

The Czech Community and Czech as a “Language of Daily Use” in Vienna 1880–1910¹

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There is a well-known witticism that the largest Czech city at the turn of the 20th century was Vienna. Even during the crisis years of the 1840s, thousands of people arrived in Vienna from the Bohemian lands every year hoping to find work. The city experienced its most rapid period of growth in the second half of the 19th century, when the influx of migrants from poor regions of the Bohemian lands became considerably stronger. Thanks to census data we know that in 1856, 22 % of the Viennese population (105 353 people) were originally from Bohemia, Moravia or Austrian Silesia. By 1890 this figure had grown to 28 % (378 074 people), and in 1910 it was exactly one quarter (499 273 people); a further quarter of the city's population had been born in Vienna to parents originally from the Bohemian lands.² Of course, it was not only Czechs who lived in the Bohemian lands. Of the hundreds of thousands of migrants from the Bohemian lands in 1890, 244 586 came from entirely or predominantly Czech-speaking districts; by 1910 this number had risen to 341 734.³ These figures are taken from official statistics based on the Cisleithanian censuses. Czech national activists offered far higher figures, as their counts included second- and third-generation Czechs — i.e. the children and grandchildren of the original migrants.

The last two decades of the 19th century represented the peak of Czech migration to Vienna. The largest Czech communities lived in the municipal districts [Bezirke] of Favoriten (X), Ottakring (XVI), Landstrasse (III), Brigittenau (XX) and Hernalds (XVII).⁴ However, in 1880 the Cisleithanian censuses began to determine people's “language of daily use” [Umgangssprache], and in the censuses held before the First World War, the majority of Viennese Czechs gave their *Umgangssprache* as German. In his well-known work *Der nationale Besitzstand in Böhmen*, Heinrich

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2 Monika Glettler, *Die Wiener Tschechen um 1900. Strukturanalyse einer nationalen Minderheit in der Großstadt*. In: *Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum*, Vol. XXVIII, Munich 1972, S. 32.

3 *Ibid.*, S. 34. Wilhelm Winkler calculated that of these 341 734 individuals in 1900, 206 133 had been born in districts where over 90 % of the population spoke Czech as their language of daily use.

4 *Ibid.*, S. 52–53.

Rauchberg proudly stated that although Czech migration to Vienna was on a much larger scale than Czech migration to West Bohemia, the Viennese Czechs' assimilation into their new German-speaking environment was much more successful. As evidence of this claim, Rauchberg cited the fact that 411 037 of Vienna's total population of 1.7 million had been born in Bohemia and Moravia, and as many as 508 174 Bohemians and Moravians had the right of domicile [*Heimatrecht*] in some city there; however, only around a quarter of them gave Czech as their "language of daily use", despite the fact that three quarters of them originally came from predominantly Czech-speaking areas.⁵

In the 1880 census, 25 186 people in Vienna gave Czech as their language of daily use, making up 3.98 % of the city's total population. Surviving census materials from the Viennese suburbs show that many people with *Heimatrecht* in Czech-speaking areas of Bohemia gave German as their *Umgangssprache*. There is no evidence of respondents' data being subsequently altered in the 1880 data recording forms [*Aufnahmsbogen*] completed by census officers — unlike the situation in 1900, and especially in 1910 (see below). In 1890, 63 834 people in Vienna gave Czech as their *Umgangssprache* (5.26 % of the total population); by 1900 this figure had risen to 102 974 (6.88 %), and in 1910 it fell by 1.5 % to 98 461 (5.37 %).⁶

The aim of this study is to explore why most of the migrants from Czech-speaking areas of the Bohemian lands did not state Czech as their language of daily use in the Cisleithanian censuses. For this purpose it will be necessary to outline the position of the Czech minority community within Viennese society, to describe the social climate in which the community lived, to characterize the category of *Umgangssprache* used in the Cisleithanian censuses, and above all to describe how the census data on *Umgangssprache* in Vienna were collected and processed.⁷

