Bohemia's Jews and Their Nineteenth Century

Texts, Contexts, Reassessments

Jindřich Toman

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Cover image: Matthias Wehli, "Prague Jewish Cemetery with the View of Prague Castle," ca. 1855.
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Contents

Credits

Foreword

My project started as what I mainly considered a reading enterprise based on literary sources such as those assembled in Oskar Donath's two-volume anthology about Jews and Jewishness in Czech literature (Donath 1923/30) or in Wilma Iggers's historical reader about the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia (Iggers 1986). I also admit inspiration from Otto Muneles's bibliography of Jewish Prague (Muneles 1952). Donath impressed me with his enthusiasm and detailed knowledge of sources, while Iggers was an engaged pioneer amassing a broad variety of Bohemian Jewish texts between the Enlightenment and the twentieth century, and as for the hundreds and hundreds of entries in Muneles—whenever I open this bibliography, I am humbled to see that I have missed an important title. In brief, trying to rescue forgotten texts from obscurity and looking for their contexts was a pleasure.[1]

My initial point of departure was based on the impression that our knowledge of nineteenth-century Bohemian Jewish culture is uneven. While the two prominent ends of the "very long Jewish century"—the era of enlightened reforms of the 1780s on the one hand, and the late decades of the Habsburg Monarchy on the other hand—have each received extensive attention in scholarship, the "quiet decades" in between, except for the revolutionary year 1848, seemed to me not to have been a very popular subject. Although I still believe that this judgment was not completely off the mark, I gradually realized that the idea of quiet decades was no more than rough conjecture. Besides older historiography, some already from the 1920s and 1930s, distinct progress in researching

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1   This stage of my research resulted in a few short studies published in various journals and collections. Some of them have been revised as chapters in the present book, while chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12 appear here for the first time.

this period has been in fact made in recent decades. Although no longer able to work fully, Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein succeeded in presenting portraits of major Bohemian Jewish authors of the 1830s–1840s (Kestenberg-Gladstein 2002); Hillel Kieval provided analyses of the nineteenth-century Bohemian Jewish community, including its ideological and social context (Kieval 1988, 1992, 2000); Věra Leininger provided a high-resolution analysis of the legal and social status of nineteenth-century Bohemian Jews, with special reference to the ghetto of Prague (Leininger 2006); and Martina Niedhammer used understudied material in asking questions about Jewish Prague of the 1820s–1840s, highlighting family, gender, and class (Niedhammer 2013). In addition, Gary Cohen's analyses of Jewish and German Prague in the late Habsburg Monarchy have proven to have significant implications for my "quiet decades" too (Cohen 2006); the same holds for Michal Frankl's work on late nineteenth-century antisemitism (Frankl 2007). These are all signposts that helped define a map on which I believe my book is eventually situated.[2]

Throughout, I have highlighted printed, i.e., public, literary, and journalistic sources, where journalism is understood as a set of genres that includes essay, feuilleton, opinion statements, literary commentaries, and the like. Although reliance on such material would seem to have its limits, print media are obviously privileged entities in that they are well recognizable in the public space, tracking issues and conflicts in detail, often while they are unfolding. Many points remain murky in the dynamic space of print media, including the interaction of literary fiction, opinion statements and commentaries, and of course, the coverage of the so-called bare facts. Most importantly, however, mixed as they are, print media not only shed light on how public space is "happening," but they also inform it by way of their expressive capacity and verbal strategies, their rhetorical force, style of argumentation, specific topoi and motifs, as well as access to the public space.[3] Obviously, all texts, including those about Bohemian Jews, originate for specific reasons and with different aims. In some

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2   As much of the present monograph was already completed in 2020, I was unable to take into consideration some recent publications, including the encompassing tome *Zwischen Prag und Nicholsburg: Jüdisches Leben in den böhmischen Ländern*, ed. by Kateřina Čapková and Hillel J. Kieval (Čapková and Kieval 2020). I can only recommend it as an invaluable complement to the present book.

3   Some of these factors relate to concepts discussed in the wake of Benedict Anderson's idea of print capitalism (Anderson 1991).

cases, they try to be realistic, in other cases they represent agenda-setting calls, in other cases, they create affective communities, and yet in another case they simply try to entertain. Handling this rhizomatic package should be part of the analysis.

Obviously, texts do not exist in a vacuum. In the present case, elements characteristic of verbal media exert their functions against a grand historical context defined by factors that accompanied the overall demise of *anciens régimes.* As has been said many times, they range from the philosophies of the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, urbanization, secularization, and nationalism. It is mainly for the sake of brevity that I will assume that the interplay of all these factors has created a modern space, henceforth the New Space, which is primarily understood here as an environment that invites us to expect a breadth of heterotopic configurations, a space that may house a broad variety of projects, conflicts, and solutions often existing side by side. Keeping Bohemian Jewish history in mind, the task is to see which of them the print culture reveals as intertwined, or just stray and episodic, and significantly, which show persistence and eventually aspire to *longue durée.* Overall, the New Space is understood in minimalistic terms here, mainly as a frame that does not prevent certain types of projects and conflicts from arising and leaving marks in the public space. Stressing the presence of projects—successful or not, completed or abandoned, advocated by individuals or by groups— is significant, as they represent a salient characteristic of Bohemia's Jewish history.

Although not following any particular social or cultural theory, the analyses presented below inevitably touch on issues with strong social and cultural components. Episodes unfolding in the New Space expose issues that need to be kept in mind, including those of identity, loyalty, and in the Jewish context, the so-called assimilation. As for the last one, I largely follow Todd Endelman, who has argued that the concept of assimilation lacks critical rigor in that it blurs at least four distinct factors: "Acculturation (the acquisition of the cultural and social habits of the dominant non-Jewish group),[4] integration (the entry of Jews into non-Jewish social circles and spheres of activity), emancipation (the acquisition of rights and privileges enjoyed by non-Jewish

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4   They include the adoption of new social and cultural values and new modes of deportment, dress, and speech; cf. Endelman (2015: 50).

citizens/subjects of similar socioeconomic rank), and secularization (the rejection of religious beliefs and the obligations and practices that flow from these beliefs)" (Endelman 2008; 2015: 50).

These four factors would certainly each deserve a detailed discussion, as each is complex in its own right and may cover a range of situations. In the case of acculturation, much depends on whether it is understood as a multilateral process resulting in changes affecting all parties involved. When such mutuality is absent, unilateral relations need to be recognized. In other words, unilateral acculturation may still deserve the term *assimilation* as descriptively adequate in some cases. In the case of integration, one of the significant aspects is the rise of non-utilitarian contacts between Jews and Gentiles—i.e., an intercourse in which "Jews and Gentiles began to meet each other in situations not governed by the immediate purpose of business" (Katz 1973: 42). Although contact with the non-Jewish world has always been essential in the history of Jews,[5] the Enlightenment negated the basic premodern situation in which "there was no 'neutral' or 'semi-neutral' society, no common ground, or civil society, in which individuals from both groups interacted voluntarily" (Endelman 2015: 49). A hard binary at first blush, this generalization remains useful both as a grand framing device and as a challenge that invites a search for "wedges" that split social and cultural borders before and after the Enlightenment. Entertainment is one of them.

