

THE PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION IN BOHEMIAN WORKERS' MOVEMENTS

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The two-fold effects of the industrial development on the nationality problem of the Cisleithanian part of the Hapsburg empire is reflected in the relation between German and Czech workers' movements in Bohemia. Its international character was, in fact, reinforced by national population shifts, motivated by industrialisation, into the German-settled areas, which were affected, exclusively at first, by the process of industrialisation. The common social interests of the workers of both nations, along with the opposition to German entrepreneurs, guaranteed an originally orthodox internationalism, which was represented by a social democracy based on the original German pattern. Only with the advancing mechanisation of industry did the workers' movement win to itself the working masses, whereas before, the proletariat, in a state of flux and socially under-privileged on account of national wage-pressures, had remained politically passive. In place of an international workers' élite there now appeared nationally-independent socialdemocratic organisations which took the linguistic division into consideration. But not until industrialisation moved into the Inner Bohemian districts did the national division take on greater importance and force Czech social-democracy into a federalisation of the hitherto international and formally united National Party.

The time-lag between the industrialisation of the German and Czech areas corresponds to the shift of the nationality-struggle from the mixed regions into the closed settlement areas, and to the change from a struggle of minorities to a "struggle of the Austrian nations for the state". The international programme of the social-democrats was made easier for them by the fact that social and national emancipation went hand-in-hand not only for the non-German workers' movement, but also that from the point of view of the Germans too, a purposeful social policy lent its support to the reinforcement of the German element — a fact which inspired the celebrated Victor Adler, originally a member of the „German Nationalist" party, to go over to international social-democracy. On the other hand, however, the international integration of German and Czech workers suffered from the widespread idea that Czech migration into the German-settled areas would continue unchecked, and thus bring about a shift in the language frontiers; this, however, was only the case in the early stage of industrialisation. At the Brünn Party Conference Czechs and Germans did

manage to agree on a common nationality programme, but only because the Czech socialists, influenced by this conception of the migratory movements, were not prepared to come to a firm decision, wishing to avoid a definitive solution. This was also an important reason for their rejection of Bohemian „Staatsrecht“ (proposals for constitutional unity of Bohemia and Moravia within the Hapsburg Monarchy). The difficulty underlying the nationality problem — that the national movement for equal rights was tied up with the desire to put an end to the economic predominance of the German element — was solved neither by the leading theorists, Bauer, Renner, and Smeral, nor by Kramář's theory concerning tax-sources. International integration of the Austrian social-democrats ran aground not least because of the contradiction between the political and economic-political programmes, the former aiming at self-government and national autonomy, the latter at a centralisation of economic power through the trades-union organisation. Therefore the party as a whole failed over the question of international or national trades-union organisation at a period when the national discord took on the character of an imperialism within the state, by the addition of economic rivalries as well as Darwinian theories, a state of social transition which was not overcome by the development of a more consolidated and developed capitalistic system.