2 Black–Yellow Surfaces
Austrian Patriotic Mobilization

Olga Machleidt, aged five at the beginning of the war, recalls that, when asked by her teacher if she could spell her own name, she came proudly to the front of the class and explained that she could also spell another word. She then proceeded to write "der Krieg," the war, on the blackboard.[1] This simple childhood memory symbolizes the increasing presence of the conflict in Prague's visual landscape. The war was everywhere, and civilians were constantly reminded of it and asked to join in the common effort.

This invasion of Prague's public space through the Austrian patriotic mobilization is at the heart of this chapter. Historians have tended to construe the Austrian war effort as an ill-fated endeavor, impeded by the lack of a common Austrian "state idea" (*Staatsidee*). According to this view, the mobilization in Austria could not be compared to that in other European countries, as a supranational Austrian identity was not sufficiently established to develop an Austrian patriotism. The efforts of the state to foster such a feeling had been inadequate. The hurdles for Austrian cultural mobilization were exacerbated in the non-German speaking regions of the Empire and particularly in the Bohemian Lands.[2] Yet, looking at the streets of Prague, a different picture emerges with the war effort playing a prominent role in daily life. Habsburg victories were consistently marked through public celebrations; collections for war charities were present in every street while posters on the walls constantly reminded passersby of the conflict. How can we reconcile this picture with the alleged failure of Austrian mobilization? Did a specific

[1] Olga Machleidt, "Erinnerungen eines Kindes," Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Sudetendeutsches Archiv, Heimatberichte, 1715.

[2] For an overview, see Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 14–15; on the failed Austrian identity, see Steven Beller, "The tragic carnival: Austrian culture in the First World War," in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War : The arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127–161; On state propaganda, see Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary*; on the Czechs, see Claire Nolte, "Ambivalent Patriots: Czech culture in the Great War," in *European Culture in the Great War*, 162–175.

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Austrian patriotic culture develop during the war and what forms did it take in the streetscape? Who were the promoters of these actions and how engaged were Prague's inhabitants?

The "patriotic mobilization" examined here encompasses, in a broader sense, all the manifestations of support for the war effort that were visible in urban space. These include classic patriotic rituals linked to prewar Habsburg celebrations, but also engagement with the war events and participation in relief actions.[3] First World War historians of Britain, France, and Germany have shown the extraordinary efforts deployed by wartime societies to mobilize "both imaginatively, through collective representations and the belief and value systems giving rise to these, and organizationally, through the state and civil society."[4] By shifting the focus away from debates over the issue of Austrian identity among intellectual circles, we can uncover the existence of a concrete and everyday culture of patriotism during the war.[5] Even the military authorities, who, as we have seen in Chapter 1, were prone to expect treason from the Czech-speaking population, acknowledged the active popular participation in the war effort: there was "a strong division between national attitude and humanitarian activity. The support for the care of wounded soldiers and the sums collected for it are extremely commendable."[6]

The patriotism mobilized during the war did not rely only on traditional forms of imperial loyalty, but also on what Melissa Stockdale has termed "social patriotism," the sense of caring for one's fellow countrymen.[7] This type of wartime patriotism did not require a uniform and stable identity; it easily espoused local contexts and took different forms across the Empire. The dynamic "humanitarian" activities of the Prague civil society form part of the encouraged civic behaviors, which played an important role in mobilizing wartime societies throughout Europe.[8] Our definition of wartime patriotism should be expanded beyond the

[3] For a narrower definition of patriotic culture centered on cultural productions, see Hubertus F. Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 4.

[4] John Horne, "Introduction: Mobilizing for Total War, 1914–1918," in John Horne (ed.), *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

[5] On Austrian identity, see Fredrik Lindström, *Empire and Identity: Biographies of the Austrian State Problem in the Late Habsburg Empire* (West Lafayette: Purdue University, 2008).

[6] Mood report, Military Command, NA, PMV/R, ka 182, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 15472, October 19, 1914.

[7] Stockdale, *Mobilizing the Russian Nation*, 107.

[8] Purseigle, *Mobilisation, sacrifice et citoyenneté*; on imperial culture being mediated through the local, see Brad Beaven, *Visions of Empire: Patriotism, Popular Culture and the City, 1870–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

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nation-state model to include other types of social mobilizations.[9] Even in nation-states, patriotic mobilization could be fueled by local identities and local cultural symbols were, for example, used in French war charity posters. "Humanitarian" war relief actions are in this case fully considered as manifestations of patriotic culture.[10] The same can be applied to the multinational Habsburg monarchy where war relief mobilized several forms of patriotism (social, local, national, and imperial) to sustain the state's war effort. The aforementioned Czech-speaking bank director, complaining to the police about postal censorship, detailed his "patriotic action," which included help in transporting wounded soldiers and donations to the Red Cross and other war charities. He referred to these humanitarian efforts as "action in the support of all interests leading to the final war victory," thereby clearly highlighting their end goal.[11] Patriotic mobilization was compatible with Czech nationalism and comprised varied everyday actions: collections, welfare work, attendance of public ceremonies, and celebrations.

Through the observation of the streetscape, this chapter explores how state authorities, associations, and individuals articulated their participation in the war effort. The vibrant civil society which developed in Austria–Hungary, and particularly in the Bohemian Lands, did not stand in antagonism to the state, and indeed the flourishing civic activism (voluntary associations, national and political movements) worked within the system rather than against it.[12] Existing associations readily mobilized for the war effort and new ones were created.[13] In a provincial center like Prague, the patriotic impulse should not be viewed as a top-down effort imposed from Vienna and with no local or national declensions. Indeed, many Czechs could reject the German narrative of a war against Slavdom and yet participate in war relief. The interpretation of what constituted "good" patriotic behavior in wartime varied from one institution to another and even from one individual to another. In this respect, the numerous denunciations sent to the authorities can be viewed as an integral part of civic culture in Late Habsburg Austria, outlining conceptions of acceptable wartime behavior and expectations of equal sacrifice.

The presence of the Austrian patriotic mobilization in urban space followed the development of the conflict. The fading financial effort for

[9] Bjork, "Flexible Fatherlands," 71–93.
[10] See Purseigle, "Au nom de la patrie."
[11] Deposition by Josef H., NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5089, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 31015/16, September 16, 1916.
[12] Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society."
[13] On the vitality of civil society in war welfare, see Hsia, *Victims' State*.

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these campaigns in the last two years paralleled the general declining support for the war. Increasingly, concerns over material issues (explored in Chapter 4) dulled the patriotic mobilization. The examples in this chapter are therefore mostly drawn from the first half of the war (1915 and 1916), as this reflects the evolution of the Habsburg home front's morale. The chapter's progression tracks the manifestations of patriotic mobilization in the streetscape from the most obvious and flamboyant to the most subtle: first, examining the big patriotic celebrations which recalled prewar times, then the specific wartime representations of the conflict, then the creeping pressure to take part in the war effort through collection drives, and finally the suppressed visual artefacts.

Patriotic Displays: Flags and Celebrations

During the war, the streets of Prague regularly became the stage for patriotic rituals: flag-hanging, celebrations, and processions. These visual signs of patriotic mobilization were drawing on traditional prewar practices albeit magnified by the war context. After the initial disastrous invasion and setbacks of 1914, the temporary successes against Russia and Serbia in the spring of 1915 gave rise to a high point of black and yellow (imperial colors) displays in the streets. The loyalty rituals were highly choreographed events rather than spontaneous outbursts of enthusiasm, but they nonetheless prominently shaped the streetscape. They also often required individual participation (if not adhesion). Their political significance is therefore more complex, and they cannot merely be viewed as a superficial imposition from above. They formed an integral part of what passersby perceived of the city and were in turn influenced by the public's interaction.

The war saw the development of state-mandated initiatives to promote patriotism among the population. In these efforts, Bohemia, specifically its Czech-speaking part, was of particular concern. Coudenhove, the new governor of the province, launched in the summer of 1915 a campaign to nurture the Austrian spirit in the Czech population. In a memorandum sent to local authorities, he instructed concrete actions to "elevate and stimulate the Austrian state idea (*Staatsgedanken*)."[14] His recommendations made this form of patriotism very present in urban space. Civil servants and local personalities publicized news of military victories through public announcements and ensured that they were celebrated, that lectures with patriotic content were held, that local cinemas and newspapers carried patriotic programs, and military music was played in

[14] NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5172, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 31083/15, July 10, 1915.

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garden concerts. The chronicle of the Krásnohorská secondary school, for example, mentions the attendance of the student girls at a lecture held at the cinema Lucerna entitled "Our army in the field."[15] These events did not only take place in the center of the city: the working-class suburbs of Vršovice and Nusle also held talks explaining the development of the Czech nation within the monarchy.[16] Loyalty became a criterion to determine subsidies or to grant a license. In this context, the sincerity of patriotic displays can be questioned, but in any case, Coudenhove was a few months later very pleased with the results of this action. He conceived it not as an authoritarian prescription (and reprimanded functionaries who had forced the inhabitants to put flags on their windows) but rather as an influence from the authorities on a "receptive" population.[17]

Not only state officials but also elected municipal bodies played an active role in the dissemination of patriotism, for example, by publishing announcements to join in celebrations. In Prague, Mayor Karel Groš, elected since 1906 and considered as an important representative of the Czech nation, attended every ceremony or celebration in the city and regularly demonstrated his loyalty to the Emperor.[18] Municipalities in Prague and the suburbs also renamed several of their streets to fit the agenda of the Habsburg authorities, thereby lending a more patriotic character to the city. "Russian," "Serbian," or "Belgrade" streets in several of the suburbs were rechristened in 1915.[19] The Prague City Council transformed the prominent Old Town thoroughfares of Petersburg and Paris streets into Lvov (Lemberg) street in June 1915 in honor of the city's recapture by the Central powers, removing the former street signs.[20] Renaming streets after members of the imperial family was another way to display loyalty. The avenue linking Wenceslas Square to the train station was renamed in honor of the heir to the throne and future Emperor Charles, while another square in the center took the name of his wife Zita.[21] The name changes could be strategically motivated: the Czech Commission

[15] AHMP, Dívčí gymnasium "Krásnohorská" Praha II. – Nové Město, Vodičkova ul. 22, "Dějiny soukromého českého soukromého dívčího gymnasia v Praze," 133.
[16] Report, Král. Vinohrady district officer, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5075, sig. 8/1/92/19, ad no. 44486/15, October 16, 1915.
[17] Memorandum from Governor, September 23, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5172, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 40476/15.
[18] Šedivý, *Češi, české země a Velká válka*, 205.
[19] For example, in Dejvice or in Vršovice, Police Headquarters to Governor's office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5079, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 579/16, December 27, 1915; Košíře changed the names of Belgrade and Cetinje streets in September 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium rady a magistrátu, ka 844, sig. 41/1, no. 3365, September 13, 1915.
[20] Phonogram, Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5071, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 363018/15, August 5, 1915.
[21] *Prager Tagblatt*, August 18, 1915, evg ed., 2; *Domov za války*, V, 470.

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for Child Protection and Youth Welfare, for example, decided to name a new children's hospital in honor of Zita to make sure that the contributions would not be diverted to the Vienna hospital that had just taken her name.[22] The most striking renaming was that of Joseph Square near the Powder Tower on the site of the former city walls. It was one of the most frequented places in the city and was named after a nearby church. For the Emperor's eighty-fifth birthday, the Mayor announced with great pomp that it would take the name of Franz Joseph I Square. Beyond the honorific value, however, the new designations probably did not much enter common usage: for instance, the change of Joseph Square was only formally authorized in January 1918.[23]

The rechristening in honor of Franz Joseph took place on his birthday as part of the official municipal celebrations of this patriotic event. To the traditional calendar of dynastic festivities were added in wartime army victories. As a result, almost once a month by 1915, the city witnessed official celebrations with flag decorations on building and celebratory masses in the major churches. After the (brief) occupation of Belgrade in December 1914, all the church bells in Prague rang for half an hour.[24] In February 1915, all the banks, private, regional, state, and municipal buildings were covered with flags for the victories in Bukovina.[25] The city was thus living to the rhythm of the progress of the conflict and drawing on imperial forms of festivity to celebrate it. The ceremonies had a great impact on Prague's visual and aural environments.

Beyond officially organized celebrations, the successes of Austro–Hungarian and German troops in 1915 also provoked small spontaneous demonstrations of enthusiasm. A few hundred people would regularly gather in front of the offices of the *Prager Tagblatt* and then followed a usual route: to the nearby German consulate, the Ferdinand Avenue, and the Military Command in Malá Strana, on the other side of the river. They sang patriotic songs but also the "Wacht am Rhein," which recalls the demonstrations with pan-Germanic overtones discussed in Chapter 1.[26] Perceived as "German" demonstrations, they could turn into occasions for the display of national hatreds and antisemitism. The

[22] AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 867, sig. 68/9, no. 1258, April 17, 1917.
[23] It is used, however, in an official 1917 directory, *Politický kalendář občanský a adresář zemí koruny České na rok 1917*, 25 (1917), 241; formal authorization from the Emperor, *Venkov*, January 4, 1918, 6; in April, the newspaper still mentioned "(formerly Joseph Square)" for clarity, *Venkov*, April 19, 1918, 6.
[24] *Čech*, December 3, 1914, 7.
[25] *Národní listy*, February 23, 1915 (evg ed.), 5.
[26] Examples: Daily police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 21438/15, May 6, 1915; Daily police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5070, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 35135/15, July 25, 1915.

