1 All Gray
Militarization in Urban Space

"For a while there, we saw more uniformed men on the street than civilians," reported the *Prager Tagblatt* on the first day of partial military mobilization.[1] The outbreak of war in 1914 redefined the relationship between the military and the civilian worlds. Cities, and especially garrison towns, were the prime spaces where this confrontation took place. As Austria–Hungary entered a conflict that soon turned global, Prague had to adjust. The military presence was not a new feature of city life, but it gained importance during the war years. The different gray uniforms of Austro–Hungarian soldiers departing to the front, as well as of those stationed there, became an even more regular sight.

Furthermore, the military came to play an increased role in the administration of the city. Prague was firmly situated at the rear of any combat zones during the whole war, and therefore not in a region directly under army jurisdiction, but military authorities nonetheless encroached on daily life.[2] The Military Command on Malá Strana Square became, more than during peace time, one of the centers of power in the city and a synecdoche for military rule (Figure 1.1). As described by the chief of the Prague Landwehr Justice in his memoirs, "the gray building in front of the portal of Saint Nicholas Church in Malá Strana, seat of the Corps Command in peacetime and of its successor, the Military Command during wartime, turned grayer and grayer as the war went on. […] as soon as you stepped in the interior, you felt as in a labyrinth."[3] Before the war, the building housed the headquarters of the eighth army corps (a an area covering about half of Bohemia). Renamed Military Command, it expanded its influence and the army intervened more directly in civilian affairs. This chapter examines the various alterations of urban space implied by militarization: the newly imposed restrictions and rules, the encounters between civilians and soldiers, the exposure to military administration, and the control of information circulation.

[1] *Prager Tagblatt*, August 27, 1914, 2.
[2] Christoph Führ, *Das k. u. k. Armeeoberkommando und die Innenpolitik in Österreich: 1914–1917* (Graz: Hermann Böhlau, 1968), 23.
[3] Antonín Licht, *Válečné vzpomínky z doby persekuce* (Prague: Alois Wiesner, 1925), 17.

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Figure 1.1 The building of the Military Command in Prague
Source: *Album revoluční* (Prague, 1918), image 31

Wartime militarization implied a shift in the balance of power in the city and transformed the triangular relation between municipal, state, and military authorities. Down in the Old Town, at the Town Hall, was the municipal council, elected through a very limited franchise system (only 6% of the population) that favored wealthier citizens. Municipalities had a relatively high degree of autonomy and since the 1860s, the Prague city council had been dominated by the Czech bourgeoisie. Prague municipal authorities functioned in many respects as heads of the Czech nation.[4] On the other side of the Vltava, in Malá Strana, was the seat of the Bohemian provincial administration, the Governor's Office, located only a few steps away from the Military Command. The governor was traditionally a member of the nobility flanked by increasingly legally trained bureaucrats. Civil servants were supposed to maintain political and national neutrality, but in practice often cooperated with local elites.[5] In a large

[4] Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, 36.
[5] On the Habsburg bureaucracy, see Franz Adlgasser, Fredrik Lindström, eds. *The Habsburg Civil Service and Beyond: Bureaucracy and Civil Servants from the Vormärz to the Inter-War Years* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2019).

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city such as Prague, the chief of police was directly reporting to the governor, so the state police were also part of civilian imperial administration. Prague was an important garrison town with a dozen barracks complexes and other military facilities (military hospital, cadet school, and invalids' home) interspersed in the various neighborhoods. In 1910, around 8,500 military persons were stationed in the Greater Prague area.[6] The physical proximity between civilians and soldiers was not exempt of tensions. Despite the military's significant urban presence, officers were more isolated from the society around them than bureaucrats. They regarded with hostility the state officials and with suspicion the autonomous communal authorities coded as nationalist. The frictions in civil–military relations, already perceptible before the war, only grew with the wartime regime.[7]

In the context of the Habsburg monarchy during the First World War, the term "militarization" refers to the process of subordination of the civilian sphere to the military and the increased role of the army in government.[8] The consequences for the population were a severe limitation of basic civic freedoms, and the requisition of many aspects of economic civilian activity. The army wanted to create a "coercive straitjacket" that aimed to avoid popular mobilization and its afferent claims for rights.[9] This conception shaped wartime repression. Prague is an interesting case study, as the repression was milder than in most crownlands yet presented similar characteristics. Militarization was a wartime process that built on long-term trends. Like in other European countries, the military enjoyed a prominent position in Habsburg society reinforced by military conscription. A military culture developed that implied the growing mobilization of resources toward military goals and a high appraisal of military values.[10] This culture was both exploited and transformed during the war. How did militarization manifest itself in urban space in Prague? How were public spaces mobilized for military aims? To what extent were prewar military tropes mobilized to this end? By analyzing the consequences of mobilization and emergency measures in urban space, this chapter offers a different approach to the issue of whether the wartime military regime was a perversion of the state or its logical

[6] *Hlávní výsledky popisu obyvatelstva ze dne 31. prosince 1910 v král. hlavním městě Praze* (Prague: Národní tiskárna, 1911), 30.
[7] See Deak, Gumz, "How to Break a State."
[8] Austrian statesman Josef Redlich already spoke of a "militarisation" of the hinterland, Josef Redlich, *Austrian War Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), 84.
[9] Jonathan E. Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 16.
[10] Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 308; 3.

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continuation.[11] Rather, it shows that, independent of decisions among military and bureaucratic elites before 1914, for ordinary citizens in Prague, the situation of suspicion and uncertainty was a clear departure from prewar norms and expectations.

This chapter opens with an exploration of the changed military/civilian dynamics in urban space right from the first days of mobilization. It then examines the impact of Austrian military culture on Prague in the wartime context and the contacts between soldiers and city dwellers. Finally, it engages with the ongoing discussion on the nature of the Habsburg military wartime government to inquire into the army's role in the hinterland.

Bustling Streets, Serious Faces: Mobilization and the Outbreak of War

"Mobilization changed everything: streets, homes, people's mindsets," as Vašek Káňa described it in his autobiographical novel.[12] The transition from peace to war in the summer of 1914 rapidly transformed the lives of millions of Europeans. Historians have increasingly provided a fuller picture of everyday experiences at this defining moment, shifting the focus away from diplomatic chancelleries. Descriptions of the atmosphere of the mobilization days in Western Europe often refer to the first August days of 1914.[13] In Austria–Hungary, however, the last days of July already marked the beginning of mobilization for war. Indeed, the announcement of the ultimatum to Serbia on July 23 generated a considerable agitation among the population. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand nearly a month earlier came back to the forefront of the news. As writer Max Brod explained in his memoirs: "the common people (at least in Prague) and with it almost the whole population reacted to the announcement made months ago very simply: We forgot it. We were completely surprised when it resurfaced that Friday in the most beautiful July weather and took the heretofore practically unknown form of an ultimatum."[14] The hope that Serbia would

[11] On this debate, see Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*; Deak, Gumz, "How to Break a State:" 1111–1112; Laurence Cole, "Visions and Revisions of Empire: Reflections on a New History of the Habsburg Monarchy," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 49 (2018): 261–280 and Mark Cornwall, "Treason in an Era of Regime Change: The Case of the Habsburg Monarchy," *Austrian History Yearbook* 50 (2019): 124–149.

[12] Vašek Káňa, *Válkou narušení* (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1953), 7.

[13] Bruno Cabanes, *August 1914: France, the Great War, and a Month That Changed the World Forever* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[14] Max Brod, *Streitbares Leben: Autobiographie* (Munich: FA Herbig, 1960), 84.

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accept the ultimatum remained until 6 p.m. on July 25. That evening, the Prague-based German-speaking newspaper *Bohemia* carried the fake news that the Serbs had accepted it without conditions.[15] The press only received limited information on the Foreign Ministry's war plans and a great uncertainty prevailed among the public, which explains the reactions of surprise and the anxious search for news over the following days.[16] The magnitude of the conflict's scale dawned only progressively on Prague's inhabitants.

During the night from Saturday 25 to Sunday morning, preparations for the partial mobilization started. In Bohemia, July 26 marked the one-year anniversary of the introduction of the Saint Anne's Patents, which had adjourned the provincial assembly and replaced it with a special administrative commission. The authorities forbade planned demonstrations to request the patents' withdrawal, worrying that demonstrations in this context would lead to "criticisms of the external situation."[17] Meanwhile, many Bohemian Catholics were celebrating the Saint Anne festival by going on pilgrimages to different holy sites in the region.

On Sunday morning, the first visible sign of change in Prague was the yellow posters in Czech and German that appeared on street corners and public buildings announcing the partial mobilization.[18] People gathered around them to see who was called up and the posters turned into hubs of discussion. As one newspaper described it, "it did not take long before the first clusters of walkers started to congregate around them and nervously read … the mobilization order! It acted like an electric spark." The news was unexpected, as there only had been up until then rumors of more serious measures.[19] A priest in the suburbs noted that, at that stage, some still considered the posters as a call for maneuvers, "and we heard many voices saying that war [was] not possible and that our merciful emperor would not let it happen."[20] In a highly literate city such as Prague, gathering around and reading official posters constituted an important common urban experience, in contrast to the factionalism of the different newspapers' readership.

[15] *Bohemia* (evening edition), July 25, 1914, 1.
[16] Petronilla Ehrenpreis, *Kriegs- und Friedensziele im Diskurs: Regierung und deutschsprachige Öffentlichkeit Österreich-Ungarns während des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2005), 63.
[17] Memorandum from the Governor, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15098/14, July 24, 1914.
[18] Poster in Czech, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, July 26, 1914.
[19] *Právo lidu*, July 27, 1914, 1.
[20] AHMP, FÚ u kostela Narození Panny Marie Praha – Michle, Pamětní kniha 1866–1946, 90.

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The visual aspect of the city center immediately changed in this first day of mobilization and newspapers remarked on its new "physiognomy."[21] The influx of reservists, suitcase or bundle in hand, in the main thoroughfares leading from the train stations and to the army barracks created great animation, as crowds gathered to observe them and to get information. The "indescribable effervescence" in Prague is a recurring motif in accounts of the mobilization.[22] Streets were filled with people, and trains for the usual summer excursions to the countryside left empty. The word "mobilization" could be heard on every mouth.[23] A "prodigious bustle" was visible at the town hall or outside the barracks on Joseph Square, as men flocked there in high numbers.[24] At the barracks' gates, officers informed reservists of where to go while curious crowds peeked through, wondering what was going on inside. As men one by one received theirs, more uniforms of all types flashed through the streets.[25] The stores selling additional military equipment such as revolvers or horse gear were full of new clients.[26]

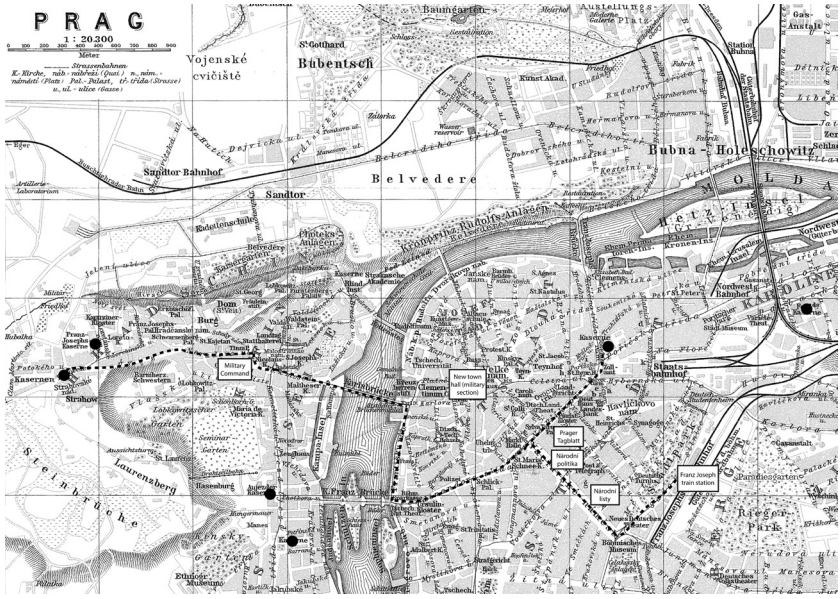
A specific topography of this mobilization day in Prague emerges from these descriptions (see Map 1.1). The center of military activity was mostly concentrated on the left bank of the Vltava from the main army barracks of Pohořelec, perched on top of the Castle's hill, down to the Military Command in Malá Strana. On Neruda Street, which linked the two points, automobiles carrying military officers circulated constantly and at great speed. Crossing the river, the military section in the new town hall (Old Town) was another center of agitation. Journalist Josef Žemla's account of the mobilization in his hometown, published in August 1914, describes the confusion of many young men who did not know exactly where to go.

> Noise, shouting, fear, anxiety – opposites meet. The military section in the town hall is full. Young workers, artisans, clerks, postmen, etc, all of them either fill the offices looking for information or arrive in the corridors – with the mouth open to ask how they should behave.[27]

Others looked for the latest information at the various newspapers' offices along Prague's largest square (Wenceslas Square). All the major

[21] "The physiognomy of Prague changed": *Čech* July 27, 1914, 6; *Právo lidu*, July 27, 1914, 1; *Národní politika*, July 28, 1914, 7.
[22] Josef Vieulzoeuf, *Memoáry pražského knihaře* (Prague: Svaz pomocnictva knihařského, 1929), 147; "Vzrušená Praha," *Hlas národa*, July 27, 1914, 3.
[23] *Národní politika*, July 27, 1914, 5.
[24] *Národní listy*, July 27, 1914, 2.
[25] *Právo lidu*, July 27, 1914, 1.
[26] *Prager Tagblatt*, July 27, 1914, 2.
[27] Josef Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci ! Týden pražského života v době mobilisace* (Prague: Reyl, 1914), 7; See also, *Národní listy*, July 27, 1914, 2.

