TITLE: NATIONALISM BEYOND THE IMAGINED COMMUNITY: SOCIAL REALITY OR ELITE-CLASS TRICK?

AUTHOR: KARL F. BAHM,
The University of Southern Mississippi

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH

TITLE VIII PROGRAM

1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
PROJECT INFORMATION:

CONTRACTOR: The University of Southern Mississippi

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Karl F. Bahm

COUNCIL CONTRACT NUMBER: 809-01

DATE: March 15, 1995

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Individual researchers retain the copyright on work products derived from research funded by Council Contract. The Council and the U.S. Government have the right to duplicate written reports and other materials submitted under Council Contract and to distribute such copies within the Council and U.S. Government for their own use, and to draw upon such reports and materials for their own studies; but the Council and U.S. Government do not have the right to distribute, or make such reports and materials available, outside the Council or U.S. Government without the written consent of the authors, except as may be required under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 5 U.S.C. 552, or other applicable law.

1 The work leading to this report was supported in part by contract funds provided by the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, made available by the U. S. Department of State under Title VIII (the Soviet-Eastern European Research and Training Act of 1983, as amended). The analysis and interpretations contained in the report are those of the author(s).
"Nationalism Beyond the Imagined Community:
Social Reality or Elite-Class Trick?"

Karl F. Bahm

Executive Summary

This is basically an historical case-study of the interaction between class and national identities. In its larger context, it is a contribution to our understanding of what nationalism is: where it comes from, how it manages to appeal to and mobilize such diverse sectors of the population, and how it is that it seems able to appear and disappear in such baffling manner. Specifically, the project has looked at the case of the working-class population of late-nineteenth century Bohemia—both German- and Czech-speakers—and how they were related to or responded to the intense nationalism of that period in Bohemia. By focusing especially on those workers who were at least informally organized within the Social-Democratic movement and who therefore should have been, on the face of it, and apparently were for a time immune or unaffected by nationalism, but whose history nonetheless displays an eventual, depressing descent into nationalist bitterness and division, the project addresses directly the questions of nationalism's appeal to the lower classes, and its contingent, 'on-again-off-again' character, on which most theories of nationalism tend to be silent.

Since it was not so much the sentiment of nationalism itself, but rather its quotidian effect and potentiality which was of interest, the research proceeded not by looking merely at the working-class's explicit, programmatic attitudes to the nation and nationalism, though this was also a part of it. More important was a close study of the workers in their daily lives—at work, in the Social-Democratic organizations, at home, in society, and vis-à-vis the state—in their relation to 'the nation'. Proceeding from a conviction of the importance of the cultural component of nationalisms, it focused on the level of everyday, material culture and the ways that this was manifested in the workers' everyday social interactions. The goal was, finally, to understand how those things were related to the development of nationalism.

The study differentiates between a mere national identity, which is identified with the quotidian, material culture—the language, habits, beliefs, traditions, etc.—which are marked out and maintained by a group's everyday patterns of social interaction on the one hand, and nationalism, which is seen as the deliberate, politically motivated mobilization and manipulation of that national identity on the other hand. National identities exist as a fundamental part of all modern populations' social reality, their complement of identities (along
with gender, class, race, etc.). In this sense there is nothing necessarily aggressive, exclusive, or nationalistic about them. The German-Bohemian workers, for example, had a quite identifiable (and far from unconscious) German national identity. But that German national identity was in no conflict with their at least equally profound sense of class identity. Indeed, insofar as a German national identity was part and parcel of the Social-Democratic movement, but one which was wholly cultural, there was not even any conflict between this German national identity and a continuing Czech national identity on the part of Czech workers within the movement.

Nationalism, then, takes a group's national identity and mobilizes it as the supreme and exclusive identity, the focal point of all social and political activity. In this sense it is something artificial, a rigidification and politicization of national identity. Such nationalist mobilization can occur for a variety of reasons, and at the behest of any kind of self-interested elite group, as many theories of nationalism point out. But without an understanding of the deeper existence of a national identity, on which any nationalism must build, it is impossible to understand how any but that elite group can be mobilized by nationalism.

At the same time, however, the fact of a national identity shared by all sectors of a population obviously does not mean that it must be mobilized into a nationalism simply because a given elite group attempts to do so. The Bohemian case shows clearly how for a long time the German-Bohemian workers' national identity, because of its relationship to their class identity, was not generally available for nationalist mobilization, while at the same time the Czech national identity of their Czech-speaking comrades was. The key is the differing set of political and social circumstances and their relationship to the culture. Nationalism cannot, this study concludes, simply fire up, willy nilly, any population group at any time. Given the right constellation of social and political pressures and relationships, however, even a population which had previously shown no nationalist inclinations could become thoroughly nationally aroused. What is needed to understand, and perhaps to foresee, such occurrences is therefore not more study of the emotion and passion of nationalism, its programs and intellectual origins, but rather closer study of the political and social environment in which it can successfully seize and mobilize national identity.

Nationalism may be at one level an elite-class 'trick'. But its foundation of national identity is a social reality. The phenomenon as a whole is not irrational, nor retrograde, nor inexplicable, but rather a fundamental social and political reality of the modern age, with which we are likely to have to continue to deal—potentially everywhere, but not necessarily anywhere.
NATIONALISM BEYOND THE IMAGINED COMMUNITY:
SOCIAL REALITY OR ELITE-CLASS TRICK?

An historical case-study of
the interaction between
class and national identities

Karl F. Bahm
The University of Southern Mississippi

There can be little doubt left that Francis Fukuyama's assertion of the "end of history"—the ending of the Cold War having supposedly also ended all real conflict and debate over the further development of at least Western history—was, to be generous, short-sighted, naïve, and thoroughly mistaken. The explosion of nationalisms of various stripes, the civil wars, and the rash of secessions of increasingly tiny and obscure nations or would-be nations which have become all-too familiar in this post-Cold War, New World Order are enough to put to rest any such smug complacencies. It is not merely that the ostensible 're-awakening' of nationalism and nationalist conflicts in the West has belied the wide belief, even before Fukuyama, that this part of the world had long ago evolved past that. Even more confounding is that the current manifestations of nationalism and what we are now learning of its meaning and operation (as poor as that may be at this point) are challenging a whole range of beliefs about the very nature of Western state and society, and the ways that they are constituted, develop, and change. Although he may have gotten it backwards, Fukuyama was at least right in seeing an intimate connection between the end of the Cold War, and our notions of history and modernity.

The tragedy of Bosnia is so horrifying to a Western world grown callous by a half-century of Vietnams, Cambodias, Indonesias, Ugandas, Somalias, and Rwandas precisely...
because Yugoslavia was part of the West. True, Yugoslavia had a Communist government, but it had ceased to be part of the 'Eastern Bloc' in any meaningful sense.\(^4\) And it was especially Bosnia, and above all Sarajevo—urbane, cosmopolitan, not only multi-ethnic but ethnically intermingled, with an identity based more on economic success and an ethnically neutral civil society than on nationalism—which epitomized this hopeful, seemingly forward-(read Western-) looking development. Indeed for a time after the outbreak of hostilities between Croatia and Belgrade, Bosnia seemed the veritable oasis of Western-like tolerance and rationality in a sea of 'primitive' nationalist hatred.\(^5\) But Bosnia too fell, into the most vitriolic and intractable nationalism yet. And Bosnia's fall signifies much more than one country's apparent loss of modernity: it is a symbol of the collapse of a great deal that we held true about all 'modern', Western societies, and about nationalism itself—what it is, what it means, where it comes from.

Of course, it is not only in the former Yugoslavia that we must recognize nationalism again at work; and it does not always take such savagely violent form. Today the Czech Republic, only recently emerged from the Slovaks' nationalist secession from Czechoslovakia, is experiencing anew the 'Sudeten-German question'. After 46 years, the Czech-German dynamic is once again an issue of some concern in the country. Tensions between Czechs and Sudeten-Germans (this time expatriate Sudeten-Germans living in the Federal Republic of Germany) are heightening, fueling nationalist groups and nationalist sympathies on both sides, and straining, however slightly, relations between the Czech and German governments.\(^6\)

\(^4\)Having quarreled and broken with the Soviet Union in 1948 and having developed a "market socialist" economy and society well linked to those of the Western capitalist world, Yugoslavia was generally considered to be at least on the road to "modernization". See particularly Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).


\(^6\)Shortly after the 1989 revolution, debates ignited over the issue of the expulsion of the Sudeten-Germans from Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948, and the question of restitution to the expellees. In the spring of 1994, debate heated up with publication of research on the massacre of Germans in northwestern Bohemia in 1945. Throughout that spring and summer tensions rose, with the Sudeten-German exile organization in Germany, the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*, provocatively declaring that the Czech government should treat with them as a sort of state-level representative of the Sudeten-German people, and threatening to drag the Federal German state into the fracas. For their part, the Czech nationalists, like the *Republikáni*, increased their anti-German rhetoric and in August, violently disrupted a commemoration of the victims of racist and nationalist hatred at the Terezín concentration camp memorial, which included German participants. See, for example, the articles "S omluvou jsou podle Kohouta nyní na žádě sudeští Němci", *Lidové noviny* (Prague), 8 August 1994, 1; "Terezínský incident by měl být varováním pro budoucnost", *Lidové noviny* (Prague), 8 August 1994, 3; Jiří Hanák, "Potřeba česko-českého dialogu", *Lidové noviny* (Prague), 8 August 1994, 5; and
There is unfortunately no end of examples of outbreaks of nationalisms, old and new, throughout Europe. That is in fact part of the problem facing those who would understand it: it fails to fit the expected patterns anymore. Although the have been numerous, sometimes widely divergent theories of nationalism proffered over the decades, most even of the newest of them interpret nationalism as in some way an inevitable by-product, or even an essential part, of the creation of a modern state and society. As such, nationalism tends to be permanently linked to a particular phase of (at least what used to be called) "modernization". For the West, then, and most especially for Western Europe and North America, nationalism must belong to the past. Within such interpretations, nationalism can no more be comprehended as part of the post-Cold War, 'post-modern' world of the West than could, say, the reappearance of feudalism after World War I. Yet there it is; and not only in the 'obviously insufficiently modernized' societies like Azerbaijan or Chechnya, but also in Germany, Britain, France... and Bosnia.