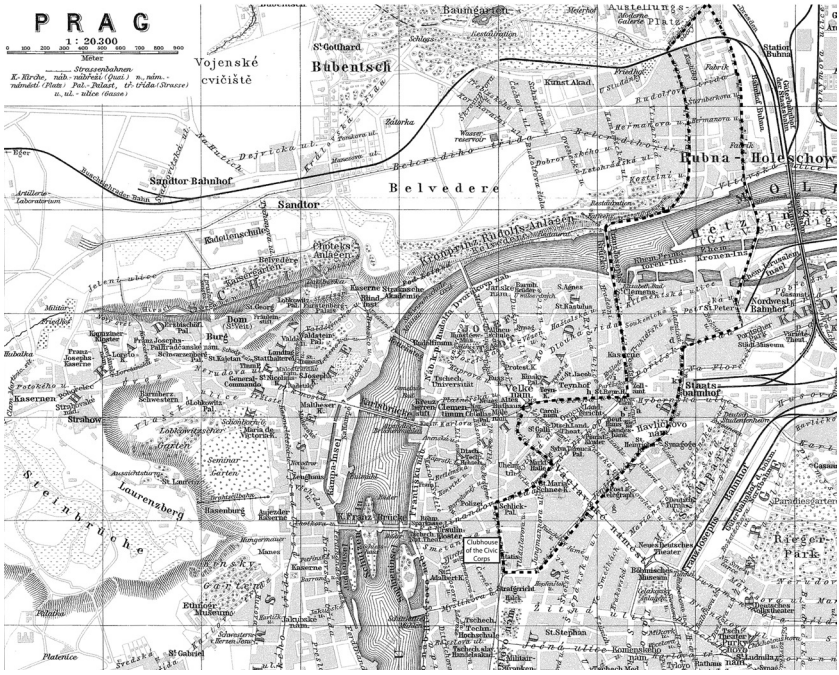
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Prague police interpreted disturbances not as antipatriotic, but as anti-Semitic.[27] A man was arrested for yelling at the demonstrators: "Because of the stinking Jews, so that they can walk around Prague and near the 'Tagblatt', we must enlist until fifty!"[28] On another day, water was thrown at them from a private apartment.[29] An anti-Semitic letter to the *Prager Tagblatt* also complained of the "so-called patriotic (?) [*sic*] demonstrations" in front of the newspapers' offices and of the criticism levelled at Czechs by Jews when thousands of Czechs "must shed their blood for the state."[30] It is interesting to note that the protests against these demonstrations were framed in terms of unequal wartime sacrifice, a trope embedded in the war mobilization of home front societies, with each side questioning the other's "patriotism."

However, the small rallies only had a limited impact on the streetscape compared with the formal victory celebrations, best exemplified by the festive displays for the recovery of Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv in June 1915. Religious thanksgiving services were of course held in many churches and synagogues: in St. Vitus Cathedral and in the Týn Church, a *Te Deum* was celebrated during the festive masses.[31] But, even earlier, as the news spread on the evening of June 22nd, public buildings were immediately decorated with flags. The following day, the Prague mayor announced the victory with a poster on street corners that called for every home-owner to put a flag on his window.[32] According to the Social Democratic newspaper *Právo lidu*, "the center of Prague was drowning in the many-colored flags," especially numerous on na Příkopě and Wenceslas Square.[33] Even the Military commander "observed with satisfaction the rich flag decoration in the center of Prague."[34] In the evening, following patriotic speeches on the significance of the victory, three different parades marched across the city, acclaimed by the public. The military bands came out of their barracks at 8 o'clock while soldiers carried small lanterns. From the barracks near the castle, the parade came down to the

[27] Governor to Interior Ministry, August 23, 1915, NA, PMV/R, ka 185, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 18964.
[28] Excerpted daily police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 21636/15, May 9, 1915.
[29] Excerpted daily police report, June 23, 1915, NA, PMV/R, ka 185, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 14416.
[30] Anonymous letter in Czech, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2255, sig. P 5/22, [police stamp May 28, 1915].
[31] Daily police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5067, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 31400/15, June 26, 1915.
[32] *Národní listy*, June 25, 1915, 3.
[33] *Právo lidu*, June 24, 1915, 5.
[34] Mood report, Military Command, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5068, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 32431/15, July 1, 1915.

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Map 2.1 The procession of the civic corps with music and lanterns on the eve of the Emperor's birthday, August 17, 1916

palace of the Governor in Malá Strana where the public heard them play the imperial anthem and men doffed their hats. From the barracks in the Western suburb of Vršovice, another regiment went through Purkyně Square to Wenceslas Square and back. The last parade started from the barracks in Újezd, crossing the river through the main thoroughfares of the city – Ferdinand Avenue, na Příkopě, Elisabeth Street – before going back. The city's civic corps also organized a musical procession with the participation of a "very abundant public" through the streets of the Old Town (See Map 2.1 for the trajectory of the corps' procession for the Emperor's birthday the following year).[35] Until late that night, several groups, partly following the civic corps, partly on their own, walked through the streets singing the imperial anthem and the Czech anthem "Kde domov můj" "in a joyous mood," while people opened their

[35] *Národní politika*, June 24, 1915, 5; For the parade pictured in the map, see Corps leader to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2931, sig. F 13/2, no. 23086, August 8, 1916.

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windows to wave at the demonstrators.[36] The crowds were so thick in some streets that the police had to intervene, although only a few young people were brought to a police station as a result.[37] The police had observed similar scenes a few weeks earlier for the recovery of the fortress of Przemyśl: the evening military processions on Wenceslas Square were accompanied by an "enormous crowd" and somewhat boisterous children who sang along with the band, cheered and amused the rest of the public. One of them remarked: "Look at the joy of the children!"[38]

Competing Conceptions of Patriotism on Purkyně Square

On July 1, 1915, the mayor of Král. Vinohrady, Alois Bureš, organized an homage to the Emperor with a festive representation of Czech opera "The Bartered Bride," opened by a patriotic prologue. Twelve-thousand school children from the suburb and nearby municipalites gathered on Purkyně Square either dressed in white or in Czech national costumes and waving small black and yellow or red and white flags. Local dignitaries, including the mayor himself and the duchess Coudenhove, wife of the Bohemian Governor, appeared on the balcony of the theater for an ovation by the crowd. The procession continued in the nearby Rieger gardens around a bust of the Emperor and ended with Czech national dances. The Prague Military commander, however, complained that he had not been invited to the ceremony. Despite this display of imperial loyalty, Mayor Bureš was considered suspicious in military circles. For them, the noninvitation was a sign that the Military Command was "a thorn in the side" of the municipal council. The Prague police had to absolve Bureš of any treasonous behavior and assure them that his loyalty "was above any doubt."[39]

Franz Joseph's eighty-fifth birthday in August 1915 gave rise to a particularly striking celebration of this traditional holiday. Following the fall of Warsaw in early August, it took place in the aftermath of battlefield

[36] *Národní listy*, June 25, 1915, 3.
[37] Excerpted daily police report, June 24, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5064, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 30943/15; *Právo lidu*, June 24, 1915, 5.
[38] Report, Old Town police inspector, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3017, sig. M 34/1, no. 17864, June 12, 1915; The fortress of Przemyśl had fallen to the Russians in March – a great blow to Austro-Hungarian morale. On the siege, see Alexander Watson, *The Fortress: The Siege of Przemyśl and the Making of Europe's Bloodlands* (New York: Basic Books, 2020).
[39] Daily police report, July 2, 1915, NA, PMV/R, ka 184, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 13920; Mood report, Military Command, October 9, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5078, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 50092; Report, Police Headquarters, October 23, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5076, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 45319; *Čech*, July 3, 1915, 6.

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advances for the Central Powers at a point in the war when victory seemed possible. At a time of heightened patriotism in Europe, Habsburg festivals were also generating renewed mobilization. Once again, Prague was covered in flags – black and yellow, white and red – not only in the center but also in the larger suburbs and in nearby villages. In Jinonice, for example, "the whole town was decorated with flags" and the priest acquired for this occasion an imperial and national flag to hoist on the church.[40] Shops, offices, and factories were closed and all the churches held celebratory morning services. Parish chronicles recorded the exceptionally large attendance at the mass. The priest of the church of Our Lady of the Snows in the very center noted "an unusually numerous pious audience, which sang enthusiastically the imperial anthem before leaving."[41] In the village of Michle, "there were not flags everywhere, on every house, but to the mass the whole of Michle's elite came." The priest cited the presence of the municipal council, the main associations, the firemen in full uniform, as well as numerous parishioners "so that the church was full," contrasting it with the previous year or the prewar period.[42] The ceremonies included traditional rituals of homage of the Prague mayor to the Bohemian governor and patriotic speeches by mayors on the suburbs' squares together with more "popular" celebrations.[43] In the parks on both islands of the Vltava, a large public gathered for concerts and later illuminations, which dazzled the crowd assembled on the river banks. The Czech-speaking theater in Král. Vinohrady closed the day with a representation of Smetana's *Bartered Bride* preceded by a *tableau vivant* featuring the Emperor and the city of Prague.[44] The German-speaking community organized a large concert in one of the major parks on the outskirts of Prague, which attracted around 40,000 people, while the inhabitants of Jinonice ended their own celebrations in the local pub.[45] Local associations put on small events and a music publisher sold compositions of patriotic music especially created to celebrate the holiday.[46] Clearly, in August 1915, Prague was still projecting the image of loyalty expected.

In the choreography of these celebrations, the display of flags and banners ranked as an important visual sign. Mayors explicitly encouraged city inhabitants to decorate their houses with flags for the celebration of

[40] AHMP, FÚ u kostela sv. Vavřince Praha – Jinonice, Pamětní kniha, 139.
[41] AHMP, Pamětní kniha chrámu Páně a fary u Matky Boží Sněžné, 209.
[42] AHMP, FÚ u kostela Narození Panny Marie Praha – Michle, Pamětní kniha 3, 93.
[43] *Právo lidu*, August 19, 1915, 4; AHMP, FÚ u kostela sv. Petra a Pavla Praha – Bohnice, Pamětní kniha bohnické farnosti, 104.
[44] *Národní listy*, August 19, 1915, 4.
[45] *Prager Tagblatt*, August 19, 1915, 8; AHMP, FÚ u kostela sv. Vavřince Praha – Jinonice, Pamětní kniha, 139.
[46] *Národní politika*, August 6, 1915, 8; 12.

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victories or of the Emperor's birthday or jubilee. The question of which flags people hung at their homes or on official buildings was not a trivial one in late imperial Austria. It attested to one's loyalties to the state and/or to the nation. The two were not incompatible and more than one flag could be displayed on a building. Thus, since the end of the nineteenth century, people had hung various flags for patriotic celebrations: the black and yellow flag, symbol of the Habsburgs (imperial colors); the red and white flag, symbol of Bohemia and the Czech nation (provincial colors); the black, red, and gold flag, symbolizing the German nation, but also the Prague flag with the local emblem (red and yellow).[47] The impact of the numerous flags of wartime displays on the streetscape is difficult to overestimate. The buildings expected to show flags were not limited to official edifices. A list drawn by the Military Command of buildings which failed to display a flag for the Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv celebrations shows the diversity of institutions, which were automatically expected to be decorated: government and municipal seats, of course, but also administrations such as post offices, train stations, churches, schools, factories, national houses and Sokol training halls, newspapers' offices, banks (most of the unflagged buildings were banks), and even theaters (the National Theatre only had a red and white flag).[48] On those days, the density of colors in the center created in itself an urban spectacle, as *Národní politika* explained: "in the evening Prague streets were enlivened by streams of people who, like for all celebrations and holidays, gazed at the whole decoration of the city."[49]

Flag-hanging might appear to modern sensibilities as the ultimate staged ritual, but in the early modern period, it was considered as a meaningful form of visual plebiscite. Every house thereby demonstrated its adhesion to the political power in a civic act, which expressed the popular will.[50] The vitality of this tradition in the early twentieth century (similar to illuminations) shows the survival of preelectoral civic practices in the Habsburg monarchy. Indeed, the regional authorities took the flag decorations as a reliable sign of political loyalty. When Governor

[47] Wingfield, *Flag Wars*, 131. On flags as loyalty symbol, see: Elena Mannová: "'Sie wollen keine Loyalität lernen!': Identitätsdiskurse und lokale Lebenswelten in der Südslowakei 1918–1938," in Peter Haslinger and Joachim von Puttkamer (eds.), *Staat, Loyalität und Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa 1918–1941* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007), 45–67; on the city flag in Fiume, see Ivan Jeličić, "Redefining Fiumians: Flag Usage and the Ambiguities of the Nation-Building Process in the Former Habsburg-Hungarian corpus separatum, 1914–1924," *Contemporary European History* (2022): 1–20.

[48] Mood report, Military Command, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5068, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 32431/15, July 1, 1915.

[49] *Národní politika*, August 19, 1915, 4.

[50] Olivier Ihl, "Contre la laïcité. Le pavoisement de Jeanne d'Arc dans le Paris de 1909," *Revue d'Histoire moderne et contemporaine* 64, no. 1 (2017): 63–84.

