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Goethe
im Vormärz

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Eoin Bourke (Galway)

Moritz Hartmann, Bohemia and the Metternich System

In Moritz Hartmann's novella *Der Krieg um den Wald* there is a vignette of the village on the river Litawka where he was born:

[...] Ein kleines Schlößchen mit einer unbedeutenden Thurmuhr, und ein mit Mauern umgebener Kohlgarten, der sich Schloßgarten nennt, bilden seinen ganzen Schmuck. Sonst Strohdächer, teilweise noch mit Rasen bedeckt, aus denen wilde Pflanzen aufwuchern, einzelne Bäume, zerbrochene Holzhecken, tiefe Lehmgruben mitten zwischen den Häusern, ein heiliger Johann von Nepomuk in der Mitte, einige rotangestrichene Fensterläden an den wohlhabendsten Häusern – in der Ferne das dumpfe Klopfen der Eisenhämmer und der ewig aufsteigende Rauch der Silberschmelzhütte – das ist das ganze Dorf, das ist Duschnik [...].¹

Although the story is set in the year 1744, the village of Duschnik (Daleké Dušniky) would have changed little by the time Hartmann spent his childhood there and was still typical of many Bohemian villages in the Metternich Era in being dominated economically and socially by the landed gentry in their manors as well as insofar as industrialisation, though widespread, was still in its early stages, small-scale and rural. Also the fact that the village square had as its central feature a statue of Johannes Nepomuk with his halo of five stars, as so many villages and towns in Bohemia did, was a reminder of the triumphs of the Counter-Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church of the Baroque Period, in its extraordinary propensity for propagandist ideography, had orchestrated the cult of “Jan von Nepomuk” purely in order to replace and extinguish the Czech folk memory of that other Jan, namely Hus, a historical and national paradigm which Moritz Hartmann would later strive to reinstate.

The Hartmann family occupied one of the prosperous houses mentioned in the above description, as Hartmann's father, an owner of one of those steam hammers that featured dominantly in the local landscape, had made a good living from trading and silver mining. The parents were orthodox Jews, being descended from a long line of eminent Rabbis

¹ Moritz Hartmann, *Der Krieg um den Wald – eine Historie in zwölf Kapiteln*, in Hartmann, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Ludwig Bamberger & Wilhelm Vollmer, Stuttgart 1873, vol. IV, p. 4.

and Talmudic scholars, but Moritz, typical of those generations which reaped the fruits of Joseph II's Tolerance Patent of 1781 and his educational reforms, was to become assimilated as fast as he could, the 13-year-old histrionically casting his phylacteries into the bushes soon after his Bar Mitzwah. For his secondary education his parents placed him in the Latin School of Piarist Brothers in Jungbunzlau (Mladá Boleslav) so that he would be housed and kept in tow by his pious grandfather Rabbi Isaak Spitz. That he went to a Roman Catholic school was unavoidable, as second- and third-level education had become almost entirely dominated by that Church since Joseph II's death. This is not surprising when one considers that under Metternich the only semblance of provincial Bohemian government took the form of a Diet made up of four Estates, prelates, lords, knights and the cities, the highest being that of the prelates, consisting of the Archbishop of Prague, all the bishops, most of the abbots and many other prominent clerics, but no representatives of any other religion. The prelates, lords and knights of Bohemia had between them 200 votes, while the combined cities of Bohemia and Moravia, which might have constituted the only anticlerical voice, had one single vote.²

In school Hartmann suffered from the philistine and anti-humanistic tuition of a system intent on shielding young impressionable minds from stimulating images and ideas:

Sechs Jahre lernten wir wörtlich lateinische Regeln auswendig,
ohne je einen ordentlichen lateinischen Autor lesen zu dürfen;
vier Jahre lernten wir Griechisch, um am Ende nicht zwei Verse
Homers übersetzen zu dürfen [...].³

At the end of his schooling he could speak better Latin and Greek than Czech. (All secondary-school instruction throughout Bohemia was through the medium of German.) In the subject of geography the modern Kingdom of Greece was left unmentioned because the pupils were not to find out that a rebellion can be successful – *any* rebellion, even if it was against a Turkish regime. Hartmann and his Jewish classmate Leopold Kompert, in later years the author of the well-known ghetto idylls, also began to feel the brunt of the ubiquitous if undercurrent anti-Semitism prevalent in Bohemia. An ex-Jesuit Latin teacher liked to make

² Cf. Stanley Z. Pech, *The Czech Revolution of 1848*, Chapel Hill 1969, p. 9.

