¹⁰¹⁴ For those heading to the new capital city, it is difficult to disentangle emotions that came from what the veterans had experienced during the war (common to other returns)¹⁰¹⁵ and the impact that the changed conditions in Prague had. Franz Carl Weiskopf describes this uncanny atmosphere in the city in the summer months of 1918 as he felt lost returning to his hometown: ‘[The city] appeared foreign to me, almost hostile. But I saw now: it was not just me; not only I had changed; the city was also different than before. Something must have happened to it since I had seen it. It was more agitated, more excited; but this agitation did not conceal fear but a hidden threat.’¹⁰¹⁶ His interpretation insists on the city’s transformation rather than his own but the two elements seem here impossible to divorce. These testimonies do not reflect the experience of all German-speaking veterans but they evoke how, on an individual level, the political upheaval meant that the Prague of 1914 was not the Prague of 1918.

The problematic integration of the German-speaking population of the Bohemian Lands into a new state created on national principles has been studied elsewhere. For instance, an article in the newspaper *Bohemia* rejected the ‘Czech revolution’.¹⁰¹⁷ As Karl Bahm has shown, by the end of the winter 1919 many of the Bohemian Germans had lost the will to fight for their own state.¹⁰¹⁸ Some of the German-speaking population in Prague was keen to show its loyalty to the new regime. In December 1918, as Masaryk and Kramář officially visited the German Estate theatre, they were acclaimed with strong applause. The consul from Germany who was present

¹⁰¹³ Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Sudetendeutsches Archiv, Heimatberichte, ‘Gedenkschrift 75 Jahre deutscher Männerturmverein Prag; 90 Jahre deutsche Turnverbindung “Tafelrunde” (Harald Ohlmes)’, 1963, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰¹⁴ Mark Cornwall, *The Devil’s Wall: The Nationalist Youth Mission of Heinz Rutha* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 4.

¹⁰¹⁵ See: *Retour à l’intime: au sortir de la guerre* ed. by Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty (Paris: Tallandier, 2009).

¹⁰¹⁶ F.C. Weiskopf, *Das Slawenlied* in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Grete Weiskopf and others, 8 vols. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1960), III, p. 52.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Deutsche Zeitung Bohemia*, 28 December 1919, p. 2.

¹⁰¹⁸ Karl F. Bahm, ‘The Inconveniences of nationality: German Bohemians, the disintegration of the Habsburg monarchy, and the attempt to create a ‘Sudeten German’ identity’, *Nationalities Papers*, 27 (1999), pp. 375-405.

noted that some German Bohemians who had a few years earlier cheered Kramář's death sentence by the Austrian military courts were now bowing to him, addressing him in Czech.¹⁰¹⁹ The break with the old regime was perceived as transformative enough by some Prague Germans to induce them to leave the city¹⁰²⁰ while others accommodated rapidly to the new circumstances.

C - A revolutionary spirit?

The term revolution and revolutionary was not reserved to the regime change and the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic. The revolution could also refer to a future more radical upheaval. For example, during a 'revolutionary meeting' in April 1920, several legionaries and regular soldiers assembled to discuss the necessity of a revolution at home.¹⁰²¹ This meeting was led by a legionary coming back from Russia who called for a similar type of revolution. However, Bolshevism would be a simplifying category to describe revolutionary aspirations at the time. Conditions in Soviet Russia were not necessarily well-known and the meaning of 'Bolshevik' or 'Bolshevism' could vary. As Hans Lemberg has noted, the term was 'loosely used' at the time as the expression 'Bolshevism of clerical coloration' would indicate.¹⁰²² Many rumours about the presence of Bolsheviks in the city circulated shortly after the war. Denunciations of 'Bolshevik' individuals can be found in the police files. A young woman reported a discussion on a train with a returning POW who had declared that everything would be better when 'Bolshevism begins'. A Jewish veteran was accused of suspicious behaviour and potential Bolshevism by his neighbours while a Russian or Polish Jewish Bolshevik agitator had been spotted in a pastry shop.¹⁰²³ Anti-Semitism often surfaced in these suspicions. As Elisa Ablonczy has shown in other Central European cases, the idea of a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy

¹⁰¹⁹ *Deutsche Gesandtschaftsberichte aus Prag*, pp. 129-130.

¹⁰²⁰ See for example a letter in German by a civil servant to ask to be removed to Vienna: NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3077, sig. P 56/1, 10 April 1919.

¹⁰²¹ NA, PMV, ka 179, sig. N, no 103, 12 April 1920.

¹⁰²² Both quotes from Hans Lemberg, 'Die Tschechoslowakei im Jahr 1. Der Staatsaufbau, die Liquidierung der Revolution und die Alternativen 1919' in *Das Jahr 1919 in der Tschechoslowakei und in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. by Peter Heumos and Hans Lemberg (München: Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 225-248 (p. 235).