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Map 1.1 Main sites during the mobilization days (itineraries of soldiers' marches, main army barracks (●), newspapers' offices)

daily newspapers decided to print three editions a day. Special editions carried all the new developments, and the latest dispatches were pinned on the wall. Groups of people pressed themselves to see the announcements and then relay the news further. The introduction of preventive censorship, which delayed publication by three hours, provoked a crowd invasion of the *Prager Tagblatt*'s courtyard, which necessitated police intervention.[28] On Monday, many did not go to work to be able to follow the news on the street.[29]

The train stations constituted another focal point of the tumult, with men coming to Prague to join their regiments. Trains were delayed and men waited for their connections on station benches or sitting on the ground. The halls were filled with an unusual number of people and buzzing with noise.[30] They also witnessed the painful farewells of mobilized men to their loved ones. Moving scenes of separations between husbands

[28] *Prager Tagblatt*, July 27, 1914, 2; *Právo lidu*, July 27, 1914, 1; On censorship, see Ehrenpreis, *Kriegs- und Friedensdiskurse*.

[29] *Národní politika*, July 28, 1914, 7; The police also stressed that news were attentively followed, Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15445/14, July 27, 1914.

[30] *Prager Tagblatt*, July 28, 1914, 2.

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and wives or parents and children were repeated throughout the city (at barracks' gates, at train stations), conferring an air of gravity to public space. The "serious faces" and "seriousness of the moment" feature in many descriptions.[31] The police reported that "the atmosphere in the population [wa]s very depressed, which [wa]s however only explained by the military measures that concern more or less every family."[32] Jaroslav Knotek-Domě, from the working-class district of Libeň who was five in 1914, remembers how his father departed to the front:

> My dad also had to report to the barracks at Pohořelec. They were there several days. We went there every afternoon with my mum to look at him. But only to the iron gates of the barracks' courtyard where dads were there like convicts. Behind bars. After a few days we arrived again one afternoon and the courtyard was empty. They had gone to Vienna during the night. I really cried that time. I couldn't be calmed on the whole way back. From Pohořelec to Libeň.[33]

In the first few days, the presence of all the men preparing to leave for war meant that "Prague was full of soldiers," as a parish chronicle recalled: Some were able to still sleep at home, some were still in civilian clothes, others already in uniform, all of them uncertain of where they would go. Their presence participated in the militarization of space: "Roads in the field were closed, bridges guarded by the military, so that the whole impression was really gloomy."[34]

The overall picture of the mobilization days in Prague was characterized by this mixture of sadness and nervous agitation. The governor noted no signs of enthusiasm but described the atmosphere as "dignified and serious."[35] The publication of the Emperor's manifesto on July 28 justified the decision to go to war. This text, prefaced as usual "to my peoples," legitimized the war against Serbia, to which the Emperor was compelled despite his desire to preserve peace. The poster, again, was placed on street corners. The police report from July 29 mentions that the manifesto was "fervently read and a deep emotion was perceptible for many. The manifesto has reinforced in every stratum of the population the already widespread opinion of the necessity of the monarchy's actions."[36] Žemla also confirms that the manifesto was widely read and

[31] *Národní politika*, July 28, 1914, 7; *Čech*, July 27, 1914, 6; *Právo lidu*, July 27, 1914, 1.
[32] Report from the Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15445/14, July 27, 1914.
[33] Jaroslav Knotek-Domě, "V libeňském zázemí za první vojny," *Etnografie dělnictva*, 9 (1977), 224.
[34] AHMP, FÚ Michle, Pamětní kniha, 91.
[35] Governor to Interior Ministry, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15445/14, July 27, 1914.
[36] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15804/14, July 29, 1914.

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made "a particular deep impression" on the reader. The general mobilization posters displayed in Prague streets on August 1 were perceived as a response to Russia's own general mobilization and provoked new fears. They marked the conflict's extension: The war would not be confined to Serbia as many had still hoped.[37]

Despite fears to the contrary, the mobilization in Prague went smoothly and without incident. A priest remarked that even the socialists and national socialists, most likely to speak against the war in peacetime, were "the most willing to flock to the posters and to the barracks."[38] As Czech philologist Albert Pražak later admitted, "and yet we all enrolled and went," adding as an explanation: "maybe out of survival instinct."[39] A Czech journalist in wartime exile at the time also marveled: "The Czechs went. […] My closest friends and good Czechs, whose friendship I was proud of, became fratricidal. They went, they had to go. If I were them, I would obviously also have gone. The suggestive force of war is terrible."[40] The motif of the duty to obey recurs in Žemla's description of the mobilization days: "the duty calls" is repeated throughout the text. He even expresses patriotic emotions related to Austria: "at this moment, one feels in one's heart the larger fatherland (*širší vlast*)," the term referring to Austria in opposition to more local affiliations such as the Czech nation. According to him, the opinion on the street was: "Austria was forced into war […] yes one must feel 'austrianily' in this historical moment."[41] Historian Jiří Hutečka has shown that traditional models of manly duty were an explanatory factor for the prompt reporting of Czech men.[42]

Whatever the motivations, the authorities were satisfied with Czech troops' response to the mobilization. "It even caused men in Vienna to be astonished at how the mobilization happened quickly and normally," recalls one inhabitant from Prague.[43] Austrian military authorities had feared that their Slav recruits would not be reliable in wartime. The Army High Command deemed Czech support as potentially problematic based on minor antimilitaristic demonstrations during the Balkan wars.[44] They exaggerated the dangers posed by Czech pan-Slavism. Czech national

[37] Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, 15; 24.
[38] AHMP, FÚ Michle, Pamětní kniha, 91.
[39] Albert Pražák, *Politika a revoluce: paměti* (Prague: Academia, 2004), 29.
[40] Karel Horký, *Americký leták: teď anebo nikdy* (Prague: Nákladem V. Rytíře, 1918), 7–8.
[41] Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci!*, 18; On duty, see also, *Čech*, July 27, 1914, 6.
[42] Hutečka, *Men under Fire*, 41.
[43] Alois Žipek (ed.), *Domov za války: svědectví účastníků* (Prague: Pokrok, 1929), I, 136.
[44] Martin Zückert, "Imperial War in the Age of Nationalism: The Habsburg Monarchy and the First World War," in Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen (eds.), *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 501.

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culture had often emphasized the affinity with other Slavs, such as Serbs or Russians. This sentiment, however, was mostly focused on intellectual and cultural connections and never amounted to a clear foreign policy.[45] The military commander remarked that "against expectations, reservists reported for duty on time and in high numbers" during the partial mobilization and that until the middle of August, departing troops were widely acclaimed by the local population in Prague.[46]

As the first regiments departed for the front, civilians accompanied them through the streets to the train stations, waving and chanting "Hoch" and "Sláva." Film footage shows crowds cheering soldiers marching in Wenceslas Square and through the streets, men waving their hats, women shaking their handkerchiefs.[47] The market sellers on Tyl Square collected fruits during the week to distribute at train stations and fill men's pockets before they went away.[48] Heartfelt patriotism or loyalty to the Empire is certainly not the only factor for presence in the crowd, which could be motivated by curiosity or human sympathy, but this show of support for local soldiers nonetheless demonstrates an early participation in the monarchy's war effort. Žemla describes a thick crowd witnessing the exit of troops from their barracks and launching into the Czech national anthem "Kde domov můj" (Where is my home?).[49] The farewell celebrations at train stations formed a loud spectacle. A priest recalled hearing the music and the departing cries of soldiers from the smaller railway station in Vršovice all the way from his parish in the nearby village of Michle.[50] The journey to the train station constituted for soldiers a visual farewell to the entire city. Poet Fráňa Šrámek recalled the last snippets he caught of Prague before his departure, his unfamiliar walk on the pavement with military boots and the street – "river of stone": "you never had, street, so many beauties, or smelled that way into my nose." The poem ends with the cry: "Farewell, remember,

[45] J. F. N. Bradley, "Czech Pan-Slavism before the First World War," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 40, no. 94 (1961): 184–205.

[46] Mood report, Military Command, NA, PMV/R, ka 182, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 14991, October 19, 1914.

[47] Although dated 1915, it seems plausible given its title (The mobilization in Prague) that it was filmed during the mobilization days: http://europeanfilmgateway.eu/detail/Mobilisace/nfa::b97c26200209cb02cc3225901100c160 (accessed September 25, 2018).

[48] *Venkov*, August 26, 1914, 4.

[49] Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, 25.

[50] AHMP, FÚ Michle, Pamětní kniha, 91; on the soundscape of mobilization in Berlin, see Daniel Morat, "Cheers, Songs, and Marching Sounds: Acoustic Mobilization and Collective Affects at the Beginning of World War I," in Daniel Morat, ed., *Sounds of Modern History Auditory Cultures in 19th and 20th century Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 177–200.

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Prague!"[51] Indeed, "S bohem Praho" (Farewell Prague) belonged to the usual cries of waving soldiers, according to a police report.[52]

The early reactions to the war outbreak in Prague in many ways resemble the scenes in other European cities, dominated by resignation and a sense of duty, and curious crowds anxious to get news.[53] As was the case in Dublin, despite fears and accusations to the contrary, the population rallied behind the war mobilization when it broke out.[54] The Bohemian capital also did not stand out in the context of the Habsburg Empire, where studies have emphasized a mixture of emotions among the crowds present: enthusiasm limited to certain moments and sections of the population, but mostly great uncertainty, resolution, and sense of duty.[55] This reaction, far from isolating Czechs from other European nations, places them firmly within the European First World War experience.

Prague during the mobilization displayed a dutiful response, supporting crowds, but only isolated demonstrations of "war enthusiasm." The scenes that could qualify as such occurred in the first days of August (between 3 and August 9), following news of the first German victory on the Western front.[56] A few hundred demonstrators gathered around the Radetzky monument in Malá Strana and sang patriotic songs. They were greeted by the Mayor of Prague. Presented as demonstrations from both nationalities by Governor Thun, they also took pan-Germanist undertones with a demonstration of loyalty in front of the consulate of the German Empire and the singing of the *Wacht am Rhein*. The presence of Czech-speaking men among the crowd at the Radetzky monument is disputed. The official municipal bulletin mentions speeches there in

[51] *Šibeničky*, 2, no 16 (1919–1920): 122.

[52] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PMV/R, ka 183, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 1748, January 16, 1915.

[53] Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre: contribution à l'étude de l'opinion publique, printemps-été 1914* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1977); Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*.

[54] Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 166.

[55] On the seriousness of the mood in Tyrol, see Oswald Überegger, *Der andere Krieg: Die Tiroler Militärgerichtsbarkeit im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 2002), 257–258; There is no monarchy-wide study of the mobilization days. For an overview, see Mark Cornwall, "Das Ringen um die Moral des Hinterlandes," in Helmut Rumpler and Anatol Schmied-Kowarzik (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918. Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016), 395–403; for a nuanced account in the Salzburg region, see Laurence Cole, Marlene Horejs, and Jan Rybak, "When the Music Stopped: Reactions to the Outbreak of World War I in an Austrian Province," *Austrian History Yearbook* 52 (2021): 147–165; the best detailed urban study is: Bernhard Thonhofer, *Graz 1914: der Volkskrieg auf der Straße* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2018).

[56] Jan Galandauer, "Wacht am Rhein a Kde domov můj: válečné nadšení v Čechách v létě 1914," *Historie a vojenství*, 5 (1996): 22–43.

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both Czech and German.[57] A Czech source, however, mentions that the nobility paid a group of men to attend.[58] Bohemian nobleman Clam-Martinic confirmed his involvement with Governor Thun in organizing this display of loyalty.[59] Were the nobles trying in this manner to prove the existence of a failing Czech loyalty to the Empire?

It would be more enlightening to understand this meddling in tandem with prewar practices in the management of nationalism and concerns over nationalist demonstrations. Thun, as a representative of the Conservative nobility, was wary of any form of exacerbated nationalism, German or Czech, and was worried that these patriotic demonstrations would turn into pan-German demonstrations. As Galandauer emphasizes, pan-Germanism was considered anti-Habsburg before the war and only tolerated during the war because of the alliance with the German Empire. This overt manifestation of support for the German Reich was novel in the Prague context.[60] Hence, Thun's goal was to denationalize the demonstrations in order to avoid the violent nationalist clashes that were regular occurrences before the war.[61] He decided to ban further demonstrations with an announcement on August 9 to his "dear Prague compatriots of Czech and German tongue," explaining that the proofs of patriotism were very touching but had to cease to maintain public order.[62] The governor did not want war enthusiasm to be used as a pretext to score points in the fierce fight between German and Czech nationalists in the Bohemian Lands. Czech politician Tobolka reports in his diary another patriotic demonstration on Wenceslas Square on September 9, organized by a student from a Czech school, in honor of the Emperor and the army, which also did not meet with Thun's approval. Tobolka comments: "[Thun] wanted a brave fight in unity for the Habsburg Monarchy but did not wish it to be linked, with consideration to both nations in the Bohemian Lands, with manifestations from the civilian population."[63]

[57] *Věstník obecní královského hlavního města Prahy*, XXI, 13–14, August 27, 1914, 250.
[58] František P. Vožický, *Kronika světové války 1914–1919* (Na Král Vinohradech: F.P. Vožický, 1919–1921), I, 18.
[59] Christopher Brennan, "Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond His Control or beyond His Capacities? The Domestic Policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916–May 1917" (Phd dissertation, London School of Economics, 2012), 62.
[60] Galandauer, *Wacht am Rhein a Kde domov můj*, 34–35.
[61] On prewar nationalist clashes, see Jan Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft: Tschechen und Deutsche, 1780–1918* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996); Nancy Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).
[62] Announcement published in newspapers, see *Národní politika*, August 10, 1914, 3.
[63] Zdeněk Tobolka, *Můj deník z první světové války* (Prague: Karolinum, 2008), 18.