³ Cit. Otto Wittner, *Moritz Hartmanns Leben und Werke. Ein Beitrag zur politischen und literarischen Geschichte Deutschlands im XIX. Jahrhundert*. Vol. I: *Der Vormärz und die Revolution*, Prague 1906, p. 11.

an example of the Jewish pupils by saying: “Die Juden sollen schachern und nicht Lateinisch lernen”. As in most schools, Jewish pupils, even if they were the best in the class, were excluded from awards, so-called “Prämien”. The same teacher used to tell Hartmann and Kompert gleefully: “Wenn ihr keine Juden wäret, so wäret ihr hier die Ersten.”⁴

From his visits to his grandfather and listening to the Rabbi’s reminiscences, Hartmann learnt of the “Golden Age” of Josephinism, in which not only the Jews were given permission for the first time to build synagogues where they needed them, to move freely, buy property and practise any profession of their choice, but also when serfdom was abolished and the peasants were accorded free mobility. These accounts of a better past began to sharpen the young Hartmann’s awareness of the glaring anachronisms of the present, in which the so-called “robot”, i.e. the (mostly Czech) peasants’ obligation to perform unpaid labour services for the (mostly German) landlords, as well as the patrimonial system of justice, i.e. the right of the landlord to personally sit in judgement over his peasants and to punish them as he thought fit, whether by a box on the ears or a public flogging, had been gradually restored under the arch-conservative regime of King Franz I and his all-powerful and equally illiberal minister Prince Metternich. Even the humiliating practice of the peasant’s having to kneel before the landlord’s agent, address him as “gracious lord” and kiss his hand, a custom forbidden by Joseph II in 1789, had been everywhere reinstated.⁵

To study medicine at Prague University, as was Hartmann’s plan, he first had to study philosophy for two years. Here again, the curriculum was designed, to use Hartmann’s own words,

dem jungen Menschen allen Geschmack an Spekulation und Wissen zu verderben. Die Philosophie dieser philosophischen Jahrgänge waren eine Schulphilosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts, wie sie in feststehenden Formeln die Jesuiten vorgetragen hatten, und für die Kant, Fichte und Hegel nicht existiert hatten.⁶

Bernhard Bolzano, the “gentle philosopher”, a priest who in his thinking and lecturing had moved dangerously in the direction of non-dogmatic

⁴ Ibid., p. 12. Cf. Hillel J. Kieval, ‘The social vision of Bohemian Jews: intellectuals and community in the 1840s’, in *Assimilation and Community: the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Jonathan Frankel & Steven J. Zipperstein, Cambridge/New York/Port Chester/Melbourne/Sydney 1992, pp. 251-252.

⁵ Cf. Pech, p. 16.

⁶ Cit. Wittner, p. 20.

theology, social rather than catechismal ethics and a rationalist belief in freedom of the individual and of cultural group identity, as for instance the right of Czech self-consciousness to express itself, had been removed from the Chair of Religious Philosophy by the centralist State in 1819. Hartmann came to Prague University too late to experience an inspiring lecturer. Professors had to submit their lists of prescribed textbooks and their own lecture texts to censorship boards and, if these were sanctioned, they were not allowed to depart from those texts in the course of the lecture. Lectures had to be held in the German language, including those on the history of Czech literature, and students had to note down every word of the official Austrian state history that they received in a stodgy and unchanging format. Not only had student fraternities been strictly forbidden since the Carlsbad Decrees but also the singing of student songs, the wearing of sashes or caps or the forming of clubs for any purpose whatsoever. What is called “student life” was to take place only in the lecture-halls under the hawk-like eye of the university authorities and controlled by frequent roll-calls. The function of the university was to produce utterly obedient and monarchist German-speaking state servants.

No wonder that the young Hartmann sought intellectual stimulation more and more in the cafés of Prague, and in particular in a small, dark, smoke-filled pub in the Zeltnergasse (Čeletná) called “der Rote Turm”, as any exchange of ideas and discussion of literature had to be both verbal and clandestine due to the existence in the German Federation of Europe’s strictest censorship system masterminded by the notorious Count Sedlnitzky,⁷ whose index of forbidden books read like a guide to the best of world literature and contained many works by Lessing, Goethe and Schiller, not to speak of the recently banned “Young Germans”. There was a separate index for works in the Slavic languages as well as a total ban on all foreign newspapers with the exception of the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*. Contraband copies of the works of such authors as Heinrich Laube were treated as very precious and circulated among friends. In the “Roter Turm” Hartmann became acquainted with such young radical writers as the then “red republican” Alfred Meissner, the Hungarian Friedrich Hirschl, who would later rename himself Szarvady as a manifestation of Magyar patriotism, and Isidor Heller, who was to abandon his studies and head for Spain to fight for the cause of a liberal constitution. Hartmann also came into contact with young Czech

⁷ Cf. Pech, pp. 9ff.

nationalists like the journalist Karel Havlíček, a former classmate of his, who studied closely Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Agitation and was to co-found a Czech secret society called "Repeal" and to spearhead the cause of Czech autonomy in 1848.

The Czech Awakening, as it came to be known, had begun in the academic spheres of philology and linguistics, as in Josef Dobrovský's seminal *Geschichte der böhmischen Sprache und Literatur* of 1791, characteristically written in German, or Josef Jungmann's Czech-German dictionary (*Slownik česko-německý*) of 1835-39, and in historiography, as in František Palacký's *Geschichte Böhmens*, the first volume of which, though appearing in German in 1836, caused a sensation in both German and Czech intellectual circles, because it uncovered for the first time the former might and expanse of the "Kingdom of St. Wenceslas" and the glorious and far-reaching Hussite Movement, centred as it was in Prague, along with other historical facts that had been carefully and systematically buried by centuries of the Germanicisation of society and a Jesuitical rewriting of history. Added to this was Václav Hanka's announcement of his discovery in 1817 of Czech scrolls referred to as the Königinhof (Dvůr Králové) and Grünberg (Zelená hora) Manuscripts and allegedly dating from the 9th/10th centuries. In the 1880s there were established by Czech philologists to have been a forgery, but despite that fact had as fructifying an effect in Slavic-speaking regions as James Macpherson's *Ossian* had once had all over the Europe of Early Romanticism. The manuscripts persuaded their readers that Czech, after all, was an ancient literary language and not just the patois of peasants, workers and servants. "Ob nun die Königinhofer Handschrift apokryph sei oder nicht," wrote Hartmann in his *Revolutionäre Erinnerungen*,