CZECH MINORITY IN VIENNA

In 1857 the Austrian statistician Karl Freiherr von Czoernig, describing the ethnic classification of the Viennese population, ranked immigrants as members of the lower strata of society. He wrote that those from Bohemia and Moravia frequently worked as domestic servants, day-labourers or cooks.⁸ In the second half of the 19th century, at the peak of the Czech influx to the city, new migrants also included skilled labourers and tradesmen,⁹ though very few Czechs worked in white-collar profes-

5 Heinrich Rauchberg, *Der nationale Besitzstand in Böhmen*, Part I, Leipzig 1905, S. 301–303.

6 Emil Brix, *Die Umgangssprachen in Altösterreich zwischen Agitation und Assimilation: die Sprachenstatistik und die zisleithanischen Volkszählungen 1880–1910*, Wien-Köln-Graz 1982, S. 119–136.

7 Wilhelm Winkler, *Die Tschechen in Wien*, Wien 1919, S. 7.

8 Karl Freiherr von Czoernig, *Ethnographie der österreichischen Monarchie*, Vol. I, Vienna 1857, S. 674.

9 The largest trades were tailors and cobblers; in 1910 a total of 17 194 members of these trades gave Czech as their language of daily use. Cf. M. Glettler, *Die Wiener Tschechen...*, S. 64.

sions or were otherwise in a position of relative economic independence from the German-speaking majority population.

In the last five decades of its existence, the multiethnic Habsburg Monarchy faced the problem of how to combine both civil and ethnic principles in its policies. From 1867 onwards, Cisleithania guaranteed basic civil rights and freedoms to all its citizens, acknowledging the principle that all indigenous nations (known as *Volksstämme* in the terminology of the time) were equal, that they enjoyed the inalienable right to the protection of their nationality and language, and that members of these nations had access to education in their national language. A wave of economic migration followed the passing of the Cisleithanian Basic State Law on the General Rights of Citizens [*Staatsgrundgesetz über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger*]; the most noticeable consequence of this migration was the influx of thousands of people from the lower strata of rural society into booming industrial areas and large cities. Economic migration had not only a social dimension but also an ethnic one; from the perspective of German-speaking society, there was an influx of tens of thousands of non-German migrants to traditionally German-speaking areas such as West and North-West Bohemia or Vienna. This influx took place at a time when national identity was rapidly developing into the most influential and important form of collective identity, launching a process of “ethnicization” of both law and politics in Cisleithania.

Czech national activists and politicians strove to keep the Czech migrants “within the fold” of the Czech nation; they automatically considered anybody born in a Czech-speaking area to be a Czech, and they vehemently rejected the notion of natural assimilation after that individual’s arrival in a German-speaking environment. Their German counterparts strove to achieve the opposite — i.e. to ensure that the immigrants became assimilated, in order to protect the German position of dominance [*nationaler Besitzstand*] in the destination regions.

As I have already mentioned, Cisleithania acknowledged the rights of all its nations [*Volksstämme*], though these rights did not apply to all nations universally throughout the Monarchy. The Czechs had the right to use the Czech language in communication with state authorities and courts in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, as Czech held the status of a “language in common use” in these provinces [*landesübliche Sprache*]. Czechs had the right to be taught in the Czech language at *Volksschulen* (basic primary schools, known as *obecné školy* in Czech) within these three provinces — even in areas which were predominantly German-speaking, provided that there was a sufficient number of school-age children in the area whose parents requested the opening of a school with Czech as the medium of instruction.

The situation in Vienna was different, as the state did not guarantee national rights to the Czech immigrants in the city. The Czech language was not *landesüblich* in Lower Austria — with the exception of the municipalities of Poštorná, Nová Ves and Hlohovec [Unterthemenau, Oberthemenau and Bischofswarth], situated on the border with Moravia; these villages were defined as a salient of Czech ethnic territory protruding into the neighbouring province of Lower Austria. In ruling no. 91 (25 April 1877) the Imperial Court of Justice [*Reichsgericht*] permitted the provision of

Czech-language education in these three municipalities, describing Czech as “doch mindestens vorherrschende volks- und landesübliche Sprache”.¹⁰