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Coudenhove assessed the success of his initiative to promote Austrian patriotism in September 1915, he considered the increase in numbers of black and yellow flags displayed in Bohemian districts as a clear signal.[51] By contrast, an accidentally burnt flag hanging above a military hospital was the subject of a thorough investigation.[52] Whether genuine or forced, the injunction to hoist flags was well followed in Prague over the first years of the conflict. During the summer of 1915, even the consul from the German Reich, who cannot be suspected of any pro-Czech sympathies, mentioned the zeal with which houses were decorated with flags and the greater proportion of black and yellow.[53]

The expectation to display flags was socially stratified and, in a sense, it reflected the limited census in Prague municipal elections.[54] It was the bourgeois classes, specifically the homeowners as mentioned in the posters, who were supposed to decorate their houses with flags and attend the celebratory mass. Except for school children, who systematically took part in celebrations, the official ceremonies' primary target was not the working class. In the early twentieth century, the narrow impact of these civic rituals and their staged nature was increasingly challenged by democratic politics. An anonymous letter sent to a Serbian journal after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand already mocked the "old, learned comedy of the circles whose loyalty and patriotism are professionally prescribed and which has nothing to do with real feeling. […] It is characteristic of Austria that the bureaucratic regime goes so far to order mourning from the people and characteristic of the confusion of the official circles, in whose eyes such forced performances still have value."[55] The sincerity of this participation should obviously be questioned, especially in the context of increased surveillance, but as scholars of Socialism have shown, the dichotomy between "true" feeling and "fake" display masks the degree of integration of these rituals in everyday life.[56] Local elites might

[51] Memorandum from Governor, September 23, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5172, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 40476.

[52] Police report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5076, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 47315/15, November 9, 1915.

[53] Report, German consul, August 24, 1915, NAL, GFM 6/45, Ö101 Böhmen, 36.

[54] On the reduced franchise at the municipal level, see Jeremy King, "The Municipal and the National in the Bohemian Lands, 1848–1914," in William Whyte, and Oliver Zimmer (eds.), *Nationalism and the Reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848–1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), 23–24.

[55] Letter sent from Prague to the "Mali Journal" in Serbia, July 10, 1914, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2890, sig. A 15/1, no. 23655/16.

[56] See Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); For a parallel with May 1st parades, see Roman Krakovsky, *Rituel du 1er mai en Tchécoslovaquie 1948–1989* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

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have enforced them for a range of motives, but the spectacle created by these rituals impacted everyone in Prague who watched the celebrations and took part in the atmosphere. Moreover, these traditions were still particularly alive and well during the war.

Flags were such an integral part of Austrian political culture that citizens could feel invested in the type of flags displayed around them. On the Emperor's birthday in 1917, some Czech-speaking citizens in the suburb of Smíchov complained to the governor that they had not seen the Bohemian (provincial) red and white flag on the town hall for this occasion. They felt offended, explaining that: "the population of Smíchov is most loyal and it is the duty of a government to respect their national feelings most carefully."[57] Loyalty and national feelings were not conceived as antagonistic as long as they could be both correctly represented in public space.

Events with national or local significance also contributed to the patriotic displays. Catholic processions were still a regular presence in urban streets in the early twentieth century. In June 1915, a large procession, which culminated in a mass celebrated by the archbishop on Wenceslas Square near the saint's monument, united parishioners from all corners of the city in a celebration of Czech Catholicism. The invitation to attend called for prayers for "our monarch, soldiers, and anxious fatherland (*vlast*) and also for a successful, speedy peace."[58] Official dignitaries were in attendance, as were army circles: the army commander, soldiers, and the city's civic corps. Parishes in the city and the suburbs led a procession starting at their own church all the way to Wenceslas Square.[59] The cortege included the school youth, local associations with their banners, deputations of soldiers from the hospitals, and "many believers."[60]

The vigor of these ceremonial traditions during the war challenges the notion that Habsburg patriotic rituals were doomed to failure. The wartime imperial celebrations contrast with the 1908 jubilee when Prague was the only provincial capital not illuminated and the celebrations were overshadowed by Czech/German national riots.[61] In 1916, the illuminations were again relinquished, but the purpose was this time to donate

[57] Anonymous letter, April 1917, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 4878, sig. 3/18/4, no. 12895.
[58] Archbishop consistory to the Prague priests, May 28, 1915, AHMP, FÚ u kostela sv. Petra a Pavla Praha – Bohnice, Pamětní kniha bohnické farnosti, [234].
[59] AHMP, FÚ u sv. Prokopa Praha – Žižkov, Pamětní kniha 1911–1943, 49.
[60] AHMP, FÚ u kostela sv. Markéty Praha – Břevnov, Pamětní kniha 2 (1836–1937), 498.
[61] Wingfield, *Flag Wars*, 127–130; Steven Beller, "Kraus's Firework: State Consciousness Raising in the 1908 Jubilee Parade in Vienna and the Problem of Austrian Identity," in Maria Bucur, and Nancy Wingfield (eds.), *Staging the Past: the Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001), 46–74.

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the money instead to the War Widows and Orphans Fund and participate in the patriotic effort. The population in Prague was invited to "limit the expression of the festive mood to the hoisting of flags."[62] The war saw a last flourish of the imperial rituals that had attempted to foster dynastic loyalty in the late nineteenth century.[63]

The imperial patriotic rituals were surprisingly alive and well in 1915, with stronger participation even than during the prewar period. To be sure, they remained relatively stilted affairs and were still stratified in terms of class with a higher density of flags in the city center. They also reflected the context of the favorable military situation of the Central Powers at the time. As the war continued, the atmosphere changed. By November 1916, when Emperor Franz Joseph died, everyday concerns had already overshadowed mourning celebrations. A woman from Prague laconically remarked to her POW husband: "the Emperor died, terrible high prices."[64] Mourning flags decorated public buildings and private houses – "many" according to the *Prager Tagblatt* and the Žižkov City Council, but only "some" according to the Czech press.[65] The high point of patriotic celebrations early in the conflict could not be sustained amidst the increased war-weariness of the later years. Through the conflict, however, patriotic representations took new forms beyond traditional monarchical rituals; the war itself became the subject of new patriotic images and discourses.

The War on Walls, Screens, and Canvas

In addition to the increased presence of traditional patriotic symbols, the streets of Prague became invaded by representations of the conflict. Traveling through the city meant seeing posters inviting to contribute to the war effort or shop windows filled with items for soldiers or military accessories. Bookshops displayed maps of the Balkans and other war zones to enable customers to follow troop movements.[66] The main newspapers' offices around Wenceslas Square had boards where crowds gathered to read the latest dispatches. Words, images, and even film

[62] Posters [1916], NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3019, sig. M 34/1.
[63] Daniel L. Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848–1916* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005).
[64] Letter from Marie H. to Adalbert H., ÖStA, KA, AOK, Evb/NA, K3749, no. 4555, November 27, 1916.
[65] In Vienna, see Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 282; *Prager Tagblatt*, November 22, 1916 (evening edition), 2; Meeting of the Žižkov City Council: NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2942, sig. G 5/5, no. 32925, November 23, 1916; *Národní politika*, November 22, 1916 (afternoon edition), 4; *Národní listy*, November 22, 1916 (evg ed.), 3.
[66] *Národní listy*, April 10, 1915, 3.

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provided war depictions to a public eager to get nearer to the reality of the conflict despite physical distance.

The start of the war had seen an explosion of official posters and warnings in the streets and the following months and years confirmed this tendency. The posters stemmed not only from municipalities and regional or district authorities, but also from war relief associations and even private firms using patriotic imagery to sell their ware. References were made to "our heroes in the field" or to the "patriotic spirit." They were present everywhere, in the center, as well as in the suburbs and occupied an important part of display columns and boards. Their ubiquity could easily provoke irritation among the public. It also meant that they were a prime target for expressions of opposition to the war effort. In the entrance hall of a local tax office, the words "to secure victory" had been crossed out on both Czech and German versions of a war relief poster.[67] On a posting board in Král. Vinohrady, an obscenity was scribbled on a Ministry of Defense call for youth training.[68] Alerted by a passerby, a policeman got rid of another "unseemly" inscription on an official appeal affixed to a poster wall in the center.[69]

The eight successive campaigns for the signing of war bonds typically gave rise to numerous notices and advertisements. Announcements by the Bohemian governor encouraged the population to sign war bonds, proclaiming, for example, for the third campaign: "No patriot should abstain."[70] Municipalities published their own appeals to sign war bonds. The suburb of Žižkov in October 1915 posted an announcement signed by many notables of the district (shop and café owners, school directors, estate managers), which ended with the exhortation: "let's show that in the Austrian Empire there is not only enough bravery, determination, and patriotism but also enough economic force for this war to end with a great and durable peace and the affluence warranted by victory."[71] Many of the posters aiming to convince savers to invest in war bonds were produced by the banks themselves. Their colors and designs hence

[67] Anonymous denunciation (in German), NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2262, sig. P 21/96, no. 27387, September 6, 1915.
[68] Police Headquarters to Military Command, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5069, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 34088/15, July 14, 1915.
[69] Police Headquarters to Military Command, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5069, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 31137/15, July 14, 1915.
[70] ÖNB, Kriegssammlung, "Letzte Zeichnungs-Woche 3. Kriegsanleihe – Bekanntmachung – Prag – In tschechischer Sprache," 1915, www.bildarchivaustria.at/Preview/16202784.jpg (accessed June 5, 2020).
[71] ÖNB, Kriegssammlung, "Dritte Kriegsanleihe – Aufruf an die Bevölkerung – Zizkov – In tschechischer Sprache," 1915, www.bildarchivaustria.at/Preview/16202784.jpg (accessed June 5, 2020).

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resembled more traditional advertisements compared with the more austere official announcements. The Anglo-Austrian bank, for instance, put posters up in Hybern Street to advertise for the third war bond.[72] Designs by Czech artist Hanuš Svoboda included a stylized version of the imperial double eagle above a crown and a poster for Živnostenská banka, featuring a medieval knight in full armor, sporting Austrian emblems and a sword before a mountainous background.[73]

This last poster epitomizes the "nostalgic turn" in wartime images.[74] In Bohemia, the traditional image of Saint Wenceslas, medieval ruler and patron saint of the province, was used in the promotion of the war effort. The Provincial War Help Office produced a badge to be sold for the war effort, representing a riding figure of the saint with the inscription: "Saint Wenceslas, intercede for our army and for us."[75] This badge was sold for the annual celebrations for the saint in September, which were very popular in Prague. Secondary school students were encouraged to buy it in the hope that they would wear it around that day and inspire others to do the same. A national Czech icon such as Wenceslas was easily exploited for the benefit of Austrian patriotic culture.

The pictorial language used to mobilize the population in Prague relied on the motive of help and compassion for the suffering of soldiers or orphans rather than on the glorification of war deeds. Support for the war effort was frequently framed in terms of support for the soldiers from Prague rather than more general concepts.[76] In many of the images used to sell and promote the war effort, the enemy was conspicuously absent. Caricatures, such as the comic doll representing king Peter of Serbia sold by a street seller in restaurants and cafés on na Příkopě/Graben, were not absent from public space.[77] But, overall, the demonization of Serbs and Russians was not the main vector of mobilization. The animosity against former ally Italy also did not feature much in pictorial productions,

[72] *Právo lidu*, September 28, 1915, 6.

[73] ÖNB, Kriegssammlung, "Vierte Kriegsanleihe," ca. 1916, www.bildarchivaustria.at/Preview/14297536.jpg (accessed June 5, 2020) and "Reklame – Kriegsanleihe – Kleinstgrafik," ca. 1916, www.bildarchivaustria.at/Preview/15755998.jpg (accesssed June 5, 2020).

[74] Jay Winter, "The Practices of Metropolitan Life in Wartime," in *Capital Cities at War*, II, 10–11; Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[75] Provincial War Help Office to the secondary school Minerva, AHMP, Dívčí gymnasium "Krásnohorská" Praha II, ka 16, inv. č. 961, September 20, 1916.

[76] On similar features in Russian patriotic culture, see Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia*, 63–83.

[77] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5061, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 13468/15, March 19, 1915.

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although the district officer in Žižkov had noticed "a strong displeasure against this country" following the May 1915 declaration of war.[78] Even the heroization of Austrian soldiers, very present in the images produced by the official relief effort, does not feature so frequently in material produced in Prague.[79] Representations emphasized images of grief much more than jingoistic caricatures, suggesting a particular adaptation of the Austrian "war culture" to the Prague context.[80]

One of the most successful posters in wartime Prague was the lithograph used by the Local War Help Office of the City Council to promote its Christmas gifts to servicemen. Executed by the artist Max Švabinský, it showed a tired dragoon riding in a snowstorm (Figure 2.1).[81] The image was first used in 1914 in posters displayed in the streets of Prague with the slogan, "Remember your brothers in the field!" It appealed directly to the viewer's empathy with the soldiers in the height of winter: the soldier looks downcast and cold. The *Prague Municipal Bulletin* credited the poster with the success of the collection, explaining that, after its appearance on street corners, citizens brought their gifts in "like bees to the hive."[82] Having commissioned the work, the municipality might not have been the most objective judge, but the success of Švabinský's drawing can be inferred from its subsequent uses. In early 1915, it was reproduced in postcards which served as vouchers in a charity lottery organized by the municipality. These postcards were available in schools, cinemas, cafés, and concert halls.[83] Later that year, 50,000 stickers with the same image sold very quickly in primary schools around Prague and the suburbs.[84] Even Jan Hajšman mentions the strong impression it created in the Prague crowd in his memoirs.[85] This work of art by a prominent Czech artist of the time became one of the vehicles of a representation of the war centered on emotions and compassion.