What any theory or interpretation of nationalism must above all account for now is its ability to appeal to the broad masses, far beyond any remotely discernible economic, social, or political self-interest. Nationalism appears to us today as a kind of irrational force of nature; a wholly destructive and inexplicable force which seizes populations and ultimately destroys them in a sort of fit of primitive self-sacrifice. Within this frenzied worship of the "Dark Gods", we frequently perceive at work (or think we do) the narrow economic or political interests of one elite group or another. But neither the characterization of primitive irrationality, nor the

---


Certainly there is a common, and probably not wholly misguided inclination to see in these kinds of nationalisms just the opposite sort of development: the expression of a society in crisis; the desperation of a society in decline and dissolution. But there are no coherent historical theories of nationalism along this line. And in any event such an interpretation takes no consideration of the "original" experience of nationalism in most of these countries in the nineteenth century.

presumption of the guiding power of an elite group's selfish interests can explain the mass appeal of nationalism—so often, in so many places, now rising, now disappearing, only to rise again.

This study, then, examines nationalism from the standpoint of the lower classes. It is an historical case-study of the rise of one of history's most powerful examples of nationalism—in nineteenth-century Bohemia—and the relationship to that nationalism of one population sector, the working classes, which seemed in many ways to remain outside of, or unaffected by it, only to later seem to fall completely under its spell. The basic conclusions of this examination are that nationalism is merely the deliberate political mobilization of a national identity which exists on a much more profound and quotidian level. National identity is something which pervades all of society and predates the emergence of nationalism; but it is something which, absent the single-minded, nationalistic mobilization which makes of it a matter of supreme and hegemonic importance, and fixed characteristics, is much more fluid, interactive, and mutable. Nevertheless, it is only on this foundation that nationalism can build. In that sense, nationalisms are neither wholly irrational or 'fake', nor do they come from nowhere. They are built on a fundamental feature of modern society. What they then do with that can rightfully be examined as a question of political and economic interests. But the recourse to 'the Nation', the ability to 'dupe' the masses into following the elite group is neither irrational, nor anti-modern, nor in fact dependent solely on the will and interests of that elite group.

Although most of the attempts to understand nationalism have contributed in some way to our overall knowledge of it, the phenomenon as a whole, both historical and contemporary, so far refuses to be explained by any one theory. Rather than conforming to one shape, cause, or purpose, it manifests a bewildering and frustrating variety and mutability. It would appear that nationalism can appear, and re-appear, in any type of state or society, at any stage of its political or socio-economic development, and in the service of virtually any socio-economic function or other ideology. Indeed, the maddening variety of 'types' of nationalism can easily lead one to want to reject the whole concept of nationalism as being useless for descriptive or analytical purposes. But that would not only abrogate social science's obligation to try to understand a social and historical phenomenon of all-too-apparent reality and extraordinarily powerful, nearly universal resonance. It would also leave governments, foreign and domestic, helpless to find ways to respond in intelligent and constructive ways to the real challenges of nationalism.

What is so far clear is that the ideology and social movement of nationalism involves the mobilization of a national identity of some sort, which exists (at least logically) prior to that
nationalism. Nationalism makes that identity the focal point of an individual's—and a society's—self-perception. Before the appearance of nationalism a person living in, for example, Bohemia would identify herself primarily as a Catholic or Protestant, a resident of this or that town, a member of a particular family, a woman, a peasant or seamstress or shop-keeper, or even a speaker of Czech or German, depending on the situation. Nationalism seeks to take this multiple, situational identity-complex and focus that person's social and political sense of self into a national identity of 'Czechness' (or Germanness)—generally based on language and/or some other marker of ethnicity. This national identity then becomes the strongest, most powerful, fixed, and central identity for that person, bonding her closely to some people, while separating her irreparably from others. In this way individuals are mobilized into the service of, and into sacrifice for, the sake of, their 'nation'.

The purposes or functions of this national mobilization have been many, and they appear to be determined by both the historical context and the immediate political, cultural, social, and economic situations. Thus it is that nationalism, which exhibits an impressive universality around the world and through history, manifests at the same time a frustrating and apparently endless particularism, each example unique to itself in many important ways. Indeed it tempts one to deny that it is one phenomenon that is being dealt with at all, however methodologically unsatisfying that would be. Nonetheless, the general tendency in most scholarship on nationalism has been to see in its rise the response of economic and social elites to a particular phase in the development of 'modernization'. In these views, nationalism is seen as a more or less deliberate effort on the part of ascendant new elite groups—usually the educated middle classes and the intelligentsia—to reorder the political and cultural landscape so as to better acquire, or hang on to power by mobilizing the masses and laying an unassailable claim to sovereignty. The nationalization of society is thus seen as in some sense a concomitant of the expansion of the public sphere, the inclusion of the lower classes into the ranks of the socially and politically responsible, and (for better or worse) the 'democratization' of society (even if it is seen—as it frequently is—as a great deceit, a bag of bourgeois 'tricks' to dupe the masses into

---

supporting measures which serve solely the interests of the elite classes). Such an interpretation does in fact go far in explaining much of the historical record, at least of Europe's first serious bouts with nationalism in the mid-19th century.

Of course there are many who see nationalism as the opposite type of thing—particularly in the present-day context. In this view nationalism is seen as in fact a retrograde, rather than a constructive response on the part of declining elites or those fearful of a deterioration in their social or economic standing because of the type of profound shifts in the social-economic order discussed above. This scenario is, prima facie, a compelling explanation for the type of negative, destructive, and palpably desperate nationalisms which we see today in Bosnia, Chechnya, or among eastern German 'skin-heads'. But even this interpretation is really based on an assumption of the relationship between nationalism and 'modernization'—only in this view nationalism is a reaction to the progress of modernization, while in the former it is a more direct expression of that progress. The one makes good sense of the nationalisms found in early- and mid-19th century European (especially Central European) states-in-becoming; the other of later-19th century and mid-20th century states in decline. Either could plausibly be invoked to explain the conflicts in Eastern Europe and the lands of the former Soviet Union today; indeed both could well be detected at work simultaneously in different sectors of a modernizing society.

But neither approach can successfully explain the myriad manifestations of the recognizably nationalist phenomenon in societies which cannot be seen as going through 'modernization' or any other kind of seismic social-economic transformation: for example the great many western German 'skin-heads', the resurgence of northern Italian nationalism, the reappearance of Welsh nationalism, or the re-awakening of tensions between Sudeten-Germans and Czechs. Nor can they offer any explanation of why nationalisms seem to come and go in such blithe, unpredictable ways. What most strikes any student of nationalism is that it can and does adapt to any situation, and combine with virtually any other ideology.

It seems advisable, therefore, to focus attention and analysis more on the 'stuff' of nationalism: the cultural and social factors which become mobilized as 'the nation'. There can be no question but that the study of the ideological functions of nationalism is an important topic for the complete understanding of the phenomenon. At the same time, however, an exclusive focus on the political and ideological factors in whose service nationalism can find a raison d'être—particularly since they are so numerous—begs entirely the questions of what it is that is being mobilized, and what it is that the lower classes seek in, or gain from nationalism. For it must be remembered that nationalism, by its own logic, must at least aim to elevate, mobilize, and absorb the entire popular body. It may well be that nationalism always involves above all some type of expression of elite or middle-class interests or fear. But what needs yet to be understood is how and why the lower classes, shut out by the logic of that argument from interest or benefit in the pursuit of the nation, should become so surely mobilized for it.

It is at this level of the (logically) pre-existing national identity that nationalism would seem to derive its bewildering and frustrating universality and daunting potential. For while it is clear that at the level of the mobilization of national identity for political-ideological purposes, nationalism can fairly be (indeed must be) understood as something manipulated, even “imagined”12, it seems to be equally clear that such manipulation or imagination is constructed out of, or on the basis of something very real and very powerful. It is precisely at this point, I think, that so much of the confusion and frustration surrounding nationalism originates. Only by understanding what symbols, relationships, loyalties, etc. the "imagined communities" utilize, and then how it is that those things, part of the daily reality of all members of any prospective nation, can be molded together, and separated from all aspects of that social reality which would divide the nation—for example class, gender, regionalism—and then inscribed with a universally understood meaning, can we begin to understand how and why nationalisms appear when they do, and, very importantly, when they do not.

Beyond giving us a clue to nationalism's powerful universality, moreover, increased attention to these 'building blocks' of nationalism can in fact lend deeper appreciation for the origins of its particularistic diversity as well. The diverse social, cultural, and historical raw materials of national identity, and the particular ways in which these are mixed together and interact with the other realities of a people's social existence—the conditions within which nationalism must try to assert itself—surely have much to do with the tremendous range of guises which nationalism takes and the great diversity of uses to which it can be put.

12Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. 
An example from history may provide some concrete evidence for the general, and rather abstract point being argued here. Nationalist conflict between the Czechs and Germans of Bohemia has a very long history. With its roots in the mid-nineteenth century and the great socio-economic transformations associated with industrialization, this is indeed one of the great, classic battlegrounds of nationalism anywhere in history.\textsuperscript{13} In the studies of this historically very consequential confrontation the greatest weight of the analysis has been focused on the Czech nationalist movement, with its roots in bourgeois self-assertion.\textsuperscript{14} There has also been a fair number of studies of the reciprocal German-Bohemian nationalism, proceeding primarily from the other predominant interpretation of nationalism: that of a desperate and generally irrational reaction on the part of declining elites or middle classes fearing social and economic loss, brought on in this case by the rise of the economic and political elites of the newly assertive Czech nation.\textsuperscript{15}

While there is little to quarrel with in those interpretations as they are applied to the specific contexts and populations with which they are directly concerned, they offer little

\textsuperscript{13} Some argue that the conflict has even deeper roots: into the fifteenth-century Hussite revolution, in which "Bohemians", particularly those speaking the Czech language, became associated with rebellion against the church and state (not to mention destruction of property). But while it may be that some Hussite mythology and symbology made an appearance in the linguistic-national conflicts of 400 years later, most trace the origins of true nationalism between Czechs and Germans \textit{per se} in Bohemia to the onset of industrialization in the early to mid-nineteenth century. General literature on the history of the conflict would include Johann Wolfgang Brügel, \textit{Tschechen und Deutsche 1918-1938} (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1967); Zdeněk Jindra, \textit{Germany and the Slavs in Central Europe} (Prague: Slav Committee of Czechoslovakia, 1960); Robert A. Kann, \textit{A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); Elizabeth Wiskemann, \textit{Czechs and Germans. A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia} (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