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During one of these demonstrations on na Příkopě Street, as the crowd cheered an artillery section leaving the city, a lawyer named Bouček exclaimed in Czech: "the poor boys!" The man next to him objected to his remark and Bouček was arrested. He was not condemned in the end. It was deemed that, being part of the cheering crowds, he could not be suspected of antipatriotism and had probably uttered these words out of human sympathy. But this incident reveals the atmosphere of suspicion that prevailed after the war outbreak.[64] Numerous denunciations sent to the authorities or to newspapers by German-speakers attempted to build an image of Czech disloyalty. The climate of intense fear of spies prevalent at the beginning of the war also accounted for many dubious reports on treason and Russophilia.[65] Already on the first day of mobilization, an overzealous crowd on Wenceslas Square had taken a man to the police station who had allegedly said something objectionable. The man turned out to be a plain-clothes police officer and the "loyal citizens" went their own way.[66] A German-speaking denunciator warned the police on August 5 of the preparation of big demonstrations in Prague, mentioning that he overheard planning for an insurrection and the words: "the Germans have enough money. The crowd will show them."[67] "A concerned patriot" denounced his neighbor who had been hosting a Russian for three weeks.[68] Denunciators were sometimes struggling to find any reliable proof of the Czechs' disloyalty. A German-speaking "patriot" considered that some "circles" were too friendly to the Montenegrins and Serbs but he had to admit that everything seemed in order and that people were displaying loyalty.[69] The Czech press refuted those claims of disloyalty. The daily *Venkov*, shocked by a denunciation published in the *Berliner Tagblatt*, emphasized: "it is known everywhere that our people's behavior in Bohemia during the mobilization is exemplary."[70] The denunciations did not necessarily reflect anything more than their writers' anxieties or enmities.

Beyond the crowds, the outbreak of war also brought many new restrictions on street life. The militarization of space meant both an

[64] See the file, NA, PMV/R, ka 182, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 13805/14, October 6, 1914.
[65] On the spy fever in Germany, see Florian Altenhöner, *Kommunikation und Kontrolle: Gerüchte und städtische Öffentlichkeiten in Berlin und London 1914–1918* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008), 192–193.
[66] *Čech*, July 27, 1914, 6.
[67] Anonymous letter, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5043, sig. 8/1/90/27, no. 17221/14, August 5, 1914.
[68] NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2255, sig. P 5/10, no. 18889, August 2, 1914.
[69] Anonymous letter to the Governor's office, NA, PP 1908–1915, ka 2255, sig. P 5/9, no. 17104, July 31, 1914.
[70] *Venkov*, July 30, 1914, NA, PM 1911-1020, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 16006/14.

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intensification of military traffic and a reduction of "normal" urban civilian activity.[71] A war chronicle describes the unceasing lines of soldiers moving through the streets: "In the still night the artillerymen move in long columns with their canons. The canons rattle against the pavement, it is impossible not to hear, the population is wakened from sleep, opens the window and watches a moving sad scene."[72] Civilian cars were monitored and stopped at checkpoints where military vehicles had special access and railway traffic was limited to give priority to military convoys.[73] Prague inhabitants, accustomed to taking the train for summer excursions to the countryside, were now queuing at the Police Headquarters to obtain a travel permit. Only those with a specific family or health reason were permitted to purchase a ticket.[74] Within the city, public transport was reduced because many conductors had been called up: one had to wait longer for a streetcar and they stopped earlier at night.[75] Horses were requisitioned for the military: the owners had to bring them in on a specific day depending on their neighborhood.[76] Cyclists and persons using carts had to get special police passes and could be stopped in the street for a military check.[77] Public lighting on bridges was eliminated in early September for security reasons and, to save fuel, part of the public lighting had to be out after 9 p.m.[78] Prague also had to reflect the seriousness of the times and entertainments of all kinds were suppressed. The first theater to suspend representations was *Uranie*, a large arena in the suburb of Holešovice, on August 2.[79] A memorandum from the Bohemian governor recommended a ban on dancing entertainments and concerts "in these serious times."[80] All these restrictions on city life created a plethora of new official announcements posted on street corners, detailing the new regulations.[81]

The limitation of traffic led the City Council to realize very early on that the city's food supply was at risk of being disrupted, and it created a

[71] As in other cities, the "great animation" of late July, early August can be contrasted with the "calm" later on. See, Emmanuelle Cronier, "The Street," in *Capital Cities at War*, II, 58.
[72] Vožický, *Kronika*, 13.
[73] Military Command order, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 17492/14, August 7, 1914; Military Command order, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 18789/14, August 13, 1914.
[74] *Národní listy*, August 10, 1914, 2.
[75] Announcement in *Národní listy*, July 27, 1914, 2; *Národní listy*, July 29, 1914, 4.
[76] *Národní politika*, July 27, 1914, 3.
[77] *Národní politika*, August 10, 1914, 3.
[78] NA, PP 1916–1920, ka 3016, sig. M 34/1, no. 17545, September 4, 1914; NA, PP 1908–1915, ka 2233, sig. L 18/29, September 30, 1914.
[79] Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, 27.
[80] NA, PP 1916–1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/1, August 6, 1914.
[81] Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, 20.

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supply commission on July 29. On the same day, the Governor's Office introduced a maximum tariff for the most necessary commodities. This measure was, however, immediately cancelled following protests from merchant circles and replaced with an obligation to clearly publicize prices.[82] The high demand for flour, bread, and other food items in the first days after the mobilization created an immediate small penury. On July 29, the price of 100 kg of flour had already gone from forty-three crowns to fifty crowns.[83] The panic of the first few days and the disruption on the markets quickly receded in the following months, which caused the Austrian government to plan insufficiently for the forthcoming shortages. The 1914 harvest was not as abundant as the previous one due to a lack of manpower. Students and boy scouts from the city were encouraged to replace men in the fields. There were also complaints of people from the cities going to the countryside to thieve. For instance, the district officer from Král. Vinohrady reported gangs of suburban inhabitants going to nearby fields to steal the freshly harvested grain. The military mobilization of gendarmes hampered the surveillance of fields.[84] The new war conditions rapidly disturbed the city's economic balance and its chain of supply as city dwellers feared for the future.

These fears also led small savers to rush to the banks to make sure their money was safe or to retrieve it. Men departing for the front also went in high numbers to cash in money before they left.[85] Authorities again attempted to limit the panic created by the declaration of war through the publication of announcements on street corners, as several posters from the Bohemian governor or the Mayor of Prague show. The public announcements tried to reassure citizens that their savings were not in danger. Banking institutions received regular requests to change paper money into gold, and the Bohemian governor aimed at reasserting the value of the state currency. He appealed to the population's patriotic spirit and underlined the priority given to military needs over civilian ones in terms of bare cash.[86] The multiplication of these warnings attests to their relative failure. On August 10, Governor Thun denounced "thoughtless" people spreading rumors that Austro–Hungarian money was not valid anymore and encouraged the population to report such individuals.[87] This defiance against paper money also meant that coins quickly went missing. As a result, some shoppers were prevented from buying the most common

[82] *Věstník obecní*, XXI, 13–14, 255.
[83] *Domov za války*, I, 309.
[84] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 18727/14, August 10, 1914.
[85] *Prager Zeitung*, July 28, 1914, 3.
[86] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, Vyhlášky, July 30, 1914.
[87] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, no. 17973, August 10, 1914.

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goods as no one would accept debts at such a time and banknotes could not be changed.[88] According to a parish chronicle, "in Prague, people went with 20 crown bills from one shop to the next and did not get anything anywhere. People without small change were forced to step out of the tramways."[89] These small scares illustrate the rupture caused by the war outbreak and epitomize the atmosphere of uncertainty in the city.[90]

The very peculiar atmosphere of the first few weeks started to change in September, as the war became more and more part of everyday life. It is also at that moment that the first mobilization incidents occurred in Prague after nearly two months without any trouble. On September 23, 1914, troops left the military barracks in Pohořelec in a disorderly way, often drunk and accompanied by women and children. Some were wearing the Slavic tricolor on their caps and Bohemian red and white flags were present. For the authorities, these demonstrations were worrying in themselves but also because they happened in the streets of Prague and could hence have much wider repercussions. As the governor noted: "Any illicit demonstration occurs much more openly here and can come to the notice of larger circles."[91] How can we interpret this change and what do these disturbances reveal?

Several reports note a change in atmosphere in September. A parish chronicle remarks that the population did not feel the "pressure of war" in the first few weeks "as if the mobilized soldiers had only gone to maneuvers … until the first wounded arrived in Prague and news of fallen men reached" the city.[92] Another chronicle recorded the shock: "When the trains brought to Prague the wounded from the battle against Serbia and Russia, horror and fear shook the senses of even the toughest."[93] The first transports of wounded soldiers had arrived in Prague between the end of August and the beginning of September.[94] In explaining the disorderly departure of troops in September, the governor mentioned a combination of factors but stressed the impact of the wounded men's arrival who had brought back stories from the battlefield. He insisted on their detrimental effect to the general mood: "The wounded [soldier] not only willingly relates his experiences but tends to exaggerate

[88] Žemla, *Praha v mobilisaci*, 27.
[89] AHMP, FÚ u sv. Vavřince Praha – Jinonice, Pamětní kniha, 131.
[90] On the financial crisis of 1914 see: Richard Roberts, *Saving the City: The Great Financial Crisis of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[91] Bohemian Governor to Prime Minister, September 24, 1914; Drašarová, Eva, and Jaroslav Vrbata (eds.), *Sborník dokumentů k vnitřnímu vývoji v českých zemích za 1. světové války 1914–1918* (Prague: Státní ústřední archiv, 1993), I, no. 33, 89.
[92] AHMP, Pamětní kniha fary sv. Matěje (v Šárce) Praha – Dejvice, 149.
[93] AHMP, FÚ Michle, Pamětní kniha, 91.
[94] *Prager Tagblatt*, September 4, 1914, 3.

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his complaints."[95] What historian Oswald Überegger has dubbed the "September shock" was by no means a Bohemian exception. Everywhere in Europe, the first casualties and the arrival of wounded soldiers turned the mood and influenced the new departures to the front.[96]

In Prague, the shock of the war's reality was heightened by the worrying rapidity of the Russian advance. Despite censorship and biased reporting in the newspapers, news of the first defeats in Galicia filtered through. As Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv, fifth city in the Empire, had fallen to the Russians on September 3, rumors amplified the Russian successes and reported Cracow as taken and Eastern Moravia as threatened.[97] The climate of fear and lack of reliable information fostered the formation and spread of alarming reports on the progress of enemy troops.[98] Some rural newspapers, for example, reported Prague as bombarded.[99] Although German nationalists and postwar Czech narratives have invited us to see Czechs as expecting and welcoming the Russians, the attitudes toward the possible invasion in autumn 1914 seem to have been more ambiguous. A gendarmerie report notices, for example, that exclamations such as "The Russians won't do us anything because we are Slavs" were more the expression of a fear than a sign of active support for invasion. He also emphasized that the population in Prague was above all satisfied when order was maintained.[100] This reaction highlights the complexity of what the army understood as "russophilism" in the first months of the war. The incidents of departing troops in Prague remained limited and need to be understood in the uncertain context of the rapidly moving battlefront in the Eastern part of the Empire.

The mobilization of troops and the outbreak of war brought rapid transformations to the urban landscape in Prague. The war was already inescapable in the daily spectacle of the city. Groups formed in front of official posters, listing the mobilized corps, the traffic limitations, the requisitions, and food provisions, or countering rumors. The crowds cheering troops on could be heard going through the liveliest parts of the city as well as the incessant traffic of soldiers. The increased militarization was immediately perceptible in the presence of uniformed men, the spread of news of military developments, and the restrictions in city life,

[95] Bohemian Governor to Minister President, September 24, 1914, *Sborník dokumentů*, I, no. 33, 88.
[96] Überegger, *Der andere Krieg*, 263; see also, Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914–1923* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 27.
[97] Mood report, Military Command, NA, PMV/R, ka 182, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 14991, October 19, 1914.
[98] For a comparable process in Berlin, see Altenhöner, *Kommunikation und Kontrolle*, 168.
[99] *Věstník obecní*, XXI, 13–14, August 27, 1914, 267.
[100] Gendarmerie Command to Bohemian Governor, NA, PMV/R, ka 182, no. 13369, September 26, 1914.

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giving precedence to military traffic. The conflict subordinated civilian needs to military ones in every domain, creating a hierarchical division.

The Changing Contours of the Civilian and Military Realms

As the war progressively turned into the backdrop of everyday life, the uniforms present in the streets marked a redefinition of the borders between the civilian and the military. Given the army's preeminence in prewar Austrian society, the separation was not novel, but the war gave it additional meaning. The home front is often portrayed as a symbolically feminine space deprived of men, all mobilized far away, but this representation overlooks the important military presence in wartime streetscapes.[101] In Prague, the uniforms of the recent recruits, of the troops stationed, and the convalescing soldiers all became part of the urban landscape. The visible differences between civilians and soldiers delineated new wartime hierarchies.

Uniforms had already proliferated in public space at the turn of the century. They imposed a visual order in cities, marking social identity and bearers of authority. Even nonarmy uniforms often borrowed elements from military garments to confer prestige to the wearer. The cut of nineteenth-century military uniforms facilitated an erect posture by constricting movements and forcing the wearer to stand upright, making them a symbol of status and masculinity.[102] Officers customarily wore their uniform and weapon in public space, as a signifier of their position in society. Regular parades made military uniforms part of urban spectacle.[103] Recollections from men who were children at the turn of the century mention the various colors of the parade uniforms worn by the regiments stationed in Prague:

[101] On the gendered division between front and home front see: Elisabeth Domansky, "Militarization and Reproduction in World War I Germany," in Geoff Eley (ed.), *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (University of Michigan Press, 1996), 427–464: For a critique, see Maureen Healy, "Introductory Remarks: Space, Chronology and the Habsburg Home Fronts," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 24, no. 2 (2017): 176–184; on gender and wartime uniforms, see Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 104–108.

