

## The Austrian State Idea and Bohemian State Rights:

### Contrasting Traditions in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1914.

Recent scholarship on the dual monarchy has stressed the prolonged crisis over the concept of Austria in the mid to late nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The confusion was particularly acute in Bohemia where the overlapping identities and loyalties confounded strict nationalist categories.<sup>2</sup> For example, the historian Anton Gindely described himself in the following terms, '[m]y father is Hungarian, my mother is Bohemian, my upbringing is German; so I can truly understand each nationality without being awkward in any of them.'<sup>3</sup> At one stage Gindely was recognised as the successor to František Palacký – the father of the Czech nation and the greatest historian in the Monarchy – until he displayed too much sympathy for the Bohemian Germans, even preferring to remain at the German University in Prague when the Charles University was partitioned in 1882.<sup>4</sup>

The Monarch's diversity lay behind the greatest question it confronted in the modern era: how to organise the state where geographical difficulties were exceeded by the problem of linguistic, cultural and historical diversity? How could 11 different nationalities in the whole monarchy, 17 separate Landtage (regional diets) in the western half alone be integrated into a functioning state which could take its place alongside France, Germany, Russia and

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<sup>1</sup> Zöllner, E., 'Perioden der österreichischen Geschichte und Wandlungen des Österreich-Begriffs bis zum Ende der Habsburgermonarchie' in A. Wandruszka and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie Vol. 3: Die Völker des Reiches* (Vienna, 1980), p. 29. In addition, Zöllner, E., *Der Österreichbegriff. Formen und Wandlungen in der Geschichte* (Vienna, 1988). See also Bruckmüller, E., 'Österreichbegriff und Österreich-Bewußtsein in der Franzisko-Josephinischen Epoche', in R. Plaschka, G. Stourzh and J. P. Niederkorn (eds.), *Was heißt Österreich? Inhalt und Umfang des österreich-begriff vom 10 Jahrhundert bis heute* (Vienna, 1995), Bruckmüller, E., *Nation Österreich. Kulturelles Bewusstsein und gesellschaftlich-politische Prozesse* (Vienna, 1996), Stourzh, G., *Vom Reich zur Republik. Studien zum österreichbewusstsein im 20 Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1990) and Stourzh, G., 'Der Umfang der österreichischen Geschichte' in H. Wolfram and W. Pohl (eds.), *Probleme der Geschichte Österreichs und ihrer Darstellung* (Vienna, 1991), pp. 3-27.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Kořalka, J., *Tschechen im Habsburgerreich und in Europa 1815-1914* (Vienna, 1991), pp. 23-75. The essay is entitled 'Fünf Tendenzen einer modernen nationalen Entwicklung in Böhmen' and provides excellent definitions of *Österreichtum*, *Großdeutschum*, *Slawismus*, *Bohemismus* and *Tschechentum*.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Plaschka, R., *Palacký bis Pekař. Geschichtswissenschaft und Nationalbewusstsein bei den Tschechen* (Graz and Cologne, 1955), p. 36. Palacký and Masaryk also had very mixed national backgrounds.

<sup>4</sup> See Začek, J., *Palacký. The Historian as Scholar and Nationalist* (The Hague, 1970), p. 99.

Britain as one of Europe's great powers?<sup>5</sup> Can unity be created out of such diversity? A crucial focal point for these issues was Bohemia which presented a bitter field of conflict between differing visions of Austria.

On one hand, there was the Theresian-Josephinist tradition of a centralised *Gesamtstaat* (whole, integrated state) which stressed the dynasty's Imperial role and Vienna as the capital of the Empire. The most important instrument for centralisation was the Imperial bureaucracy – loyal to the Emperor and to the idea of the Empire. On the other hand, there were the traditional rights of the Bohemian Landtag which had been considerably circumscribed over the centuries after the Battle of the White Mountain (1620) but, according to the feudal nobles and the Czechs, had never been totally eliminated. The Czechs and Bohemian nobles pointed out that every monarch before Francis Joseph, with the notable exceptions of the Josephs I and II, had been crowned King of Bohemia and agreed to the rights of the Bohemian Landtag. The push for Bohemian State Rights (wide-ranging legislative and administrative powers to be exercised by the Bohemian Landtag) received considerable impetus when the Czechs formed an alliance with the conservative Bohemian nobles and refused to recognise the validity of the central parliament in Vienna.<sup>6</sup> Yet the Czechs, as we will see, were not unequivocal proponents of historic Bohemian State Rights in

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<sup>5</sup> The Austrian state has been relatively neglected by historians of late. The two key works date from the inter-war period. Josef Redlich's monumental, unfinished torso Redlich, J., *Das österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* (2 Vols. Leipzig, 1922-1926) focuses on the period from 1848 to 1867 and was published in the inter-war period. Friedrich Walter's even longer multi-volume work Walter, F., *Der österreichische Zentralverwaltung* (Vienna, 1938-1970) covers the period from 1740 to 1867 and started publication in the inter-war period, ending with Walter's death in 1970. While these two massive testaments to the Austrian state provide an incredibly detailed history of the central apparatus, the question of state integration has not been addressed recently. There is nothing on the scale of Weber, E., *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (London, 1979). For two notable exceptions see Brandt, H-H., 'Parlamentarismus als staatliches Integrationsproblem: Die Habsburger Monarchie' in A. M. Birke und K. Kluxen (eds.), *Deutscher und Britischer Parlamentarismus. British and German Parliamentarism* (Munich, 1985), pp. 69-105 and Judson, P., *Exclusive Revolutionaries. Liberal Politics, Social Experience and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914* (Ann Arbor, 1996) in particular chapter 4 'Building the Liberal State', pp. 117-42. For two classic works on the failure of integration and the eventual dissolution of the Monarchy see Jaszi, O., *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, 1929), which is a brilliant, systematic exposition of the last years of the Monarchy but, written in the shadow of its demise, perhaps exaggerates the inevitability of its collapse, and Kann, R., *The Habsburg Empire. A Study in Integration and Disintegration* (London, 1957), which takes a sociological approach.

<sup>6</sup> In 1904 Louis Eisenmann wrote that '[t]his rapprochement has considerable importance in the political history of Bohemia and all of Cisleithania'. Eisenmann, L., *Le Compromis Austro-Hongrois de 1867. Étude sur le dualisme* (Paris, 1968 Orig. 1904), p. 338.

the sense of their political allies the Bohemian nobility, instead basing their arguments on a mix of natural and historic rights.

Underlying the conflict were two differing views of Austrian history. The differing interpretations of history legitimised and influenced the political demands of the two sides. In this essay I wish to trace the different historiography of the German liberals and Czechs, highlight how the different historical interpretations affected politics and, finally, to assess the chances of a compromise. On the Austro-German side the focus will be on the legal and state based histories which took the Austrian *Gesamtstaat* and the growth of the central bureaucracy as their base. The particular difficulties the Bohemian German historians had in reconciling the Austrian central state with Bohemian German history will also be addressed. On the Czech side I will discuss the ideas of three key individuals in the creation of Czech historical consciousness and political life – František Palacky, Karel Kramář and Thomas G. Masaryk. The interaction between the competing views, their political implications and the changes over time function as inter-connecting threads throughout this essay.

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While far-sighted Austrian statesmen had advised a consolidation of the lands under the Habsburgs earlier, the Austrian State Idea (*Österreichische Staatsidee*) really originated in the Theresian-Josephinist attempt to create a unified state.<sup>7</sup> Thus, as Josef Redlich has pointed out, the beginnings of the Austrian state idea involved reforms from above and initiated the

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<sup>7</sup> The forerunners included Philipp Wilhelm Hörnigk's celebrated pamphlet '*Österreich über alles, wenn es nur will*' (1684) as well as Prinz Eugen and Count Starhemberg's memorandum of 1726. For short overviews of the Austrian State Idea see Till, R., *Pax Austriaca. Sinn und Geschichte des österreichischen Staatsgedankens* (Vienna, 1948), Weizsäcker, W., 'Deutschland und der österreichische Staatsgedanke' in A. K. Simon (ed.), *Festschrift zum 75 Geburtstag des Sprechers der Sudendeutschen Rudolf Lodgmann von Auen* (Munich, 1953), Weizsäcker, W., 'Zur Geschichte des österreichischen Staatsgefühls', *Ostdeutsche Wissenschaft* 2 (1955), pp. 297-340 and Berger, P., 'Die Idee einer österreichischen Staatsnation bis 1938', *Der Donauraum* 12 (1967), pp. 57-73. It was only in Maria Theresia's time that concrete actions were taken to build a central state and to infuse the bureaucracy with this ideal, especially under the influence of Joseph reforming zeal. Hence the creation of Josephinism and the description of someone as a Josephinist.

tradition of a centralised bureaucracy.<sup>8</sup> For the generation of liberals born just after the Napoleonic Wars and educated in the stultifying atmosphere of the Metternich era, Joseph II was a source of inspiration and proof that meaningful reforms to the Austrian state could be implemented. The leader of the German liberals in the 1860s and 1870s, Eduard Herbst, described his time in the Finance-Procuration office in the early 1840s as a unique learning experience in Austrian statescraft.

Our study lay in the files, where the handwritten notes of Joseph II and Maria Theresia were scattered like rich deposits of gold dust. We believed in them like the Gospel ... these letters preached the task of the State ... they explained to us the State idea ... we learnt at this time that the meaning of the Empire as a whole is in reverse relation to the power of the provinces ... therefore we became Josephinists in the practical service of the finance-procuration office; so the Austrian idea matured in us, we saw in our hopes a unified Austria as a powerful state structure of the future.<sup>9</sup>

The Finance-Procuration office was a veritable finishing school for the future leaders of the German liberals; along with Herbst, the future ministers Leopold Hasner, Karl Giskra and Josef Lasser were all at one time lowly clerks in the office.