die slawische Bewegung war es auf keinen Fall. Mit der Veröffentlichung dieser Handschrift, welche beweisen sollte, daß die Tschechen eine Sprache, eine Nationalität und endlich eine Literatur hatten, beginnt in Böhmen ein neues Leben, das anfangs nur wie ein dünnes Rinnsal still und bescheiden, bald aber, wenn auch nicht breiter, doch viel lärmender dahinzog.⁸

Although Palacký was later to oppose Hartmann's Frankfurt politics passionately, the latter goes on in his reminiscences to praise that "excellent historian",

⁸ Moritz Hartmann, *Revolutionäre Erinnerungen*, ed. H.H. Houben, Leipzig 1919, p. 7.

der mit seinem heldenmütigen Fleiße, seiner großen Gelehrsamkeit, seinem weitreichenden Blick und Kombinationsgeiste, bei der bisherigen Vernachlässigung, Verfälschung und Verwirrung der vaterländischen Geschichte, allerdings wie von der historischen Vorsehung geschickt war, um seine Landsleute mit dem Stolze und, was mehr ist, mit dem Bewußtsein einer historischen Existenz zu durchdringen.⁹

Hartmann and his Prague friends, whether German-Gentile or German-Jewish, rallied enthusiastically to the cause of what at first was a reawakening of suppressed Bohemic cultural nationalism and a move towards a cross-fertilisation of the two main lingual cultures (Czech/German) and the three main ethnicities (Czech/German/Jewish) of the country. They soon saw themselves as a “Jungböhmisches Bewegung” to correspond to Young Germany. The Prague writer Rudolf Glaser founded a literary journal called *Ost und West* for the express purpose of bringing together German and Slavic literary impulses under the Goethean motto: “Orient und Occident sind nicht mehr zu trennen”. With Bohemia as the bridge, *Ost und West* published German translations from all the Slavic languages including Pushkin and Gogol, contributions by German writers sympathetic to the cause of emerging nations like Heinrich Laube, Ferdinand Freiligrath, Ernst Willkomm, but above all the Prague circle of Young Bohemians like Alfred Meissner, Isidor Heller, Uffo Horn, Gustav Karpeles and Ignatz Kuranda. Also Hartmann made his literary debut in the journal with a love poem entitled “Der Drahtbinder”, and featuring a subtitle which was in keeping with the spirit of the times: “nach einem slavischen Lied”.

Hartmann moved to Vienna in 1840 to escape the stifling regime of Prague University, expecting a more cosmopolitan atmosphere in the Imperial capital, but was surprised to find an even more oppressive one there than in Prague due to the proximity and concentrated impact of Sedlnitzky's *Polizei- und Zensur-Hofstelle*. As Otto Wittner, Hartmann's biographer, put it:

[Der rücksichtslos waltenden Zensur] war alles unterworfen, was zum Druck oder zu öffentlicher Bekanntgabe bestimmt war, vom dickeleibigen Wälzer bis zur Firmentafel und dem Pfeifenkopf. Sie begleitete den Österreicher von der Saugflasche bis zum Grabstein.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wittner, p. 43f.

Newspapers and journals were not allowed to make any reference whatsoever to government policy, fiscal or administrative matters, the Church, the clergy or the army. It was forbidden to quote from foreign newspapers, whether the quotations had to do with Austria or not. Decisions on what to censor in literary productions were arbitrary, depending on the individual official's private whims. The official was not obliged to give the writer reasons for the decision to ban his or her book or article. It was strictly forbidden to circumvent the Austrian censorship by publishing abroad. The effect, as Hartmann saw it, was that of a proliferation of society gossip in the newspapers and a marked trivialization of literature and drama. Adolf Wiesner wrote of the situation:

Will man in Wien einen halblauten Tadel über irgend eine, die Gemüter lebhaft in Anspruch nehmende Tatsache, über Mißbräuche usw. durch die Scheere der Zensur bringen, so muß man eine Harlekinsjacke umwerfen; im Ernst bringt man den Ernst nie durch, in Spässen zuweilen.¹¹

On hearing that a literary society with a distinguished membership from the professions and civil service and called the "Juridisch-politische Lesegesellschaft" had been founded to campaign for a relaxation of the censorship laws, Sedlnitzky's retort was: "Dort lesen sich die Leute zu Verbrechern!"¹² When the playwright Eduard von Bauernfeld and other members of the same group drafted a petition of innocuous content and docile formulation, signed among others by Hartmann, and hoped to be able to present it in May 1844 to Metternich himself, the latter refused to receive them and gave an audience instead to just one member, Professor Endlicher, dressing him down with the indignant words:

Seit 28 Jahren beschäftige ich mich mit dem Fortschritte, und sehen Sie, hier liegen die Karlsbader Beschlüsse zu einer Revision vorbereitet. Da kommen Sie mir nun mit Ihrer unglücklichen Petition dazwischen und verderben mir alles; – abzwängen läßt sich die Regierung nichts!¹³

After this rebuttal an exodus of young Austrian writers to Leipzig followed, among them Hartmann, because the Saxon censorship laws were somewhat more relaxed. He immediately found a publisher for his collection of poetry *Kelch und Schwert*, having to add an extra page

¹¹ Adolf Wiesner, *Denkwürdigkeiten der österreichischen Zensur*, cit. Wittner, p. 44.