Although not projected as a significant contribution to theories of identity and loyalty, the present book turns to these concepts time and again. However, both are a focus of interest mainly where they allow for an understanding of social roles as they function in moments of conflict and change—i.e., as they are negotiated and renegotiated, enforced and policed.[6] As our texts show, dynamic aspects of identity, including multiple identities, are among the phenomena of Jewish history to pay attention to. Similarly, the concept of loyalty, which in recent years has complemented the interest in identity, is welcome whenever it can be applied along the same dynamic, or processual, lines. It is attractive as an analytic tool, and it may be preferable to iden-

5   Cf. Jacob Katz's sketch of the mechanisms of the contacts that Jews entertained with the surrounding society (Katz 1993: 10–30).
6   See Brubaker and Cooper (2000), a more than two decades old analysis that critically discusses the ways the identity concept has been applied—and abused.

tity analyses whenever it allows for nuances such as negotiation of loyalty, multiple loyalty, or whenever it can be understood in transactional terms of giving and receiving.[7] All these aspects are ultimately revealed in situations in which choices—often forced—can be meaningfully pursued, which is a salient feature of our domain of inquiry. If there were no choices—religious, political, economic, cultural, linguistic—neither projects nor conflicts would exist, and questions of identity and loyalty would be rendered uninteresting, if not meaningless.

Related to the above "serious" concepts are metaphoric terms, such as that of the boundary—be it cultural, social, or economical; imagined, conventional, or contingent; soft or strict; ignored or enforced. Although metaphoric, as many concepts in cultural studies are, the notion of the boundary is in our cases still useful in that it almost always implies the perspective of a conflict encoded in line-crossing or—to use another metaphor—the desire to seek "wedges" with which boundaries would be subverted. Such terms are open to spatial imagery, always an important factor in relations between ethnic minorities and majorities and their dynamics.

Let us then see, with due caution, whether (parts of) Bohemian Jewish cultural history—which also includes parts of Czech and German cultural history—can be written, or rewritten, by way of connecting specific projects to conflicts that our sources document in the New Space. Let us see whether one can fathom the dynamics of the century by way of turning the pages of old newspapers and obscure pamphlets. Or, to invoke Isaiah Berlin, let's take the liberty of moving as a fox while paying due regard to the hedgehog.

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7   See Schulze Wessel (2004) and Osterkamp/Schulze Wessel (2017) for concepts of horizontal and vertical loyalty and attention to the role of emotionality. The horizontal mode of loyalty dovetails with Anderson's hints at fraternalism that he lists among the defining characteristics of the nation: "The nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1991: 7).

1 Bohemia's Configurations

It is a set custom of Bohemian Jewish studies that a "trial" map of Bohemia be presented as an opener. This is a delicate move, since the basic terms—Czech, German, Jewish—have over time changed in content and function; moreover, the tendency to use our contemporary definitions often impedes the analysis. This chapter, therefore, amounts to no more than a reminder that in the nineteenth century, the Bohemian (or Czech) Lands were part of the Habsburg Monarchy, a multinational colossus centered in Vienna, and that they represented an ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous territory with three ethnicities (Czechs, Germans, and Jews) and two major languages (Czech and German). The first part of the chapter provides a conventional introduction to this situation. The second part opens a less compartmentalized perspective in stressing dynamic aspects of Bohemia's ethnic "trialism." This part should remind us that each of the groups under consideration pursued its own specific interests and thus functioned in its own way. To simplify, the Czechs were pursuing a program of nationalism; the Germans were gradually reacting to this program, transforming themselves from "Bohemians into Bohemian Germans" (G. Cohen); and the Jews were for an extensive part of the century struggling for elementary civic rights, while repeatedly conceptualizing their relation to the remaining parties. Goals and results were not always compatible, and conflicts were coming about.

1.1   The Three-Box Game

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Bohemia[1] and Moravia were populated by roughly more than four million inhabitants, nearly 60 percent of whom were Czechs and close to 40 percent Germans, or more accurately, speakers of Czech and speakers of German. Far behind these two major groups was a strong, not quite 2 percent Jewish minority.[2] All of these groups already coexisted side by side well before the nineteenth century. The present section provides a brief map of these three ethnicities.[3]

1.1.1   REVIVAL: THE CZECHS

Starting from roughly the 1770s, some 250 years after the Bohemian Lands were incorporated into the Habsburg Monarchy, the Czech intellectual elite, largely bilingual, began to cultivate the idea of *obrození*. The term has been variously translated as Czech "renaissance," "awakening," or "revival" into English, each case invoking the metaphor of waking up after a long period of sleep. And indeed, the Czech Revival—the term I will use throughout—specifically represents a nation formation that did not start from scratch but justified its narrative by reference to historical continuity. Under this perspective, Czech nationhood was a disrupted one.

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1   The English term *Bohemia*, or German *Böhmen*, is primarily a territorial notion rooted in the historical concept of Bohemia, a territory that is now approximately the western part of today's Czech Republic. As this territory was populated by two major ethnicities—one Czech and one German-speaking—it would be logical to call the inhabitants Czech Bohemians and German Bohemians. However, such usage does not exist. Instead, we typically see the term *Bohemian* (or German *Böhme*), the meaning of which may vary. Throughout, I will use glosses to provide the "right" meaning where needed. For a detailed survey of Bohemian ethnic terminology, see Dickins (2011) and the literature quoted therein.

2   See Cohen (2006: 66–68) for a detailed discussion. Kořalka (1996: 140) gives the following figures for Bohemia for the year 1846: Czechs 2,598,774 (59.77%), Germans 1,679,151 (38.62%), Jews 70,037 (1.61%)—grand total 4,347,962.

3   For a concise English-language survey of Bohemia's Habsburg years, see Sayer (1998), among others. See also Judson (2016) for the broad imperial frame.