\textsuperscript{14} The best monograph on this subject in English is John F. N. Bradley, \textit{Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century}, (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984), distributed by Columbia University Press. Useful also would be Bruce Garver, \textit{The Young Czech Party, 1874-1901, and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System}, (New Haven, 1978). There are also a good number of studies, from various angles, in German and Czech. For a useful general survey of the period from the standpoint of Czech scholarship, see Otto Urban, \textit{Česká společnost 1848-1918}, (Prague: Svoboda, 1982).

guidance for understanding the broader phenomenon. Above all they are silent on the question of how and why nationalism was able to incorporate the lower classes, especially, and most unusually, the working classes. Nor can they suggest any explanation for the noticeable tendency of, e.g., German-Bohemian nationalism to come and go, or to be constantly re-created in different historical situations.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw one of the most intensive and extensive cases of the wholesale nationalization and national polarization of a society to be found anywhere in history. The national question became not only the focal point of a tremendous amount of conflict and bitter hostility; it became indeed the central issue for self-definition for the rival social, economic, and political groups. By the 1890s, Bohemian political life was almost completely paralyzed by the conflict, with both sides disrupting the Bohemian (and later the Austrian) parliament with not only demagogic speeches, but also whistles, drums, and horns. Economic life had become almost completely divided into two separate economies, with separate credit facilities, producers’ associations, insurance companies, etc. Separate Czech schools were established in areas where the Czechs were in the minority, and collections were held to likewise benefit the presumed oppressed German minorities in Czech-speaking regions. Areas where such separatist parallelism was impracticable—such as appointments to, or language usage in the civil service, state railroads, state schools, the appointment of parish priests, etc.—became hotly contested areas: symbolic arenas where national identities were profoundly shaped and reinforced.

There can be no question but that the nationalistic rending of Bohemian society was directly connected to the onset of industrialization, the consolidation of the middle classes, and the opening up of society (the public sphere) to greater participation. But the second half of the nineteenth century in Bohemia was not only the scene of this kind of profound nationaliza-

---

16 I am not aware that any German minority schools were ever actually established—or really necessary. But the Bund der Deutschen in Böhmen (Union of Germans in Bohemia), founded in 1895 and centered in Teplitz, was very active in this sort of cause. Okresní archiv Teplice, Spolky, čís. evid. 109.


18 Bradley traces the origins of Czech nationalism back to the tax, educational, and bureaucratic reforms of Joseph II, as well as to the population trends of the late-eighteenth century, all of which permitted the rise of a Czech middle class, making an industrial revolution possible. Bradley, Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century, 1-19; Whiteside, "Industrial Transformation, Population Movement and German Nationalism in Bohemia." The most crucial aspect of the "modernization" argument about nationalism has to do with the uneven character of these processes. For the classic explications of the theory, see especially Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, and Thought and Change; and Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication.
tion and national polarization. Industrialization brings with it the consolidation also of a working class (however one might tend to define that). And so late-nineteenth century Bohemia was also the scene of intense class formation, which involved, as elsewhere in Central Europe at this time, also the wide-spread growth in size and political impact of the socialist (Social-Democratic) movement.

It must be wondered at this point, in light of the predominant interpretations of the origins and functions of nationalism, how the lower classes, involved in their own processes of working-class formation, then stood to the processes of nationalization. Moreover, given the wholistic impetus of nationalism—its need to incorporate and mobilize all members of the nation, and its exaltation of the entire national corpus as an indivisible whole with all other identities or divisions, such as class, being superficial—and the avowedly inter-nationalist, even anti-nationalist ideology of the socialist movement, one must further wonder how the Bohemian working classes dealt with, and responded to these twin forces of ‘modernization’. This is of much more than idle, academic significance. For these questions go right to the heart of nationalism’s patent ability to spread, and to mobilize and arouse whole populations.

A close examination of the situation reveals that the working-class men and women of Bohemia in fact managed, against all ideologically driven expectations, to both maintain a clearly socialist culture and class identity, and at the same time to manifest a profoundly

19The history of the development of an industrial working-class in Bohemia is a classic case of proletarianization: from its origins in the proto-industrial organization of weavers, button-makers, and other cottage-industry workers, through the development of mining and the railroad, to the establishment of large-scale chemical factories. The working class in Bohemia was divided between an important but relatively small ‘elite’ of skilled artisans—who were nonetheless increasingly losing their independence and were declining in numbers—and a vast ‘army’ of unskilled “day-laborers” who migrated from job to job, type of work to type of work, living on the edge of subsistence, with no job security at all. Industrialization in Bohemia also involved, in a classic pattern, vast migrations of workers into the towns and industrial areas from the countryside and other, primarily agricultural, areas of the kingdom. As the center of industrialization in Bohemia was primarily in the German-speaking border regions of northern Bohemia, which had already had a long artisanal tradition, this meant that the influx of unskilled, proletarianized peasants into the factories, mines, railroad yards, etc. were to a very large extent Czechs. This was naturally to have a profound impact on the shape of nationalism and the workers’ movement in Bohemia. On Bohemia specifically, see Norbert Engisch, *Braunkohlenbergbau und Arbeiterbewegung. Ein Beitrag zur Bergarbeitervolkskunde im nordwestböhmischen Braunkohlenrevier bis zum Ende der österreich-ungarischen Monarchie* (Munich: R. Oldenburg, 1982); Pavla Horská-Vrbová, *Kapitalistická industrializace a středoevropská společnost. Příspěvek ke studiu formování tzv. průmyslové společnosti* (Prague: Academia, 1970); Arnošt Klíma, "Die Entstehung der Arbeiterklasse und die Anfänge der Arbeiterbewegung in Böhmen", in *Wirtschafts- und sozialgeschichtliche Probleme der frühen Industrialisierung*, ed. Wolfram Fischer (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1968), 434-448; Jaroslav Purš, "K otážce průmyslové revoluce v hlavních odvětvích textilního průmyslu v českých zemích", *Československý časopis historický* 2 (1954): 93-143; idem, "The Situation of the Working Class in the Czech Lands in the Phase of the Expansion and Completion of the Industrial Revolution (1849-1873)", *Hronika* 6 (1963): 145-237.
German and/or Czech national identity. The ways in which this was at all possible, and the
different ways in which it operated for the Czech and German-Bohemian workers offer both
important correctives and reinforcements of our understandings of nationalism, where it comes
from, how it spreads, and what its potential manifestations are.

What is perhaps not so surprising is that even among the lower classes, the generation of
nationalism can be traced to some congruence of interests, or perceived interests, with those of
the elite power-holders, particularly during times of great social and economic change and
stress. Nationalism, then, still is about power. At the same time, however, the study of
working-class national identity and the posture of the lower classes to cultural and political
nationalization reveals the importance of the everyday cultural context for the construction of
national identity—which is the raw material of nationalism—the influence of the lower classes
on that construction, and even the limited degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the ostensible national
elites as regards that national identity. National identity, it turns out, is much more fluid,
flexible, and interactive than tends to be supposed by the models which fixate on its elite
aspects and lend to it (in perfect accord with nationalist thought itself) a constant, static, and
hegemonic character.

The working classes of Bohemia, a classic case of industrial and proto-industrial
proletarianization, were thoroughly socialized into the Social-Democratic movement. While
actual membership figures for the party itself never included more than a small minority of the
total number of this population, a much more significant percentage were members of Social-
Democrats or influenced and inclined trade unions, accident and sickness associations
(Arbeiter-Kranken- und Unterstützungs-Kassen), reading and educational associations, gymnastics
clubs, nature and hiking clubs, bicycle clubs, etc. The state of the extant historical record
does not permit determination of the exact numbers of members of any of these organizations.
But in one crucial town in northwestern Bohemia, for example, in and around Aussig (Ústí nad
labem20), there existed at the turn of the century a handful of official Social-Democratic
political organization, a number of trade unions, and scores of educational associations, choral
societies, worker-gymnastics clubs, bicycle clubs, nature-lovers organizations (Arbeiter-
Naturfreunde), freethinkers' associations, sickness and accident insurance associations.

20 The name in parentheses is the Czech name of the town, what it was called by Czech-speakers at the time,
and its name today in the Czech Republic (most German-speakers having been expelled from Czechoslovakia
between 1945 and 1948). The first name, the German name, was the name under which the town was founded,
od the name used by the majority of its inhabitants until 1945-48. For that reason, I will refer to the German-
Bohemian towns in this article, after the initial reference, by their German names.
consumers’ cooperatives, stenographer clubs, youth sections, women’s sections, a Union of German Opponents of Alcohol, and a Workers’ Bakery.21

In even larger numbers they took part in party-sponsored dances, Christmas celebrations (Christbaumfeste), May Day festivals, and simple Volksfeste. The demonstratively political May-Day celebration in Teplitz (Teplice), near Aussig, in 1895, for example, included a meeting attended by 2,000, and a 4,000-strong parade through the streets by male and female workers taking the day off from work (generally without their employers’ acquiescence).22 Two years later, just after the socialists’ first parliamentary triumph, a reported 10,000 men, women, and children took part in the meeting, parade, music, and dancing.23 The working-class population of Teplitz-Schönau during that time was around 5,00024 The socialist press did not hesitate to publish disappointingly low attendance figures for such events as well, but the pattern of attendance was consistently rather high. And less politically oriented occasions were even better attended. In 1897, the annual summer Volksfest sponsored by the Aussig party was reportedly attended by 10,000 visitors, who consumed, in one day, 5,000 liters of beer.25 This was no rarity (neither the size of the attendance nor the beer consumption).

---

21 Compiled from the records of the Bohemian Governor’s Office, series České místodržitelství (ČM), Státní ústřední archiv, Prague, (SÚA), and the Vereins-Kataster, Archiv Města Ústí nad Labem, OÚ 174, and from the pages of the Volksrecht (Aussig), vol. XII (1907). See also Holek, Lebensgang eines deutsch-ischeichen Handarbeiters. Party records (which for a variety of reasons are extant in only extremely spotty form) count for the larger Aussig district 1,560 members in the political organizations in 1897. Protokoll des VI. Parteitages der Deutschen Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei Österreichs, "Parteibericht und Kreisberichte", (Vienna: DSAPÖ, 1897), 39-41.

