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**How it was, How it is, and How it Should be:  
The Roots of Czech Language Revival in Bohemia, 1775 – 1800**

**Shirley Ascroft**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The Department**

**of**

**Education**

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## ABSTRACT

How it was, How it is, and How it Should be:  
The Roots of Czech Language Revival in Bohemia, 1775-1800

Shirley Ascroft

This thesis discusses the phenomenon of language revival through an examination of the Czech National Awakening, a literary, philological and eventually politico-national movement that took place in the Czech Lands in the nineteenth century and the only completely successful case of language revival in Europe. Language death is a steadily increasing phenomenon and it is unclear why most attempts at revival meet with either limited or no success. The study focuses on the twenty-five years immediately prior to the Awakening in an attempt to understand how a small, scholarly, eighteenth-century linguistic movement to preserve Czech in the face of the growing power of German grew into a national cause. To this end it explores the significance of the historical background, the importance of changes to the educational system, the roles played by the aristocracy, the Church, and the Czech intelligentsia, and the great social and intellectual upheaval of the late eighteenth century. All these factors had a role in upsetting the delicate linguistic balance in the Czech Lands. The findings show that the Czechs have experienced a history wherein language has always been a chief identifier of ethnic status. At the end of the eighteenth century a new generation of Czech scholars added to this a new spirit of modern nationalism, wherein it began to be important to speak, read, and write Czech in order to participate in the national experience. It is also suggested that the common assumption that language has always been the chief component of nationalism is fallacious. An important factor in modern language revival may be an analysis of the particular national group or groups involved, in order to see how basic language is to their self-identification.

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## THESIS STATEMENT

The thesis questioned why the Czech National Revival enjoyed such success while language programs aligned with similar national movements in nineteenth century Europe failed. After examining the roots of the movement, it is clear that the key factor that led to the revival of a fully functional Czech lay in the ancient Czech identification of language, and not religion, territory, or any of the other elements associated with national description, as the key element that marked them as distinct. At the turn of the nineteenth century this concept underwent a metamorphosis and reappeared in the form of language as the embodiment of the Czech national spirit. In order to participate in the community, to fully share in this spirit, it was vital to speak, and not just honour, one's native tongue.

**Note:** All translations appearing in this work were done by the author, with the kind assistance of Jana Kostincova and Manfred Feitgenhauer.

## Introduction

*What defines a nation? Well, first I guess that would have to be language.*  
People and Politicians, BBC World Service, March 23, 2000

The Russian literary critic Yuri Lotman describes 'semiosphere' as a metastructure wherein one or more central languages dominate all functions – from the most personal to the most public. This language (or languages) has reached the highest stage of structural organization and is regarded as the 'natural' language of the semiosphere. It has reached a stage of high self-description, having grammars and dictionaries that define its boundaries, and it dominates the high, or prestige, areas of law, religion, politics and the high social sphere. It spreads its cultural norms across the semiosphere from most abstract to the most concrete and at the centre there is stasis and blindness to semiotic or cultural activity outside the centre.

However, Lotman is more interested in the activity on the periphery, where marginal languages exist - the half formed, the low, and the ones from without, but dynamic and constantly in collision with each other and the central language. Here on the outer rim lies the realm of the polyglot and semio/cultural ambiguity. One or more of these peripheral tongues may be in the process of developing its own structures of self-identification and creating its own cultural norms, and can be in a stage of transition from outer to inner. When a peripheral language or an intruder from another semiosphere for some reason begins to dominate the inner domains, the central language or languages in that semiosphere may begin to stagnate, and then, possibly, to disappear, first from the public and then the private sphere. The result is language death, a phenomenon that has become more and more common in the twentieth century (Lotman, 1996).

In the twentieth-century, a European and North American concept postulates that the extinction of languages and their speech communities is undesirable, both morally and culturally (Crystal, 2000; Haarmann, 1985). This follows from the relatively recent presumption that language is a key element in defining ethno-cultural identity and further, that all these identities are of equal value. Thus, in an attempt to promote policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism, official attempts are being made to revive endangered and moribund languages with the aid of language planning agencies and professional language planners. These undertakings, however, often begin as the result of nationalist efforts by elite (i.e. educated and assimilated) groups within a marginalized speech community in an effort to define themselves and the nation they represent as distinct. That a common tongue can bind a group of speakers, promoting social, historic, and cultural affinity while creating a sense of common political and territorial destiny, is a powerful and attractive notion.

The premise behind language revival today is that language has the power to bind a community spiritually, while enabling it politically and perhaps economically. As attractive as this may sound to certain interest groups, it is only rarely attempted, and even more rarely succeeds. There are many reasons for language revival failure, some of which are understood; many of which are not. Many sociolinguists would argue that failures result because there is very little actual correspondence between language and ethnicity (Haarmann, 1986; Eastman, 1984). Others would ascribe revival failure to apathy of the dominant language community and the economic inequality that is too often the hallmark of small and marginalized nations (Crystal, 2000). Many historians, political scientists, and sociologists point out the tenuous links that 'native tongue' has had to nationalist movements (Hobsbawm, 1990, 1987; Smith, 1984, 1970). Ethnologists, focus on the very ambiguous relationship, full of misunderstandings, that exists between language planners and the elite

interest groups that have commissioned their services, and the body of people who are actually to speak the language they wish to revive.

In this vein, Reg Hindley theorizes that the failure to revive Irish Gaelic is, in part, due to the fact that Irish English is particular enough a variety to create a sense of distinct identity in the Irish speech community that nationalists, mistakenly, have believed only a historically determined language such as Gaelic could produce (Hindley, 1990). Mari Jones describes Breton speakers as living in a semiosphere in which Breton assumes private and local community functions, while French is the language of wider communication. Much to the chagrin of Breton nationalists, the majority of Breton speakers view the homogenized standard version of the four distinct varieties of their language with suspicion, and the educational program that accompanies it as an insult. It is seen as inferring that somehow they are not up to full-level communication in French (Jones, 1998). As well, a strong government-sponsored program to revive Uzbeki is foundering due to the enduring belief on the part of most of the population that Russian has brought and will continue to bring all the benefits of modernization. Their native tongue will not function as appropriately in spheres many wish to enter (Faust, 2000).

Despite the many setbacks, there is an ever-growing interest in mounting attempts to resuscitate and maintain marginalized tongues, even in Europe. Here, in the last twenty years, only Welsh can be said to have achieved any real measure of success (Crystal, 2000; Welsh Language Board, 2000). Nevertheless, interest in language revival continues, certainly in part due to the enduring perception of language as the main factor that distinguishes a national or proto-national society. It is, in fact, only one of a number of come-and-go factors that find a unique balance within every self-perceived community, including religion, territory, heroes and history, cultural norms and traditions, political precedent, and ethnicity

(race). All or none of these factors may be chosen by the group to define itself and its aims, and not one, including language, has ever proved itself indispensable (Hobsbawm, 1986; Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1976). For each group, the balance will be different. In the former Yugoslavia, where the population has a common language, and shared a public culture, political ideology, educational system, and territorial bounds for sixty years, the two dominant factors of perceived distinction would seem to be first names and cuisine (Drakulic, 1988).

Despite a large body of evidence that would indicate otherwise, many modern nationalists continue to see language as the leading definer of the nation. Under the term 'nation' are bound a series of related givens, including language as the defining factor in ethnicity, the right to political and territorial autonomy, and a high level of cultural homogeneity. These seem today to be a 'natural' part of the process of national growth but are, in fact, European concepts that took modern form at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They were developed during nation-building processes over that century, and reached a grotesque apotheosis in the doctrines of the Third Reich.

Many of the strong language revival programs extant today, from Basque to Bahasa Indonesia, are part of movements to either strengthen or create nations and most play some role in the development of a national consciousness (Crystal; 2000; Haarmann, 1985; Alisjahbana, 1984). Yet despite the sophisticated, tolerant, and highly sensitive work done by language planners in many parts of the world, language and its role in modern nationalism is not still well-understood. Some believe that linguistic nationalism can be instilled in a people (Crystal, 2000; Hale, 1992). Too many nation-building ideologues still espouse the one-language, one-people, one-border theory without understanding national and historic variables involved and without foreseeing the catastrophic consequences these programs

may sometimes bring about (Laponce, 1984). While the planners themselves emphasize diversity, their employers are often interested in political power. Language revival as part of a nationalist agenda is often doomed to, at best, only partial success

The causes of language death are reasonably, if not entirely, understood. What has not been satisfactorily explained, however, is precisely why one group will view the disappearance of their mother tongue with relative indifference, while another will fight fiercely for the right to maintain it. Understanding the factors that precipitate these behaviours may lie in a deeper comprehension of the national taxonomy of each particular marginalized community.

Although language planning has been described as a twentieth (and now twenty first) century activity (Haarmann, 1986), the most completely successful instance of language revival in Europe, Czech, was initiated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is of particular interest to follow the beginnings of a successful linguistic revival that was the key element in a nineteenth-century nation-building agenda. Of more importance, however, is to look at the pre-national period at the end of the eighteenth century, when the transition from philological to national movement can be seen. The national identity, or consciousness, of the Czechs was an essential part of their language revival and grasping the makeup of that identity is essential to the understanding of their success.

### ***Czech***

The present-day Czech Republic (one half of the former Czechoslovakia) is comprised of the historic regions of Bohemia, Moravia, and part of the former Silesia – the Lands of the Czech Crown, or Czech Lands. It is a democratic state presently enjoying its twelfth year of autonomy, and has been self-governing for only thirty-two of the past 500 years. Lying in the very heart of Europe, it forms a natural geographical unit – that is, an oval of mountain

ranges surrounding a fertile central plain. Czech is the most westerly of the Slavic languages, and today approximately 10.5 million Czech speakers live in the Czech Republic, and approximately 1.3 million more live abroad. Literacy is rated at 99%<sup>1</sup>, and 55% of Czechs believe themselves to have communicative competence in at least one second language.<sup>1</sup>

Although the word 'Czech' appeared as early as the seventh century in connection with language (Daneš, et al, 1997), it was considered a Slavonic dialect as late as the end of the seventeenth century. Until that time and even later, speakers of Czech used 'Czech' to denote their ethnic and political status and 'Czech' and 'Slavonic' alternately to signify the language they spoke (Seibt, 1998; Carleton, 1990; Balbín, 1675). It was standardized in its modern form during the first half of the nineteenth century, which is why Czech is diglossic – the written, and High form differs substantially from the three major, and highly mutually intelligible spoken varieties, which are to greater or lesser extents considered Low (Čermák, 1993). These varieties, in turn, roughly correspond with the traditional regional boundaries, although there are many sub-varieties.

Until 1945, the linguistic situation in the Czech Lands was complicated by the presence of a large number of ethnic Germans who made up approximately one third of the population after 1400. Most of them lived in the cities and in the mountainous border regions, especially in West and North Bohemia (the Sudetenland) and for hundreds of years their language dominated commercial and governmental spheres. In the aftermath of World War II, approximately 3.5 million Sudeten Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia and ethnic Czechs from other parts of the country were moved in to take their place.

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<sup>1</sup> As opposed to their neighbours the Germans, 44.3%; Austrians, 32%; Hungarians, 24%; Poles, 20%. All these statistics were provided by the Czech Language Institute ASCR; and are found in *Lidové Noviny*, no 124, year XIII, Friday, 28 July, 2000

The National Revival, or Awakening, began in the last years of the eighteenth century and from the beginning the movement to revitalize Czech was a movement to combat the overwhelming gains German had made in the Lands over the previous centuries. The first generation of Awakeners, the men who spearheaded the movement, were deeply affected by the linguistic, political, social, and intellectual developments that marked the period. It is through following their progress, their transition from patriots to nationalists, that the link between national spirit and linguistic revival can be charted.



## Chapter One

### **The Czech Thread: Historical Background to 1770**

*O Lords, have only Czechs in your councils, and prevent these guests from settling. Use your own language and abandon the alien tongue!*

From the Chronicle of Dalimil, circa 1350

*The Germans misuse the willingness and kindness of the Czechs, and they try to use it to eliminate the homeland and the Slavonic language.*

Bohuslav Balbin, circa 1679

There is a theme that underlies the work of many nineteenth and twentieth-century Czech historians that was first formulated in a modern context by the nationalist historian František Palacký (1798-1876). He suggested that throughout history the Czechs have possessed a distinct sense of Czech ‘national’ consciousness: tolerant, humanistic, intellectual and linguocentric. This distinct identity and sense of proto-national spirit has always been represented most particularly in the use of Czech by Czechs, and the championing of that language against the threat of German language contact and socioeconomic domination (Palacký, 1831). Pavel Josef Šafařík (1796-1861), linguist and Slavist, goes further, adding that this special linguistic consciousness is imbedded in the very grammar of Czech. Its feminine, childlike, and pliable inflections are contrasted with the grown-up, masculine and inflexible nature of the Germanic grammatical structure. Most significantly, he argues that Czech is capable of transmitting its special qualities to ethnic Czech speakers of the language (Šafařík, 1846, in Macura, 1995, p.42).

This idea, of the transmission of cultural norms, especially of a national nature, through the medium of language is a common, though not entirely well-understood concept (Crystal, 2000; Lotman, 1996; Haarman, 1986; Eastman, 1984; Edwards, 1984; Smith, 1984). Although the germ of this concept appeared sporadically at earlier periods, in the aftermath of the French revolution it would become an important feature of small, struggling, nationalist movements in many parts of Europe, and especially amongst the Slavs., but nowhere with such intensity or with such import as among the Czechs. For the Czech

awakeners, language was the essence of their national program. Palacký and later historians would trace manifestations of this particular Czech linguistic/national consciousness, positing that it appeared in various periods, under various guises, and for different reasons throughout the history of the nation. In the twentieth century, many historians still argue over the particulars of this belief without denying its essence. It effects an underlying continuity of “national biography” which, as the historian Miloš Havelka would argue, produces a sense of political stability and independence in a nation that has experienced neither for very long (Havelka, 1995, p. 7).

The idea of a distinct, mystical and humanistic national spirit is also understandable in a nation that has experienced a long-standing sense of cultural, social and linguistic isolation, and the work of the awakeners of the National Revival needs to be understood within the context of this sense of isolation. In the words of the historian Josef Pekař:

This is the most powerful and significant fact and factor of our history. The Czech national culture has endeavored to conform to ideals which were imposed on Czech consciousness during certain periods by the West and [...] in history and culture we connect neither with the Slavonic East, nor with the West (1927, pp. 8, 9).

In order to understand this sense of isolation, the development of the modern idea of a distinct Czech spirit and the role it would play in the success of a linguistic revival, it is first necessary to look at the history of the Czech Lands till 1750. There are two episodes in particular which the awakeners would turn into highly charged icons in that history; the period of the Hussite wars and the battle of the White Mountain.

### ***From the beginnings to Hus***

Although open to dispute, it is suggested that Slavic tribes moved into Bohemia and Moravia sometime in the first half of the sixth century AD. The region had previously been home to an interconnected and powerful group of Celtic tribes who had largely moved on by the time the Slavs arrived and had also been a Roman outpost for a short while. The region became known in Roman records as Boiohaemum from the name of the most powerful of

the Celtic tribes, the *Boii*, but the Slavs began to call the country by the name of the most powerful of their tribes, the *Čech*, or Czech. The two names, Bohemia and *Čechy*, would run concurrently from then on (Sláma, 1998). Further, at some still unspecified period, before or after the arrival of the Slavs, a Germanic tribe, the Marcomanni, settled briefly in western Bohemia. Whether or not they were first in the region (a controversial point), they had disappeared by the time the Slavs arrived in numbers. The Slavs were agrarian, settled in villages under tribal chiefs, and remained largely within autonomous local units until the middle of the seventh century, when a defensive tribal federation in Moravia was formed to drive off marauding tribes of Avars and East Franks. After 658 this federation seems to have dissolved (Sláma, 1998).

A more politically and culturally dynamic federation appeared to the east in Moravia in the eighth and ninth centuries. Called the Great Moravian Empire, at one point it contained both Slovakia and part of Bohemia, although the Bohemians were later to develop their own political structure and Slovakia was eventually lost to the Magyars. With only brief periods of independence, Slovakia would remain under Magyar influence until 1918. Although the political, social and linguistic fortunes of Bohemia and Moravia would be more or less closely linked from then on, the Slovaks would develop under a different cultural and linguistic system for hundreds of years, cutting the Czechs off from much intercultural contact with Slavs to the east. Then, in the middle of the ninth century Svatopluk, the ruler of the Great Moravian Empire, invited two Slavic-speaking priests, Cyril and Methodius, from Byzantium to convert his people to Christianity.

The two priests developed a script that was based on Greek with which to transcribe liturgical texts, and this Glagolitic (later, Cyrillic) alphabet was to become the vehicle in which Old Church Slavonic was inscribed, and which would spread through many of the Lands settled by the Slavs. Today many Czechs still consider Cyril and Methodius as having brought Christianity to the Moravians, and through Moravia to the Slavic world. This act has been

seen as a significant event in the development of the Slavic peoples and their languages and in the Czech participation in that world (see Fischer, 1969; Masaryk, 1913). However, German missionaries from Bavaria were also preaching in the area, and the fight over who would Christianize the territory was a long-standing conflict between the Byzantines and the Church of Rome. For reasons of Byzantine political weakness, in the end Czechs would follow the Roman, and not the Eastern Rite and adopt Latin as their liturgical language (Sláma, 1998). This would prove another source of distance between the Czechs and the greater body of the Slav world.

The Bohemians of the eighth and ninth centuries had developed strong local leaders, *duces*, or dukes, and developed a loose political system in which one was elected by the rest to lead. Bohemia remained a duchy until the late twelfth century when the Přemysl tribe assumed dynastic control and a kingdom was formed. The tradition of electing rulers remained, however, and later, as dynasties died out, new ones were elected by a federation of nobles (and later burghers as well) which became known as the Estates. Further, Moravia, which had disintegrated politically after a decisive loss to the Magyars, first was re-conquered by the Bohemians, then broke away to form a Margravate in the eleventh century. It was finally re-annexed, with Silesia, in the twelfth century to a now dominant Bohemia, and from then on the borders of the Czech Lands would remain relatively constant. In 1212 the German Emperor Frederick II granted Přemysl Otakar the Golden Sicilian Bull, which guaranteed the Bohemian nobility the right to elect their own ruler, confirmed the hereditary status of the ruler and the integrity of the borders. Later, in 1356, the Bohemians would also become electors of the Holy Roman Emperor. The Kingdom of Bohemia was developing into a rich and powerful medieval state.

The Czech kings could expand as they did for a particular reason, which was to cause as many problems as it was to bring benefits. Between the tenth and eleventh centuries German settlers began moving into the mountainous Sudetenland, the relatively unpopulated

border regions in the west and north. By the end of the eleventh century, a numerically significant minority of Germans, who would eventually make up a relatively stable thirty five to forty percent population, lived in settlements that ringed most of Bohemia and Moravia. They were most numerous in the west and north-west, but also heavily concentrated in Silesia (Lněničková, 1999). Their presence in the border regions effectually cut off the last regular contact the Czechs had with the Slavic Poles, and would become the source of intense linguistic, social and political friction for eight hundred years.

The Sudetenland was not settled by individuals, as was the American west. German developers, sometimes even commissioned by the Czech ruler, would go to a German town and there collect a group of volunteers, who would move together to Bohemia and build a village. They would retain the laws and statutes of their German home town and maintain contact with it, often over hundreds of years (Seibt, 1998). With the Germans came a twofold problem. First, they did not tend to assimilate, linguistically or culturally. Second, they brought with them certain skills that gave them an almost overwhelming advantage over the almost exclusively agrarian Czechs, including town law and structure, mercantile and intellectual expertise, three-field agriculture, expertise in mining, and weaving skills (Rugg, 1985; Blum, 1957). The Czech kings welcomed the Germans for the undeniable benefits they brought with them, and by the thirteenth century the Germans had opened up the rich silver mines in Kutná Hora and had established a burgher patriciate in the larger towns and in Prague, turning them into flourishing economic centres. However, the price to be paid for these benefits would become more and more of a burden.

The Czech backlash began soon after the Germans began to arrive in significant numbers and focused on the areas where they saw themselves losing the most to the Germans, primarily in commerce and in the upper levels of the Church. The first extant Czech Chronicle, written by the monk Cosmas at some time during the eleventh century, praised Prince Spytihněv, who “earned everyone’s admiration because he ordered the

expulsion within three days of all Germans from Bohemia...” (in Klíma, 1993, pp.228-229). An anonymous Czech monk of the twelfth century wrote a broadside initiating in print what would become a recurrent theme, that the Germans “have too much money, are encroaching, and refuse to speak Czech” (in Seibt, 1998, p. 14).

Many modern historians are inclined, as is Arnošt Klíma, to extrapolate from the chroniclers of the period and assume that in general “...the Czechs associated their language with defending their nationality and demanded that all dignitaries should know Czech” (Klíma, 1993, p. 229). There is a problem with this not uncommon judgement. First, Klíma is assuming that Czechs of the twelfth century possessed a modern sense of ethnic and national consciousness. Further, although he uses the collective “the Czechs”, we have access to only one particular point of view, that of the people who wrote, the priesthood. The priesthood felt themselves to be a special group, set apart from even the nobles, and was particularly threatened by the German presence, having a lot to lose from an influx of superior scholars and upper-level German prelates. The people they wrote about, the ruling classes, were also threatened by the Germans’ money and favour, but not so threatened as to follow Prince Spytihněv’s lead and try to eliminate them altogether.

However, both the priests and the nobles saw language as the defining point in their conflict with the Germans; not over nationality, but the struggle for economic power and influence at court within the framework of a medieval kingdom. Nevertheless, the political infrastructure would remain solidly Czech and although there were minor German coups in Prague and Kutná Hora in the fourteenth century (Klíma, 1993), in general, the Germans kept to their towns, their mines, and their businesses. Their real power and their threat was that as burghers, some of them could participate in the meetings of the Estates and the most powerful even appeared in the councils of the kings (Seibt, 1998). Below the level of noble, priest, and burgher lay the vast majority of Czech speakers in the Lands, but no one knows what they thought at all.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the tension between the Czechs and the Germans grew, although the land prospered. Other problems arose as well, and in the main these had to do with the growing power and wealth of the Church and the laxity and immorality of the clergy. A lesser noble, Tomáš of Štítné, wrote a powerful polemic against the Church in the early fourteenth century and it is most interesting because it is written in Czech, rather than in Latin. This is not because his Latin was not up to the task but because, as he explained, St. Paul had written in the vernacular and there was no reason he couldn't write about Church matters in his native tongue either (Dobrovský, 1793). Tomáš both defends his use of Czech and attacks the behaviour of the clergy, illustrating what was becoming a complex net of tensions between the Germans and the Czechs, German and Czech (and perhaps Latin), the Church, the king, the nobility and the burghers.

Matters came to a head in the late fourteenth century. German scholars, massively over-represented at the new university in Prague (established in 1348 by Charles IV), became the focus of resentment by the Czech masters and scholars, who were in the minority. A Czech master, Jan Hus, influenced by the teachings of John Wycliffe, spearheaded a movement to shift this imbalance. He also formulated an extended program of Church reform, which included the translation of the Bible into Czech, a Czech liturgy, and universal literacy. In his eyes this work demanded the institution of a number of spelling reforms, including the use of the haček (Novák, 1945). The Czechs received the majority of votes at the university in 1409 and Hus became rector, which is seen today either as a triumph for Hus and the Czechs (Klíma, 1993), or as the loss of an invaluable number of intelligentsia, as many of the German scholars subsequently returned to Germany (Pfaff, 1996). In 1412 Hus, who had become a radical preacher, was exiled to the provinces for heresy and spent two years in South Bohemia preaching to the peasants in Czech. In 1414 he was invited to explain himself to the Emperor in Constance and was promised safe conduct. Upon his arrival he

was immediately imprisoned, subjected to a mock trial, and then burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.

The reaction was immediate and extensive. The nobles of Bohemia set their seals to a protest, followers of Hus threw Catholic town councilors out of the window of the town hall in Prague, and scores of peasants met in the hills to plan a new community of God on Earth. The Catholics and the Hussites took sides, and both Czechs and Germans appeared in both camps. The German Emperor Sigismund then tried in 1419 (rather unwisely) to gain the throne of Bohemia. As he rejected a list of demands presented by the nobility, who in the main had sided with the Hussites for reasons of their own, the Bohemian Estates denied him that office. The demands included that Germans should not be appointed to civic offices, legal disputes in the Kingdom should be conducted in Czech, Czechs should have first voice in the kingdom, and use of Czech in the liturgy should be condoned (Klíma, 1993). The Hussites built a new town (Tábor), and fortified old ones (Hradec Králové), and under the leadership of Hussite nobility and some very able generals, they fought the Emperor with what was, arguably, the first European national army.

Sigismund twice invaded the Lands over the years 1427-1431, and both times was defeated. In 1433 he convened a Church council in Basle to open negotiations on the Hussite confession, the result of which was the Compactata (1436-37), which contained certain concessions to the Hussite articles of faith. Although this marked an unprecedented compromise on the part of the Church, fighting would continue well up until beyond the end of the century, and as a result, many of the appurtenances of civilization in the Czech Lands were destroyed. However the military victories, and perhaps more significantly, the Compactata, indicated and would continue to indicate to many Czechs the singularity of their convictions and the essential justness of their cause.



There are problems with this, however. The historian František Šmahel points out that in actuality, the Hussite heresy did not flower in a vacuum. Many of the German settlers were Waldensians and had come to the Czech Lands to escape persecution, and were being hounded by the Church even in their new home by the 1320s. The Waldensian heresy was broadly similar to the Hussite in many respects, and under different circumstances adherents to both would have quite a bit of mutual sympathy (1998, p. 84). Yet this did not stem the flow of anti-German sentiment that would continue unabated during the whole period, as the Czech Hussites were as concerned with bloodlines as with confession. In 1409 one of the most powerful of the Hussite leaders, Master Jeroným of Prague, defined membership in the Czech nation as including first, homeland and language; second, both parents of Czech origin; and only third, faith (Šmahel, 1999, p. 23). Although this was not a modern definition of all-inclusive participatory nationalism, certainly the Hussites were advocating a far more inclusive society than any other in Europe at the time. The emphasis on defining who was born Czech indicated a cultural, and perhaps linguistic homogeneity amongst Germans and Czechs (or at least Germans and Czechs of influence) that demanded a more specific definition of who was who. In a period when there is strong evidence that would indicate that the majority of Germans of power and influence actually spoke Czech (Šmahel, 1999, p. 23), an insistence on heredity was necessary to distinguish group membership, and language alone was not enough. As practical Hussite policy included the replacement of Germans with Czechs in town councils and positions of power in the universities, some of their goals were not so much innovations as the continuation of the same struggle for Czech ascendancy that had been going on since the Germans had arrived and which would continue for centuries. This explicit link between blood and language would return, re-worked, at the end of the eighteenth century.