The Revival process was multilayered and proceeded at a different pace in different social groups. There is a consensus, mostly among literary historians, that it had at least three stages[4] between the last third of the eighteenth century and the year of revolutions, 1848. The process is usually described as beginning with an era of learned philologists and historians who were guide mainly by the ideals of critical philology that came with the Enlightenment. It continued with a second phase, the "Jungmann phase,"[5] marked by an active cultivation of Czech as a standard language and dominated by romantic historiography, now increasingly functioning as a tool of nation formation. J. G. Herder's ideas about national literature were influential, but Jungmann also referred to their vulgarized versions, as represented by the German F. L. Jahn, aka "Turnvater Jahn." The third phase, occasionally called the "Palacký phase,"[6] is usually dated between 1830 and 1848, which basically coincides with the Vormärz era in Habsburg historiography. But whichever dates we work with, there is a clear sense that well before 1848, Czech had a standardized format and functioned as a language of literature, although not of higher education. In other words, the emphasis on language was a significant feature of the Revival, eventually representing the cornerstone of a successful project in terms of not only general literacy but also politics. The bond of language and nation was an essential part of Czech nationalism.

The defeat of the revolutions of 1848 affected Czech society initially in slowing down its development toward a modern political entity; however, much had been resumed in the 1860s, an era during which the Monarchy moved to a liberal political system defined by a constitution and parliamentarianism. In many ways, the 1860s and 1870s represent a successful transformation characterized by premodern political parties and a concentrated effort to create a homogeneous national society in which the Czechs would be the leading force. When exactly this era came to an end is a matter of what criteria we chose. Pieter Judson has suggested that the entire Monarchy began to change politically and structurally in the 1880s (Judson 2017). Close to this

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4 I take it that these stages were inspirational in Miroslav Hroch's theory of stages that structure nation formation.

5 Josef Jungmann (1773–1847), a Czech philologist and literary historian, significantly shaped the second phase of the Revival.

6 František Palacký (1798–1876), a historian often called the Father of the Nation, shaped the third phase of the Revival also politically.

are the Czech 1880s and 1890s, which are marked not only by the proliferation
of Czech political parties but also by the emergence of currents that opened
Czech culture to international modernism. The present study stops approxi-
mately at this point—the decision in the 1880s to raze the Prague ghetto marks
the end of our survey on perhaps a symbolic point.

1.1.2   EMANCIPATION: THE JEWS

Given a relatively short list of candidates for minority status in the region,
Jews come close to a paradigmatic Central European minority.[7] Their position
was strengthened by their own clear sense of identity, steadily reinforced by
long-term segregation and programmatic exclusion. For centuries, however,
Jewish communities were legally on unstable grounds. When reporting on
the Prague ghetto in the late sixteenth century, the English traveler Fynes
Moryson (1566–1630) made a simple yet fundamental observation about
the central premise of their status: "At Prague [Jews] haue the priuilieges of
Cittizens, but they buye it and continue it with great payments of money"
(from Hughes 1903: 490). In our period, however, Jews could claim limited
toleration in the sense that they no longer faced extreme situations such as
systematic expulsions[8] or pogroms of the Eastern European kind.[9] At the
same time, Jews did not have equal rights and were far from being integrated.
Segregated as second-class residents, they did not achieve the status of full
citizens until 1867.[10]

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7   In rare cases, Romas are mentioned as a minority side by side with Jews; see
    Dohm's influential *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Dohm 1781/83).
8   The Habsburg empress Maria Theresa decreed the last large-scale expulsion of Jews
    from Prague in 1844. While the decree was soon withdrawn, the idea of expulsion
    did not disappear entirely. In 1848, a petition with three hundred signatures by local
    merchants circulated in Prague, demanding the expulsion of the Jews. The city hall
    placed it *ad acta*. This tool was not always limited to Jews, cf. banishment of Protes-
    tants from Salzburg in 1731.
9   This is not to say that violence was absent. Anti-Jewish riots occurred repeatedly
    throughout the nineteenth century, continuing in the first years of the Czechoslovak
    Republic and even after World War II.
10 In 1867, civic equality was finally encoded in the so-called "December Constitu-
    tion" [*Dezemberverfassung*], a package of laws that included the Basic Law about

Historians mostly agree that the reforms that the Habsburg emperor Joseph II declared in the 1780s were a turning point in Habsburg Jewish history. They initiated a beginning of a new social, economic, and cultural space for Habsburg—and Bohemian—Jews. Specifically, besides a decree of religious tolerance of non-Catholic Christian churches, Joseph II released a cluster of edicts between 1781 and 1789 that changed the status of Jews. Each of them was tailored to a specific region of the Monarchy, starting with the Bohemian decree, signed on October 19, 1781 (Verordnung 1781). The decrees were part of an extensive social and political program that was gradually implemented under the influence of philosophical trends characteristic of the Enlightenment. While revealing the mindset and specific interests of an absolute monarch, they represented a social contract *sui generis*, perhaps incomplete and imperfect, but in some sense expressive of both parties' interests.[11]

Although Joseph II's decrees had specific effects on local Jewish communities, for instance, by destroying the practice of Jewish self-governance, they all derived from the same template that stressed questions of language, education, and entrepreneurial activities. The program of weakening the status of Jewish languages is clearly visible, for instance, in the prohibition of their

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the Common Rights of Citizens [*Staatsgrundgesetz vom 21. Dezember 1867 über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger für die im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder*]. For Jews, the important parts included: Section 2 (*Vor dem Gesetze sind alle Staatsbürger gleich* / Before the law all citizens are equal), Section 14 (*Die volle Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit ist jedermann gewährleistet* / Freedom of belief and conscience is guaranteed to everyone), and Section 19 (*Alle Volksstämme des Staates sind gleichberechtigt, und jeder Volksstamm hat ein unverletzliches Recht auf Wahrung und Pflege seiner Nationalität und Sprache* / All nationalities [*Volksstämme*] of the state are equal, and each nationality has an inviolable right to exercise and maintain its nationality and language); cf. www.verfassungen.de/at/Oesterreich-Ungarn/index.htm (accessed Aug. 2017).

An often-overlooked set of relaxations that preceded the liberal constitution of 1867 was the 1859 *Gewerbegesetz*, which eliminated a few occupational restrictions for Jews (Gary Cohen, p. c.).

11   For a discussion of Joseph II's Jewish policies, see Karniel (1986), who also reprints some of the relevant decrees.

use in legal documents,[12] but also in granting Jews access to education with the understanding that it would be conducted in German. Thus in Bohemia, concomitant ordinances simply ordered Jewish parents to send their children to German language schools.[13] The decrees further opened entrepreneurial activities for Jews—after all, the Monarchy was in a dire need of modernization, so it would be competitive, among others with its northern neighbor Prussia. However, numerous discriminatory laws remained, including residency regulations, Jewish head-tax (*Judensteuer*), and mainly, the Family Head Law (*Familiantengesetz*), which set limits on the number of Jewish families in Bohemia and Moravia, with the intent to prevent an increase in the Jewish population. In effect, discrimination against Jews continued throughout the pre-1848 era in one way or another.[14]

Another line of change came from within the Jewish community itself. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Bohemian Jewish communities were responding to new religious and cultural developments such as the Haskalah and Reform Judaism, both of which originated in German Jewish communities. Bohemian Jewish response generated an important intellectual elite, although its representatives remained locked in for a long time in the dominant Jewish languages of the period.[15]

Newer research supports the conclusion that, at least in nineteenth-century Prague, Jews represented a "regular" (i.e., layered) social group that interacted with their Czech and German counterparts not only economically but also socially and culturally (Niedhammer 2013). In several cases, members of the Jewish elite also achieved aristocratic ranks while leading families, espe-

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12   This restriction was not so new; see the papal encyclic *Cum nimis absurdum* of 1555, an antisemitic classic of the early modern era (*Cum...* 1555).