Thus, despite the reactionary tendencies of Metternich's police state, the traditions of Joseph II's enlightened state continued in the bureaucracy.<sup>10</sup> The onset of the revolutionary events of 1848 involved a hard choice for many of these young liberals: Frankfurt or Vienna? Most chose to attend the Frankfurt Parliament and in the early days of the Revolution all eyes were on whether Germany would finally be united. Nevertheless, some liberals decided to stay in Vienna, attend the Reichstag (parliament) and work on building a constitutional Austria – Josef Lasser and Rudolf Brestel being notable examples. With the failure of the Revolution, the Austrian state became the crucial component in the Schwarzenberg-Bach, neo-absolutist government. A strict centralisation policy was followed and the bureaucratic foot soldiers of this great attempt at standardisation and uniformity within the Empire were

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<sup>8</sup> See Lindstrom, F., *Empire and Identity. Biographies of Austrian Identity in an Age of Imperial Dissolution E* (Lund University, PhD. thesis, 2002), p. 248. Another recent work on Redlich is Ng, A., *Nationalism and Political Liberty: Josef Redlich, Lewis Namier, and the Nationality Conflict in Central and Eastern Europe* (Oxford, Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 5848, Wednesday, 8 December 1880, *Morning Edition*.

<sup>10</sup> See Heindl, W., *Gehorsame Rebellion. Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich 1780 bis 1848* (Vienna, 1991).

mockingly named Bach's Hussars.<sup>11</sup> Historical studies received a tremendous boost when Count Leo Thun founded the Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung (Institute for Austrian Historical Research) on 20 October 1854. Its goal as conceived by Thun and his Under-Secretary Joseph Alexander Helfert (a conservative politician who later became a distinguished historian and had also been in the Finance-Procurator office in the 1840s) was specifically political: to create a school of researchers from all over the Monarchy who could demonstrate how the Austrian state evolved into a unified whole.<sup>12</sup> Helfert's plea for 'Austrian history' is contained in his book, *Über Nationalgeschichte und den gegenwärtigen Stand ihrer Pflege in Österreich* (On National History and the Present State of its Promotion in Austria).<sup>13</sup> Helfert's view of Austrian history was firmly based on the *Gesamtstaat*. Because Austrian history had been neglected for so long many professors had to be brought in from Germany; among the most important being Constantin Höfler, a Swabian-born historian who had been educated in Munich and Göttingen and was appointed Professor of History in Prague in 1852, and Theodor Sickel, a Prussian-born historian and archivist who had studied at Halle, Berlin and Paris and would later be a decisive influence on the course of the Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung.

The neo-absolutist years had a profound effect on Austrian liberal thinking. First of all, for many moderate liberals, the Austrian state promised protection from the evils of violent revolution and anarchy, both glimpsed in the 1848 revolution.<sup>14</sup> Second, the events of 1848 had not only shown social unrest but also the possibility of a non-German Austria. The

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<sup>11</sup> A good example of a relatively high ranking Hussar is Ignaz von Plener, later to be Finance Minister in Schmerling's government and Trade Minister in the *Bürgerministerium* (citizen's cabinet), who served as State Finance Director in Bratislava (Pressburg) – then part of Hungary - between 1851 and 1857, Lemberg (in Galicia) and then Vienna. Plener was born in Vienna and had served in Eger (where his son the later liberal leader Ernst von Plener was born) and Prague before his posting to Bratislava. With such movement loyalties centred not on any district or culture but on the Austrian state, as Plener's clearly did. See Plener, E., *Erinnerungen* Vol. 1 (3 Vols. Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1911), pp. 1-16. On Ignaz von Plener see Wolf, M., *Ignaz von Plener* (Munich, 1975).

<sup>12</sup> Lhotsky, A., *Geschichte des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung 1854-1954* (Graz and Cologne, 1954), pp 5, 26.

<sup>13</sup> Helfert, J. A., *Über Nationalgeschichte und den gegenwärtigen Stand ihrer Pflege in Österreich* (Prague, 1853).

<sup>14</sup> See Boyer, J., *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848-1897* (Chicago, 1981), pp 4-20. For an opposing view, stressing the continued differences between the liberals and bureaucrats see Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*, pp. 70-4.

Austrian Reichstag had a majority of non-German peoples, its President was Polish (Franciszek Smolka who would later be President in the 1880s during the Taaffe government) and much of the constitutional work was by Czechs – specifically František Rieger and František Palacký. On the other hand, the Austrian state was clearly German-based and remained the most potent instrument for any attempt at Germanisation or defence of the Austria's 'German' character. Third, the Bach state had combined an absolutist, bureaucratic and military control with far reaching, even progressive, reforms in the economy (under the liberal minister Bruck), education (under the conservative centralist Thun) and not least in state administration itself (under the liberal turned bureaucratic, absolutist Alexander Bach).<sup>15</sup> Fourth, the failure of the Frankfurt Parliament coupled with the *kleindeutsch* (small Germany; led by Prussia and excluding Austria) lobby had turned liberal attention away from unifying Germany to the task of rebuilding Austria. The liberals disagreed with many aspects of the Bach regime – lack of parliamentary control, abolition of communal autonomy and especially the Concordat ceding many privileges to the Catholic Church – but they also witnessed and participated in the reforms from above. An uneasy, informal alliance based on a commitment to a modern, central Austrian state developed between the liberals and the reforming wing of the bureaucracy which would, despite many difference of opinions, continue until the end of the Monarchy.<sup>16</sup> Certainly the bureaucracy was closer to the German liberals than to any other political party, especially the Czechs or Slovenes. The Bohemian nobles obviously had many family members in high positions throughout the bureaucracy – mostly in the diplomatic corps and the army – but the bulk of domestic policy was formed by career bureaucrats who had progressed largely through their own merits and efforts. Fifth, as Redlich has noted, the Bach regime emphasised the German character of the Imperial bureaucracy. The language,

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<sup>15</sup> Brandt, H-H., 'Liberalismus in Österreich zwischen Revolution und Großer Depression' in D. Langewiesche, *Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich* (Göttingen, 1988), pp. 136-60. For a more exhaustive look into the Bach era see Brandt, H-H., *Der österreichische Neoabsolutismus. Staatsfinanzen und Politik 1848-1860* (Göttingen, 1978).

<sup>16</sup> While Josef Redlich has been attributed as noting the alliance between the liberals and the bureaucracy, Michael Hainisch mentioned this as early as the 1890s. Hanisch, M.; Wittelshöfer, O. and Philippovich, E., *Zur österreichischen Wahlreform* (Vienna, 1892), p 7. Hainisch would later become the first elected President of Deutsch-Österreich (German-Austria) in 1919.

ethos and personnel were German. This assumption, that the bureaucracy – even the idea of Austria itself – was of a fundamentally German character, remained a persistent theme of liberal thinking in the next decades.<sup>17</sup>

With the centralist February Patent and the greatly expanded Reichsrat (Imperial Parliament), the liberals flooded the newly opened public sphere with speeches, brochures, journals and newspapers. The younger generation of liberals, such as Wilhelm Exner, threw themselves into political discussion and organisations, while looking to parliament as leading the fundamental reform and regeneration of Austria.<sup>18</sup> Herbst, Giskra, Johann Nepomuk Berger and Eugen Mühlfeld led the liberals in the Reichsrat and firmly supported Schmerling's centralist policies. However, with respect to parliamentary powers – ministerial responsibility, budgetary control, power over military expenditure and a restriction on the use of emergency executive powers – the liberals were adamant; to modernise and reinvigorate Austria, a constitutional liberal *Rechtsstaat* (rule of law) had to be constructed.

Parliament, a responsible government and a framework of liberal laws were therefore the main planks of the Austrian liberal project. While the authoritarian aspects of the Austrian bureaucracy were criticised, most liberals still believed firmly in a central state and defended Schmerling's constitution against clerical and non-German nationalities' arguments for a federal Austria with regional autonomy.<sup>19</sup> Above all, during the four years of the February Patent (1861-65), the liberals were determined to take advantage of the new constitutionalism by fighting for parliamentary power, amending the constitution to institute liberal rights and insisting on a *Rechtsstaat* to restrict bureaucratic abuses.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ernst von Plener, the liberal leader in the 1880s and early 1890s, is an example of a leading liberal from a family steeped in the traditions of the Austrian bureaucracy who refused to accept the Germans as just another national grouping and insisted on the German character of Austria and its state.

<sup>18</sup> Exner, W., *Erlebnisse* (Vienna, 1929), pp. 186-7. Also see Benedikt, M., *Aus meinem Leben. Erinnerungen und Erörterungen* (Vienna, 1906), pp. 41 and 266-268 who believed in both a central Austria and a wide democracy.

<sup>19</sup> See Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*, p. 103. Some Slovenes agreed with the relatively progressive aspects of the Schmerling government and supported an alliance with the liberals.

<sup>20</sup> In fact the February Patent remained in effect, as did the October Diploma (1860), until the end of the monarchy. The December Constitution (1867) was a fundamental rewriting in a liberal and centralist direction of the previous two 'constitutions'.

In a flood of pamphlets initiated by the new opening of the public sphere in the early 1860s, many liberals attempted to articulate their views on constitutionalism and their vision of a new, modern Austrian. All expressed a deeply felt need to reform the state but the variety of opinions covered a wide spectrum. The strict centralists insisted on a strong, unified Austrian state and parliament with no compromises to the nationalities.<sup>21</sup> The biggest obstacle to a constitutional *Gesamtösterreich* (whole, integrated Austria) was the Hungarian issue. Hungary's resistance and the memory of the 1848-49 revolutionary war against the Kossuth-led bid for independence hung over all discussions of the constitution. Not many liberals were prepared to follow Heinrich Jaques's threat of material force – whether subjugation by bureaucratic or military means (Jaques is not clear on this point).<sup>22</sup> Wenzel Lustkandl, while not going as far as Jaques, denied the existence of Hungarian state rights and entered into a fierce debate with the leader of the Hungarian liberals, Ferenc Deak.<sup>23</sup> More typical was Hans Perthaler's view (Perthaler has been described by Robert Kann and Josef Redlich as the real drafter and father of the Schmerling constitution), who wavered between concessions to the Hungarians and loyalty to a central Austrian state.<sup>24</sup> Just months after hoping for an agreement with the Hungarians, Perthaler reveals exasperation at their intransigence and insists on the validity of the February Patent.<sup>25</sup> Other liberals were prepared to concede the historical reality of Hungary's separate administrative and constitutional traditions and agree to a dualist structure.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See [Perthaler, H.], *Palingenesis. Denkschrift über Verwaltungs-Reformen in Österreich* (Leipzig, 1860), [Perthaler, H.], *Neun Briefe über Verfassungs-Reformen in Österreich* (Leipzig, 1860), Jaques, H., *Die Verfassung und unsere dringendsten Aufgaben. Denkschrift* (Vienna, 1861), Jaques, H., *Über unser Parlament* (Vienna, 1861) and Lustkandl, W., *Das Wesen der österreichischen Reichsverfassung. Eine akademische Antrittsrede* (Vienna, 1864).