[102] Arnaud-Dominique Houte, "Prestiges de l'uniforme. Policiers et gendarmes dans la France du XIXe siècle," *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 36 (2012): 153–165; Sarah Jones Weicksel, "To Look Like Men of War: Visual Transformation Narratives of African American Union Soldiers," *Clio: Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 40, no. 2 (2014): 137–152.

[103] On military parades, see Jakob Vogel, *Nationen im Gleichschritt: der Kult der "Nation in Waffen" in vgDeutschland und Frankreich, 1871–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); on uniforms in Germany, see Ute Frevert, *Die kasernierte Nation. Militärdienst und Zivilgesellschaft in Deutschland* (Munich: Beck, 2001), 244; on Habsburg military culture, see Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism*.

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The blue tunics of the infantry, the light blue of the cavalry, the brown ones of the artillery and train brightened up by colorful lapels on the collar and the arms, the ash grey of the "eleventh" [regiment], red orange of the "seventy fifth," grass green of the "hundred and second," dark green of the "twenty eighth" (of the Prague Pepíci [working-class men]), cherry red of the "seventy thirds."[104]

There were many voices more critical of the military, but it does not detract from its important prewar physical presence in Prague.[105]

With the outbreak of war, uniforms became an even more common sight everywhere. "The current aspect of our main promenades is livened up by flows of very numerous field uniforms," described *Národní listy*.[106] Among the uniforms "populating the Graben every evening instead of the student caps" were those of the train, cavalry, infantry, and medical corps.[107] Hats' shops on the Graben/na Příkopě were struggling as men stopped buying this quintessentially civilian headgear. Even women's fashion mirrored the colors of military uniforms: dark blue ("marine"), brown ("taupe"), dark green ("Hindenburg"), and gray ("Hötzendorf") dominated in clothes shops.[108] This unprecedented, overwhelming presence of uniforms in public space also signaled a fresh prestige for individuals.

The men newly dressed in uniform felt entitled to a public show of respect. The change from civilian to military identity conferred authority and the military pecking order was performed in public space. František Langer thus recalls that one of his friends, as a punishment, was obliged to go back and forth on one of the main thoroughfares (Ferdinand Avenue) and each time salute a young corporal. He was only eventually "freed" by a higher-ranking officer of his acquaintance who could in turn treat the corporal in the same way.[109] Soldiers enforced proper military salutations, even violently. An officer brutalized another officer's man-servant who had not properly saluted him on the street.[110] On one of the

[104] Oskar von Zaborsky, "So war's in Prag um 1900," *Prager Nachrichten*, 9 V, September 1954, 4; See also Wilhelm Weizsäcker, "Altprager Erinnerungen," *Prager Nachrichten*, 2 II, February 1951, 3.

[105] On militarism as a dividing factor in society, see Laurence Cole, Christa Hämmerle, and Martin Scheutz, eds, *Glanz – Gewalt – Gehorsam. Militär und Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie (1800 bis 1918)* (Essen: Klartext-Verl., 2011); on Czech society and the army, Jiří Rak and Martin Veselý ed. *Armáda a společnost v českých zemích v 19. a první polovině 20. století* (V Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, 2004).

[106] *Národní listy*, March 11, 1915, 5.

[107] Walter Michalitschka, "Wenn die Blätter fallen … Streiflichter der Erinnerung an den August 1914," *Prager Nachrichten*, 8 V, August 1954, 2.

[108] *Národní listy*, April 13, 1915, 2; *Ibid*., April 14, 1915, 3.

[109] František Langer, *Byli a bylo: vzpomínky* (Prague: Akropolis, 2003), 66.

[110] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PMV/R, ka 185, sig. 2 Böhmen, no. 20420, August 11, 1915.

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city's main squares, an ensign hit a soldier with his saber for failing to salute.[111] Another similar scene "caused a great stir among the inhabitants of the nearby houses and passers-by."[112] This violence brought the traditional military hierarchies into public space as they took on a heightened significance during the war.

The illicit use of uniforms reveals both the appeal of these garments and the various motives of those who wore them illegally.[113] The military commander himself often noticed in the city "persons in officer uniform," whose neglected aspect made a "disagreeable" impression. He supposed that these men were not real officers, who would not commit such mistakes, but individuals who used uniforms either to "shine" or for spying purposes: "the great number of officers currently in Prague and their constant rotation facilitates this activity."[114] The disguise sometimes served purely criminal purposes. A man entered a printing shop in Král. Vinohrady, in the uniform of a sergeant, pretended to have a military order and stole forty crowns.[115] The authority conferred by the uniform could be of great use. Men who presented themselves in uniform for false requisitions and metal collections became frequent enough by 1916 for the Bohemian governor to ask to publish warnings in the press, explaining that it was everyman's duty to report any suspicious person in uniform.[116] The municipal council in Smíchov placed an announcement to warn against the purchase of fake military medals, which shows that there was a market for it.[117]

Wearing a military uniform without serving was of course punished and represented a transgression of the division between civilians and the military. A twenty-two-year-old woman was, for example, arrested at the Franz-Joseph train station where she was attempting to depart to the front in a uniform she bought. She was sentenced to forty-eight hours in prison.[118] A prostitute was similarly arrested and punished in Žižkov for wearing the

[111] Excerpted daily police report, February 15, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5058, no. 7735.
[112] Excerpted daily police report, June 2, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5063, no. 26367.
[113] On Britain, see Laura Ugolini, "The Illicit Consumption of Military Uniforms in Britain, 1914–1918," *Journal of Design History*, 24 (2011): 125–138.
[114] Officers needed therefore to carry an identification document with them: Military Command order, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3014, sig. M 31/2, no. 3742, January 25, 1916. For an example of a man arrested for unauthorized use of a lieutenant uniform in December 1914, see NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5056, no. 37495 (report from Prague, no. 80).
[115] *Čech*, August 11, 1915, 8.
[116] Memorandum from the Bohemian governor, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5083, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 11525, April 16, 1916.
[117] Announcement, August 5, 1916, AHMP, KPSS, ka 10.
[118] *Dělnické listy*, July 14, 1915, 7.

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uniform of one of her clients.[119] While the aims were different, these two cases show the sanction against women who stepped into the military realm. The rules for uniform wearing grew stricter, and by 1917, the unauthorized wearing of any part of a uniform could lead to a fine of 200 crowns or fourteen days arrest.[120] Conversely, reverting to a civilian outfit for soldiers was also a grave offense. A deserting infantry soldier who had fled from an army hospital was found drunk "in civilian clothes," betrayed by his army tag after being searched.[121]

In wartime, the uniform symbolized the division between the highly valued frontline sacrifice and home front passivity. Children's "military" costumes revealed aspirations to manly participation. *Národní listy* reported on the many children or youth in gray uniforms seen in the streets around Christmas 1914.[122] Wearing it could give a taste of the soldiery world, as in the case of two teenage Polish refugees arrested in a railway station's toilets for trying on the uniform of a Polish legionary.[123] Even Prague was affected by the moral climate that revered uniformed men and reviled the "shirkers" avoiding army service.[124] An anonymous letter signed "Dr. Truth, reservists" complained about the "unfair" behavior of a Young Czech politician who paraded in restaurants and cafés, having evaded his "duty" at a time when everyone had to fulfil theirs.[125] In this context, wrongful appropriation of military symbols was highly monitored by the authorities and the soldiers. Two reserve officers denounced a magistrate's assistant and a private employee who had pretended to be lieutenants in a wine bar.[126] The division between civilians and military was strictly enforced. When a battalion agreed to distribute black and gold armbands to men who had been exempted 'from service, the Military Command strongly condemned the practice, which would have subverted the hierarchy between those who served and those who stayed home.[127]

Yet, civilians were often keen to visually demonstrate their adherence to military values. Men on the home front appropriated military signs

[119] Police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 23491, May 17, 1915.
[120] AHMP, KPSS, ka 10, i.č. 198, decree February 26, 1917.
[121] Police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5069, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 34128, July 13, 1915.
[122] *Národní listy*, December 22, 1914, 3.
[123] Police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5058, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 10661, March 4, 1915; on the war's appeal among adolescents, see Manon Pignot, *L'appel de la guerre: Des adolescents au combat, 1914–1918* (Paris: Anamosa, 2019).
[124] On the language of sacrifice in wartime societies, see John Horne, "Public Opinion and Politics," in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester: Wiley, 2010), 283.
[125] Letter to the police chief in Czech, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5057, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 2298, January 14, 1915.
[126] Police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5068, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 32569, July 4, 1915.
[127] Copy of Military Command Order, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3032, sig. M 34/11, January 17, 1917.

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and decorations to situate themselves within the imperial war effort. A "greeting exemption" badge depicting a little hat could be worn by men who volunteered for the war effort, signaling that they did not have to take off their hat as a greeting but could use the military salute instead.[128] Engineers who did not serve were allowed to wear a similar uniform to the military engineers with a white armband.[129] The new wartime hierarchies preserved existing class hierarchies.

Access to some form of military prestige was granted to middle-class men. The local civic corps (*Bürgerkorps/měšťanské sbory*) embodied this civilian bourgeois war activism. The formation was part of a longer tradition of municipal militias in the Habsburg Empire.[130] By the early twentieth century, their function was more linked to social prestige than military efficiency: they trained in shooting and participated in uniform in local official celebrations. As younger men departed for the front, the corps in wartime was mostly composed of older men (judging from the lists of those decorated during the war, born in the 1850s and 1860s).[131] For middle-aged men too old to serve, it was a way to perform service to the fatherland in wartime. Hanuš Burger, however, suspected his father to have joined the corps to avoid conscription. In his memoirs, the future theater director recalls: "the uniform of the City Guard was magnificent. It was black and resembled a staff officer's. My father looked wonderful in it. […] [O]n the street he was mistaken by soldiers for a lieutenant. I was extremely ashamed when I saw him salute back."[132] The corps' wartime service consisted of generous donations to war charities and war loans, watchmen duties over army buildings (replacing army guards), and the military training of the youth.[133] Other middle-class institutions were relied on to perform watch duties, such as the Sokols and the volunteer firemen. In the Prague suburbs, local authorities asked them to form voluntary police units to lead watch rounds.[134] By October 1914, 4,000 Sokol members served as security units all over Bohemia.[135]

In June 1915, following Ministry of Defense guidelines, the Prague civic corps created a youth defense organization (*Jugendwehr/junobrana*)

[128] *Prager Tagblatt*, July 9, 1915, supplement, 2.
[129] *Prager Tagblatt*, February 1, 1915, 4.
[130] See Claire Morelon, "Respectable citizens: Civic Militias, Social Order, and Local Patriotism in Habsburg Austria (1890–1920)," *Austrian History Yearbook* 51 (2020): 193–219.
[131] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/4 and NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2895, sig. A 18/37.
[132] Hanuš Burger, *Der Frühling war es wert: Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1981), 30.
[133] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2895, sig. A 18/37, no. 15450; *Venkov*, August 17, 1914, 3.
[134] Report, Král. Vinohrady district office, August 31, 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 17366.
[135] Report on the Sokols' activities in wartime, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5073, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 5809/14, October 26, 1914.

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that was supposed to prepare schoolboys for war. Youth guards had mushroomed in Habsburg Austria, shortly before 1914, with civic militias often at the helm.[136] Members of the municipal corps taught pupils from the Prague secondary schools several times a week. On Sundays, the corps organized maneuvers in the military grounds of the city (Motol or Pískový vrh/Sandberg).[137] One of them, organized at Letná on 1 and January 2, 1916, was open to the public to attend against a small fee (Figure 1.2). The goal was both to raise funds and to show the usefulness of the initiative.[138] The organization even had its own band. Some of these parades were organized in uniform and others in civilian clothes. The search for uniforms remained an issue, as the corps had trouble raising enough funds for this purpose.[139] The Bohemian authorities had refused to provide official uniforms for financial reasons and also



Figure 1.2 Secondary school students during a Youth Defense parade, 1916
Source: *Národní filmový archiv*

[136] Morelon, "Respectable Citizens," 200.
[137] City Infantry Corps to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/I, no. 25672, September 1, 1915 and no. 27427, September 10, 1915 (numerous other examples in that file for August, September, October).
[138] Governor's Office to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/I, no. 36835, December 27, 1915.
[139] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2908, sig. B 41/II, no. 3930, April 20, 1917.

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to avoid to make the training look like "playing soldiers." Armbands in black and gold or regional colors were, however, authorized.[140] The youth defense acted as a local transition mechanism from peace to war for young men. Other youth organizations during the war anticipated the wartime service of those who would be called up in the near future, such as the Czech scouts (*Junáci*) who took an active part in military training and war relief actions.[141]

The conflict gave a particular hierarchized significance to the separation between citizens and soldiers and uniforms were the visual marker of these separate identities. As such, they were susceptible to many uses and misuses. They became the focus of attempts to stretch and rework the boundaries of the military and civilian roles, and of strengthened rules to enforce them.

Encounters and Violence in Public Space

Another facet of the military culture in urban space, less positive or aspirational, but also indicative of reinforced hierarchies and the accompanying sense of entitlement, was the occasional violence in civilian/military relations. The daily encounters between military personnel and civilians on the streets of Prague sometimes led to the eruption of small clashes. These conflicts registered in daily police reports exemplify the often tolerated violence practiced by military troops. Various soldiers were present in the city: regiments from Hungary temporarily transferred to Prague (infantry regiments number 2 and 68), convalescing men, local departing troops, and soldiers from the reserve units. Some of them came with their experience of the battlefield; many were new to the city and some could not communicate well with the local population.[142]

These incidents labelled by the authorities as *Militärexzesse* (military excesses) ranged from verbal confrontations with civilians or policemen to acts of physical violence. While these public disturbances are in continuity with conscription rituals and prewar military behavior, they also reveal the increased militarization of civilian space during the war. To be sure, civil–military tensions and violence against civilians existed before 1914 in Austrian society. Prague, as a garrison town, was not experiencing civil–military clashes for the first time. For example, the notion that

[140] Memorandum from the Bohemian Governor, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3129, sig. St 34/11, November 5, 1915; on the *Jugendwehr* in Freiburg, see Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life*, 512–515.