22 Reported in the Social-Democratic newspaper Der Gesellschafter (Aussig), 9 May 1895, 1-2.

23 Die Freiheit (Teplitz), 6 May 1897, 1, 4.

24 The neighboring spa-town of Schönau (Šanov) was annexed by Teplitz in 1895. The figure of 5,017 workers and day-laborers is recorded for the town in the census of 1910; Österreichische Statistik. Neue Folge (Vienna) (hereafter ÖS, NF, or simply ÖS for volumes published before 1910), 3/8 (1916): 4-5. There are no disaggregated numbers on social and occupational breakdowns for individual towns before that; but in 1880 the entire Teplitz district, with probably around 50 towns and villages, comprised a total working-class population of over 30,000 (over 70% of the total employed population). ÖS, 1/3 (1882): 158-169.

25 The fest was attended by large numbers of women and children as well as men. Assuming a minimal beer consumption among the children and at least many of the women, the quaffing of beer among the men and the rest of the women must have been of truly impressive proportions. The attendance figure, reported in the Social-Democratic newspaper Volksrecht (Aussig), 12 August 1897, 4, was confirmed by estimates in the bourgeois press. And, although a direct, one-to-one corroboration is impossible, the estimates in police sources for these types of activities also generally run in the multiple thousands, lending further credence to the Social-Democratic figures. In 1880, Aussig itself had a worker population of 4,484; in 1910 one of 10,148 (those figures include only the worker him- or herself; the total working-class populations would then be somewhat greater).
Though many of the events—like the Aussig Volksfest of 1897—were relatively devoid of political messages, none were completely free of them, and many more—like the 1895 Maifest in Teplitz—were quite explicitly socialist/ideological. The point here is that in their membership in the various party-affiliated associations, and in their attendance at the various types of party-sponsored activities, the working-class men and women of northern Bohemia would have undergone a significant degree of socialization into the Social-Democratic culture and worldview. This is most definitely not to say that such membership and attendance indicated (as the Social-Democratic leaders of the time would have it) a clear, resolute, and unambiguous agreement with (or even understanding of) the Social-Democratic party and its platform, let alone the ideology of socialism. Nor can it be argued that through this kind of contact with Social-Democratic organizations previously uncommitted workers necessarily became 'converted' to the cause. Nevertheless, such membership and activity certainly did involve greater and lesser degrees of contact with much of the socialist world-view and values, which, as a large part of the social reality of the working classes, certainly must have had some sort of formative influence on the workers' own world-view, at the very least on some superficial level.

But other evidence lends even more support to the conclusion that the Bohemian working classes were possessed of a well defined class identity that was shaped to a significant degree by Social-Democratic values and programs. Like the membership in their ancillary organizations and the attendance at their festivities, the circulation of the socialist press enjoyed far greater numbers than straightforward party membership figures would justify. In 1897, Aussig's and Teplitz's party organs each had a circulation of well over 4,000. In addition to these was an astonishing array of smaller circulation papers from other towns around the region, trade-union papers, the Viennese party-central's flag-ship paper, as well as, after 1897, a weekly Czech-language Social-Democratic publication for northern Bohemia, Severočeský dělník.26

Perhaps most importantly, the workers of Bohemia regularly gave the Social-Democrats the right to represent them in parliament through their votes. In 1897, with the creation of the 5th, general, 'curia', the workers of Austria for the first time were given the right to vote—

---

26 Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Deutschen Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich, (Vienna, 1897), "Kreisberichte", 40-41; and Severočeský dělník (Teplitz), 3 June 1898, 3.
albeit an unequal and indirect one.\textsuperscript{27} In that first year of working-class political participation, the Social-Democratic party made a tremendous showing, sending 14 new deputies to parliament. In the Teplitz district as a whole (which comprised several towns and villages), the socialists received nearly 60\% of the fifth-curia vote. Socialist support in most of the towns and working-class areas within the district approached or surpassed 90\%--only the decidedly bourgeois and nationalist Teplitz kept the total percentage so low.\textsuperscript{28} Except for a universally poor showing by the Social-Democrats in the parliamentary elections of 1901, the socialists were consistently able to command significant majorities among the working-class population of Bohemia.

This fact more than any other suggests that the working-class population of Bohemia identified to a significant degree with the Social-Democratic Party and socialism, and associated them with their perceptions of their best interests. Much of that identification had to do, no doubt, with the fact that it was largely the agitation of the Social-Democrats which got for the workers the right to vote in the first place. But the fact remains. While we may not be able to speak of the serried ranks of the self-consciously militant, Marxist educated, proletarian armies of socialist wishful thinking, we must nonetheless recognize that for the experienced reality of the working classes of Bohemia, socialism was both a powerful influence on, and an essential component of those workers' identities.

The \textit{prima facie} problem here is how to reconcile this profound (if imperfect) socialist identification on the part of the workers, which was of course in its theoretical manifestations internationalist or even anti-nationalist, with the clearly high level of nationalization and national polarization at work in the population as a whole. It is inconceivable that the working classes as a whole should have remained unaffected by the rampant national polarization loosed within Bohemia in the late-nineteenth century. In the first place, as argued above, a great many of the workers of Bohemia, while associating and identifying with Social-Democracy in significant ways, were not militant, indoctrinated, self-consciously ideological comrades who were hermetically sealed off from the larger national society. It turns out that a very large

\textsuperscript{27}The Austrian electoral system was enormously complex. The five curiae were: large estates owners, chambers of commerce and trade, towns, markets, and industrial areas, rural communities, and the fifth, general, curia, in which could vote also members of several of the first four curiae. Additionally, though it comprised over 72\% of the eligible votes, the fifth curia elected only 17\% of the representatives sent to the Reichsrat. In general on the Austrian electoral system, see Robert A. Kann, \textit{A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 425-426.

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Die Freiheit} (Teplitz), 25 February 1897, 3-4; and "Die Ergebnisse der Reichsrathswahlen in den im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern für das Jahr 1897", ÖS, 49/1 (1897).
portion, probably the majority, of the Social-Democratic constituency existed as it were on the 'fringes' of the socialist "sub-culture". In that sense they must have maintained connections to and interaction with the non-socialist, bourgeois dominated world.

In fact, though the sources do not permit the tracing of individual memberships, a close study of the historical record makes very clear that workers of virtually all levels of Social-Democratic commitment maintained memberships also in non-socialist, even bourgeois and nationalist organizations. This is something about which the Social-Democratic press and the protocols of the party conferences constantly complained, from the earliest days of the movement until 1918. The workers in and around Aussig and Teplitz, after quaffing several liters of beer while singing 'the Internationale' at the party's May-Day festival, or returning from casting a ballot for the socialists, were likely to drop in on a meeting of the bourgeois-nationalist gymnastics club of which they were members, or to turn out in uniform and flag for a muster of their local, patriotic military and veterans' club, perhaps to help in the dedication of a new church. Certainly many of the workers joined these kinds of associations above all for the material benefits such as accident and sickness insurance, burial benefits, and the like, which went with most kinds of social, political, and economic associations at that time. Yet just as interaction with and support of the Social-Democratic movement suggests an important degree of exposure to and at least tolerance of (if not agreement with) socialist values and ideals, so must we here assume likewise a certain degree of exposure to, tolerance of, and probably at least partial agreement with the values and ideals of larger, bourgeois-


30The statutes of the *Militär- und Veteranenverein* in Aussig, printed in the member-book of the worker Heinrich Fischer of Krammel, who was a member of the organization throughout the 1880s and 1890s, detail the extensive accident, sickness, and burial benefits for both the members and their wives: deposited in the library of the Archiv Města Ústí nad Labem, R356. Communications between the presidium of the Bohemian Governor's office and the local district-governors (Bezirkschaftspolitiker) make clear (with some sense of alarm) that as early as the 1870s, a large percentage, and frequently the majority of the members of such organizations were of the working class. SÚA, *Prezídium českého místodržitelství* (PM) 1860-1870, 8/5/22/4. An article in the *Volksrecht* (Aussig), from 27 March 1907, pages 6-7, complained about so many good, class-conscious workers joined the bourgeois military and veterans' organizations with the excuse that they needed the material support offered by them. This excuse was testily rejected with the observation that there were plenty of Social-Democratic organizations which would also offer financial support. An article from two years earlier also acknowledged sadly that a number of "Genossen" (Comrades) had participated with their local military association in the festive ground-breaking for a new church in the village of Prödlitz. *Volksrecht*, 9 August 1905, 5. See also Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture*, 44.
dominated world. Material benefits and conviviality may have been the most decisive factor in this regard, but one cannot entirely dismiss the suspicion—a suspicion which was clearly nagging at the very alarmed Social-Democratic leadership—that membership in a veterans’ organization, for example, and the putting on of the uniform and the repeated cries of “Hoch!” to His Majesty were in fact both reflective and supportive of pride in a workers’ military service, and devotion to the patriotic ideal of the fatherland.31

Despite all ideological constructs to the contrary (whether from the Left or the Right), in fact the boundaries between classes and ‘social spheres’ appear to have been very fuzzy, porous, even somewhat mobile, rather than clear, fixed, and impermeable. Even more important than the kind of multiple associational activities discussed above, which after all were situated entirely within the so-called ‘public sphere’ of political-ideological commitment—even if on an alternating basis between socialist and bourgeois-nationalist public spheres—was the semi-public sphere of schools and churches, and the ‘private sphere’ of the family.32 It was in these arenas that the workers, and their families, were integrated into larger social values and identities, while remaining identifiable working class. In the churches and the schools the workers were exposed to an array of bourgeois, national, and other non-working-class norms and values, and were subject to forms of assimilation, authority, and control beyond those which produce class identity (the wage-labor relationship and socialist organiza-

31The early Viennese socialist leader Andreas Scheu wrote in his autobiography of the pride with which the masters and their journeymen with whom he worked marched in the parade of the Deuschmeister and Kaiserjägerbataillon (two of the Austrian army’s units). Scheu himself, though he had no desire to serve in the military and sought exemption on medical grounds, admits to having been impressed by the parade. Andreas Scheu, Umsturzzeime. Erlebnisse eines Kämpfers (Vienna: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1923), 105-114.