¹⁰²³ Deposition by Kamila Č., 28 November 1918; Surveillance report on Pavel W., 21 January 1919; Police report, 30 December 1918, in NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3074, sig. P 55/40.

provided a simplistic explanation for the revolutionary threat of these years.¹⁰²⁴ One well-meaning citizen even wrote to the police to inform them that he had seen a Russian-speaking man on Purkyňovo náměstí that looked like Lenin himself, a fact he claimed was confirmed by other witnesses.¹⁰²⁵ The overuse of the word Bolshevism and the strong anti-Bolshevik sentiment (and fears of upheaval in governing circles) should not lead to an overestimation of the Russian model's importance in Prague. As we have seen in Chapter 5, popular demonstrations in the immediate aftermath of the war expressed a wider range of demands and were not limited to an imitation of Bolshevik slogans. Verena Moritz and Hannes Leidinger showed that the Austro-Hungarian veterans who came back from Russia during that time were less influenced by Bolshevik propaganda than by social-revolutionary ideas from their own experiences.¹⁰²⁶

The interpretation of the Czechoslovak authorities of various social movements and unrest often linked them to a plot to stage a coup and take over the government. In this stabilization phase, the young Czechoslovak government was afraid of foreign agents and Bolsheviks. The movement of Hussite women that we examined in the previous chapter was for example accused of being part of an aristocratic plot to restore the monarchy. Aristocrats were interrogated as part of the investigation.¹⁰²⁷ Although monarchist restoration attempts were a real threat in East Central Europe after the war, the authorities in Prague seemed to overestimate their capacity to generate a popular movement.¹⁰²⁸

To characterize these years, it might be useful to describe the atmosphere as a vague revolutionary spirit which might have had different meanings for different people rather than as a clear-cut revolution. This form of unrest in Prague resembles the 'revolutionary spirit' identified by Tyler Stovall in Paris. In his study of that particular year, he showed how material issues

¹⁰²⁴ Eliza Ablovatski, 'The 1919 Central European revolutions and the Judeo-Bolshevik Myth', *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire*, 17 (2010), 473-489.

¹⁰²⁵ Letter in Czech, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3074, sig. P 55/40, no 3754, 7 April 1919.

¹⁰²⁶ Hannes Leidinger, Verena Moritz, *Gefangenschaft, Revolution, Heimkehr. Die Bedeutung der Kriegsgefangenenproblematik für die Geschichte des Kommunismus in Mittel- und Osteuropa 1917-1920* (Wien: Böhlau, 2003).

¹⁰²⁷ Deposition by Erwein Nostitz, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2919, sig. D 6/11, 8 September 1919.

¹⁰²⁸ See Timothy Snyder, *The Red Prince: The Secret Lives of a Habsburg Archduke* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), pp. 121-148.

became the centre of a contestation against the state among the working-class.¹⁰²⁹ Roberto Bianchi, looking at food riots in post-war Italy, also analysed how they combined a recycled discourse of Bolshevism with much more traditional forms of contention (like food riots). He argued for the reconsideration of 1919 as a pan-European revolutionary moment in the vein of 1848.¹⁰³⁰ In this light, instead of understanding the revolutionary moment of 1918-19 as a mere aftershock of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, we can see how the very local material issues and disappointed hopes for the wartime sacrifices led to a disaffection with the state that can be found (at various levels) across Europe. The eventual return to order in the 1920s should not obscure the importance of this moment.

The Czechoslovak declaration of independence and the subsequent creation of a Republic acted as a catalyst for expectations that peace would bring about a better world. It soon became clear, however, that economic problems persisted and that not much had changed in the Bohemian lands. The young Czechoslovak state, in order to function efficiently in those potentially unstable times, kept most of the civil servants from the previous regime. This necessary continuity was resented among the population and undermined the new state's legitimacy. The disappointment was also proportionate to the great hopes that war sacrifices would be rewarded. When studying the Great War, 1918 does not therefore appear as a good ending point. To understand the disruption created by the conflict, it is essential to look at this moment of transition. The disappointment with the new conditions in the first years after the war led to an attempt to reclaim the state for its citizens from an administration perceived as alien. The Czechoslovakia of the 1920s, hailed as a model of democracy in the region, appeared to have successfully overcome this post-war stabilization phase. More research would nevertheless be needed to determine how much of this discourse of disappointment re-emerged with the crisis of the 1930s, potentially constituting one of the structural weaknesses of the First Republic.

¹⁰²⁹ Tyler Edward Stovall, *Paris and the Spirit of 1919: Consumer Struggles, Transnationalism, and Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁰³⁰ Roberto Bianchi, 'Les mouvements contre la vie chère au lendemain de la Grande Guerre', in *Le XXe siècle des guerres*, ed. by Pietro Causarano and Valeria Galimi (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2004), pp. 237–245.