¹² Cit. Wittner, p. 82.

¹³ Cit. *ibid.*, p. 84.

bearing the emblems of the title so that the book would exceed 20 folios in size and therefore be free of pre-censorship. (The strange logic of this rule is probably to be explained as follows: the authorities considered thicker and therefore more expensive books to be beyond the purchasing powers of the most feared section of society, that of the peasant-cum-proletarian.)

Kelch und Schwert was firmly within the ambit of Hartmann's Bohemian patriotism and made thorough use of the codes of that newly launched discourse. The title itself was drawn from the symbology of Hussitism, the chalice representing the demands of the so-called Utraquists (derived from *sub utraque specie*) to have the Communion administered in both forms of wine and bread, while the sword conveys the holy wrath of religio-political conviction and the readiness to die for one's beliefs. Particularly the section entitled *Böhmische Elegien* evinces all the elements of the awakening Bohemian pathos: the concept of resurrection inviting comparison of the downtrodden Bohemians with the crucified Christ ("Du Märtyrer der Völker du, / Wann wirst du auferstehn wieder?"¹⁴), the loss of a national language ("Verkannt ist deine Sprache"¹⁵), religious persecution and forcible re-catholicisation ("du kniest demüthig jetzt / An den entweihten Altaren, / Dahin mit Hunden man gehetzt / Der Väter geißelwunde Schaaren. // O Volk, dem man den Gott geraubt / [...]").¹⁶ Jan Hus himself, who is alleged to have sung a hymn while being burnt at the stake at Constance, and the Hussite generals Thurn and Jan Žižka are invoked, the last named catching the imagination of both Hartmann and Alfred Meissner, who published an epic poem about him in 1846, as a figure of unparalleled heroism in being a general who remained undefeated in the battles of the Habsburg/Czech conflict of the Thirty Years' War despite the fact that he was blind. Of the Czech language Hartmann writes:

Sie dröhnet wie der eherne Fuß
Anstürmender Hussiten,
Und tönet wie das Lied von Huß
Aus seiner Flammen Mitten.

Sie grollet wie die Trommel, stumpf,
Bedeckt von Ziska's Felle,

¹⁴ "Böhmische Elegien I", in Hartmann, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. I, p. 56.

¹⁵ "Böhmische Elegien II", *ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁶ "Böhmische Elegien III", *ibid.*, p. 59.

Und rollet hin wie Thurns Triumph
An seines Kaisers Schwelle.¹⁷

In an admonition to the Czechs that they should show more resolution, Hartmann compares the Czech people not with Hus himself but rather – because in the past they had succumbed to Roman Catholicism – with Jeronimo of Prague, who, at the Council of Constance, first renounced his support for Hus but later re-affirmed his adherence to Hussite principles, causing him, too, to be burnt at the stake in 1416:

Dein Volk ist nicht wie jener Huß,
Der sich den Holzstoß hat erkoren;
Es gleichet dem Hieronymus,
Der seinen Glauben abgeschworen.

O Volk, so hast du durch Verrat
Ein schmachbedecktes Sein gefristet;
Man stahl dir deine schöne That,
Man hat dich pfäffisch überlistet.¹⁸

To make his nation aware of its historic mission, Hartmann reminds the Bohemians of the historical ramifications of Hussitism throughout Europe, inspiring the Huguenots, the Albigensians and the Lutherans to revolt against the corruption of the Roman Church:

O Böhmens Volk! – das heil'ge Korn,
Daß du in alle Welt gegossen,
dir bracht' es rosenlosen Dorn,
Du hast die Früchte nicht genossen.

Aufblüht' es im Cevennenland
Und in the Thalen der Provence,
Der Albigenserstreiter wand
Daraus sich ew'ge Märtyrerkränze.

Aufschob es spät im deutschen Land,
Und seine Frucht ward heimgetragen
Von jenes Mönches kühner Hand,
Dem, wie dem Huß, das Herz geschlagen.¹⁹

Hartmann also instrumentalizes the myth of the White Mountain to the utmost in “Böhmische Elegien VIII”. The White Mountain is a plateau