Historians, and especially national historians, have had the tendency to create watersheds out of certain historical events; points wherein they see a clear and significant change of direction, and often these events take on a mythological character. In Czech historiography, Hussitism takes pride of place. František Palacký gave modern voice to this theory in his seminal *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia* (1836 – 1876). He saw the Hussite movement as an early Czech apotheosis – a non-confessional national fight for Czech rights, language, and nation against the overwhelmingly militarily superior Germans. The fight was necessary, in his view, even though it went against the peace-loving and gentle nature of the Czech Slavs, as opposed to the warlike qualities evinced by their German enemies. It is quite evident that Palacký (a Protestant) identified strongly with the Hussites and that he felt that he and his fellow-awakeners were fighting the same fight. Tomáš G. Masaryk, writing almost seventy years later, agreed and took this argument further. He suggested that distinctly Czech religious/spiritual qualities first found expression in the tenets of the Hussites and would later recur and flower during the Reformation. This humanistic, freedom-loving egalitarianism expressed by Palacký would continue to inspire Czechs throughout their history (Masaryk, 1913; 1915).

On the other hand, Josef Pekař, the most significant Czech historian of the early twentieth century and a Catholic, saw nothing so innately Czech in Hussite and Reformation spirituality, and much that was damaging in Hussitism and the Reformation (Pekař, 1921). What he did see was evidence of a definite Czech national consciousness, not particularly aligned with any specific religious philosophy, but which was manifested in different ways throughout the history of the Czech nation (Pekař, 1928). The idea of Hus as having called forth a Czech national spirit was formulated by Palacký in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Masaryk/Pekař debate would form the basis of a twentieth-century

intellectual cleft that is still an issue in Czech historiography (Křen, 1992; Fischer, 1965; Šalda, 1928).

Although the sixteenth century would be marked in the Czech Lands by great inner strife and rule by a number of different houses, Czech intellectual life managed to thrive and reach what the awakeners would look back on later as a “Golden Age”. It was at this time that the first attempts to standardize the language were made and of books printed before 1550, thirty nine of forty four were in Czech (Krása, 1990, p. 70). Of the books printed by the great printing house of Melantrich before 1620, 111 were in Czech, 75 in Latin, and 7 in German (Kniedl, 1990, pp. 121-122). These statistics may be somewhat misleading, as both Josef Krása and Pravoslav Kniedl point out that the Germans in the Lands were more often importing books from and publishing in the German states. During the late 1500s and early 1600s there were a number of Czech authors of note, including the poet Šimon Lomnický, the racy and popular (but very sloppy) chronicler Václav Hájek z Libočan, and the grammarian Vavřinec Benediktus Nudožerský, who produced both a grammar and a dictionary (Kniedl, 1990; Dobrovský, 1792).

Adam Daniel z Veleslavína was possibly the most distinguished author of the Czech Renaissance. In his *Sylva Quadrlinguis* he defended Czech (in Latin) against attacks by Germans, who as early as this, were claiming that it was a language not fit for the expression of finer thoughts. He writes

Our Bohemian tongue, which we now speak, is elegant, copious, refined, sober, grand, and is able to express itself most aptly and commodiously in all the branches of theology and even of philosophy (in Dobrovský, 1792, p. 120).

Daniel was concerned about the ever-growing use of German in the Czech Lands, but events of the next century would bring an even more serious threat to the Czechs and their language.

## ***To the White Mountain and beyond***

In 1527 the Bohemian Estates elected Ferdinand I of Austria, a Habsburg, king of Bohemia. They did this because Ferdinand was a strong ruler and they hoped he would bring stability to the Lands, which had remained more or less in a state of internal turmoil since the Hussite wars. Before his election he promised to honour the religious diversity of the Czech Lands, which were, by this time, heavily Protestant. He did not keep his promise, and the Habsburgs were to struggle with the Bohemian Estates over religion all through the sixteenth century. Certain concessions were won under Maximilian II (1564-1575), and under Rudolf II (1576-1611), but the tolerant Rudolf was deposed and his brother Matthias (1611-1619) took the throne. Matthias maintained the supremacy of the Catholic Church and the Habsburg right to defend both it and the rights of the Habsburgs in Bohemia and Moravia. Matthias's conservative stance precipitated a Protestant congress in Prague in 1619, and the delegates threw the country governors out a window of the castle. The Bohemian Estates raised an army and initially drove back the invading Austrians, and actually invaded Austria more than once.

After Matthias died in 1619, the Estates felt confident enough to elect Frederick, Elector Palatinate, a German Protestant and brother-in-law of the Protestant King James I of England, as their king. They were precipitate, however. They were not financially prepared for war or in agreement amongst themselves, and were not particularly well-organized. James did nothing to intervene, and the Army of the Czech Nation, which was composed in the main of badly trained troops and mercenaries, met the Austrians on November 8, 1620 outside Prague at Bílá Hora, the White Mountain. In two hours the Czechs were in flight and Frederick, called the Winter King, left Prague the next day. The Habsburgs were in possession of Bohemia once again.

The battle of the White Mountain marked the beginning of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), one of the ugliest and most destructive of all ugly and destructive European land wars, and the Czechs were to emerge the major losers in this conflict. During this period the Czech Lands were to be invaded and intermittently occupied by Austrian Imperial troops, the Saxons, and the Swedes.<sup>1</sup> Although early on the main focus of the war shifted to Germany, by 1648 the population of the Czech Lands, estimated at about 2.5 to 3 million in 1618, had dropped to close to a million by 1648 (Polišenský, 1991, p. 243). Many had died in the conflict, but others were forced out. The public execution of 1621 of twenty one of the most powerful Protestant noblemen, knights, and burghers (including the rector of the university) was only the beginning of the executions and exile of Protestants in the Lands. By 1648 only eight (loyally Catholic) families of the traditional Czech nobility remained in possession of their estates. The estates of Protestants were confiscated, carved up, and awarded to the mercenaries fighting for the Emperor. The new hereditary nobility in the Lands bore such names as Piccolomini, Lesley, Mansfeld-Collaredo, and Taffey.

This would have a major impact on the development of the countryside, as the new aristocracy would tend to look to Vienna, rather than Prague as their central place, and there would often be a language (and possibly cultural) barrier between lord and peasant that would continue even into the twentieth century (Rugg, 1985). Not only did the Czechs lose the temporal heads of their society; they lost many of their intellectual leaders as well. The exiles of the Protestants in the years following 1620 would eliminate much of the Czech intelligentsia, the most notable of whom was Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius). Their presence in England and Holland would have a profound and enriching effect on spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> Christina, Queen of Sweden, sent with her army a number of art experts armed with a shopping list. The Emperor Rudolf II, who had made Prague his capital, had been an avid collector of painting and sculpture, and Christina knew what was there and what she wanted. For the first time, but not the last, in European history an army had arrived with a plan for systematic plunder.

and intellectual communities in those countries over the century, but would constitute an almost irreparable loss to their own land (Polišenský, 1991).

The battle of the White Mountain would, as Josef Dobrovský argued, “lame and weaken the whole Czech nation in body and soul” and usher in “the saddest period of the Czech language and literature” (Dobrovský, 1792, p. 124). Events in the aftermath of the battle would successfully reduce the Czech language, and the Czechs in the process, to a state of almost suspended animation. The battle was fought on principles of faith and aristocratic self-interest and while during the Thirty Years war the Czechs did not mix faith and speech as they did in the Hussite struggles, the language nonetheless, would suffer greatly. Bohemia lost its autonomy as an independent kingdom in 1620, and in 1622 the currency was devalued to a tenth of its former value. In 1627 the Renewed Land Constitution for Bohemia (1628, Moravia) further lessened autonomous rights, and in the same year Czech (temporarily) lost its status as official language and the Roman Catholic faith was declared the official religion (Seton-Watson, 1965; Pekař, 1927).

During the next hundred years the Habsburgs would continue to strengthen their hold on the Czech Lands. In the process the Bohemian Estates would suffer continual losses of autonomy, which would eventually completely vanish when Bohemia and Moravia became separate provinces under the direct control of the Crown of Austria under Maria Theresa. That hold was consolidated by the Counter-Reformatory measures brought in in force to subdue and re-Catholicize the populace. The Jesuits and the Piarists were brought in to effect these measures, and the process began. Although the Thirty Years War was fought over non-linguistic issues, the subsequent actions of the Habsburgs and the Catholic orders were not. As the Czechs had for centuries identified their language as the very definition of their community and during the Hussite period, as an article of their faith, the Catholics were to pay them the same compliment after 1620. They would attack the Czech language as the heretic fundamental which had to be eliminated if they were to physically and spiritually

subdue the Lands. Universal literacy, a necessity to the Hussites, and later, Lutherans and Calvinists, was discouraged and schooling sank to an all-time low under the Piarists, who taught in the lower schools and the Jesuits, who controlled the upper schools and the university (Melmuková, 1999).

Czech presses were closed in 1620, but the Kralice Press of Moravia, amongst others, would operate in secret for the next thirty years, and it was at this time that the Kralice Bible was published. For want of much other material, its language would form the literary standard for both Czechs and Slovaks for the next hundred and fifty years (Kniedl, 1990). Czech books were not merely suppressed at the presses, they were hunted out and burned and their authors and readers faced inquisition and exile. Even a hundred years later, in the middle of the eighteenth century the Jesuit Antonín Koniáš alone burned between 30,000 and 60,000 Czech books. An Index<sup>2</sup> was first issued in Prague in 1635, and others would continue to appear throughout the century and into the next. Indices were additionally issued in Hradec Králové in 1729 and 1749 and all of them outlawed heretical literature, most of it in Czech. If a book was written in Czech that was often evidence enough of heresy – the Kralice Bible appears on all three of these eighteenth-century lists. As well, in 1729 the Bishop of Hradec Králové outlawed all literature written using orthographic revisions suggested by Hus, including the haček (Melmuková, 1999; Novák, 1945; Dobrovský, 1792). These measures were extreme, but they were means to an end and that end was complete Catholicization of the Czech Lands. Germans suffered too – the majority of Germans in the Lands were Lutherans or Anabaptists, and great numbers of them were to leave the country or face inquisition during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Hroch, 1999a; Seton-Watson, 1965).

By the second half of the eighteenth century, Czech, although still spoken by a vast majority of the population, was rapidly losing its literary dimension. This was a very serious

loss. The upper levels of the reading public, that is, the considerable number of people in the preceding century who could read Czech as well as Latin or German had died or had been exiled. No new reading public was being created and the existing literature in Czech was being rapidly destroyed. Works produced in Czech after the White Mountain consisted exclusively of very primitive religious tracts aimed at the lowest common denominator, and often these were translations from the German (Dobrovský, 1792). If the aim of the Catholic forces of Counter-Reformation in Bohemia and Moravia was, as Pekař suggests, “not to destroy the body but to change the soul of old Bohemia” then the soul, as they saw it, lay in the literature (1927, p. 210). In the European frame of reference, a language derives its esteem from the scope and quality of its literary heritage and this was particularly true in the beginning of the Renaissance, when literary work in the vernacular (certain vernaculars) was being vigorously developed (Smith, 1984). In trying to destroy a literature of heresy, the Church succeeded in destroying the viability, the prestige of the Czech language and being removed from the central place, Czech subsequently lost its visibility in the eyes of the upper social strata. In essence, in losing its literary heritage Czech was relegated to the periphery and therefore, perceived to be moribund.

However, there were certain Czechs who were not willing to let their language vanish without defense. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century Bohuslav Balbín, a Czech Jesuit from Hradec Králové, was to write (in Latin) a forceful *Defense of the Slavonic Language Called Czech*<sup>2</sup>, a manuscript that would not be published until a hundred years after it was written and would have a tremendous impact on the awakeners of the next century. Balbín, a professor of law, historian, traveller and scholar, was to lose his position at the university in Prague and be sent to the provinces to teach at a lower school for his pains, but during his

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<sup>2</sup> A list sanctioned by a Bishop, which outlaws certain books and print material.

<sup>3</sup> *Dissertatio apologetica pro lingua Slauonica, praecipue Bohemica (1672-1673)*, translated into Czech as *Obrana jazyka slovanského, zejména českého*.



years in seclusion he was to write, amongst other works on the same theme, a history of Bohemia (Simek, 1889). The historian Ivan Pfaff calls Balbín and the small group of like-minded scholars writing in Latin about the Czech language during the period Baroque nationalists (Pfaff, 1996). This is an interesting and highly subjective assessment of their aims, but nevertheless, it is important to look at Balbín in order to see in what way seventeenth century Czech intellectuals viewed the struggle over language.

Balbín was not just an historian and a linguistic patriot, he was a keen amateur linguist of no small means. Later patriot-historians shaping National Myth would surmise that the reason he wrote in Latin was that he had become completely Germanized and knew no Czech (Klíma, 1972), but it is obvious from his description of the language that he knew it and other varieties of Slavonic very well.<sup>4</sup> His use of Latin would indicate, rather, the predominance it had re-assumed in Central European scholarship as a result of the Counter-Reformation and the loss of Czech as a language of any literary validity. His view of the Czech-German problem is very simple and based firmly on temporal power and traditional rights. He argues that the Germans are pushy, brutal, and monolingual, and they are taking over the country. He maintains a truculently anti-German tone throughout his work, seeing Germans as a lot of trades/craftsmen who have spread all over Europe, buying their way into the nobility and into the kings' councils, but refusing to learn the language of any country in which they are guests. Balbín does not see the Czechs as spiritually ravaged, but they have lost what is theirs. In saying this, he does not differ much from the opinions of the medieval chroniclers

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<sup>4</sup> In *A Debate, Brief But True*, he explains a very funny joke Czechs play on Germans who speak Czech badly. The Czechs get the Germans to say "Our mother is from Vienna, but father is in Prague." (*Naše matka je z Vídně, otec však je v Praze* - p. 28). With a German accent this comes out something like "My mother is a sow and my father, a pig."

An interesting aspect of Balbín's argument is his analysis of language shift. He explains, that the Czechs, being by nature very polite, kind, and hospitable people, have allowed this to go unchecked. However, he sees great danger in this, as the Germans, because they refuse to speak other people's languages or speak them really badly, change their host languages or eliminate them altogether. This is what he says happened in Southern Europe after the fall of Rome:

When the new nation [Germans -Goths and Vandals] couldn't adopt Latin, but far more of the ancient inhabitants learned the rude tongue of their new guests, then from the efforts of both nations, the old and the new (when a German wanted to say something in Latin, he made up words and distorted the accent and way of speaking), a new language was born, which to the Italians was called Italian, to the Gauls, French, to the Hispanics, Spanish – each language different because faults and making errors have no laws – all originated from spoiling Latin (1679, p. 30).

Outside of emphasizing the natural sweetness and hospitality of the Czechs, there is little evidence in Balbín's writings that he regarded them as possessing any sense of distinct national consciousness, ethnic purity, or unique spiritual qualities. He does see the Germans as having uniformly bad ones, amongst which are lust for power, underhandedness, and wanderlust ("It hasn't been and it isn't possible to find a nation that travels more often than the German – partly for trade, partly for pleasure" (1679, p. 31).

Balbín's interpretation of the aftermath of the White Mountain is coloured by his intense Catholicism and firm, if problematic, Jesuit allegiance. Although he attacks the Catholic establishment and the Jesuits in particular, it is because he deplores the brutal measures of re-Catholicization, and sees these measures as effecting the opposite of what they were meant to accomplish.

Today in Bohemia so many people are oppressed and [...] because of their onerous burdens and the unbearable tributes, each year more subjects fly to the heretics than come to the Faith, despite the Jesuit mission (1674, p. 79).

Further, he sees the temporal authorities, working with the Church, as equally responsible, and accuses the military commander of Prague of worse plundering of his

homeland than was ever done by the enemy (1674, p. 31). Significantly, however, he sees the White Mountain as only one in a series of deplorable events of greater or lesser impact during the Thirty Years War which, as he was born in 1621, had occurred within his lifetime. The loss of Czech autonomy he sees manifested in their loss of language and literature, the literature that he remembers reading as a boy. As for the battle itself - it would take another hundred years for it to be transformed into a national rallying point.

In 1791 Joseph Dobrovský, Czech scholar and priest, delivered a coronation address to Leopold II. In it, he outlined the history of the Czech nation and in particular, stressed the importance of the period of the Hussite wars and the battle of the White Mountain. The Hussites he saw as early linguistic nationalists, and the White Mountain was an event in which all good Czechs of either faith could see the turning point in their history and the beginning of all their troubles. As a profoundly religious man and a committed Catholic, in *The History of the Picards and the Adamites* he differentiated between Hussite heresy, which for him was reprehensible, and the Hussite fight against the Germans and defense of Czech, which was laudable. For Dobrovský, Hus and Jeroným appear both as Czech martyrs and heretics, even in the same sentence (Dobrovský, 1795, pp. 30-31). He sees them as 'patriots' with an unfortunate religious focus. There is no evidence, either in this work or elsewhere, however, that he saw in Hussitism any manifestation of Czechness or Czech spirit, and the idea would probably have offended him (Dobrovský, 1795). In contrast, Palacký, Dobrovský's student and writing almost fifty years later, took Dobrovský's idea and developed it, shaping the modern perspective on the significance of the Hussite period in Czech history. In his work the religious heresy has lost any negative connotations and the Hussite doctrine itself has become an singular, important expression of a particular 'Czechness' (Palacký, 1831).

Although they diverged slightly on the import of Hussitism, Palacký echoed Dobrovský on the White Mountain. In his *History of the Czech Language and Literature*, brought out the year after his address to the Emperor, Dobrovský called the battle the beginning of the “saddest period” in the history of the language and literature (1792, p.125). Palacký, writing in 1830, concurred, seeing the White Mountain as “having driven a nail into the soul of the Czech nation” (Palacký, 1831, p. 12). Both men see 1620 as a massive watershed in Czech history, the point from which everything fell into a great darkness, and here they differ from Balbín on two points. First, in 1792 and 1831, the White Mountain had become a symbol of Czech servitude and martyrdom; the point from which events of the subsequent one hundred and fifty years take a downward turn and not, as Balbín would posit, one unfortunate episode in a whole period of political turmoil and ecclesiastical corruption. Second, in contrast with his unease with the Hussite heresy, the battle of the White Mountain had lost its confessional significance for Dobrovský, and by Palacký’s day it was no longer associated in any way with religious matters. In contrast, for Balbín the events of the first half of the seventeenth century, the loss of Czech literature, the threat to the spoken language and the German usurpation of temporal power, were completely wrapped within the context of the Catholic faith.

Within Dobrovský’s framework, the Battle of the White Mountain is metamorphosed into an abstract historical symbol that he describes as precipitating the almost irreparable loss of a heritage, and one that robbed a people of their linguistic and literary birthright, regardless of faith (Dobrovský, 1792). Palacký, taking the argument further, regrets the crushing of a distinct Czech spirit that was only finding its voice again in his own day. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the White Mountain became in popular consciousness an event that

struck at the distinct spirit of all Czechs regardless of faith - a pilgrimage point and symbol for the new spirit of Czech nationalism (Macura, 1998; Petráň and Petráňová, 1998).

Thus the metamorphosis of a linguistic and cultural complaint, from the temporal, to the abstract, and then to the mystical. Whether or not the Czechs actually achieved an early form of national consciousness due to their acerbic and unequal linguistic and political contact with German and Germans has been a heavily contested point. However, it seems safe to say that a tradition exists wherein the Czech language early on became the focal point in an economic, social, intellectual, and spiritual struggle for supremacy. During the period of the Counter-Reformation and the Baroque, it would become not so much a linguistic, as a historio-cultural symbol of an oppressed people. The awakeners of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century would gradually transform the political and religious struggles of the Hussites and the Battle of the White Mountain into symbols which revealed the Czech language as an indispensable transmitter of spiritual qualities unique to the Czech nation. Certainly, part of the success of the National Revival is based on the necessity to actually speak Czech in order to acquire the spiritual benefits that the language conveyed.

It is interesting to note that during the period under Communism, the Hussites and the White Mountain retained their pride of place, as they manifested the willingness of Czechs to battle the forces of Imperialism. In particular it was the Hussites who were glorified, but no one could read Pekař's more measured reading of that period because from 1948 to 1989 Josef Pekař did not exist. Masaryk's glorification of the Hussites as the embodiments of the true essence of Czech spirituality initially pleased the communists better, though he was seen as weak, but eventually no one read Masaryk either because he had disappeared from the shelves as well.

## Chapter Two

### **Spheres of Language, Spheres of Class: Nobility, Language and World View in Eighteenth Century Bohemia**

*After lunch Baron Kressl came to me and spoke Czech, which was something I found absolutely strange.*  
František Martin Pelcl to Joseph Dobrovský, 1785

#### ***Bohemia 1775***

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century Czech had been reduced to a peripheral language within a multilingual society wherein German had become the language of administration and commerce. Although it still retained its (regained) status as one of the five official languages of the Austrian domains (along with German, Latin, Croat, and Hungarian), this was largely an honorary designation. Once the language of a rich and powerful medieval kingdom, it had now been relegated to a variety spoken regularly only by the lowest ranks of a subject people. To integrate and position themselves well in upper levels of their society, Czechs needed to adopt German. This resulted in mother-tongue attrition in the few Czechs amongst the intellectual and economic elite.

More seriously, the wealth of Renaissance literature produced in Czech and/or by Czechs had been largely burnt, confiscated, and outlawed over the preceding one hundred and fifty years, and intellectual and literary advances of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had essentially passed Czech by. The written conventions of the language, based on the Renaissance Czech of the Kralice Bible, were anachronistic at best. In a highly static, hierarchical society where class and prestige were of paramount importance, Czech had, in effect, lost its central place. In order to regain its lost prestige, the language would have to find a modern venue within which to develop. Intellectual, social, and political innovations would provide this venue, and a certain social class would initiate those changes. In order fully to understand the route Czech eventually followed to rebirth, it is necessary to understand the

role the eighteenth century Bohemian aristocracy would play in encouraging the reinstatement of Czech, and within what specific context.

In 1740, Maria Theresa of Habsburg, Archduchess of Austria and Queen of Bohemia and Hungary, ascended to the throne of Austria. In 1745 her husband (Francois Stephan of Lorraine, Franz I) was declared Holy Roman Emperor and in 1765, after his death, her son Josef II became co-ruler and Emperor. After his mother's death in 1780, Josef ruled alone until his death in 1790. Both Maria Theresa and later Josef as well were concerned with the impossibility of governing such a massive territory and throughout their reigns they worked to modernize the state through policies that involved the centralization of administration, taxation, and education. As a result, the Bohemian Estates became relegated to a tax-collecting unit working under the orders of a governing council, and most of any autonomy that remained to Bohemia and Moravia was lost to Vienna. Over the course of the century the Czech Lands were reduced to a provincial hinterland. The overwhelmingly rural landscape was dotted with small villages and farms that were the property of great, and for the most part, absentee lords, and German speakers largely controlled the commercial life in the towns (Rugg, 1985). The great Church orders, most significantly the Jesuits and the Piarists, controlled vast areas of land, as well as the school and university system. The Board of Censors (*Zensur*) run by the Jesuits kept out almost all information and thought from abroad, and the secret police kept almost everyone in their place.

Despite the wars, drought and famine that would mark the period, the Czech Lands possessed not only great agricultural wealth, but also a small but significant manufacturing base that had been established in the countryside that would grow rapidly in the next century. During the latter half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, the province of Bohemia alone would supply Austria with approximately 30 – 40% of its entire tax revenue from all sources (Kerner, 1969). The mining of coal, iron, silver and semi-precious

stones rose over the century, as did the development of metallurgy, and the manufacture of chemicals. The importing of heavy machinery from Britain would accelerate the development of a nineteenth-century Bohemian industrial base (Lněničková, 1999; Schreyer, 1793). In the eighteenth century, Czech glass dominated the world market, although by the nineteenth century it would begin to lose its preeminence (Lněničková 1999a). Further, by 1770, textile manufacture entailed the production of wool, linen and silk, and 48,104 weavers “of all kinds” existed in Bohemia alone (Pelcl, 1774, vol. 2, p. 972). By 1790, the population of Bohemia and Moravia had risen to approximately 4,000,000, roughly three-fifths of whom were ethnic Czechs and of that group, 60 -70% were monolingual speakers of Czech (Lněničková, 1999a, p. 115). Despite these gains, the focus of power, not only of the Habsburg domains, but also of Europe as a whole was shifting to the west, and the Czech Lands were becoming increasingly removed from centers of European political and intellectual influence.

The larger society of which the Czechs were a small part was heavily stratified. Based on a series of power relationships that had been formulated hundreds of years before, the various groups, or classes, within that society were quite socially, linguistically, and culturally distinct, although complex symbiotic relationships, either of a traditional nature or created out of expediency, were maintained between them. Almost all the real power lay in the hands of the monarch and the great aristocratic families. Under them, the lesser nobles, knights and gentry made up a more diversely stratified group, and under them lay the (proto) commercial classes of the towns and villages – crafts and tradesmen, district hetmen (administrators), and estate managers. At the bottom, the vast majority of the population was made up of the peasants and serfs who were under the control, often the ownership, of the great nobles. The Catholic hierarchy constituted a parallel social structure. The great prelates lived like the nobility, and parish priests lived in penury. The professionals, the doctors, lawyers, and lower-level bureaucrats made up a group that hovered somewhere between the landed gentry and



the middle levels of Church theocracy. The keywords of the whole system were piety, stasis, and obedience.

What made the Habsburg domains distinct among the great realms of the period was not the linguistic mix of peoples over whom they ruled, but rather the fact that the Habsburgs governed not one state, but many. Maria Theresa was not ruler of one Greater Austria, she was ruler of “the lands ruled by the House of Austria” and separately and at once many rulers, from Archduchess of Austria and Queen of Bohemia down to Baroness Hohenembs (Kann, 1970, p. 12). Theresian and Josefinian absolutism was greatly hampered by the theoretical and sentimental autonomy of the myriad holdings over which they ruled. The court in Vienna thronged with nobles from all over Eastern and Central Europe, torn between the accrual of personal gain in a centralized court and the protection of their own regional interests. To find councilors with no particular local bias was difficult. In such a setting, language would always be a delicate issue, both in the conceptual idea of ‘native tongue’ and the spoken reality of a multilingual court and a vast bureaucratic administration. As a matter of course, a multilingual/multifunctional use of language amongst the noble orders in the Austrian domains developed, wherein language changed as function changed and the prestige of the function reflected upon the prestige of a language. This functional multilingualism also existed elsewhere in a Europe where Latin was still the most prestigious of tongues and French the most fashionable, but not with such intensity or, for that matter, with such import (Blanning, 1970; Tapié, 1970; 1969).