32The classic elaboration of the concept of the ‘public sphere’ was Jürgen Habermas’ Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit from 1962, published in English as The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). Habermas defined the public sphere as those places—above all the press and associations—where men (!) came together as citizens of a state, and/or nation, to develop and share and exhibit public opinion on and identity with the state and/or national society.
tion, for instance.) Here they participated in and were recognized as part of that larger society which could be mobilized as a nation.

Above all it was the 'private' family sphere which connected working-class people to this larger social (and national) world. The family (at least for the lower classes, and one surmises this was true for the middle classes as well, despite bourgeois dreams of a man's home as his castle) was much less a secluded refuge from 'society' than it was a crossroads of social, economic, and even political influences and integrations. The worker's job, although outside the private family sphere, was the primary agent of that family's working-class identity. Likewise, the worker's involvement in the Social-Democratic party, trade union, or merely ancillary associations, while taking place generally outside of the family sphere, nonetheless influenced the lives of the other family members, and the life of the family as a whole, in important ways—from the husband's and father's frequent absence from the home, to the monetary benefits of many of these organizations, to the bringing home of ideas and values gained from Social-Democratic involvement. And these kinds of influences were not dependent only on the worker-husband figure who alone traveled back and forth between the sphere of the party and the familial sphere, which are presumed to be separate. Although the meetings, rallies, and long evenings in the tavern tended to be the preserve solely of the adult males, the large festivals, entertainment programs, Sunday hikes, and train excursions were

33 Of course, the experience of class is not limited to the spheres of work and socialist organization. Experiences of wealth inequality and social snubbing, differences in dress, in levels of and access to (high) culture, in the right to vote, and fluctuations in opportunities to pursue education in a consistent way were all reinforcers of class identity. This would certainly have been part of the workers' experience vis-à-vis the church and school, though not in its entirety. It is naturally impossible to pin-point definitively the extent of working-class attendance at school and especially at church. But school records and the individual house-returns for the decennial censuses—which, astonishingly, are preserved for much of the Aussig district—indicate that working-class children most often did attend school, at least until around the age of puberty, and at least on an irregular basis. Anecdotal evidence—references in the press and in worker memoirs—support this conclusion. Similarly, police reports, memoirs, and complaints in the socialist press indicate that while many workers were quite hostile to the clergy and would generally rather spend Sunday mornings in the pub than in church, others, especially women, were more devout and/or conscientious, and in any event special occasions and religious feasts would find the majority of workers participating in church ceremonies of one form or another. Good sources for this kind of anecdotal information are Wenzel Holek, *Lebensgang eines deutsch-tschechischen Handarbeiters* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1909), and Richard J. Evans (ed.), *Kneipengespräche im Kaiserreich. Die Stimmbesprechungen der Hamburger Politischer Polizei, 1892-1914* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989).

34 While it is true that a great many working-class women were themselves workers, the Social-Democratic organizations were for the most part overwhelmingly male. And the census returns for Aussig suggest that very few married women even of the working class worked outside the home, though it could very well be simply that once married, a woman's 'professional' identity—the one which got entered on official forms—became that of simply "wife", even if she continued to work in the factory.
very pointedly family affairs. They were a very significant point of intersection and fusion between the public sphere of the workers' movement and the supposedly private sphere of the family.

The other members of the family also brought to the familial sphere contacts and influences from the larger world: children brought home ideas and values from school (and indeed schooling frequently involved the parents' interaction with the school authorities); wives and mothers did most of the purchasing of food, clothing, etc. in the market (surely as much a Habermasian 'public sphere' as the press and associational system), and took care of other chores such as laundry in a communal environment; grandparents or older aunts and uncles provided an element of continuity to earlier traditions and cultures, whether in the form of memories of village life, or the teaching of rhymes and folk songs, etc.; and finally, many working-class families provided lodging also for one or more unrelated lodgers.35

The point of all of this is that workers, as integrated and socialized into the Social-Democratic milieu as they may have been, nonetheless did not cease to be connected to, and integrated into their society in all the rest of the normal ways. Not only did they, as Vernon Lidtke acknowledges, "not set aside normal ways of behaving and thinking when they entered the socialist milieu,"36 but they operated at the same time in a number of other theoretically discrete but in reality interconnected and interdependent social spheres. Social reality is far more complex than ideological prescriptions would have it; and workers as real social beings are far more multi-faceted agents than we often allow.

It should be clear enough, then, that at a time of intense nationalization and national polarization, as was the late-nineteenth century in Bohemia, even if we accept the theory of

35This kind of everyday history is notoriously difficult to document. The worker memoirs, while we must be careful not to treat them as necessarily products of a 'typical' worker experience, nonetheless provide very good support. For a particularly excellent depiction of the types of familial roles described here, see the autobiography of Wenzel Holek's son, Heinrich Holek, Unterwegs. Eine Selbstbiographie (Vienna: Bugra, 1927); see also Wenzel Holek, Lebensgang eines deutsch-tschechischen Handarbeiters; Carl Fischer, Denkwürdigkeiten und Erinnerungen eines Arbeiters, ed. and with a foreword by Paul Göhre, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1903); Florian Gröger, Von unten auf! Eine Selbstbiographie (Klagenfurt: Druck- und Verlagsanstalt "Vorwärts", 1926); Gustav Habrman, Z mého života. Vzpomínky z let 1876, 1877, 1884, 1896 (Prague: ústřední dělnické knihkupectví, 1914); Robert Köhler, Erinnerungen aus dem Leben eines Proletariers (Reichenberg: n.p., 1913); Theophil Pisling, Nationalökonomische Briefe aus dem nordöstlichen Böhmen (Prague: Carl Bellman's Verlag, 1856); Adelheid Popp, The Autobiography of a Working Woman, tr. E.C. Harvey (Chicago: F.G. Browne & Co., 1913).

36Lidtke continues: "In that sense they brought their working-class culture with them and, if it did not determine directly the programmatic substance of a socialist festival, for example, it did influence the way people behaved and the general atmosphere." Lidtke, The Alternative Culture, 19.
nationalism as an upper-class bag of tricks, the lower classes, including the majority of the socialist working class, must have been exposed to tremendous national(ist) influences and pressures. And indeed, if we take a closer look at those areas of continuing non-socialist, extra-working class activity and influence, we will find precisely the sorts of things which are identifiable as national identity: membership in gymnastics clubs and veterans’ associations; the stories and songs handed down by oral tradition and the maintenance of contacts to the village; the language training and other kinds of assimilation that go with school attendance; etc.

But we do not really need to wander so far to point to evidence of national identity in the Social-Democratically organized working class. The Social-Democratic movement, as much of the literature has come to recognize, was itself clearly possessed of an identifiable German national identity. In fact it is possible to see the Social-Democratic movement in Bohemia as an active vehicle for the instilling, or at least reinforcement of a German national identity among the working classes; an idea which was not at all foreign to the Czech-nationalist opponents of Social-Democracy.

On the one hand, the Social-Democratic movement has its roots in the democratic-national upheavals of 1848. Its origins are therefore—later dogmatic assertions of fatherland-less internationalism not to the contrary—unproblematically German. Its language, style, and values—its national identity—were also clearly German: Schiller, the Hambach castle, the unself-conscious commitment to the civilizing mission of German language, and culture and

---

37The gymnastics associations were a very popular and effective vehicle for nationalist sentiment and agitation for both Germans and Czechs. The so-called “warrior” (Krieger) and veterans’ associations in Austria tended to manifest German-national sympathies as well, though their nationalism had to be much more subtle, tied as they were to the idea of the Habsburg dynasty and Austrian state, which was, at least ostensibly, distinct from the German national idea.

38This was of particular importance in the maintenance of a minority national identity, as, for example, that of the Czech-speakers living in northwestern Bohemia. See Heinrich Holek, Unterwegs.

39See especially, for example, Mommsen, Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage; Werner Conze and Dieter Groh, Die Arbeiterbewegung in der nationalen Bewegung. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vor, während, und nach der Reichsgründung (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1966); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Sozialdemokratie und Nationalstaat. Nationalitätenfrage in Deutschland 1840-1914 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962); and Jiří Kořalka, “Erste Sozialisten in Nordböhmen im Verhältnis zur Eisenacher Sozialdemokratie und zur tschechischen Nationalbewegung 1868-1870”, Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 8 (1968): 285-347. Even Lidtke, The Alternative Culture; and Roth, The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany tacitly acknowledge as much in their studies, though, like most of the historians of the German labor movement, they then go ahead and ignore the issue, or continue to treat it as irrelevant or as if it just doesn’t fit—taking their cue essentially from Social-Democratic self-descriptions.
education (*Kultur und Bildung*), etc.\(^{40}\) It is not so much that the movement was consciously nationalist; but rather that its language, its attitudes, its iconography more unconsciously reflected the culture from which it came, and within which it continued to exist.

But this kind of national identity, subtle as it was, could not in the environment of late-nineteenth century Bohemia and Austria remain unconscious and unreflected. Indeed, one of the most difficult aspects of this history is the apparent eruption of nationalist passions and hostilities within the internationalist party. From the 1890s on, the "little Internationale" of the Austrian Social-Democratic party was increasingly riven by tensions between its Czech members, who accused their German-speaking comrades of national chauvinism and demanded organization on a national basis, and its Austro-German members, who reacted in honestly baffled anger against what they felt was an infiltration of the ideology of their bourgeois opponents into their ranks.\(^{41}\) Nevertheless, in the interests of solidarity and avoiding an open break, the party was increasingly re-organized on a national basis, with an individual Czech party organization founded in 1893\(^{42}\), the end of the unitary party and separate parties within


\(^{41}\)The Czech socialist leader Jan Bavorský chided the Viennese party for the podium draped with German colors, accusing them of hiding German-national ideals and goals under the term "cosmopolitanism". For the Germans, responding to the spirit of 1848, the colors had less to do with Germaness, than with democracy and equality. They charged the Czech leaders with "Nationalitätenschwärmerei" (roughly: nationalities-delirium). Kořalka, *Tschechen im Habsburgerreich*, 227. See also Raimund Löw, *Der Zerfall der "Kleinen Internationale". Nationalitätenkonflikte in der Arbeiterbewegung des alten Österreichs* (Vienna: Europa-Verlag, 1984).