[141] *Junák: časopis pro dospívající mladež* 2, 1, January 15, 1915, 15.

[142] On language in the army, see Tamara Scheer, "Language Diversity and Loyalty in the Habsburg Army, 1868–1918" (Habilitationsschrift, University of Vienna, 2020).

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an officer needed to defend his honor when a man insulted him or the army led to sometimes violent clashes.[143] Nevertheless, in Prague, none of these incidents were as frequent or violent as they became during the war. The wartime "excesses" were the product of a wartime culture that increasingly subordinated the civilian world to military values.

Combing through police reports, I found sixty-five incidents in Prague involving military personnel in the year 1915.[144] The "excesses" involved insults or threats to civilians or policemen, often using bayonets or revolvers. In many cases, the fights resulted in physical wounds varying from bloody noses to bayonet cuts and culminating in the killing of a policeman in December 1915.[145] Cases of sexual violence also occasionally feature in the reports: one rape, two sexual assaults, and one abuse of schoolgirls.[146] The number of incidents fell to three in 1916, but this seems to have mostly reflected a change in reporting: after September 1915, the Prague Military Command asked to only be informed by the police of the most important incidents.[147]

The various weapons routinely carried by soldiers meant that conflicts easily escalated. The motives for these fights vary, but they have in common the presence of weapons in public space. Soldiers coming back from battle brought back ammunition and weapons with them. The curiosity of the public for these objects prompted the Prague Military Command to search incoming wounded transports for ammunition upon arrival.[148] Weapons

[143] See deposition from Leopold K., August 3, 1911, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/34, no. 16137; on officers defending honor against civilians, see István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 128–130; for another clash between officers and students, Police Headquarters to Military Command, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/28, no. 23958, November 7, 1909; on prewar military excesses in Trento, see Nicola Fontana, "Trient als Festungs- und Garnisonsstadt: Militär und zivile Bevölkerung in einer k.u.k. Festungsstadt 1880–1914," in *Glanz – Gewalt – Gehorsam*, 194–197.

[144] from the different daily police reports transmitted to the Ministry of Interior: NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 182–190 and to the Bohemian Governor, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5051-5078.

[145] Daily police report, December 20, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5078, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 51878/15.

[146] Daily police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5072, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 38612, August 24, 1915; NA, PMV/R, ka 186, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 22706, October 22, 1915; Excerpted daily police report, February 3, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5058, no. 6096; Excerpted daily police report, June 24, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5064, no. 30942.

[147] Military Command to Police Headquarters, September 1, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5063, no. 39436.

[148] ÖStA, KA, Terr, Befehle, K62, Nr 7047, May 10, 1915; for a similar attempt at control on weapon circulation in France, see Emmanuelle Cronier, "L'échappée belle: permissions et permissionnaires du front à Paris pendant la Première Guerre mondiale" (Phd dissertation, Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne, 2005), 160; Violent assaults by soldiers seem to have been less prevalent in Paris, see *Ibid.*, 565.

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were also sent as trophies by relatives from the front.[149] The war necessarily implied an increased circulation of weapons, even in the hinterland.

The majority of "excesses" reported by the police took place at night with alcohol featuring in most cases. Pub brawls with civilians or among soldiers led to the intervention of the police in the tavern itself or in the streets nearby.[150] Unsurprisingly, the taverns in question were often located near the major army barracks of the city. During the war years, soldiers were assiduous patrons of cafés, cabarets, and beer halls. In his memoirs, cabaret artist Jiří Červený recalls the overwhelming presence of men in uniform in these establishments.[151] During a military police raid after hours in the cabaret "Lucerna" near Wenceslas Square in 1917, the inspecting major found, "to his surprise," many soldiers and even officers among the guests hiding in one of the secret cellars of the club.[152] Many found ways to circumvent the strict regulations of wartime as for them Prague represented the last taste of civilian life.

The war introduced time restrictions on the sale of alcohol. In Bohemia, pubs, cafés, and restaurants had to close at 12 p.m. (with possible exceptions until 2 a.m. for better Prague establishments, reduced to 1 a.m. after January 1916). The sale of spirits was severely curtailed (forbidden after 5 p.m. or on Sundays) and no alcohol could be served to intoxicated persons. The police measures particularly targeted soldiers, and especially departing troops. Wine or liquor could not be sold to military personnel in a radius of 150 meters of train stations.[153] Pub owners also refused to serve beer to soldiers after 9 p.m.[154]

Class prejudices played were visible in the repression of excessive alcohol consumption. The army found it concerning to see officers and

[149] Example of a man who brought 6 Serbian weapons sent by his brother to the Military Command, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5063, no. 39436, April 29, 1915, Military Command to Governor's Office.

[150] On alcohol-related clashes in France, see Stéphane Le Bras, "Tracking the 'Enemy Within': Alcoholisation of the Troops, Excesses in Military Order, and the French Gendarmerie," in Jonas Campion, Laurent Lopez, and Guillaume Payen (eds.), *European Police Forces and Law Enforcement in the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2019), 45–64.

[151] Jiří Červený, *Červená sedma* (Prague: Orbis, 1959), 125.

[152] Report from the military police, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3137, sig T 15/3, January 4, 1917.

[153] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5050, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 17288, August 8, 1914; Announcement, August 5, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5087, no. 24157/15; Announcement, December 31, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5079, no. 163/16; on alcohol consumption limitation in Britain, see Robert Duncan, *Pubs and Patriots: The Drink Crisis in Britain During World War One* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).

[154] Excerpted daily police report, March 12, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5059, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 12187.

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men patronizing the same establishments. The military commander complained that officers in Prague had been seen in "very obscure locales" where troops would go. He recommended going to establishments befitting their ranks: "every man must, as he enters a locale, immediately sense whether his distinction fits in this milieu or not." He also warned against staying out after midnight when "all the excesses take place."[155] Police stations in all Prague neighborhoods drew long lists of the pubs deemed unproper for officers. Just in Prague's Old Town, over eighty pubs were considered disreputable, including *U (zlatého) tygra*, one of the oldest and most famous beer halls in the city.[156]

Officers and Cafés

Purkyně Square concentrated most of the upmarket establishments considered as acceptable for officers in the suburb: two cafés and three restaurants there made it on the list. One of them was the famous Hlavova, an elegant and spacious café with large windows overlooking the square, which gathered the Czech intelligentsia of journalists, students, and artists. A convalescing lieutenant mixed up in a fight in 1917 declared having spent the evening at Hlavova in the company of another officer. One of the only other reputable cafés in Vinohrady on the list, the café "Nizza," was located a few blocks away and more frequented by German-speakers. In a summer night in 1915, an officer reprimanded a young man at the entrance of the Nizza for brushing up against the lady who accompanied him. The young man reacted angrily and cried: "Don't be impudent!" "I am not impudent, I am an Austrian officer," replied the officer and gave him three or four slaps.[157]

The restrictions on the serving of alcohol were common sources of violence in Prague pubs. Two soldiers from the twenty-eighth regiment threatened with their weapon a waiter who had declined to serve them beer and chased him down the street. As the owner shut the tavern's

[155] Station commander order, December 4, 1915, NA PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/65, no. 34946.

[156] Police Headquarters to police stations, December 2, 1915, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/65, no. 34652.

[157] List of establishments in Vinohrady, December 14, 1915, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/65, no. 34652; Deposition by lieutenant H., NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3014, sig. M 33/13, no. 11704, June 16, 1917; on the Nizza incident, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/61, no. 25322, August 28, 1915.

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doors while they were outside, they then stormed the doors with their bayonets.[158] On another night, a soldier who did not get served beer and was reminded of the restrictions "provoked such an excess" that a policeman had to be called in. He did not relent and threatened the policeman with his bayonet.[159] The soldiers directed their anger at the pub owners and policemen trying to enforce the rules, but also resented the unfairness of civilians being allowed to continue drinking. In an incident in April 1915, as a soldier was prevented from buying more beer, another patron jokingly took his glass away and received several bayonet wounds.[160]

In August 1914, the Military Command had set up night patrols in Prague to watch private property but also control pubs and send soldiers away. The patrols were supposed to "punish excesses in the strictest manner" and positively influence relations with the population, "so that people see that their superiors take care of them."[161] But, in practice, they were sometimes themselves responsible for excesses. In January 1915, a military patrol who refused to leave a pub in the early morning hours gave a bloody nose to the policeman trying to expel them.[162] Two civilians were even arrested because they had criticized a patrol for drinking beer in a pub when patrols were supposed to deter other soldiers from drinking.[163]

The violence was often accompanied with a sense of entitlement which equated active military service with a new form of impunity. The authority of the law and of the policemen enforcing it was no longer recognized. The fact that arrested soldiers had to be referred to the military undermined the authority of policemen. The Military Command asked the police not to use chains because it was felt as dishonoring.[164] A soldier who had fallen asleep on the steps of the Marian Column in the middle of Old Town Square and was woken up by a policeman for the "impropriety of his behavior" insulted him: "You bastard, police rascal, why are you waking me up, you are going around with your feathers, go

[158] Excerpted daily police report, January 19, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5057, no. 3452.
[159] NA, PMV/R, ka 186, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 22602, October 21, 1915.
[160] Excerpted daily police report, April 2, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5060, no. 15784.
[161] Military Command Order no. 15, August 12, 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 18463.
[162] Excerpted daily police report, January 31, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5057, no. 5288.
[163] Excerpted daily police report, July 26, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5070, no. 35223.
[164] Military Command to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 25/2, no. 32569, November 12, 1915.

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over there to shoot!"[165] Soldiers, and even more so officers, emphasized their superior position in wartime hierarchies. During an altercation in the street, an officer retorted to a policeman: "I am a lieutenant and you are only a common policeman."[166] Similarly, a policeman who stopped noisy revelers on the street at 3 a.m. was accused of overstepping his duty by an army officer leaving for the front on the next day.[167]

The elegant *Café Orient*, which had just opened two years earlier with complete Cubist furnishings, was the scene of several clashes between officers and the police. It was located in the old town, close to the main barracks on Joseph square. In December 1915, an officer who had fallen asleep drunk wounded with his saber the hand of the café owner waking him up.[168] The military hierarchy accused the police of having exaggerated the incident.[169] A month later, an officer waiting for his colleagues outside the café was shoved by a drunken butcher. In retaliation, he slapped the man and struck him with his saber. A crowd of a hundred prostitutes and workers quickly gathered and berated the officers, shouting: "pfui, Hungarians." The police arrived and tried to ascertain the cause of the fight. One of the officers reprimanded the policeman: "You are also a half soldier, you see that I am an officer, address me in a more proper manner! and see that the crowd gets dispersed!" A few days later, the café owner went to the police to report officers staying later than the official closing hour to celebrate their departure to the front. In light of these incidents, the Military Command ended up forbidding officers from frequenting the café because the owner was perceived as damaging their reputation. In order to save his business, the owner made a donation to war invalids to help remove the ban.[170] These incidents show the ambivalence toward the public order disturbances created by the presence of soldiers: the police needed to balance military demands in a context of war, while pub owners wanted to keep regular clients.

As can also be seen in this last case, the conflict between Prague residents and the soldiers stationed there sometimes assumed national overtones. In Prague, it was to be expected that the animosity between

[165] Police report, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3026, sig. M 34/2, no. 131, May 10, 1916.
[166] Deposition by the policeman, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3014, sig. M 33/11, no. 1199, November 10, 1916; on policemen's diminished authority in France, see Emmanuel Saint-Fuscien, *À vos ordres?: la relation d'autorité dans l'armée française de la Grande guerre* (Paris: Éditions de EHESS, 2011), 119.
[167] See file, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3014, sig. M 33/15, no. 1387, February 2, 1918.
[168] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 21557, May 8, 1915.
[169] Military Command to Bohemian Governor, May 20, 1915, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, no. 15766.
[170] Depositions of the officers and of the café owner, January 4, 1916, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3014, sig. M 33/1.

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these two groups intersected with Czech/German rivalries. For example, a corporal hit a man in the face for speaking Czech in a pub and called him a "Czech dog" (*böhmischer Hund*).[171] This insult crops up in several altercations between civilians and military men. Conversely, a Czech soldier berated two German-speakers on the street, claiming that they should not speak German in Prague.[172] Hostility toward German-allied soldiers was also perceptible. A group of convalescing soldiers from Germany, admiring the astronomical clock on Old Town Square, were insulted by a well-clothed man who spat in front of them.[173] But much of the nationally motivated animosity toward soldiers was directed toward the Hungarian regiments newly transferred to the city. The language barrier, greater than with German-speakers, probably played a role in the distance between the two groups. Misunderstandings heightened hostility. A Hungarian soldier denounced members of a sports club as spies because he overheard them use the word "Russia," the only word he understood in Czech.[174] Military authorities noted the antipathy toward the Hungarians among Czechs who resented their exclusive use of Hungarian in public.[175] A vegetable seller was reported as saying: "Ever since you Hungarians have been here, you've acted as if you were big lords."[176] Teenagers in Prague's western suburbs threw stones at the horses of Hungarian soldiers on their way to the Motol training ground and called them "Hungarian dogs, Hungarian swine."[177] The priest in the nearby village of Jinonice reported that the Hungarian soldiers housed there left an "unpleasant impression," begging for bread, sometimes stealing it, and with officers beating their men.[178] Not all the men from these two regiments were Hungarian-speakers. One of the regiments was from a majority Hungarian-speaking region, but the other was from Transylvania and included a significant minority of Romanian-speakers.