In the Austrian domains languages, like people, existed on a sort of hierarchical ladder, with Latin at the top, then French, then German, and then, at the bottom, the multitudinal regional languages and dialects that were spoken by the various peoples living in the Austrian-controlled territories. Italian held the second position at the beginning of the century, and English would open a small but viable niche in the 1780s. That is putting it simply, however.

In reality, language use was equated first with class and prestige, and only then with territorial origin or ethnicity, and amongst the upper orders, the term 'native tongue' had become as conceptual as it was actual. Further, the linguistic functions of the more prestigious languages included high levels of exclusion, setting up a dynamic that would have social, political, and national repercussions. Amongst the upper orders, the social and political weight carried by 'native tongue' was negligible.

### ***French and the Aristocratic World View***

Although Latin and French were both languages identified with aristocracy, there were great differences in function and type of prestige between the two. To a certain extent, Latin was a language of inclusion and French, exclusion. As an old man, Josef Dobrovský was proud of pointing out that his father had been a peasant-turned-dragoon and his mother could not read or write (Palacký, 1846). Yet he and other intelligent boys from the same social sphere were able to advance through the Latin (secondary) schools to the university, and those of exceptional merit could enter the middle levels of the Church, become a tutor in a great house, or even enter one of the professions. As a man, Dobrovský moved in very rarified social circles; unthinkable without his classical education; almost (outside of cash) the only means of social mobility available at that time. For the nobility, Latin was an educational fundamental, but for a small but significant number of men from the lesser ranks, it was a tool and a ticket out.

French was something different altogether. For more than a hundred years the brilliance of the Bourbon court had captured the imagination of the European aristocracy, and French had superceded Italian as the aristocratic idiom throughout Central and Eastern Europe as far away as Russia. After Versailles was built, French norms became the European template for monarchy, administration, and court style. As all things French were of immense influence during the second half of the seventeenth century and all of the eighteenth, and the European

nobility began to identify more with the style of the French court than with their tenantry at home, creating a continental culture of aristocracy (Dewald, 1996). This lateral frame of reference was to produce a certain homogeneity of dress, manners, political and social aspirations and choice of language amongst the members of this class all across Europe.

This homogeneity, however, was not simply reflected in outward appearance and style. The aristocrat was seen as possessing inner qualities, outwardly manifested in choice of language, actions and attitudes, mannerisms, and even physical appearance and tone of voice. In the eighteenth century the concept of race – of whole ethnic groups possessing common, inherited physical and mental characteristics - had not yet developed. Individuals, depending on class and region of origin, might identify themselves according to religion, region of birth, common ruler, and/or in the case of the aristocracy, class (Fishman, 1970).

Class was determined by birth, and class lines could not be crossed, or, rather could be crossed only in special circumstances (which usually meant either marriage or the purchase of a title). Furthermore, by the middle of the seventeenth century a complex hierarchy had developed within the ranks of the nobility as well. Louis XIV was the first of the great bureaucratic despots and an exponent of *raison d'état*. As a measure of prudence and centralization of authority, he had initiated a system wherein the French nobility did not live on their estates and occasionally visit the king, as had been the custom. Instead, he build a vast, fixed court at Versailles, away from Paris, where he encouraged his nobles to live most of their lives and fill positions created by the king in a centralized administration (Smith, 1970). In this way the local autonomy of the aristocracy was decreased and the king could keep them under his eye. Based on the Versailles model, the development of the great courts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries split the nobility in two, as there were those families who could afford to do this and others who could not (Lněničková, 1999a; Dewald, 1996).

The noble courtiers at Versailles were largely responsible for the development of the eighteenth century aristocratic sphere, and their style was emulated as far as was possible all over Europe. Of the particular codes and signs which distinguished the European aristocrats within this sphere from the less fortunate without, the most potent was the use of the standard French of the *Academie*, seen both as a powerful transmitter of class norms and an effective way of keeping out the uninitiated. Lotman argues that the central language in a semiosphere spreads its norms across that sphere, and becomes its metalanguage of cultural description. Co-members of the semiosphere literally cannot see beyond its borders, and believe it to be reality (Lotman, pp. 73-74). For the Bohemian aristocracy, this inability to see beyond the norms and reaches of the world they had created would eventually end in the inadvertent conception of a linguistic movement over which they would lose control. Pecl writes that the Bohemian noble

speaks French above all [...] Frenchmen themselves are astonished at the readiness, the beautiful accent and the purity with which our noble speaks and writes. He has chosen this language, as it were, as his mother tongue, for, since the beginning of the century, German, particularly in print, seems too stumbling to him and Czech appears to be meant only for the common people (1774, p. 619).

The eighteenth century Bohemian aristocracy increasingly identified themselves with the French model and had ceased to see any world beyond the borders of this semiosphere. Francophilia extended, as far as ready cash would allow, to the development of a physical French world to complement the linguistic one. In Bohemia, the nobility read French newspapers and books, they listened to French music and attended French theatre and opera, they bought luxury goods from France, created French interiors for their homes, and cultivated French parks and gardens (Hanus, 1921).

Further, in the seventeenth century Descartes had written in Latin, the stateless language of scholarship. But the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century wrote in French. Rousseau, Montesquieu, Diderot, and Voltaire all had a tremendous impact on enlightened thought and

intellectual development. The use of their native tongue deepened and broadened its prestige, and made it attractive to a small but significant number of Europeans of scholarly aspiration. Johann Gottfried Herder, a young teacher of great intellectual promise who had studied under Kant in Königsberg, went to France in 1769 to meet Diderot and make a name for himself in French intellectual circles. He had studied French, which was difficult because French lessons were expensive and hard to come by. Although in Paris he actually met Diderot, he found his book-learned French not up to what was spoken in even the 'egalitarian' intellectual salons - so packed was it with value-laden signs and subtleties. He gave up in despair after six months (La Volpa, 1995). He would later write

Social orders have split apart, since for a century the so-called higher orders have accepted a completely alien language and have preferred a foreign upbringing and way of life [...] If one spoke German, with someone, it was a servant or domestic [...] The orders have presented themselves in a corrupt way, so that they lack a reliable common organ for their innermost feelings (in La Volpa, 1995, p. 12).

Later, in his *Ideas* (1784), Herder would develop a theory in which whole peoples (he uses 'nations') were predetermined by nature, history and, most importantly, common territory and ethnic origin to be united by a native language full of culturally specific meaning (Herder, 1791). For him, language was the unifying factor, not of class, but of ethnicity. This was formulated in part as a result of his frustration in the face of aristocratic French. His writings were to have tremendous impact on the Czech Awakeners of the next century.

### ***Nation and Native Tongue***

Herder chooses 'nation, rather than 'Volk' (the people), which would be more commonly used in eighteenth century German to describe the people born on a specific territory (Hobsbawm, 1990). The modern definition of the word 'nation' was at this time only in its nascent stage. The word itself originated in the Latin *natio*, which originally meant what today would be considered 'tribe'; a sort of those-people-across-the-river designation for barbaric groups

outside the *Pax Romana*. By the time of the Renaissance it had become a rather fluid sub-term of 'race', and both race and nationa broadly indicated lineage, genera or species. Race did not intimate pre-determined biological similarities stemming from common human ancestry and nation did not mean a group of people within an autonomous state.

In the sixteenth century there were considered to be only four or five races of human beings, none of which was innately superior. There were as many nations as there were cities, ranks, language groups or professions.

During the seventeenth century 'race' dwindled to become a word used to describe more specific social groups. By the end of the eighteenth century it was beginning to be used to indicate pre-determined mental and physical characteristics stemming from common ancestry, both inferior and superior (Hudson, 1996; Hobsbawm, 1990). This may have been a result of the scientific revolution and the corresponding trend to greater precision in classification, coupled with the European attempts to categorize the peoples of Africa and North America with whom Europeans were in ever-increasing contact (Hudson, 1996). The term 'nation' was undergoing a different metamorphosis.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, two definitions of nation were running concurrently in Europe. Especially in England, the concept of nation was becoming specifically territorial - identified with a state and a government. All the people living within that state were assumed to share certain linguistic and cultural norms, creating a much larger, more stable and manageable unit (Knight, 1988). By 1789, revolutionary rhetoric in France would extend its meaning to indicate a government from below, ruled by the will and, especially, the "emotional involvement" of the all the people, again, who all share the same norms, but in this case the norms could be transmitted by language alone (Hroch, 1999b; Knight, 1988; Hobsbawm, 1987, p.143).

In Austria and pre-Revolutionary France, however, when 'nation' was used to refer to the whole state, it signified the nobility, who symbolized the particular traditions, symbols, privileges and rights of the kingdom that they were determined by history and birth to represent and defend. As they represented the nation, they became the nation and 'nation' meant the noble orders. The French courtiers called Versailles *ce pays là* - not so much an actual territory, but a mental landscape beyond which their imaginations found it hard to travel. Other myopic expressions European aristocrats used to describe their own social circles included *society*, *monde* and *Welt*. The concept of 'society' encompassing everyone living within a defined territorial or governmental unit did not exist. The vast number of people living under the Austrian and Bohemian Lands did not participate in the greater 'society', or the 'nation' as it was thus defined (Hroch, 1999b; Hudson, 1996; Hobsbawm, 1990; Smith, 1970; et. al).

The distancing between classes further extended into the concept of 'native tongue'. By the eighteenth century, the idea of a common language as a means of central control was well developed by the French, and was seen as an attractive, though impractical, means of transmitting shared norms through shared language (Bell, 1988; Smith, 1984). Language legislation to effect centralization had also been sporadically attempted elsewhere in Europe, particularly in Spain, where Castilian had been imposed as early as the sixteenth century as the language of the ruling class. Although it seemed logical to Louis XV that as he was a French monarch, all his subjects should speak his language, French administrators in Alsace in the eighteenth century were taking the matter a step further. They were promoting French not

only as the language of the ruler, but in an attempt to transmit to the German-speaking populace “nos moeurs, nos principes”<sup>1</sup> (Bell, 1988, p. 473; Fishman, 1970).

To a French aristocrat, the concept of ‘native tongue’ was unambiguous. As a representative of the French nation, it was French, presumably the variety that had been standardized and was regulated by the *Académie*. However, poorer nobles living in the provinces might also answer “French”, although they knew it only imperfectly and spoke on a regular basis their own Breton, Alsatian German, Occitan, or any one of a number of other varieties and languages spoken on French territory (McDonald, 1989; Smith, 1984; Fishman, 1970). Josef II often referred to himself as a German Emperor and his language as German, but the Viennese variety he spoke with his subjects in the streets he had probably learned from his nurse, and to his friends and in council he spoke French almost exclusively (Béranger, 1996; Blanning, 1970). The sociolinguists Carol Eastman and John Edwards both find that the ties between the languages people speak and the concept of a mother, or native, tongue are highly complex. A ‘native’ or ‘mother’ tongue may in some cases be a first language, but Eastman, in particular, points to the fact that people will choose a language as their native tongue, as adjunct to a ‘feeling’ of ethnicity, without speaking it at all. It can serve as a symbol of participation in a group (Eastman, 1984; Edwards, 1984). For the noble orders of Europe, for many reasons ‘native tongue’ often did not represent spoken reality, but existed as only as a symbol.

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<sup>1</sup> The intense measures of Francisization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would began during the revolution. A linguistic census in 1792 revealed that one third of the people under French rule spoke no French, and a quarter of the remaining two-thirds only understood it. The only sizable body of people who spoke a variety of French that closely resembled the standard written variety lived in the environs of Paris. It was seen as necessary that all the people speak standard French, because only French could transmit to them the revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality that would be obscured in their own local speech. More pragmatically, one national language ensured that everyone understood communications from the central government without their having to be translated (see Hobsbawm, 1990;1987; McDonald, 1989; Gellner, 1983).



This was particularly the case in Bohemia. As a result of the Thirty Years War, the large majority of Bohemian peers were not the traditional noble class, and further, a large number of them were of foreign, mainly German, ancestry. Many to most (the actual percentage is now impossible to determine) could not speak Czech (Hanuš, 1921, p.74). Both the Poles and the Hungarians, on the other hand, had retained their own indigenous aristocracies, and there were a lot more of them. In Poland in the late eighteenth century they numbered 8-10% of the population, in Hungary approximately 5%, while in the Czech Lands, the nobility numbered a meager 1% of the population and was largely foreign in the bargain (Dewald, 1996, pp. 24-25). The Theresian court surpassed even Versailles in intricacy of rank and ceremonial and plum positions in the burgeoning state bureaucracy were given to those under the eye of the Empress. This resulted in the often-literal abandonment of country estates by the wealthier members of the various nobilities over which Maria Theresa was sovereign. This was especially true of the Czech nobility (Dewald, 1996; Rugg, 1986). In Poland and Hungary there was a vigorous landed gentry who stayed home and minded the shop in Polish and Hungarian. A commensurate group was largely lacking in the Czech Lands (Dewald, 1996).

By the 1760s, often absentee and generally lacking adjunct gentry, the noble orders of Bohemia could hardly be seen as cynosures of either linguistic or cultural continuity at home. Again, unlike the Hungarians and the Poles, not only was their Czech almost non-existent, but they despised their 'native tongue' as a language fit only for the lowest orders. Still, the Bohemian noble orders saw themselves as representatives of the Bohemian Nation, and as defenders of the old Bohemian *Staatsrecht*, the historic rights and privileges of the Kingdom of Bohemia that had originated before 1526 (Kann, 1970, pp.151-155).

Miroslav Hroch argues that Czech had two concurrent states of existence during

the eighteenth century. The first, the symbolic Czech the nobles would invoke as their 'mother tongue', represented the great Kingdom of Bohemia. It was a heavily value-laden language of political autonomy and of rich historical worth. The second, communicative Czech, was a series of local varieties spoken by the low urban classes and peasants and, in the eyes of Josef II himself, it was a "half-formed" and "defective" tongue fit only for bumpkins (in Hroch, 1999a, p. 54). For the nearsighted noble orders, communicative Czech did not really exist at all within their narrow frame of reference and they saw no anomaly in this dichotomy. What the people really spoke was of no interest to the Nation.

However, for reasons of their own, the Bohemian aristocracy would begin to invoke the symbol of their native tongue more and more vociferously as the century progressed. In order to combat monarchical policies of bureaucratic absolutism that would begin to infringe upon their traditional rights, they needed to develop clearer forms of inner and outer distinction that would identify them and their cause as particularly Bohemian. As French had included them in an homogeneous world of aristocracy, their 'native tongue' would become a means of group identification and a rallying point. They would build the prestige of Czech as a transmitter of historical and literary glory, the scope defined in its symbolic form, and encourage a very modest and very particular revival from within their own narrow frame of reference. These efforts to legitimize a peripheral language would have unforeseen consequences, as they would create a base from which Czech speakers themselves could begin a more all-embracing awakening.

### ***Land Patriotism***

Arguably, in the eighteenth century the aristocracies of Europe were at the apex of their development as a class. Their power was seemingly unconditional; their world view was the only world view. However, many of them were under siege and the significant attacks came

from above. It was not until 1789 that they would face serious threat from below. Bureaucratic despotism, enlightened despotism, enlightened Catholicism, and even the idea of social contract - all these terms described the one French idea the noble orders did not admire: the diminishment of their hereditary rights and privileges in the interests of a strong, centralized monarchy.

This struggle was particularly bitter in the Austrian domains, as the powers of the aristocracies were considerable, and attacks on those powers were seen as contrary not only to their personal well-being, but were complicated by various local interests. Maria Theresa, although sympathetic to the aristocracy, could see the impracticalities and dangers in their strength, and in the case of Bohemia, she had experienced them first hand during the War of the Austrian Succession. Although a conservative and traditionalist, she initiated the policies of centralization and her son Josef would accelerate their scope and progress (Hroch, 1999a, 1999b; Blanning, 1970; et. al.).

To a great extent the aristocratic struggle that was mounted against absolutism in the Austrian domains took the form of *Landespatritismus*, or Land patriotism. This phenomenon can be seen, as Hroch describes it, as the exploitation of linguistic and cultural symbols of oppressed peoples by and for the benefit of their local nobility (Hroch, 1985, 1999a). Hanuš, at the other extreme, describes it as a process of aristocratic awakening in the face of (especially Josefinian) absolutism - an enlightened nobility aware of political and intellectual developments in France and, especially, England, who have begun to identify themselves in actuality with the nation they had previously represented only symbolically (1921). Either theory can be cogently defended, depending on particular circumstances and individuals. Neither, however, sufficiently explores this activity from within the aristocratic world-context of the time.

There were two sorts of Land patriotism and they occurred both alternately and concurrently. The first approach was based on the *Staatsrecht*, and took the form of official protests issued by the Estates and the Bohemian Gubernial council<sup>2</sup> in the 1770s and 1780s against Habsburg land, labour, school, and tax reforms. These were accompanied by plentiful reference to both the Bohemian Lion, the Bohemian Kingdom, the 'nation' and 'native tongue' (Berls, 1971, pp. 59-61; Pelcl, pp. 743, 749, 819-820). The response to these protests generally took the form of a flat 'no'. The second approach was more all-embracing, more complicated, more interesting, and in the end, more fruitful. To put it quite simply, the Bohemian nobility began to acquaint themselves with and take an active interest in Bohemia.

They did this in a number of ways, and for a number of reasons, both practical and philosophical. For many, it meant retirement to their estates. As repeated financial crises marked most of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and the Austrian national debt grew to staggering proportions (370 million gulden by 1791 – Lněničková, 1999a, p.37), many had no choice but to rusticate and retrench. On their estates they were inclined to make improvements, as in general the major source of their revenues was not rent, but the sale of produce. Many seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Dutch and British agricultural innovations found their way to the Czech Lands after 1740 (see Lněničková, 1999a; Blum, 1958).

Further, by the middle of the eighteenth century noblemen began to take an interest in the considerable amount of manufacturing that was being done, especially in Bohemia. They began establishing production depots, particularly for textiles, on their estates, and by the end of the century would control most of the proto-industrial activity in the Lands. This, argues Blanning, was the reason behind the lagging growth of an industrial bourgeoisie in the

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<sup>2</sup> This Council was one of the new (1763) government offices created by Maria Theresa to circumvent local and traditional governing bodies and concentrate power in Vienna. It was

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (1970). Industrial development was and would be controlled largely by the aristocracy well into the next century and the middle classes consisted almost entirely of guildsmen, retailers, professionals, district hetmans, and estate administrators (Lněničková, 1999a; Blanning, 1970; Pelcl, 1817, p. 619). The same process could, however, be seen as innovative, progressive, and of eventual benefit to the growth of Bohemia as an industrial centre in the late nineteenth century (Freudenberger, 1975).

More importantly, however, the aristocrats were to have an impact on the actual development of the Czech language. Their activities in this realm were initiated as a reaction to absolutism, and Land patriotism was expanded into a political program by the 1780s, which involved the establishment of a regional federalism under the Austrian Crown. In contrast with the French nobility, most of whom shared the same ostensible 'national' origin, in order to accomplish their objectives, the Bohemian nobility had to re-define themselves as a national presence of power and distinction within the many national units under the Austrian Crown.

Pelcl's observation concerning the Bohemian noble who has chosen French as his mother tongue over German and Czech, shows a certain ambiguity – which one was the mother tongue French had replaced? This confusion is understandable, considering the changeable nature of the aristocratic population of Bohemia. Due to intermarriage between the noble Estates of various nations under Austrian rule, membership in the Bohemian nobility could mean simply inheriting estates in Bohemia or Moravia. Many of the greater houses, including the Kinskýs, Fürstenbergs, Eszterhazys and Thuns, for example, identified themselves when it suited them either with Bohemia, Austria, Hungary or Poland (Bělina, 2000; Fiala, et. al., 1997; Hanuš, 1921). Moreover, as late as the mid-nineteenth century the Marradas family still retained their native Spanish, and the Piccolominis, Italian (Skutina,

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responsible for taxation and the enactment of regulations at the circle (provincial) level and its

1990). Certain lingering individualities and ethnic confusion in the ranks would be erased and their political stature would grow if they all began to share the same conceptual framework – as a loyal, French-speaking German aristocracy with a glorious Czech past. In the words of Franz Anton Kolowrat-Liebstein “We are still the nation” (in Macura, 1995, p. 155).

### ***The Nobility, History, and a Literary Revival***

What the nobles needed as a basis for their claims was a national history that would legitimate the German presence and establish their own status as the ‘natural’ leaders of Bohemia (Maur, 1999). History was, at the time, generally considered to be a series of moral lessons concerning the glorious examples of one’s forebears. Despite the conscientious work of certain historians as far back as Tacitus, the ruling classes generally have never seen accuracy as half so important as political expediency in the writing of ‘national’ histories. Many cautious, yet scholarly histories of Bohemia were to be published in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, including studies by Gelasius Dobner, followed by the more significant work of Pelcl and Dobrovský. However, the work of Ignaz von Cornova would become by far the most popular, as he suggested that the early Czech Slavs and the German Marcomanni had settled together and intermarried. This reconciliation of conflicting ethnicities, even within the highly pro-Czech focus of his work, lent historical justification to the German presence within the Czech Lands. This was of vital importance to the aristocracy, as it legitimized their own status as leaders of the Czech nation and made the lustrous exploits of the Czech kings their own heritage (Maur, 1999; Haubelt, 1986; von Cornova, 1776).

Linguistic work in the same vein was done earlier by the like-spirited Friedrich Pohl who, in 1763, published a grammar/linguistic treatise that revealed through word origins that the Slavonic Czech was closely related to German. Although Dobrovský was to demolish

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approval was needed for enactment

Pohl's very singular work, he remained popular well into the new century (Havránek, 1953). History and language became fashionable, and work on and interest in Czech in noble circles took the form of the collecting and cataloguing of what works still existed from the Renaissance and before. The production of scholarly grammars was also encouraged, promoting the concept of the language as inextricably bound to the history of the nation (Majer, 1999; Haubelt, 1986). For most of the nobility, this academic interest did not extend any further than in financing the work done. They were content to view Czech itself as part of the past to which they were the heirs. It had not lost its symbolic status in their eyes – they were interested in reviving the literary past in order to bolster the historic prestige of a 'native tongue' most of them still would not consider speaking. Their limited world view would not allow them to do otherwise.

Despite the broad, popular impact of Cornova and Pohl amongst the nobility in general, a smaller, more discriminating group from within their ranks would begin to see the need for at least a partial and specific revival of a communicative Czech. This group, called either progressives (Kann, 1970) or the patriotic intelligentsia and the avant-garde (Maur, 1999), had access to the most recent trends in French, English and German intellectual development. In addition, their own contributions to Enlightened thought were considerable. A few, like Ignaz Born or Franz Josef Kinský were scholars/scientists of note, others, like Franz Anton Nostic Rieneck, were great patrons and enthusiasts. It was on the towers of the Nostic country residence that the first lightning rods in Bohemia were tested (1775) and Nostic would later establish the largest and most influential salon for the devotees Czech studies. He collected about him members of the (very small) Czech intelligentsia – Pelcl was his librarian (and tutor to the Sternberg family), Dobrovský lived in his home for ten years after 1774, and was tutor to his four sons. Today, the Dobrovský library from the Nostic residence in Prague, now part

of the National Library, contains a huge collection (over 4,000 volumes and manuscripts) of antique Bohemian literature, which Dobrovský and Pelcl bought and Nostic paid for (Machovec, 1964; Hanuš, 1921).

For most of the Bohemian aristocracy, the new interest in the Czech language was firmly confined within a very narrow, symbolic, and comfortable scope. Czech functioning within a communicative sphere was unimaginable. This opinion was not universally shared, however, and certain nobles, at any rate, seemed to have been willing to take things further. Maria Theresa herself had at one time been concerned with the extent to which Czech had disappeared from all levels of administration within the Czech Lands. In 1763 she suggested forming a commission which would explore the logistics of teaching officials to read, write and speak Czech (in Bělina, 2000).

Although the commission never seems to have materialized, some classes in the Czech language and history were instituted at the Royal Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt in the same year at the behest of Count Kinský, who headed the committee responsible for the modernization of the curriculum there (Hanuš, 1921). As a significant proportion of the cadets were from Bohemian noble families, he presumably saw these classes as both furthering the interests of Land patriotism and catering to the concerns of the Empress. Ten years later he would write

We must provide an education for real life[...] Our youth must be educated first in their mother tongue and then in foreign languages. Czechs must have Czech as their mother tongue, like the French have French and the Germans, German. Czech is organized like a classical language; it is musical, and as easy to learn as other languages are. It is more important than other languages, even for aristocrats, in practical life. Our youth must be thoroughly educated in the history of their homeland, so that the nobility is encouraged by their fathers to perform great deeds (Franz Josef Kinský, 1773, in Lněničková, 1999a, p. 115).

Kinský is certainly recommending the development of a communicative Czech, but in a specific context. He, like others amongst the progressives, sees this as an actualization of their



symbolic 'native tongue' - hence, the seamless transition from language to history. In his mind, Czech *is* history. How this type of Czech could serve young nobles in 'practical' life is unclear, most likely to assist them in the administrative functions to which they were destined by birth.

Nostic, one of the most powerful and wealthiest nobles in Bohemia, was also quite radical in his support for a spoken Czech amongst the nobility. His salon was the centre both of groups working against absolutism and for the revival of both Czech and German scholarship and the term Land patriotism was in its most extreme form known as Nostic patriotism (Hanuš, 1921). Land patriotism, it should be emphasized, was as firmly fixed on Austria as it was on Bohemia, and Nostic was one of the most ardent supporters of the idea of the Czech-German "Bohemian". He is best-remembered today as the builder of what he conceived of as a 'national' theatre (first the Nostic, then the Estates Theatre) in Prague between 1781-1784.