\(^{42}\)Already in 1878, at a congress in Břevnov, the Czecho-Slavic Social-Democratic Party of Austria was founded for Czech workers anywhere in Austria, as a sort of quasi-autonomous body within the larger Austrian party. This federalistic position was essentially lost at the Hainfeld unity congress of 1889. See Mommsen, *Die Socialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, 90-94, 150-154; and Löw, *Der Zerfall der "Kleinen Internationale"*, 18-19.
a kind of federative super-party in 1897\textsuperscript{43}, and separate trade-union commissions in 1904\textsuperscript{44}. A final, bitter, and complete divorce came in 1911 over the issue of extending national organization to the trade unions themselves.\textsuperscript{45}

Lest it be assumed that it was solely the Czech Social-Democrats who were behaving in a nationalist manner (as Austro-German party leaders liked to claim), it must be remembered that the German-speaking socialists also frequently gave clear indications of aroused national identity. Caught up in the so-called "August experience" of 1914, Austro-German socialists, like their comrades all over Europe, enthusiastically endorsed and physically joined the war effort. In 1918 they united with the bourgeois and nationalist parties in presuming, and then demanding, their inclusion into the rump-Austrian state, with the aim of eventual unification with a greater Germany.\textsuperscript{46} And again, perhaps most spectacularly, in 1935, the Sudeten-German workers, who had always given the Social-Democratic party their overwhelming support (indeed the \textit{Deutsche Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei} had been until then by far the largest German party in terms of votes received), seemed suddenly to 'go Nazi', giving their votes to Konrad Henlein's \textit{Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront} in the parliamentary elections that year.\textsuperscript{47}

Clearly, then, national identity does exist for all classes as an important attribute of the lived social reality even of the Social-Democratically influenced working class--class identity, contrary to the expectations (or hopes) of most socialist leaders, does not appear to eclipse national identity. The lower classes--again specifically including those class-conscious members of the working class--appear even to be entirely susceptible to the mobilization of that


\textsuperscript{44}Löw, \textit{Der Zerfall der "Kleinen Internationale"}, 67-96.

\textsuperscript{45}Löw, \textit{Der Zerfall der "Kleinen Internationale"}, 132-137; Mommsen, \textit{Der Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage}, 439-449.


\textsuperscript{47}In the parliamentary elections of May, 1935, Henlein's SdP captured two thirds of the Sudeten-German vote, where their predecessor parties the German National Party and the German National-Socialist Workers Party together had only managed to muster around 6%. By the municipal elections of 1938, the \textit{Sudetendeutsche Partei} could claim over 85% support from the German population of the Czechoslovak Republic. \textit{Statistický ročenik, 1935/36} (Prague: Státní úřad statistický ČSR, 1936); see also Joseph Rothschild, \textit{East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars} (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 102-126.
national identity into a virulent nationalism under certain circumstances. And it must be clear
given the ongoing confluence of identity between class and national identities even under the
conditions of a nationalistically mobilized identity—something which can be seen most clearly
in the case of the Czech socialists—that this mobilization occurred for entirely different
reasons, functioned for entirely different purposes than those of the political and economic
elites with whom we are used to associating nationalism. The behavior of Bohemian workers
offers convincing evidence that, if class does not entirely eclipse national identity, neither do
national identity and nationalism entirely eclipse or replace class identity and socialism, the
way one would expect if one were to believe the nationalists.

III

We must differentiate between nationalism—politically mobilized national consciousness—
on the one hand, and 'mere' national identity—the 'stuff' of nationalism—on the other.
Nationalism, which, as an argument for exclusive or overriding loyalty to the 'Nation' as a
sort of 'meta-identity', certainly must be understood as a type of construct, is nevertheless
constructed out of, or on top of very real social and cultural factors: language and a literature,
economic inter-dependence, patterns of regular social and economic interaction, with shopkeep-
ers, teachers, police and other authorities, etc. These are patterns of cultural and social
interaction prior to the level of mobilized and essentialized nationalism, but which, largely
unconsciously and in conjunction with a host of other social-cultural variables (gender, class,
etc.), shape and direct the lives and the identities of these people. These cultural and social
factors mark out the limits and possibilities of national identity, and provide the latent raw
materials upon which a nationalism—should one become possible or necessary—can and must,
build. No nationalism, "invented" though they may be, could successfully mobilize broad
sectors of a population without building on something already resonant and recognizable to the
all the different social and economic groups which make up 'a people'.

While it is true that before the rise of nationalism (at the beginning of the modern age),
before the onset of broad processes of 'modernization', these elements of national identity may
have been generally insignificant, or irrelevant, even unreflected for a person's identity\(^4\),
with the onset of the economic, political, and social integration (and separations) of moderniza-
tion, and the rise of a nationalist movement, no sector of the population can remain unaffected

\(^4\)See Greenfeld, Nationalism; Hayes, The Historical Evolution of Nationalism; Kohn, The Idea of
Nationalism.
and ignorant of that national identity. The German-Bohemian workers in the late-nineteenth
century very clearly shared 'Germanness' with their upper-class co-nationals; they were
members of the nation by virtually any accepted definition of the word. This was something
which was capitalized on, and probably even manipulated, or interpreted by nationalism. But
was not something wholly created by nationalism.

And the German workers were not unaware of their Germanness. Nor, despite some
ideologically driven ambivalence in party-programmatical pronouncements, were the rank-and-
file workers embarrassed or confused by it. A liberal theology student who spent several
months masquerading as a worker in a factory in Saxony and wrote about his experiences
noted that the workers frequently had small pictures of the Kaiser next to pictures of Karl
Marx at their work-stations.49 And Roth tells of the home of one Social-Democratically
active family in whose home hung, in one room, the pictures of August Bebel, Wilhelm
Liebknecht, Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx, Otto von Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm, several
saints, and Field Marshal von Moltke.50 Things in German-Bohemia, just across the border,
were no different. During the early 1900s, the Social-Democratic organizations in Aussig
staged a series of "entertaining evenings" highlighting various regions of the greater Germany:
for example a presentation of "folkloric (volkstümliche) skits from life" in Bavarian dialect and
costume in 1907, and an "alpine concert" of folksongs from Kärnten by members of the metal-
workers' choral society in 1905.51 This kind of awareness and acceptance of national identity
was even truer of the Czech-speaking workers, who eventually made their Czechness the focal
point of their Social-Democratic identity and activity.52

The crucial question for understanding how this can work, and how to explain the
difference (in form as well as in terms of when and where it appears) between simple national
identity and nationalism, has to do with the function of each. The key is that nationalism
represents a national identity focused and mobilized for political action as the supreme,
overriding identity and focal point for social and political activity. National identity, on its

49Paul Göhre, Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter und Handwerksbursche (Jena?, 1895).

50Roth, The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany, 217. Bebel, Liebknecht, and Lassalle were German
socialist leaders.

51Volksrecht (Aussig), 15 September 1907, 4; and 16 May 1905, 5.

52Mommsen, Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage, 181-234; Zdeněk Šolík, Socialistické
dělnické hnutí a česká otázka 1848-1918 (Prague: Academia, 1969); idem. "Die tschechische Sozialdemokratie
own, prior to mobilization by or as nationalism, is much more diffuse, unfocused, *unsignified*. It has no necessary political component, and thus tends to be more purely cultural. While this may sound rather common-sensical, it has some interesting consequences which are of the utmost importance for a realistic and usable understanding of nationalism.

A cultural-national identity, unmobilized for nationalistic purposes, is more fluid, flexible, and interactive than nationalism would make it appear. The evidence suggests that no identity—national, class, or even gender—is completely monolithic, hegemonic, and all exclusive: human beings and their lives are far too multi-faceted for that. Unfocused into an exclusivistic and particularistic nationalism, national identity is one of an array of social and cultural identities. Like class, it is only one aspect of the workers' social existence—one area of reality of their everyday lives. But it, again like class, is integrally connected to most other aspects. Consequently, cultural-national identity is perfectly able to coexist with virtually any other identity, including class. Eloquent testimony of this is provided by the miners' union in Dux (Duchcov), a town not far from Teplitz, which insisted, without police permission and against the better judgement of the party leadership, on attending the unveiling of a memorial to Kaiser Josef II in 1881. The report in the Social-Democratic paper *Arbeiterfreund* described how the miners, expecting a true *Volksfest*, found instead long, boring speeches by bourgeois dignitaries full of "*deutsche Blöderei*" (German stupidity). Yet the sentiment was neither anti-national, nor even a-national, for it goes on to describe how one of the miners reportedly turned to the author of the report at the end of one speech and "said, as he pointed to the castle ruins, 'We're free of those up there, and from these'—here he pointed at the speakers' podium—'we will yet be free. No one will take our Germanness from us!'"53 There is nothing at all incompatible about national and class identities *per se*, as must be clear from the case of the Bohemian working classes.

Nor, it turns out, perhaps even more importantly, is there any necessary incompatibility between various national identities, as such. The Czech workers living in the overwhelmingly German-Bohemian towns of Aussig and Teplitz were confronted with enormous pressures to cultural-ethnic assimilation. This was all the more true for those Czech workers (the majority of them) under the influence of the Social-Democratic movement, which was, as we've seen above, heavily imbued with a German-national identity. Although there were abundant efforts

---

53 *Arbeiterfreund* (Reichenberg), 27 October 1881, 3. Kaiser Josef II of Austria was famed as an enlightened ruler who did much to rationalize and centralize the Habsburg lands. Because of the germanifying implications of many of his reforms, and perhaps also because he ruled in the 18th century, at a time when Austria was still a leader in the German-speaking world, and when it was still possible to contemplate a united Germany including Austria, he became something of a cult-figure to German nationalists in Austria.
to accommodate both languages at party functions, particularly in the early years. German remained very decidedly the language of the party and movement.54

This was much more than a simple matter of lexicon, for the Social-Democratic movement, coming as it did to the Austrian lands from mid-century Germany, was filled with the spirit, and values, and iconography of the national-democratic movement of 1848, as we’ve seen above. To be a part of this movement, then, was to be introduced to, and to identify at some level with the likes of Friedrich Schiller, and even Friedrich Jahn and the idea of Großdeutschland (Greater Germany, i.e. a Germany including Austria).55 In fact, one of the centers of the workers’ movement in Bohemia was the Workers’ Educational Societies (Arbeiterbildungsvereine), which were naturally very heavily culturally German: their libraries included, as well as Social-Democratic standards, also classics of German literature, and a good deal of popular literature (Karl May, translations of Jack London, etc.), but very rarely any literature in Czech.56 Education here meant, not surprisingly, education in a particular language and into a particular culture. The workers in Aussig’s and Teplitz’s mines, factories,

54 Most rallies, particularly in the 1860s and 1870s, included a speaker in the German language followed by one in Czech. And the statutes of many working-class associations made explicit provision for the use of both "Landessprachen" ("languages of the land" or "regional languages") in meetings. As the normally exclusive use of German in those very statutes indicates, however, the language of the party--its very thought and vocabulary--was German, with Czech an acknowledged minority language. These kinds of materials are collected in the series ČM in the Státní ústřední archiv (SÚA) in Prague.