In her above-cited study, Monika Glettler describes the development of various societies and associations that were active in the Viennese Czech community. In 1872 the Comenius Society [*Spolek Komenský*] was set up for the purpose of establishing and running Czech-language schools in the city. Count Jan Harrach applied to the authorities for permission to set up the Comenius Society; he also wrote the Society’s statutes and supported it financially. The statutes were changed in 1886 to enable the Society to establish local branches, leading to an increase in membership. By the end of 1886 the Society had over two thousand members. The largest membership was in the city’s 10th district (Favoriten), where the first Czech private school was opened.¹¹ When permission to open the school was granted to the Society by the Ministry of Education [*Ministerium für Kultus und Unterricht*] in 1882, Vienna’s City Hall expressed its support for the protests mounted by the district and provincial educational boards [*Schulrate*] against this decision. At the end of 1885 the Czech private school in the 10th district was attended by 585 children, and the Comenius Society requested the right to issue state certificates of education. The school’s application cited the *Reichsgericht*’s decision of 12 July 1880 (Hye 219), which ruled that the Imperial Education Act [*Reichsschulgesetz*] only took account of the language spoken by a school’s pupils if that language was *landesüblich* in the province — even in just one part of the province.¹² The application was rejected; as grounds for the rejection the authorities gave the inadequate knowledge of the German language among the school’s pupils, based on an inspection carried out by the district *Schulrat*. Repeated applications submitted by the Comenius Society were likewise rejected. The rejection issued in 1895 (pertaining to an application submitted in 1891!) stated that public educational institutions as defined in Article XIX, Paragraph 3 of the 1867 Basic State Law on the General Rights of Citizens [*Staatsgrundgesetz über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger*] were established in locations where the population was made up of two or more *Volksstämme*, but that the Czech language was not in common use [*landesüblich*] in Vienna.

At the end of 1896, the German nationalist deputy Rudolf Kolisko submitted a draft bill to the Lower Austrian Diet [*Landtag*] targeted against the Comenius Society’s school: the bill proposed that German be declared the exclusive language of instruction at *Volksschulen* and *Bürgerschulen* within Lower Austria (including private schools). The Kolisko bill was passed by the Diet, but it never reached the statute

10 Anton Hye (ed.), *Sammlung der nach gepflogener öffentlicher Verhandlung geschöpften Erkenntnisse des k. k. österreichischen Reichsgerichtes*. III. Theil. Enthaltend die in den Jahren 1876 und 1877 gefällten Judicate, Vienna 1878, S. 593–596.

11 Margita Jonas, *Geschichte des Schulvereines Komenský*. In: Regina Wonisch (ed.), *Tschechen in Wien. Zwischen nationaler Selbstbehauptung und Assimilation*, Vienna 2010, S. 61–92, here S. 62–65.

12 Anton Hye (ed.), *Sammlung der nach gepflogener öffentlicher Verhandlung geschöpften Erkenntnisse des k. k. österreichischen Reichsgerichtes*. V. Theil. Enthaltend die in den Jahren 1879 und 1880 gefällten Judicate, Vienna 1881, S. 998–1004.

book, as the government ruled that (according to Section 6 of the *Reichsschulgesetz*) the determination of the language of instruction did not fall within the powers of the province.

At the end of 1901 the parents of over three thousand Czech children in Vienna and Floridsdorf (which at the time was still a separate municipality) submitted an application to the provincial *Schulrat* for the opening of a Czech public school in each of the Vienna *Bezirke* plus Floridsdorf. The application was rejected, as was an appeal lodged with the Ministry of Education. The parents then turned to the *Reichsgericht*, whose finding dated 19 October 1904 supported the authorities' position that the Czechs did not have a right to Czech-language education in Vienna or in Lower Austria as a whole, "mit Ausnahme jener Bruchteile, die als bloße Ausläufer des geschlossenen böhmischen Volksstammes in den Nachbarländerner scheinen, wie dies in Unter- und Oberthemenau, dann Bischofswarth der Fall ist". The main grounds for the rejection of the application were that the members of the Czech community did not have historical roots in the province's public life, and thus they did not constitute a *Volksstamm* in the province.¹³