¹⁷ “Böhmische Elegien II”, *ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁸ “Böhmische Elegien III”, *ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

of slate northwest of Prague, so-called because of the white stone quarried from it to build the prestigious buildings of the city. It was the scene of the battle between Frederick V the Elector Palatine and Ferdinand II of Austria in 1820 in which the Czech forces were defeated. Historically, the battle was a mere one-and-a-half-hour-long skirmish fought out largely by mercenaries on both sides, with the Bohemian army being badly prepared and badly led by the Czech aristocratic generals. If anything, the occasion was rendered traumatic by the ritualistic and “exemplary” public executions of the 27 Czech leaders that took place afterwards in Old Town Square of Prague as well as by the ensuing and long-drawn-out process of brutal re-catholicisation of the populace. But despite the actual battle’s insignificance in terms of military history, Palacký gave it a mythopoeic dimension in his *Geschichte Böhmens*, making it the central pivot of Czech national history, and Hartmann follows suit in lending the occasion even more mythic reverberations in the balladic rhythm and use of metaphors of the tree of life, the raven of sorcery, evil and death and the eagle as the newly rising power, a metaphor with similar connotations to that of an avenging angel or a phoenix rising from the ashes. The poem starts and ends with the image of the White Mountain, its whiteness, stained as it is by the sacrificial blood of the Czech martyrs, suggesting virginal innocence raped and murdered by the brutish intruder. It is arguably the best constructed and most rousing poem in the cycle *Böhmische Elegien*, expertly playing the registers most likely to call forth the awakening Czech sense of outrage:

Am weißen Berge steht ein Baum,
 Uralt, verdorrt und astlos,
 Sein Haupt, gleich einem wüsten Traum,
 Umschwirrt ein Rabe rastlos.

Der Rab ist alt zweihundert Jahr
 Und einer von den Raben,
 die mit Gekrächz die heil’ge Schaar
 Hier halfen einst begraben.

Des Baumes Wurzel sind getaucht
 In Herzen, die noch bluten,
 Er steht im Boden, wo verraucht
 Der Freiheit letzte Gluthen.

Ich hab’ zu meinem Troste mir
 Ersonnen manche Sagen,

Die vor mir her, wie ein Panier,
Den Traum der Zukunft tragen.

So sieht mein Aug den dürrn Baum
Von Blüthen überflossen
Und ringsum auf den öden Raum
den Frühling ausgegossen.

Der Rabe sinket todesmatt
Beim Gruß des Frühlingsboten,
Und tief in ihrer Lagerstatt
Still regen sich die Todten.

Und statt des Raben kreist ein Aar
Um jenes Baumes Gipfel –
Und betend kniet die Freiheitsschaar
Am Weißenberger Gipfel.²⁰

If there is a specifically Jewish element in the collection, it lies in the comparison of Prague with Jerusalem: “Du hast dich selber einst genannt / Zur Zeit der rächenden Hussiten: / Das heilige, gelobte Land – / Du hast wie jenes viel gelitten.”²¹ And: “Nur Eine Stadt hat noch der Ost, / Mit der du schmerzvoll dich verglichen: // Ein slavisches Jerusalem, Das bist du [...]”.²² It is a comparison that most Czech nationalists will have felt uncomfortable about, for reasons to be explained later. Three other aspects would also have at least been seen as controversial, the first being Hartmann’s sympathy for Poland. This was not shared by all Czech Slavs because of Poland’s support of Magyar independence despite Hungary’s harsh treatment of the Slovaks in its territory. The second was Hartmann’s heroicisation of Joseph II. Hartmann even chides Bohemia for its thanklessness towards the enlightened monarch:

Es kam ein Arzt, der wollte heilen,
Mein Vaterland, dein altes Leid;
An deinem Bette wollt’ er weilen
In lindernder Barmherzigkeit.
[...]
Du hast mit Starrsinn und Empörung
Dem Guten seine Müh gelohnt –
Du scheutest tückische Bethörung,
Weil im Palaste er gethront.

²⁰ “Böhmische Elegien VIII, *ibid.*, p. 63.

²¹ “Böhmische Elegien I”, p. 56.

²² “Böhmische Elegien IX”, p. 64.

Wohl selten kommen sie vom Throne,
 die segnend durch die Völker gehn;
 Doch hast du nur die goldne Krone
 Und die von Dornen nicht gesehn.
 [...]

 So ging mit seinem heißen Lieben
 Mein Kaiser Joseph aus der Welt,
 Und du bist blaß und krank geblieben,
 Und deine Nacht blieb unerhellt.²³

Although it had been Joseph II's educational reforms that in the course of time made it possible for a Czech bourgeoisie and intelligentsia to be formed in the first place, the Czech nationalists, the products of his reforms, abhorred his centralisation and Germanisation policies. Even though both Maria Theresa and he had promoted the cultivation of the Slavic languages, both were adamant that the unified official language of Cisleithania should be German. Even the orthodox Jewish communities were critical of Joseph's Tolerance Patent, because they foresaw that, as in the case of Hartmann himself, Jewish participation in the Gentile educational system would inevitably lead to acculturation. It has to be remembered, too, that in his benevolent despotism Joseph II tried to ban the use of Hebrew outside of religious services and to abolish Yiddish altogether. And yet his regime, as Rabbi Spitz will certainly have told the young Moritz, was infinitely more progressive than that of his mother, who, at one stage, attempted to banish Jews entirely from the Czech Lands. It was only at the behest of the Christian communities, who feared that trade would decline if the Jews were banished, that she relented.

A third controversial aspect of Hartmann's cycle of poems is his attempt to eschew Pan-Slavism and to present the West, i.e. Germany, as the panacea for Bohemia's ills. He was quite right in seeing Russia under the Czarist rule of the Romanovs as the most reactionary and one of the more powerful forces in Europe with distinctly expansionist aspirations, a power that had no qualms whatsoever in oppressing other Slavic nations like Poland or the Ukraine if it served its geopolitical purposes to do so. Thus Czar Nicholas I is described as "ein Autokrat / In seinem wüsten Kaisertraume".²⁴ Hartmann was also right in considering the Metternich system too reactionary to provide a space in which the Bo-

²³ "Böhmische Elegien X", p. 65.