An etching by another famous Czech artist, Mikoláš Aleš, of an orphan girl leaning on a cemetery wall, was reproduced by the Local War Help

[78] Weekly report, Žižkov district office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5063, sig. 8//1/92/19, no. 37401/14, May 29, 1915.
[79] Joachim Bürgschwendter, "War relief, Patriotism and Art: the State-run Production of Picture Postcards in Austria 1914–1918," *Austrian Studies*, 21 (2013): 99–120.
[80] On the French "war culture," see Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18, retrouver la guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000); on the use of this concept in the plural to reflect diversity within a society, see Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, "Conclusion," in *Capital Cities at War*, II, 468–481.
[81] AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK.
[82] *Věstník obecní královského hlavního města Prahy*, XXI, 22, December 24, 1914, 419.
[83] *Národní listy*, January 10, 1915, 4.
[84] *Národní politika*, December 17, 1915, 3.
[85] Jan Hajšman, *Česká Mafie: vzpomíny na odboj doma* (Prague: Sfinx, 1932), 45.

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Figure 2.1 Postcard with the drawing by Max Švabinský: "Remember your brothers in the field!"
Source: *Muzeum města Prahy, H 081 035*

Office into thousands of postcards to be sold for the war effort.[86] Yet another much-used image in posters and badges represented a crying mother veiled in black holding her child up to face the viewer. Behind her, an angel comforted her. A large poster by the local branch of the Imperial Widow and Orphan Fund, for example, featured the black and white drawing and invited every Czech to do his duty to the homeland by helping these children.[87] This image, also used in campaigns in Vienna and in subsequent funding appeals, shows a similar use of suffering as a means of patriotic mobilization.[88] "Social patriotism" was harnessed as a powerful tool in service of the Austrian war effort.

The collection of stamps and stickers gathered by Jiří Čarek as a child shows an emphasis on similar themes. Aged seven in 1915, the future

[86] Local War Help Office to school directors, December 21, 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK. See also receipt for the printing of 3,000 postcards, December 31, 1914.
[87] AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 894, sig. 83/116.
[88] For example, in this 1917 poster: ÖNB, Kriegssammlung, "Kriegerwaisentage 1917 – Gute Menschen spenden ihr Scherflein," October 1917, www.bildarchivaustria.at/Preview/14666400.jpg (accessed June 5, 2020).

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archivist collected various items related to the war effort, which can be found in his personal papers.[89] It gives an indication of what a Czech-speaking middle-class child in Prague might have been exposed to. Four out of sixteen stamps bear a text in Czech (the others are in German). Several of them feature members of the imperial family or Habsburg heroes (Prince Eugene). Others represent children or soldiers in the care of the war welfare agencies, insisting on the orphans, widows, or wounded soldiers deserving help. The illustrations used in the stamps rely on a sense of tradition or on the usual tropes of charity. Children and youths were among the most avid consumers of this "war culture" and of all its collectible images. One school chronicle noted in September 1915: "Very eagerly did the students buy war cockades, badges with Saint Wenceslas and stickers [of Švabinsky's] 'Soldier in the field.'"[90]

School children also had occasions to participate more directly in war representations. The patriotic tableaux *vivants* (carefully posed silent scenes) organized by theaters after or before a play often relied on their participation. In the wooden suburban theater *Uranie*, for example, one of these tableaux represented the glorious return home of soldiers: a group of uniformed servicemen formed the center of the scene with a young woman in traditional Czech costume holding her hands out to them. On their left and right sides, women and children in both civilian clothes and national costumes leaned toward them with flowers and crowns.[91] Children from the local schools were enrolled to play their own roles and hence participate in the patriotic representation of the fatherland. Theaters had learnt to adapt to the war. After the shutdown of dance and music halls in the first months of the war, entertainment had resumed gradually with the excuse of raising money for the war effort.[92] Many theaters and cabarets in Prague during the war staged plays for the benefit of the Imperial fund for widows and orphans or for the benefit of the Red Cross, as was expressly mentioned on their posters and leaflets.[93]

[89] AHMP, Jiří Čarek – Dokumentace, ka 21, inv. č. 270.

[90] "Dějiny soukromého českého soukromého dívčího gymnasia v Praze," 133; on the mobilization of children, see Christa Hämmerle (ed.), *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1993); Hannes Stekl, Christa Hämmerle, and Ernst Bruckmüller (eds.), *Kindheit und Schule im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2015); Milena Lenderová, *Vše pro dítě: válečné dětství 1914–1918* (Prague: Paseka, 2015).

[91] Original sketch, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/86, no. 5976, February 29, 1916.

[92] Memorandum from the governor, August 6, 1914, NA, PP, 1916-1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/1, no. 17129. See Healy, *Vienna*, 105.

[93] See all the donations made by theaters to war charities, NA, PP, 1916-1920, ka 3137, T15-19.

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Many of the war images and portrayals in public space were the result of local, associative, or private initiatives. Centralized propaganda efforts directly sponsored by the Austrian state remained limited. The film and literature output was relatively small, and attempts to influence public opinion mostly concentrated on negative means, such as press censorship.[94] The War Press Office did, admittedly, organize an exhibition of war paintings at the Rudolfinum in November 1916, even though this type of event might not have drawn large crowds.[95] More popular were the official war newsreels shown in cinemas all over Prague.

The relatively new medium of cinema became increasingly popular during the war and "war pictures" were in high demand. Beyond the official production, a major Austrian war film such as *The Dream of an Austrian Reservist* also encountered tremendous success in Prague: it was shown repeatedly in 1915 and in 1916 and was the most successful film of the war years.[96] An article in *Právo lidu* depicted the war movies fans "who have run through all of Prague and its suburbs to see 'The Reservist's Dream'" and marveled at the impression made by the images of the "first war that will be immortalized."[97] The "most interesting war film so far," according to *Národní listy*, was the footage of the recapture of Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv shown at the Lucerna theater with panoramic views of the city that "complemented newspapers' reports."[98] The audience's reactions to patriotic newsreels sometimes led to quarrels in cinemas. During a screening in February 1915, some applauded as a picture of Emperor Wilhelm II appeared while others went "pst" to silence them, revealing Czech–German tensions in Prague.[99]

Another war display that found great favor among the public was the "Prague trench," which promised to give Prague inhabitants a better notion of the front experience. Built near one of the city's largest parks (Emperor's Island near Stromovka), it opened in September 1915. Organized in cooperation with the Military Command and planned by

[94] Cornwall, *Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, 27–28.
[95] *Kriegsbilderausstellung. K.u.k. Armeekommando Kriegspressequartier. Prag 1916. Rudolphinum*. (Prague: Fürstbischöfl. Buchdr., 1916).
[96] It is announced as back "by general demand" in August 1915, *Večer*, August 28, 1915, 4; in 1916 that "all seats were sold" during previous showings, *Národní listy*, May 19, 1916, 5. The film was one of the most successful pro-Habsburg patriotic films and was produced by a private company, Robert von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A history* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2005), 22; Nolte, "Ambivalent Patriots," 174.
[97] *Právo lidu*, September 15, 1915, 4.
[98] *Národní listy*, July 9, 1915, 4; July 10, 1915, 4.
[99] Military Command to Governor's Office, February 6, 1915, NA, PMV/R, ka 184, sig. 22 Böhmen, no. 4087.

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two officers, it claimed to be simpler and more realistic than in other cities, "count[ing] on the interest in the whole population for everything linked with the war." Its goal was to give civilians a better representation of the soldiers' conditions than they could make out from newspapers' photographs. For a low price, in their own city, they could experience the war they read about and get a better sense of it.[100] By November, the "trench," a tramway ride away from the center, had become "the favorite excursion place of the Prague public" and had already drawn 40,000 visitors.[101]

The curiosity surrounding war events among the public (at least in the first year) was sustained by the many representations of the conflict present in urban space. From the "realistic" trench to the popular films or the ubiquitous posters inviting to "patriotic sacrifice," images of the war were difficult to escape. Rather than framed in martial tropes, the interest for the war and soldiers was connected with familiar images of historical tradition and compassion for the suffering of loved ones. Cinemas and theaters remained extremely popular in Prague throughout the war. As the conflict progressed, however, they increasingly became a space to escape from the reality of war instead. In 1918, a man explained in a letter: "most people try to divert their thoughts from the war; the theaters and cinemas are always sold out, some representations weeks in advance."[102]

Badges and Boxes: Private Initiatives, Public Collections

Many of the war posters tried to catch the attention of passersby to make them contribute to war causes. Small war committees and other help offices mushroomed during these years, all vying on the streets for donations from the same population. They reveal the dynamism of these actions and show that in Prague, as much as elsewhere in Europe, the mobilization for the war effort was not a state-sponsored enterprise imposed on a passive victimized society. Many of the war relief organizations were a mix between public and private. They drew on the rich network of associations in Late Habsburg Austria, often separated according to national lines (Czech and German) in Bohemia. Their activity shows how nationalism, even Czech nationalism, could be used as a vector of imperial patriotic mobilization.

[100] *Národní politika*, September 22, 1915, 5; *Prager Tagblatt*, September 19, 1915, 12.
[101] Quote from *Národní politika*, November 24, 1915, 6; number from *Prager Tagblatt*, November 19, 1915, 5.
[102] ÖStA, KA, AOK, Evb/NA, K3799, no. 2648, March 7, 1918.

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According to a contemporary guide, more than seventy agencies, committees, and associations operated in Prague to manage war relief actions.[103] The key governmental institutions created after the outbreak of the war were the War Help Bureau and the War Relief Agency. Headquartered in Vienna, they centralized donations in the entire monarchy. The War Relief Agency had a Prague branch next to the main train station and a shop selling war relief products on Ferdinand Avenue, one of the city's main thoroughfares. Overall, central agencies were often located in the New Town, the economic and financial heart of the city. The Orphan and Widow Fund's offices were on Wenceslas Square and the local state agency for the care of home returning soldiers on the business avenue Poříč. Near the Governor's Office and the Bohemian Diet in Malá Strana were the regional agencies, such as the Regional War Help Office. Finally, the Old Town concentrated municipal relief offices near or in the town hall. Every larger suburb also had its own office. In war relief activities, the mix between public and private, local and imperial was frequent: in practice, it left much room for initiatives from below.[104] The Red Cross, for example, while officially linked with the imperial war relief and running a local bilingual Bohemian branch with its headquarters in Prague for the supervision of regional activities, still remained a private entity. Its different offices were mostly housed in the baroque palaces of the Bohemian aristocracy in Malá Strana.

Building on their prewar experience, voluntary associations massively participated in the war effort.[105] Their activism before the conflict often followed national lines, a commitment they maintained in the course of their new mission. The War Help Committee of the Czech Women's associations had its seat in the Art Nouveau Representation House, the heart of Czech social life in Prague. The involvement of these nationalist actors further entangled the dynamic between private and public in the promotion of the war effort. The imperial Widow and Orphan Fund in Bohemia was, for instance, entrusted to the care of the private Czech and German Provincial Commissions for Child Protection and Youth Welfare.[106]

Four of the main Czech war relief associations also organized a large war exhibition in the Czech National Museum on Wenceslas Square

[103] *Rádce v době světové války: okresní válečná pomocná úřadovna v Praze ve prospěch svých humánních účelů* (Prague: vlast. nákl.: Praesidiál. kancelář král. hl. m. Prahy, 1916).
[104] Bürgschwentner, "War relief, Patriotism and Art."
[105] On war relief actions in Graz, see Nicole-Melanie Goll, "Kriegsfürsorge zwischen 'War Effort'und Herrschaftssicherung am Beispiel von Graz (1914–1918)," *Historisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Graz*, 45–46 (2016): 421–438.
[106] Zahra, "'Each Nation Only Cares for Its Own.'"

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showing the help provided to soldiers, especially wounded or disabled, and their dependents in the Bohemian Lands.[107] Running from the end of 1915 to mid-1916, it displayed the work of Czech doctors and charities, the care for war invalids, and the efforts of Czech schools. Painter Otakar Štáfl organized the gathering of photographs and visual material, as well as 200 paintings on war subjects by Czech artists, and two dioramas representing a destroyed bridge and a destroyed church.[108] Though recently disbanded, the Czech gymnastics association Sokol also participated, showing their numerous activities of war relief on the home front. Despite these efforts, the Military Command contended that the financial outcome was disappointing.[109] This negative assessment, however, somewhat misrepresented the success of the enterprise. While the total revenue was not very high because of exorbitant expenses and a low entrance fee, nonetheless, at least 60,000 people visited the exhibition (roughly one tenth of the population of Prague and its suburbs).[110]

Among all Czech associations involved in war relief, the Sokol deserves particular examination. Often presented as the backbone of the Czech legions which fought on the side of the Entente, and inspirers of desertion, the Sokols were in fact pillars of the Austrian war effort on the home front.[111] As early as July 27, 1914, the management of the Sokol sent a letter to the governor to offer their services: "we consider it as our patriotic duty to contribute," listing potential actions "for the endangered citizenry" such as replacement workforce, help to the families of soldiers, or collections of donations.[112] By October 1914, the organization had already raised 200,000 crowns for the war effort in Bohemia (on top of its own financial contributions nearing a similar amount) and had turned its numerous practice halls into hospitals. Members also welcomed wounded soldiers at train stations, helped with the harvest, provided clothes, gave nursing courses, and acted as replacement policemen.[113] An editorial entitled "love, duty, compassion" published for the

[107] The Czech branch of the Widow and Orphan Fund, the Institute for war invalids, the War Help Committee of the Czech Women's associations, and the Local War Help Office, *Národní politika*, 2nd supplement, December 25, 1915, 1.