In 1907 the Comenius Society established its second private school in Vienna, in the 3rd district (Landstrasse). The Vienna City Authority [*Magistrat*] attempted to foil the Society's plans; when these efforts proved unsuccessful, the *Magistrat* closed the school under the weak pretext of its failure to comply with hygiene regulations. When the Czechs constructed a new school building, the *Magistrat* refused to issue the final approval for the building, stating that the original construction permit had been issued for a residential block and not a school.¹⁴ The *Magistrat* had the entrance to the school sealed off. The school was eventually opened in May 1912, after the Comenius Society had appealed to the Lower Austrian Governor's Office [*Statthaltereie*], but it only remained open for a short while; in October of the same year the *Magistrat* closed the building down again, stating that it was unclear whether the foundations would be able to support the extra weight (compared with the originally planned residential building).¹⁵

The City Hall's approach to Czech-language education in Vienna typifies the anti-Czech climate that was prevalent in the city during the decades preceding the First World War. Local politicians' irrational fear of the growing Czech influence in the city was channelled by German nationalist organizations into a virulent anti-Czech campaign.¹⁶ In 1897 the German chauvinist and founder of the Austrian Christian Social Party [*Christlichsoziale Partei*] Karl Lueger (1844–1910) became the Mayor of Vienna. Later the same year, he assured his colleagues in the City Assembly that only

¹³ M. Glettler, *Die Wiener Tschechen...*, S. 102–103, 278, 281–282, 285, 300, 308; M. Jonas, *Geschichte des Schulvereines...*, S. 67.

¹⁴ Czech activists in Vienna had feared (with some justification) that if they had applied to build a school, permission would have been refused.

¹⁵ M. Jonas, *Geschichte des Schulvereines...*, S. 72; M. Glettler, *Die Wiener Tschechen...*, S. 347 ff.

¹⁶ Karl M. Brousek, *Wien und seine Tschechen. Integration und Assimilation einer Minderheit im 20. Jahrhundert*. Schriftenreihe des österreichischen Ost- und Südosteuropa-Instituts 7, 1980, S. 24.

applicants of German nationality would be considered when appointing municipal officials and clerical staff; this effectively represented a boycott of Czech applicants.¹⁷ When the new city statutes were approved on 28 March 1900, Czechs applying for citizenship rights in Vienna [*Bürgerrecht*] had to swear an oath that they would do everything in their power to preserve the German character of the city; under the previous law of 19 December 1890, applicants had merely had to swear that they would conscientiously fulfil all their responsibilities as citizens according to the statutes and that they would support the well-being of the municipality.¹⁸ In January 1911 the Assembly of the 18th Viennese district (Währing) approved a proposal that all municipal employees of Vienna who gave Czech as their *Umgangssprache* in the census should be dismissed from their jobs, that only German officials should be employed at the *Rathaus*, and that any person who broke their oath to preserve the German character of the city should have their citizenship rights revoked.¹⁹

CATEGORY OF *UMGANGSSPRACHE*

The previous paragraphs have indicated how Vienna's City Hall opposed the Czech community's national, educational and cultural activities and aspirations. In fact, the authorities in the city did more than that: they orchestrated a well-organized campaign to ensure that immigrants from Czech-speaking areas stated German as their *Umgangssprache* in censuses. This campaign — probably the most aggressive of its type in the whole of Cisleithania, operating on the very boundary of legality — was intended to demonstrate that Vienna was an exclusively German city.

From 1880 onwards, Cisleithanian censuses determined *Umgangssprache*, i.e. respondents' language of daily use. The data on languages of daily use in Cisleithania between 1880 and 1910 were used by the state authorities as a basis for addressing the increasingly difficult problem of the co-existence of different nationalities and the application of nationality as a state-forming principle. The state authorities needed information on the situation with regard to language and nationality as a basis for its administrative duties. On the surface, the government was careful to distinguish between nationality and *Umgangssprache*; however, this did not prevent all the nationalities in the Monarchy from viewing *Umgangssprache* as a referendum on nationality. The census data on *Umgangssprache* were used as a basis for specific measures in matters of "ethnic sensitivity" (such as approvals of new schools, administrative and electoral reforms, appointments of officials, the determination of official languages to be used by state authorities, etc.). Czech politicians and national activists felt disadvantaged because although the Constitution guaranteed equality to all nations [*Volksstämme*], the Czech community's specific demands were thwarted by the fact that the authorities used *Umgangssprache* (rather than nationality) as the