CONCLUSION

Prague was not destroyed during the First World War. Neither was it occupied. Yet, it came out of the conflict in many ways as a new city. This study has charted the presence of the war in a space where it was absent. The military, patriotic displays, wounded soldiers, refugees, queues and demonstrations all constituted traces of the conflict in Prague's visual landscape. The urban space itself was the object of our enquiry, rather than specific groups or institutions in the city. This approach has led us to focus on the citizens' daily encounters with the war and on the ways in which the city was lived in by its inhabitants during these years.

The experience of the First World War and its aftermath in Prague reveals many more similarities than was previously thought with major cities in established nation-states. In Prague also, the war implied a mobilization for the war effort on the home front that involved broad sections of society. If anything, the home front played an even more crucial role in the Austro-Hungarian context: the Empire lost the war on the streets of Prague, Budapest or Vienna as much as on the battlefronts where it was still fighting in 1918. The 'falling' process described by Maureen Healy for the imperial capital¹⁰³¹ was thus not unique but clearly observable in Prague as well. In order to obtain a fuller picture of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it would be necessary to see how this applies to other cities, the Hungarian half of the realm, or the countryside.

To show that a patriotic mobilization also occurred in one of the monarchy's cities, which possessed a relatively clear identification with Czech nationalism, invites us to rethink the modalities of support for the war. Empire and nation were not opposites incompatible with each other. As was the case in other belligerent countries¹⁰³², local communities focused more and more on their own suffering, displaying solidarity on the local level. In the context of Austria-Hungary, this meant that cultural mobilization could be framed in imperial, national, or even urban terms. 'Our' fighters could refer to Austro-Hungarian troops in general, Czech soldiers more particularly or men from the local regiment. An example such as this is a way to broaden

¹⁰³¹ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁰³² Pierre Purseigle, *Mobilisation, Sacrifice et Citoyenneté: Angleterre-France, 1900-1918* (Paris : Belles lettres, 2013).

the focus away from exclusively national ‘war cultures’ and provide a point of comparison for an examination of imperial ‘war cultures’. As most belligerents were Empires at the time, a finer understanding of these dynamics could shed new light on the war experience of most subjects and citizens during the First World War.¹⁰³³ For example, a recent study on Jerusalem during the war features many common themes on the complexity of wartime experience and post-war reconfigurations.¹⁰³⁴

There is no contradiction in stating that the Austro-Hungarian war experience produced its own self-mobilization and that the war saw a process of de-legitimization of the state. It is precisely because of the great sacrifices offered by Praguers during the conflict that the Empire lost the trust of its citizens. The same crowds who cheered departing troops celebrated national independence. Czech nationalists in the interwar have judged Czech-speakers loyal to Austria as opportunist or even collaborators. This supposes a diametrical opposition between the Habsburg Empire and the new Czechoslovakia. The reality was more complex. Ivan Šedivý pointed out how questionable it was to use the word ‘resistance’, with its reference to the context of occupation in the Second World War, to describe Czech political activity during the war.¹⁰³⁵ The participation of Praguers in the war effort generated high expectations from the state in return. As Austria-Hungary seemed increasingly unable to respond to this challenge, it does not seem so surprising that many turned their hopes towards a new state that could promise a better future.

It would be interesting to compare the war experience in Prague during the First World War with that of the 1866 war against Prussia. Prague was then shortly occupied by the Prussians and the Habsburg authorities entirely left the city. Unfortunately there has been virtually no scholarly study of this aspect of the 1866 campaign but the memory of this occupation might have still been present by the time of the outbreak of the First World War. Describing the presence of Prussian troops in Prague at the time, Fritz Mauthner recalls: ‘we observed for days how soldiers made themselves at home in the capital of the conquered province in beer taverns, sat in cafés chatting, eating and drinking together in bands with their infamous needle-fired gun

¹⁰³³ See *Empires at War: 1911-1923*, ed. by Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁰³⁴ Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

¹⁰³⁵ Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka, 1914-1918* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001), p. 58.

in the hand'.¹⁰³⁶ Although he describes the occupation in positive terms, an epidemic of cholera broke out at the time. How did Praguers interact with the invasion army and what was their relation to Austria then?