[108] *Národní politika*, supplement, November 14, 1915, 1; November 16, 1915, 7.

[109] Excerpted mood report, Military Command, June 13, 1916, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5086, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 21157/16, July 10, 1916.

[110] Total revenue of 24,840 crowns and an entrance fee of 40h (20h for youth and soldiers), see police report, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2894, sig. A 17/4, no. 23398, October 9, 1916.

[111] On the Sokols during the war, see Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands*, 180.

[112] ČOS to Governor's office, July 27, 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5073, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15809/14.

[113] Summary of the Sokol's activities, October 26, 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5073, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15809/14.

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war's one year anniversary recounted all the activities performed by the Sokol, including the 100,000 soldiers housed in their hospitals.[114] We see here again the influence of "social patriotism" in mobilizing forces for the war effort.

Given the amount of energy, time, and money they deployed for the war effort, the ban of the association in November 1915 seemed a particularly poor reward for the Sokols' contribution. A letter by the leader of the Sokol to the Interior minister attests to how the news came as a hard blow and was felt as an injustice. In a bid to cancel the decision, he pointed out that they had volunteered and participated financially in the war effort as well as provided military training for the youth. While acknowledging prewar ties with Slavic nations, he vehemently denied any antistate activities. The Sokol felt that its preservation would benefit the state itself, as Sokol members had rendered great public services through their wartime actions. "Our ranks show whole hecatombs of fallen and wounded soldiers, […] the impressive work done in the field of war action, […] crowds of self-sacrificing men and women in the charity services, and great financial sacrifices devoted to these goals."[115]

Shortly after the ban, the police seized posters detailing in numbers the Sokols' participation in the war effort.[116] Entitled "Samaritan actions of the Sokols in the war," these lists enumerated the amount of money gathered by various branches of the Sokols in diverse actions: 200,000 crowns were given for the establishment and maintenance of hospitals in Prague (II, III, and VIII), and 40,000 crowns for the creation of prostheses in Žižkov and Brno. The poster also listed the number of Sokol "brothers" and "sisters" who joined the nursing help or the voluntary policing service, the number of Sokol branches which created hospitals, pharmacies, children wards on their premises, and the results of their collections for the "war help action." The Military Command seized these posters not because of their "completely harmless" content, but because it was a direct reaction to the ban and because of the crowds they could attract. By late 1915, the participation in the war effort was still enough of a consensus in the population that the Sokols felt the need to demonstrate it not only to the authorities who were persecuting them but also to the whole city. They were showing to the Prague public that they were not only on the side of the war effort but one of its main pillars in Bohemia. Even after their official suppression, they continued to

[114] Special edition of the *Sokol Bulletin*, XIX, 18, NA, ČOS, ka 63.
[115] ČOS to Interior Ministry, NA, PMV/R, ka 91, sig. 15/5, no. 1582, December 16, 1915.
[116] Report, Military Command, December 7, 1915, ÖStA, KA, KM, KÜA, K96, 1915, no. 52126.

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be active. The Sokol in the suburb of Košíře, for example, still donated money to the Widow and Orphan Fund and gave clothes to a Red Cross hospital in 1916.[117]

Perhaps less unexpected was the very active support of the war effort by the small German-speaking community in Prague. A physical symbol of their contribution in urban space was the statue of the *Wehrmann in Eisen* (iron warrior) housed in the garden of the German House on Am Graben/na Příkopě, a club which served as the center of German cultural and political life. This wooden monument represented an armored knight ready for the defense of the fatherland and was to be progressively covered with little iron nails purchased for the benefit of war causes. Iron-nail war landmarks were modeled on the example of Vienna, but always the result of local initiatives. They made the unity of home and front tangible through the reassuring traditional image of a medieval knight.[118] The inauguration of the statue on June 27, 1915, attended by many of the city officials, was an occasion to showcase the patriotism of the local German community.[119] The operation was a tremendous success, bringing many visitors to the garden and giving rise to new rituals. School children improvised little ceremonies where they sang songs before inserting the nails, one by one. Gift vouchers could be purchased and exchanged against nails.[120] By November 30, 1916, the *Wehrmann* had attracted 111,500 crowns in donations, an impressive number relative to the Prague German population.[121] The statue's gradually developing armor became a visual embodiment of the German community's dedication to the war effort as well as an integration of the conflict into everyday life.

Beyond this more official monument, five other nailing landmarks were erected throughout 1916, all located on major sites of the German cultural community in Prague. The association of German women in Prague built an iron emblem in the garden of the German theater.[122]

[117] AHMP, Sokol Košíře, sig. III 4.

[118] On the *Wehrmann* statues in the monarchy, see Kathryn Densford, "The Wehrmann in Eisen: nailed statues as barometers of Habsburg social order during the First World War," *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire* 24, 2 (2017): 305–324; in Germany, see Stefan Goebel, "Forging the Industrial Home Front: Iron-Nail Memorials in the Ruhr," in Pierre Purseigle, and Jenny MacLeod (eds.), *Uncovered Fields. Perspectives in the First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 162–163.

[119] *Prager Tagblatt*, June 28, 1915, 3.

[120] *Prager Tagblatt*, July 11, 1915, 5; see also, Erhard Lipka, *Lesestücke aus dem Weltkriege* (Prague: Schulbücherverl, 1917), 10.

[121] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, S 11/2/62, no. 35198, December 21, 1916.

[122] Letter from Isabella H., May 28, 1916, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, S 11/2/94, no. 9665.

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Three additional iron warriors collected donations: one in the courtyard of the German commercial academy, one in the winter garden of the Union of Germans in Bohemia, and one in the barracks of the seventy-third regiment in Vršovice. The café Continental (located on the German-connoted thoroughfare Am Graben/na Příkopě) also boasted a nailing shield whose funds went to the widows and orphans of fallen professional huntsmen. The initiative had come from a local bank employee.[123] Nailing landmarks inscribed the common effort to support the war victims in the landscape of the city and united people around ultra-local associational or professional communities. Unlike in Brünn/Brno where the *Wehrmann* featured prominently on the main square of the city, the Prague nailing monuments were placed near landmarks of the Prague German-speaking community (German house, German theater, café Continental). They delineate a geography of small communities of patriotic mobilization across the city, making publicly visible their participation in the war effort. Interestingly, despite the Germanness associated with the action in Prague, a Czech equivalent project for a "coat of arms of the Czech kingdom in iron" was initiated by the Prague civic corps. They intended to install it on Wenceslas Square next to the statue of the saint and organize a large patriotic celebration for its unveiling.[124] The project was later abandoned, and the money raised by the corps given for other war relief actions linked to Saint Wenceslas.[125]

National loyalty appears as one of the conduits of imperial patriotism in the context of the war effort. However, the nationalized aspect of many of these actions does not mean that nationalism was a requirement for patriotic mobilization. Some initiatives were not affiliated nationally and reflected other divisions (religious, for example). In this respect, the case of the War Help Committee (*Prager Hilfskomitée/Pražské pomocné sdružení*), which proclaimed to be "utraquist," offers an intriguing example.[126] The utraquists were the part of Prague society in the nineteenth century which refused to choose any national affiliation, Czech or German.[127] By 1914, they were considered to have more or less ceased to exist in Prague, yet the creation of such a committee attests to the

[123] Police report, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, S 11/2/100, no. 32345, November 18, 1916; on the shield in the café "Continental," see letter from the organizer, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, S 11/2/124, no. 114656, April 25, 1917.
[124] *Národní listy*, July 8, 1915, 3.
[125] *Právo lidu*, August 10, 1915, 5.
[126] File on the Committee: NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S11/2/74.
[127] Robert Luft, "Nationale Utraquisten in Böhmen. Zur Problematik nationaler Zwischenstellungen am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts," in Maurice Godé, Jacques Le Rider, and Françoise Mayer (eds.), *Allemands, Juifs et Tchèques à Prague 1890–1924* (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1996), 37–51.

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resilience of this phenomenon. In the usually segregated Prague bourgeoisie, the war had, at first, brought a modicum of intercourse between the two nationalities. Musical concerts for the benefit of one or the other war charity were attended by members of both nationalities.[128] This phenomenon was not new but had become rarer in the years before the First World War.[129] Created in September 1915, the committee was meeting in the "neutral" territory of the Hotel Central. Its creation stemmed from the actions at train stations in the summer of 1914 that had assembled both Czech and German volunteers in the same places and "united" both nationalities.[130] It organized eighteen concerts in 1915 and twenty-seven in 1916, as well as other events to collect funds for the war relief.[131] It purported to help in the patriotic mission with the "interests of the Empire's unity" in mind, having observed "a fragmentation of forces because of party political ambitions."[132] The idea was to create a platform where both upper-middle-class Czech-speakers and upper-middle-class German-speakers could donate without feeling that they were supporting a national agenda. Although it remained a marginal phenomenon, it is interesting that the old "utraquism" was revived in Prague for a brief moment during the mobilization of civilian bourgeois society in the war.

Understandably, the president of the local Prague branch of the imperial War Relief Agency felt that this committee was unnecessary competition for his imperial (and hence nationally neutral) institution.[133] The competition between the various associations dealing with war relief (among themselves and with state-sponsored entities) was not limited to this specific case, but emerges as a recurring feature of welfare actions during the war. Different sections of civil society were not positioning themselves for and against the war, but rather trying to show their commitment to the common struggle. They measured their own sacrifices against that of other communities. Urban space was a prime site for the competition of different patriotic contributions.

One of the most prominent signs of the war charities and patriotic actions' presence in the streetscape were the regular public collections. As they strolled down the street or visited public spaces, Prague

[128] Example of a concert in Rudolfinum, *Prager Tagblatt*, 2nd supplement, February 20, 1915, 3; See an article that criticizes this wartime "utraquism" in music concerts: *Národní listy*, January 3, 1918, 4.
[129] Cohen, "Cultural Crossings in Prague, 1900," 12–19.
[130] AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 892, sig. 83/1, no. 432, February 3, 1915.
[131] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/74, no. 1742, December 12, 1916.
[132] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S11/2/74, no. 12385, April 19, 1916.
[133] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S11/2/74, no. 12385, April 19, 1916.

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inhabitants were constantly asked to contribute to collections for war relief. Volunteers standing on street corners raised money for the benefit of various institutions (Imperial War Widows and Orphans Fund, Red Cross, Black Cross). They acted as a reminder of the war on everyday journeys through the city. Collection boxes in schools, banks, cafés, and cemeteries were placed in the most frequented urban locations and invited participation from the public. The snowman on Wenceslas Square held a box for the Red Cross.[134] On special days, public offices, banks, or tobacco shops displayed boxes for donations.[135] The War Help Office offered some boxes made of Russian shrapnel for this purpose.[136] Even inside private homes, families could order a box and save small amounts "during card games" or while sending a letter to the front.[137] The conflict became unavoidable in everyday life: from the posters always suggesting to give to the visible fundraising through persons or boxes.

The level of Czech financial contribution to the war effort, ever since the war years, has been scrutinized and taken as a measure of their failing commitment to the Empire. During the conflict, German Bohemian deputies already accused the Czechs of having signed significantly less state-sponsored war bonds, compared with their German counterparts.[138] More recent research has shown that economic considerations and uncertainty played a bigger role than nationalism in the calculations of Czech banks and explains the more modest sums engaged through them in war bonds.[139] The focus on small collections complements the study of war bonds by highlighting how all-encompassing the war effort was in public space and shifting the emphasis away from total amounts. Taken at the individual level, small contributions, such as little badges purchased for the Red Cross, appear more significant and demonstrate a high-level engagement with the patriotic mobilization.

As the Catholic Church actively promoted the war effort, churches became important sites of patriotic mobilization in the city. The War Relief Agency, for example, asked the bishop of Prague to urge priests to include in their sermons encouragement to donate to

[134] *Právo lidu*, January 3, 1915, 12.
[135] Examples: customs office in Prague, *Národní listy*, August 8, 1915, 2; banks in the suburbs, *Čech*, September 22, 1916, 6; tobacco shops and other shops, *Právo lidu*, supplement, July 27, 1915, 7.
[136] *Čech*, January 4, 1917, 6.
[137] See advertising leaflet from the Orphan and Widow fund, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3096, sig. S11/21, April 1918; see also advertisement in *Právo lidu*, June 30, 1915, 4.
[138] *Dotaz německých poslanců o chování se českého národa za války* (Prague: J. Skalák, 1918), 100.
[139] For a thorough treatment of this question see Šedivý, *Češi, České země a Velká Válka*, 242.