17 E. Brix, *Die Umgangssprachen...*, S. 123.

18 M. Glettler, *Die Wiener Tschechen...*, S. 293–294.

19 Emil Brix, *Die nationale Frage an Hand der Umgangssprachenerhebungen in den zisleithanischen Volkszählungen 1880–1910*, Vienna 1979 (unpublished dissertation), S. 208.

criterion for decision-making; in the Czechs' view, the figures on *Umgangssprache* were deliberately distorted in order to understate the actual size of the Czech nation. The implementing regulations for censuses defined *Umgangssprache* very vaguely, as the language which an individual normally used in his/her everyday dealings (i.e. in communication). In the German-speaking areas of the Monarchy, which were the destination for migrants from Slavic areas, the local self-government authorities responsible for carrying out censuses deliberately inserted a new "definition" of *Umgangssprache* as the language used by an individual in his/her employment. Clearly, according to this new definition, an individual's *Umgangssprache* would always be the language of the ethnic group which made up the large majority of the population in the given area. By contrast, Czech political representatives and national activists interpreted *Umgangssprache* as the language which the individual preferred to speak, i.e. the language which he/she spoke at home; this essentially meant that *Umgangssprache* was equivalent to the individual's native language.

From the 1900 census onwards, the state rejected the German interpretation of the term, though *de facto* only internally, in circulars sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the individual provincial governor's offices [*Statthaltereien*]; the Ministry did not add even a brief definition to the census implementing regulations. The Bohemian Governor's Office responded shortly before the 1900 census by issuing an edict forbidding census officers from changing respondents' replies regarding their language of daily use. Nothing of this nature happened in Lower Austria.

In Vienna the census took place using the method of notification forms [*Anzeigezettel*], which were completed by homeowners and then checked by a team of inspectors. However, in all other parts of Lower Austria — as in the vast majority of Cisleithania — the census was carried out by census officers who went from household to household, interviewing people and recording their answers in a census data form [*Aufnahmsbogen*]. The census officers and inspectors were appointed by local (municipal) authorities, and their appointments were confirmed by the state authorities.

The Czechs were mainly concerned with ensuring that the *Umgangssprache* recorded for domestic servants and manual workers was not linked in any way to the *Umgangssprache* recorded for their employers. This effort was closely related to a further controversial aspect of the recording of this census data — the method by which the census officers recorded the *Umgangssprache* of those persons who lived in a household but were not members of the homeowner's family. These persons included servants, tenants, day-labourers, and so on. The instructions issued internally by the state authorities stipulated that such persons should be allowed to state their language of daily use with absolute freedom. However, this instruction was not incorporated into the census data forms completed by census officers [*Aufnahmsbogen*] until 1910, when it became part of Section XIII of the form.²⁰ Parallel with this devel-

20 "In order to determine which of these languages should be recorded as the language of daily use of the respondents, the census officer, in accordance with the instructions given in paragraph 1, should question the heads of the family or independently resident individuals; during the questioning, the officer should avoid misleading the respondent or influencing the respondent's answer to the question."

opment, the 1910 instructions for the notification forms completed and submitted by homeowners [*Anzeigezettel*] stated that the homeowner should ask members of the household for the required data, especially those members of the household who were not family members.²¹ The instructions given for previous censuses had merely stated that the homeowner should record or notify the authorities of data for all persons resident in the household, including both family members and non-members.

CENSUS DATA ON *UMGANGSSPRACHE* IN VIENNA

After the censuses of 1880 and 1890, no complaints were filed in Vienna (or anywhere else in Lower Austria) against the incorrect recording of an individual's *Umgangssprache*. There is no evidence of Czech nationalist agitation provoking a German reaction during the lead-up to the censuses. The only evidence that the German interpretation of *Umgangssprache* was controversial can be found in a parliamentary interpellation by the Czech deputy Egyd Jahn in the Chamber of Deputies of the Imperial Council [*Reichsrat*] in April 1890. Jahn proposed a resolution calling on the government to determine not only *Umgangssprache* but also nationality, and calling for the responsible authorities to determine *Umgangssprache* with the maximum possible degree of objectivity, without influencing respondents. He criticized the fact that the *Umgangssprache* section of the previous census had been greatly abused — for example in Vienna, where non-Germans had been told that residents of the city were not allowed to give any other language than German as their *Umgangssprache*.²²