13   See a 1784 ordinance for Bohemia that states, among other things: "Jewish parents are urged to send their children to German schools unless they want to expose themselves to the applicable fine" (*Die Juden sollen...*, in Cramer 1792: 168).

14   For a detailed account of pre-1848 legislation regarding property, domicile, and marriage praxis, see Leininger (2006).

15   A monographic description of Jewish enlightenment in Bohemia and Moravia between 1780 and 1830 is Kestenberg-Gladstein (1969), who in general stresses local specifics of Bohemian Jewry. See also studies such as Hecht's (2008a) monograph on the enlightened Jewish philosopher and pedagogue Peter Beer. On Prague's Jewish profile, see Pařík (2008), among others.

cially in the banking and textile industry (the Dormitzers, the Jerusalems, the Porgeses, and others), participated in projects, which were in many instances fostered by hybrid Czech/German institutions that did not shy away from admitting Jewish members. In 1825, the Prague Savings Bank (Prager Sparkasse) had the prominent merchant and banker Leopold Lämel as its founding member and director (cf. Županič 2012: 446); the Union for the Promotion of Industry in Bohemia (Jednota k povzbuzení průmyslu v Čechách), with hundreds of members the largest associated body in Bohemia, had an increasing number of Jewish members too, especially after it lost its aristocratic character in the 1840s. And even one of the central institutions of the Czech Revival, the Patriotic Museum of the Kingdom of Bohemia, henceforth the Bohemian Museum, had at least one Jewish member in the society of its supporters, Moritz Edler von Henikstein, while editors of the museum's publications cooperated with Jewish authors.[16]

In terms of language, the enforced use of German in Jewish education proved to be a significant factor in making Bohemian Jews German-speaking and German-writing subjects, which in the long run left a mark on Czech-Jewish relations as Czech nationalism was strongly focused on the cultivation of Czech. With the decline of what we today call Western Yiddish,[17] German was at least on paper gradually becoming the primary language of Bohemian Jews, Josephinism but also the Haskalah being among the determining factors. Nonetheless, the actual linguistic practice was complex and the data is often confusing. Two Prague publications three decades apart may serve as an example: I. E. Landau's bilingual edition of 613 Jewish commandments from 1798 and M. W. Jeitteles's bilingual edition of funeral prayers and related customs from 1828/30.

In the bilingual edition of the 613 Mitzvot (commandments) by the chief rabbi of Prague, Isaac Ezekiel Landau, published in Prague in 1798 (I. E. Landau 1798), the Hebrew text is accompanied by commentaries in what the title page announces as "German language based on Jewish dialect" [*deutsche Sprache nach jüdischer Mundart*] and what the introduction qualifies

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16   To be precise, with at least one, the converted author Aaron Ludwig Jeitteles (see section 6.1.2 below).

17   On the status and defining features of Western Yiddish, see Fischer (2018) extensively.

FIG. 1. Title page of *Israelitische Gebote aus der heil[igen] Schrift mit thalmudischen Erklärungen übersetzt in deutscher Sprache nach jüdischer Mundart von* I[srael] E[zekiel] L[andau]] [*Israelite Commandments from the Holy Script with Talmudic Explanations* – translated into German language according to the Jewish dialect by I[srael] E[zekiel] L[andau]. [Prague:] 1798. Courtesy of the Jewish Museum in Prague.

as "gwehnliche munt art" [sic; common dialect] (no pagination, in Hebrew script, the so-called *weiberschrift*]; the German preface, authored by the imperial censor of Jewish prints Karl Fischer, uses the term "Jewish-German vernacular" [*jüdisch-deutsche Volkssprache*]. Landau himself stated explicitly that in choosing this usage, he was aiming at those of his brethren "who do not understand a better and more refined language" [*die eine beßere und gearbeitete* šprache *nicht fr* štehn] (sic; ibid.). Although the specifics of Landau's language would deserve further analysis, what one eventually reads is more or less clear German, albeit lacking stylistic elegance and rendered in a rather peculiar orthography.

A similar case repeated in the late 1820s with a three-volume bilingual set of prayers and texts related to funeral customs published by Moses Wolf Jeitteles (1775–1847) in Prague between 1828 and 1830 (M. W. Jeitteles 1828/30). Using German, the editor stated that the language he was using was his "incorrect" native langue, not German:

> The language I chose for this lecture had to be that of my incorrect
> mother tongue, which costs me less effort, as I was born into it and

am used to it from my youth; it is commensurable to the subject and comprehensible to readers of my own kind.[18] (M. W. Jeitteles 1828, section *Vorerinnerung,* no pagination, in "*weiberschrift*")

But again, reading the text, one will not find any strikingly dialectal usage. What is "incorrect" is perhaps the style and orthography. In other words, it seems that printed sources from the period of our interest do not offer any significant data regarding a hypothetical "Judeo-German" level—they show a strong presence of German.

However, data about the other side of the linguistic spectrum, the spoken language, do indicate the existence of a Judeo-German vernacular, albeit mostly anecdotally.[19] Kestenberg-Gladstein states that this vernacular was used in its spoken varieties in families as late as the end of the nineteenth century and marginally even beyond. Still, the data are rarely presented, so we are left with indirect references to this linguistic practice only. Thus the Jewish author Leopold Weisel speaks about the "meanest jargon" in the Prague ghetto around 1850, the Czech author Karolina Světlá recalls hearing "jargon" in the Prague Tandelmarkt in the 1840s, and the Jewish preacher Adolf Jellinek implores Habsburg Jews in 1848 not to use the "Jewish jargon" [*jüdischer Jargon*], which he glosses not only as a "corrupt language" [*verderbte Sprache*] but also as a major evil that separates Jews from the Gentile majority.

The gradual demise of Judeo-German was at any rate flanked by a decisive rise of German, which in Bohemia was largely understood as High German rather than a regional (Austrian) variety of German. Discussing the situation in the late decades of the nineteenth century, the Czech linguist Pavel Trost described it in sociolinguistic terms as a hypercorrection that was part of a Jewish "drive for advancement and legitimization":

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18   Die Sprache, welche ich in diesem Vortrage gewählt, mußte jene meine nichtkorrekte Muttersprache sein, die, darin geboren, und von Jugend an daran gewöhnt, mir weniger Mühe kostet, dem Gegenstand angemessen und für Leser meinesgleichen verständlich ist.