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the Christmas action.[140] The priest at Saint Stephen in the New Town explained that his church had two collection boxes in early 1915 – one for the soldiers and their families through the vicariate, the other for widows and orphans collected through the city council. The priest also regularly contributed to door-to-door collections and to "all street collections."[141] Schools were another key location for war relief actions. Schoolteacher Marie Schäferová recalls how she was obliged by the authorities to go door to door with her pupils to collect money, canvassing the whole neighborhood near her school in Malá Strana.[142] Even in a poor working-class suburb, such as Žižkov, pupils had saved money in little boxes and provided clothes for the wounded.[143]

School children also played a major role in the metal collections, as Austro-Hungarian citizens were asked to give, not money, but all their brass and copper metal objects. The demand for copper – to be used for bullet casings and shrapnel shells – increased during the war, while shortages grew in the Central Powers due to the Blockade. Before the conflict, Austria–Hungary had been heavily reliant on copper imports. The country therefore needed to quickly find alternative domestic sources of metal to fuel the continued production of ammunition, although the purpose of the collections was not mentioned in official appeals.[144] The first drive was launched in April 1915: on the advertising kiosks, posters invited participation in the "patriotic war metal collections" and municipal employees distributed appeals in both languages to all Prague homes.[145] School children went from door to door and drew lists of the donors and the items provided: from the larger ones such as kitchenware, bath tubs, pipes, lamps, to the smaller ones, pendulum of clocks, brass buttons, or door handles.[146] In a building not far from the town hall, a collection point was created where inhabitants could bring their own metal objects. To advertise the action, the municipality displayed two iron mortars (which could be ordered as replacement for donated brass mortars) in the windows of the tourist office next to the Powder Tower, "one of the

[140] Kriegsfürsorgeamt to Archbishop Ordinariat, November 11, 1916, NA, APA III, ka 1210, no. 4291.
[141] AHMP, FÚ u kostela sv. Štěpána Praha – Nové Město, Pamětní kniha (Liber memorabilium IV.) 1836–1923, 150.
[142] See her memoirs in AHMP, Marie Schäferová, ka 1, inv. č. 5, 14.
[143] *Právo lidu*, July 1, 1915, 5.
[144] "To the population," AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK; on copper shortages, see J. Robert Wegs, "The Marshaling of Copper: An Index of Austro-Hungarian Economic Mobilization during World War I," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 12 (1976): 189–202.
[145] *Právo lidu*, April 2, 1915, 9; April 18, 1915, 5.
[146] Letter of the Prague school board, April 17, 1915 and the accompanying instructions, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK, no. 223.

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most frequented points in the royal city of Prague."[147] Successive waves of metal collections followed, gathering more and more from the population, as well as collections of wool and rubber in October 1915 and June 1916. School children took away the collected items on carts decorated with small flags.[148]

The regularity of street collections for money or objects brought a rhythm to city life, mixing traditional celebrations and new state-wide occasions. Official public collections – from the "flower days" of 1914 to the "sacrifice days" of October 1916 and beyond – mobilized volunteers in similar locations with small boxes, badges, and flowers. Some lasted for a day while others were part of a week-long fundraising drive. Starting in late 1914, two "flower days" (named in reference to prewar charity events) took place on October 4 and November 1. On the latter day, Governor Thun drove through Prague to distribute a coin to every volunteer he encountered and apparently came back to his palace with a car filled with flowers.[149] The "flower days" continued in March and May 1915, one for the benefit of Prague war orphans.[150] That same year, collections took place during the "May Help" on May 13 and the "Golden Spike" in September, coinciding with harvest time and Saint Wenceslas celebrations. 1916 saw week-long mobilizations for the Red Cross Week (April 30–May 7) and the "Sacrifice Days" (October 4–8). The Local War Help Office of the Prague municipality managed to raise almost 400,000 crowns, and another 140,000 crowns were raised during the Red Cross Week.[151]

In continuation with prewar middle-class charity practices, special events were organized to raise money for the war effort: concerts in public parks or at the Representation House, theatrical representations, and religious services in the different churches of the city. Some of them gathered the local high society and numerous official personalities, such as the celebration in the park of the Baroque Wallenstein palace in July 1915. Organized for the benefit of the Prague war orphans, the

[147] City Council Presidium to Vienna War Help Office, October 16, 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK, no. 82.
[148] Committee for patriotic collections to City Council presidium, May 24, 1916, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK, no. 36.
[149] *Národní politika*, November 3, 1914, 4.
[150] AHMP, Dívčí gymnasium "Krásnohorská" Praha II. – Nové Město, Vodičkova ul. 22, Dějiny soukromého českého soukromého dívčího gymnasia v Praze, 133; Daily report NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5062, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 22801, May 14, 1915.
[151] List of the collections and amounts in the report "How the Prague municipality and the Local War Help Office with the corporations established at the Old Town Hall participate in the war relief," AHMP, MHMP I Presidium, ka 894, sig. 83/214, no date (probably end of October 1916).

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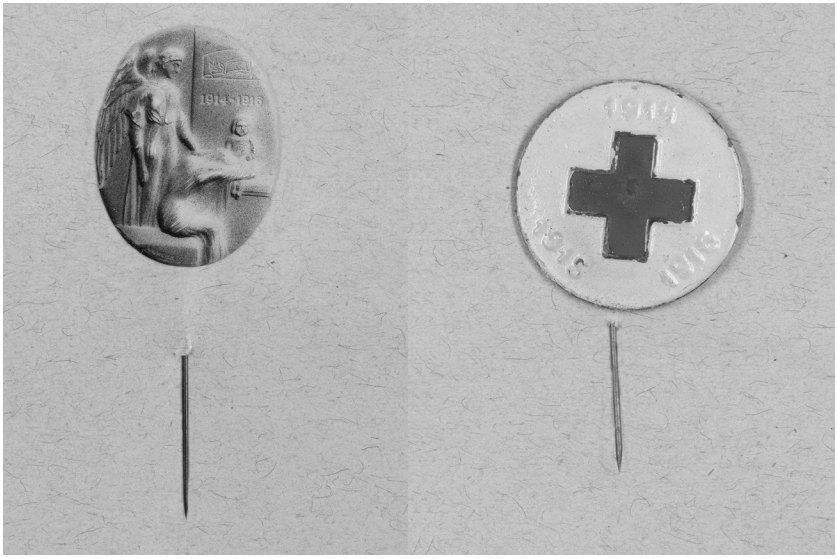


Figure 2.2 Red Cross and Widow and Orphan Fund badges
Source: AHMP, *Jiří Čarek, ka 21, inv. č. 271*

event also opened the doors of this noble residence to the public with a concert of the Czech Philharmonic in the magnificent great hall. Other more modest events took place in the suburbs as well: on the same day, for instance, the municipality of Bubeneč organized a bazar for the benefit of war orphans in the local school.[152]

The little badges sold in support of the various war charities and worn on jacket lapels demonstrated one's commitment to the war effort (see Figure 2.2). They were a visible testimony of the Prague population's involvement in relief actions. A Czech author, writing in 1918, complained about the ubiquity of these badges on the streets of Prague during the conflict: "And Czech […] cowards […] started to adapt, attaching on their coats little flags with a white U (Unterseeboot) or at least the emblem of the Red Cross. […] It was painful to walk through the streets of Prague."[153] Knowing what the people wearing these badges associated with them is complex: some wore them out of loyalty to the

[152] Daily report, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5068, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 32756/15, July 5, 1915; on the Wallenstein Palace celebration, July 1, 1915, AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK.

[153] Jaroslav Nauman, *Válečné glossy: prosy 1914–1918* (Prague: Sokolské besedy, 1918), 44–45.

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state, others to show their solidarity with the fighting soldiers, others because they had avoided army service and were thereby demonstrating their participation in the war effort as civilians. Civil servants were also subjected to strong pressure to contribute to the war collections. Public employees often donated a percentage of their salaries directly to war causes.[154] Different passersby associated various degrees of sincerity to their badge-wearing, but the general picture of the streetscape produced was one where support for war causes was prominently displayed.

During the Red Cross week from April 30 to May 7, 1916, around 100,000 little white badges with a Red Cross were sold in Prague, corresponding to roughly one sixth of the urban area's population, which gives an idea of how widespread these items were on the street. The week-long event, simultaneous in all the major towns of Cisleithania, constituted a high point of engagement with war relief actions.[155] Local school boys accompanied their teachers door to door to appeal to the population's generosity, while girls helped raise money in the streets.[156] Propaganda efforts included the display of posters but also Sunday homilies in Catholic churches.[157] Most of the city's theaters, cinemas, concert halls, and other venues hosted special performances. The Czech National Theatre, for example, staged a Smetana opera for the benefit of the charity, while a garden party on the main island of the river Vltava/Moldau attracted most of the city's elite.[158] The suburbs arranged their own fundraising events. In Smíchov, the local ladies' committee organized collections on the main avenues and squares, productions in local theaters and cinemas as well as a popular celebration in a public garden on the Sunday.[159]

The map below shows the different locations in Prague where volunteers stood with their donation boxes during the Red Cross Week (Map 2.2).[160] The same collection points were used one month later

[154] See, for example, Finanzprokuratur to Governor's Office September 3, 1914, PM 1911-1920, ka 5453, sig. 10/32/2, no number; Postal directorate to Governor's Office September 17, 1914, PM 1911-1920, ka 5453, sig. 10/32/2, no. 429.

[155] NA, ZČK, ka 49, Týden Červeného kříže Summář.

[156] City Council to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/89, no. 13103, April 26, 1916.

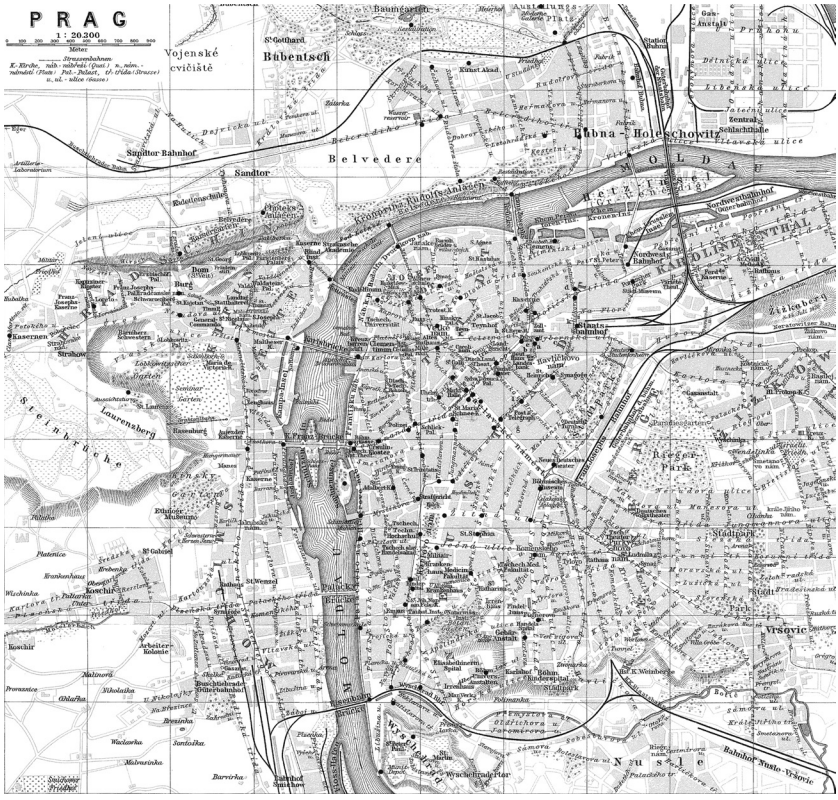
[157] "Instruktionen für die Vorbereitung der Roten Kreuz Woche (30 April bis 7. Mai 1916)," S. 3, NA, ZČK, ka 49, Týden Červeného kříže Summář.

[158] *Venkov*, May 2, 1916 and *Hlas národa*, May 2, 1916, NA, ZČK, ka 49, Týden Červeného kříže, Výstřižky z novin.

[159] Letter from the Smíchov committee of ladies, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/93, no. 13184, April 27, 1916.

[160] List of collection points for the Red Cross Week: "Street Collections 30 April and 7 May 1916," NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/89. Similar list for the collection for returning soldiers on 1 June: AHMP, MHMP I, Presidium, ka 907, sig. OVK.

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Map 2.2 Collection points in the inner city during the Red Cross week (April 30 to May 7, 1916)

in a fundraising drive for the benefit of returning soldiers. Most of them were located on busy street corners where passersby were likely to stop. There was a high concentration in the center of the city, especially around the most animated thoroughfares Ferdinand Avenue and Am Graben/na Příkopě, and on the main squares (Wenceslas Square, Joseph Square near the Powder Tower, Charles Square, and Old Town Square). Train stations, churches, and famous restaurants or cafés constituted other central points for the fundraising efforts. Walking through the streets of Prague on those days, it would have been hard to avoid the collections, be it on the city's bridges, in public parks, or in front of the main shops.