Many historians see the term 'national' here as either innocent or cynical, and definitely implying 'a theatre for the use of the Bohemian nobility', as productions in the theatre were for many years to be almost exclusively in German, French, or Italian. The premier of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, in 1787, would number amongst its first productions (Hroch, 1999a; Sayer, 1996; Kann, 1970; Kerner, 1969). However, more reliable sources state that, from 1785 on, Czech plays were presented on a semi-regular basis, and after 1815, productions in Czech became a regular feature of Sundays and holidays (Macura, 1998a; Vondráček, 1956)

In support of those who see 'National' here in its old sense, there is no doubt what Nostic considered his actual 'native tongue' and who was 'the nation'. He wrote, rather obliquely, that "should only we Bohemians [*Böhmen*] be exceptional and feel less German blood in our veins? To prevent this I will assist the highest orders to create a national theatre

in our mother [German] tongue” (in Vondráček, 1956, p. 58). However Dobrovský, tutor to Nostic’s sons, supported and encouraged by Nostic and a member of his salon, was of the opinion that Nostic certainly intended many productions in Czech to be given in the theatre (Dobrovský, 1794, in Dobrovský 1913, pp. 3, 19). The initial plan, whatever it was, may have foundered on unforeseen difficulties, as there were certain logistic problems in presenting Czech (and initially German) plays that would crop up again in the next century. At any rate, after his death, Nostic’s heirs sold the theatre to the Bohemian Estates in 1792, at which point the family lost any influence over what would be presented.<sup>3</sup>

The Nostic salon was one of the many informal centres in Prague where the like-minded could meet, make contacts, and exchange information. The formal societies and clubs that were so much a part of French and English intellectual life in the eighteenth century were not lacking in Bohemia. They were hubs of scholarship and free exchange of ideas in a period when a significant proportion of intellectual advances took place in amateur circles. The Royal Society in London (1660), the French Académie (1666) and the Berlin Academia (1700) were all institutions that combined scholarship with the tolerance that was lacking in the universities of the period (Kostlán, 1999).<sup>4</sup> In emulation, the earliest scholarly society in the Czech Lands, the Society of Unknowns, appeared in Moravia in 1747 (Haubelt, 1986). By the 1770s there were quite a few scholarly societies in Prague, including the Learned Club (1772), founded by Born to promote English scientific developments, and the Society for Patriotic Economists,

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<sup>3</sup> Derek Sayer reports that what he calls the “standard *History of the Czech Theatre* [F. Černý (Ed.) 4 vol., 1969 - 1985]” comments on the “paradoxicality” of the fact that the first representative stage of the Bohemian kingdom was erected as a German national theatre.” (1996, p. 183). This is interesting, because Sayer is referring to an article in the work by Miroslav Kačer written in 1969. Any close study of Czech histories of the 18<sup>th</sup> century written between 1948 and 1989 will reveal that under communism, the Land patriots were either ignored or viewed as evil Germanizers. Even Haubelt (1985), an otherwise impeccable source, cites Nostic only on one page (210) as a force for Germanization, ignoring the patriot’s promotion of a literary and artistic revival of Czech. The Estates Theatre did become a German-only theatre, but in 1860.

<sup>4</sup> This was particularly true in the Catholic Austrian domains. Prokop Diviš, the Czech Jesuit, mathematician and natural scientist, conducted his electrical experiments in a chapel in the presence of two priests. Prayers were said before and afterward (Haubelt, 1986).

which flourished over the years 1775-1782. The Masonic Order became hugely popular during the 1770s and 80s, and although the Austrian and Bohemia lodges were founded on an enlightened Catholicism and Austrian/Bohemian patriotism, the Masonic Order would lose its appeal for aristocrats after it was outlawed in 1790 (Hanuš, 1921).

The most important and prestigious of these scientific/intellectual societies was the Royal Bohemian Society for the Sciences, founded in 1784 by the same small circle of progressive aristocrats, including Kinský, Sternberg, and Fürstenberg (the first president), who had founded and were members of many of the smaller societies in Prague. Kinský had been a member of a similar society in Vienna, but left it to organize one in Prague that would reflect and encourage patriotic scholarship in Bohemia. It was modeled on the *Académie* and the Royal Society and its mission was to promote enlightened exploration of natural science and the humanities, the development of scholarly investigations of the history and literature of Bohemia, and the compilation and re-issue of the great Czech literary works of the Renaissance (Kostlán, 1999; Hroch, 1999a; Hanuš, 1921). The society, between the years 1784 - 1792 would finance the publication of, amongst other works, Voigt's *Concerning the Spirit of the Bohemian Laws in Different Periods of History* (1786), and Pelcl's *History of Bohemia* (1790) and *History of the Germans and their Language in Bohemia* (1792). The Royal Bohemian Society, under official sanction from the Crown, would not only focus and voice the objectives of the progressive element among the Land patriots, but also inadvertently back and fuel the objectives of the Czech scholars themselves. Both Dobrovský and Pelcl were members and much of their research was funded by the Society. It would not be until 1818, with the founding of the National Museum that a scholarly body of such prestige would appear.

### ***Land Patriotism and what ensued\****

The role that the elite cadre amongst the Land patriots played in financing and encouraging early Awakeners and the revival of specifically Bohemian scholarship and interest in the Czech

language is not disputed by historians today. However, outside of Hanuš and, to a certain extent, Freudenberger, their role is seen as subordinate to that of the Czech scholars in their employ, and many historians, including Hroch, Bradley, Béranger, and Lněničková see these aristocratic efforts as self-serving and suspect. However, if one understands a little of the intellectual and political climate of the day and place and, more importantly, the limited world view and particular attitude to language of the eighteenth century Bohemian aristocrats, respect grows for their contributions and, more importantly, the by-products of their efforts, in the context of framework-building for a modern Czech.

First, Land patriotism must be seen as an extremely conservative political and intellectual phenomenon. It was formulated as a bulwark against absolutism and was intended to be a staunch defender of the status quo, and even the monarchy would countenance its scholarly pursuits. These pursuits – including the financing of work by Czechs of the academic caliber of Dobrovský and Pelcl, amongst others - were specifically aimed at the creation of a legitimate, modern affirmation of the glory of the Kingdom of Bohemia and its literary life and language before 1620. This would build the prestige of the Bohemian aristocracy (as representatives of the Bohemian Nation), and, to a certain extent, its clout within a centralized political framework. Further, to a great extent the histories and analyses of the period were specifically written to put the German presence in Bohemia within an acceptable framework, reconcile it with the ancient Czech kingdom, and, it might be suggested, to explain the significance of German to the aristocrats themselves.

The second by-product of Land patriotism was the creation of a solid base of linguistic and historical scholarship from which the nineteenth-century Czech Awakeners would work. The scholarly work they promoted would immeasurably increase the prestige of Czech, and the retrieval of lost literature they financed would provide an invaluable bank of material from which to work. As Haubelt points out, the revival of Czech as a language of literary merit

would be of inestimable consequence in the next century – it would restore its birthright as a language of viability in European eyes (Haubelt, pp. 408-409). Further, the patronage of Czech scholars within the narrow confines of late eighteenth-century Prague created an actual Czech sub-group, including priests, scholars, tutors, and librarians, who met each other in the salons and the societies of which they were adjunct members and ‘consultants’ (Hroch, 1999a; Haubelt, 1986; Hanuš). The new Czech intelligentsia that was formed from these individuals would create its own dynamic, move beyond the confines of aristocratic thought in Prague, and its members would become the eventual leaders of a larger circle of Czech scholars living and working all over the Lands.

Another inadvertent contribution the nobility would make was the introduction of enlightened international scholarship into the otherwise heavily-censored and theocentric intellectual circles in Prague. Although begun in the Renaissance, the Enlightenment had firmly established the vernacular (specifically French, German, and English) as a viable vehicle for scientific philosophical work, and the implications inherent in this ‘nationalization’ of scholarship were not lost on the now up-to-the-minute Czech intelligentsia. Although unthinkable at the time in most quarters, Dobrovský certainly considered using Czech for modern scientific work (Dobrovský, 1913, pp. 25, 47).

Further, the introduction of a new language of specifically scientific and literary prestige – English – may have had an impact on the Czech intelligentsia. The output of the Royal Society had made it almost indispensable for science, and new intellectual trends, especially from Germany, made it necessary to read Shakespeare and the modern English novelists. Certainly, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, English, almost unknown before that time in the Czech Lands, became extremely fashionable and many, including Kaspar Sternberg, would regret not having studied it as children in order to read with facility the scientific papers issuing from the Royal Society (Hanus, 1921; Sternberg, 1868, p. 4). The

Austrian Charles Sealsfield (Karl Postl) observed in 1821 that the mention of 'English' liberty particularly enraged the Czechs (in Lněničková, p. 79). Presumably, broader norms of English political thought had been seeping through as well.

For a few members of the Bohemian aristocracy, at any rate, the trend seemed to be moving away from the broader popularity of a German nobility with a Czech past, and away from the linguistic class-homogeneity that was offered by French. Their children, brought up in the context that their fathers and mothers had created, would continue to support the more serious and more all-embracing and far more nationalist efforts of the Awakeners well into the next century, despite the revolutionary paranoia engendered by the French Revolution and the re-establishment of crushing censorship that followed (Hroch, 1999; Hroch, 1985). The progressive aristocrats of the 1770s and 1780s had reestablished Czech as a language of historical and (historically) literate prestige, and through their interest in enlightened thought they had introduced new social and intellectual venues for the vernacular and scholarship. Possibly most importantly, they had inadvertently gathered together a nucleus of Czech intelligentsia that would lead a revival of a modern Czech. Their fight against absolutism had some unanticipated consequences.

One aspect of absolutist policy, however, would bring forth what was missing, a broader, specifically Czech support of a communicative revival of the language. This would not be provided by the aristocracy, but by reaction to the Germanization policies of Maria Theresa and Josef. The fight over linguistic and education reforms over the last quarter of the eighteenth century would create a sizable opposition amongst a broader spectrum of the Czech-speaking community, and truly begin the revival process.

## Chapter Three

### **Tilting the Balance: Habsburg School Reforms 1765-1776**

*Everyone will appreciate how advantageous it will be for the general welfare if the same official language reigns throughout the empire; as a result, the bond of fraternal love will unite all parts of the Monarchy, one with another*

Josef II, 1775

*This school legislation threatens the nation and the common good...and will oppress and extinguish our native tongue.*

Gubernial Council of Bohemia, 1776

One of the factors considered crucial in Language revival, and more particularly language maintenance, is a strong school program that will create a body of speakers, and more importantly, readers and writers of a particular language (Crystal, 2000). Corpus planners in particular depend on the school system to implement the texts and dictionaries they have created and to formalize the changes to the language they have made. Students are generally first instructed in the target language, which later becomes the language of instruction for some or all subjects (for a modern instance, see The Welsh Language Board, 2000). Although government language planning agencies cannot completely regulate the language the students will use outside the classroom, a strong educational program will provide the target language with a lot of the legitimacy and prestige it needs to survive outside school walls. For the Czech Awakeners, Czech in schools was one of the first and most enduring of their objectives as they first began to see their language under direct attack in changes to the school system.

Before 1750 it was religion, and not language, that was the source of the greatest tension between the Habsburg rulers and the general populace of Czech Lands. However, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, an ideological and political battle over education turned into an evolutionary process wherein the quest for religious conformity became a struggle for linguistic uniformity. To revive Czech, the Awakeners needed a modern framework within which to work and the Austrian educational reforms of 1760-1775 inadvertently created one for them. The linguistic goals of the progressive element amongst

the Land patriots, although instrumental both in opening up the possibility of the revival of a communicative Czech and building its theoretical prestige, had nothing at all to do with general linguistic mobilization. During the process of educational reform, the relationship between the monarch and the Catholic Church was to be questioned, the Church itself would have to change, and a language of neutrality would be replaced by a language of confrontation. Understanding the aims of the Czech Awakeners after 1776 is contingent upon understanding what kind of schooling existed before 1760, how it was transformed, and how the linguistic, intellectual, social, and political climate of the time affected educational change.

### ***University Reforms: 1760***

Before the battle of the White Mountain, the Czech Lands had maintained a strong educational tradition that stretched back to Charles IV and the founding of Charles University in the middle of the fourteenth century. At that time the rector of the university also headed a significant number of lower schools (Latin schools) that existed primarily to prepare boys for university, the professions and especially the priesthood. This system was to survive even the Hussite wars, though not without considerable damage. By the end of the sixteenth century it had been re-established under Rudolf II, but by this time the religious confusion that reigned in the Lands made it almost impossible for the rector to dictate educational policy to the various heads under his jurisdiction (Haubelt, 1986; Kerner, 1969). The framework remained however, and after 1620 the re-Catholicization of the Lands included the schools, with the Jesuits controlling the universities and the Latin schools, while the Piarists looked after the trivial (primary, village, or parish) schools, most of which had been founded and were sponsored by local nobles.

There were two major problems with this arrangement, however. First, the prime objective of the priests was forcible conversion, and education at every level resembled indoctrination coupled with inquisition and book-burning. Second, there were never enough



trained priests even to begin to properly tend to the population of the Lands, and from 1620 to 1800 one of the most enduring problems faced by the educational authorities was the lack of pastoral care (Béranger, 1997; Berls, 1971). However, the Hussite (and later Protestant) emphasis on the importance of universal literacy in the vernacular had created an educational sub-culture. By the eighteenth century a sizable proportion of the population (German and Czech) identified itself with Protestantism, and there is significant evidence indicating that many unofficial and often clandestine schools run by Protestant pastors existed at the village level, where the students were taught to read and write in Czech. Often soldiers who had picked up a little reading and figuring also served as teachers (Melmuková, 1999).

The most popular form of village school was, however, the 'singing' schools that sprang up before the turn of the eighteenth century in response to the aristocratic mania for private orchestras and singers. Children were taught musicianship and, possibly, the rudiments of reading.<sup>1</sup> By 1774 there were approximately 1000 such schools in Bohemia (Berls, p. 54). However despite the existence of all these schools, at the end of the eighteenth century only a small proportion of the population of the Czech Lands could read or write at all (Lněničková, 1999a). Both secondary and primary education (where there was any) was aimed solely at the teaching of the catechism. Reading methodology was at best haphazard, or more often, non-existent. Students of all levels and ages were grouped together, and methodology consisted of rote memorization and drill (Haubelt, 1986; Berls, 1971).

In contrast, the Catholic Latin school was the only path to the upper levels of education. Here the language of instruction was first German, and then Latin, the language of wider communication and scholarship. All university studies were conducted by priests in Latin, and the two great professions, medicine and the law, were heavily influenced by, if not

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<sup>1</sup> The heads of these schools were often lay musicians, called cantors, who doubled as church organists and musical directors for the local landlord. One hopeful candidate for a cantorship pointed out that he could "play the violin, viola, violin-cello, and trumpet, that he could sing tenor and bass and knew some arithmetic (in Berls, 1971, p. 56)

under direct control of the Catholic Church. Most of the existing European publications of weight, in literature, theology and science, were written in Latin and it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that a significant body of work in the vernacular (specifically French and English) began to appear. The Habsburgs, as Catholic rulers of officially Catholic domains, forged close bonds between Church and state in the use of Latin for the upper levels of civil administration.<sup>2</sup> Above the level of village school, Latin was the language of educational instruction for both reasons of practicality as well as of prestige (Melmuková, 1999). Beyond all this however, the multilingual Austrian domains were dominated by a German monarch, but no more than twenty percent of the population were native speakers of German (Kann, 1973). Latin was a satisfactory language of wider communication because it was neutral; not specifically identified with any state or nation, and the power it conveyed was intellectual and ecclesiastic. When communicating in Latin, Czechs and Germans could meet as equals and in higher social circles. For ambitious Czech parents, Latin school was absolutely the only hope for a rise in social status for their boys.

By the middle of the eighteenth century cracks had appeared in this educational facade. The universities in Vienna and Prague, left exclusively to the Jesuits for over one hundred years, were understood to be hopelessly behind the standards of the rest of Europe. Teaching of the sciences, modern languages, and mathematics was almost non-existent; philosophy was dominated by theology, and theology, by sophistry. At the Latin school level studies were at similarly low ebb. Many students leaving the Latin schools had only a shaky grasp of the language, and especially in Bohemia and Moravia, all education was engulfed in an atmosphere of intense religious bigotry (Berls, 1971; Kerner, 1969). Further, this bigotry, ever present in the Czech Lands, was the cause of a massive intellectual diaspora that although

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<sup>2</sup> The Hungarians still insisted that Latin, and not despised German, should be the language of wider communication in the Austro-Hungarian Empire as late as 1912. Latin was still their official language, and Hungarian ministers in Vienna were confusing everyone by delivering all their speeches in Latin (Kann, 1973).

most intense in the years after 1620, continued almost to the end of the eighteenth century. Not only were many of the Czech Protestant intelligentsia exiled, but others, not able to enter the university in Prague on religious grounds, studied in the German states or in Holland. To compound the problem, state censorship, which was also controlled by the Jesuits, was so all-encompassing as to stifle almost all news, all books, and all knowledge from without. That this state of affairs was beginning to be seen as an impediment was evidence of a shift in thinking that had taken place in the eighteenth century.

From the very beginning of Maria Theresa's reign in 1740 it became increasingly obvious that if she were to preserve the Habsburg domains, much would have to be done to modernize them. A monarch for whom issues of religion were of paramount importance, she saw her role as that of spiritual head of a religious community and to the end of her days preserved a patriarchal (or, matriarchal) sense of responsibility for the spiritual and temporal wellbeing of her subjects. She saw the aristocracy as divinely ordained and necessary for the continuing existence of her monarchy, but understood that for the monarchy to survive, the powers of the aristocracy had to be curtailed. She was a staunch traditionalist, but pragmatic enough to realize that changes had to be made. To this end, although at odds with the iconoclasm and secular character of the Enlightenment, she surrounded herself with highly able ministers who were influenced by its principles.

In order to create what her advisor Haugewitz called "a perfect form of government and a model for all of Europe", the basis of all her reforms was the centralization of power in Vienna (Hroch, 1999b, p. 87). Modernization would bring about fiscal and governmental uniformity and, above all, religious conformity throughout the multilingual and multicultural Lands under her rule (Béranger, 1997; Blanning, 1970; Crankshaw, 1969). In the early years of her reign, she and her ministers concentrated on consolidation through fiscal reform and sweeping centralisation of governmental bodies in the Austrian and Czech Lands. It was at

this time that Bohemia and Moravia lost most of the autonomy that had remained to them, even to the parish level (Béranger; 1997; Tapié, 1973; Kerner, 1969; Seton-Watson, 1965).

Maria Theresa's educational policy began in the early 1760's with a reform of the universities in Vienna and Prague. This was a natural outgrowth of the policy of ecclesiastical reform begun by her brilliant Chancellor of State and arch anti-cleric, Wenzel Anton, Prince Kaunitz, in an attempt to subject Church dealings and holdings in the Austrian domains to complete state control. His investigations into the activities of various orders revealed, among other things, the torpor that exclusive Church administration of education had produced. There was a shortage of trained professors at the university level. Further, the upper ranks of the prelacy lived like princes, while village priests often lived in poverty-stricken circumstances – a situation not conducive to the recruitment of young men willing to do pastoral work in the country, and a serious shortage of priests: teachers in the field had resulted. There was also only a very limited supply of Catholic books in all institutions of learning (Berls, 1971). Furthermore, and of more interest to Kaunitz, the creation of the massive new bureaucracy as a result of the new administration demanded competent and knowledgeable new officials at all levels, and it was obvious that the universities were not in any way responding to that need.

A man more particularly involved in education reform was the Dutch Jansenist Gerhard van Swieten; protégé of Kaunitz, Maria Theresa's personal doctor and advisor from 1745. Although not a secularist, he was convinced that state interests were of paramount importance and not necessarily best served by institutions within the Catholic Church. He and a group of like-minded reformers had wrested the censorship commission from the Jesuits in Vienna in the late 1750s and it was through his influence that *De l'esprit des lois* was published in Austria at that time. Under his aegis and the impetus of the new Ministry of Education, the renovation of the universities began in the early 1760s. Lay professors were hired (Karl Heinrich Seibt, in 1766, became Prague's first non-clerical lecturer), and new subjects were added to the curriculum to meet the requirements of a new bureaucracy,

including modern languages, German (in a separate category), modern philosophy, applied political science, accounting, and mathematics. It was at this time that German became the language of instruction for some of the new material (Berls, 1971; Blanning, 1970; Kerner, 1969). By 1791, a professor of law would be writing pleading letters asking that Latin remain the language of instruction for at least one course in each faculty, as only in Theology had it prevailed (Hroch 1999a, p.156).

### ***Elementary School Reforms: 1774***

Elementary education was an even more compelling interest for van Swieten and his colleagues, and in particular, elementary education in Bohemia and Moravia. Although all educational reforms were carried out first in Austria, the Czech Lands became the crucible of new policies of centralization, fiscal reform and education, because they were the closest most easily controlled of the Habsburg holdings and one of the most problematic. First, sizable pockets of religious dissent simply would not go away. Secondly, repeated peasant revolts over the century brought home the fact that the Czech peasantry lived in extremely miserable conditions. There was a great contrast between the industrious ethnic Germans of the mountainous Sudetenland, who were developing cottage industries, and the impoverished Czech serfs who lived by agriculture alone on the plain. To most, this was either the result of the Czech serfs' innately shiftless nature and probable mental deficiency (Haubelt, 1986; Tapié, 1973), or a manifestation of God's Divine Plan (Crankshaw, 1969). However, an influential minority was beginning to see this state of affairs as determined by geography, aristocratic privilege, cultural patterns, and tradition; in short, as a situation that could and must be changed.

Although the university reforms went through slowly and in the face of constant protests from the Jesuits, a more serious debate was brewing that would polarize the various interest groups. In the early 1770's, a heated controversy erupted over van Swieten's proposal

to establish a system of compulsory elementary education. Although convinced that schools could only improve when released from the domination of the Church, he could not lose sight of the basis of all Theresian educational reforms; the re-establishment of effective religious instruction that would bring spiritual, and through spiritual, temporal unity to the Austrian domains (Béranger, 1997, p. 65).

Emphasis on the powers of reason that was the hallmark of enlightened thinking in France and England, in Austria had become single-minded attacks on the 'traditional' rights and privileges of the Church and the aristocracy that the Empress would not bear *in toto*. She was not about to dispense with divine ordination in favour of social contract, but she was amenable to changes proposed by this line of reasoning that would streamline the system, while leaving the core intact. Therefore, of the three main interest groups taking part in the debate over elementary school reform: the traditionalists, the enlightened secularists and the enlightened Catholics, and it was the third group that was the most influential.

The traditionalists, typified by Cardinal Migazzi of Vienna, saw nothing wrong with the existing situation that inquisition and threats of exile could not improve. They, for the most part the upper echelons of the prelacy and a great number of the aristocracy, equated literacy with heresy and strongly opposed any type of school reform aimed at a more comprehensive education for students of any and all ranks and levels anywhere (Berls, 1971). Their power was great and bolstered by the censorship commission and the secret police, but their reasoning, in even the eyes of the empress, was seen to be flawed and excessively concerned with the protection of their own considerable rights and privileges. They were the focus of attacks by the second, and weakest interest group, the radical secularists of the Enlightenment, who would agree with Maria Theresa's great jurist, Josef von Sonnenfels, that "Every tradition which has no justifiable basis should be abolished automatically" (in Blanning, 1970, p.30).

Although few in number and of small general influence in Catholic Vienna, with the exception of Kaunitz, who was a supreme pragmatist and probably an atheist (Blanning, 1970), they contributed the notion of the subject as useful and productive citizen, but within a state based on secular principles. Further, they argued that aristocratic rights were based on traditional privileges and obligations and although the privileges remained and were being closely guarded, the obligations had dissolved with time. The state had a responsibility to each person living under its aegis, and this responsibility was not being met (Blanning, 1970). Both these ideas engaged Maria Theresa in that they appealed to her very real concern for the well-being of all her subjects, and they were evidently crucial to the development of the modern state she so desired.

The third group, the enlightened Catholics, was by far the broadest and most able to effect change. They agreed that the state had an obligation to each and every one of its subjects, and all subjects could be made useful, but they placed these concepts within a framework more acceptable to Maria Theresa. They were a disparate group - enlightened prelates such as Bishop Leopold Hay of Hradec Králové, aristocrats like Count Johann Boquoi, Jansenists like van Swieten, scholars such as Seibt and Dobrovský, and educational reformers such as Kindermann and Felbirger. These were men influenced by the Enlightenment but who maintained their religious allegiances and were committed to changing the focus of Church doctrine from death and damnation to tolerance, self-control and the development of inward piety. In 1771, Seibt outlined the issue.

[...] statesmen have concentrated solely on the laws and ignored the character of the citizens. How can we insure that the laws will be obeyed if men are too ignorant to recognize their rationality? Some [Migazzi] say that we can insure obedience by threats of punishment. Can this be done in all cases? Have not some men reached such a degree of wickedness that no punishment deters them? We must direct our attention to the morals of the people. The subject does not obey because he does not have any enlightened concept of virtue, because he does not see the necessity for it[....] If we wish to make diligence and industriousness national characteristics, we must transform the characters of the people through morality and religion[....] There is a very dangerous political heresy circulating - that one can be a good citizen and still be a wicked man. They [enlightened secularists, particularly von Sonnenfels]

insist, on the basis of a heathen philosophy, that honor, fame and utility are sufficient motives to insure order and tranquillity in a state. What a dangerous basis (in Berls, p. 59, 60-61).

In short, if people were to become useful (and Catholic) citizens, it was not good enough to teach them skills and laws, but change them from within – and this time with gentleness.

In 1766, an enlightened Prussian abbot and educational reformer, Johann Ignaz Felbiger of Sagan, published a revolutionary *Methodenbuch* (*Method Book*). He had certainly read Locke, and probably Komenský, and presented a very new methodology for the teaching of young children. He recommended the sorting of students of different ages and levels into separate groups, and the breakdown of subject matter into levels of difficulty. In particular, he proposed a graded reading methodology that involved the breakdown of language teaching into alphabet, simple and more complex words and sentences, morphology, and simple rules for spelling and writing.

The very centre of this work though, was a gentle and tolerant catechism (Felbiger, 1766). Although religion was the main focus of the plan, Felbiger's additional concentration on the graded building of literacy was an innovation. Following Felbiger's plan, a young Bohemian priest, Ferdinand Kindermann, with the encouragement of his patron, Count Johann Boquoi, opened a model school in Kaplice that met with great success, promoting the idea in the Czech Lands and in Vienna. In 1770, van Swieten invited Felbiger to plan and head a Normal school for teachers in Vienna, and in 1774, the General School Regulations Act was passed, making primary education compulsory for children of both sexes from the ages of six to twelve in the Czech and Austrian Lands. Children were to be instructed in their own language, although German language instruction was encouraged in schools where the population was exclusively Czech, and 'German' schools, which taught German, religion, and crafts to older Czech boys were to be established in the bigger towns. Not only were Felbiger's 4 R's (Religion as the fourth) to be taught in all schools, but also, where trained teachers were available, weaving, spinning, knitting and hydraulics (Berls, 1971).



This all looked very good on paper, but in actual fact the Act was very timid and produced only limited educational change. It was a large-scale compromise designed to appease the traditionalists (including the Empress herself), while promoting Felbirger's enlightened plan. The administration of the law was left to the aristocracy and the Church, there were no funds specified for the training of staff and the building and staffing of schools. As many of the proposed pupils in the Czech Lands were the actual property of the aristocratic administrators, the results varied widely from estate to estate. In order to demonstrate how things should be done, Maria Theresa had Kindermann establish over five hundred successful schools on her own estates, but many other landowners did not follow her lead. Yet the system did survive, and despite these drawbacks by 1781 out of 776,000 eligible children in Bohemia and Austria, 208,580 were attending school, which is an impressive figure by European standards at the time (Kerner, p. 348). Further, the educational standard of Kindermann's Bohemian schools on the Felbirger plan outstripped even those in Austria. The Normal school for teachers in Prague (est. 1775) was turning out teachers of such quality that they were being sent by the government to establish schools in other parts of the Austrian domains, including Hungary and the Balkans (Hroch, 1999a; Berls, 1971; Kerner, 1969).