19   Attempts at describing this usage include Balík (2015), Demetz (2006), Kestenberg-Gladstein (1969: 357–359), as well as research prompted by an interest in Franz Kafka's German (Nekula 2016).

> The purist tendency represented by the elevated Prague German
> was directed against the Austrobohemian variety of German. This
> drive for purism was not so much an issue of the old Praguers as
> that of a new stratum, the emancipated Jewry that had changed in
> a short span of time from Yiddish to High German. […] For this
> group, the overcoming of the vulgar, or "kitchen" German, as the
> Austrobohemian variety was called, and at the same time the over-
> coming of Mauschel-German, as the Yiddish was called, i.e., the
> drive to speak a super-high German, was part of their advancement
> and drive for legitimation. (Trost 1981: 384).

To close these linguistic observations, we note that by the 1860s Jewish
publications took pains to mark the vernacular as obsolete. In a short story
"Hannah: A Story from the Jewish Folk Life" [Hannah: Eine Erzählung aus
dem jüdischen Volksleben], published in the Prague Jewish magazine *Die Zeit-
stimme* in 1863 (X.Y.Z. 1863), Hannah sings a song she remembered from her
childhood. As it has vernacular features, the anonymous author saw it neces-
sary to translate it into standard German, but since the text is actually easy to
understand, one may see here a gesture marking the song explicitly as a legacy
of the past, rather than a gesture assisting an incompetent reader.

   The second part of the nineteenth century made Bohemia's Jews economically
successful and largely continued their cultural and linguistic German orienta-
tion. At the same time, however, significant tendencies leading to acculturation
were visible and became socially institutionalized. As we shall see below, while
the 1840s opened a discussion of a project of a Czech-Jewish rapprochement,
the 1870s brought a Jewish initiative, the Czech-Jewish Movement, which pro-
grammatically advocated a philosophy of cooperation with the Czechs—the use
of the Czech language and disengagement from German were the main points
of reference. This was fundamental. By the end of the nineteenth century, at the
latest, social change, secularization, easing of legal constraints, and an increase
of external social pressure fragmented this community in multiple ways, yet
Czech was one of the choices.

1.1.3   UNDER PRESSURE: THE GERMANS

While Jews may plausibly claim the status of a paradigmatic minority in
Bohemia, Germans in Bohemia, Moravia, and Austro-Silesia challenged the

minority concept already by their sheer number and strong territorial presence. As their privileged position did not long seem to call for any fundamental emancipatory efforts, their national self-articulation in the sense of nineteenth-century nationalism came with some delay. Moreover, in the first part of the century, models other than nationalism were available, including *Landespatriotismus* [land patriotism],[20] which was strong at least at the level of the high elite and also with some literary authors from Bohemia, whose works reacted to Bohemia's dual nature by invoking its shared Czech-German history.[21]

However, revisions of Bohemian German identity began to emerge especially after 1848. According to Gary Cohen, the surge of Czech nationalism was among the significant factors: "In the process of defending themselves against the Czech challenge, the German-speaking middle and upper strata transformed themselves from Bohemians to Germans" (Cohen 2006: 23); here, "Bohemian" has the "*Landespatriotic*" reading, i.e., that of belonging to the multiethnic geopolitical entity called Bohemia. This is in line with discussions that started to appear in the 1850s in tracts such as *Germans in Bohemia* [*Die Deutschen in Böhmen*] by Friedrich Anton Schmalfuß (1821–1865), possibly the first work to make Bohemian Germans the focus.

Reading Schmalfuß, we are facing an identity-forming discourse that contains clear demarcation statements. Thus, we read that when asked to identify himself, a German from Bohemia traveling abroad would call himself upon careful reflection "a German Bohemian [*Deutsch-Böhme*], rarely ever

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20   The term *Landespatriotismus* (Cz. *zemský patriotismus*) is common in Central European historiography, although it has apparently been in use only since the late nineteenth century. It refers to group identity based on identification with the historically defined territory of the Czech, or Bohemian Lands, rather than its ethnic composition. Accordingly, modern theorist of nationalism, Miroslav Hroch, defined Bohemia as a region, "defined by political (or historical) limits, regardless of its internal structure and ethnic boundaries" (Hroch 2004: 103). In this conception, the ethnic identity of the population is subordinated to the territorial specificity of the region. A modern monographic treatment of *Landespatriotismus* does not exist, but credit should be given to the posthumously published *habilitation* by František Kutnar (1903–1983), originally written in the 1940s (Kutnar 2003). See also studies by Steffen Höhne, including Höhne (2000, 2001).

21   For a systematic map of tropes and motifs characteristic of Bohemian German literature before 1848, see Leclerc (2011).

just a Bohemian [*Böhme*], and never an Austrian [*Österreicher*]" (Schmal-
fuß 1851: 61). Schmalfuß was also clear on the civilizing role of the German
minority in Bohemia. In his view, just as the Czechs [*Čecho-Slawen*] mediated
between the more advanced West and the less advanced East, "so it is a his-
torical task of the Germans in Bohemia to keep the Czechs in constant spir-
itual contact with more educated Germany" (ibid., v). The passage is firmly
embedded in period thinking about the ranking of ethnic groups, be it in
terms of ethnic characteristics, culture, or languages.[22] Schmalfuß also reveals
emerging loyalty dilemmas, including the demise of *Landespatriotismus*, cf. his
phrase "rarely a Bohemian," where Bohemian has the territorial reading.

The second part of the nineteenth century saw intensive work on the trans-
formation of Bohemian German identity. Steps in this direction are doc-
umented by a variety of initiatives such as the academic yet broadly based
Association for the History of Germans in Bohemia [Verein für Geschichte
der Deutschen in Böhmen] (1862) on the one hand, and communal associ-
ations, such as the perhaps most visible venue, the German Casino Associa-
tion [Verein Deutsches Kasino], established in Prague in 1862 and active since
1875, on the other hand. Similar communal venues emerged in the 1870s also
in Brno, the Moravian metropolis with a strong German population (Malíř
2014). Other localities followed suit. Another significant project was the
German theater in Prague. Founded in 1888, it can be interpreted as a reaction
to the opening of the Czech National Theater in 1881. In addition, the 1880s
saw the growth of numerous regional associations such as the Association
of the German Bohemian Forest [Deutscher Böhmerwaldbund] (1884), the
Association of Germans from Northern Moravia [Bund der Deutschen Nord-
mährens] (1886), and a few years later, the Association of Bohemia's Germans
[Bund der Deutschen Böhmens] (1894). Other relevant associations included
the German School Association [Deutscher Schulverein] (1880), originally
a Vienna-based organization.[23]

Significantly, a number of the sprouting *Vereine* [associations, unions]
openly admitted that their activity was not proactive but reactive by calling

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22   On the ranking of languages in this period, see Toman (1995: 197–198).