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Raising Money on Purkyně Square

In Král. Vinohrady during the "Sacrifice days" of October 1916, school children and their teachers sold for the Widow and Orphan Fund little green–gray badges decorated with a white flower accompanied by a sprig of heather: from 9 to 5 on Sunday, four small groups stood on the square itself, at the Czech National House, at the café Hlavova, at the Café Royal, and at the town hall. Others were located on squares, in public gardens, cafés, and market halls of the suburb.[161]

The ubiquity of collections was not to everyone's taste. A man was arrested for complaining to the conductor as he stepped into a tramway carriage and received a Red Cross card: "If they wanted that war, they should not beg."[162] Another sent a letter to the government following the increase in the price of stamps for the war effort outlining the unremitting pressures for citizens to donate:

I would like to bring to the attention of the illustrious k. u. k. government that tobacco shops lately are reluctant to sell stamps at the normal price. They sell them instead for 2 hellers more and this amount has to serve war purposes. This measure creates bad blood among a population already overburdened by the high prices and the constant collections because it is an outrageous public robbery of the citizenry. Those who have the means, let them give or those who want, let them give but this looting of the pockets of the poor people is very undignified for the k. u k. government.[163]

Such constant participation in collection drives, public giving, and events for the benefit of soldiers contributed to the progressive weariness of the population. It is my contention that we cannot understand one without the other. The home front contributed with its money, time, and effort in war relief, and Czech-speakers felt like they had done their duty, contributing a fair share. The pressure to participate helps explain the feeling of poor retribution for the sacrifices made, which became widespread in the last two years of the conflict and undermined the state's legitimacy. As with prewar charity, many war relief actions targeted a middle-class or lower-middle-class audience, but working-class adults and children were also expected to contribute to the common effort, for example through

[161] List of collection points in Král. Vinohrady, see "Obětní dny na Král. Vinohradech," NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3095, sig. S 11/2/102, no. 27677, September 29, 1916.
[162] Complaint quoted in Czech, Military Command to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3014, sig. M 33/2, May 7, 1916.
[163] Anonymous letter to the Vienna government (in Czech), March 7, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5068, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 32854/15.

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the metal collections. Glossing over the intense presence of the Austrian war effort in Prague and the participation of its inhabitants means that we cannot understand the demands put on the state in the following years. Here again, "reading" the intense participation in the war effort from the appearance of the streets enriches our understanding of the unfolding of war on the home front. To complete this examination, it is necessary to consider not only the positive markers of mobilization, but also its flip side – the elements removed from public space.

Monitoring the Urban Environment: Colors and Denunciations

The transformation of the streets not only occurred through the invasion of new symbols (collection boxes, flags, posters), but also through the clearing of elements contravening the wartime spirit. Streets were monitored to make sure that their appearance suited the patriotic atmosphere. The dynamics of small changes in shop windows, colors displayed, and foreign words were not simply initiated by the Austrian authorities and imposed from above: individual citizens also participated to make the streetscape conform to the times. The denunciation letters to the police targeting public space are in this respect particularly revealing. They show a will to have the local urban environment correspond to larger imperial concerns. As accusations against space and not persons, they also broaden our understanding of denunciating practices.[164]

One of the prominent sites for police vigilance was the stores' window displays, which had changed with the war. As newspaper *Národní listy* observed, "many of the things that used to be attractive are either set aside or have disappeared entirely. Foreign products replaced with domestic articles."[165] The war disrupted many trade routes and made some items unavailable. The resourcefulness of local firms could not always make up for it. Items on sale and directly visible from the street were particularly regulated and sometimes banned. A few toy soldiers with their hands raised spotted in a shop in Smíchov led to a check of all toy shops in the city and a confiscation of similar figurines, even though the owner explained that he had purchased them from Germany and that they represented English soldiers.[166] The police also forbade the sale of toy soldiers wearing the

[164] On denunciation defined as an act against other citizens, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Robert Gellately, "Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History," *Journal of Modern History*, 68, no. 4 (1996): 747–767.

[165] *Národní listy*, April 10, 1915, 3.

[166] Police Headquarters to Military Command, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3142, sig. U 5/4, no. 34444, February 7, 1916.

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flags of enemy countries in several stores in Král. Vinohrady and seized the merchandise, but did not punish the owners who were deemed unaware of the toys' meaning.[167] Moreover, the representation of the war in shop windows could not be too realistic: two printings shops, a gallery and a chemist in the New Town were asked to take down stark images of war "atrocities" and replace them with positive patriotic images.[168] The military or police observed shop windows with an eye for inappropriate displays. Military commander Schwerdtner, irritated on his daily walk to his office by the sight of English, French, or Russian titles still present in a bookshop window, demanded a full inspection of Prague bookshops.[169]

Common citizens also supported these efforts to regulate urban space by monitoring public signs or storefronts. Street names or shop names were a frequent topic of complaint in denunciation letters to the police. The letters were often anonymous or signed with a pseudonym underlining the patriotic spirit of the author.[170] Authorities acted upon these prompts to purge public space. In order to render the city more patriotic, the police enforced the removal of any name of cafés or streets with a reference to the enemy states: Russia, France, and England. This measure was a reaction to the complaints of several anonymous "patriots" who had been shocked to see English and French still displayed in the streets of Prague. They considered it a shame for Prague in the eyes of the rest of Austria. "A few good patriots," for example, complained about the instructions in the Russian language at several hotels and cafés in the center of Prague. They remarked on the fact that Russia had banned inscriptions in a language other than Russian and that the owners of these establishments being patriots themselves would not object to the removal. The signs thus served "no practical purpose and simply provoke[d] every good Austrian."[171] The fact that the writers mention the owners without animosity shows that the main quibble here was genuinely with the way the city looked. The consequences for the owner were also mild as he was only asked to remove the sign in question.

In July 1915, the Prague Police Headquarters instructed its officers to pay special attention to such signs during their rounds and request their removal.[172] Two months later, the police station in the Upper New Town

[167] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3018, sig. M 34/1, no. 115, February 4, 1916.
[168] Report from the Upper New Town station, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3018, sig. M 34/1, no. 22981, October 2, 1916.
[169] Licht, *Válečné vzpomínky*, 154.
[170] Similarly, after 1918, Czech-speaking denouncers signalled German-speaking signs to the City Council, see Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen*, 127–128.
[171] NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, sig. F 8/3, letter June 22, 1915.
[172] Memorandum by the Chief of Police, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, sig. F 8/3, July 2, 1915.

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reported the disappearance of any signs in Russian, English, or French from various cafés and establishments: a pub called "At the English queen" had to take down its sign while the Café Louvre, one of the largest and most prominent coffeehouses in Prague, also considered eliminating its street sign.[173] For owners, the changes threatened their established brand: a "Russian café," which had changed its name to "Café National," published posters to alert its clients to the name change.[174] Presumably the same group of "patriots" mentioned above (as can be assumed from the letter format and the pseudonym) wrote to the Chief of Police in November 1915. While praising the elimination of Slavic colors from urban space, they noticed that a few French names such as "Le Chic Parisien" were still found on the main streets of Prague.[175] This campaign shows the reciprocal influence of the public on the police in matters of patriotism. The police, in a context of manpower shortage, were helped by the common citizens who brought to their attention contraventions to the wartime spirit. Denunciators ensured the uniform execution of official decisions. A woman remarked, for instance, that the "Russian" street in Vršovice had been renamed in honor of Franz Joseph, but that the street signs had not yet been changed.[176] The vigilance of common citizens was supposed to supplement the police efforts.

Interestingly, the "patriots" in these cases were not targeting a specific person but were concerned with the patriotic character of the city itself. This type of denunciation adds to our understanding of the practice, which cannot solely be viewed as an attack on persons or a sign of personal enmities. Chiefly studied in the context of occupation or totalitarian regimes, denunciation has been described as a means for citizens to use the power of the state to further private interests.[177] Examining this practice in other conditions reveals a more complex picture whereby denunciation formed part of civic culture. To be sure, many denunciations in wartime Prague hid more personal motives or Czech–German tensions behind the self-professed loyalty or patriotism. The Prague Police Headquarters received many letters from citizens who denounced the unpatriotic character of their neighbors and might have had ulterior

[173] Upper New Town station to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2999, sig. L 20/5, no. 3223/III, September 13, 1915.
[174] Governor's Office to Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2891, sig. A 15/1, November 12, 1917.
[175] Letter to the Police Headquarters, November 3, 1915, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, sig. F 5/16, no. 4099.
[176] Letter in German, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2999, sig. L 20/5, no. 32997, November 16, 1915.
[177] Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 117–121.

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motives. For instance, the "citizens of Truhlářská street" denounced a few neighbors who "played the patriots in public" but gathered at night in one of the street's pubs to hold secret Russophile meetings behind "blurry windows."[178] Another Czech-speaking "loyal Austrian" accused members of the council in Břevnov to have been absent at the meeting organized to celebrate the Emperor's birthday.[179] However, doing one's duty in wartime should not be underestimated as a motive for denunciation, as Maureen Healy has shown in the Viennese case.[180] The practice was publicly encouraged. In the wartime context of "exceptional circumstances" and reduced police forces, "every well-disposed and order-loving state citizen" was enlisted to help the authorities in every way even through anonymous denunciations.[181] The numerous denunciations that do not mention a specific person or call for a specific punishment (and whose consequences did not go beyond a warning) delineate the contours of "good citizenship" in imperial Austria and individual participation in state matters.

These letters also show common citizens shaping the meaning of patriotism during the war years.[182] The state authorities (and particularly the civilian bureaucracy) had to reconstruct definitions of what constituted patriotic behavior during the war and individuals played an important role in this process. The bureaucracy was not unilaterally imposing a uniform meaning of Austrian patriotism to a reluctant and passive population. The meaning of terms such as "Austrian" or "patriotic" shifted depending on the letter-writer. The anonymous writer "Austriacus," for example, denounced the flags hung in front of the Czech Women's Help Committee, which included the Bohemian and Prague flags but failed to display the imperial colors, black and yellow. Yet, as the head of the association stated, this institution devoted to war charity and patriotic goals had not intended to contravene any rules.[183] The meaning of Austrian

[178] Anonymous letter in Czech, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2891, A 15/1, March 8, 1917.
[179] Letter translated into German (from Czech presumably), NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2255, sig. P 5/12, August 22, 1915.
[180] Healy, *Vienna and the Fall*, 154; on denunciations, see Scheer, "Denunciation and the Decline of the Habsburg Home Front."
[181] *Čech*, August 11, 1914, 4; on wartime citizen vigilance in the United States, see Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); on denunciation as part of civic culture, see Sace Elder, "Murder, Denunciation and Criminal Policing in Weimar Berlin," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41:3 (2006): 401–419.
[182] On denunciations as forms of exclusion, see Keely Stauter-Halsted, "Violence by Other Means: Denunciation and Belonging in Post-Imperial Poland, 1918–1923," *Contemporary European History, 30*(1) (2021), 32–45.
[183] Letter received April 16, 1917 and accompanying deposition by Vilma N., NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 3094, sig. S 11/2/49, no. 8420.

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patriotism during the war was the subject of a contest between different institutions or groups who held different conceptions of what constituted appropriate behavior in wartime. This particular example typifies the national tensions between Czechs and Germans in Prague (a German-speaking writer accusing a Czech association) but shows them defending their respective conceptions of good patriotism.[184]

Denunciations reveal letter-writers who considered that public space should reflect their identity (be it in connection to the state, nation, or city). They found a dissonance between their sense of self or of the polity to which they belonged and the current appearance of the streets, which they wished to redress. Their letters drew on the complex interplay of loyalty (imperial, national, and local) in Habsburg Austria. The citizens' participation in the control of urban space was sometimes motivated by their civic pride and concern about Prague's respectability. A resident of the suburb of Holešovice, for instance, wrote to the Prague Mayor to suggest forbidding citizens from hanging laundry out of their windows on the main avenue during the days of city-wide flag decoration. Concerned with the upcoming Emperor's birthday, he wrote "in the interest of the royal city of Prague" to eliminate this "bad habit which disfigures the metropolis."[185] This example highlights the possible integration of a local patriotism into the larger state patriotism.

Scrutiny of the streetscape extended to the colors displayed in everyday life, which acquired a special significance during the war.[186] The First World War represented a shift from previous attitudes in Bohemia. In public notices in August 1915, the Prague Chief of Police warned against the display of the Slavic tricolor (blue, red, and white). The sale of cockades or ribbons, or even objects, in these colors was prohibited and subject to a fine. Cases of noncompliance could even lead to arrests.[187] The goal was the systematic elimination of these colors, perceived as treasonous, from urban space. This was not a mean feat as many Czech national symbols contained these colors, including Prague's street signs. The Military Command's mood report approvingly remarked on the progressive covering of their blue borders: "In Prague the street signs with white letters, red background, and blue border are at quite a slow

[184] For a similar situation for army recruitment in Ireland, see Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, 189.
[185] Letter to the Prague Mayor in Czech, NA, PP 1916-20, ka 2931, F 13/2, no. 24358, August 14, 1915.
[186] On colors as a historical subject, see Michel Pastoureau, *Bleu: histoire d'une couleur* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2000).
[187] Police announcement, August 26, 1915, NA, PP, 1908-1915, ka 2178, sig. F 5/16, no. 23739.