### ***The Gymnasium Reforms: 1776***

For five years very ugly battles had raged over primary education and the form it was to take, but an even uglier and possibly more interesting fight over education was brewing. It erupted in 1773 when Pope Clement abolished the Jesuit order. Almost all Jesuit property, which was considerable, passed into the hands of the state and their exclusive hold over the universities and the Latin schools was dissolved. Gerhard van Swieten had died the year before, and it was at this time, in his wake, that Josef II began to take a more active interest in educational reform, when the issue of what to do with the educational vacuum at the secondary level arose.

Josef and his mother had ruled jointly since the death of his father in 1765 but they did not share the same vision of rulership, creating a tension that grew more acute as they both grew older. Unlike his mother, Josef tended more to the ideal of an almost completely secular state and enlightened despotism. Although he did not question his personal piety, he was jealous of the power of the Catholic Church and its institutions, and he deeply distrusted its regarding itself as an independent body within his state (Bělina, 2000; Blanning, 1971). Further, he was as not as disinclined as was his mother to curtail the power of the aristocracy in the interests of the state. What he did share with her, however, was a genuine concern for all his subjects, and he spent many of the early years of his joint rulership travelling all over his domains, taking an active interest in the lives of even the lowest of his subjects. His travels in Bohemia during the famine years of 1773-1774 became legendary and it was then that he earned an enduring, if highly inaccurate, reputation for kindness and sweetness of nature (Bělina, 2000; Hroch, 1999a). However, he distrusted his mother's belief in the integrating powers of uniform Catholicism, and was seeking a new force that would bring the same results with no loss of power to himself. He saw this new force for unity as German, and it was in the gymnasium reforms that this was to be tested.

Both Maria Theresa and Josef wished to change the focus of the secondary, or Latin schools from preparation for the priesthood and the professions into gymnasia that would serve as a training ground for young aristocrats who were to fill posts in the upper levels of the civil service. In late eighteenth-century Austria and the Czech Lands, the education of aristocratic children (boys) was both strictly classical and severely Catholic, and often little better than that of the children of peasants. As children they were almost exclusively educated privately, and it was impossible for the state to control the standards of private tutors who were too often qualified only in that they spoke French as a first language (Skutina, 1990).

Further, ignorance was not necessarily a drawback within a caste that largely regarded any knowledge of economics, politics or modern philosophy as a social solecism. In short, despite the small group of advisors who surrounded Maria Theresa and Josef (many of whom were not of noble blood), there were too few qualified members of the aristocracy to fill the many positions in new government offices created by the centralization (Hroch, 1999a; Berls, 1971). Therefore, both Maria Theresa and Josef agreed that their somewhat mutually exclusive duty was to upgrade and modernize the curriculum in the gymnasia, while making public school studies attractive to the parents of future ministers of state.

Therefore, in 1775, the Ministry of Schools was instructed to judge two proposals for a new curriculum, one intensely conservative, one highly revolutionary, and arrive at a compromise between the two. The result was more conservative than even Felbiger could now wish. His educational views had become far more state-centred during his years in Vienna, and the 4 R's of his 1765 *Methodenbuch* were to be augmented in the 1777 edition with the study of history and political science. This edition was imbued with a staunch and secular patriotism that the earlier edition completely lacked. He wrote

It [history] should be generally taught because it is not only interesting work to read about events, but it is also possible to learn from models and examples in history, which are extremely illuminating. If we familiarize ourselves with the history of our country, we will learn about personages and events from several worthy points of view. This knowledge will fill us with great honour and love for our country [...] (Felbiger, 1777, in Bělina, 2000).

As Commissioner for Schools, and director of the Normal School for teachers respectively, Felbiger and Kindermann raised their voices in protest against the gutting of the more radical of the proposals as did von Sonnenfels, who with Josef had envisioned a very different plan. Throughout 1775 a vicious battle raged over curriculum content, and this time the issue was not merely that of religion. The more radical plan had included studies in mechanics, hydraulics, physics, comparative world history, and natural science which were, in the eyes of

many, trade-school and applied studies that were of a lower level and not appropriate for (noble) students preparing for university (Berls, 1971).

A compromise was reached in May of 1776, and the gymnasium Reform Act was sent to the Bohemian Gubernial council for enactment. Like most compromises, this pleased almost no one, including Maria Theresa, who was uneasy about the checks on aristocratic rights and lack of religious focus it contained, and Josef, who felt it was not radical enough either linguistically or in course content. Two thirds of the existing forty-two gymnasia were to be closed or changed to German schools and the ones remaining open were to fall under complete state jurisdiction. Intensive Latin would continue, but as a subject, and only in the upper grades would it become a language of instruction, and only for theology and philosophy. All other subjects were to be taught in German. As many lay teachers as were qualified and available were to be hired. Entrance exams in German, Latin, and Religion were to be set. Although there were no fees for the sons of the nobility, all other students were to pay 20 florins a year, and had to pass the entrance exams with exceptional marks. In addition, all private tutors were to be certified at the Normal School for teachers, where they had to receive certificates in German, Normal school method, and religion (Berls, 1971).

The vast majority of the aristocrats of Austria and Bohemia were, in general, not pleased with the reforms. Many thought the new curriculum smacked of trade school, and seemed rather full of a lot of hard things to learn (Kerner, 1969). They resented the loss of their patronage of the Latin schools, which they regarded as a traditional right that had been violated and moreover, that they could not hire a tutor of their own choosing seemed absurd. The decrease in the hours of religious study slightly shocked them as well. However, the main focus of their complaint was the balance of languages. There was not, in their opinion, enough Latin to prepare students sufficiently for university. The dominance of German seemed to them impractical pedagogically as they did not regard it as sufficiently developed to be a

language of instruction for any but the most basic of subject matters, and its predominance signified a large drop in the status an upper-school education should convey. Although they regarded themselves as a German nobility with a Czech past, the reality of stumbling German over French or Latin seemed ludicrous (Bělina, 2000; Hroch, 1999a; Haubelt, 1985).

Objections to the balance of languages did not end with the aristocracy. The school legislation was the first to indicate clearly that Germanization was an official program. The Gymnasium Reform Act was, in fact, the first of many school and governmental language reforms in the coming years that would crystallize Czech opposition, antagonize even the most conservative members of the aristocracy, and bring about the process of real language revival in the Czech Lands.

### ***The Czech Reaction: 1776 and onward***

In essence, the Czechs took the line that the gymnasium reforms were about to stifle the education of Czech children, destroy the prosperity of Czech towns and shut Czechs out of the professions, the Church hierarchy, and the civil service. Formerly, the sons of Czech peasants and small tradesmen had been able to attend Latin school and move into the universities with relative ease as long as they were clever, industrious and Catholic. Now, this was going to be very difficult to do, Catholic or Protestant. First, 20 florins was a lot of money to spend and many Czech parents could not pay this fee. As well, an entrance exam in German that demanded a high grade would be impossible for a Czech child educated at primary school in Czech to pass. Further, many Latin schools had closed, creating a problem for many children who did not live in proximity to one of the new gymnasia. Whole towns where existing Latin schools had closed would suffer loss of revenue and eventual stagnation, as the children living there would never be able to advance themselves sufficiently (Hroch, 1999a; Rugg, 1985; Berls, 1971).

Moreover, the gymnasium reforms and the Germanization that accompanied them effectively extinguished almost all hope of social mobility for Czech speakers. The historian Jaroslav Marek likens the social structure of the Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia at the end of the eighteenth century to a great pyramid - extremely broad at the base and very tiny at the top (Marek, 1998). Josef II seemed to be doing his best to flatten the pyramid altogether. He argued, quite reasonably, that the welfare of the state and the individuals within it would improve dramatically if that state contained a lot more really good farmers and tradesmen and a lot fewer priests and lawyers (Lněničková, 1999, p. 180). The Czechs responded, also quite reasonably, that in future all the good farmers were going to be Czech, and the priests and lawyers that existed would all be of German origin (Marek, 1998, p.9). This seemed a likely result, as after his mother's death in 1780 Josef would continue and intensify policies of Germanization even at the primary school level, arguing that to do so was a kindness to children who were being mentally and socially deprived as a result of speaking such an unformed tongue (Hroch, 1999a. p. 92).

But well beyond issues of money and distance was the problem of language. As long as Latin had remained the dominant language of the upper levels of the educational system, the Czechs felt the playing field to be as even as could be expected. It was, after all, the language of religious studies for both Catholic and many Protestant denominations, and opened the same doors to the professions for both Czechs and Germans at home and abroad. As a neutral language, and one of immensely high prestige, all Czechs (and Germans) of the period would have acknowledged it superior to their own, and beyond that, as the language of wider communication throughout the Habsburg domains, it gave them an illusion of autonomy that a universal German would not. German was not only the language of the Austrian overlords; it was the focus of six hundred years of hostility within the Czech Lands. This certainly was the reason that protests poured into the School Commissions in Prague and Vienna from all over Bohemia in the following years (Haubelt, 1985).

What is initially unclear, however, is who was voicing this dissent. The vast majority of Czech speakers at the bottom of the pyramid could read poorly and write only their names. They were the property of a landlord, and either unaware of or indifferent to school reforms. Above their level the shift to German had begun well before the school reforms, and Marek estimates that by 1800, one third of Czech speakers (the top one third) had been completely assimilated (Marek, p.2). However, the opening salvo came quickly and from an unexpected source. In November of 1777, the Bohemian Gubernial council sent a letter to Vienna protesting against the gymnasium reforms. This act would, they argued, destroy the economy of towns without gymnasia, shut Czechs out of the upper levels of the school system, the professions and the Church and furthermore, it would “oppress and extinguish our native tongue” (in Berls, p. 158).

Janet Berls suggests that in voicing this argument they were speaking for the magistrates, parish priests and other local officials with whom they would have been in contact (Berls, p. 160). The Gubernium at this time was composed of a governor, Count Thun, and the ethnically disparate group that one would expect of Bohemian nobility, including Baron O’Kelly von Aghrim, and the Austro/Italian Count Ludwig Cipriani. None of the men on the council in 1777 were Czech, two-thirds of them were of Austrian or German origin, and it is unlikely that many (or any) of them could speak Czech at all. However, only Count Thun was from the upper echelons of the aristocracy. The families of all the rest had been ennobled only after 1700 and they were drawn from the ranks of the lesser nobility, the knights who made up the great body of career civil servants, administrators and lesser diplomats in Vienna and Prague at that time (Fiala, Hrdlička and Županić, 1998). Their lack of Czech ethnicity, however, did not stop them from invoking the “nation and the common good” and protesting the attack on “our” native tongue”, the usual rhetoric of the Bohemian Nation (in Berls, 1971, p. 158).

Berls, Kerner, and Blanning all see this and other noble protests as stemming largely from self-interest, and the likely reaction of Land patriots to absolutist reforms. The invocation of 'nation' by members of the Gubernium pertains to their own Estate (the Nation) and the document is protest against the loss of further aristocratic privileges (; Berls 1971, pp.160-173; Blanning, 1970; Kerner, 1968). In the main, this is probably true. Loss of revenue at the town level meant loss of revenue to the landowner as well as the inhabitants of the town. Summoning the 'nation' to back them and highlight their individuality was certainly Land patriotism in its most directly confrontational form (see Bělina, 2000; Hroch 1999b; Lněničková, 1999).

However, in light of the work done on a revival of the historic prestige of Czech by the small but highly influential circle of progressive aristocrats, there may be some ambiguity in the exact meaning of the term 'nation'. The nobility was in the process of re-defining themselves, linguistically and politically, and in the process their role within the context of their own territory had been amplified; even the most conservative would be affected by this trend. The argument that they were working only from motives of self-interest is not entirely convincing. Further, although most of the great noble houses and a good number of the lesser ones were of foreign blood, certainly a respectable number of the knights and barons were of Czech origin, and may have been undergoing a particular awakening process of their own (sixteen Czechs had been ennobled since 1700; Fiala, et al., 1997)). As Baron Vavák's petition to the Emperor Leopold stated in 1791

Nothing is more grievous to us than this; it's nothing new, but rather it is an old thing - that is, our speech, our beloved Czech mother tongue. When our children progress in school, the speech of their true forebears is scorned and they must study in another language, especially if they wish to be accepted into the university. Both the children of townsmen and villagers must study hard and long, and even then may be left out, or suffer from mockery (in Taraba, 2000).

In short, it may be that the motives of the Gubernial Council in using such rhetoric were not so cut-and-dried as has been formerly argued



The greatest opposition to the school reforms, however, came from a small group of Czechs who in the years following 1776 would see their opportunity and seize it. They were the parish priests, the schoolteachers, students and university professors, crafts and tradesmen, the printers and publishers, translators and the priests and scholars living and working within educational, commercial, and religious institutions with and without the encouragement of patronage. Although most of them spoke and wrote in German, it would seem from their protests against the school reforms that this Germanization went no deeper than language. Two scholars of stellar ability - František Martin Pelcl and Joseph Dobrovský - would initially lead them. The educational reforms and the Germanization that accompanied them became the impetus Pelcl and Dobrovský needed to begin to find and encourage younger Czech scholars all over the country. They tirelessly promoted the language and the literature and began forming a fledgling Czech intellectual circle independent of the narrow confines of the aristocratic language-world well beyond Prague city limits.

In the conclusion to his *History of the Czech Language and Literature* Dobrovský would write:

I will attempt, and with the interest of a few patriotic Czechs [...] to return the Czech language to its former state of perfection, as it was in the Golden Age of Maximilian and Rudolf II. I leave it to the future to decide, however, as it depends on circumstances beyond our control. I refer to the order, activated in 1780, under which no Czechs without knowledge of German, could enter Latin school [...]. Although Czech was ordered to be put aside by the Emperor's School Commission in 1783, it was embraced far more than ever, and *in no region of this land was there a place where the regional commissions were not petitioned for its return* [italics Dobrovský's]. If, after the rejection of so many Czech boys who are unable to study in German and thus not be able to attend Latin school, there will be enough Czechs or Utraquists [Czech Protestants] for the different services, and especially for the intellectual disciplines, only time will tell (Dobrovský, 1791, p. 81).

Although Dobrovský advocates returning Czech to a period of former glory, he does not advocate Czech in the school system. He seems to be concerned with the loss of Latin and resulting advantage to ethnic Germans. This ambiguity of concept would cause him problems later. However, he was of the opinion that “the school regulations will destroy Czech intellectual

pursuits in this land” and the Germanization of the school system would remain a focus of his energies throughout much of his life (Dobrovský 1783; in Dobrovský 1913, p. 198).

Although the gymnasium reforms perhaps initiated this concern, the first concerted Czech attack on the school system was on the university. In 1791 after years of effort, Pelcl succeeded in persuading the Emperor and the university authorities to create a chair in Czech Language and Literature, of which he was the first incumbent. Although certainly the chair was giving only visual representation to the concept of Czech as the historic symbol of the Bohemian Nation, it was a start (Haubelt, 1986). Both Emperors Leopold (in 1791) and Franz (in 1819) were to curtail German requirements in gymnasia and Franz would eliminate them at the primary school level (Hroch, 1999a). Further, in the nineteenth century, the issue of Czech at all school levels was to become an issue of enduring interest. As early as 1840, of the eight Czech journals and magazines published in Prague at that time, one was *Škola (School)*, a journal “of interest to teachers and Czechs concerned with education and language” (*Časopis Mzsa.* 1854). In 1841 the primary and secondary schools underwent further reform, and Czech literature began to appear at the gymnasium level in some places (Laněčková, 1999a).

In short, the Theresian and Josefinian school regulations effectively demolished what they had set out to accomplish – unity within the Austrian domains. Maria Theresa relied on the ideal of a great spiritual community of which she was the divinely ordained leader as a unifying force, and Josef’s ideal of enlightened despotism would replace religion with language to achieve the same end. However, in choosing German, and not Latin, as the language of unification, Josef made a fatal error. Latin was neutral, German was not. German had become a veritable barrier, denying Czechs access to Latin and the rewards it brought. Further, in promoting German, a vernacular of no particular prestige as a language of education and wider communication, the Habsburgs effectively showed Czech scholars that there was a new

framework in which to revive and develop their own language. In the years following 1776, they began to create a new Czech to fill the frame. To illustrate, this poem was written in or around 1780, and is quoted by Joseph Dobrovský in his *History of the Czech Language and Literature*. He describes the author merely as “a senior in Starý Boleslav” (Dobrovský, 1791, p. 139).

### **Warning: to the slanders of the Czech language**

Though the friend of the Czech rejoices,  
And thinks the Czechs have won,  
Things are so bad that we are grieving,  
The honour of the language is being diminished.

The Czech has won his place in the theatre,  
But only due to the love of certain people;  
He no longer attends the places [Latin schools]  
Where he could leave as an educated person.

Yet he wants to have a German by his side,  
It isn't possible to get an education,  
Yes: only with him [a German] is he allowed  
To approach the Goddesses of Art. [Philosophy]

It's only because he's Czech that he's not to  
Wear an academic gown.  
He's being pushed out of the schools,  
And is not allowed to enter any more.

Teuton! I admire your language,  
Although not more than that of the Czechs;  
In this country, be it black or white,  
Each language should have its own place.

Don't believe it! It's not as bad  
As it seems to you.  
And besides, it [Czech] is changing in an orderly way,  
It can be set in stanzas any way you wish.

You shouldn't be so harsh,  
German can maintain its advantage;  
But you should leave me some room  
And let my language dwell with yours.

## Chapter Four

### **Language, Patriotism, and Nationalism: Towards a Linguistic Revival**

*Everything depends upon when you were born.*  
Kaspar Sternberg, 1833

The Czech reaction to the Germanization in the education reforms of Josef II was immediate, but scattered and without leadership or any set of concrete goals. Furthermore, the vast majority of Czechs in opposition viewed these changes as a threat to their traditional route of social mobility through the loss of Latin, and only a very few of them began working towards any kind of Czech revival, either as a literary or spoken medium. In such a linguistically and politically static society, a functional revival of the language that would extend beyond the symbolic one envisaged by the progressive element amongst the Land patriots was at this point not at issue. The awakeners would have to see the opportunities change offered them in order to develop a functionally more powerful Czech.

Change was coming. In the last quarter of eighteenth century, the Land patriots were financing the retrieval of Czech literature of the Renaissance, rebuilding its prestige and inadvertently creating the nucleus of scholars who would eventually generate an agenda that was purely Czech. The intellectual tolerance and universality that had marked the best of enlightened thought was gradually being replaced by the mysticism and tribalism of a German import, *Sturm und Drang*. Josef II's social reforms curbed censorship and his Edict of Tolerance, issued in 1781, recognized Protestantism and gave Protestants social and economic opportunities formerly denied them. He opened a small window of relative freedom that the Czech intelligentsia would take full advantage of. Although the larger economic framework remained the same, new opportunities in commerce were opening in the cities, and as the school reforms progressed, positions opened for lay teachers in the schools. Further, the vast civil service that grew up in the last decade of the century offered

young Czech men tremendous opportunity for social advancement, and the positions would be open to Protestants and Catholics alike. All these developments would have an impact in some way on the course of the early revival.

Three stages of endeavour marked Czech linguistic activities over the last half of the eighteenth century. The first, which lasted until roughly 1778, was a period of conservation and self-discovery; a time of the defense of Czech as the historio-cultural symbol of a powerful medieval kingdom and the re-affirmation of the traditional rights and privileges of the Czech crown. Although the conservation of the literary heritage of the Renaissance still held central place, in the 1780s, it was becoming a base for a new concentration on language description and modernization, and the first explorations into the possibility of Czech as a functional instrument of some kind. Production of written Czech began in earnest. The 1790s, however, brought a new generation of Czech scholars to the forefront and a new intellectual basis for revival. These young patriots begin to see their language as necessary to both personal identity and group participation, and a few begin to explore its potential as a contemporary, fully functional spoken medium.

### ***Germanization***

As of July 14, 1789, French went out almost completely out of fashion. The events of the subsequent years gave rise to social and intellectual paranoia that gripped the Austrian Lands; and as Kaspar Sternberk, patron, natural scientist and co-founder of the National Museum, observed, “even on the streets of Vienna everyone was something different in the eyes of different people. To some, everyone was an ultraroyalist, to others, everyone was a Jacobin” (Sternberk, 1868, p. 37). The clubs were closed<sup>1</sup>, the Masonic Order disbanded and outlawed, and with the ascension of Emperor Franz in 1792, crushing censorship returned in

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<sup>1</sup> The first to go being the Society of Friends of the French Constitution – established September 1792, closed May 1793 (Zelený, 1873, p. 182).

an effort to keep all forms of new thought out of the Austrian Domains. Under the circumstances it was advisable to appear as patriotic as possible, that is, attached with loyal emotion to the state and the ruler. Even the most progressive of the Bohemian aristocracy found it expedient to forget their earlier attempts at distinction through language. The Land patriots largely dropped French, now the language of revolution from below, and their interest in Czech even as a symbolic option waned. Instead, they retreated to security in the form of patriotic German, and by the 1820s, German was not only the one 'mother tongue' of the Bohemian and Austrian aristocracy, but the language they actually spoke (Majer, 1997; Skutina, 1990; Zelený, 1873). The Czechs themselves would use the term 'patriot' more subversively to distinguish each other, those who were interested in the advancement of the Czech language and the retrieval and promulgation of the Czech literary heritage of the Renaissance.

The German the aristocracy adopted, however, was not the German that had seemed too "stumbling" to Pelcl's Czech aristocrat in 1774 (Pelcl, p.619). In the last quarter of the century, it had undergone a process of transformation by scholars in the German States, and the High variety that they had developed was acceptable to the aristocracy in Vienna and Prague.

Before the second half of the eighteenth century, German was generally considered a language of only a little more aesthetic, intellectual, moral, or cultural worth than was Czech. The traditional sectors of the Bohemian semiosphere wherein German predominated included the commercial classes in the towns and cities, the middle levels of the army and civil service, and in the German-speaking border regions. Furthermore, what 'German' actually referred to in the Czech Lands was a number of regional varieties called *Sudetendeutsch*, or *Böhmisch*. *Kuchelböhmisch* referred to creoles, full of borrowings from Czech, that were spoken in the urban centres, especially Prague and Brno (Čermák, 1993; Carlton,

1990). German was valued little more than was Czech as a language of any aesthetic or intellectual worth, and its edge over Czech in eighteenth-century Bohemia largely rested on its conceptual status as the 'mother tongue' of the Austrian ruling class. The protests against German in the schools and universities were based to a great extent upon the belief that German was unfit for any but the most utilitarian of subjects (Berls, 1971; et. al.).

German, however, was undergoing its own metamorphosis. As early as the latter half of the seventeenth century German societies were being formed to create a single, 'pure' German (Lotman, 1996). The emergence of Kant as a major thinker in the middle of the eighteenth century led to increased respect for the language abroad. The view of German as a less-developed and undistinguished tongue began to change in Bohemia as early as 1766, when Karl Heinrich Seibt, a Bohemian of German origin returned to the city after studying for five years in Leipzig. At the time, Leipzig was considered the 'Paris of the German states' and his mentors there, Johann Christoph Gottsched and Christian Fürchtengott Gellert, were central figures in a literary and intellectual circle promoting a standard, High German (Lorenzová, 1999; Vodička, 1948).

When Seibt returned to Prague he brought with him not only language, but language wrapped in a novel and glossy package of dress, manners and modern intellectual pursuits that took first the bourgeoisie, then the aristocracy, by storm. He became the first lay professor at the university, where he taught Modern Philosophy, Aesthetics, and German and his classes were a sensation. His salon, the first of such gatherings in the city, became one of the most influential in Prague in the early 1770s. To 'speak like Seibt' became the rage and it is Seibt himself who instilled the idea in popular consciousness, first in Prague and then in Vienna, of the existence of High and Low forms of German. In 1771 Maria Theresa apologized to Seibt for her 'bad' German, that is, the Viennese variety she spoke. Certainly, the notion that she spoke either good or bad German had never occurred to her before in

her life (Haubelt, 1986, p. 162). Ten years later her son Josef would be lauded as the 'people's' emperor partially because of his use of the same low variety. He was seen as having made a choice, although it is more likely that he learned his Viennese from his nurse, as had his mother, and had never bothered to alter his habits of speech (Taraba, 1999).

A form of High German that weaned the aristocracy away from French was not such a serious threat in itself; it was in the militant Germanization of the school and administrative systems that more seriously menace to Czech appeared. Theresian, and especially Josefian bureaucratic reforms and the subsequent explosion of new posts to be filled created an economic need for German that had not existed as such before the 1760s. Between the years 1772 and 1790 bureaucratic positions increased by 62% in Bohemia and Moravia alone (Lněničková, 1999a, p. 183). The language of the bureaucracy for all the Habsburg domains became exclusively German after Josef's overnight decree in 1785. For reasons that are not entirely clear, and which Robert Kerner puts down to the apolitical and pragmatic nature of the bureaucratic mind, there seem to have been few protests against this in Bohemia at the time (Kerner, 1969; Blanning, 1970).<sup>2</sup>

As early as 1763 Maria Theresa was already concerned about the language barrier between her administrators and the people over whom they governed, and she saw a solution to this problem in making Czech obligatory for low-level German-speaking bureaucrats. For her son Josef, however, Germanization of the civil service throughout his domains and the schools that fed it would streamline the massive and centralized system of government that he envisaged. As this was one of the few Josefian reforms not rescinded by either Leopold or Franz in the Czech Lands, by the 1830s, Bohemian/German bureaucratese had evolved into three distinct varieties, all of which were legislated.

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<sup>2</sup> This was not the case in more distant Austrian domains, such as Milan and Brussels, where the decree caused chaos.



First, there was the outer language (*Aussere Sprache*) which was used with the public; and either Czech or German could be used, depending upon the situation and the ability of the official to speak Czech. The inner language (*Innere Sprache*) was used with colleagues on the same level and this, by law, was to be German (as of 1828, Hroch, 1999a). The third and upper language (*Obere Sprache*) was used with superiors and was, of course, German as well. In essence, two Czech-speaking officials sitting at adjacent windows might speak with members of the public in Czech, but one would have to use German to borrow a pencil from the other. Until the 1870s the inner and higher languages remained exclusively German, and the fight to change that ruling would be a long and bitter one (Seibt, 1996; Kann, 1970; Wiskemann, 1938).