²⁴ "Böhmische Elegien IXII", p. 67.

hemian nation could flourish. On the other hand, he underestimated Prussia's hegemonic, militaristic and reactionary nature, and was certainly foolish to expect the Czechs, who felt enough of the arrogance and cultural elitism of the Bohemian Germans in their everyday dealings with them ever to wish to throw in their lot with that massive German bloc further west and north.²⁵ Hartmann was being not a little ethnocentric himself in his expectation that a German-Czech Bohemia should transport the culture and civilization of the West to the East at a time when the Czechs were bent on salvaging their own half-smothered indigenous culture.

In the heady and elated atmosphere of Leipzig – Alfred Meissner called it a “Wetterleuchten”, “eine Hast, eine Ungeduld!”²⁶ – Hartmann also probably felt that the proclamation of the German Republic and the dawning of a new age was just about to happen. The whole tone of *Kelch und Schwert* is redolent of such an expectation. But he himself was to become one of the best chroniclers of the speedy demise of German parliamentarism at the hands of those same Prussians. In other words, it is understandable that his well-intentioned but somewhat naive lines below not only fell on deaf ears among the Czechs but caused outright indignation:

O Böhmen, fremdes grünes Blatt
 Von einem fremden Wunderbaume,
 Nach dem sich seht ein Autokrat
 In seinem wüsten Kaisertraume,

 Gen Westen kehre dein Gesicht,
 Die Freiheitssonne kommt aus Westen,
 Siehst du das junge Morgenlicht
 Wie Rosen über Kron' und Aesten?

 Im Osten ist es Nacht und kalt –
 Auf einem Thron von Bruderleichen
 Sitzt dort die blutige Gestalt
 Mit ihrem neuen Kainszeichen.

 An Deutschlands Halse wein' dich aus,
 An seinem schmerzverwandten Herzen,
 Geöffnet steht sein weites Haus
 Für alle großen, heil'gen Schmerzen.

²⁵ Cf. Hartmann, *Revolutionäre Erinnerungen*, p. 16.

²⁶ Cit. Wittner, p. 107.

Vergiß, vergiß den alten Groll –
 Mein deutsches Herz kann dir verkünden:
 Auch Deutschland fühlt, das Maß ist voll,
 Und büßet seine alten Sünden.²⁷

The Viennese censorship official dealing with the volume of poetry found it “in hohem Grade anstößig und zensurwidrig”. Of the *Böhmische Elegien* in particular he reports:

In der ersten [Elegie] spricht sich die **Trostlosigkeit über Böhmens Bedrückung seit Josephs II. Tode** [...] und die Hinweisung auf hussitische Repressalien [...] aus. In den letzten berührt der Verfasser **alle empfindlichen Stellen seines Vaterlandes**, und es **aufschreien** zu machen über seine **Gesunkenheit** [...], über seine **Verbannung** [...], über seine **Glaubensbeschränkung** [...], über sein Absterben [...], über seine **Not** bei **Wiens** Luxus [...], über seine **eingebüßte Königskrone** [...], über seine **Gottverlassenheit** [...] und fordert es auf, abgewendet von dem **Czar mit dem Kainszeichen** im Osten [...], seine Hoffnung auf Deutschlands **Westen**, auf **Deutschlands verwandte Sympathien** zu bauen, wo ihm der **Dichter** ein **Herold** sein wollte [...].

The official concludes his extensive analysis of the volume with the following recommendation:

Bei so bewandten Umständen läßt sich, den bestehenden Zensurvorschriften gemäß nichts anderes tun, als das Buch, seines aufreizenden Inhaltes wegen, **dem öffentlichen Verkehr möglichst entziehen** und **die Person des Verfassers** aber, in Anbetracht seiner Jugend [Hartmann was 23 at the time], seines seltenen Talents und der Wahrscheinlichkeit einer Palinodie bei halbwegs gereifterer Erfahrung und ruhigerem Blute **nachsichtsvoller Schonung** anzuempfehlen.

Damnatur.

J.G. Seidl.

Wien am 17.1.1845.²⁸

This meant not only that the book’s circulation within the German Federation was proscribed but also that literary journals were forbidden to print reviews of the book. Yet the book went into a second print run in Germany. In Prague, several booksellers who were found to be secretly

²⁷ “Böhmische Elegien XII”, op. cit., p. 67.