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pace painted over and so begins the disappearance of this color combination from public space."[188]

The police also had to monitor closely one of the main targets of the hunt against blue, red, and white: tobacco shops. Following an anonymous denunciation, policemen checked the signs of every tobacco shop in the city to control the colors displayed on these semiofficial shops (usually the black and yellow with the imperial eagle, but sometimes also the Bohemian red and white). They made sure that the tricolor appeared nowhere, not even in an old advertisement for the newspaper *Národní listy*.[189] Tobacco shops also sold matchboxes, which became the object of singular persecution. Matches were commonly sold for the benefit of national associations such as the Matice Česká (a cultural and school association) in the prewar period. As a result, these matchboxes were decorated with Czech national motifs and pan-Slavic colors. The police inspected tobacco shops to seize all the matchboxes in the incriminated colors.[190]

Other objects circulating in public space and adorned with the pan-Slavic colors were seized. The Matice also placed its collection boxes in pubs, restaurants, and other frequented sites. Although the head of the association had quickly provided new boxes where the blue was painted over, the police still managed to find and confiscate seventeen boxes in the wrong colors in public locales.[191] Similarly, 13,644 copies of a small printing shop advertisement distributed in restaurants and cafés to be used by waiters as bills were destroyed.[192] In some cases, the colors were loosely connected to pan-Slav or national motifs from the prewar period. For example, a shoe polish maker whose 20,000 boxes with blue-red-white labels were seized explained that he had produced them in celebration of the All-Slav Sokol festival in 1912.[193]

[188] Mood report, Military Command, November 9, 1915, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5079, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 27326/15.

[189] Instructions to all police stations, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, sig. F 5/25, July 23, 1915.

[190] NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, sig. F 5/23, the entire file, for example depositions from Vinohrady, July 31, 1915; See also, examples of matchboxes sold in Karlín: NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5089, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 26994, September 2, 1916; On matchboxes and national associations in the Littoral, see: Stefan Wedrac, "L'ira dell'aquila: lo scioglimento della società scolastica "Lega Nazionale" nel Litorale austriaco," *Storia e Futuro*, 19 (2009).

[191] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5077, sig. 8/1/92/19, ad 37462, September 20, 1915.

[192] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5074, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 41585/15, September 12, 1915.

[193] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5070, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 35138/15, July 22, 1915; on the 1912 slet, see Claire Nolte, "Celebrating Slavic Prague: Festivals and the Urban Environment, 1891–1912," *Bohemia* 52 (2012): 49–53.

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In many cases, however, the combination of blue, red, and white was used without any political meaning. In Prague alone, the police listed more than 100 brands using these colors to sell products as diverse as beer, soap, metal, or paper. The chamber of commerce explained that many of them used this combination simply because of its visual appeal.[194] For the police themselves, the criminalization of these colors was not without problem. Not only were they common in many designs for everyday items, from coffee to packaged soup, which made the effort to remove them completely from sight difficult, but the alliance of blue, red, and white could have many other meanings. They were also the colors of the crownland of Carniola, for example. Confused about the instructions, the police were, at times, overzealous. A policeman reported the three forbidden colors in an advertisement for a nearby pub painted on a suburban wall as the text was in blue on a white background and underlined in red. The report from his superior, however, concluded that this sign did not correspond to a Slavic tricolor as it was mixed with other colors.[195] A firm selling ink accused of treason because of the use of these colors in its advertising also challenged the "subjective" assessment of the policeman and declared that their design did not include blue but purple.[196]

More inventive businessmen could find ways to continue selling their merchandise despite the prohibition. A company with a large stock of sardine boxes labeled with the forbidden colors told the police that they were of Norwegian origin and that the blue, red, and white colors were therefore a reference to the flag of a neutral country. The police authorized the sale of the stock on the condition that it was not displayed in the shop windows.[197] The police also allowed the sale of soup powder wrapped in red, blue, and white because of the great financial loss caused if the whole stock had to be destroyed. But again, the company could not publicly expose the merchandise in shop windows.[198] All these examples illustrate the compromises of the Prague police forces, which avoided businesses losing money while preserving the patriotic aspect of the wartime streetscape.

[194] Chamber of Commerce to Prague Police Headquarters, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, sig. F 5/32, September 14, 1915.
[195] Report, Nusle police station, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, F 5/16, no. 35252, October 13, 1915.
[196] Letter from the Národní podnik, July 24, 1917, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, sig. F 8/1, no. 13759.
[197] Report, Police Headquarters, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5084, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 15316, May 13, 1916.
[198] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5078, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 40438/15, September 8, 1915.

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In this task too, the police were seconded by the vigilance of the "patriots" who walked around Prague with a careful eye for the remaining blue, red, and white. They noticed them on the signs in tramway cars, on a storefront, or even on a ceiling painting at the Czech Museum.[199] They shared with the police their pained astonishment when they saw the incriminated colors in public space. An anonymous writer expressed his feelings upon noticing the colors at the station in Král. Vinohrady: "that on the platform boards and other signs the blue-white-red celebrates its joyous existence in silent toleration […] is the object of an unpleasant amazement."[200] The zeal of denunciation was not foreign to the German–Czech antagonism, but the shock caused by the sight of the signs remaining in a small suburban train station points to the new urban injunctions created by the war atmosphere.

The three Slavic colors had not been a particular subject of offense before the war, which explains how widespread they were in public space. The novelty of this treatment for Czech-speakers can be illustrated by a letter received by the Police Headquarters demanding confirmation of the order to remove Slavic colors:

> Today's issue of the newspaper in Graz published an article, saying that the Prague police headquarters made an announcement forbidding wearing the Czech tricolor. As the Czech public does not even want to believe it, I would like the [illustrious] police headquarters to tell me what the truth of it is. Regards, Fr. Beneš, Sergeant.[201]

The reaction of many incriminated "traitors" was similar and ranged from disbelief to annoyance. Instead of imposing a uniform patriotic meaning on the city, the fight against visible pan-Slavism produced the opposite effect in part of the Czech public. Even those who accepted it commented upon the inequality in the treatment of colors. An "Austrian" remarked that the pan-Slavic colors were rightfully banned but that the police should also ban the "high treasonous" pan-German colors (black, red, yellow), "which have a strong tendency against the independence of our monarchy," and which are still worn in Prague "publicly and undisturbed."[202]

[199] NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, sig. F 5/32, letter in German signed "a few patriots," September 22, 1915 and anonymous letter in German, no date.
[200] Anonymous letter in German, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2999, sig. L 20/5, no. 34300, November 27, 1915.
[201] Letter in Czech, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, F 5/16, no. 25683, September 2, 1915.
[202] Anonymous letter in German, NA, PP 1908-1915, ka 2178, F 5/32, August 29, 1915.

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A Protest in Colors

On May 16, 1918, draper Václav Moora hoisted two small flags in pan-Slavic colors from the window of his apartment on Purkyně Square and refused to take them down when asked by the police. Instead, he added another small flag. After the district officer came to see him, he finally relented. Nevertheless, he sent an angry telegram to the Interior Ministry justifying his actions: "the police station here torments me for the display of colors of Austrian nations and yet they do not move a finger for the display of pan-German treasonous flags. I ask for protection." The consequences of his actions were mild (an explicit reference to the 1917 imperial amnesty in the report explained this leniency) and he was soon afterward released. This act of defiance was pointing to the internal contradictions of the Habsburg authorities' wartime policy. Interestingly, this protest was still framed within the imperial logic and appealing to the central authorities in Vienna.[203]

The resentment created by the ban on pan-Slavic colors fueled the Czech-speakers' progressive disaffection toward the Habsburg state in the second half of the war. An illustration of this mood is a letter from 1916 addressed to the governor, stating that, although the Czech nation had followed state orders "the songs which our mothers sang to us as children are forbidden as crimes, the colors which relate to our national life and adorn our costumes and art, are violently removed."[204] Another letter expressed similar sentiments: "you disbanded the Sokols and other Czech associations, you locked away our innocent leaders, confiscated Czech songs, forbade the vignettes – even the poor vignettes – on our matchboxes."[205] Gestures also showed that the ban was less and less respected as the atmosphere loosened in the wake of the 1917 imperial amnesty for the Czechs accused of political crimes. According to a denunciation, the sign of an association in pan-Slavic colors, previously removed, was reinstated in its former place in 1917.[206] By May 1918, during the fifty-year celebrations of the National Theatre and

[203] Police report (including the telegram in Czech), NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, F 8/1, no 6861, June 1, 1918.
[204] Anonymous letter in Czech signed "A Czech," May 1916, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2890, sig. A 15/1, no. 15135.
[205] Anonymous letter in Czech, April 24, 1916, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2890, sig. A 15/1, no. 12784.
[206] Anonymous letter in German signed "Austriacus," NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, F 8/1, February 7, 1917.

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in the following days, some youths wore tricolor ribbons as a gesture of defiance.[207] The provocative display of pan-Slavic colors by a Král. Vinohrady draper (see text box) also demonstrated the will to publicly expose dissent on the new color policy. By banning the colors from public space, the Habsburg state had inadvertently conferred to them a subversive meaning they previously lacked.

The monitoring of the city's visual environment was complemented by a heightened vigilance for the songs sung and the attitudes displayed toward music. Orchestras played the imperial anthem in cafés, restaurants, and pubs to celebrate news from the front.[208] The anthem was so regularly performed that it gave rise to a new type of denunciation, accusing those who did not stand up.[209] As these incidents often occurred in pubs late at night, the police found it more expedient to prevent the anthem from being performed after a certain hour.[210] Czech national songs, most famously the popular "Hej Slované," suspected for its pan-Slavism, were banned and could not be sung in public spaces any more. The police tracked potentially unpatriotic music wherever partitions were sold. The music sheet for a 1908 song which included a few measures from the Marseillaise and the Russian anthem was seized in a music shop and songs sold in fun fairs with potentially war hostile texts were to be immediately confiscated by the police.[211]

The war provoked a regulation of the city's sensory aspect, mostly visual (window displays, signs, colors), but also aural through the banning of songs. The Prague police carefully inspected streets and shops to remove anything that could recall the enemy states. They were helped by ordinary citizens who saw the war as an occasion to exert civic vigilance in monitoring urban space. The numerous denunciation letters on the subject reveal this practice as firmly part of Habsburg civic culture and invite us to expand our perspective on modern denunciations. The blue, red, and white Slavic colors became a particular site of contention. This attack on familiar and widespread symbols, which were not linked to

[207] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2929, F 8/1, no. 6542, June 22, 1918.

[208] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PP, 1916-1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/2, no. 27515, May 26, 1915.

[209] An example in *Čech*, December 10, 1914, 9; see, for example, offenses no. 27, 28, and 29 (August 6, 1914 and September 8, 1914) in the list from December 1914, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5056, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 37495/14 in 38436/14.

[210] Memorandum from the Governor, NA, PP 1916-1920, ka 2886, sig. A 8/2, July 19, 1916.

[211] Police Headquarters to Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5075, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 42685, September 29, 1915; Memorandum from the Governor's Office, NA, PM 1911-1920, ka 5063, sig. 8/1/92/19, no. 39480/15, September 12, 1915.

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support for Russia, but were either part of prewar Czech culture or simply an attractive combination for advertising, tended to alienate Czech speakers from the common war effort rather than achieve the dream of a Prague purged of any pan-Slavic references.

The Austrian war effort in Prague was neither nonexistent nor exclusively the result of actions by German-speakers; it represented an important part of daily life in the city. To be sure, it is difficult to evaluate to what extent this activism was genuine or the result of social (or even military) pressure. Whatever the motivations, their impact on the streetscape was clear to see. By showing the strong presence of patriotic mobilization in Prague, this chapter has sought to break down the dichotomy between a "fake" surface of loyalty and hidden "true" feelings of opposition to the war. The war saw an increased participation in patriotic rituals, a marked interest for war events, and an effective contribution to war relief: crowds celebrated the retaking of Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv, flocked to the "Prague trench," and bought Red Cross insignias in high numbers. Not only did Czech nationalism not stand in contradiction with patriotic mobilization, it could even be used to bolster it, as the Sokols' impressive means and energies invested in the war effort show. Despite their ban by Austrian authorities, their action in the service of the monarchy's war was extremely commendable. Even dissent was at this stage often framed in terms of the wartime moral economy of sacrifice and its equal repartition rather than as direct opposition to the monarchy. Czechs could argue that their patriotic sacrifice was more real than the patriotism on display in German victory celebrations.

Participation in the war effort did not necessarily require uncritical support for the monarchy's foreign policy war goals, or for propaganda slogans such as "Serbia must die," but relied to a large extent on the conviction that one should do one's duty during this difficult time, take part, help one's fellow countrymen – what can be defined as "social patriotism." This was a powerful lever, even in multinational Austria–Hungary, and even among Czechs. In the context of a rapidly changing war situation, 1915 especially saw the collective investment in the war effort pervade the city, and it took more than nationalism to dismantle this consensus. If the official propaganda of the Austrian state is often seen as missing or failing during the war years, those actions whose goals were more modest enjoyed a relative success in the first half of the war.[212] The year 1916 seems to constitute a high point in this respect. By 1917, the activity around the war relief had quietly reduced. The deteriorating

[212] On civil society's engagement with war relief as proof of the resilience of the Austrian war effort, see Hsia, *Victims' State*.

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conditions in Prague explained this disaffection; many inhabitants could simply no longer afford to support the war effort. If they did, they were more likely to support other causes, as did middle-class Czech-speakers giving to national causes. Nevertheless, we cannot understand the disillusionment of the war's last years (explored in further chapters) if we do not consider the extraordinary efforts of the home front mobilization in Prague.

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