<sup>22</sup> Jaques, H., *Die Verfassung und unsere dringendsten Aufgaben*, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup> Lustkandl, W., *Das ungarisch-österreichische Staatsrecht. Zur Lösung der Verfassungsfrage* (Vienna, 1863) and Deak, F., *Ein Beitrag zum ungarischen Staatsrecht. Bemerkungen über Wenzel Lustkandl's Ungarischösterreichisches Staatsrecht* (Budapest, 1865).

<sup>24</sup> [Perthaler, H.], *Die Frage des Augenblickes. Pfingsten 1861* (Vienna, 1861).

<sup>25</sup> [Perthaler, H.], *Ungarn und der Reichsrath* (Vienna, 1861). For another example of the difficulty in balancing Hungary's position and the desire for an Austrian *Gesamtstaat* see Friedmann, O. B., *Zur Einigung Österreichs. Eine Denkschrift* (Vienna, 1862), which oscillates between dualism and centralism without coming to a fair conclusion.

<sup>26</sup> Berger, J.N., *Zur Lösung der österreichischen Verfassungsfrage* (Vienna, 1861), [Czedik, A.], *Das österreichische Parlament* (Vienna, 1861) and most notably [Fischhof, A. and Unger, J.], *Zur Lösung der ungarischen Frage. Ein staatsrechtlicher Vorschlag* (Vienna, 1861). For a comprehensive biography of Fischhof



Underlying all of the German liberal opinions was a belief in the special position of Germans within Austria.<sup>27</sup> Through history the Germans had, according to the liberals, formed the fundament of the bureaucracy and the educated classes. In the liberals' eyes, German culture was clearly the most advanced and developed of all the national cultures and deserved its place as the leading nation in Austria. This was particularly true in Bohemia where the German influence – culturally, economically and politically – was far more pronounced than in the Hungarian lands. The liberals may be prepared to concede the existence of constitutional Hungarian rights but viewed Bohemia – because of the presence of almost two million German speakers, the traditional leading role of German culture and the successful administrative integration of the Bohemian lands under Maria Theresia and Joseph II – as part of the Austrian state and institutional structure. Thus a liberal like Alois Czedik could express great admiration for the Hungarian constitution and its municipal life but dismiss Bohemia as 'long being one with the Austrian lands in the economy and in life, long without state rights existence'.<sup>28</sup> For Bohemian Germans especially, a central state meant both protection from a Czech dominated Bohemian Landtag under a federal system and an assertion of their Austrian identity. Herbst, who led the formidable block of Bohemian German liberals for two decades, expressed the belief in a central state in a famous phrase: 'we all gravitate to Vienna!'.<sup>29</sup>

The liberal commitment to the constitution and the central state became apparent when the Emperor appointed Count Richard Belcredi as head of government in place of Schmerling

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– one of the most important leaders of the 1848 Revolution, a member of the Kremsier constitutional committee and in the following decades a persistent advocate of national reconciliation – see Charmatz, R., *Adolf Fischhof. Das Lebensbild eines österreichischen Politikers* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1910).

<sup>27</sup> This was the case even for such a committed believer in national reconciliation. See recently Reifowitz, I., 'Threads Intertwined: German National Egoism and Liberalism in Adolf Fischhof's Vision for Austria', *Nationalities Papers* 29 (2001) 2, pp. 441-58. While Fischhof's views contained certain German prejudices, he honestly and wholeheartedly wished to further the development of other nationalities. One of the means would be the influence of the 'more developed' German culture.

<sup>28</sup> Czedik, *Das österreichische Parlament*, p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, No. 85, Sunday, 7 April 1895 'Kein Rückschlag auf die Provinz'. Frankfurt, Berlin and Prague were the other possible 'capital' cities. Herbst, crowned the 'King of German-Bohemia' by his conservative, noble rival Count Clam-Martinitz, was actually Viennese who in the middle of an impassioned speech would occasionally speak with a pronounced Viennese accent. His family origins however were Czech see Elisabeth Wymetal, *Eduard Herbst, sein Werdegang und seine Persönlichkeit vornehmlich auf Grund seiner selbstbiographischen Aufzeichnungen* (Vienna Univ. thesis, 1944), p. 4.

in 1865. Belcredi, a moderate federalist, was entrusted with effecting a compromise with the Hungarians but the liberals interpreted his appointment as a turn to federalism and closed ranks to protect Schmerling's centralist system. Even the Styrian Autonomists fraction – their leader Moriz Kaiserfeld had been the first liberal to criticise Schmerling's inadequate policy towards the Hungarians – protested vehemently at the suspension of the constitution and defended the idea of a strong Imperial *Gesamtstaat* (for defence, trade and foreign affairs) along with regional autonomy for administrative matters.<sup>30</sup>

The Austrian defeat at Königgrätz in 1866, the subsequent dualist state structure and the liberal-inspired rewriting of the constitution represented the minimum acceptable state programme for the liberals. The liberal historian Franz von Krones later described the dual system as 'the outer limit of the concessions which the idea of a unified State could approach; beyond it would lie chaos.'<sup>31</sup> Many liberals were not happy with the loss of the *Gesamtstaat* but were prepared to accept the *fait accompli* if the constitution was amended in a liberal fashion, including a list of fundamental rights of citizens, and an assumption that the central parliament and state would remain for the western half of the Monarchy – now unofficially named Cisleithania. The political goals of the German liberals during the 1860s and 1870s remained constant: a unified Austria (i.e. Cisleithania) based on a powerful parliament and a framework of liberal laws. Only with these institutions could the Austrian-Hungarian Empire enter the modern world, regenerate its strength and rightly claim its place as one of the Great Powers of Europe. The writing of Austrian history played an important role in this process.

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<sup>30</sup> See Krones, F., *Moritz von Kaiserfeld. Sein Leben und Wirken als Beitrag zu Staatsgeschichte Österreichs in den Jahren 1848 bis 1884* (Leipzig, 1888), pp. 230-6. Kaiserfeld's political opinions changed from issue to issue but his commitment to the Austrian state was always clear. For example, in 1867 when he and Herbst accepted dualism and negotiated terms of the *Ausgleich* with Hungary, Kaiserfeld despaired at the lack of cohesion in Imperial affairs; particularly the cumbersome system of delegations. Kaiserfeld and many liberals wanted a central Imperial parliament.

<sup>31</sup> Krones, F., *Handbuch der Geschichte Österreichs von der ältesten bis neuesten Zeit Vol. 4* (4 Vols. Berlin, 1879), p. 658.

The Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung had been in existence for over ten years by 1867 but no coherent history of Austria had been produced.<sup>32</sup> Rather unfortunately the first director Albert Jäger, a Tyrolean with a Benedictine education, was an autodidact with no systematic training in historical research. Theodor Sickel, who was giving lectures in Paleography at the University at this time and had been trained at the Paris based '*Ecoles des Chartres*', gradually took over many responsibilities and eventually became the Institute's second director (1869-91). Sickel created the outlines of the Institute and his focus on vast editions of source material (including the appropriately named *Monumenta Germaniae*) founded the academic traditions of the institute and trained a school of dedicated archivists and librarians. While many historians attended the institute, including the noted liberal historians and politicians Heinrich Friedjung and Viktor von Krauss, none went on to write the Austrian counterpart to Palacký's great history of the Czech people. The most prominent was the Professor of Austrian History at Graz and a graduate of the first class at the Institute, the aforementioned Franz von Krones, whose two general histories of Austria, monographs on 1526 and the Napoleonic era all chronicled the development of the Austrian state.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps a better Director for the purposes of forming a framework for understanding Austrian history would have been the instigator of the Institute, Johann Alexander von Helfert who was a prolific historian and political commentator of a conservative, Catholic bent. Along with his own works of history, Helfert edited the *Österreichische Geschichte für das Volk* (Austrian History for the People, 1863, 17 volumes) which included Höfler and Krones among its contributors. However, neither Krones's works nor Helfert's had the same effect on the public imagination as Palacký's. The gradual growth of Austria – from dynastic origins to a slow development of a unified state – did not appeal to the imagination as much as the

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<sup>32</sup> See Lhotsky, A., *Geschichte des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, p. 7. See also Santifaller, L., *Das Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* (Vienna, 1950). The standard work on Austrian historiography is Lhotsky, A., *Österreichische Historiographie* (Vienna, 1962).

<sup>33</sup> Krones, F., *Handbuch der Geschichte Österreichs*, 4 Vols. (Berlin, 1876-9), Krones, F., *Grundriß der österreichischen Geschichte* (Vienna, 1882), Krones, F., *Die österreichische, böhmische und ungarische Länder in letzten Jahre vor ihrer dauernden Vereinigung 1437-1526* (1864), Krones, F., *Zur Geschichte Österreichs im Zeitalter der französischen Kriege und der Restauration 1792-1816* (Gotha, 1886), Krones, F., *Aus Österreichs stillen und bewegten Jahren 1810-12 und 1813-15* (Innsbruck, 1892). Krones vast output also included works of cultural history, biographies and regional history (Styria).

heroic efforts of Jan Hus. Austrian history did not have such a talismanic figure. Even Maria Theresia, who similarly faced enemies on all sides, did not serve as such a powerful symbol in the Austrian imagination as Hus did for the Czechs. Joseph II – while an inspiration for many educated, liberal Germans – remained a very controversial figure among the non-German nationalities. The only great Austrian in living memory, Colonel Radetzky, was more a symbol for the army than for the state. In the cultural world Franz Grillparzer could be held up as a model, loyal Austrian *Beamter* (bureaucrat) but he appealed more to the Viennese and suffered somewhat in comparison to the formidable achievements of the German enlightenment, particularly the oft-cited Goethe and Schiller.