55 Friedrich Schiller, an enduring figure of German national culture, and German national sentiment, was also a favorite of the socialists. His championing of the ‘common people’ and his romantic outrage at all forms of oppression and injustice made him the perfect bridge between nationalist and socialist values—a fusion which was not at all unusual in the earlier part of the century. Friedrich Jahn is a bit more problematic. Called by successive generations Turnvater (gymnastics-father), Jahn founded in 1811 a network of gymnastics clubs to serve as a vehicle for the physical and moral regeneration of particularly the youth of Germany. Much vilified in this century by writers who see in him a precursor of an arrogant, aggressive, and xenophobic German nationalism, Jahn was nevertheless also much concerned with equality and social justice. Although he was not touted as loudly or officially as was Schiller by the Social-Democrats, it is an irony of late-nineteenth century German-speaking society, that Jahn was honored and claimed as spiritual father by both hard-bitten nationalists and many Social-Democrats. In fact, gymnastics clubs were important recruitment and educational locuses for both movements. On Schiller in the socialist movement see especially Rector, "Wozu der Arbeiter die bürgerliche Kultur braucht". There has as yet been relatively little work on the gymnastics clubs; but see Lidtke’s interesting discussion of the way both socialists and nationalists strove to appropriate for themselves the legacy of Jahn: Lidtke, The Alternative Culture, 66.

56 Based on a thorough examination of the extant records of the holdings of the Workers’ Educational Associations (which are very incomplete), ČM, SÚA; occasional records can also be found in the press and in memoirs like those of Holek, Lebensgang eines deutsch-tschechischen Handarbeiters. See also Dieter Langewiesche, Zur Freizeit des Arbeiters. Bildungsbestrebungen und Freizeitgewohnheiten österreichischer Arbeiter im Kaiserreich und in der Ersten Republik (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), 174-222.
and tile-yards who had come there from the Czech interior and then become associated with the Social-Democratic movement (and census statistics, as well as member-books from a variety of working-class organizations and the working-class press suggest that this was a significant number) were, prima facie, likely to adopt much of the language use and values, and to become part of the everyday social-cultural networks of interaction which make up national identity—in this case a German national identity.

Worker autobiographies, like that of the "German-Czech" worker Wenzel Holek, make this point eloquently. Holek, whose given name was Václav, was a Czech-speaking dock worker and tile-shingle maker in Aussig, who, through his integration into the Social-Democratic movement there, became completely assimilated into its German-national culture, eventually identifying himself as a member of that culture and disparaging his fellow Czechs and Czech culture. For Holek, as for most Austro-Germans, including the Social-Democratic leadership, Germanness was associated simply with education, cultural and social advancement, and a higher civilizational step. Indeed, when a self-consciously, and separatistic, Czech Social-Democratic movement began to develop, this was one of the primary complaints leveled against the parent Austrian party.

So far there would be nothing unusual or particularly interesting about this. But a sensitive reading of the evidence (one with a more differentiated appreciation of cultural-national identity vs. political-national mobilization of that identity) reveals that for the great majority of the Czech workers, this layer of German cultural-national identity which came especially with their integration into the Social-Democratic movement, coexisted with another layer of a still very clearly Czech cultural-national identity. Holek aside, who was an unusual and somewhat extreme case of near-total assimilation, the Czech workers did not cease to be recognizably Czech workers, despite their adoption of much of a German-national culture.

---

57 Wenzel Holek, Lebensgang eines deutsch-tschechischen Handarbeiters.

58 The main Czech Social-Democratic organ Právo lidu accused the Austro-German Social-Democrats of trying to accomplish that which the Austrian state, police, and capitalists had so far not managed: the complete germanification of the Czech working class. Právo lidu (Prague), 4 August 1911. And in 1905, the Czech leader Antonín Němec tagged one of the Austro-German trade-union leaders with the charge of "germanization-lust" and "national domination-addiction". Mommesen, Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage, 412.

59 The very writing of the autobiography puts Holek in the "unusual worker" category: and his book was written explicitly as the story of a workers' journey from ignorance, unculturability, and dependence to culture and self-assertion, which happens to correspond also to Holek's gradual journey from the interior of Bohemia, to the northwestern (German-Bohemian) rim, to, finally, Germany itself. The autobiography of Holek's son, Heinrich (or Jindřich), describing life at the turn of the century and in the first years of the 20th century, manifests a much greater awareness of and pride in his Czech identity, and a greater tension between his Czech
Within party organizations and functions, as noted above, Czechs commonly claimed and were accorded certain language considerations, although there can be no doubt that virtually all of them could understand and speak German in some measure. Reports show also that at many of the taverns where the Social-Democrats tended to pass the time, subscriptions were maintained not only to the local and Viennese, so German-language, party newspapers, but also to several Czech-language publications. After 1897 a local, Teplitz-based, Czech-language party organ was published—Severočeský dělník (The North-Bohemian Worker). But nowhere, apparently, was there a tavern (or any other kind of meeting place) which carried only Czech-language publications. At least until the organizational divorce of the 1910s, it is apparent that the Czech-speaking workers not only worked and met on party business together with their German-speaking comrades, but that they also socialized, and drank, together, thus

and German identities: Heinrich Holek, Unterwegs.

Although the Austrian authorities were loath to collect any direct statistics on ethnicity or language ability, which might seem to give official legitimation to the nationality principle, there is a great deal of evidence which makes any other conclusion extremely unlikely. For purely practical reasons, for example, the authorities were obliged to collect data on the linguistic abilities of school children. They reveal that in 1900, the number of children in the German-language school districts who were bilingual was three times the number of those who were able to speak only Czech (7.7% as compared to 2.5%; those who could speak only German was naturally the great majority, at 89.8%). ÖS (1900), table 88, LXIX-LXX. Also Heinrich Rauchberg, Der rationale Besitzstand in Böhmen, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1905), 435; and Jan Havránek, "Češi v severočeských a západočeských městech v letech 1880-1930", Ústecký sbornik historický (1979): 227-253. Also important in this regard is the fact of the paucity of Czech schools in the region—Aussig was the only town in the area with a Czech school; and it had only one, founded in 1896 and located in Schönprysen. Archiv Města Ústí nad Labem, Inventář, VII skupina fondu, 174-176, compiled by Jan Beuček. Holek, whose whole story is one of the general need for Czech workers in northern Bohemia to speak German and who made the complete journey from almost exclusive Czech-speaker as a child to almost exclusive German-speaker as an adult, also presents very clear, if anecdotal, evidence of this point: Wenzel Holek, Lebensgang eines deutsch-tschechischen Händlerarbeiters. Certainly many of the Czechs in Aussig would not have spoken German very well—the German-nationalist press is full enough of stories poking fun at “Wenzel’s” Kauderwelsch (roughly: gobbledygook; Wenzel, being a common Bohemian name and the name of the patron saint of Bohemia and one of its ancient kings—svatý Václav, or St. Wenceslaus—was how Germans frequently referred to Czechs)—and that they would naturally have felt more comfortable hearing the speeches or asking questions in Czech, given the opportunity. But there can be no doubt that they were all more or less capable of existing and interacting in a German-speaking world, which is precisely what they had to do, not as a Czech minority in German-Bohemian northwestern Bohemia, but also as Czechs in Habsburg Austria.

In 1889, for example, the Teplitz Allgemeiner Arbeiterbildungsverein decided to subscribe to a number of socialist papers of both the German and Czech languages. Report of the Teplitz Beirikshauptmann to the Staathalterei from 6 December 1889: SUA, CM 1884-1900: 30/259/172. And according to the Arbeiterfreund (Reichenberg), 11 November 1876, p. 4, the Aussig Arbeiterbildungsverein possessed 262 books in German and 28 in Czech as early as 1876. Another article in the Volksrecht (Aussig), from 1 June 1901, p. 5, described how the terms for the ending of a socialist boycott against a tavern in Schönprysen (Krásné Březno) were that the owner had agreed to subscribe to several Czech and German Social-Democratic papers.
sharing a not insignificant degree of culture and identity, while at the same time the Czech-speakers were maintaining on some other level something of their own Czech language and national identity.

The primary location, or vehicle for this Czech cultural-national identity was naturally their connection to a larger national society, with the family as a sort of crossroads, or zone of inter-communication between 'public' and 'private', and/or between the various public spheres, as described above for the German-Bohemian workers. In the same way as they continue to function for immigrants in the United States, the families of the Czech workers served as lifelines back to, or miniature copies of the society and culture left behind. If the worker was in northern Bohemia with a family, that family sphere would be one of the few places where he or she would speak Czech in Aussig or Teplitz, reinforcing the maintenance of that aspect of their national identity. And as more and more families came with or were established by the Czech workers, they began to draw after them Czech shopkeepers, priests, and teachers, establishing eventually a kind of critical mass, and a self-sustaining Czech society. This self-sustaining, or self-reinforcing Czech society rarely reached the proportions in northern Bohemia where it could completely sunder itself from the larger northern Bohemian society—something which, in the terms of the argument made above about the interdependence of all social sectors, would be rather impossible in any event. The Czech workers, and presumably their family members as well, remained quite well integrated into the larger, German-speaking work, social, and Social-Democratic worlds.