The concept that can help us make the link between these two polities, the Habsburg Empire and the Czechoslovak Republic, is patriotism. During the war and the immediate post-war, both states appealed to their citizens' patriotism. *Vlastenectví* in Czech could refer, depending on the context, to the patriotism for the Habsburg Empire or to the patriotism for the Czech nation. The abstract fatherland that this notion referred to could in both cases be embodied in the locality. Enthusiasm for the war is not the right category to analyse this phenomenon, it requires instead focusing on daily acts of contribution. At the end of this analysis, the notion of patriotism seems more useful than the idea of shifting loyalties. When collections for local soldiers became collections for legionaries after 1918, the shift in the hinterland was not that radical. The rupture, which was so clearly emphasized by the new power, hid more ambiguous continuities. The bearers of state power remained the same and the political culture that developed in Czechoslovakia was still very much embedded in reflexes from the Habsburg times.

The real shift observable during the war was in the reconfiguration of legitimacy. Old structures of authority were destabilized by the conflict. The first erosion to this system came from a wartime culture that subordinated the civilian world to military values. The lack of respect for civilian authority that was born during the war re-emerged after the end of the war. Returning soldiers, especially, felt entitled to have a say in the management of the state. The traditional social hierarchies that the Habsburg state had been resting on were disrupted as a result of the food penury, which impoverished the lower and middle classes and gave rise to a new class of wartime profiteers; a disruption which also contributed to the undermining of state legitimacy. As society was in flux, the sources of legitimacy could change. The evolution of the relation to the different churches is a blind spot of this research, which would deserve further examination.

Though the nation emerges as one of the beneficiaries of this shift, it was not the only one. National radicalization was one of the consequences of the hunger crisis because national interpretations of the penury became prevalent. The efforts of national associations to relieve the population from hunger, stepping in where the state had failed, gave a new legitimacy to national

¹⁰³⁶ Fritz Mauthner, *Erinnerungen. Prager Jungendjahre* (München: G. Müller, 1918), p. 75.

claims. *České srdce* (Czech Heart) played a key role in this respect during this transitional period and would deserve to be examined even further. Moving away from a Prague focus, one would probably be able to find out more about comparable German initiatives. Looking at the actors of this radicalization in the urban space, the generation of wartime adolescents appears as a major participant in the unrest of the last years of the war and the immediate post-war. The impact of generational experience is rarely explored with regard to nationalist battles and would be worth researching. How did their war experience shape their conception of intervention in the public sphere?

The national legitimacy established after the war did not go unquestioned. The state authorities, which officially represented the Czechoslovak state, were often discredited by their association with the old regime. The new democracy raised expectations for a broader engagement with politics. The central state did not always know how to respond to this popular participation which sometimes implied a challenge to its authority.

The revolution of 1918-1919 should be reassessed in the light of these findings. The shadow of the Bolshevik revolution has somewhat obscured the significance of this revolutionary moment in European history. To reduce it to an aftershock of the developments in Russia is to misunderstand the very local conditions from which these various movements across Europe stemmed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne's recent interpretation of violence in the post-war period has underlined the role played by the war experience and the 'mobilizing power of defeat'.¹⁰³⁷ Although they point to the partially constructed nature of the Bolshevik threat, they still maintain, by focusing on paramilitary groups, the dichotomy between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary. The low-level violence in Prague was more diversified and the meaning of revolution more plural. Popular demonstrations indicated a mix of subsistence issues, a will to engage more in state management, and national or anti-Semitic scapegoating. Legionaries, although on the victorious side, were as likely to engage in street violence as other veterans in the name of their own conception of the new state.

The revolutionary moment around 1918 was not only the result of the 'demobilization' from war to peace. It revealed transformed attitudes to the state and new aspirations. It also came

¹⁰³⁷ Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, 'Vectors of Violence: Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War, 1917–1923', *The Journal of Modern History*, 83 (2011), 489–512 (p. 491).

to terms with the profound changes in social structures that marked the period. The unrest in Prague is comparable to the upheavals in the cities of Eastern and Central Europe (though less violent than in many cases) but also to the protests in France, Great Britain or beyond Europe. More research on the land reforms and the rural transformations in the period would illuminate our understanding of this revolution. It would also require to be thought as a transnational moment of change¹⁰³⁸ and not just the sum of various national crises or revolutions.

Though it ultimately failed and the rest of the 1920s could be characterized by a return to order, its legacy in the interwar period and beyond would need to be examined in more detail. Did the disappointment and shattered hopes of the time resurface later on? At any rate, the rapid recovery from this phase of upheaval constitutes a more surprising fact. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the real test of the regime's legitimacy came with the partial mobilization against Charles' restoration attempt in October 1921. Its success marked the viability of the new state, as had been the case for its predecessor in 1914.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³⁸ *Transnational Moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989* ed. by Gerd-Rainer Horn and Padraic Kenney, (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

¹⁰³⁹ Martin Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität: die tschechoslowakische Armee und ihre Nationalitätenpolitik 1918-1938* (Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), p. 126. See also: Jan Fiala, 'Mobilizace československé armády na podzim 1921', *Historie a vojenství*, 42 (1993), 36–67.

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