Part of the reason for this difference in impact between Austrian *Gesamtstaat* and Palacký's Czech history was the sheer shock, upon publication of Palacký's work, that the Czechs had a glorious history.<sup>34</sup> The history of the Habsburgs in Europe, however, was well known; though it was only in the post-1848 years with the decline in the Church's influence and the move away from genealogies that modern techniques of historical research and institutionalised academic study were used systematically in the representation of the House of Habsburgs and its growth into a modern state. In addition, Palacký's history of the Czechs contained a relatively simple plot; the peace-loving, democratic, artistic Czechs were invaded by the warlike, aggressive Germans who subjugated them in a hierarchical, feudal system of slavery. While Palacký was not entirely dismissive of the German influence - he admitted some benefits - his schema of a constant battle between two peoples remained clear. The prosaic history of Austrian state building could not compete with such a powerful story.

Nevertheless there were increasing attempts to write the history of the Austrian state. For example, two legal scholars chronicled the growth of the Josephinist state in vast, ambitious projects. Hermann Ignaz Bidermann's *Geschichte der österreichischen Gesamtstaatsidee 1526-1804* published in two volumes - the first published in 1867 (an ironic

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<sup>34</sup> One of Palacký's friends tried to dissuade him from beginning his History by stating that 'the Czechs could not have a great historian because they do not have a great history'. See Baar, M., *The Historian and the Nation in the Nineteenth Century: the Case of East-Central Europe* (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 2002) p. 137.

date for the history of the Austrian *Gesamtstaat!*) and the second volume in 1889 – and Ignaz Beidtel’s *Geschichte der österreichischen Staatsverwaltung, 1740-1848*, also in two weighty volumes published 30 years after his death in 1896 and 1898, both focussed on the role of the bureaucracy in creating modern Austria.<sup>35</sup> However, the true monument to bureaucratic diligence and the Josephinist idea of an Austrian *Gesamtstaat* is surely Constant von Würzbach’s 60 volume *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich* (Biographical Dictionary of Imperial Austria), which began publication in 1856, hence the old fashioned title from the neo-absolutist era, and was completed in 1890. Incredibly, this standard reference work, still of great importance to present day researchers, came in its entirety from the pen of Würzbach. For Würzbach, Bidermann and Beidtel a basic assumption in their understanding of Austria’s history was the conception of Austria (including Hungary) as an organic whole with Vienna as its Imperial centre. The hard work of the bureaucrats, from the lowly postal clerk in the outermost reaches of the Empire to the Head of Ministerial Departments in Vienna, held the Empire together and maintained social order. While the political storms raged, wars were won or lost, the Austrian bureaucracy quietly went about its task of administering the Empire.

The decision in 1893 to introduce the course ‘*Österreichische Reichs –und Rechtsgeschichte*’ (History of Imperial Austria and its Laws) prompted a series of textbooks from Werunsky (1894), Huber (1895) and Bachmann (1896).<sup>36</sup> The course was designed for students of law and history and covered the development of the Austrian legal framework and administration. The general approach was to concentrate on the dynasty, especially the crucial moments of consolidation (1526: Ferdinand I elected to the Hungarian and Bohemian crowns, 1627: Ferdinand II ordinance reducing the power of the Bohemian Landtag after it had lost

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<sup>35</sup> Bidermann, H. I., *Geschichte der österreichischen Gesamtstaatsidee 1526-1804* (2 Vols. Innsbruck, 1867 and 1889). Bidermann’s second volume, which only reached 1740, has a resigned tone which is wholly absent from the first volume. Beidtel, I., *Geschichte der österreichischen Staatsverwaltung, 1740-1848* (Innsbruck, 1896). Beidtel’s rich life included appointments in Olmütz, Lemberg, Venice, Klagenfurt, Brünn and attendance at the Frankfurt Parliament in 1848. He died in 1865 and Alfons Huber later edited the two volumes on Austria’s state administration.

<sup>36</sup> Huber and Bachmann’s views on history will be discussed later in this essay.

the Battle of the White Mountain and 1713: the Pragmatic Sanction combining all of the land of the Habsburgs in perpetuity), until the Theresian-Josephinist reforms. The focus in the nineteenth century became the growing web of laws and administrative decrees that covered the Monarchy. It is ironic that the study of the Austrian state occurred in the years of its slow adjustment to the demands of the non-German nationalities and necessity of adapting to the realities of an assertive, diverse, increasingly political populace.

In 1882 the moderate liberal Ludwig von Oppenheimer reflected on the position of the German liberals, the self-anointed *Staatspartei* (State Party) who had consciously adopted the traditions of the Josephinist, reformist bureaucracy but were now in opposition to a Slav-Clerical government under Count Taaffe.<sup>37</sup> The great question for the Empire, according to Oppenheimer, is how to cope with diversity and build a state.<sup>38</sup> Oppenheimer, as many German liberals, is ambiguous in his attitudes towards the Hungarians. They had destroyed the idea of the unified *Gesamtstaat* and had achieved parity with the Germans while only contributing 30% to the shared costs of the Monarchy, yet had also shown a great inner strength, a gift for politics and a propensity for constitutional life.<sup>39</sup> Oppenheimer, along with many liberals, lamented the loss of the *Gesamtstaat*. After 1867 the German liberals were forced to concentrate on other goals: the implementation of constitutional life, the restriction of state debts and, increasingly, the protection of the *Deutschtum* (German interests).

Professional historians outside of Vienna were also turning their attention to recent Austrian history and produced lasting syntheses of Austria's particular process of state-building. Ferdinand von Krones's (Graz) *Handbuches der Geschichte Österreichs* (1876/79, 5 volumes) has already been mentioned and Alfons Huber's (Innsbruck) massive project to write a standard work of the Austrian state only reached the end of the Thirty Years War (1648).<sup>40</sup> The project was continued by Oswald Redlich after Huber's death but still only

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<sup>37</sup> [Oppenheimer, L.], *Austriaca: Betrachtungen und Streiflichter* (Leipzig, 1882).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Huber, A., *Geschichte Österreichs* (5 Vols. Gotha, 1885-96).

reached the beginning of Maria Theresia's reign.<sup>41</sup> Lhotsky has noted in relation to Huber that "perhaps he would have finally shown how he imagined the whole phenomenon of Austria and therefore helped the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to create an historical basis for its state ideology".<sup>42</sup>

The most distinguished historians in Vienna all researched significant periods in the building of Austria, though none produced an integrated narrative. Alfred von Arneth, who became President of the *Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Academy of Sciences) and a prominent member of the liberal party in the Upper House, wrote multi-volume biographies of Prinz Eugen and Maria Theresia. G. P. Gooch in 1913 described the latter as "the most important work ever produced by an Austrian historian, and is one of the classics of historical literature".<sup>43</sup> August Fournier concentrated on the Napoleonic time, when Austria led the alliance against Napoleon and held a dominant position in Europe.<sup>44</sup> His rival at the University of Vienna, Adolph Beer, wrote on the finances of the Austrian state in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>45</sup> All three were prominent liberal politicians; Arneth attended the Frankfurt Parliament in 1848 and was active in politics afterwards, Beer was a parliamentarian from 1873 to 1897 and extremely influential in matters of education, finance and economy (he was Chairman of the parliamentary Budget Committee in the mid 1890s) and Fournier, during his years as Professor in History at the Prague University (he succeeded Höfler), was prominent in both the Bohemian Landtag and the Austrian Reichsrat.<sup>46</sup> Kroner, as already noted, also

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<sup>41</sup> Redlich, O., *Geschichte Österreichs Vol. 6* (Gotha, 1921) and Redlich, O., *Das Werden einer Großmacht Österreich von 1700 bis 1740* (Brünn, 1942).

<sup>42</sup> Lhotsky, *Österreichische Historiographie*, p. 201.

<sup>43</sup> Gooch, G.P., *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (NY, 1949 orig. 1913), p. 426.

<sup>44</sup> Fournier, A., *Napoleon I. Eine Biographie* (Prague, 1886), Fournier, A., *Gentz und Cobenzl. Geschichte der österreichischen Diplomatie in den Jahren 1801-1805* (Vienna, 1880), Fournier, A., *Der Congress von Chatillon. Die Politik im Kriege von 1814. Eine historische Studie* (Vienna, 1900) and Fournier, A., *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress* (Vienna, 1913).

<sup>45</sup> Beer, A., *Die Staatsschulden und die Ordnung des Staatshaushaltes unter Maria Theresia* (Vienna, 1894), Beer, A., *Die handelspolitischen Beziehungen Österreichs zu den deutschen Staaten unter Maria Theresia* (Vienna, 1893) and Beer, A., *Die Finanzen Österreichs im 19 Jahrhundert* (Prague, 1877).

<sup>46</sup> Both Arneth and Fournier wrote memoirs. Arneth, A., *Aus meinem Leben* (Vienna, 1892) and Fournier, A., *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1923). Fournier's was never completed and was edited from his papers after his death. Unfortunately they do not cover his years in Prague where, as Professor of Austrian History in the German part of the Prague University, he played a crucial role in public life.

investigated crucial moments in the development of the Austrian state - the elections of Ferdinand I to the Bohemian and Hungarian crowns and the fight against Napoleon.<sup>47</sup>

Thus Austrian historiography, taking the process of state-building as its paradigm, started relatively late and never achieved the coherence that Palacký's work gave to Czech historiography. By the turn-of-the-century Austrian historiography had built a growing number of monographs and syntheses portraying the development of the Austrian state. Nevertheless, the real fundament of the Austrian State Idea remained the bureaucracy and the form it took in the millions of individual memorandums, small reforms and administrative decisions produced each year. Only after the *Gesamtstaat* was in danger did the bureaucrats and German liberals make a concerted attempt to trace the organic development of the Austrian state and to justify its existence. Censorship and the general intellectual stagnation of the *Vormärz* and the neo-absolutist time was used as an excuse by many German liberals, but this had not hindered Palacký.