The rapid growth of the civil service would profoundly change the makeup of the Czech intelligentsia both in Prague and the provinces. Before the last years of the century, the main employer in this Catholic society with a craft and guild-based mercantile class had been the Roman Catholic Church. Both Josef's Patent of Tolerance and the new civil service offered plentiful opportunities for non-confessional employment, and there were prospects of advancement, and even, for the very outstanding, the possibility of a knighthood or baronage (Kerner, 1969). Posts, excepting perhaps at the level of the village trivial schools, were open only to those with fluent German. For ambitious Czech boys, by the end of the eighteenth century it was German, and not Latin, that offered them upward mobility.

By the end of the century, other kinds of new opportunities for employment outside the Church or the Church-dominated professions were opening as city life in Bohemia began to take on a modern cast. The population of Prague in 1790 numbered about 90,000, which was much less than Vienna's 270,000, but respectable in comparison with Hungary, where no city had more than 29,000 inhabitants. Prague was, at this time, the second city of the Austrian domains (Kerner, 1969, p. 74). Despite the financial disasters that repeatedly struck

over the last half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, the wealth of the city grew and it was becoming an important centre of banking and finance that served all the Austrian domains (Hroch, 1999a; Lněničková, 1999a). As the educational and land reforms hastened a decline in the influence of the Catholic Church, lay teaching positions opened up in all educational institutions, signaling the creation and rise of an aristocracy of Letters that would dominate Central European academic life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The cities, principally Brno (Brunn), Plzeň (Pilsen), and Prague, were now offering opportunities for employment and advancement that were to be solidly German-speaking well into the next century (Franc, 1999; Lněničková, 1999ab; Hroch, 1999a; Sayer, 1996).

The Germanization of the white-collar workforce in the Czech Lands coupled with the aristocratic adoption of a high variety of German and posed an almost incalculable threat to the viability of a functional Czech above the base line. By 1800, it is estimated that nearly a third of the ethnic Czechs in the Lands had been assimilated. Nonetheless, the earlier generation of Czech patriot priests were being replaced by a much broader and more diverse group of young Czech scholars able to earn their living and create their own social milieu independent of the nobility and the Church.

German was becoming indispensable for even middle-level employment, but it was also the medium for what was becoming a great European intellectual metamorphosis. It was the introduction of *Sturm und Drang* in the middle of the 1770s that made German writers in German the unquestioned leaders of a new artistic and intellectual movement.

*Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) prefigured Romanticism and was a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment and neo-classicism. Inspired by the works of Rousseau and Dante, Ossian (MacFerson), and, in particular, Shakespeare, it was distinguished by an emphasis on subjectivity, youth, and genius; and especially on nature and natural

identification with homeland, people, native tongue, and common origin. As the Enlightenment advocated that education and a benevolent civil order could create a common whole, the German thinkers of the 1760s and 1770s began to argue that societies were based on natural group affinities that were the result of common inheritance of language, territory, and customs. Furthermore, these group affinities created distinctions of character amongst different peoples. The movement also stressed a spiritual engrossment in how the deep past had shaped the present. Politically, it was both anti-universalist and anti-absolute, but its proponents lacked the extreme individualism, emphasis on the supremacy of emotion over critical reason, radicalism and personal licence of the later Romantics.

Possibly the most significant aspect of the movement was the shift in mode of intellectual production. For enlightened scholars, science and philosophy were of paramount importance. For the younger generation of Germans, the most profound expression of thought had to be artistic. The early exponents of *Sturm und Drang* included Herder, Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe. Under the influence of *Sturm und Drang* there was a notable rise in the production of lyric poetry (Goethe, Schiller, Hoelty), and the conservation of folk poetry, and creation of the ballad form (Burger). It was at this time that the German novel began to appear (Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 1774). The magazine, or polemical journal, became a faster, cheaper, and more effective way of disseminating ideas to the ever-broadening reading public. Although poetry and novels were important, the principal means of artistic expression was to be found in drama. The name itself was derived from the title of a play (Winkler, 1993; Larsen, 1987; Hobsbawm, 1962; Smith, 1970).

*Sturm und Drang* was a relatively short-lived phenomenon and did not replace, but rather ran in tandem with the later Enlightenment. It would find its way to the Czech Lands in small increments beginning with Herder, but by the 1780s certain of its principles would begin to have a significant impact on the development of a new Czech.

## ***To 1778 – Conservation and New Voices***

The swell of Czech protest against the early school reforms was the first major indication in two hundred years that Czechs were concerned about the state of their language. In the years following the first of the school reforms the Czech scholars of note, most of whom lived and worked in Prague, began to show signs of common purpose, if not of forming a common front. They were beginning to identify themselves as Czechs and in doing so they returned to the traditional focus of their discontent – their own tongue. There were initial limitations to their protests, as they were a tiny group consisting almost exclusively of priests, former Jesuits, and professors, and were under the patronage of the Land patriots and at the mercy of the board of censors. Writing before the Josefinian social and religious reforms and before the advent of aggressive Germanization, their works on language reflect the arguments of the authors they were most familiar with, that is, the chroniclers of the Czech Renaissance and the Baroque humanists (Pfaff, 1997). They generally lived and worked in Prague where the lines of language demarcation were blurred, inhabitants of that capital tending to be linguistically indifferent and identifying themselves first as Praguers, and not as either ‘German’ or ‘Czech’ (Hanus, 1923; Zelený, 1873; Jungmann, 1845). In the main enlightened Catholics and tending to adhere to the then-prevailing notion of Czech/German reconciliation, they were nonetheless beginning to produce works of solid scholarship that focused on Bohemia and the Czech language. The great reconcilers, Ignaz von Cornova and Friedrich Pohl, were more generally popular and František Martin Pelcl more influential, but an important historian and literary critic of the 1760s and 70s was Gelasius (Job Felix) Dobner.

First a Jesuit then a Piarist, Dobner was a teacher at gymnasia in Prague for many years before producing his first published work at the age of 43, an encyclopedia of Czech history. His works included editions and commentaries on Renaissance Czech literature, a

collection of Czech folklore, and in 1760, the first modern history of Bohemia (Haubelt, 1986). In the 1770s he and Ignaz Born founded a club to promote Czech scholarship, and he also worked with Mikuláš Voigt, the historian, Karel Ungar, the librarian and critic, and, of course, with Pelcl - historian, bibliophile, pedagogue and librarian to Nostic-Rieneck (Hanus, 1923).

Dobner and his contemporaries were of the generation of Czech scholar-priests with an education based in the old Latin schools - neither Pelcl nor Dobner ever really spoke German very well - and much of their work is about Czech, analyzes Czech, and contains defenses of Czech. Two hundred years previously Adam Daniel z Veleslavína had written that Czech was "elegant, copious, refined, sober, grand, and is able to express itself most aptly and commodiously..." (in Dobrovský, 1792, p. 120). Now Dobner would amplify:

Czech speech, in comparison to all other Slavonic languages, is the oldest, the most expressive, and the purest. This is disputed by no one who understands that the Czechs were first amongst all the Slavonic tribes in morality and religion. They had their own histories, poetry, and works of scholarship at the time that Charles IV founded the university in Prague (Dobner, 1771, in Híkl, 1920).

Dobner was a staunch, albeit somewhat inaccurate, patriot and it is interesting to note that he views Czech within a broader Slavic context. In essence, however, his position is not much different from that of his patrons and would strike no one as treasonous, buried as it is in reference to the past. He was significant in that he rejected (or more accurately, neglected) the idea of reconciliation and held that as Bohemia was historically a Czech-speaking kingdom Czech should continue to be the first language of the Lands (Dobner, 1783, in Bělina, 2000, pp. 32-33).

Dobner and his associates were vociferous in decrying the school reforms; not for their Germanization, but for the loss of Czech access to the good Latin training that provided the traditional route of Czech social mobility. Their use of the term 'nation', moreover, held none of the modern associations it would possess by the end of the century. Instead, 'nation' appeared either as the old-style term of common descent and classification,

and of course, most practically it meant the Bohemian nobility (Hudson, 1996; Pelel, 1774; Dobner, 1771, in Híkl, 1920). In short, their arguments, although certainly heartfelt, were couched in inherited terms and lacked any sense of urgency. A new voice was introduced in the 1770s, however, that would provide the Czech intelligentsia with a sense of distinctive purpose that the Land patriots could not share.

In 1775 Pelel brought four books to press under the patronage of Count Sternberg. Three were minor works by late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Czech authors, and the fourth was *The Defense of the Slavonic Language Called Czech* by Bohuslav Balbín. Although in manuscript it was known to the small circle of Czech scholars in Prague, this was the first time the book had been published. It was issued jointly in Prague and Vienna, and after Count Fürstenberg was handed a copy in Vienna by his secretary, he spent a terrible week trying to get the book suppressed and the copies recalled. The Land patriot, who nine years later would be one of the founding members and first president of the Royal Bohemian Society for the Sciences, was in no way prepared to countenance what the book contained and considered it political tinder, as well he might (Kočí, 1974).

First, the intransigently anti-German nature of the work was completely out of keeping with the enlightened atmosphere of tolerance and reconciliation that the progressive nobles were attempting to foster. Further, Balbín's point, endlessly restated, was that the Germans had usurped positions of authority that were rightfully Czech in a Czech kingdom, and their insistence upon speaking German was detrimental to the Czech tongue. To the Bohemian aristocracy, this struck a little too close to home. Balbín's equation of language, state, and political balance of power was far more radical than anything the older members of the Czech intelligentsia had ever put into print, but nonetheless, the book was a sensation. Within the next twelve years it would appear no less than ten times, issued and with introductions and glosses by such notables as Voigt, Thomsa, Václav Thám and Ungar.

Even Dobrovský would issue corrigenda (Hroch, 1999a; Dobrovský 1792; 1789, in Dobrovský, 1953).

It has been claimed (by Součková, 1958 and Melmuková, 1999, amongst others) that the traditional friction between the Germans and the Czechs had almost entirely disappeared by the late 1700s. This was possibly true among the upper levels of the progressive nobility, but evidence would point to the fact that amongst the Czechs the idea of injustice had never vanished at all; they merely lacked a forum in which to express it. The immediate and enduring success of the book points to the fact that it touched a chord. Pelcl went to a great amount of trouble to publish the work, which might be seen as quite a subversive act, and his standard image amongst modern historians (Hroch, 1999a; Machovec, 1964) as a lackey of the Land patriots would, under the circumstances, bear some re-thinking.

The success of the *Defense* in Czech intellectual circles and its repudiation by the Land patriots points to a divergence in thinking between the two groups. To the nobles, the locus of their 'German' was Vienna, and certainly not in the German states and especially Prussia, with which they had been more or less at war for a large part of the century. Nor did they feel any special affinity with the ethnic Germans of Bohemia (Seibt, 1996; Skutina, 1990). 'German' to them meant language alone and not ethnic status. It was Balbín's reiterating that the traditional rulers of Bohemia had been unrightfully displaced that offended them. To the Czechs, however, 'German' meant the "guests" or "foreigners"<sup>3</sup> who had been living in the Czech Lands for well over five hundred years, and not necessarily the Austrians at all. In part inspired by the spirit of Balbín, linguistic change at the end of the century was focused and fueled by a resurgence of the traditional Czech resentment of ethnic German power and precedence in the Lands. The resurgence of interest in Renaissance authors such as Václav Hájek z Libočan, and Adam Daniel z Veleslavína

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<sup>3</sup> Dobrovský, 1792, pp. 47, 104; and 1814, pp.13, 15. Note that Masaryk would use the same terminology in his maiden speech as president of the First Republic in 1918 (Wiskemann. P. 18).

through to Balbín created a new sense of common identity and oppression amongst the Czechs. The common thread in much of the older works was a call for the maintenance and defense of Czech against German and this urgency, and the sense of linguistic outrage that was found especially in Balbín, was regarded as a cry for help from their forefathers to which they must respond.

The school reforms brought the foundering state of their language to the attention of the Czechs and Balbín showed them the face of the enemy. A new, young voice was needed, however, to move the debate to the present. In 1778, a twenty-five-year-old graduate of the university in Prague published a scholarly tract. A scholar of Oriental (Biblical) languages, he proved a fragment of the Gospel of St. Mark held by the Church in Prague and regarded as authentic, was actually of fifth-century origin. Josef Dobrovský was at this time tutor to Count Nostic's four sons; a position he held from 1776 to 1787. Although his parents were poor, he had taken the route out traditionally available to intelligent young Czech men of his day and went from Latin school to gymnasium. After a year of university in Prague, he entered the Jesuit order at the age of nineteen because, as he told Palacký, he saw this as his only chance to travel. A mere nine months later the Jesuit order was abolished, and he re-entered the university, graduating with highest honours in 1775 (Machovec, 1964; Palacký, 1833, p. 17).

Dobrovský attended university during the first years of reform and was greatly influenced by the enlightened Catholicism of Seibt and the work of the great enlightened mathematician Josef Stepling (Haubelt, 1986). His most profound source of influence came from Václav Fortunatus Durych, his professor of Oriental Languages. Durych had become interested in Old Slavonic while teaching in Munich, and during the 1770s was producing a study of old Czech and Slavonic bibles. Dobrovský himself would refer later to Durych as the greatest of his mentors, and it was due to his encouragement that the younger scholar



left Biblical studies for Slavonic scholarship (Dobrovský, 1783; in Dobrovský, 1841, pp. 41, 182).

When Dobrovský left university in 1775 his opportunities for employment as a scholar who was not a priest were still severely limited. What he wanted and what he deserved was a position at the university, but his tract on the St. Mark manuscript had finished that for him. While his stellar scholarship brought him great acclaim and noble patronage, his belligerency, extreme religious stance, and radical advocacy of pro-Czech issues would continue to make him an enemy of almost anyone who could do him any practical good. At that time, and under such conditions, he had only two options, private tutoring and the Church. For most of his life he was employed only by the more radical of the Land patriots, who continued to support him and promote his work.<sup>4</sup>

Living under the Nostic aegis brought the young scholar some indubitable benefits. It was in that house that he met and began a long collaboration with Pelel. As a member of Nostic's salon he was able to meet the most significant members of the intellectual circles in Prague and many of the older Czech scholars. Most of the time he was able to work unhindered by mundane considerations and the Land patriots, principally Nostic, would finance the library of Czech Renaissance literature both he and Pelel would retrieve. It was in this circle of enlightened aristocrats and old-style Czech patriots, he began to produce writing that was quite new and brought forth a sense of immediacy and confrontation. His work in the 1780s marks a transition from the old-style equation of language, Kingdom,

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<sup>4</sup> Dobrovský became a priest in 1785 because he was under the impression that if he did so the Church authorities would leave him alone. The years with Nostic, which as an old man he described to Palacký as the "most beautiful of my life" (Palacký, 1833, p. 6), in actuality seem to have been for him a time of almost unalloyed frustration as he tried, without success, to become a professor at the university. As he wrote to his friend Augustin Helfert, "I cannot leave this [Nostic's] house so easily" (Dobrovský, 1783; in Dobrovský, 1941, p. 102). It was also during this period that he had at least two serious nervous breakdowns. The last thirty years of his life were spent combating chronic and severe mental illness.

history, and German/Czech reconciliation to a new kind of linguistic and patriotic focus based as much on current issues as with the preservation of the past.

In 1779 and 1780 he published three journals that ostensibly discuss contemporary Bohemian and Moravian literature, but which he used as manifestos. In the first he writes

Nowadays Czech is dependent on other cultures and an attempt to cultivate it seems fruitless to most people. The Arts and Sciences are taught here from Latin, French and, for the most part, German books. None of them promote Czech at all. Our focus must change direction to that which saves the Czech language, how it was and how it is, and so that those who do not know it do not accuse it of inadequacy (Dobrovský, 1779, in Hanuš, 1923).

It was his concern with “how it is” and not just “what it was” that set him apart, and would continue to do so. As a young man who had recently attended university and was trying to get a position there, he was far more aware of the immediate effects of Germanization than were his older, more established colleagues (Dobrovský, 1783, in Dobrovský, 1941, p.4; Dobrovsky, 1792, p. 81).

Although he published copiously throughout his lifetime, the three works for which Dobrovský is best known are *Die Geschichte der Bohmischen Sprache und Literatur* (1792), his definitive, modern Czech grammar (first edition 1809, revised edition, 1819), and his *Institutiones linguae slavicae dialecti veteris* (1822). In this last, his life’s work, he attempted to reconstruct the original Old Slavonic through tracing the relationship between both older and newer Slavic languages in phonology, declension, tense, and structure. It would be in the 1780s, however, that he established himself as the first scholar of his day and the acknowledged leader of what was quickly becoming a movement.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Interesting, if somewhat dubious analyses of Dobrovský’s character and work were provided by Julius Dolanský and Felix Havránek in 1953. They both saw Dobrovský as a scientific materialist who created a scientific Czech grammar and studied foreign languages so that he could criticize the Bible. He fought all his life against the authorities of the old feudal order to assure victory for the modern progressive and democratic forces. According to Dolanský and Havránek, Dobrovský concluded that languages were not the products of one class, but of all classes, just like the great comrade Stalin did. They added that as a young man, Dobrovský arrived at a new solution for the oppressed Slavs based on a fraternal relationship with the great Russian people (Dolanský, 1953; Havránek, 1953).

## ***To 1790 - Self-definition and a window of tolerance***

Maria Theresa died in 1789, and during the following decade Josef II ruled alone and was in the position to enact the more extreme of his enlightened reforms without the hampering influence of his far more conservative mother. It was in these years that Germanization became a reality within the Lands, but it was also a time of new opportunities, especially for the Czechs. In 1781 Josef introduced the Patent of Toleration, (Melmuková, 1999). Furthermore, in the next year he issued his patent that almost completely abolished serfdom. Both patents ensured that over the following years an ever increasing flow of Czech speakers to the cities, especially Prague, would for the first time in 500 years create a significant number and eventual majority of first-language speakers of Czech in the capital (Lněničková, 1999a; Kann, 1973). This would not change the German dominance of commerce and city life to any great extent, but it created a public of readers and spectators who were interested in work in their own language.

A critical turn in the focus of Czech linguistic endeavor took place at this time. Although the histories and commentaries on antique texts that marked the work of scholars in the previous decade continued to be produced, there was a shift in the 1780s to the production of grammars and dictionaries. The dictionaries were generally poor things; word lists in two or more languages that were largely drawn from older sources. Pelcl and Dobrovský themselves collaborated on a little German/French/Czech dictionary in 1778; not of much more worth than the rest, and written obviously as an aid to teaching (Kočí, 1978).

Dobrovský cites nine grammars published during this period, including Hanka z Hankenstein's 1782 offering, *An Attempt at a Plan for the Easiest and Most Useful Way of Teaching the Czech Language and Literature*, and from Karel Tham in 1785, *A Brief Czech Textbook with*

*Czech, German and French Conversations and Extracts from the Greatest Czech Works*. An interesting feature of these productions was the inclusion of ‘conversations’, or samples of discourse illustrating different situations in which the language could be used. Pelcl’s grammar contains three examples – a conversation between two merchants, a highly improbable one between two aristocrats, and a third, between an aristocrat and his servant (“Bring me the silk stockings.” “Lord, they are torn.” “Can’t you do anything about that?” “Lord, I will take them to the stockingmaker to be mended.”, in Hroch, 1999a, p. 66). The grammars were, in the main, really textbooks for self-instruction in the language, and were copied from older works. There were grammars for foreigners, for Czechs themselves, for children and even quite simple ones for ladies (Matsura, 1998b). Most were, like the dictionaries, based on older, Renaissance models.

In Lotman’s terms, semiotic self-description (i.e., the creation of grammars and dictionaries) for a language on the periphery of the semiosphere is an important stage of self-organization. A language with a high level of self-description can more easily spread its cultural norms across the semiosphere (Lotman, 1996). The surge of interest in the production of grammars and dictionaries in the 1780s was an important advance in proto-language planning for the Czechs. In the main, their intended readership was Germanized Czechs who wanted to instruct themselves in their ‘mother’ tongue. The inclusion of ‘conversations’ proposed (remote) possibilities for a functional Czech in upper social spheres, and the addition in many of the grammars of extracts from Czech literature exposed a broader audience to a canon only the elite was familiar with at the time.

One aspect of some of the grammars and dictionaries that was very new was the addition of Czech neologisms. To a great extent they were coined out of expediency, as the language simply lacked a modern vocabulary and modern social forms. Where the new

words came from and the motives of the word-coiners for so doing were mixed. For some, like Dobrovský, the considerations were essentially pragmatic. His friend and correspondent Felix Zlobický was responsible for the translation into Czech of all legal documents produced by Josef II, and over the years 1782 – 1790 he and Dobrovský hammered out an extensive new legal vocabulary for Czech (Dobrovský, 1913). For others, the concept of language purity was gaining ground. For Dobner and Voigt, language purity meant a return to the Renaissance Czech of the Golden age, and they encouraged the revival of antique terms and in particular, a standardization of spelling based on the Kralice Bible (Dobner, in Híkl, 1920). For Fortunatus Durych, on the other hand, language purity meant closer linguistic ties with older Slavonic varieties.

There was a third motive, however, that would continue to gain popularity well into the nineteenth century. Friedrich Pohl, in particular, became highly interested in restoring 'purity' to Czech, and his earlier work, which pointed to the etymological similarities between German and Czech, was replaced in 1786 by a new grammar. This production included Czech neologisms drawn from old Czech etymology that would aid in ridding the language of foreign (read German) impurities. His fervour approached the fanatical and his attempts to rid Czech of words like *nos* (nose) and *student* (student) and replace them with bizarre compilations such as *čítoun* (smelling thing) and *mýšlvin* (thinking person) were largely forgotten later, although he did set a precedent (Kraus, 199a; Lněničková, 1999a).

Dobrovský was impressed with Pohl's fervour, if aghast at his scholarship, and as by far the greater linguist he was always dubious about the possibility of any sort of linguistic purity.

He wrote

Which of the Slavonic dialects is the purest [...] would be quite easy to discover if one could find a Slavic people who remain in their own region, never travel, never mix with or marry anyone else, never do business with outsiders, and have never conquered or been conquered by anyone [...]

However no one will ever find this little group [I *čik:žž*], even on the borders of Utopia or Eldorado (Dobrovský, 1815, p. 115).

That Dobrovský advocated a return to the “former state of perfection” Czech had held during the Renaissance is often seen as proof that his linguistic goals were buried in the past (Dobrovský, 1792, p. 81; Hroch, 1999a). Yet his depth of understanding about how language works would reinforce Felix Vodička’s view that what Dobrovský was arguing for was not adherence to the archaic corpus of the language, but a new breadth of function. His aim was not to restore a two hundred-year-old language, but to point out that it had been and could be used even in the highest echelons of society (Vodička, 1948). The purification of the Czech language through the eradication of German borrowings and the creation of neologisms became a highly politically-charged activity in the nineteenth century. Dobrovský’s pragmatism and deep understanding of the dynamics of language contact was forgotten or ignored as language purity became synonymous with spiritual and national purity.

The neologisms that were being coined in the 1780s were partially inspired by a new interest, one that would become increasingly important to the Czech intelligentsia. It was during this decade that the identification with a greater Slavdom took hold of the Czech intelligentsia and produced a significant change in the focus of Czech resistance to Germanization. The shift from a concentration on *Staatsrecht* and Austria to race, tribe and a ‘natural’ nationhood took hold all over the Slavic world during the 1780s, and nowhere so firmly and so completely as in Bohemia. This was, certainly due to the influence of *Sturm und Drang* and particularly to the writings of Herder, who, in his *über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772) explained that a common language and common territory produce common experience, and that commonality both creates language, and is preserved by language. (Herder, 1772). Herder was no chauvinist and unlike Fichte, he did not particularly admire

the Germans as a race, but rather lauded the language, numbers, and “dove-like” spiritual superiority of the peace-loving Slavs in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Herder, in Dobrovský, 1806, pp. 32-36).

Dobrovský was enraptured by the idea of a broader Slavic nation and it was he who popularized Herder in the Czech Lands. His numerous travels over Europe became not just book-buying expeditions, but opportunities to investigate the different speech varieties and customs that made up the Slav world. The major focus of his work in the 1780s, formerly concentrated completely upon Czech and Czech literature, broadened to embrace a comprehensive study of Slavic speech varieties in general. Through his work, the Czech nation was provided with a new identification, not as a distinct minority within a greater German-speaking world, but the most westerly of a great and alternate collective. The Czech sense of isolation was replaced by a spiritual, linguistic, and what was beginning to be seen as a biological kinship with literally millions of people, and it was during this decade that the issue of pan-Slavism became synonymous with the Czech movement.

There were two fundamental problems with pan-Slavism. The first, as Masaryk points out, was that the creation of a commonality of language and experience between the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Poles, the Bulgarians, the Serbs and all the others, was and would continue to be a very artificial task (Masaryk, 1915). In 1846, the Czech journalist Karel Havlíček Borovský remembered

With the awakening of our national spirit and certain other higher activities in our country, the idea of Slavdom arrived too [...] the idea of Slavdom, like every other good idea, became a fashion with us, so that a few years ago nearly everyone called himself a Slav; somehow ashamed of such a small name as our Czech, Moravian, Silesian, or Slovak. Everyone, before they started to study Czech grammars, raced on to the Russian, the Polish and other languages, without knowing much about them, of course, [...] Everyone called Russians, Poles, Illyerians, and other Slavs his brothers [...] and those who were impractical cherished in their hearts the firm conviction that in their own time all eighty million Slavs would have in common one literary language, one sympathy, and all those other things which it is not appropriate or permissible to mention [...] (in Kubka, p. 119).

The idea of a Slavic brotherhood was attractive in theory, but in practice, as the Slovaks, Poles and Ukrainians found to their dismay in the nineteenth century, some were big brothers, and some were little brothers. The second, and far more serious problem with pan-Slavism, was Russia.

As the only Slavic autonomous state, the Czechs and all Slavs accorded Russia due homage. However, it was also a big and very hungry Empire with a secret police force impressive even by Austrian standards. In the nineteenth century, awakeners of the Czech National Revival would be polarized over the question of Russia, but in the 1780s this was still a new and highly intoxicating concept for the Czech intelligentsia. Dobrovský was the first of many to make the 'pilgrimage' to Russia in 1792-1793, and oddly enough, at the invitation of the Russian government. He had a very interesting time meeting scholars, investigating bibles and antiquities, and spent hours in libraries in Moscow and Petersburg, but for the rest of his life he was rather ambivalent about the whole experience. He published a book about his year in Russia which became almost immediately a cult classic and (anonymously) a short Russian grammar in 1799, (*A Short Handbook on how to Easily Understand Russian. Mainly for Czechs, often also for Germans. Even for Russians who would like to Understand Czech Better*). It was always Russian, though, and not Mother Russia, that would remain the almost exclusive focus of his attention. The disarray in the libraries there had dismayed him, and he noted the Russian scholars he met, although highly enthusiastic Slavonicists, could barely manage in ten years what he could do in ten months (Dobrovský, 1814, in Dobrovský, 1984). The stringency of the Russian authorities had not escaped his notice either, and his letters home were written in Latin, presumably to baffle the Russian censors. For a scholar who struggled all his life under a totalitarian regime, Russia would



remain an intellectual, and not political Mecca (Kubka, 1926; Dobrovský 1797, 1803, in Dobrovský, 1956; Dobrovský, 1913).