²⁸ Cit. Wittner, p. 120.

distributing the book underwent confiscations and interrogations. Single poems were translated into Czech and passed around in manuscript form. How Hartmann's poems were received among the Czech nationalists was of particular importance to him. On enquiring from Alfred Meissner in Prague about this, Meissner replied:

Dein Kelch und Schwert macht hier soviel Aufsehen, als ein Buch überhaupt machen kann, und die Wirkung davon wird eine **nachhaltige** sein ... Dein Erfolg bei den echten Czechen ist indessen kleiner, als ich es erwartet hätte. Sie sind sämtlich russisch gesinnt und werden dir den Vers: ‚an Deutschlands Halse wein’ dich aus’ nie verzeihen können. ‚Er hat noch nicht den rechten Standpunkt’, sagt mir ein böhmischer Literat, ‚aber es ist schon viel, daß er so weit ist. Mit seiner Verklärung des Huß ist er ganz auf dem rechten Weg. Auch wir wollen nach und nach dem Volke seine Scheu vor Huß und den Beranys ausreden, wollen das Volk dem Katholizismus, dem römischen, entfremden.’ ‚Um es dann desto leichter griechisch zu machen’, sagte ich [a reference to the Orthodox Church and therefore to Pan-Slavism]. Er lächelte. Ja, der alte Huß muß auch herhalten, dem Zar zu dienen. ... Ach ich weiß nicht, ob sich etwas aus den Böhmen machen läßt. Sie sind jetzt allesamt Orbiten, Verwaiste, Menschen ohne Haupt und Leitung.²⁹

In fact, the Czech nationalists were brilliantly organized, as Hartmann was later to recall, but were rapidly moving away from the common ground which the German and Czech intellectuals had initially shared – that of an all-embracing, bilingual Bohemic patriotism – to an increasingly exclusivist ethno-Slavic nationalism. This was to be made brutally clear to the German and particularly the German-Jewish sympathisers in 1848. But even before that there had been a demonstration of Czech anti-Semitism in the course of a cotton-printers’ riot in Prague in the summer of 1844. It was a spontaneous and essentially Luddite uprising against the increasing introduction of machines. As many of the largest textile manufacturers – such as the Epstein and Porges families – were known to be Jewish, the mob, as so often in history, took the easy option and turned upon the defenceless inhabitants of the Judenstadt. General Windischgrätz’s grenadiers crushed the rebellion with their customary coldbloodedness, upon which Windischgrätz unfortunately gained the reputation of being a saviour among some ghetto Jews. Hart-

²⁹ Cit. Wittner, p. 121f.

mann wrote to Meissner in reaction to the pogrom: “Wir werden in Zukunft in Böhmen als Deutsche dazustehen haben. Da wird in Zukunft unser Platz sein.”³⁰

A further ominous note was to be heard on a journalistic level in a critique of Siegfried Kapper’s *České listy* (Böhmische Blätter) written in 1846 by Karel Havlíček. Kapper, like Hartmann, was a Bohemian Jew who passionately supported the cause of Bohemian independence, but felt that consistency demanded that one should embrace the culture totally and therefore write in the Czech language. To this end he established the *České listy* in order to convert Bohemian Jews to Czechdom. Havlíček showed nothing but contempt for Kapper’s efforts, commenting in his own journal *Česká včela* (Tschechische Biene):

Und wie können die Israeliten zum tschechischen Volk gehören, wenn sie semitischen Ursprungs sind? Eher können wir Deutsche, Franzosen, Spanier, Engländer usw. zu unserem Volke rechnen, als die Juden, denn alle diese Völker sind uns verwandter als die Juden.³¹

This piece of racism did its work in causing a gap of a whole generation before Bohemian Jews would once again write in Czech.³²

At the same time as this review appeared, Hartmann made himself very much a *persona non grata* with the Viennese authorities by bringing out a second volume of poetry, *Neuere Gedichte* in 1846, of an even more trenchantly pro-Hussite tone than the first. He was warned by friends that a sentence of imprisonment of one to five years could be awaiting him if he attempted to return to Bohemia, and that the Saxon government might yield to Austrian pressures to extradite him, and so he left for Brussels in 1845 and Paris in 1846. He returned to Duschnik and Prague in 1847 after he heard that the case against him had been dropped, but he and his family were harassed by the police and he was shadowed by government agents the whole time while there. A new case was opened against him for having taken part in a Schiller festival in

³⁰ Moritz Hartmann, *Briefe aus dem Vormärz*, ed. Otto Wittner, Prague 1911, p. 255.

³¹ Cit. Wilma Iggers (ed.), *Die Juden in Böhmen und Mähren. Ein historisches Lesebuch*, Munich 1986, p. 129.

³² Hillel Kieval gives a more differentiated account of Havlíček’s general attitude to Bohemian Jews, but also concludes that “Havlíček’s reply to Siegfried Kapper did close the door on the brief experiment in Czech-Jewish literary and cultural co-operation.” Cf. Kieval, p. 270.

Leipzig at which allegedly incendiary dinner speeches had been made, but the March Revolution broke out before he could be brought to court.

After the fall of the French monarchy, Havlíček's Repeal organization met on March 11 in St. Václav's Baths to vote on a citizens' committee and to draft a petition for reforms to the Viennese government. The attendance was largely Czech. It was decided to elect a central committee to formulate the draft. In subsequent meetings, Hartmann, Meissner and some more Germans were elected to the committee. When the committee became afraid of its own courage and wanted to insert a clause limiting freedom of the press, Hartmann and Havlíček, both writers, spoke out passionately against this voluntary self-censorship. It was the last time they were to speak in one voice. Hartmann and his German friends wanted Bohemia to take part in the preparations for a Frankfurt Parliament, but Palacký and Havlíček, the leaders of the Czech party, were vehemently against it, fearing that Czech interests would be disregarded in a pan-German parliament. Besides, to the politically conservative Palacký the idea of republicanism was anathema. He formulated instead a programme of Austro-Slavism that foresaw a combined Slavic majority in an Imperial Austrian parliament, and Havlíček supported him. The two groups became increasingly polarized, the Czechs objecting to the Germans wearing the black-red-golden cockade in the streets of Prague, the Germans, particularly the Sudeten Germans in Vienna, demanding that German should remain the official language of Bohemia and the language of instruction at Prague University. Havlíček instructed his followers to tear down signs in German, while Hartmann pleaded that the old regime would use this split in ethno-cultural standpoints to practice its perfidious policy of divide and rule, that the cause was not that of nationality but rather of freedom. An anonymous appeal from within the Jewish community to the quarrelling parties made the same point in pamphlet form about the dangers of ethno-linguistic nationalism:

Wir brauchen von moderner Sprachenverwirrung nichts zu wissen. Bei uns gilt der Spruch: „Ein jeder rede, wie ihm der Schnabel gewachsen ist.“³³

The pamphlet goes on to say that the whole question is an over-intellectualized urban concern, and that if one were to talk about nationality in a Bohemian village, whether Czech or German, one would be asked:

³³ Iggers, p. 138.

„Was ist das für ein Tier?“ Ja, es ist auch ein Tier, und zwar eines der gefährlichsten – ein reißendes.

Wo dies einreißt, da ist's um alles geschehen: Eintracht, Hausfriede, ja sogar das Lebensglück mancher Familie ist zerstört.

Darum, liebe Landsleute, liebe tschechische Brüder, schenket dem Nationalitätenschwindel, wenn man euch denselben vielleicht erklären wollte, kein Gehör; weiset ihnen die Tür und saget ihnen: „Dieser Würgengel unseres gemütlichen Stillebens paßt und ziemt wohl für euch in der großen Stadt, wo ihr aus Langleweiligkeit nichts Besseres erfinden konntet; bei uns heißt: „Vereint arbeiten!“³⁴

On reading these lines, warning as they do against the definition of nation on the basis of ethno-linguistic lines in a multicultural area, one cannot help thinking of the recent situation in the Balkan countries, or of Grillparzer's dictum of 1849: „Der Weg der neueren Bildung geht von Humanität durch Nationalität zur Bestialität.“³⁵

The Prague pogrom of 1844 repeated itself in the course of 1848. Hartmann ascribed it to the descent into ethnic nationalism:

Aber ich will weiter erzählen, welche Entwicklung die Prager Bewegung durchgemacht hat und was die Revolution, die überall so viel Erhebendes, Großes, Edles ans Licht gebracht, was diese selbe Revolution in Prag erbärmlich, gemein, widerwärtig machte.

Der Heldensinn des Prager Pöbels, sein Freiheitsdrang wandte sich erst gegen einige Bäckerläden und, infolge dieses Triumphes ermutigt, gegen die Juden.³⁶

When Hartmann observed the reluctance of the new National Guard to intervene, he himself led a small band of armed students – incidentally, both German and Czech³⁷ – to protect the inhabitants of the Judenstadt.

The Czechs opposed elections for the Frankfurt Parliament and tried to sabotage them even in the regions of West Bohemia where Germans predominated. Hartmann went to Frankfurt as the “Deutschböhmisches” representative of the city of Leitmeritz (Litoměřice). Palacký, on the other hand, on being invited to take part in the 50-member Pre-Parliament, flatly rejected the offer in a famous letter to the Frankfurt Assem-

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cit. Jörg K. Hoensch, *Geschichte Böhmens. Von der slavischen Landnahme bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 1987, p. 323.

³⁶ Hartmann, *Revolutionäre Erinnerungen*, p. 25.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 26.

bly in which he pronounced: "Wahrlich, existierte der österreichische Kaiserstaat nicht schon längst, man müßte im Interesse Europas, im Interesse der Humanität sich beeilen, ihn zu schaffen."³⁸ Therewith, every aspiration on the part of Hartmann to create a multi-ethnic democratic Bohemian state within a German Federal Republic was laid to rest. But also Palacký's and Havlíček's politically more conformist concept of a semi-autonomous Slavo-Czech region within the "k. und k." Monarchy was nipped in the bud when in 1852 Franz Joseph 1 revoked the March Constitution of 1849 and established a neo-absolutist police state under the watchful eye of his Minister of the Interior Alexander Bach. When Havlíček campaigned against Bach's draconian censorship measures, he was imprisoned in Brixen, Tyrol, for four years, while Hartmann was exiled for his part in the October Revolution of 1848 until his amnesty in 1867. The latter, though remaining a democrat, was never to take up the Czech cause again, returning not to Prague but rather to Vienna, where he died in Oberdöbling in 1872. Long after, he was to be quoted once more as a Czech patriot in a context of which he would surely have approved, when refugee Prague writers in London headed their anthology of *Stimmen aus Böhmen* (Verlag der Einheit, London, 1944) with a motto from *Kelch und Schwert*: "Der ich komm' aus dem Hussitenlande..."³⁹

³⁸ Cit. Adalbert Schmidt, *Dichtung und Dichter Österreichs im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Salzburg/Stuttgart 1964, p. 185.

³⁹ Cf. Margarita Pazi, 'Moritz Hartmann, der Reimchronist des Frankfurter Parlaments', in *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* (1973), p. 266, fn. 75.