The 1900 census (carried out in the first days of January 1901) provoked more intense animosities. A year before the census, the *Reichsrat* deputy Ignát Hořica protested against the discrimination experienced by the Czech community in Vienna. He stated that 330 000 of the total 400 000 Czechs in the city had not been recorded as such due to the abuse of the *Umgangssprache* category.²³ The deputy Vladimír Srb, speaking in a parliamentary interpellation in January 1909, stated that the number of inhabitants who had given Czech as their *Umgangssprache* did not represent the actual number of Czechs in Vienna; instead it represented the number of economically independent Czechs. In 1900, of a total of 100 658 domestic servants, only 10 045 gave Czech as their *Umgangssprache*. Srb emphasized that a study by Franz von Meinzingen published in the *Statistische Monatschrift* 1902 had cited data from the 1900 census showing that a total of 300 000 inhabitants of Vienna had been born in predominantly Czech districts; a study by Anton Štefánek (*Slovenský přehled* 1905) had estimated the figure to be almost 400 000. On the basis of these data, Srb pointed

21 See Decree no. 148 of the Ministry of the Interior, 20 August 1910, on the 1910 census.

22 Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrathes im Jahre 1890, Session X, Vol. XII, Vienna 1890 (minutes from the 39th meeting of the 10th session, 25 April 1890, S. 14607–14609).

23 Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrathes im Jahre 1899, Session XVI, Vol. III, Vienna 1900 (minutes from the 18th meeting of the 16th session, 23 November 1899, S. 1148).

out that the number of Viennese inhabitants with Czech as their *Umgangssprache* should have been around 350 000, not 103 000.²⁴

By this time, the Czech Social Democrats were publishing a Czech-language newspaper in Vienna — *Dělnické listy* [“Workers’ Newsletter”] (further DL). It is interesting to trace how the Czech Social Democrats approached the collection of census data on *Umgangssprache*, especially in comparison to another Viennese Czech-language newspaper, *Vídeňský denník* [“Viennese Daily”], which commented on the census in early 1911. DL is also the source of the first critical reactions to the methods used by the census inspectors and the coercion of the Czech-speaking population by employers and landlords.

Two articles were published in DL in the last month before the census (which took place in the first days of January 1901). The first article states that all true Social Democrats should give as their *Umgangssprache* the language in which they were brought up and in which they feel and think: “We, the Social Democrats of Vienna, see and feel more than anybody else the shameful fact that our children are treated worse than the children of criminals, that despite our hard work, conscientiousness, and the sacrifices which we make to this city with our money and our blood, we are still viewed by the arrogant cliques of Christian Socialists and German Nationalists as nothing more than intruders, people of an inferior type, or even slaves, who should have many duties but should not be able to claim even the most natural rights of man [...] There are sure to be many people of Czech origin who have an inadequate knowledge of the German language, but who are deceived by this invention of the Liberal Party: the ‘language of daily use.’”²⁵ More surprising, in my opinion, is the second article, an editorial which opposes the private census²⁶ held by the Czech National Council: “The National Council of bourgeois parties has constituted a census committee which is entrusted with ensuring that members of the Czech nation state that Czech is their native language. There can be no objection to that. However, the National Council has also organized a private census, in which the Social Democrats have no wish to participate. We have received many complaints about national agitators who have been harassing our party members. For this reason, on 18 December the Executive Committee of the Czech Social Democratic Party in Lower Austria issued a statement calling on all Social Democrats to give Czech as their language of daily use, but not to complete the forms for the private census.”²⁷

24 Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrates in den Jahren 1908 und 1909, Session XVIII, Vol. IX. Vienna 1909 (minutes from the 125th meeting of the 18th session, 20 January 1909, S. 13965–14001, here S. 13983–13984, Amendment II, 4194/I).

25 *Dělnické listy* (further DL), 12. 12. 1900, p. 1, K nastávajícímu sčítání lidu.