Violent night-time "excesses" did not improve relations with the local population. In June 1915, a group of Hungarian soldiers trying to enter an already closed brothel in Malá Strana at 3 a.m. woke the neighbors

[171] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5069, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 34130, July 14, 1915.
[172] Deposition of Peter H., January 1, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5057, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 2416.
[173] Deposition of Albert P. and others, November 15, 1915, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, M 24/64.
[174] Police report, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, M 24/68, December 14, 1915.
[175] Mood report, Military Command, June 20, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5072, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 38599. The report mentions a censored article in *Národní listy*.
[176] Mood report, Military Command, October 30, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5079, no. 762.
[177] Military Command to Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5080, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 3462, January 20, 1916.
[178] AHMP, FÚ Jinonice, Pamětní kniha, 137.

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who came out to their windows to complain about the noise. The soldiers threw rocks at them and broke two windows.[179] A week later, a group of Hungarian soldiers loudly celebrated the recovery of Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv by Habsburg troops in a hotel in the same neighborhood. As the police escorted them to the military authorities, they attacked the police officers with their bayonets with the approval of an officer. The policemen were left wounded, lying in the street.[180] Fights broke out in pubs over the playing of Hungarian songs or insults to the Hungarian nation.[181] The killing of a policeman on a cold December night in 1915 by a Hungarian soldier accused of stealing a watch marked a high point in the hostility. The newspaper *Národní listy* described a "case of unheard-of brutalization" and remarked that a large crowd gathered "angry at the perpetrator of the murderous attack and his kind."[182]

The presence of the crowd reveals the very public nature of these outbursts of violence, which took place in city streets. Police reports frequently mention that the incidents quickly generated gatherings and onlookers often took sides. For example, a large group of people immediately assembled on Wenceslas Square as a drunken aspirant refused to be led away by a cadet sergeant. The main concern of the more senior officer who came to discipline them both was to lead them into a house on a side street in order to avoid "attracting further attention."[183] Officers feared for the image of the army and complained about Prague crowds interfering as they were disciplining men in the street. The crowd's haranguing of an officer undermined his prestige: the "big city curiosity" subverted traditional hierarchies and easily "morph[ed] into the public shaming of a superior."[184] As a soldier was reluctantly escorted by a patrol through the streets of Malá Strana, a group of fifty people came to his help to resist his arrest.[185] Officers tried to impose an authority that was threatened by urban crowds.

[179] Daily police report, June 15, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 28937; On civilian-military tensions around prostitution, see Nancy Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 228.

[180] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 30635, June 23, 1915.

[181] Excerpted daily police report, February 12, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5058, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 7494; excerpted daily police report, August 12, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5071, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 37261.

[182] *Národní listy*, December 20, 1915, 3; Daily police report, December 20, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5078, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 51878/15.

[183] Excerpted daily police report, March 12, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5059, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 12187.

[184] Officers of the IR 2 to Military Command, April 16, 1915 and April 20, 1915, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/50, no. 11868.

[185] Excerpted daily police report, August 16, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5072, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 37972.

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Although the small fleeting crowds who gathered around the soldiers sometimes took their side, overall, they tried to defend the perceived victims, recruits or civilians. Two women who were pestered by a military patrol were defended by passersby. The patrol, in turn, then threatened the civilians with their bayonets.[186] The violence by soldiers became a form of public spectacle in the city. As a patrol arrested by mistake a soldier who was walking with his wife and she screamed, a rumor quickly spread among the assembled public that a soldier had been wounded by the patrol.[187] The police often needed back-up not only to resolve the incident but also to disperse the crowds.

The military was keen to minimize the incidents involving soldiers and even accused the police of exaggeration. After two soldiers caused a stir and a huge crowd gathering by destroying beer glasses on Loreta Square, the officer in the nearby Franz Joseph barracks refused to give their names to the police.[188] This lack of cooperation with the police was frequent. In a pub brawl between civilians and soldiers, the police defended the civilians while the patrol took the side of the soldiers. As the police tried to enter the barracks to take the soldiers' names for report, they were pushed out by the squadron leader.[189] Arrested soldiers were immediately released to the military authorities who were then judging their own men and seemed to have, on the whole, behaved relatively leniently. In an incident in front of military barracks where a postal employee was repeatedly stabbed by a soldier and had to be taken to the hospital, the police could not find any witness among the officers, who described the whole affair as "insignificant."[190]

For the Military Command in Prague, the police reports themselves contributed to the poor relations between soldiers and the locals. "We can hear from various places that the Czech population – particularly in Prague – wishes for the immediate transfer of Hungarian battalions as soon as peace is declared. Maybe the reports of the police authorities and local authorities, which portray the discipline failures of the men from these replacement battalions in a stark light, are not devoid of the aforementioned tendentiousness. These misconducts – mostly assignable to small causes – grow then substantially in the report chain between

[186] Excerpted daily police report, June 4, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5063, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 26534.
[187] Daily police report, July 27, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5071, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 35324.
[188] NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5064, no. 30635, June 23, 1915.
[189] Excerpted daily police report, February 11, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5058, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 7492.
[190] NA, PMV/R, ka 189, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 28716, December 10, 1916.

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administration and army."[191] Following military complaints, the Prague Chief of Police issued a reminder to keep reports on excesses objective.[192]

The sharp decline in the records of violence by soldiers after 1916 does not necessarily indicate that the situation fully improved. The Prague Military Command noticed that the "almost daily incidents, which sometimes degenerated into serious assaults, rarely occurred in the year 1916." The Military Command's assumption that this decrease revealed better relations between civilians and military personnel seems however doubtful.[193] By then, the police probably underreported these incidents under pressure from the military. The generalization of the leave system in 1916 could have been expected to lead, on the contrary, to an increase in disturbances mitigated by the introduction of a military police in October 1916, which helped discipline the soldiers in the city.[194] It is more likely that incidents continued to happen but were less consistently recorded. In April 1918, for example, a quarrel between a Czech soldier and a Hungarian infantry man turned into a more serious attack by Hungarian soldiers against a crowd assembled on Invalids' Square, where shots were fired into the crowd and four people wounded.[195]

The visible and increased presence of soldiers in the streets of Prague imprinted the hierarchies of wartime onto the urban space. The preeminence of the military over civilians was evinced by the prestige of the now ubiquitous uniform, but also by everyday incidents of low-level violence. Night-time "excesses," often taking place near the major military barracks of the city, revealed the tensions of authority between civilians and soldiers, which foreshadowed other conflicts between military and civilian authorities over the control of urban space.

Military Control and the Spread of Information

"Prague lives under a painful yoke of uncertainty. People do not trust the newspapers or the official news of permanent victories. […] People are arrested and put on trial. Fear and mistrust spreads."[196] In an entry for the end of August 1914, a war chronicle tried to convey the depressing

[191] Mood report, Military Command, October 19, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5078, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 22919.
[192] Memorandum from the Police Chief, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 24/61, no. 27741, October 31, 1915.
[193] Mood report, Military Command, NA, PMV/R, ka 190, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 1115, December 31, 1916.
[194] Military Command to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3013, sig. M 30/20, no. 35572, November 2, 1916.
[195] *Prager Tagblatt*, April 27, 1918, 10.
[196] Vožický, *Kronika*, 26.

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atmosphere reigning in Prague at the start of the war, the social relations rendered more difficult by a regime of suspicion and arbitrary arrests. The repressive measures in Bohemia were not as severe as in other provinces of Austria–Hungary, where the military takeover of civilian affairs was more complete, but increased censorship and curbed freedoms nonetheless bred uneasiness and alternative circuits of information.

This leaden atmosphere in the city was a direct result of the state of exception measures imposed by the state at war. The last days of July (25th to 31st) saw the introduction of several emergency laws, which suspended for an indefinite period the main constitutional rights (freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, right of association and free assembly, and the sanctity of the home and correspondence).[197] This set of laws and the systematic use of paragraph 14 of the 1867 constitution to rule by decree formed the basis of a new regime, which has been characterized as "bureaucratic-military dictatorship."[198]

Throughout the war, Prague remained part of the regions of the "hinterland" (with Upper and Lower Austria, and most of Moravia), which were not placed under direct military control and where summary justice was not used.[199] Nevertheless, the Military Command came to play an increased role in the life of the city, in its administration and economic management. Judgment by military courts was extended to civilians in the case of political crimes (high treason, lese-majesty, disturbance of public order). The last offense, especially, meant that a political statement in public space could lead to a military trial. Additionally, workers in factories for war production were also subject to military law. Through the Law on Wartime Procurement (1912), many of the city's factories were "militarized." Workers were de facto drafted, subject to military discipline and their social rights to organize and strike suspended. Disobedience could lead to physical punishment or prison. The factory administrators were military officers who exerted a surveillance on the hundred thousand workers they supervised.[200] Many civilians in Prague,

[197] *Reichsgesetzblatt für die im Reichsrathe vertretene Königreiche und Länder 1914*, Nr 156–158, July 26, 1914, 821–826; On the War Surveillance Office, see Tamara Scheer, *Die Ringstraßenfront. Österreich-Ungarn, das Kriegsüberwachungsamt und der Ausnahmezustand während des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Vienna: BMLVS, 2010).

[198] Mark Cornwall, "Disintegration and Defeat the Austro-Hungarian Revolution," in *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary: a Multinational Experiment in Early Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. by Mark Cornwall (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 181–182.

[199] Hungary was subject to separate emergency legislation, on wartime repression in Hungary, see Irina Marin, "World War I and Internal Repression: The Case of Major General Nikolaus Cena," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 44 (2013): 195–208.

[200] Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 69–70; See also ÖStA, KA, NL, 6 (B), Zanantoni, Eduard, "Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben…," 424. I thank Jonathan Gumz for directing me to this source.

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on the street or in factories, were suddenly potentially under the threat of being subject to military justice.

The emergency measures constituted a major shift in Austrian politics. The political administration's role changed and it became the "handmaiden and executive of the military."[201] The seeds for this transformation were arguably sown before the war, but for ordinary citizens, the way they related to their state and its representatives was perceptibly altered.[202] The censorship of private correspondence, for example, appeared arbitrary. A man frustrated that his letters (in German) did not arrive had learned in a café that the reason was probably censorship. He was brought to the police station for his negative comments against censorship in a subsequent letter and defended himself explaining that he did not write anything "objectionable" or "dangerous to the state."[203] A Czech-speaking technical bank director complained to the police as he felt insulted "as a proper and irreproachable citizen" by the censorship of his private correspondence. He presented in great detail his verifiable "patriotic action": first his service in the gendarmerie, then his wartime war relief actions. He had used his personal car to transport wounded soldiers from the train station to the several hospitals in Prague, even at night. He had financially supported the war effort by signing war loans, giving to the Red Cross, and contributing to other war causes, including economic activities in Galicia. He concluded: "I have always shown my patriotism in every direction as best as possible and it offends me painfully all the more that my private letters are opened by police provision."[204] As Deak and Gumz point out, the emergency laws brought more uncertainty and chaos and made the state less predictable.[205] From the viewpoint of Prague inhabitants, these measures certainly felt like a new course.

The stricter regime of press censorship also bred rumors, as official information increasingly appeared unreliable. Newspapers published official war bulletins and any sensitive military information, unpatriotic

[201] Deak, "The Great War and the Forgotten Realm," 374; on the role of the military's extended powers in undermining the *Rechtsstaat*, see Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 393–395; Alessandro Livio, "The Wartime Treatment of the Italian-Speaking Population in Austria–Hungary," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 24, no. 2 (2017): 185–199. On civil servants and emergency laws, see Peter Becker, "Recht, Staat und Krieg: 'Verwirklichte Unwahrscheinlichkeiten' in der Habsburgermonarchie," *Administory*, 1, no. 1 (2018): 28–53.

[202] For arguments on prewar illiberalism in the monarchy, see Laurence Cole, "Visions and Revisions of Empire"; Cornwall, "Treason in an Era of Regime Change."

[203] Deposition (October 7, 1916) and original letter (September 25, 1916), NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3076, sig. P 56/1, no. 27379.

[204] Deposition by Josef H., NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5089, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 31015/16, September 16, 1916.

[205] Deak and Gumz, "How to Break a State."

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content, or negative portrayal of the situation in the monarchy was suppressed. Censorship of the press was not a novelty of the war years, but it became preventive. The result was an increased number of blank spots, which alerted readers to the excerpts banned by the censor.[206] Nearly thirty newspapers in Prague were suspended for the duration of the war and even *Národní listy*, one of the main Czech newspapers, had to stop publication for eight days in December 1914.[207] In this context, what Maureen Healy called a "black market of information" flourished as an alternative source for a population anxious to learn about the development of the conflict.[208] A woman described in a letter how the information in newspapers was complemented by acquaintances and the transports of wounded: "[in newspapers] lately always situation unchanged, enemy attack repelled but yesterday I found out from a Sokol friend that Italy regained ground near the Adriatic. In Italy rages a terrible fight, in the last days there was such a big transport of wounded, as apparently never during the whole war."[209] Her friend lived next to the main train station and observed the daily arrival of wounded soldiers, as she explained to the police.[210] The military authorities attempted to quell this phenomenon, as they did not want worrying news from the front reaching the hinterland and frightening new recruits. To contain the habit among the civilian population, as from June 1915, a soldier could immediately arrest a person overheard spreading worrying rumors and take them to the nearest military authorities.[211]

A city like Prague concentrated many hubs where news was exchanged and transmitted: in cafés, at markets, around newspapers' offices, and at the train stations where wounded soldiers arrived.[212] As a soldier ironically mentioned in a letter: "Last night it was generally said that Warsaw was taken […] So, I went where the citizen goes to get some wisdom: to a café, where, however, everyone was just as smart as I myself already was."[213] Cafés (and pubs) were already in the prewar periods semipublic

[206] Mark Cornwall, "News, Rumour and the Control of Information in Austria-Hungary, 1914–1918," *History*, 77, no. 24 (1992): 53–54.
[207] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5081, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 6704/16, Annex III, February 28, 1916.
[208] Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 132.
[209] Letter (in Czech) from Josephine von U., April 23, 1916, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3076, sig. P 56/1, no. 16109.
[210] Deposition of Ludmila V. in *Ibid*.
[211] Military order: ÖStA, KA, Terr, Befehle, K 62, Nr 8686, June 14, 1915; Military Command to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, 8/1/92/19, no. 28068/15, June 12, 1915.
[212] See a man arrested at the train station for spreading rumors: case number 62, September 27, 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5056, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 37495/14 in 38436/14.
[213] Censored letter by Paul K. (in German), August 1, 1915, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3076, sig. P 56/1, no. 7922, March 9, 1916.