23   It is with a delay that I noted Jitka Balcarová's (2013) monograph on the Bund der
        Deutschen. Although focusing on the twentieth century, the author provides a rich
        survey of late-nineteenth-century trends and includes analyses of driving cultural
        concepts such as *völkisch*, *Volkstum*, *Schutzarbeit*, and a few others.

themselves *Schutzvereine* [protective associations]. In fact, as early as 1861, the Prague-born journalist and dramatist Theophil Pisling (1834–1916) claimed candidly in his tract *Germanization or Czechization* [*Germanisierung oder Czechisierung*] that for the very sake of preservation, Bohemian Germans had the duty "to act energetically and brace themselves for *resistance*" (Pisling 1861: 59; emphasis added). Ideas about granting autonomous administrative status to the German-speaking population by dividing Bohemia into German and Czech parts may be mentioned in this connection as well. Hence Ernst von Plener (1841–1923), an Austrian politician involved in disputes between Czechs and Germans, converged with Czech politicians such as Eduard Grégr, who apparently saw a reason for ceding parts of Bohemia's German-inhabited territory to Germany.

In sum, there is no doubt that the German-speaking community was highly stratified and played a significant role in Bohemia's and Moravia's administration, economy, and culture. Regional differences were notable, though. While northern border regions developed substantial industry, including glass and textile, southern border regions such as the Bohemian Forest [Böhmerwald] followed a more traditional way of life. Furthermore, German Prague played its own role in not being easily assimilated into German borderlands. The Jewish presence in the German-speaking areas was always significant; it increased in the second part of the century when Bohemia-internal migrations faced an influx of the German-speaking Jewish population into the Sudetenland.[24]

1.2   And Beyond the Boxes

The above survey of Bohemia's configuration, simple as it may appear, should not leave the impression that the three "boxes" had firm walls and that the three ethnic groups did not communicate with one another or were unaware of one another. Quite to the contrary, the content of the "boxes" was changing and the borders of the three major minorities were permeable too. In other words, simple labels, statistics, or parallel histories do not automatically yield an adequate picture of the functioning of Bohemia's ethnic groups. In theory, we

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24   Profiles of Jewish communities in the borderlands are included in Gold (1934).

could open chapters on at least six basic lines: Czech reflections on Germans, Czech on Jews, German reflections on Czechs, German on Jews, and Jewish reflections on Germans and Jewish on Czechs. Clearly, a full description of these relations is not the goal of this monograph, but notable research fills some gaps. Note, for instance, Jan Budňák's (2010) study of the perception of Czechs by Germans in literary works. Interethnic caricature, especially in the second part of the nineteenth century, is also of interest; see Jiří Štaif (1998). And as regards the state and functioning of the Jewish minority, note Lenka Veselá-Prudková (2003), who covers the perceptions of Jews by Czech society during periods ending with the eighteenth century.

1.2.1   WHO WAS REALLY WHAT AND WHEN?

The profiles of all three groups under consideration were changing. Jews started the nineteenth century perhaps with the most stable self-understanding, primarily because of a history of religious consistency and a keen awareness of the diaspora. However, the Bohemian Jewish community underwent changes too; it already had reacted to the Enlightenment and Reform Judaism in the early decades of the century.

   The Czechs underwent a significant change in their identity throughout the nineteenth century as well. The national program that started essentially as a cultural program advocated by the educated elite eventually developed into an explicit political program that aimed at a broadly based homogenization, the governing ideology being one of increasingly aggressive nationalism and a desire for some form of national self-determination, possibly achievable by way of redefining the Monarchy as an entity close to a federation. (The quest for full independence in the sense of a nation-state came only in the Monarchy's final years.) It was especially after 1848 that Czech-German polarization, especially in Bohemia, and a strong aversion to the practice of multiple loyalty became visible.[25]

   Finally, speaking about Bohemian Germans, Gary Cohen noted that "the preponderance of the German-speaking population, like many of the Czech speakers before 1848, lacked any conscious loyalty to a distinct ethnic or national group" (Cohen 2006: 21). To illustrate this, he singled out a con-

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25   For nuances and tactics in this process, see Bugge (2017).

vention of German-speaking communities in August 1848 at which one of the Prague delegates admitted that it was impossible to count the Germans in Prague because one could not reliably determine whether or not the subjects to be counted were Germans. As noted above, this changed fundamentally in the second half of the century, when—to quote Cohen again—"the German-speaking middle and upper strata transformed themselves from Bohemians to Germans" (ibid., 23). This is a classical illustration of a contextually defined identity. Toward the end of the century, the Germans of Bohemia and Moravia began to complement their imperial loyalty with a bond to a local construct: the Sudetenland. Moreover, an articulate contrast asserted itself between German Prague and German borderlands (Čapková 2005: 61–64). Attempts to establish Liberec/Reichenberg as the Sudeten-German capital illustrate this development.

1.2.2   TRANSLOCAL HORIZONS: *Bildung*

Bohemia's configuration was dynamic also in the sense that it was simultaneously local and translocal. In all our cases, translocal factors played a significant role, albeit often providing discordant points of reference. Should Bohemian Germans limit their political loyalty to Vienna, or should they follow the pan-German [*großdeutsch*] line? (This issue, of course, was not absent in Austria proper, either.) Should Czechs follow the line of an overall Slavic revival? (Pan-Slavism was relatively popular, at least before 1848, but it subsequently fizzled out.) And should Bohemian Jews look across the borders to German lands?

Focusing on Bohemian Jews, we have been facing a complex translocal fabric of reform and transformation since the late eighteenth century coming from Germany. Enlightened Bohemian *maskilim* revered Mendelssohn, Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller just like their Jewish counterparts in Germany did. They did not generally have the feeling that Czech culture could offer anything comparable. Some of them were among the active participants of German Haskalah periodicals such as *Sulamit* (founded in Saxony in 1806). Ignoring fine details, Jewish identification with German culture, or German *Bildung*, was a long-term project that was in effect throughout the nineteenth century. In 1844, using highly emotional language, Adolf Jellinek, a Bohemia-born Jewish preacher active in Leipzig and later in Vienna, explicitly asserted loyalty to German culture, while warning against "fraternization" with other regional cultures:

> Jews, who are by language, civilization, and worldview Germans, should stay Germans and prove themselves as the bearers and guardians of German nationality. Among all nationalities, Germans have an edge over other nationalities in Bildung, culture, civilization, and scholarship. Fraternization with Czech, Slavic, and Magyar nationalists simply means losing culture and Bildung. (Jellinek 1848b: 154)

Again, an identity-building step that shows strong contextual qualities.