By the 1860s and 1870s Czech historiography had built an impressive array of studies postulating a separate history of the Czech nation, parallel but separate to the construction of the modern Austrian state. The classic work is, of course, František Palacký's 'History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia': the first 3 volumes were originally published in German in the 1830s and 1840s, significantly under a slightly different name (History of Bohemia) and then from 1848 to 1876, Palacký revised the work for a Czech edition and published the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> volumes only in Czech.

Palacký's view of history, as many have noted, is heavily indebted to German thinking.<sup>48</sup> From Hegel and Schelling he derived the idea of the historical dialectic; in Bohemia's case the eternal conflict between the Czechs and Germans.<sup>49</sup> From Herder he

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<sup>47</sup> Krones, *Die österreichische, böhmische und ungarische Länder im letzten Jahre vor ihrer dauernden Vereinigung 1432-1526*; Krones, *Zur Geschichte Österreichs im Zeitalter der französischen Kriege und der Restauration 1792-1816* and Krones, *Aus Österreichs stillen und bewegten Jahren 1810-12 und 1813-15*.

<sup>48</sup> This is not to deny the influence of French and especially Scottish history on Palacký's conception of history.

<sup>49</sup> Baar notes that the idea of polarity in history was a generally held view of the time. Baar, *The Historian and the Nation*, p. 164. Nevertheless Hegel and Schelling were by far the most well-known and widely read proponents of the idea – simply because of their stature in the German intellectual community and the fact, in the nineteenth century, that German was the language of scholarship in Central and Eastern Europe.



adopted the generalisations about national character – the Slavs as by nature democratic, peace-loving, religious and industrious while the Germans were aggressive, predatory and authoritarian.<sup>50</sup> From Heinrich Luden, the patriotic historian of medieval Germany, he was inspired to write about his fatherland and its national spirit.<sup>51</sup> From Kant he found inspiration and justification for Austria's world-historical role in the nineteenth century – to realise the principles of equality of religious and nations.<sup>52</sup> This could, Palacký argued, only be achieved by a federation of Austrian nations; a conception completely opposed to the centralising tendencies of the Imperial bureaucracy.

Palacký's importance on Czech consciousness can hardly be overestimated.<sup>53</sup> His portrayal of the Czechs through history gave his people a proud narrative which provided the basis for understanding the Czechs' place in the world. He divided Czech history into distinct periods: the Old Period (from pre-historic times to 1403) which was dominated by the imposition of the German feudal system, the Central Period (1403-1627) which witnessed the democratic, Slav reaction to the German feudal system and was personified by the deeds of Jan Hus, the Taborites and the Bohemian Brethren, and, finally, the New Period (from 1627 to the nineteenth century) which started with Ferdinand II's land ordinance and involved a process of Germanisation, re-Catholicisation (principally under the Jesuits) and increasing Habsburg absolutism.<sup>54</sup> The essential features of the Czech people were evident in the structures of life before the German, feudal invasions.

The characteristic feature of the ancient Slav constitution is that total absence in Bohemia of all political class distinctions, complemented by a corresponding absence of all privileges, immunities and exemptions, resulting in complete equality before the law and enjoyment of full political rights by all the people.<sup>55</sup>

It was, however, the Hussite period which stood as *the* crucial period in the formation of the Czech people. Hus's stand against the Catholic Church was central to Palacký's portrayal of

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<sup>50</sup> Zacek, *Palacký*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>51</sup> Baar, *The Historian and the Nation*, p. 132.

<sup>52</sup> See František Palacký, *Österreichische Staatsidee* (Wien, 1974 orig. 1866), p. 20 where he seems to base the principle on Kantian ethics. Masaryk often mentions Kant as an inspiration for Palacký.

<sup>53</sup> See Baar's comments in Baar, *The Historian and the Nation*, p. 184.

<sup>54</sup> See Zacek, *Palacký*, pp. 85-6.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Richard Georg Plaschka, 'The Political Significance of František Palacký', *Journal of Contemporary History* 8 (1973) 3, p 43.

the Czechs as the forerunners of humanitarian ideals, the idea of the only people who had stood alone against the prejudices and corruption of the whole of Europe created a powerful national myth. Clearly a different emphasis to the German liberal view of the gradual acquisition of territory and development of the Austrian state under the leadership of the German *Bürger!*

Integral to Palacký's conception was the Czech people as a distinct and autonomous historical actor. While the German liberal historians placed importance on the development of the Austrian state, Palacký focused on the trials and tribulations of the Czech people.<sup>56</sup> Indeed the Czechs were not naturally inside the Austrian state. The Bohemian crown was an elective monarchy (even if the Bohemian nobles were compelled to elect a Habsburg unless the line ran out) and the Czech people had only bound itself to the Austrian state for certain specific historical purposes. In 1526 the Habsburgs were elected to the Crown for the common protection of Christendom and European culture from the Turks. Unfortunately once the Turkish threat had dissipated, the Habsburgs – according to Palacký – became instruments of the Catholic Church and for centuries stood against any progress and science.<sup>57</sup> The age of religion was over, he argued, and in the nineteenth century the dominant principle was nationality. According to Palacký, Austria's role was to provide a protective, secure geographical territory where the principle of equality of nations could be realised.

Palacký's political activity stemmed from 1848; his rejection of Frankfurt's invitation and his participation in the Austrian Reichstag in Vienna and Kremsier. His conception of a federal Austria famously moved from a radical one based on ethnic grouping (4 groups in the original draft in the Reichstag, later expanded to 8 groups) in 1848 to a more moderate one based on the historical-political entites (regions with their own Landtag) in the 1860s.<sup>58</sup> The

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<sup>56</sup> Lemberg, E., 'Volksbegriff und Staatsideologie der Tschechen' in E. Birke und K. Oberdorffer (eds.), *Das böhmische Staatsrecht in den deutsch-tschechischen Auseinandersetzungen des 19 und 20 Jahrhunderts* (Marburg/Lahn, 1960), pp. 42-78. Lemberg makes much of the Czech people's lack of figures who built a state. The pantheon of Czech heroes based on Palacký and Masaryk's view of Czech history – Hus, Chelčický, Komeskný and Havlíček – are in fact **against** authority and the state.

<sup>57</sup> Palacký, *Österreichische Staatsidee*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>58</sup> See for example Wierer, R., 'F. Palacký's staatspolitisches Programm', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 6 (1957) 2, pp. 246-58. For the background to Palacký's state rights position and a good overview of the whole Czech

Czechs had, as noted before, entered into an alliance with the Bohemian nobles in 1861 and coupled with a reading of Baron Josef Eötvös's work, Palacký moved in the direction of historical state rights for the Landtage, in particular the Bohemian Landtag. Nevertheless, Palacký's series of articles published in German under the title '*Österreichische Staatsidee*' (the Austrian State Idea) betrayed a continued belief in the natural rights of nations for autonomous development; derived, as mentioned previously, from ahistorical Kantian ethics.<sup>59</sup> This uneasy tension in basing political demands on both natural rights and Bohemian historical state rights was also evident in the next generation of Czech politicians, principally, as we will see, between Karel Kramář and Thomas G. Masaryk. By the end of his life Palacký despaired that any meaningful reforms could be effected on the dualist Empire and his later writings evinced bitterness and pessimism about the place of the Czech people within an Austria dominated by the Germans and Hungarians. His role in the renewal of the Czech people's self-consciousness, however, was crucial. He had definitively shaped the understanding of Czech history and had given the Czech people an heroic and humanistic meaning in the course of world history. His interpretation of Bohemian history and the conceptions of the Czech and German people have continued to dominate the historical imagination of Central Europe until the present.<sup>60</sup>

While the historical focus in Vienna and much of the Alpine Lands (approximately the area of present-day Austria) was the central Austrian state, the historians of Bohemia, mostly based around the history faculty at the Prague University, were forced to address Palacký's monumental historical scholarship and his vision of the historical process. Josef Knoll and the aforementioned Constantin Höfler both opposed Palacký's portrayal of Bohemian Germans and their place in Bohemian history. Knoll defended the Josephinist *Gesamtstaat* and the

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political scene see Garver, B., *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 49-59.

<sup>59</sup> Palacký, *Österreichische Staatsidee*, pp. 8 and 11-20.

<sup>60</sup> For example see the influential essay by Kundera, M., 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', *New York Review of Books*, 26 April 1984, pp 33-38.

cosmopolitan aspects of Austrian patriotism.<sup>61</sup> Höfler, himself a historian of the Hussite period, challenged Palacký's positive appraisal of Hus as a forerunner of the Reformation and thus became the subject of a brilliant academic defence from Palacký.<sup>62</sup> The most influential forum for the historical views of the Bohemian Germans was the *Verein für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* (Association for the History of Germans in Bohemia) which was founded in 1862 by a number of University students (Höfler gave the opening lecture) and published a yearly collection of articles intended to challenge Palacký's interpretation of Bohemian history. The title of the association, so similar to Palacký's Czech title 'The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia', illustrated the change in German and Czech thinking from a common land history prevalent in the first decades of the nineteenth century to the divisive historical debates between Czechs and Germans in the middle to late nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> Höfler's opening address stressed the Catholic conception of Austria as well as the old Imperial *Großdeutsche* idea. Höfler's commitment to a central Austria based on conservative values of Catholic and Imperial universalism quickly led to uneasy tension with the young student founders of the Association who wished to emphasize the history of the Bohemian German people - not the Austrian state and Empire. Eventually Höfler, the greatest historical authority among the Bohemian Germans, resigned his seat in the central committee in 1870 and concentrated his efforts on University work.<sup>64</sup>

A teacher at the German *Oberrealschule* in Prague and one of the student founders, Ludwig Schlesinger, was commissioned by the Association in 1866 to write a history of Bohemia as a counter-weight to Palacký and his account appeared in 1871, quickly going

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<sup>61</sup> Neumüller, M., 'Zur deutschliberalen Geschichtsschreibung des 19 Jahrhunderts in Böhmen', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 20 (1971), pp. 441-465 and Baar, The Historian and the Nation.

