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## Review of Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948, by Jeremy King

Carol A. Leibiger

*University of South Dakota, C.Leibiger@usd.edu*

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Jeremy King. *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002. xv + 284. \$39.50. ISBN 0-691-04892-4.

King presents an extensive revision of his dissertation (*Loyalty and Polity, Nation and State: A Town in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848-1948*, Columbia University, 1998), the first in a projected series on multiethnic cities of the Habsburg empire (King, Letter, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/groups/ccsa/king2.htm>). He makes the interesting claim that viewing the history of nation states as the triumph of ethnic self-determination is ahistorical, since states are not congruent with nationhoods; ethnicity, in fact, proceeds from nations, “projected backward with history-making effect” (8). According to King, ethnicity was merely one of the Habsburg subjects’ group allegiances that came to dominate over others, e.g., religion and class (7). The author demonstrates this development by presenting 100 years of the history of the German-Czech city of Budweis/Budejovice.

Budweis/Budejovice is an appropriate subject, since it mirrors Bohemia demographically and was an important constituent of the Austrian empire. (Bohemia was second only to Lower Austria in economic strength, and more ethnic Germans lived there than in any other crownland except Lower Austria during the nineteenth century.) Ethnic conflicts arose there due to the mixing of the ethnic German and Czech populations in formerly mostly homogeneous settlements beginning in the late eighteenth century, along with the rise of ethnic consciousness and nationalism that precipitated the Revolutions of 1848. (This pre-state ethnic consciousness, attested by the engagement of both Germans and Czechs as 1848’ers, is problematic for King’s argument.) The resolution of such conflicts would have been a significant example for other multiethnic areas in the monarchy, and the empire’s failure to end them had tragic consequences in Bohemia, eventually leading to the *Anschluss* and the later expulsion of most ethnic Germans from Communist Czechoslovakia.

King impresses with his extensive use of original materials, especially contemporary journalistic writings, along with archival materials and scholarly literature, which he has apparently read in the original German, Czech, and Hungarian. Using these sources, he traces the history of German-Czech relations in Budweis/Budejovice as representative of the larger ethnic context of Bohemia and contrasts this development with that of a neighboring crownland into which ethnic Germans were more successfully integrated, i.e., Hungary. This story involves not only factual history, but the evolution of ethnic self-definition under the auspices of the multinational Habsburg empire. King seeks to capture this development in the history of the terms *Budweiser* (a resident of Habsburg Budweis/Budejovice, without reference to ethnicity), German (a member of a group that spoke “some form of German,” and exhibited a civic behavior which was both liberal and enlightened, [16, 72]), and Czech (a resident of Bohemia whose first language was Czech [72]). This discussion of language and self-definition crystallizes the German-Czech conflict, since language use in education and civil service bureaucracy became the litmus test of equality for these groups. King assumes the affiliation of ethnic group and language, as he identifies as German all those who were members of the German *Sprachgemeinschaft*, regardless of their origin in the German-speaking lands, an assumption he does not articulate clearly. Nor does he utilize the terms *kleindeutsch* and especially *großdeutsch*, which have colored the discussions of the concepts *German* and *Germany* and would aid in understanding the affinity ethnic Germans in Bohemia felt for the notion of Greater Germany, especially after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

King demonstrates the role played by the Habsburg monarchy in the development of ethnic identity and conflict, as Emperor Franz Josef (“Francis Joseph” in this work) and his

various governments utilized notions of ethnicity and popular sovereignty after 1848 to strengthen their position in Vienna without promoting the resolution of conflicts in multiethnic areas of the empire. The ethnic demands within Bohemia did not extend to claims for the establishment of an independent state during the years 1848-1918; ethnic groups struggled for power within the existing monarchy and its institutions, especially the bureaucracy, then as now the true seat of power in Central European governments. The Habsburg empire maintained peace, and this actually allowed the national movements to grow. Outright clashes only erupted in Bohemia once the monarchy was dissolved and nationhoods fought to succeed the Habsburgs (210-211).

This work is an exhaustively researched, well written, and highly interesting account of ethnic relations in a typically multiethnic Central European city, which suggests an interesting, if not entirely convincing, new perspective on the relationship of ethnicity and the modern state. King's projected further studies on multiethnic cities of the former Austro-Hungarian empire (Ödenburg/Sopron and Marburg/Maribor) should throw further light on this important subject.

Carol A. Leibiger  
University of South Dakota