Following George L. Mosse (1985), we understand *Bildung,* literally "education," as a cluster of projects that ranged from an emphasis on individual character formation (the Goethe line), to a world-open balance between one's individuality and the modern world, including the acknowledgment of modern education and scholarship (the Humboldt line). *Bildung* was also meant to erase differences between privileged aristocracy and emerging bourgeoisie, and as a means of overcoming inequality of men (the Herder line). Moreover, there is a good reason to see the concept of *Bildung* not only as an entrance ticket into the middle class, at least in Germany, but, gradually, as a constitutive part of Jewish identity, especially among those who leaned toward the ideas of the Enlightenment and reformed, or even secular, trends.

Among Bohemian Jews, the empire of *Bildung* was strong. As we shall soon see, *Bildung* was the world of literature for authors such as Aaron (Andreas) Ludwig Joseph Jeitteles and Moses Israel Landau already in the early decades of the 1800s, with the names of Goethe and Schiller providing the guiding coordinates (see 6.1.2). And it continued to be powerful with authors such as Leopold Kompert in the 1840s and 1850s. Significantly, *Bildung* was not just a matter of loyalty to the German language. Jewish idols of German culture, Schiller in particular, were poets of freedom and universal human rights. Another member of the Prague Jeitteles family, Ignaz Jeitteles (1783–1843), would in 1806 publish a poem entitled "Tolerance" [Die Duldung] which echoes Schiller's text to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" even metrically:

> *Tolerance* unites the nations,
> Teaches man to be humane.
>
>   (Ig. Jeitteles 1806: 87; original emphasis)

Schiller's presence was persistent well into the second part of the century. Othille von Kahler describes Schiller in her memoirs, which cover the 1860s, as the reference point of literary culture.[26]

The empire of *Bildung* created a discourse community that negotiated its loyalty on several counts, including identification with German culture and a sharp delimitation vis-à-vis the Czechs especially in 1848, thus pointing to a contextual formation of identity again. To continue with Jellinek:

> As Germans, Jews demand the rights that belong to every German in Austria; as Germans, they do not want any special legal bait for themselves; as Germans, they are the bearers of culture and education, bearers of trade and industry; as Germans, they are under the protection of German freedom. It is foolish to flirt with Czechs; it is foolish to give up one's German self-consciousness: to feel German is to feel free because the German spirit has become truly free. (Jellinek, 1848a)

The author proceeds to stress that in the big struggle of peoples, Czechs will simply not understand the prospect of freedom but will in their national fanaticism deny any other nationality its right to exist.

1.2.3   WHO KEPT AN EYE ON WHOM

Another angle that dynamizes our understanding of the "three boxes" relates to the ways in which Bohemia's ethnic groups perceived one another and in what form they did so. Clearly, the Czechs kept an eye on the Germans all the time, although with changing intensity, while the Germans reflected on the Czechs too. This was happening in a variety of ways. For instance, resident in Bohemia, German authors Joseph Georg Meinert (1773–1844) and Karoline von Woltmann (1782–1847) would consider Czech legends and fairytales—and by extensions, the Czechs—as a folkloristically interesting phenomenon.

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26   "The one who was the epitome of poetic upswing was Friedrich Schiller. His poems, his dramas. Among these again mainly *Tell, Mary Stuart,* and *The Maid of Orleans,* whose monologues were and had to be the obligatory showpieces of the constantly reciting and quoting youth, a standard of domestic culture and etiquette." (Iggers 1986: 175)

In the end, they made significant contributions to collecting and recording Czech oral folklore.

Czechs kept their eye on Bohemia's Jews early on too. Czech chronicles, most prominently the *Czech Chronicle* [*Kronika česká*], a popular compilation of Czech history by Václav Hájek z Libočan (born around 1495), are flush with references to the presence of Jews in medieval Bohemia, mostly unflattering. Jewish characters also appear in Czech literature, including farces and puppet plays (see chapter 5), as well as in sources documenting a constant level of popular antisemitism that continued well into the twentieth century.[27]

We must also mention German language sources on Bohemian Jews, such as Joseph Schiffner (~1760 – ~1818) and Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848), two very different representatives of the Prague German-speaking elite, both reacting to the presence of Jews in Bohemia's fabric. In the fifth volume of his panoramic *Gallery of Bohemia's Interesting and Remarkable Personalities* [*Gallerie der interessanten und merkwürdigen Personen Böhmens*] (1804–1808) Schiffner included a lengthy history of Jews in Bohemia, probably the first written in German (Schiffner 1808). His empathy for Bohemian Jews was minimal. Although he did not call them aliens, he came very close to it: the Jews "crept in" [*…schlichen ein*] and greatly misbehaved. But there is some echo of the present in his work, as he does not criticize the implications of Josephinian decrees. The fact that his Jewish chapter appears as part of a grand historical account of Bohemia is at any rate significant since Schiffner is in the end unwittingly performing an act of incorporating Jews into the panorama of Bohemia's history.[28]

A quite different level of reflection of Bohemia's configuration—and its tensions—transpires from the works of the late-Enlightenment scholar Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848), a cleric and professor of religion and mathematics at Prague's university.[29] Bolzano presented hundreds of so-called exhortations

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27   For a taxonomy of negative Jewish stereotypes in Czech literature at the turn of the twentieth century, see Holý (2014).

28   The *Gallery* was almost immediately translated into Czech by Jan Rulík, a Czech revivalist. Rulík thus provided Schiffner a dual space of reception—German and Czech. Oddly enough, the last volume, which includes the Jewish section, was not translated.

29   Bolzano had an Italian father and a Prague German mother. He grew up in Prague, where his first language was German. While he is credited for his work in mathematics and logic, for us his reflections on Bohemia are more important. Demetz calls

[*Erbauungsreden*] before the university community, critically reasoning about topics ranging from the Second Coming of Jesus to the nature of music to the dignity of womanhood. Significantly, he also addressed relations of Czechs and Germans in Bohemia and Christian attitudes toward Jews. He was eventually dismissed from his position in 1819, most likely for his enlightened leanings and critical disobedience.