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places where people regularly went to gather information and read the press. This role was reinforced during the war, especially since they were heated amidst growing fuel shortages.[214] The alternative news circuits found there could contradict official reports. A man was arrested in December 1914 for (rightfully) reporting in a pub in Vršovice that newspapers were lying and that Belgrade had been retaken by the Serbs.[215]

The pubs' social function made them prime locations for the cases of everyday treason that led to military trials. By April 1915, 252 antistate incidents in the Prague police zone had led to arrests and prosecution by military courts, about half of them in relation to statements or gestures against the war, the government, or the Emperor.[216] Besides a few high-profile cases of treason by politicians, the large majority of these offenses were linked to comments on the war situation, often proffered under the influence of alcohol. This reality of wartime "treason" is aptly satirized in the most famous novel on Prague during wartime *The Good Soldier Švejk*. At the start of the novel, Švejk is arrested for politically insensitive remarks and taken to the Prague Police Headquarters. In his cell, five other men have also been arrested because of unintentional remarks on the Sarajevo assassination: "all, except one, had been taken in a pub, a wine cellar or a café."[217] A great majority of the recorded antistate incidents in Prague did indeed take place either in the street (often at night) or in a pub or café.[218] The absurdly flimsy motives of arrest in *Švejk* were mirrored in real life: two men, for example, were arrested for leaving the café "Nizza" as the imperial anthem was played.[219] Even pro-Serbian or Russian statements often reveal a will to provoke rather than actual connivance with the enemy. For example, a man shouted to the policemen arresting him: "you wait, scoundrels, when the Russian comes, he

[214] Gyáni, *Identity and the Urban Experience*; Eva Bendová, *Pražské kavárny a jejich svět* (Prague: Paseka, 2008).

[215] Case number 71, December 13, 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5056, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 37495/14 in 38436/14.

[216] Other offenses concerned crimes against the conduct of war such as helping desertion, price gouging, suspicion of spying, etc. See list of offenses in the Prague police zone until December 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5056, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 37495/14 in 38436/14, and then until April 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5060, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 360/15, April 9, 1915. By May 1915, the Prague military court had taken up a total of 650 cases including forty-eight dealing with high treason, see H. Louis Rees, *The Czechs during World War I: The Path to Independence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 17.

[217] Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and His Fortunes in the World War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), 16.

[218] See list of offenses in the Prague police zone until December 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5056, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 37495/14 in 38436/14.

[219] Cases 27 and 28, August 6, 1914, in *Ibid*.

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will straighten your laws!"[220] The consequences, however, were real: a drunken journeyman who had shouted on the street: "There is a nice order in Austria; […] the lords have everything in their hands […] Hail to Russia, may Russia win" was condemned to eight months imprisonment.[221] Sentences for lèse-majesté in public space were already handed out in prewar times but the wartime condemnations by military courts were on a much larger scale.[222]

Public establishments became places of mutual suspicion and the flurry of denunciations fostered arrests.[223] Following anonymous denunciations, pub owners in a few beer halls such as "u Fleků" hung signs at the end of August 1914 forbidding patrons from singing or discussing politics.[224] Owners were thereby trying to avoid responsibility for what happened in their locales: the denunciation of the presence of an escaped Russian POW officer in a café led, for example, to an investigation of the café owner.[225] Predictably, many denunciations reflected the Czech–German national conflict in Prague: for example, the owner of the café Continental, mostly frequented by German-speakers, reported to the Military Command that preparations for celebrating the Russians' arrival had been discussed in the café of the nearby Czech Representation house.[226] False rumors about Austria were also spread by a clique in that café, according to another German-speaking accuser.[227] The war became an opportunity for national point-scoring.

The changed networks of information in Prague and the new generalized suspicion leading to arrests were both perfectly illustrated by the so-called "leaflet affair." The resulting trial, one of the most prominent for antistate activities in Prague, saw the prosecution of almost thirty people. In the autumn of 1914, suspicious leaflets of Russian provenance and

[220] Excerpted daily police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5057, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 5129/15, January 28, 1915.
[221] Police report, NA, PMV/R, ka 182, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 17277, November 21, 1914.
[222] Philip Czech, *Der Kaiser ist ein Lump und Spitzbube: Majestätsbeleidigung unter Kaiser Franz Joseph* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010).
[223] On denunciation as massive phenomenon in summer 1914, see Martin Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden: Der deutsch-slowenische Nationalitätenkonflikt in der Steiermark 1900–1918* (Innsbruck: Studien, 2007), 208–229; overall, Tamara Scheer, "Denunciation and the decline of the Habsburg home front during the First World War," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 24:2 (2017), 214–228.
[224] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5058, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 10059, March 1, 1915.
[225] Excerpted daily police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5070, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 35133/15, June 25, 1915.
[226] The Representation house (today's Municipal house) was inaugurated in 1912 by the Young Czech municipality and considered as a site of national Czech representation. NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2246, sig. M 23/99, no. 380, February 15, 1915.
[227] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5051, 8/1/92/19, no. 21449, August 31, 1914.

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treasonous content appeared in the city. Two versions of this Russian proclamation circulated: a manifest from the Russian tsar and a declaration from the Russian general Rennenkampf. Both promised liberation for Czechs at the hands of the Russians. The original 100,000 manifestos had been scattered in Galicia by the Russians, but the leaflets that made their way to Prague were probably copies.[228] The versions found by the police were not printed but either handwritten or typewritten.[229]

Leaflets and Their Flightpaths

In the Matějovský case, the police were particularly interested in bank clerk Martínek. Martínek claimed to have received the Tsar Manifesto leaflet from the head waiter at the "Café Royal" on Purkyně Square in September 1914. It soon became clear, however, that he was at the center of an alternative information network. Other than the "Café Royal," he was also a regular of restaurant "Baška" in a street behind Purkyně square and spent most of his days in cafés and restaurants. Fluent in several languages, he was an avid reader of foreign newspapers available there. At Baška, a traditional comfortable restaurant with wood paneling and wooden booths, Martínek and fourteen men of his acquaintance (all middle-class – bank clerks, engineers, lawyers, and the painter Otakar Štáfl – and almost all residents in adjacent streets in Král. Vinohrady) regularly met to discuss the war events and shared the costs of subscriptions to newspapers. Martínek produced leaflets at his bank with excerpts from foreign newspapers to show the contradictions between French or Russian news on one side and Austrian and German reports on the other side.[230]

The police had found the first leaflet by chance, from a homeless man who found it in a café and showed it to a cabman. This led them to a string of young people in possession of the leaflet, apprentice chemists who had shared it in their shops, an apprentice bookseller, and engineering students. The father of one of them, Antonín Matějovský, became the focus of this case because he was employed in the building department of the Prague municipality, and leaflets had circulated in his office at the Prague town hall. Their circulation delineates a topography of alternative information in the city: many culprits had obtained it in a café or a restaurant; shop attendants in bookshops and general stores had distributed it. Bank

[228] Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 41.
[229] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2257, sig. P 10/2, [no. 26216], November 21, 1914.
[230] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no. 31971, November 4, 1914.

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clerks and other employees had shown it at their offices.[231] Schoolboys and engineering students disseminated them in various places, including during a class on first aid to wounded soldiers in a hospital in Král. Vinohrady.[232] During the same month, other sources on the presence of leaflets in Prague emerged, leading to separate arrests. A military officer arrested two seventeen-year-old boys reading the leaflet on Jungmann Avenue in Král. Vinohrady after he overheard them explain that it had been brought by wounded soldiers from Galicia and thrown down by Russian aviators.[233] An anonymous letter denounced a certain Malík who held antipatriotic speeches in a pub in Karlín and owned a copy of the manifesto.[234] He had read it aloud in pubs and others had then copied it. Except for this last example, the leaflets spread mostly in the educated middle-class circles that tried to obtain information about the war events. Arguably, the war meant that the middle classes were now subject of a police surveillance that had long characterized working-class locales.[235]

According to the police chief, many of the accused were dismayed to learn the seriousness of their offense and had not realized the consequences of their actions.[236] They admitted that they had read and copied the proclamation out of curiosity. Twenty of them were condemned to prison sentences ranging from six months to fourteen years.[237] The sentences were especially disproportionate considering the charge: having exchanged leaflets with acquaintances. This verdict was, however, much less severe than in Moravia, where seven people were sentenced to death over the Russian leaflets.[238] In Northern Moravia, which fell under the direct control of the army, a man was court martialed and immediately executed in November 1914 for spreading an antimilitaristic poem and the Russian manifesto.[239] The arrests nonetheless generated more cautiousness. After the appearance of new flyers in December 1914, newspapers

[231] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no. 31971, November 4, 1914.
[232] Indictment by military prosecutor, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no. 12165, January 11, 1915.
[233] Deposition of Lieutenant P., *Ibid.*, no. 29502, September 27, 1914.
[234] Anonymous letter in Czech to the police, *Ibid.*, no. 32807, November 6, 1914.
[235] See Gyáni, *Identity and the Urban Experience*.
[236] Deposition of Police Chief, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no. 8684, April 10, 1915, 8.
[237] Phonogram from Police Headquarters, *Ibid.*, no. 8684, February 19, 1915.
[238] Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft*, 311. Testimonies from Moravia also underline that people read the leaflets out of curiosity, see K. Ullman, *Češi z Brna v moci rakouských katanů* (České Budějovice: J. Svátek, 1919), 51–63.
[239] *Velezrádný leták, pro nějž Slavomír Kratochvíl z Přerova na Moravě byl popraven rakouskou vojenskou hrůzovládou dne 19. listopadu 1914 v Mor. Ostravě* (Pacov: Přemysl Plaček, [1919?]).

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warned Prague inhabitants that they should immediately return any found leaflet to the authorities. As *Národní politika* noted: "nobody [could] hold the Czech nation responsible for this treasonous agitation."[240] A month later, readers were warned against opening an envelope disseminated in Karlín's streets with the words "Very interesting, please read."[241]

The "leaflet affair" was later even portrayed as a manipulation of innocent Czechs rather than treason. National Socialist deputy Jiří Stříbrný suggested in a parliamentary interpellation in 1917 that the Prague police might have helped spread the Russophile leaflets, which were, to his mind, produced by the German-speaking newspaper *Bohemia*.[242] Historian Milada Paulová, who penned the first history of the Czechs in the First World War, also mentions the idea that the leaflets were a police provocation.[243] In a counter-campaign a year later, pan-Germanist leaflets calling for the expansion of Germany were spread in key "German" locations of the city, but the police recognized an "ironic" tone (and grammatical mistakes) and thought they were of Czech provenance.[244] Through the leaflet affair, many voices portrayed Czech treason as a set-up and some Czechs wanted to frame Germans as just as treasonous to the Empire in their pan-Germanism.

For all those arrested for minor acts of "treason," imprisonment was a new experience viewed as an injustice. Suddenly, because of a word out of place or a copied leaflet, they were handled like criminals. Most proclaimed their innocence and that they had been unfairly arrested on the basis of sometimes dubious denunciations (not unlike the protagonist of Prague author Kafka's novel *The Trial*, written at the end of 1914, who still expects to deal with a recognizable legal framework ruled by the rule of law and is instead faced with arbitrariness and absurdity).[245]

[240] *Národní listy*, December 22, 1914, 3; *Čech*, December 22, 1914, 7; *Prager Tagblatt* (Mittag-Ausgabe), December 22, 1914, 2; *Národní politika*, December 22, 1914, 4.

[241] Cutting from *Národní listy*, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5057, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 2127/15, January 15, 1915.

[242] Parliamentary interpellation, Jiří Stříbrný and associates, NA, PMV/R, ka 131, sig. 20, no. 25162/17, December 6, 1917; This theory is al mentioned in Václav Chaloupecký's correspondence see Jaroslav Bouček, "Rok 1915 v dopisech Václav Chaloupeckého," *Historie a Vojenství*, 52, 1, (2003): 49–58, 56.

[243] Milada Paulová, *Dějiny Maffie: odboj Čechů a Jihoslovanů za světové války, 1914–1918* (Prague: Academia, 1937), 221.

[244] Memorandum from Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2890, sig. A 15/1, no. 12914, May 1, 1916.

[245] The famous first sentence of Kafka's *Trial*: "someone must have traduced Josef K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning" does not seem so out of place in wartime Prague, Franz Kafka, *The Trial* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1992), 1. There is, however, no proof in his private writing that Kafka was directly influenced by the wartime atmosphere, see Mark Cornwall, "The First World War," in Carolin Duttlinger (ed.), *Kafka in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 168.

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Postwar testimonies on wartime prisons stress this aspect. A very young provincial man recalls that in his cell at the Prague military prison "there were many completely innocent people," including a man accused of shouting an insult in German when he could not speak German. They were flanked by four soldiers as they were taken to court and "it looked like an escort for criminals."[246] National Socialist Emil Špatný, recalling his experience at the Prague police headquarters' prison, also insists on the illegality: "In vain we asked why we were imprisoned. In vain we asked to be tried, be it in a military or civilian court." The arbitrariness in Bohemia was, however, tempered by a form of police laxness: imprisoned Špatný and Klofáč were still able to regularly go to the baths on the Vltava under police escort and talk to acquaintances.[247] Many of the people arrested in Prague were released after a few weeks and most of the cases reported did not lead to condemnation.