In his collection of anthropological and linguistic observation on Slavic peoples, *Slovanka* (1806), Russian material barely appears at all. He was far more interested in the Wends, a small pocket of speakers of a Slavonic dialect that lived (and still live) across the Bohemian border near Dresden. His interest in the Wends went beyond absorption with their speech variety and extended to the oppression they were suffering as a minority within a German state (Dobrovský, 1814, pp. 12-14, 19-23). Despite this, Dobrovský's anthropological writings, like his work on linguistics, are almost exclusively descriptive in nature and the spiritual kinship and that others saw in the Slavic race is largely missing from his work. For many of the Czech intelligentsia of the 1780s, however, Russia was increasingly seen as the great protector of the Slavs. Early in the nineteenth century the Czech movement split over the issue and the debate was not completely resolved even after 1968.

### ***To 1800 and beyond – New opportunities, new awakeners***

Josef II died in 1790, and over the next ten years many of the more liberal of his social reforms would disappear as well. Nonetheless, it was a few years preceding and during the last decade of the century that the Czech cause became truly Czech. The major focus of activity was moving away from the small circle of established Czech scholars in Prague to younger men from the provinces who were beginning to see the capital as the centre of an intellectual and social movement which they wanted to join. In the highly romantic but relatively accurate view of a Czech nationalist of the 1870s

At the turn of the last century the Czech nation faced absolute ruin. From all corners of the land, however, the Czech motherland sent her sons to Prague in order to form a patriotic circle and serve the sacred interests of their nation. Many, of course, came from the Beroun: Josef Jungmann from the poor village of Hudlice, Seidl from old Beroun; and more came from Žebrák – the two brothers Nejedlý and the oldest of them all, Sebastián Hněvkovský.

Rautenkranc was from Hradec Králové and from Týn nad Vltavou came Puchmajer [...] all to enter into that service at the end of the last age: to fight in defense of the Czech language and nation (Václav Štulec, in Hlaváčka, 2001, p. 1).

These young Czechs coming to Prague in the last decade of the eighteenth century were significantly different from the intelligentsia who had established the movement in the capital in the preceding decades. First, unlike Dobrovský, Pelel and Dobner, the young Czech patriots of the 90s were not priests (with the exception of Puchmajer), and further, many were Protestants. The Protestant minority that remained in the Czech Lands during the latter half of the seventeenth and almost all of the eighteenth centuries fought to maintain their religious beliefs, but their presence had been severely marginalized. The Protestant intelligentsia had little choice but to study and work abroad – mainly in the German states (Melmuková, 1999). The Patent of Toleration made it possible for them to seek employment in their own land, and of the young men who would lead the Awakening in the early years of the nineteenth century, a significant proportion would be Protestant. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church would be strongly associated with the Austrian monarchy and Czech nationalism of the mid-nineteenth century would be coloured by anti-Catholic sentiment (Hroch, 1985; Roubík, 1931; Zelený, 1873).

Whether Protestant or Catholic, the young Czech patriots of the 1790s were largely independent of the direct influence of the nobility and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Due to the changes in the social structure wrought by Josef II, they were able to find employment in schools and various branches of the civil service, live independently, get married, and have children. Although many continued to receive the endorsement of the nobility (in particular, the Sternbergs) that they needed in order to publish, they moved in social circles outside the noble sphere. They saw this life as affording them independence of thought, and much of

the criticism leveled at Dobrovský and Pelcl at the time was based on what the younger men saw as too close an intimacy with the aristocracy (Jungmann, 1839; Tham, 1785).

In the last decade of the century, however, the single element that philosophically distinguished the younger men from the older generation was *Sturm und Drang*. As Dobrovský was introduced to enlightened thought at university in the early 1770s, the generation of young men attending university in the 90s would become disciples of pre-Romanticism. When Josef Jungmann was at university in Prague in 1792, one of his professors was Gottlieb Meissner, the first Protestant to teach at the university since 1620, the first declared Freemason and the highest paid member of the faculty. Meissner studied and then taught in Dresden and Leipzig, and in Prague he taught aesthetics as had Seibt, but unlike him, he was a prolific author of novels and poetry and far more concerned with secular and artistic studies. He promoted the study of Shakespeare and modern English, French and German literature. Furthermore, his aim was to inspire his students to create their own works, and actively encouraged them to contribute to his own literary journal, *Apollo*, which was issued from 1794 to 1797. He wrote in the first issue

[...] and now to you, Apollo, do I dedicate this address. Do you not believe your worth requires a work, just one work, which would carry on your name and disclose all, as it would be undertaken with great confidence in your assistance? (in Lorenzová, 1999, p. 89)

This man would have a profound impact on the intellectual development of the younger awakers: on Jungmann, Václav Hanka, František Palacký, and on a whole generation of young Czech scholars (Lorenzová, 1999; Morava, 1998; Zelený, 1875; Jungmann, 1836). Under his direction many turned from science to literature as a medium and attempted to produce that one work. Further, the chair in Czech Literature was a reality as of 1791, and many of the other professors, notably Stanislav Vydra, were great old-school patriots. The atmosphere at the post-reform university in the 1790s was far more pro-Czech and pro-Art

than it was in the 1770s when Dobrovský was a student, and a number of the new students would produce work in Czech. As importantly, under the influence of Meissner, the atmosphere was also highly liberal and pro-sentiment, in the new German tradition. The aristocratic salons of the 1770s and 1780s were the centres of progressive thought, but in the 1790s this role would be ceded to the university, and this meant that a far greater number of potential patriots could be reached.

This would lead to a fundamental shift in thinking between the younger and older Czechs in Prague, which first became evident on September 25, 1791. As the stellar member of the Royal Bohemian Society for the Sciences, Dobrovský gave an address before the new Emperor, Leopold II, entitled *The Allegiance Which the Slavonic Nation Maintains at All Times Towards the House of Austria*. It was in this speech that he first propounded the philosophy of Czech history he had formulated that was based on the Hussite movement and the battle of the White Mountain (see Chapter I). More significantly, he placed the Czechs within the context of all the Slavic peoples of the Austrian domains; as a large, powerful group that would support and strengthen the Habsburg rule (Dobrovský, 1791, in Hlkl, 1920).<sup>9</sup> The content of this address immediately stratified the Czech intelligentsia. Many were happy with the representation of Czechs as part of a large Slavic group, but most of the younger men saw the whole approach as abject bootlicking of the worst kind (Zelený, 1875).

Dobrovský was to the end of his life a scholar of the Enlightenment. Mysteries were not to be revealed in; they were to be cleared up. Language itself was not a manifestation of a common, ancient and quasi-mystical heritage, it was a system, or set of interlocking systems, that could be revealed and set down. He was deeply affected by Herder and embraced the

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<sup>9</sup> It has been argued (by Machovec, 1964, and others) that the address was a carefully formulated and highly radical manifesto. This is perhaps true, as Dobrovský pointed out later to Georg Ribay that "I had the honour of delivering my address to his Majesty [...] and afterwards reading him a selection of Slavonic verse" (In Dobrovský, 1913, p. 199).

concept of the Slavs as a great nation, but in quasi-political context as a present-day conglomerate whose language was threatened and who were unjustly oppressed. His linguistic and anthropological work was purely descriptive and the connections he made were strictly based on observation. For him, the Renaissance produced the flower of Czech literature and his interest in the Medieval and the Gothic extended only to older varieties of Slavonic. What he was interested in was the truth. In 1785 he wrote, "How is it possible to teach the truth without striving for its discovery?" (in Dobrovský, 1941, p. 157).

Not surprisingly, for young Czech patriots, this approach was seen as cold, unpoetical, and unfeeling. In Jungmann's estimation, Dobrovský was a Slavicizing German (Jungmann 1820, in Jungmann, 1956, p. 140). They viewed the older scholar as one not a friend of the nation and argued, perhaps with some justice, that it was not enough to study and to write about Czech, but it was crucially important to begin to produce it.

## Chapter Five

### **Towards a Modern Czech: Production begins**

#### ***Poetry***

Production of a new Czech began expectedly in the realm of the artistic, with the translation of foreign texts into Czech and the creation of new Czech poetry. The scholars of the previous generation were heavily influenced by the works of the Czech Renaissance, but the frame of reference for the young scholars of the 90s was more international in scope. They had access to and read modern works of German, French and English poetry, drama and fiction and their production in Czech was based on the creation of modern work.

The first step to the production of a modern poetic canon in Czech was translation. Although translation began as early as the 1760s, serious work in the field did not begin until the late 1780s. The master was indubitably Josef Jungmann, who made his name as a young scholar in the 1790s with his translations of Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* and Chateaubriand's fantastic novella, *Atala*. Before and after the turn of the century he would also produce works translated from Horace, Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Bürger, Pope, Goldsmith and Gray. Jungmann was also the undisputed master of word coining. Translation forced the creation of neologisms; drawn from Russian or Polish sources for *Atala*, and from the Kralice Bible for Milton (Součková, 1958). One interesting feature of his translations is that Jungmann felt free to czechicize their sentiments. What he and many of his contemporaries were doing was hero-building, in the best neo-classical tradition (Smith, 1970). To illustrate, here is verse 15 of Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*:

Some village, Hampden, that with dauntless breast  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;  
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood (1751).

Jungmann's version reads

Here, where there is peace on every side,  
In this village of Thurn heroes might rest.  
Here might lie a mute Rokycan,  
And a Žižka, guiltless of Czech blood.  
(in Jungmann, 1841, p. 47).

The choice of poetry translated is perhaps significant. From the English, Czech taste tended to the neo-classic and the epic, (Gray, Milton, and Pope – Jungmann, 1841; Pope – Puchmajer, 1815). From the German, there is some evidence that diversity of genre was of more significance. Lyrics are translated from Goethe (*Kennst du das Land?* - Jungmann, 1841, p. 32), ballads by Bürger (*Leonore* Jungmann, 1841, pp. 71-79), and in particular, the epics of Schiller. Both Jungmann and Puchmajer translated his *An die Freude (Ode to Joy)* during the same period (Jungmann, 1841, pp. 26-29; Puchmajer, 1815, pp. 35-39). Although the sentiments contained in the English poetry were admired and could be applied to the Czech nation, there seems to have been a concerted effort to represent Czech as a language into which the whole of the new German output could be eloquently translated. In addition, Jungmann's Russophilia is evident in his numerous 'translations' from Russian. His *Poslaní Karamzina* (1803) is merely subtitled "from the Russian", as he wrote it himself (Jungmann, 1841, pp. 51-55; Vodička, 1948).

The patriots' production of original verse was initially more cautious. In the last years of the eighteenth century Czech still had no modern canon of its own from which to draw guidelines of any sort. Although in translation there was a free selection of genre, in the original the poets stayed close to the folk genre that was the most appropriate vehicle for Czech in the state that it was, and the lyric verse that they most admired. The themes tended to the rural, as in *A Country Wedding* (Hanka, in Puchmajer, 1814, pp. 110-113). There were representations of nature (*Spring* – Vojtech Nejedlý, in Puchmajer, pp.114-115) and of course, love. A very popular although not quite so successful form was the classic ode along

the lines of *Lyridas*, in particular Nejedlý's ode on the death of Procházka (in Puchmajer, pp. 68-75) and Jungmann's elegy on the death of Vydra (Jungmann, pp. 37-44). In general, the very early Czech poetry does not contain the relentless patriotism of a lot of the later, nineteenth century production. Although expressive of patriotic sentiments, the authors, again, may have been at this point far more interested in proving that modern genre and theme were possible in Czech at all.

The major problem with producing original work in Czech was that no one knew how to handle meter and stress. Suggested solutions included the recreation of Renaissance language and meter (Kočí, 1978), the syllabic meter of folk poetry, and using Greek and Latin models (Vodička, 1948). Dobrovský unwisely decided to enter the fray and in 1799 produced his own poetic method based on syllabotonic structure - a method of vowel stress that he felt was more suited to Czech (Vodička, 1948). Although he championed the production of original verse, he had serious doubts about translation, particularly of the classics. This has been attributed variously to his pragmatic understanding of what Czech was capable of at the time (Vodička, 1948), his lack of imagination (Hroch, 1999a), or his hatred of Jungmann, who was admired for his translations of the Greek and Roman authors (Machovec, 1964). Dobrovský wrote of Jan Nejedlý's translation of part of the *Iliad*

Is it really possible, considering the stasis of Bohemian literature since the time of Rudolf, to achieve the refinement of thought and feeling, of expression and flexibility of the classics in Czech? Herr Nejedlý himself, despite his love for his mother tongue, still must admit if he is reasonable, that it is impossible for him to equal the original. Nevertheless, his translation is so successful as to mask the differences in development between the two languages (Dobrovský, 1799, in Vodička, 1948)

This attitude ran against the prevailing current once again, and Dobrovský's suggestion of syllabotonic meter was greeted in most quarters with loathing; more proof that he was essentially 'unpoetical' (Machovec, 1964; Vodička, 1948; Zelený, 1873). In the end, although the younger poets loosened the form and played with stress and meter, the syllabotonic form would remain as a fundamental in Czech verse (Součková, 1958).



Antonín Puchmajer, his student, followed this system, and he produced several anthologies of new verse, the first appearing in 1797. Contributors included members of his circle, Sebastian Hněvkovský, and the brothers Nejedlý, as well as Jungmann and Hanka, who would eventually oppose the increasing severity with which Puchmajer applied Dobrovský's rules. Miroslav Hroch calls the group lead by Puchmajer "the blind alley of the National Awakening", as it attracted few followers in its original form, although at the turn of the century Puchmajer, Hněvkovský and the Nejedlýs were the only established group of Czech poet/scholars of note (1999a, p. 236). Jungmann and Hanka were to join forces only in the first years of the nineteenth century.

Few of Dobrovský's detractors, with the exception of Jungmann, were much more gifted poetically than was Puchmajer. All the Czech 'poets' of this period were scholars and patriots first and poets second, and their aim was to show what the language could do, to produce models that could compete in a modern and very popular forum. However, the first actual work of poetic genius in Czech did not appear until Karel Hynek Mácha published *Ma (Mn)* in 1832. Significantly, Mácha would be criticized by what was by then the older generation of patriots, including Jungmann, for rejecting the engineered standard Czech of the mid-nineteenth century in favour of the variety (full of German impurities) spoken in the streets of Prague (Eisner, 1945).

The production of modern poetry, both original and in translation had an important role to play in the development of a new, functional Czech. It was a means of building contemporary artistic prestige for the language and aided in attempts to regulate and standardize it. However, poetry was an artistic medium limited to a certain, select audience. Two other forms of production, drama and the press, were more broadly popular and would

prove as or more significant to the development of Czech within the context of a whole proto-national movement

### ***Drama***

Theatre in the Czech Lands in the last quarter of the eighteenth century could not attempt to rival that of Paris, London, or even Vienna. Up until that time there were only two types of theatre to be found – the private performances given by the nobility and the traveling companies who played in public squares and marketplaces all over the Lands on feast days. Until the theatre *v Kotcích* opened in 1738 there was no permanent, public theatre in Prague. The new theatre exclusively produced the Italian operas and German comedies that were most popular with the public. Impresarios (mainly Italian) fairly regularly rented other venues and produced dramas, ballets, operas, and *Spektakels* over the year and at carnival. A great hindrance to any theatre was the surveillance of the Gubernium, which shut down many a performance (*v Kotcích* was closed almost as often as it opened). Due to the constant threat of censorship and resultant loss of income, impresarios were generally loath to produce anything other than the mildest and most inoffensive pap (Hroch, 1999a; Haubelt, 1986).

As the impresarios were businessmen first, the language in which the dramas and comedies were played was determined by the taste of the audience. For the nobility, this meant Italian opera, French drama, and the occasional Italian comedy translated into German (Hanuš, 1923). For the broader public majority ruled and until the 1760s in Prague, German was the language in which most plays were given. In 1771, however, the German impresario Brunian became the general director of *v Kotcích* and attempted to upgrade the quality of the productions, which by that time had fallen to an all-time low. He complained that Praguers “spend all their money on acrobats and other kinds of idiotic entertainment, and nowhere in this town is there any real theatre” (Vondříček, 1956, p. 53). His first act

was to gather a permanent company, as previously actors were hired for each production, and were often imported from abroad. His second act, oddly enough, was to commission the Czech translation of a German play, *Duke Hans*. Why he chose to present a play in Czech has never satisfactorily been explained, although rumour has it that the text was written by Karel Seibt in German and then translated (Kraus, 1998b). At the premiere in 1774 the actors (German and Italian) were unable to speak Czech well, the audience was bewildered and the performance was a fiasco. The experiment was not repeated.

A more serious attempt at producing Czech theatre came in 1785, when the Gubernium gave Václav Thám, a twenty three-year-old Czech university graduate, a license to produce theatre in German and Czech. He would produce in the same year a book (the first) of original verse in Czech. Although he remained interested in poetry and would argue for the older syllabic method over the syllabotonic, it was as a playwright, producer, and patriotic extremist/nationalist that he would make his name. He began by independently producing plays in Czech and German out of *v Kotcích* and the new Nostic theatre, but he soon ran afoul of both managements for the radical nature of the plays he wished to produce (Schiller, in particular). He and his older brother Karel decided to build their own venue, and in July of 1786 the Bouda Theatre opened in what is now Wenceslas Square (Hroch, 1999a; Lněničková, 1999a).

The Bouda was not just a theatre in which Czech plays were presented; it was a new kind of theatre altogether. The playbills for the first performance read in part

**The Feast of the Czech Language**  
Rejoice, Prague! A celebration is at hand  
which is sanctified by love.  
Rejoice! Today your patriotic sons  
come to the temple of Art to be awakened!  
Open the deepest feelings of your hearts!  
[...] Today your language should flower  
and once again bring forth the fruits of the Golden age [...]  
(in Vondráček, 1956, pp. 75-76).

The Bouda was a completely political creation and certainly owed its two years of existence under the Tháms to the decade of Josefinian tolerance. It was also new in that in contrast to the light entertainment offered by the Nostic theatre, the Tháms produced more serious modern plays, in both Czech and German, as well as the farces, pantomimes, and ballets that were expected of an evenings' playbill. Approximately half the plays in Czech were in translation, and most of these were out of Schiller and Shakespeare (Karel Thám himself translated extensively from Shakespeare). The original works were written largely on the lines of the German and English models and generally outlined the patriotic histories of the glorious albeit putative Medieval Czech past (Hroch, 1999a; Vondráček, 1956).

Although a wild success, the Bouda failed due to mismanagement. In 1787, however, Czech theatre moved to a new venue at *U Hybernů* where it continued to thrive into the next century. After 1792, in the wake of the French Revolution, the ascension to the throne of Emperor Franz and the subsequent return to heavy censorship, the themes of the plays took a turn. Schiller, for instance, was banned in entirety, and titles appeared such as *The Czechs! Patriotic Austrians!* and *Czechs are True Patriots or Blood and Life for Franz and Homeland* (Hroch, 1999a, p. 73).

Despite its undoubted success, there were two major problems in producing theatre in Czech. The first could eventually be rectified and had already been experienced sixteen years before by Brunian; there were a finite number of professional actors in Prague and very few of them had good enough Czech to sound credible onstage. This could prove dangerous. At one of the first performances at the Bouda the lead actor stepped forward at the end to thank the audience for the ovation. Although his Czech was good enough to memorize the lines, he began his ad lib thanks in German, only to be greeted with screams of "Speak Czech!" and a hail of spoiled fruit (Vondráček, 1956).

A second and more serious problem had to do with the language itself. Certainly, the advent of patriotic Czech theatre was greeted with broader, more widespread acclaim than were any of Puchmajer's poetic collections, and a tour west in the summer of 1786 brought the Bouda similar glory in the provinces. Miroslav Hroch optimistically posits that these productions in Czech could bring in the low, the Czech-speaking element in Prague, making the theatre truly democratic. Further, he suggests that the sound of colloquial Czech onstage went a great way to normalizing it in the ears of the upper echelons (Hroch, 1999a, p. 73-73). This is, more or less, the standard Czech historical line on the Bouda, which like the American Pony Express, has achieved in retrospect a national significance out of all proportion to the actual length of time of its existence (Vondráček, 1956; Hanuš, 1923; Zelený, 1873).

There are, unfortunately, some problems with this standard theory. First, it is very likely that the vast majority of the Bouda's patrons were not the common Czech speakers of Prague. This might be indicated by the response the German-speaking actor received – the people in that audience were not out for an evening's entertainment, they were there to share in some group experience that had been thwarted. It is very probable that audiences were generally composed of young, well-educated and like-minded Czech patriots and a part of the more progressive element amongst the Land patriots.

Furthermore, the language of the plays themselves may have been problematic. During the Bouda years and into the 1790s the plays, both in translation and originals, were high-minded and written (or translated) by young, patriotic intellectuals who had received the larger and more significant proportion of their education in German. The language they were writing in was in only the formative stages of standardization. Their written work was careful, and their themes and politics called for a 'pure' Czech full of neologisms and one that often demanded the revival of antique expressions and forms of address (Šedivý, *Krit*

*Lear*, 1792; in Lehár, 2000). It is very probable that the 'common' Czechs of Prague, speaking their own distinct and current variety and not aware of any other, would not have understood a lot of what was said. The new dramas were helping, as was the new poetry, to codify and standardize a more modern Czech (Součková, 1958). Not much 'colloquial' Czech (whatever that meant at the time) would have been heard on the boards of the Bouda.

At the Bouda there was some attempt to produce plays based on classical themes, and a little later at *U Hybernů* the management naturally decided to appeal to a broader audience and commissioned the translation of popular contemporary German comedies. Both these genres would prove problematic and Dobrovský's caveat about translating classical literature was, perhaps, reasonable in light of their unexpected failure to please. The sound of gods and goddesses, let alone contemporary lords and ladies speaking Czech rendered audiences, even Czech and patriotic audiences, helpless with laughter (Macura, 1998a). What passed in written form failed in speech and Czech sounded ludicrous coming out of the mouths of the great. As late as 1820 Palacký would write that for even the very middle classes, speaking Czech in the streets of Prague was as bad as wearing an old coat (Morava, 1988, p. 7). Despite attempts to change matters, Czech would remain a low status form and inappropriate for presentation in many of the popular theatrical genres of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was acceptable only in specifically Czech historical dramas, and in a way that would appear more and more often, in plays and dramas with country themes and characters. In the 1830s and 40s, Josef Kajetán Tyl would develop the country genre into a specifically Czech art form that would endure well into the twentieth century. He, like Mácha, was an artist and not a linguistic proselytizer, and he was more comfortable writing in the speech he had grown up with in western Bohemia (Burian, 1989).

For the young patriots in the last decade of the eighteenth century, it was no longer enough to read Czech, even modern works in Czech; it was important to hear it spoken, even if only within the limited scope of the theatre. Reading is an individual activity, while for the patriots, attending the theatre became the essence of a new communal rite that entailed much more than artistic appreciation. Czech theatre was important in that it demonstrated, even if only to a much more select group than is generally thought, that Czech could exist in something other than the lowest social spheres. Dobrovský himself was proud of the Tháms and their success (Dobrovský, 1792, p. 136). However it is uncertain how much actual language was disseminated directly by means of the stage and how much prestige it built. At the Bouda, it was not just the language, but what was being said that was important. It linked language and nation with a new political consciousness.

Although certain aspects of nationalism might have appeared at certain times and in certain places throughout history, modern nationalism in Europe is generally regarded today as a late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century phenomenon that flowered first during the French revolution (Hroch, 1999; Hobsbawm, 1990; Gellner, 1983; Fishman, 1970; Smith, 1970). Many of the elements of modern nationalism were coming together at this time, including the consciousness of the existence of a 'national spirit', a history that established some sort of continuity with great ancestors who exemplify certain national virtues, and a modern pantheon of heroes to complement them. (Thiesse, 1999). The particular philosophical soup from which the French radicals drew their convictions included large portion of Rousseau, and certain aspects of British eighteenth-century thought, including the concept of nation and political state as one (Hobsbawm, 1962). For the French, the nation was identified as the mass of people, determined by the laws of Nature to rule themselves in a defined territory. The monarchs and aristocrats had usurped this role and were not part of the nation at all. St. Just wrote in 1793

Soon the enlightened nations will put on trial those who have hitherto ruled over them. The kings shall flee into the deserts, into the company of the wild beasts which they resemble; and Nature shall resume her rights (in Hobsbawm, 1962, p.74).

In Bohemia in the 1780s, the vast majority of the aristocracy was still identifying nation as meaning themselves, the ruling classes. The term 'Czech nation' amongst the older Czech patriots was most often used to describe the natural inheritors of the rights and privileges of the former Kingdom of Bohemia. Dobrovský broadened and popularized the idea of historic Czech nation and included it in a great, linguistically-linked group of people of common racial and especially linguistic descent. This group existed within a legitimate political superstructure, the Austrian domains, in which there were complex interactions between high and low. However, what the Tháms and their circle were pushing for was another definition of nation, one far closer to St. Just's. In 1785 Karel Thám wrote his own *Defense of the Czech Language*, and cried

[...] Your guilt, O you cursed gentlemen and nobles, stems from your sluggishness and neglect. You, who are the protectors and champions of a great land and honoured mother tongue [...] (in Burián, 1989).

He does not go as far as St. Just does in excluding the nobility from participation in the nation. Here the ruling classes are not usurpers; they have abrogated their particular natural role within the nation and are therefore worthy of blame. This role is to protect the language itself, as in Bohemia Herder was as important as Rousseau was to the formation of new political thought. The rescinding of Josef's more liberal reforms after 1790 resulted in a considerable amount of social unrest all over the Czech Lands, especially concerning the reinstatement of serfdom. The influx of ideas from France further exacerbated matters, especially amongst the young intelligentsia and the student class, and throughout the nineties there was constant political agitation (Hroch, 1999a; Lněničková, 1999a). The Tháms, not surprisingly, sympathized with the ideals of the French revolution. Both of them were



members of the outlawed Jacobin club, and in 1796 issued *The Manifesto of the Secret National Convention of Free Josefianian Czechs*. Oddly enough, within five years the memory of Josefianian toleration had made his name a byword amongst the radicals (Lněničková, 1999a; Haubelt, 1986).