Bolzano's exhortations deserve attention as a remarkable attempt to create public space through rhetorical means. The medium of delivery was German, and the recipients were the multilingual academic elite. It seems that the exhortations were so popular that they were even copied, translated, and circulated (Winter 1935). On February 2, 1809, Bolzano presented a discourse entitled "On Conducting Oneself Against the Jewish Nation" [Von dem Betragen gegen die jüdische Nation], in which he addressed the general perception of Jews as a despised group.[30] Delivered literally a few steps away from the Prague ghetto, although, with no explicit local references, Bolzano noted that Jews were treated with scorn everywhere, although they were a nation that in the past had a state, a language, and enjoyed glory. But Bolzano gradually goes beyond the perspective of a harsh fate that deprived Jews of all this and puts the blame for the negative development on Christians along the lines of the dictum "as we made them, so we have them." In other words, according to Bolzano, it was Christians who were responsible for the current state of Jews, and they should think about how it could be ameliorated. Improvement could proceed by way of better education and proper information about Jews. While these are goals that fall within the rhetoric of the Enlightenment, Bolzano moves further and speaks about the amelioration of professional conditions, tax reduction, and even equal rights. Changes along these lines would pay off the Christian debt. But although an enlightened citizen, the Catholic priest in Bolzano could not obviously jump over his own shadow—when balance is achieved, the Jewish nation "will overcome its blindness and joyfully accept the religion of Jesus, to which it is rightfully entitled" (Bolzano 1809/1851: 208).

Bolzano "the first social philosopher of a multiethnic community to come" (Demetz 1997: 277); see also Höhne (2016).

30   Demetz (2013) analyzes the sermon formally, stressing parallels with G. E. Lessing and deploring that Bolzano was obviously not familiar with enlightened Jewish thought in Prague of his days.

In 1816, Bolzano also addressed another thread in the Bohemian fabric, namely the relations between Czechs and Germans. In his speech "On the Relations Between the Two Peoples of Bohemia" [Über das Verhältnis der beiden Volksstämme in Böhmen] he considered it an enormous failing, if not an outright crime [*Verbrechen*], that many citizens through the ages had pursued "the spirit of strife" [*Geist der Zwietracht*] between the two major Bohemian nationalities and he did not hesitate to remind his mixed Czech and German academic audience that they should "embrace themselves as is necessary for citizens of one and the same country if they do not wish to be the cause of their common downfall" (Bolzano 1816/1850: 157). Ironically, however, some three decades later, reality took Bolzano by surprise. While at the beginning of the century he argued for an institutionally sponsored bilingualism, as an observer of the events of 1848 he could not help but react with shock in face of calls for a prompt introduction of Czech as the language of education at the university at which he used to be a faculty member.[31]

1.2.4   IN BETWEEN OR OUT?

If anyone was constantly aware of their neighbors, it was certainly the Jewish minority. The range of Jewish attitudes is considerable, especially throughout the 1840s and 1860s. In the 1840s, some Bohemian Jews, such as the poet Siegfried Kapper, wanted to align themselves with one of the parties, the Czechs, while some of the Monarchy's Jews, such as the vocal commentator on Jewish matters, Adolf Jellinek, quoted above, called for an unequivocal alignment of Jews with Germans "within the imperial union":

> To what nationality do Israelites belong within the imperial union? To *German* nationality. Magyarism and Slavism are both artificial, not naturally grown. In Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Galicia, Moravia, and Silesia, Jews are Germans. In countries where a mixture of languages takes place, Jews represent the German language, the bearer

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31   The sermon about Christians and Jews from 1809 was apparently available in print only in 1851 (Bolzano 1851), and the sermon on Czechs and Germans from 1816 appeared a year earlier (Bolzano 1850). By then, they were history; see Höhne (2016: 65) for sources and discussion.

of culture, education [*Bildung*], and science. [...] Jews, German by language, refinement, and attitude, are to remain Germans and prove themselves to be the bearers and watchmen of German nationality [*Volkstum*]. (Jellinek 1848b: 154; original emphasis)

Jellinek's was actually corrected by another voice of the year 1848 that described the feeling of complete exclusion that both Czechs and Germans systematically voiced vis-à-vis Jews. Writing in 1848 on Czech matters for the Viennese Jewish daily *Oesterreichisches Central-Organ für Glaubensfreiheit, Cultur, Geschichte und Literatur der Juden*, the Jewish journalist Simon Hock sketched a configuration that amounted to complete encirclement:

No matter how furious the struggle between the Germans and the Czechs may become, they will be sure to agree on one point—their antipathy towards the hapless people of Juda. (Quoted from Kestenberg-Gladstein 1968: 26)

This describes a configuration in which two strong parties form an alliance against the minority party, not a situation in which the minority third has an opportunity to form an alliance with one of the strong parties as Jellinek imagined.

Given these reactions, it is unsurprising to find statements that ultimately say straightforwardly that Bohemian Jews did not wish to be claimed by any other nationality, including Germans. Unsurprisingly, they were typical of the liberal era and beyond. Consider an 1865 report from Prague in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*:

In regular times, i.e., whenever there is something to grant or gain, all these nationalities [Germans, Hungarians, Poles] push us back and consider us strangers. But whenever advantages can be gained from us, each one declares us their own property, thus reminding and warning us that we should not believe we can belong to any other element of the population or even join it. (Aus Prag..., 1865: 713)

This author obviously had no need to declare himself a German Jew; instead, he was unhappy to belong to a group that was repeatedly taken advantage of.

Yet another Jewish voice from the 1860s goes beyond the realization that Jews were the embattled minority. It is taken from the *Die Zeitstimme*, a Prague

Jewish periodical, from an article whose author merely went by "Dr. R." The author maintains that Bohemian Jews should be neither Czech nor German and should even consider it their mission to be the core of a "middle party" [*Mittelpartei*] (Dr. R., 1863: 34). In response, a certain A. Bloch from the northeastern town of Nový Bydžov reacted with reservations but agreed that "from the historical point of view, the Jew belongs to none of the two parties because he represents a third one for himself" (A. Bloch 1863: 86). The main goal was to remain unallied [*unparteiisch*].

These and similar situations morphed into a feeling of a Jewish "in-betweenness" as Jews were repeatedly confronted with the fact that they were an entity between major blocks. A recognition of this position is often understood as part of Bohemian Jewish identity. In a reflection published in the 1940s, the Bohemian Jewish philosopher Felix Weltsch described Bohemian Jews as a people "of the middle" that eventually attains "a spirituality of the middle" (Weltsch 1943: 34).[32] Finding a way to live in this situation was for him the challenge Bohemian Jews were facing—he called this "the peculiar fate of Bohemian Jews" (ibid.). However, taking the liberty of working with grand perspectives, there is in principle nothing "peculiar" here. In many territories across the globe that are inhabited by more than two ethnic groups, strategies of self-emancipation, as well as the formation of alliances, often pragmatic and fleeting, belong to political and cultural reality.[33]

32   See also cf. Kestenberg-Gladstein (1968).

33   Interethnic conversation continued to evolve well beyond our period. Decades later, the metaphor of the bridge emerged, focusing on Bohemian Jews who mediated between Czech and German cultures, mostly by way of translation, cf. the cases of Paul Eisner, Rudolf Fuchs, Otto Pick, and others; see Kieval (2005), Petrbok (2014), and Spector (2000: 195–233).