Part of what makes Hašek's (and Kafka's) humor foreign to us as we view them through the prism of totalitarianism, is this experience of arbitrary repression mitigated by inefficiency, which was to be found in wartime Bohemia. The relatively milder sentences of the Prague military courts contrast with the summary justice in the war zones. The same statements against the war by civilians that led to a few months or years in prison in Prague, for example, led to executions in Ostrava.[248] Even compared to military courts in Vienna or Moravia, the Prague judgments were more lenient.[249] There were also differences in the level of willingness to comply with military encroachment into civilian affairs from crownland to crownland. While the civilian authorities in the hinterland acknowledged the primacy of military interests in wartime and provided their support to the measures, they often had a more balanced interpretation of the situation on the ground.[250] In Prague, the antagonism between the Military Command and the Governor's Office, two buildings located only a few steps from each other in Malá Strana, was particularly marked.

[246] *Domov za války*, II, 349–350.

[247] *Domov za války*, I, 315–316; see also, *Domov za války*, II, 201–209; *Domov za války*, III, 223; on the internment of "enemy aliens," see Stefan Manz, Panikos Panayi, and Matthew Stibbe (eds.), *Internment during the First World War: A Mass Global Phenomenon* (London: Routledge, 2018).

[248] John Robertson, "Calamitous methods of compulsion: Labor, War, and Revolution in a Habsburg industrial district, 1906–1919" (Phd. diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2014), 221.

[249] Licht, *Válečné vzpomínky*, 42; 69.

[250] On Tyrol, see Oswald Überegger, *Der andere Krieg*, 87; on Styria, see Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden*; see also, Hannes Leidinger et al., *Habsburgs schmutziger Krieg: Ermittlungen zur österreichisch-ungarischen Kriegsführung 1914–1918* (Vienna: Residenz-Verl, 2014).

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Military elites generally suspected the Czechs of disloyalty and treason on the front and in the hinterland. The civilian administration, for their part, thought that the suspicions were exaggerated. A military officer reported to the Army High Command: "The political mood of the Czech population in Prague, particularly the educated part, is the worst imaginable and must be bluntly characterized as hostile to Austria."[251] He gave as examples accusations of Russian leaflets being distributed in Czech theaters and rumors that the Czechs would welcome the tsar in the municipal Representation house, parroting the accusations of German nationalists. Ten days later, the governor Thun refuted all these accusations one by one and insisted that the Prague elders and Mayor Karel Groš had behaved loyally and could not be suspected of intending to welcome the tsar.[252] Whereas civilian authorities often recognized ulterior motives behind denunciation letters (Thun condemned the widespread practice of denunciations without grounds and did not want to automatically launch an enquiry), the military took them more consistently at face value.[253] For example, the Prague Military Command sent to the Municipal Council an anonymous letter they had received, which accused the Prague municipality of Russophilism and of hiding shirkers. The military demanded explanations from the municipality, which responded by defending its personnel. The alleged Russophilism of one employee amounted to having a wife who spoke Russian.[254] This suspicion of autonomous municipal authorities reflects the complete mistrust of the military toward many Czech institutions. Their suspicions went further. The Prague Military Command also accused the Prague police of having delayed arrest of Matějovský to enable him to destroy evidence. Upon their request, an investigation was launched by the Interior Ministry.[255]

The military's accusations reflected a siege mentality where not only municipal employees but even civilian administrative authorities were considered as potentially unreliable. The army saw itself as the only guarantor of internal order ("the – albeit limited – military powers guarantee

[251] Military Command to Minister President, December 9, 1914, *Sborník dokumentů*, I, no. 67, 144.
[252] Bohemian Governor to Minister President, December 19, 1914, *Sborník dokumentů*, I, no. 72, 155.
[253] Thun uses the negative word *Denunziation* here, distinct from the more neutral *Anzeige*. Governor to Interior Ministry, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5052, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 28566/14, October 13, 1914.
[254] Municipal Council to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3015, sig. M 34/1, November 22, 1914.
[255] Interior Ministry to Governor, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5160, sig. 8/1/92/19, File Matějovský, no. 30612, June 21, 1915.

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for now the political and national peace in the land," read one report), but feared the return of "destructive elements" in Bohemia after the war.[256] Its anti-Czech attitude stemmed from some prejudices but more fundamentally from a conservative understanding of political or national mobilization as intrinsically subversive. It manifested itself particularly in a fear of the intelligentsia as a potential source of trouble and dissent.[257] In Viennese military circles, rumors of chaos and turmoil in Bohemia circulated. For example, a colonel had reported to his superiors that revolution prevailed in Prague and that the population was only maintained under the bridle by guns.[258] A few months later, in response to the Army High Command, the Prague police had to again deny the existence of planned riots in Prague and of a revolutionary plot at the Czech engineering school.[259] This fear of insurrection, linked to the post-1848 military culture of officers, explains their insistence on introducing summary justice to Bohemia, which they saw as the only efficient means to manage the crownland. In January 1915, Prime Minister Stürgkh complained about the disproportionate measures that the military wanted to impose, "which would correspond to a threatening rebellion or one that had broken out."[260]

In the spring of 1915, the replacement of the highest figures of Bohemian administration, such as governor Thun, Prague Chief of Police Křikava, and the head of the presidium of the Prague Governor's Office marked a victory for the Prague Military Command. Their departures were justified in the case of Thun and Křikava by their state of health, but there was also a political element in the decision.[261]

[256] Mood report, Military Command, October 9, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, sig. 8/1/92/19, ka 5078, no. 22920/15; on the military's self-perception as only bulwark against subversion, see Christa Hämmerle, "Back to the Monarchy's Glorified Past? Military Discourses on Male Citizenship and Universal Conscription in the Austrian Empire, 1868–1914," in Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and Anna Clark (ed.), *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture* (London: Palgrave, 2007), 151–168.

[257] Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse;* on anti-Czech attitudes, see Jan Havránek, "Politische Repression und Versorgungsengpässe in den Böhmischen Ländern 1914 bis 1918," in Hans Mommsen, Dušan Kováč, Jiří Malíř, and Michaela Marek (eds.), *Der erste Weltkrieg und die Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen, Slowaken und Deutschen* (Essen: Klartext-Verl., 2001), 47–66.

[258] Governor to Minister President, January 26, 1915, *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no. 10, 38.

[259] The police considered that a more "ominous germ" was the flour shortage, Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5061, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 19567, April 27, 1915.

[260] *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no. 13, 43.

[261] Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka*, 161; See Licht's and the German consul's assessments: Licht, *Válečné vzpomínky*, 22; NAL, GFM 6/45, Ö101 Böhmen, 36, August 24, 1915.

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The army's purge against the administration was followed by several high-profile arrests of leading Czech figures. In May 1915, Karel Kramář (Young Czech politician) and Josef Scheiner (Head of the Czech Sokol) were arrested for high treason by the military. The civilian authorities were only informed at the last minute. In July, Alois Rašín, a Young Czech politician, was also arrested.[262] This crackdown was a reaction to the alleged Czech desertions on the Eastern front, as the hinterland was supposed to have contaminated the front.[263] In this respect, Czechs seem to have mostly served as useful scapegoats to cover military setbacks. Despite little evidence of actual treasonable action, four men (Kramář, Rašín, journalist Červinka, and accountant Zamazal) were sentenced to death in 1916. Even people who did not identify with Kramář's politics before the war felt the injustice of the sentence.[264] In the circumstances, there could be no public reactions to the verdict, but Kramář was publicly feted in Prague by a crowd of 6,000 people upon his return from Vienna in 1917 after the amnesty granted by the new Emperor Charles. A man described in a letter the reactions to images of Kramář's return shown in the cinema Lucerna: "as soon as the figure of the national martyr appeared on the screen, came a thud of applause.... The enthusiasm was general and could not be diminished by the few who felt differently."[265] The branding of Czech politicians as traitors by the military had only managed to turn them into political martyrs.

As well as individuals, Czech institutions in Prague were also targeted. Twenty Prague associations (mostly cultural Russian, French, or Italian clubs) were disbanded.[266] Most famously, the Sokol (Falcon), a popular gymnastics association which had played a major role in the development of Czech nationalism since the 1870s, appeared suspicious to the army. Military Commander Schwerndter wrote in October 1914: "I cannot suspect the activity of the Sokols based on any concrete information but believe that they are a hotbed of pan-Slavists. It is therefore unfortunate that we had to rely on their practice halls [...] for the hospitalization of the many wounded soldiers here in Prague and in the countryside."[267]

[262] Rees, *The Czechs during World War I*, 16.
[263] Lein has shown that these "mass surrenders" were due to military failures rather than nationalistic feelings, Lein, *Pflichterfullung oder Hochverrat?*
[264] *Domov za války*, III, 296; On the treason trials, see Cornwall, "Traitors and the Meaning of Treason": 113–134.
[265] Letter from Josef J. to Karl M., ÖStA, KA, AOK, EvB/NA, K3756, no. 4942, September 7, 1917.
[266] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5081, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 6704/16, Annex I, February 28, 1916.
[267] Mood report, Military Command, NA, PMV/R, 22 Böhmen, ka 183, no. 14991, October 19, 1914.

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The Sokol was at the forefront of Czech nationalism and had indeed organized large rallies before the war attended by Sokols from other Slavic nations.[268] However, the vague romantic notion of Slavic solidarity did not automatically trigger a treasonous behavior in wartime. In fact, many Sokols went to the front and the association played a prominent role in war relief in Bohemia. Yet, the Sokols were disbanded in November 1915 because of their pan-Slavic links and because of the role of Sokol members in the creation of Czechoslovak legions in Russia fighting on the side of the Entente.[269] Their suppression seemed, in many respects, at odds with their wartime record.

The repression against Czech-speakers reflected the subordination of civilian authorities to military goals. Due to the wartime circumstances, the Austrian bureaucracy participated in the arrest of civilians and banning of practices in departure from what had previously been accepted or tolerated. The repression had a potentially counter-productive effect. The civilian authorities were wary of this consequence, as they thought the repression could turn the population against the state.[270] It was not as much the high-profile arrests as the arrests of people looking for news or chatting in a pub that highlighted the new unpredictability of the state for its citizens. As the military's grip on power loosened with the accession of Charles to the throne, Czech members of parliament were able to voice their complaints on the treatment of their nationality.[271] The sacrifices of the nation in the war were presented as poorly repaid by a state that persecuted its Slavic population. The damage done by the repressive policy was by then obvious to all. In 1917, *Národní listy* called for the arrest of a German-speaker who had shouted "damned Czechs, they are all high traitors!" on Wenceslas Square for outrage to the Czech nation and thought it would only be justice if he was tried by a military court "like many others."[272]

From the effervescent first moments of the mobilization days, the cityscapes bore the mark of energies geared toward the external conflict.

[268] See, Claire Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

[269] Reinhard Nachtigal, *Rußland und seine österreichisch-ungarischen Kriegsgefangenen (1914–1918)* (Remshalden: Greiner, 2003).

[270] Governor to Minister President, January 26, 1915 in *Sborník dokumentů*, II, no. 10, 39. For a similar process in Tyrol, see Gerd Pircher, *Militär, Verwaltung und Politik in Tirol im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1995).

[271] Zdeněk Tobolka, František Staněk, *Chování se vládních kruhů k českému národu za války* (Prague: Pražská akciová tiskárna, 1917); on the role of repression in politicians' radicalization, see Z. A. B. Zeman, *The Break-Up of the Habsburg Empire, 1914–1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

[272] *Národní listy*, July 13, 1917, evg ed, 3.

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Despite fears to the contrary, the mobilization in Prague in the summer of 1914 went smoothly, thanks to a mix of a sense of duty and social pressure. With soldiers becoming an everyday sight in urban space, military barracks took on increased significance as the centers where more and more recruits gathered, before marching through the streets in columns to reach the train stations. The war determined new hierarchies, enforced through public violence and prestige, both embodied in the uniform. The conflict also brought many restrictions on everyday activities, downgrading civilian life in the order of priority. Darker streets and reduced entertainments bred a gloomy wartime atmosphere of mutual suspicion. In Malá Strana, away from the economic heart of the city, the Military Command became an important authority on the atmosphere in the city, sending regular "mood reports" to Vienna. The army imposed its own mental image of the city, to be managed from above, full of treasonous Czechs, or potential plots and insurrections, trying to avoid contamination of the front by the bad influences of the hinterland. Meanwhile, train stations, newspapers' offices, and public places rustled with pieces of rumors and alternative information as civilians tried to grasp the progression of the conflict. Cafés and pubs, despite earlier closing times, remained prime sites in wartime, where news was exchanged and transmitted, but also where people could be quickly denounced and arrested, and where clashes with soldiers could easily erupt. Militarization in First World War Bohemia comprised all of these changes, though it was much less marked than in zones under army control or even than in other crownlands. Nonetheless, by challenging the rule of law, the wartime state of exception created a regime of uncertainty that was an unprecedented experience for Prague inhabitants: something as harmless as picking up a leaflet through the city could lead to a trial for high treason.

Prague streets revealed a wartime culture that subordinated the civilian world to military values and needs. In accordance with prewar conceptions, the military aimed to impose a "straitjacket" on the civilian population to neutralize them. The clash between the army's conceptions and the citizens' expectations for rule of law was made visible in urban space where people searched for alternative information on the conflict, and little crowds formed to witness military violence. This is how the military participated in the loss of legitimacy of the Empire. However, its efforts were not entirely successful and the mobilization for the war effort in Prague showed the vitality of civil society in Austria–Hungary, as we shall see in Chapter 2.

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