<sup>62</sup> Palacký, F., *Die Geschichte des Hussitentums und Constantin Höfler. Kritische Studien* (Prague, 1868).

<sup>63</sup> For the background to Palacký's original, pre 1848 project to write a *Land* history see Prinz, F., František Palacký als Historiograph der böhmische Stände' in *Probleme der böhmischen Geschichte* (Munich, 1964), pp. 84-94. Prinz has pointed to 1848 as Palacký's final break with a Bohemian noble-based history, though there were many indications of Palacký's direction beforehand.

<sup>64</sup> For details see Neumüller, M., 'Der Verein für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen: ein deutschliberaler Verein (von der Gründung bis zur Jahrhundertwende)' in F. Seibt (ed.), *Vereinswesen und Geschichtspflege in den böhmischen Ländern* (Munich, 1986), pp. 181-3. The article Oberdorffer, K., 'Der Verein für Geschichte der deutschen in Böhmen 1862-1938', *Bohemia* 3 (1962), pp. 9-29 is less illuminating.

through a number of editions. Schlesinger viewed Bohemian history as the natural expansion of great German power and regards the Czech cultural strivings in a tragic, futile light.

The Czech language island does not have anywhere near enough material and spiritual strength to develop a new land when surrounded by the heaving German oceans of culture ... Against the natural force of circumstances, all human struggles and efforts are futile.<sup>65</sup>

Little did Schlesinger know that within two decades time, when he was rising in the Prague political ranks to become leader of the German Bohemians in the Landtag, the Germans would be talking of German *Sprachinseln* (language islands) and the rising Slav flood!

Yet, as a good liberal, Schlesinger did not conceive German influence in solely nationalist terms. The German character was infused with the spirit of the constitution and freedom; the Germans were the carriers of progress, well-being and civilisation to the Slavic peoples. Never was this more apparent than in the passages about the German settlements in Bohemia in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, which were barely disguised apologies for nineteenth century German liberal ideology. According to Schlesinger, the German settler brought culture to Bohemia and through diligent, hard work built up the cities. The good German *Bürger* (citizens) in the interests of all Bohemians (especially the Czech peasants bound by the feudal yoke) fought the oppressive nobles under the banner of progress and freedom.<sup>66</sup> It wasn't Hus who brought the idea of freedom to Bohemia it was the German *Bürgertum*! They had been the protagonists against the feudal system and had provided an example to the Czechs in the fight for progress and well-being. This image of the beneficent liberal Germans is far from that of the aggressive, German, feudal invader of Palacký's account.

Schlesinger's position in Bohemian life was indicative of the German liberals adherence to *Honoratiorenpolitik* (notable politics). He was a member of the Bohemian Landtag and on the Bohemian Land Committee from 1885 (specialising in financial affairs), President of the *Verein für die Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* from 1880 (he had been

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Seibt, F., 'Der Nationalitätenkampf im Spiegel der Sudetendeutschen Geschichtsschreibung 1848-1938' in F. Seibt, *Deutsche, Tschechen, Sudetendeutsche. Analysen und Stellungnahmen zu Geschichte und Gegenwart aus fünf Jahrzehnten* (Munich, 2002), p. 379.

<sup>66</sup> Neumüller, Zur deutschliberalen Geschichtsschreibung, pp. 452-5.

editor of its journal from its inception) and in 1894 he succeeded the much-loved Franz Schmeykal as Head of the Club of Bohemian Germans in the Landtag, the most prestigious and powerful position in Bohemian German politics. His influence on Bohemian German life, through both his historical work and active political activity, was immense.

A similar blend of historical research (though at a more scholarly level) and political activity can be found in the biography of Adolf Bachmann, whose two volume *Geschichte Böhmens* (History of Bohemia) appeared in 1899 and 1905.<sup>67</sup> Bachmann, who succeeded Fournier as Professor of History at the German University in Prague, was a favourite student of Höfler's – the other being Bachmann's counterpart as Professor at the Czech University in Prague, Jaroslav Goll. In his early works Bachmann had written scholarly works on Bohemia's state position within the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century – another significant choice of subject. His *Geschichte Böhmens*, like Palacký's, ended at 1526 and, not surprisingly, stressed the ancient links of Bohemia to the German Empire.<sup>68</sup> Though a frequent critic of Schlesinger's populist style of history, Bachmann's interpretation of the German influence in Bohemia similarly portrayed the Germans as free landowners and farmers who had made significant contributions to the progress and freedom of Bohemia.<sup>69</sup> Bachmann also recognises some real achievements from common work between the two nations.<sup>70</sup> Like other professional historians of the time, Bachmann's focus was the state, foreign affairs and high politics. In his Rector speech of 1902 Bachmann agreed with Ranke that history is the history of the state and should rightly concentrate on politics.<sup>71</sup> A few years before, his textbook about Austrian history had appeared and Bachmann made clear his belief in the Austrian *Gesamtstaat* as a basis for historical thinking: “[i]n addition, the Imperial history of Austria can only concern itself with

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<sup>67</sup> Bachmann's life and works are covered well in Bachmann H., *Adolf Bachmann. Ein österreichischer Historiker und Politiker* (Munich, 1962).

<sup>68</sup> Bachmann, *Adolf Bachmann*, pp. 69-71. Bachmann presumably saw the history of the Bohemian state as ending in 1526. From then on it was part of the Austrian state. Huber's history of the Austrian state, published in the same series, covers the period from 1526 onwards.

<sup>69</sup> Neumüller, *Zur deutschliberalen Geschichtsschreibung*, p. 453.

<sup>70</sup> Seibt, *Der Nationalitätenkampf im Spiegel*, p. 381.

<sup>71</sup> Bachmann, *Adolf Bachmann*, p. 74.

the statements of the idea of the Austrian *Gesamtstaat*; it is the history of the great process of becoming and life of the unified State of Austria".<sup>72</sup> For Bachmann, the ideological achievements of the Prussian School of Historians had revealed the importance of historical work to the public's conception of present-day politics and Bachmann was inspired to follow their example.

The historical works of both Schlesinger and Bachmann show this engagement with the present political situation and the difficulty in balancing the history of the German *Volk* in Bohemia with that of the Austrian *Gesamtstaat*. The debate with Palacký's views and the emphasis on the period of settlements and Hussite wars (both occurred before Bohemia's eventual ties with Austria) forced a discussion of the Germans as a national, cultural and ethnic people predating any links with Austria. On the other hand, the subsequent consolidation process of the Habsburg lands inspired a strong loyalty to the Austrian state.<sup>73</sup> For many Bohemian Germans it became increasingly difficult to reconcile their Austrian and German loyalties. If the Austrian state could no longer provide protection of *Deutschtum* in Bohemia then the spiritual, cultural and economic power of the dynamic German Empire became increasingly attractive to the besieged Bohemian Germans. Never had history been so important to the Bohemian Germans as in the period of relative decline and this is reflected in the preponderance of historians as leading politicians – alongside Schlesinger and Bachmann, the social historian Julius Lippert also belonged in the upper echelons of Bohemian politics.

The second generation of Czech politicians, too, were preoccupied with history. For example, Karel Kramář was undertaking research in Vienna on government administration during Maria Theresa's reign in the hope of an academic career as an historian, when he received the call from Josef Kaizl and Thomas Masaryk in Prague to participate in the foundation of the Realist movement. Masaryk was a great admirer of Palacký and in a series of books published in the mid to late 1890s he outlined a philosophy of Czech history which

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<sup>72</sup> Bachmann, A., *Lehrbuch der österreichische Reichsgeschichte. Geschichte der Staatsbildung und des öffentlichen Rechts*, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Slapnicka, H., 'Die Stellungnahme des Deutschtums der Sudetenländer zum „Historischen Staatsrecht“' in Birke und Oberdorffer (eds.), *Das böhmische Staatsrecht*, p. 41.

would form the ideological basis of the Czechoslovakian state and prove of immense influence. Central to Kramář and Masaryk's ideas about Czech history and politics were their differing views on Bohemian State Rights.

Both Kramář and Masaryk published books in 1895 which contained their views of Czech history. Kramář's *Das böhmische Staatsrecht*, the more conventional of the two, traces the existence of Bohemian State Rights until Maria Theresia's brutal breach of law with her project of centralisation.<sup>74</sup> Kramář followed in the line of distinguished Czech historians who had based Bohemian State Rights on historical proof and arguments.<sup>75</sup> On the opposing side, the German liberals relied on the argument that the Battle of the White Mountain (1620), Ferdinand's Land Ordinance of 1627, Joseph I's refusal to be crowned and especially Franz II's declaration of an Austrian Empire in 1804 had broken the continuity of law and that no Bohemian State Rights existed anymore.<sup>76</sup>

In his exposition of the topic, Kramář position was ambiguous. Unlike Josef Kalousek he did not assert that Bohemian State Rights had a continuous existence until the present day – Theresian centralism had been too strong a break in continuity to pursue this line of argument. Kramář turned instead to arguments based on Czech liberalism. As a committed liberal Kramář partially accepted the German liberal interpretation of the German *Bürgertum*'s struggle for freedom against the Bohemian feudal nobles, but then presented the Czechs' liberal credentials. He argued that despite the Czech alliance with the nobles, the essence of Czech character had remained liberal and democratic.<sup>77</sup> For Kramář, the question of Bohemian State Rights was purely of structure *not* a question of progress and liberal

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<sup>74</sup> Kramář, K., *Das böhmische Staatsrecht* (Vienna, 1896), p. 18-21. For a recent intellectual biography of Kramář stressing his in-between, often ambiguous and undecided views see Winkler, M., *Karel Kramář (1860-1937). Selbstbild, Fremdwahrnehmungen und Modernisierungsverständnis eines tschechischen Politikers* (Munich, 2002).