The Bouda theatre itself maintained its reputation for radical extremism after the Tháms were gone. It was rented by a succession of small and increasingly seditious companies, most or all of whom ended up in jail (Vondráček, 1956). In 1796 a deacon from Chlumec nad Cidlanou wasn't surprised that

[...] the people are turning against their lords, since in Czech patriotic and rebellious circles this is encouraged. When Mr. Matěj Stuna in the Bouda in Wenceslas Square gave his *Peasant Rebel in Bohemia*, he wore a Jacobin cap and averred that in ten years there wouldn't be any monarchies left in Europe, nor any great estates or great lords either [...] (in Lněničková, 1999a, p. 65).

Although the brunt of the protests involved far more than language, and sometimes extended to open rebellion, especially amongst the peasants (Hobsbawm, 1962), for most Bohemians, the idea of revolution was frightening and most would have considered themselves loyal citizens (Haubelt, 1986). For most men of education, it was building the functionality and prestige of the Czech language, and not violent revolution, that was at the forefront of their various political agendas. Even so, the theatre, the most radical of the new forms of Czech production, held a politically ecumenical significance for all the patriots. Living in a police state offered very few opportunities for the public meetings that were becoming increasingly important to the dissemination of ideas and feelings. The theatre offered an opportunity for moderates and radicals alike to share in an emotional experience; in the words of the Bouda playbill, to be patriotic, to be 'awakened'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Tháms were active in spreading political unrest outside of Prague. In 1796 when Karel was visiting a revolutionary cell in Chrudim, he and his friends were arrested for drunkenness.

## ***The Press***

The third form of Czech production that would appear during the last fifteen years of the century would be part of a general explosion of print that followed a Josefinian edict giving greater freedom to the press and printers. Due to vigilant censors, publishing anything at all was always a problem in the Czech Lands during the eighteenth century and in particular, publishing in Czech had been almost an impossibility since 1620. As Czech was regarded as the language of heretics and traitors, continual bans over the whole period stopped the publication of almost anything in Czech at all, excepting Roman Catholic religious tracts and catechisms, legal proclamations, and certain types of commercial bills (Baštecká, 1999; Bobowski, 1999). This ban was partially lifted during the 1770s at the behest of the Land patriots, to facilitate their re-publishing works of the Czech Renaissance (Hanuš, 1923). The critical commentaries to reprints of these texts, even of Balín's *Defense*, that were issued by Dobner, Voigt, Ungar and others appeared in German, in accordance with the law, although at that time a modern, literary Czech was a thing of the future in any case.

Josef's relaxation of the censorship laws had an immediate impact on the publication of periodicals and newspapers. An anonymous writer remembered that in Prague in the mid-1780s

Hardly had the law concerning the freedom of the press been enacted when everyone who had fingers started to write. Every issue of every newspaper had twenty or thirty articles, and some ran to two or three printings [...] The censors worked from morning till night, and couldn't even begin to do their work properly. For every twenty articles they could only get to one; almost everything got through and this caused great excitement [...] (in Novotný, 1999, p. 306).

In the 1780s over seventy different newspaper and magazine titles were published in Prague, and a large public was apparently ready to read them. Publishing houses multiplied, reading

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They were hauled before the magistrate and proceeded to exacerbate matters by screaming "Long live freedom!" They were jailed overnight for being drunk and disorderly and obstructing justice (Lněničková, 1999a, p. 64).

rooms were opened, and the first private circulating libraries opened in 1786. More current, quicker to read, and more importantly, much cheaper than books; magazines and newspapers were the most popular form of literary production during the 1780s and 90s. Most, of course, were in German (Novotný, 1999; Volf, 1940).

In 1789, however, Václav Matěj Kramérius, literary historian, writer, friend and old schoolmate of Dobrovský, founded the first newspaper in Czech, *Kramérius's Imperial and Royal Prague Post*. Later that year he changed the name to the more judicious (and ambiguous, considering the particularly Czech definition of 'patriot') *Kramérius's Imperial and Royal Patriotic News* and he established a printing house expressly for the publication of works in Czech, *Česká expedice* (The Czech Distribution House). Like most publishers of the day, *Česká expedice* was not only a publishing house for new work and a newspaper, but of new editions of old texts as well. It also included a bookstore, antiquariat, reading room, circulating library and even, for a short time, a paper mill (Novotný, 1999). Miroslav Hroch would argue that Kramérius shared Dobrovský's outlook and absorption in the past at the expense of the present, as most of the work published out of *Česká expedice* would consist of reprints of older volumes. This, he points out, bespeaks the essentially conservative and unprogressive nature of both the publisher and his establishment (Hroch, 1999a). Kramérius, however, was a businessman and not above making a profit where he could. The new literary output in book form in Czech was minimal, and there was a large market to be tapped in antique texts and manuscripts that had been created by the purchases of the Land Patriots. It is to his credit that the *Patriotic News* would outlast most other newspapers during the closings of the 1790s and survive until 1801, and the *Česká expedice* until 1811. Although at its peak the subscription list included 1500 names, it was financial distress that drove the firm to bankruptcy, not radicalism (Novotný, 1999; Haubelt, 1986).

The *Patriotic News* was an important advance for Czech literary production because in contrast with the poetry and dramas that were being written during the same years, it demanded a different kind of writing. Like many newspapers of the period, it was a mixture of news reportage, editorial comment, letters, articles, poetry, essays, and chatty gossip, and demanded a current, concise and above all, relatively normalized, or at least consistent, use of Czech. The historian Josef Volf suggests that although the vagaries of spelling and grammar that typified written Czech throughout the period were certainly rife in the *Patriotic News*, due to Kramérius's editing, there is a certain conformity present that, he argues, would assist later in standardization (Volf, 1940).

The newspaper was even more valuable to the patriots, as the focus was on issues of interest to those concerned with Czech, the Czech movement and in Slavic studies, and it provided a weekly organ in which to reach a public not only in, but outside the capital. Copies of Kramérius's *Imperial and Royal Patriotic News* found their way to Litoměřice and the Beroun (Zelený, 1873), to Plzen (Novotný, 1999), and as far away as Bratislava (Machovec, 1964). New Czech poetry could be admired and Czech theatre could be spoken of in the provinces, but newspapers and journals gave Czechs outside of Prague a chance to follow the debates and to a certain extent, to participate in the patriotic activities in the capital. They could read Dobrovský on the spread of Slavic studies or on Polish patriotic verse (Machovec, 1964), Karel Thám on Shakespeare, or Puchmajer on Russia (Volf, 1940). Both Karel Thomsa and Václav Thám published articles recommending a return to spoken Czech, without specifying exactly where and when (Burian, 1993). Patriotic circles formed in the bigger towns over the last years of the century and for those who had no chance or inclination to travel, the opportunity to participate in the ongoing debate was available at home through the popular press (Lněničková, 1999a; Zelený, 1873).

Of the three forms of production of Czech that appeared over the last quarter of the eighteenth century in only one, the theatre, would the language be spoken and even those words had come off paper. The prevalence of Czech as a written medium should not in any way indicate that the ability to write it was common, even in patriotic circles. As late as 1841, of all the patriots on the Board of directors of the *Matice Česká*, the great society founded in 1831 to promote literature and science in Czech, only the secretary was obliged to read and write Czech well (Morava, 1988). The number of writers who were producing any new work at all in Czech in the eighteenth century was literally minute. Furthermore, many of those who produced artistic work in Czech were almost completely Germanized in their private lives. There were, of course, the great exceptions: Puchmajer corresponded with his friends Sebastian Hněvkovský and Jan Nejedlý almost exclusively in Czech (Hlavačka, 2001). Jungmann and Kramérius wrote extensively in the language for publication and Jungmann in particular worked vigorously for the re-establishment of Czech as a prestigious spoken medium and regarded the written standard as the touchstone of nation (Jungmann, 1831; Zelený, 1873).

All this activity might have died a natural death in the new century, or have been relegated to the realm of the intellectual. There were many Czech patriots, but few with the inclination to learn either this difficult new language; education in German was a fact, and the use of German was becoming more and more of an economic reality. However, there was something that entered into all three forms of new production in Czech that was most probably the element that carried it into the new century and allowed it to thrive. All the patriots loved the idea of their language. Dobner loved it for its glorious historical connotations and great literary heritage. As well as for the literature, Dobrovský loved it as a complex and perfect system, and as a link to a great, newfound collective. For the young

patriots inspired by the German thought at the end of the century, Czech was absolutely crucial because it had become the indispensable factor in what was rapidly being recognized as participation in a national spirit. As Jungmann wrote in 1821, "language is the paladium of the nation" (in Jungmann, 1831, p. 68). As Czech was regarded with an ever-increasing mystical reverence, the young awakeners were ready to go a step further than Dobrovský. As a young man Dobrovský had wanted to write about how Czech was and how Czech is; for the young generation what was far more important was what Czech meant and how it should be. It was with this aim that they faced the new century.

## Conclusion

*Take heart, Czechs, God will protect you,  
Protect your rights and your beloved land!  
Glorious Bohemia, Czech pride,  
In Bohemia, the Czechs is lord!*

Song of Freedom, 1848

The intellectual soup that simmered in Bohemia at the very end of the eighteenth century contained essentially the same ingredients that it had in the early 1770s, but in quite different proportions. The reason, the universalism and scientific inquiry that were the hallmarks of the Enlightenment were increasingly at odds with the individualism and mystic tribalism of the emerging *Sturm und Drang*. The second generation of Czech patriots, after honing the modern academic skills they had inherited from the Enlightenment, used this new German perspective to reject the empirical world view of the generation that had preceded them. The last quarter of the eighteenth century was not simply the precursor, but the crucible of the National Awakening, and the period in which important ideological foundations were laid that would result in a successful revival.

It is safe to say that in 1775 not one sane Bohemian saw Czech as a replacement, or even a rival for German. The real cause for concern was the diminishment of Latin, the traditional vehicle of Czech social mobility, in the middle and upper school systems. The school reforms stacked the deck in favour of the resident ethnic speakers of German, who were still and always 'guests' and 'foreigners' to the Czechs in the Lands. The initial outcry against the reforms consisted, in the main, of fairly reactionary protests against changes to the status quo. The framework from which the protests sprang was equally conservative; a hearkening back to the Kingdom of Bohemia and to Czech as its symbolic adjunct. By 1800, however, the patriots no longer looked back; they were looking around them and some were looking forward. The focus of their attention had turned from language as the emblem of laws, rights and state, to language as the prime indicator of race and a greater whole - nation.

This shift from the idea of language as symbol of the glorious past to language as an actual instrument that could be manipulated was possibly the single most important element in the commencement of actual language revival. However, in what direction it was to go was initially unclear. Dobrovský seems to have had no idea that Czech could practically reassume any socially dominant linguistic functions and as a supreme pragmatist, he admitted that he saw no future for the language he fought all his life for other than perhaps as a literary medium for the common people (Palacký, 1833). Jungmann, on the other hand, was obsessed with the growing conviction that first, Czech could once again be a, if not the, power language in the Czech Lands and second, that speaking, reading and writing in Czech was integral to the sharing of a national experience. It was Jungmann's vision that would prevail, and in the nineteenth century the need to function in Czech to participate in the nation would be the basis for real language shift. Both Jungmann and Dobrovský, however, thought of their language as being threatened, and this was the fear that propelled the work of all the Awakeners, both older and younger, in the new century.

Puchmajer noted in 1794 that "German novels and all kinds of new literature are infecting our language with many German terms and this process will shortly annihilate our mother tongue altogether" (in Lehar & Stich, 2000, p. 445). Jungmann warned in 1803 that within twenty years finding a Czech speaker on the streets of Prague would be equivalent to finding a unicorn with a golden horn (in Jungmann, 1841, p. 135). This idea of looming extinction was developed over the century until it became the accepted national historical line on the early Awakening; in the words of Václav Štulec in 1873, "at the turn of the last century, the Czech nation faced absolute ruin" (in Hlavačka, 2001, p. 1).

This sense of being besieged, of Czech at the point of disappearing altogether, has recently suffered from radical and extensive criticism. The sociolinguist Zdeněk Stárý states that



in actuality no more German terminology entered spoken Czech between 1620 and 1800 than had at any other time. He posits that the idea of an accelerating 'attack' on Czech from German was an alarmist theory that was developed over the nineteenth century as a justification for the fiendish level of linguistic prescriptivism that had grown in tandem with the development of a new, standard Czech (1994). Further, the historians Jitka Lněničková and Miroslav Hroch both point to the comfortable majority of monolingual Czech speakers in the Lands at the end of the eighteenth century, and would concur that the concept of Czech as a moribund language saved in the nick of time by a tiny group of intrepid and patriotic academics would be a gross overstatement (1999a; 1999a). Robert Kann would agree on numbers, pointing out (like Dobrovský), that in actuality non-German speakers vastly outnumbered Germans in the Habsburg domains (1970). Moreover, many other historians now argue (including Béranger, 1996, and Hobsbawm, 1990) that the Awakening grew out of a literary and cultural movement, much like many others of its day, inspired by Herder and the precepts of pre-Romanticism. This was the natural precursor of a one-of-many, nineteenth-century nationalist movement that used language as a rallying point, which either helped (Hroch, 1999b; Hobsbawm, 1990, 1987; Seton-Watson, 1965) or hindered the progress of the movement as a whole (Kann, 1970, 1973).

The idea of linguists as national heroes is a highly attractive notion, but the weight of evidence now seems to indicate that the Czech National Awakening was not a true language revival at all. Many scholars now claim that there was no need to preserve spoken Czech, and the brunt of the Awakeners' activities focused more on prestige and nation-building than actual linguistic revivification. These revisionist claims themselves, however, might also be subject to closer scrutiny. David Crystal cites a number of conditions that would lead to the furtherance of language shift and death that should be considered in the case of Bohemia. Those he mentions that could apply in the eighteenth-century include geographical proximity to a large group of

speakers of the dominant language, the development of industrialization, improved transport, school, and communication systems, attractive socioeconomic conditions and incentives to speak the dominant language, and the stigmatization of the minority language and its speakers by the majority. The young generation sees their language as backward and embarrassing and parents cease to transmit the language to their children. He warns:

It is easy to see how a language could eventually die, simply because, having been denuded of most of its domains, there is hardly any subject-matter left for people to talk about, and hardly any vocabulary left to do it with [...] It lacks prestige. This is the chief reason why even those languages with very large numbers of speakers may not be safe, in the long run: their status may be gradually eroded until no one wants to use them (2000, pp. 83-84)

Crystal explains that as the endangered language sinks to the bottom of the social ladder it loses vocabulary, grammatical constructions and modes of discourse. It may be reasonably argued that the condition of spoken and written Czech very much corresponded to this description by the last years of the eighteenth century. Other parallels may be drawn.

Although in the 1700s ethnic Czechs still constituted a strong majority in the Czech Lands, approximately one-third of the population were speakers of German, and German dominated commerce and the towns. The nobility were French or German-speaking, and the administrative framework was almost 100% German by the end of the century. Furthermore, the southern and western borders hugged Austria and the German states, and the proximity to Austria made Czechs liable to the severest and earliest measures of Germanization and made Germanization relatively easy to enforce. Certainly, Slav speakers were the majority in the Austrian domains, but the Czechs were largely cut off from the main body of the Slavs and suffered from high levels of language contact with German speakers.

Further, the great body of monolingual Czech speakers were peasants and the majority of those were serfs and therefore of absolutely no social importance. Serfdom would gradually disappear over the next fifty years and in result, the large, immobile Czech-speaking enclaves

would likewise be reduced by migration to the new and quickly-growing (and German-dominated) industrial centres (Blum, 1957). Similar diminishment of the traditional regions in which the native tongue was spoken on a regular basis had a crucial effect on the waning of Welsh, Breton, and Irish Gaelic (Crystal, 2000; Hindley, 1990; MacDonald, 1989). What looks to many now like an impregnable majority of Czech speakers was quite possibly a very temporary state of affairs.

Even before industrialization became a reality, the Theresian and Josefinian reforms included the development of roads, waterways, and a greatly expanded system of bureaucratic control, especially in Bohemia (Kerner, 1969). Centralized communication was immeasurably furthered by the school reforms, but that was not the extent to which the modernization of the school system would effect change. The explosion of attractive and economically viable white collar employment in education and in the bureaucracy, after 1780 open to Catholics and Protestants alike, vastly expanded and rapidly and permanently altered the traditional routes of Czech social mobility, and made them exclusively German. Moreover, the Germanization of the schools was in part fueled by the prevalent theory that Czech was deformed and malfunctional; a tongue spoken only by the shiftless and ignorant, and it carried the taint of heresy and treason well into the nineteenth century. Under the circumstances, it was no wonder that most educated Czechs viewed their mother tongue as a social solecism and the rate of complete assimilation did not abate, but continued to rise well into the nineteenth century. Judged by these criteria, the suggestion that the Czech revival was largely nineteenth-century hype cannot hold water. Czech was certainly threatened, although perhaps not for the reasons the eighteenth century Awakeners suggested, and the National Revival was a true revival.

Certainly before 1800 there were small philological and literary groups elsewhere and especially in Central and Eastern Europe, but only the Germans, the originators, matched the

numbers or the accomplishments of the Czechs. Their focus, however, was not on the revival, but on creating a standard, High version of the many varieties of German, and building its prestige. Polish was undergoing a revival of sorts as well, but based almost exclusively upon the retrieval of antique literature and codification of Old Polish (Dobrovský, 1906). Suffering from severe political and social strife, concerted effort to standardize and build the prestige of Polish would not occur until the 1850s (Hroch, 1999b; Dewald, 1996; Hobsbawm, 1990; Kann, 1970). Haarmann cites the Serbian literary revival as a rare example of pre-twentieth century language planning (1986), but again, the South Slavs began serious work on standardization only after 1800 and the bulk of the work was done in the 1850s.

The Slovaks had a particular problem. They had never been an independent people with a glorious medieval past, and for two hundred years their written standard had been based on the Czech of the Kralice bible. A number of the Czech awakeners, including Jan Kollár and Pavel Josef Šafařík, were Slovaks and one of the earliest conflicts in the pan-Slav movement was over the acceptance of Slovak as distinct, and not a lesser dialect of Czech. It was in the late 1830s that Ludovik Stur began to find recognition and support for a standard Slovak, and only then in cooperation not with the Czechs, but with the Croatian nationalist organizer and writer Ljudevit Gaj (Seton-Watson, 1965; Stur, 1843). All the pre and immediately post-1800 Slav linguistic efforts were minimal, centred on the development of Slavonic studies inspired by Herder and pan-Slavism, and done under the direct support and influence of Josef Dobrovský. Only the Russians themselves were free of his control (although they were interested in him) and the revision of their written standard during the period was initiated and completed at the behest, and not in defiance, of a government language program (Kubka, 1926).

In short, the Czech patriots were the best organized of all the non-Russian Slav peoples, and by 1800 had taken serious steps towards not just standardization, but the revival of their

language. Furthermore, although all Slav tongues were considered of low social status at the time, only Czech could be seriously considered to be endangered. The particular factors that threatened their language, including proximity to large German speech communities, aggressive Germanization and a lack of traditional leadership, were not shared by groups further east and south. Ironically, these conditions also offered the Czechs certain advantages. Strong Austrian control meant relative peace and order within the country all throughout the period. The university reforms and Tolerance Patent had provided a considerable number of young Czech patriots with access to mainstream European thought not so readily available to their more chaotic neighbours to the east. In 1790 there were 375 students of Law and Medicine alone in Prague (Haubelt, 1986, P. 382), while in 1808 at the University of Moscow there were only 135 students enrolled altogether (Miljukov, 1910, p. 494).

Lack of an indigenous nobility was also of benefit to the Czechs, as the focus of the patriots' agenda was theirs alone, and remained solidly middle-class all through the nineteenth century. The Czech national movement was not blurred with any fight to regain lost privileges and territory that obsessed the Poles and Hungarians. Lastly, although the secret police were assiduous and the board of censors was very powerful, the Czechs in no way suffered from the same drastic policies of control with which some other proto-nationalist groups were menaced. In particular, a small, patriotic linguistic group of Alsatians (of which both Goethe and Herder were members at one time) promoted German literary studies and Alsatian German in Strasbourg in the 1770s, but after 1789 the movement vanished in the face of radical Francisization. The moderates on the Committee for Public Safety suggested moving the German-speaking Alsatians to central France and the extremists advocated genocide. Neither suggestion was ever acted on, but brutal French harassment caused thousands of Alsatians to flee to the German states after 1792 (Bell, 1988).

In the end, a somewhat paradoxical situation emerged in the Czech Lands. While the rapidly changing socioeconomic conditions generally threatened the continued existence of Czech, some of these same conditions actually fostered linguistic revival at the same time. And finally, although many nineteenth century nationalist movements, from the Croats to the Finns to the Irish, had strong language riders, they generally developed later and as adjuncts to a main program that was particular to each national group. Only the Czechs developed a nineteenth century nationalist movement out of an eighteenth-century program for language revival, and that movement sprang from geographic, demographic, political, historical, social and economic conditions specific to the Czech Lands. Long before modern nationalism created a new and practical interest in the reanimation of the patriots' native tongue, the Czech language itself, and not religion, territory, customs and traditions or all those other variables that might make up a nation, had been seen for centuries as the key factor in self and group identification.

Even Jungmann, the most radical and progressive of the young patriots was completely immersed language matters at the turn of the century and was relatively apolitical. In 1803, in his mock dialogue *Concerning the Czech Language*, he scorns the ethnically-indifferent Prager, who says in stumbling, heavily-Germanized Czech

I is Czech and in Bohemia borned. I live my whole life inside de Czech borders. I speaks my langwich good, and is my langwich Cherman [...] Schwab or Czech, it's to me all de same (in Jungmann, 1841, pp. 133-134).

Jungmann was concerned with what he saw as the indissoluble link between language and ethnicity, a relatively new concept come out of Herder. For the young and assimilated Czechs, the 'feeling' of being Czech would become an important step in mutual identification.

Haarmann, Eastman and Edwards all present strong cases for ethnic identification as a concept separate from linguistic identification, but this is a twentieth century judgement when ethnic identification in most parts of the world is a given and such differentiation is valid (1986; 1984;

1984). A look at Bohemia in the eighteenth century might indicate that although a feeling of ethnicity does not require language, language spread may very well benefit from a feeling of ethnicity. The Bohemian census form of 1801 for the first time asked for identification as German or Czech, and in Prague, only 13% of the recipients entered an answer. In 1836, 97% of the recipients filled in the blank (Lněničková, 1999b, p. 32). From being awakened at the Bouda theatre to reading Jungmann, the pre-1800 patriots were more involved in discovering who they were and what that meant to formulating any concrete political goals.

In 1815, however, Jungmann begins to see things a little differently. He writes

Whoever attempts to mix different nations within one state, will only create a dangerous demesne over which to rule, against the natural laws of human culture. Never believe mulattos and half-breeds, says the old Spanish proverb. The purer the nation, the better; the more mixed, the more liable it is to the incursions of bandits. The day of one monarchy over many peoples is the last day of humanity (In Jungmann, 1841, p. 158).

Further, in 1828 the Austrian Charles Sealsfield (Karl Postl) observed

There is a mournful expression on the faces of Czechs who were the name of some free land; how they grind their teeth, when they hear of the free sons of Great Britain, and their unutterable sorrow when they hear mention of their land; of battles which they must fight for foreign interests, of the army, in which they must fight and which they have to pay for; and the instrument of their oppression is the scepter of a family which is foreign to them and defiant to their interests, which has been their lords for centuries; and in its stupidity knows only how to maintain control and plunder their national resources. Instinctive national feeling and hatred towards foreigners, meaning Germans, is a characteristic trait of this Slavonic nation (p. 82).

By the 1820s the Czechs had formulated a modern nationalist agenda, the patriots had become nationalists, and the term 'German' now included the Austrians. The fight for rights and autonomy continued to be led by the awakeners, however, and in particular the highly politically-astute František Palacký who constructed a careful program of Austro-Slavism based on his teacher Dobrovský's model; of small nation-building within the confines of a larger state. As he wrote in 1848 in reply to an invitation to attend the Frankfurt Conference of German nations; "if Austria didn't exist, we would have to invent her" (in Kuklik & Hasil, 1999, p.86).

In 1848 the Czechs joined much of the rest of Europe in losing a small but fierce revolution based on nationalist aims common to most of them. Although the revolution was not fought for specifically for language, by this time Czech had become the basis upon which to base ethnic and political identity (Pfař, 1996; Roubik, 1931). Palacký had already formulated his idea of a distinct Czech spirit transmitted through language that would seize the popular imagination and become the real base for broad language shift. The Czech spirit was the particular essence of Czechness; personal spiritual qualities that were found in Slavdom but also specifically Czech, as ample precedence could be found for them throughout Czech history and literature. It was not enough just to extol the merits of or to study Czech but to speak it and live in it, in order to participate in the group, to receive the communion of shared ethnicity.

Although Palacký would fully realize the historical justification for the Czech spirit, it was Jungmann who began to argue cogently and with great vigor for its development through the study of Czech in school. He wrote in 1805

Every one of the better-educated nations educates children through grammar; for the understanding their language will be of the highest import to them. However not every language that a nation teaches is the language that first flowered in the land. If the Romans study Greek; if the Slavs, German; if the French, English; then they are being grafted to an alien tree and in order to clear the ground, the alien tongue must be dug out and eradicated (in Jungmann, 1998, pp. 59-60).

The fight for the schools would be a long and bitter one and become as major an issue for the nineteenth century nationalists as it was for the eighteenth century patriots. In 1848 a philosophy professor from the university in Prague would state that

It is of the utmost importance that [...] every child understands the meaning of humanity above all, then nation and language, then state, Church, and finally family [...] The schools must form their curriculum so that each student understands the basic purity of upright citizenship, which on one hand is dependant on nation and language, and on the other, on the tenets of Christianity (Čapr, 1848, p. 552).

After fifty years, nation and language were still inseparable concepts and indispensable to the upbringing of children. Oddly, Čapr goes on to mention the qualities that a child may learn at home and at Church, but it is only in the context of school that he writes about the teaching of



language. This presaged a prevailing attitude in the nineteenth and even twentieth century amongst the diglossic Czechs, that language must be taught rather than acquired to be spoken properly, or *spisovně*, as if it were written (Čermák, 1993). Of less import than a direct link with parentage and patrimony, Czech became a matter of education.

About the middle of the nineteenth century a popular story spread that in the 1820s Palacký and Jungmann found themselves taking shelter from a terrible thunderstorm in a rickety shed in the country. At one point one remarked to the other (the story has many variants) that if lightning were to strike, the National Awakening would die right there. The story is obviously apocryphal. By the 1820s the Czech National Awakening was an established program working towards what would become the only fully successful language revival in Europe to date. A better understanding of how the awakeners accomplished their aims can be found in the study of the forces behind the development of modern nationalism.

Understanding that the Czech revival was actually a revival depends upon a knowledge of sociolinguistics. Language and its relationship to nation is a highly complex affair and a greater understanding of national dynamics might help to better preserve the many languages threatened today.

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