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Projected paper title: Mitigating Nationalist Conflicts in Late Habsburg-Austria: On the Aftermath of Nationalist Violence in Domžale/Domschale

Abstract

The nationalist conflicts in the Carniolan municipality of Domžale/Domschale culminated in the so-called *domžalski dogodki* (Domžale events) of 1 June 1905. The news of the violent and violently suppressed protest organized by Slovene nationalists during the *Fahnenweihe* (consecration of the flag) of the local Tyrolean *Andreas Hofer* singing society, attended by Carniolan and Styrian German nationalists, spread far beyond the municipal borders. It resonated not only in the controversies that were raised in the press over the following days, weeks, and months, but also in the debates in the Carniolan Provincial Assembly and the Viennese Parliament.

Despite the undeniable mobilizing potential of nationalist ideology on both sides, the reasons for the escalation were much more complex and were to a significant extent rooted in the competition between the two dominant Slovene ideo-political camps. The long-term consequences of this event are even more intriguing. Through the recalibration of political balance of power on the local level and deliberate incorporation of the Tyrolean population into the parish community and political structures, the local elites successfully mitigated existing nationalist tensions and more importantly prevented any future nationalist escalations of a similar magnitude.

These developments seem to contradict the teleological notions of an inexorable intensification of nationalist conflicts in late Habsburg Austria, which in turn supposedly led to its inevitable collapse. While such interpretations were already successfully challenged in more recent historiography, rich sources of ecclesiastical provenance provide us with a rare opportunity to study these processes from below. Rather than concentrating on the nationalist conflict, the analysis will primarily focus on the ways in which the clergy, in cooperation with members of the Slovene- and German-speaking local elites, mitigated nationalist conflicts on the local level.

Application: Central European History Convention

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Paper Proposal:

Protest Culture in Bohemia from 1890s to 1930s: Theoretical Considerations

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a highly formative period for the development of mass politics in Central Europe. From 1890, when Austrian Social Democracy first took to the streets to celebrate May Day as a mass party, to 1938/39, when the First Czechoslovak Republic came to an end and the brutal era of Nazi occupation began, Bohemia underwent profound transformations. Events such as the electoral reforms of 1907, World War I, or the Great Depression brought significant changes to society. What impact did these developments have on the way people engaged in demonstrations, protests, and riots?

In this paper, I analyze the *protest culture* of demonstrations framed as “nationalist” in Bohemia. *Protest culture* is “a kind of software, including the protester’s themes, motives, arguments, narratives, frames, and symbolic expressions” [Rucht, 2016]. It is a multilayered phenomenon shaped by the interaction of various social, communicative, and historical actors, processes, and semiotic forms. An application of this concept allows me to examine protest not as a singular event but as a broader social phenomenon that evolves over time while maintaining a certain repertoire or logic of engagement in public action.

Drawing on insights from political and social sciences, this paper explores the possibilities and limitations of studying “nationalist” unrest in Bohemia over a fifty-year period. By examining performances – such as symbolism and types of action – used in protests across different periods, including the Badeni Riots of 1897, the unrest of 1908, German-Czech clashes after 1918, and the demonstrations accompanying conflict over university insignias in 1934, this paper explores both continuities and ruptures in *protest cultures* during this transformative half-century. In doing so, I illustrate how major political changes, as well as singular transformative protest events, shaped how “ordinary” people in Central Europe expressed themselves in the public space.

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Beyond National Stages. Popular Entertainment and National Conflict in Habsburg Lemberg (1890–1914)

National theaters play an important role in the various national narratives on Habsburg Lemberg. They represent the Polish, Ruthenian, and Jewish national movements, their attempts at national autonomy, and their claims on the city. Yet, the historiographical focus on these national theaters eclipses a great deal of Lemberg's entertainment offer and of the city's everyday life. Variety theaters, circuses, show booths, cinemas, and many other venues and formats competed for the urban audience. Out of economic interest, many of these venues targeted a broad range of Lemberg's population regardless of language or religious affiliation.

I argue that nationalist activists not only perceived these venues as a danger to the economic survival of the national theatres but to the whole national order projected onto the urban space. Thus, popular entertainment in Habsburg Lemberg became a nationally charged field of social control. The paper traces attempts at restricting access to the city's entertainment market, fierce discussions on attendance figures and popular content, and nationalist pleas to the population. Drawing on archival files of Lemberg's police, city council, and the Statthalter's office, as well as Polish, Ukrainian, and Yiddish-language local newspapers, the complex interplay of the various stakeholders will be scrutinized.