<sup>75</sup> Kalousek, J., *Einige Grundlagen des böhmischen Staatsrechtes* (Prague, 1870) and Toman, H., *Das böhmische Staatsrecht und die Entwicklung der österreichischen Reichsidee vom Jahre 1527 bis 1848. Eine Rechtsgeschichtliche Studie* (Prague, 1872). Both argued State Rights survived the building of the central Austrian state. For an overview of this tradition see Plaschka, R., 'Das böhmische Staatsrecht in tschechischer Sicht' in Birke und Oberdorffer (eds.), *Das böhmische Staatsrecht*, pp. 1-14.

<sup>76</sup> For an example see Höfler, C., *Gedanken über das böhmische Staatsrecht* (Prague, 1889). The article originally appeared in the *Mittheilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen*.

<sup>77</sup> Kramář, *Das böhmische Staatsrecht*, p. 3.



centralism against reactionary federalism, as the German liberals had represented. Kramář was attempting to disarm German liberal criticism of Bohemian State Rights as backward and unliberal, instead pointing to the Young Czechs recent emancipation from the Bohemian nobles as proof of Czech commitment to progress and democracy. There was a scarcely disguised plea for a German-Czech compromise on the basis of an autonomous Bohemia (something the Bohemian Germans would never agree to as the clear minority people in Bohemia) and an acceptance that the German people in the monarchy were just another nationality as the others with no cultural or state mission (also unacceptable to the Bohemian German liberals who, like Schlesinger and Bachmann, had defined themselves as the benevolent *Kultur* and *Staatsvolk*).<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, Kramář's analysis of historical Bohemian State Rights stressed the unnatural, immoral, aggressive, unhistorical nature of Theresian and Josephinist centralism.<sup>79</sup> He implied that the Monarchy would have developed better with continued regional autonomy. However, since the Theresian reforms, the greatest agent in the Austrian state had been the centralising bureaucracy which had quietly taken over the public sphere.<sup>80</sup> Kramář recognised certain natural common developments, especially in the economic field, and his arguments were reminiscent of the Hungarian demands in the 1860s – legislative and administrative independence for the Bohemian Landtag but with certain common matters, principally in military administration and economic matters.<sup>81</sup> In conclusion, Kramář called for national peace with the Germans in the name of liberty and democracy – on condition that the Czech arguments for Bohemian State Rights were accepted.<sup>82</sup> Thus Kramář's position, while taking sustenance from Bohemia's history of State Rights prior to Maria Theresia, relied mainly on liberal and democratic arguments about the best, most progressive structure for the Austrian state in the modern world.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 4, 69.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, pp. 14-21, 36.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, pp. 23-8, 43.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, pp. 34-40.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, pp. 56-9.

His optimism that an agreement with the Bohemian Germans was possible reflects the changed conditions in late 1895. The coalition government in Vienna had fallen (one of the prime instigators of the ‘coalition of the moderate parties’ – an attempt to shut out the Young Czechs, antisemites and radical German nationalists - was the Bohemian German liberal leader Ernst von Plener), the Young Czechs had prevented the Bohemian Ausgleich of 1890, had done well in the recent Bohemian Landtag elections and were independent of the Bohemian nobles, while on the German side the moderate liberals in Bohemia were under pressure from the nationalist All-German factions and were looking for an agreement to retain their position in Bohemian politics. Negotiations were underway in the Bohemian Landtag between the Young Czechs and the more moderate Bohemian German liberals – represented in the discussions by Julius Lippert. In addition, Josef Kaizl, the leader of the Young Czechs, gave a speech in the 1895 Budget debate which indicated a move away from the state rights position.<sup>83</sup> Needless to say, any chance of a common, liberal, democratic agreement disappeared upon proclamation of the Badeni decrees in 1897 and the accompanying outbreak of nationalist violence.

If Kramář’s brochure was a conventional historical defence of Bohemian State Rights coupled with an exposition of current political policy, Thomas Masaryk’s approach to the state rights issue and Czech policy was rather different. The first exposition of his views was in a speech in the Reichsrat during the November 1892 Budget debates which had been a response to a provocative speech by Ernst von Plener. Masaryk’s speech lasted over 3 hours and brought accusations by German liberals of high treason at its conclusion.<sup>84</sup> Plener had

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<sup>83</sup> *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 11246, Saturday 14 December 1895, *Morning Edition*. Indispensable for the political events of the time is Winters, S., ‘Kramář, Kaizl and the the Hegemony of the Young Czech Party, 1891-1901’ in P. Brock and H. G. Skilling (eds.), *The Czech Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto, 1970), pp. 282-314. See also Garver, *The Young Czech Party*, pp. 154-216.

<sup>84</sup> For a description of the speech and the circumstances I have relied on Fried, A., *Masaryk’s Erste Tätigkeit im Wiener Parlament 1891-1893* (Vienna Univ. thesis, 1954). The literature on Masaryk is massive. For a good, concise background to Masaryk’s preparations for his first stint in parliament see Odložilík, O., ‘Enter Masaryk: A Prelude to his Political Career’, *Journal of Central European Affairs* 10 (1950) 1, pp. 21-36. I have also relied on H. G. Skilling, *T.G. Masaryk: Against the Current, 1882-1914* (Basingstoke, 1994), as a distillation of a lifetime’s learning in Czech history. For the sometimes uneasy but generally cordial relationship between the two political rivals, Kramář and Masaryk, see Winters, S., ‘T.G. Masaryk and Karel Kramář: Long Years of

spoken of the end of Bohemian State Rights and the need to partition Bohemia into German and Czech areas, effectively meaning the end of the historical territory of Bohemia. In response Masaryk attacked the German liberals saying that they did not want to know the Slavs and instead relied on a centralism which only benefited Germans and was based on a 'fetish for the Austrian state and bureaucracy'.<sup>85</sup> Austria needed autonomy and Bohemian State Rights which would allow the cultural development of all the nations. Masaryk absolutely refuted Plener's accusation that Czech culture was simply a reflection of German culture and pointed to music and historiography where Czech achievements were at least as good as the Germans'.<sup>86</sup> Rather pointedly he advises the Austro-Germans to work on their own culture and to stop relying on the greater German-speaking cultural area for support.<sup>87</sup> Here was the crux of the matter: the Germans had no positive programme, only negative centralisation with its reliance on the bureaucracy and policy of Germanisation – both hidden under the guise of Austrian patriotism.<sup>88</sup>

There were also political and economic reasons for Bohemian State Rights, Masaryk continued. Hungarian dominance had to be countered and the Czechs allowed to develop economically so that Austria was rejuvenated as a federal Monarchy for all of its nations. Masaryk was particularly provoked by a pamphlet written by Matthias Ratkowsky, a teacher at the respected Theresianum, the elite school for the monarchy's aristocracy. Ratkowsky's views were clear from the title of his work *'Das Recht und die Pflicht, die Tschechen und Slowenen zu germanisieren'* (The Right and Duty to Germanise the Czechs and Slovenes); one of the more radical views of the Germans as the 'carriers of culture to the East' but one, Masaryk states, which was representative of many bureaucrats.<sup>89</sup> The brochure was also

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Friendship and Rivalry' in S. Winters (ed), *T.G. Masaryk (1850-1937). Thinker and politician* (New York, 1990), pp. 153-90.

<sup>85</sup> Fried, *Masaryks Erste Tätigkeit*, p. 201-3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211-3.

replete with All-German sentiment and Masaryk ironically read passages from the text, including a phrase reminiscent of Herbst's yet strikingly different: we gravitate to Berlin.

The German liberals responded to Masaryk in kind, the respected Max Menger (a member of the Reichsrat since 1871) stating that he had never heard such animosity and national hate in parliament. Perhaps, opined Menger, Masaryk had learnt these sentiment from Tolstoy – referring to Masaryk's not uncritical book on Russia. Finally, Menger accused Masaryk of high treason: '[w]e don't know of any Bohemian State. I believe it is high treason to speak of an existing Bohemian State'.<sup>90</sup> Parliament erupted in scenes not seen before but which would sadly become a regular part of parliamentary life in Austria. Cries from the German liberals were heard: 'You haven't proven that you are a cultured people!' and 'Go to Russia then!'. The President of the House was forced to close the sitting because of the tumult – the first time in the Reichsrat's history according to the leading liberal newspaper of the day, the *Neue Freie Presse*.<sup>91</sup>

The *Neue Freie Presse* immediately recognised the change of emphasis in Masaryk's speech and the ahistorical arguments he used to justify Bohemian State Rights. Masaryk's view was different from the historical arguments of Palacký, Rieger, Clam-Martinitz or Brauner; it was "something really new, modern, which d[id]'t look calmly into the past, rather turn[ed] to the future".<sup>92</sup> Historical rights no longer formed the basis of Czech demands, the *Neue Freie Presse* continued, rather it was the sovereign will of the people which justified Czech autonomy. This thinking, according to the main organ of German liberal opinion, was against the Austrian state and not a matter of law but of power. It was the first step to an independent Czech state which would be completely incompatible with a central Austrian state and the one source of all state rights in Austria – the constitution.<sup>93</sup> Ernst von Plener, too, saw Masaryk's speech as tantamount to announcing a Czech national state and clearly against

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 218.

<sup>91</sup> *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 10144, Saturday, 19 November 1892, *Morning Edition*.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. However we have already seen how Palacký's views were in fact infused with arguments based on natural rights.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. Also see *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 10145, Sunday 20 November 1892, *Morning Edition*.

the Austrian state.<sup>94</sup> This liberal response demonstrated typical German liberal misunderstanding of the Czechs. The Czechs were not against Austria and wanted co-operation on common military, trade and foreign affairs matters. They were, however, against the central Austrian state, which the German liberals had supported and partially enshrined in the constitution.