Perhaps surprisingly, the German-speaking workers also exhibited a rather high degree of multi-national identity, or at least the potential for such. While their language and national identity were quite clearly German, and while their ability to speak Czech must be assumed to have been rather limited, there is nonetheless evidence that the other Landessprache was not an entirely foreign thing for them. Statistics from the censuses of 1890 and 1900 indicate a very high level of bilinguality among the school children of the northern Bohemian districts.62 While this must be treated with some caution (it is possible that the higher level could be accounted for entirely by the Czech minority— it is so far impossible to determine with any exactness how many children Czechs as compared to Germans had, and so attempt to correlate the sets of data), combined with an also surprisingly high degree of mixed Czech-German

---

62See above, note #54.
marriages—nearly 15-25%—it offers at least the suspicion that the working classes, particularly, must have had more in common, culturally, than nationalist imagery would insist. It ought to be remembered that although German-Bohemia must be seen as in many ways very distinct from the Bohemian interior and that in a similar way much links it with the southern Saxon region just across the border, the fact remains that Aussig and Teplitz were also part of the Kingdom of Bohemia.

Want ads for workers who were conversant in both languages were as late as the turn of the century not uncommon in the newspapers—including in hard-bitten German-nationalist papers, which found, one may presume, few Czech readers. And short Czech phrases, without translation, appeared fairly frequently in the German-Bohemian press of all stripes. Perhaps most interestingly, as a significant example of a common, at least potentially multinational identity, are the very common ads—again, even in the rabidly German-nationalist press—for live carp at Christmas-time: the purchase of carp and their preparation for the

63This must remain a somewhat tentative figure. The Austrian authorities were not interested in data on national origin or mother tongues, and so the marriage records give no direct information of this sort. Nor can anything be assumed from the language of the entry, for while in Prague entries can be found in both languages, in Aussig and Teplitz—being German-speaking towns—the entries tend to be always in German; indeed the consistent handwriting for these records suggest that an official took down the information from the bridal couple, and so would have wanted it in German. In any event, even had the couple filled out the register themselves and felt free to use their language of choice, it is hardly likely that the bride would have used one language and the groom another, thereby giving proof of a mixed marriage—presumably they would have settled on one or the other for their daily use. But the recording of the places of birth of not only the bride and groom, but also their parents, in combination with the official statistics on the linguistic make-up of the towns and villages of Bohemia, offer a reasonable estimation of the number of possibly mixed marriages. For example, the data show for Schönepriesen, an ethnically heavily mixed and heavily working-class ‘suburb’ of Aussig, that of a total of 108 weddings between 1869 and 1896, there were 18 where either the bride, groom, or both of the bride’s or groom’s parents were from towns where 80-100% of the population recorded the other language. There were another 15 weddings where at least one of the parent’s of the bride and/or groom was from a town with an 80-100% population of the other language, or where either the groom, bride, or one of the sets of parents were from a town where 50-79% of the population recorded the other language. If all of these could be counted as a ‘mixed marriage’, that would make slightly over 30%. Liberal allowance must be made, however, for the possibility that the minority populations in these towns were marrying spouses of their own language from other areas, where they weren’t in the minority.

64Advertisements looking for workers—particularly counter-persons in shops, secretaries, or telegraph-operators—fluent in both languages, or offering placement for boys and apprentices who are to learn both languages, can be found throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, in all kinds of newspapers.
Christmas meal is generally thought of as a Czech custom, something practiced by Czechs to this day, but nowhere else by Germans.65

IV

The picture painted above of multiple and shifting, situationally determined national identities, while completely incomprehensible from the standpoint of nationalist-oriented thinking, is entirely explicable and consistent with an understanding of national identity as the entirely cultural, non-fixed 'raw materials' of what can be, but need not be mobilized into an exclusivistic, hegemonic political-national nationalism. That kind of mobilization, the turning of a national identity into a nationalism, can, and does, occur for a wide variety of reasons, and under a wide variety of circumstances. In the case of the Czech Social-Democrats, it occurred as a result of a combination of nationalist pressure from the Czech bourgeoisie-nationalist movement66, the growing size of the Czech community in northwestern Bohemia, without which no Czech national identity could long be sustained, let alone mobilized, and the fact that, for the Czechs, lines of class and national oppression generally seemed to run parallel to each other. Here (as for the Germans in 1848) the class enemy and the national enemy tended to be one and the same, rendering a strong class identity unproblematic for a mobilized national identity, and vice versa. This last point is very important, because for the German-Bohemian workers, although the other conditions may have held true also for them, no such parallelism was possible.

In the German-Bohemian case, a strong class identity was incompatible with, or at least very problematic for, a mobilized German-national identity (nationalism), though not, clearly,

65 Again, such advertisements can be found, from the 1850s through at least the end of the 1890s, in newspapers of all kinds of political persuasions—including in the rabidly German-nationalist Aussig-Karbitter Wochenblatt. After the second World War, of course, all but perhaps a thousand of the once over three million German-Bohemians (Sudeten-Germans) were expelled from Czechoslovakia. Today, although no real study has been made, the Sudeten-Germans and their descendants living in Germany seem to no longer practice this custom. This is not surprising, for the cumulative experiences of annexation by Germany and 'nazification', the war, and their expulsion would be more than enough to mobilize their national identity to more of a political-national consciousness, limiting and directing their cultural-national identity-options.

66 It is significant that the pressure for separation into nationally distinct Social-Democratic organizations in northwestern Bohemia came almost entirely from outside the area—from the nationally more homogeneous Prague. There was found no evidence of locally generated agitation for separation. In fact, because of the thorough intermixing and the resulting complex multiple cultural identities, northwestern Bohemia remained the last and most difficultly organized region for the Czecho-Slavic (not to be confused with Czechoslovak) party. See the Freiheit (Teplitz), 6 January 1912, Beilage 1; also Jan Máchý, Počátky dělnického hnutí na hornickém severu (Prague: Práce, 1967), 313.
with a cultural-national identity. What is important here is that the German-speaking workers, despite the claims of their Social-Democratic leaders and many of their nationalist opponents, were not 'comrades without a country'; they were not devoid of national identity, but their national identity remained almost purely cultural, unfocused into exclusivist political channels. Their national identity did not need to be, and indeed under the circumstances could not be mobilized for these kinds of nationalist purposes. In the late-nineteenth century Austrian empire, where German language and culture predominated as the language and culture of power and Culture, the mobilization of national identity into nationalism certainly did mean for the Austro-German workers a concession to the opposing ideology and to the class-enemy, without bringing any discernible benefit. It did not, therefore, become so mobilized—at least not in any sort of consistent, general way, isolated examples notwithstanding. At the same time the workers continued to be, indeed in some sense through their involvement with Social-Democracy became even more German.

Historical conditions will not, however, remain static. At particular historical junctures the national identity of the German-Bohemian workers self-evidently became indeed mobilizable for nationalist purposes. In August 1914, during the winter of 1918/19, and in May 1935—and perhaps also at other times for specific individuals or for very brief spurts—it is obvious that the circumstances, possibilities, and constraints were such that the need or advantages of such a mobilization and utilization of national identity outweighed whatever problems or disadvantage might have existed. The mechanics of those situations need not be gone into here. What is important is, first, that no national identity need, sui generis, become a nationalism. Secondly, the eruption of nationalism, the successful mobilization of a national identity, and then the particular shape or character of that nationalism, once mobilized, depends very much on the environmental circumstances—the specific set of social, cultural, and political factors, which are always shifting. Lastly, while the logic of nationalism demands the integration and mobilization of the entire 'people', the absence of a nationalist mobilization on the part of any people or part of a people in a particular historical situation—e.g. the German-speaking workers in late-nineteenth century Bohemia—in no way suggests that they have been unaffected by the forces of nationalization and nation-forming, that they are not a nation or not part of their nation. It simply means that their national identity did or could not take the specific form of an exclusivist, hegemonic political mobilization. But when that kind of nationalist mobilization does occur, obviously it had to build on something; there was something which was available to become mobilized.
Nationalism, then, is only a kind of reified, monopolized, and rigidified expression of something much more pervasive, profound, and constant. In the modern world national identity is a given, while nationalism is not. And national identity, unlike nationalism, is very flexible and interactive, only one part of any group's identity-complex, and in no way inherently in conflict with any of them. Thus, while it exploits something fundamental to any group's social reality—something 'natural'—nationalism itself is neither natural nor inevitable. It is rather the deliberate manipulation and mobilization of national identity for very concrete political purposes, a particular response to a particular historical situation.

Because it must try to build on this more profound social and cultural reality, however, the particular shape and chances for success of any nationalism is going to depend on the particular character and parameters of that national identity, as well as on the concrete relationship of the group's entire range of social, cultural, and political identities to that national identity. The Czech and German workers showed markedly different uses of their national identities in their political situations. And they displayed different potentials for the nationalistic mobilization of those national identities. Nationalism appears to have its limits.

At the same time, as precisely the German-Bohemian working-class experience shows, history never remains static, and the constellation of political and social pressures can shift enough that a nationalistic mobilization of national identity can become tenable even in populations where it had previously shown no success. When this happens, when nationalism appears as it did for the German-Bohemian workers around WWI and again in the mid-1930s, we need to look rather to the concrete political circumstances, than to any presumed irrationality. It is not so much the emotion or sentiment of nationalism itself, its programs and intellectual origins, which is important, then, but the environment, the circumstances which make such a mobilization of an unproblematic national identity possible and necessary.

The bottom line would appear to be that, from the largest perspective, we can expect nationalism to continue to be a problem, a possibility virtually anywhere and anytime. It is not linked to any particular stage of modernization, nor is it anything primitive and irrational. It will presumably continue to be a feature of our modern world. On the other hand, and a bit more happily, since it is never without reason, we can perhaps learn to understand better what sorts of social and political circumstances they are which lend themselves to a nationalistic seizure and manipulation of national identity. Superficial observation already suggests the beginnings of an answer: nationalism thrives, for example, in situations of change, in perceptions of loss, victimization, and weakness. Closer, more exacting study is needed. While that is beyond the scope of the present work, it is hoped that this study has succeeded in focusing
our understanding of what exactly nationalism is, in relation to people's everyday lives, and how it can be explained that nationalism can reach out and include such large and otherwise very disparate population sectors.

Nationalism may be at one level an elite-class 'trick'. But its foundation of national identity is a social reality. The phenomenon as a whole is not irrational, nor retrograde, nor inexplicable, but rather a fundamental social and political reality of the modern age, with which we are likely to have to continue to deal—potentially everywhere, but not necessarily anywhere.