Masaryk developed his ideas further in the years after his resignation from parliament in 1893. In a series of books – begun in 1895 with *The Czech Question*, *Our Present Crisis* and *Jan Hus, Our Revival and Our Reformation* then followed by *Karel Havlíček* (1896), *The Social Question* (1898) and *Palacký's Idea of the Czech People* (1898) – Masaryk made a concerted effort to provide the Czech people with an all-encompassing philosophy of their history, an ideological base for a national ethics and a programme of ‘unpolitical politics’ for the moral regeneration of the Czech people.<sup>95</sup>

Masaryk posed what he considered the fundamental question: what was the role of the Czech people in human development?<sup>96</sup> Was there a sense to Czech history? After describing Hus’s fight for spiritual freedom and the living legacy of Hus in the order of the Bohemian Brethren, Masaryk traced a continuous thread of Czech humanism directly to the nineteenth century Czech revival and the present day. Yet this Czech story, while clearly focused on the Czech people, was of universal significance since the basis of Czech character was universal humanism.<sup>97</sup> Masaryk, like many German Enlightenment thinkers, searched for reconciliation between universal principles and national loyalty.<sup>98</sup> Where the German liberals defended their values and in particular German culture as not merely national but of universal import,

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<sup>94</sup> Plener, *Erinnerungen*, Vol 3., p. 60.

<sup>95</sup> For a selection of extracts in English from these works, principally *The Czech Question*, see Masaryk, T., *The Meaning of Czech History* (Chapel Hill, 1974). This has been a much discussed topic. See for example Thomson, S. H., ‘T.G. Masaryk and Czech Historiography’, *Journal of Central European Affairs* 10 (1950) 1, pp. 37-52 and Szporluk, R., *The Political Thought of Thomas G. Masaryk* (Boulder, 1981).

<sup>96</sup> Masaryk, *The Meaning of Czech History*, p. 18.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 26-9.

<sup>98</sup> Scruton, R., ‘Masaryk, Kant and the Czech Experience’ in S. Winters, *T.G. Masaryk (1850-1937). Thinker and Politician*, pp. 44-59. Despite Masaryk’s disavowal of Kant, according to Scruton, there is a Kantian basis for Masaryk’s construction of national ethics. In effect Masaryk was doing for the Czech people what Hegel had done for the Prussian state, reconciling universal concepts with particularist loyalties and providing a compelling philosophical justification for its existence.

Masaryk reversed the German ‘cultural mission’ and replaced it with a Czech ‘humanist mission’ which proclaimed the universal significance of Czech values, in particular their moral and spiritual development. Thus Masaryk urged concrete national work through education and ‘unpolitical’ actions which would ‘fulfil our humanist goals through moral and intellectual excellence’.<sup>99</sup>

Masaryk’s goal of providing a philosophical, historical and ideological basis for the Czech people was received with perplexity by many of his contemporaries. His former political ally and fellow professor at the Czech University, Josef Kaizl replied in a brochure entitled ‘Czech Thoughts’ and rejected Masaryk’s lineage of Czech humanism (from Hus to the Bohemian Brethren to the Czech revival). Instead, Kaizl followed the more traditional interpretations that the Czech ‘awakeners’ of the nineteenth century were influenced by European currents (it was not a solely Czech-based inspiration as Masaryk seemed to imply) – the French and German Enlightenment; the ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.<sup>100</sup> Kaizl and Kramář, who were now the leaders of the Young Czechs, both urged reconciliation with Germans and active, pragmatic political activity to achieve real gains for the Czech nation, though always within the framework of the existing Austrian state system – despite the routine inclusion of Bohemian State Rights in political programmes.<sup>101</sup> Kramář became Vice-President of Parliament under Badeni and Kaizl even had a short stint as Finance Minister (1898-99) in the Thun cabinet.<sup>102</sup> Paradoxically where Masaryk’s wider-ranging demands were dependent on natural rights arguments and the moral regeneration of the Czech people

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<sup>99</sup> Masaryk, *The Meaning of Czech History*, p. 110.

<sup>100</sup> The lack of Czech humanist continuity across the space of two centuries between the battle of the White Mountain and the Czech revival accompanied Masaryk’s neglect of the Counter-Reformation and was just one of the many criticisms Josef Pekař, the favourite student of Jaroslav Goll, made about Masaryk’s philosophy of Czech history. This dispute has been covered in depth by Plaschka, *Von Palacký to Pekař*, pp. 77-82; Hauner, M., ‘The Meaning of Czech History: Masaryk versus Pekař’ in H. Hanak (ed.), *T.G. Masaryk. Statesman and Cultural Force* (New York, 1990), pp. 24-42 and Brušák, K., ‘The Meaning of Czech History: Pekař versus Masaryk’ in L. Peter and R. Pynsent (eds.), *Intellectuals and the Future in the Habsburg Monarchy 1890-1914* (Basingstoke, 1988), pp. 92-106.

<sup>101</sup> See for example Konirsh, S., ‘Constitutional Aspects of the Struggle between Germans and Czechs in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy’, *Journal of Modern History* 27 (1955), pp. 231-61. Also Winters, S., “‘Tactical Opportunism’: Karel Kramář’s Adaptation of Palacký’s Concept of the Bohemian “Staatsrecht””, *Bohemia* 41 (2000), pp. 23-33 where Kramář’s flexibility with the State Rights argument and Palacký’s legacy is emphasised.

<sup>102</sup> As noted before, along with Kramář’s conciliatory remarks in his *Das böhmische Staatsrecht*, significantly first published in German, Kaizl postulated a compromise with the Bohemian Germans in the Budget Debates of 1895.

(which arguably could be satisfied by granting rights but retaining a central state), Kaizl and Kramář's more conciliatory attitude to the Germans and the Austrian state rested, in theory at least, on a complete change in Austria's state structure. Practical politics, of course, demanded compromises and until the First World War Kramář's approach (Kaizl died under the age of 50 in 1901) was more popular than Masaryk's. In the extraordinary conditions in the First World War, Masaryk's philosophy of Czech history provided a cogent explanation of events within the essential continuity of the history of the Czech people and a basis for the call for independence.

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When we look back at the period from 1848 to 1918 it could easily be viewed as many contemporaries and the Viennese liberal newspapers did, in terms of a clear battle between German liberal centralism based on the traditions of the Austrian state and reactionary Slav federalist claims based on a mixture of historical and natural state rights. A closer investigation shows a much more complex and varied response to 'the Austrian Question'. The German liberals, along with their natural assumption of being the '*Kulturvolk*' and '*Staatsvolk*', truly believed that their predominance had a universal basis in the values of constitutionalism, parliamentary government, the *Rechtsstaat* (rule of law) and the progress of the civilised world. There was a pronounced tension, especially in Bohemia, between the assertion of German culture (invoking the support of the whole German-speaking world) and the emphasis on the natural development of the central Austrian state as a rational, efficient administrative system which, as a corollary, also secured German dominance in the western half of the Monarchy. Over the course of decades, as the Austrian system entered into an almost continuous period of crisis and the German liberals began to feel more and more marginalised, the focus moved increasingly from the Austrian state to an assertion of German cultural and racial superiority. This, however, should not be overstressed. Despite the rise in

radical voices, the vast majority of Austro-Germans remained loyal to Austria and to the dynasty in particular.

The Czech assertion of state rights similarly wavered between the two arguments of natural and historical rights. As we have seen, the major Czech politicians relied on a mix of the two arguments. In addition, the concept of Bohemian State Rights was never clearly defined. It could mean a truly autonomous, independent state or a position similar to Hungary's (the most common assumption) or special rights for the Bohemian region within a common Austrian state.<sup>103</sup> The Czech view of history was clearer. Palacký's polarity of two nations in Bohemia was never seriously challenged (though the positivist Goll school chipped at some of Palacký's conceptions), not even by the Bohemian Germans, and the fundamental issue in Bohemia became: how to satisfy Czech cultural and political demands within an Austrian state system?

It would be a mistake to see the German liberal and the Czech nationalist views as completely incompatible. Both 'nations' recognised the other's right to live in Bohemia and both realised that some agreement had to be reached eventually. Yet as time went on the differing ideologies made it more and more difficult to find common ground and a liveable compromise as each side became more entrenched in their positions. Each generation of politicians faced the difficulty of a younger generation wishing to assert its presence by a more radical approach. Unfortunately, despite repeated efforts – the Kremsier Constitution of 1849, talks between the Young Czechs and the German liberals in 1870, the Emmersdorf agreement between Adolf Fischhof and František Rieger in 1878, the Bohemian Ausgleich of 1890 between Plener and Rieger, the 1895 negotiations between Kramář and Lippert, the Ausgleich negotiations in 1912-13 between Kramář and the Stürgkh government and numerous other attempts – the Czechs and Germans in Bohemia never achieved a lasting

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<sup>103</sup> Hugo Toman makes this point in his contribution to E. Mischler und J. Ulbrich (eds), *Österreichisches Staatswörterbuch. Handbuch des gesamten österreichischen öffentlichen Rechtes* Vol 1. (3 Vols. Vienna, 1897), 'Böhmisches Staatsrecht', pp. 184-5.



agreement. No statesman was prepared to sacrifice on a fundamental position in the cause of national peace, not even Masaryk.

The historical periodisation is also of interest. The Germans relied on the central bureaucracy and their dominant position in politics and society until the 1850s. It was not until the 1870s and 1880s that a conscious turn to Austrian and Bohemian history occurred and an ideology was systematically constructed to justify the Germans' special privileges. On the other hand, the Czechs, without a state of their own, built a historical concept of the Czech nation in the 1840s and 1850s before turning to practical politics in the 1880s in an attempt to realise their national demands.

This essay has attempted the task of illuminating the two different historiographical traditions, how they interacted and what effect they had on the politics of the day. If the Czech view has been richly documented by historical scholarship, the German liberals have been, until late, relatively neglected, especially the importance of the Austrian State Idea.<sup>104</sup> That the Austrian state finally fell in 1918 should not obscure its real historical presence in the debates of the day.

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<sup>104</sup> Recent works on Austrian liberalism include Kammerhofer, L., (ed.), *Studien zum Deutschliberalismus in Zisleithanien 1873-1879* (Vienna, 1992); Höbelt, L., *Kornblume und Kaiseradler. Die deutschfreiheitlichen Parteien Altösterreichs 1882-1918* (Vienna, 1993); Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries* and my recently completed doctorate Kwan, J., *Austro-German Liberalism and the Multi-National State, 1867-1895* (D.Phil, Oxford University, 2004).