26 In the last two Cisleithanian censuses, Czechs (and to a lesser extent also Germans and Poles) carried out so-called “private censuses”. The aim of these was to cast doubt on the results of the state census with respect to the *Umgangssprache* category in certain ethnically mixed districts, i.e. to prove that the percentage of a particular national minority was in fact larger than the official census showed it to be.

27 DL, 24. 12. 1900, p. 1, Soudruhům a soudružkám ve Vídni a v Dolních Rakousích.

In the first months of 1901 DL published two reactions to the collection of census data on *Umgangssprache*. The first of them was a letter from a Viennese German merchant who also spoke Czech, who had recorded Czech as the *Umgangssprache* of his domestic servant; he claimed that the census inspector had subsequently changed this to German, despite his protests.²⁸ The second response concerned a directive issued by Mayor Lueger on 27 February 1910 stipulating that a note should be made of the *Umgangssprache* of all municipal employees in their personal files.²⁹ This brief overview shows that the last census of the 19th century in Vienna provoked certain negative reactions in the Czech community, though to nowhere near the extent that would follow ten years later. The Czech press in Vienna — which at the time consisted solely of DL — did not mount any major campaign concerning the census. In fact, even in the very last days before the completed forms were due to be submitted and checked by the census inspectors, DL paid no attention whatsoever to the census — perhaps because it was focusing its entire attention on the ongoing elections to the *Reichsrat*.

Two months after the 1900 census, Czech deputies called on the government to incorporate into the new Census Act the compulsory determination of nationality (or native language) and to retrospectively append these data to the current census; the data collection was to take place under official protection. The deputies complained that many municipal employees in Vienna had been penalized for stating their *Umgangssprache* as Czech (i.e. their language of daily use as individuals) by being reassigned to different positions.³⁰

The fiercest battle took place before the 1910 census. In the days and weeks leading up to the census, the Lower Austrian chapter of the Czech National Council [*Národní rada česká*] in Vienna — an umbrella group coordinating the activities of Czech political groupings — held a series of public meetings featuring speeches mainly by teachers from the Comenius Society school.³¹ The Czech Central Census Committee [*Český ústřední sčítací výbor*] was based at the Czech National Council's offices (Grünangergasse 4 in the 1st district), from where information leaflets were distributed.³² The message of the Czech agitators reached people in all parts of the city — not only via newspapers, but also via the local Czech census offices (around 150 of them in total). These offices helped people to complete the notification forms [*Anzeigezettel*], or completed the forms on their behalf.

In 1907 a new Czech-language newspaper was set up in Vienna — *Vídeňský denník* [“Viennese Daily”] (further VD), which described itself as *Orgán Čechů dolnorakouských* [“Newspaper for Czechs in Lower Austria”]. VD was a “civic” newspaper, as

28 DL, 21. 1. 1901, p. 3, Jak se udržuje německý ráz Vídně.

29 DL, 17. 4. 1901, p. 2, Obcovací řeč městských úředníků a sluhů.

30 Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrathes im Jahre 1901, Session XVII, Vol. II, Vienna 1901 (emergency amendment proposal by Hrubý, Kurz and Šílený at the 25th meeting of the 17th session, 20 March 1901, p. 1551ff.).

31 Cf. *Vídeňský denník* (further VD), 13. 11. 1910, p. 3; 15. 11. 1910, p. 3, 20. 11. 1910, p. 4

32 VD, 27. 11. 1910, p. 4.

opposed to the political (social democratic) DL. It launched its campaign a full year before the 1910 census (which was actually carried out in the first days of January 1911): “In order to avoid revealing the strength of our community, the category ‘language of daily use’ has been introduced here in our Empire instead of ‘nationality’; this has enabled some uninformed Czechs to be coerced into not stating their true nationality. It appears that the category ‘language of daily use’ will also remain in the census this time — and so it will be necessary for our people, especially in mixed municipalities such as Vienna, to be informed systematically and immediately about the great significance and wide-ranging importance of the planned census.”³³

VD reminded its readers that the “language of daily use” did not depend on which language respondents used in their employment.³⁴ For the benefit of Czechs not living in Vienna but in other parts of Lower Austria (where the census was not carried out using notification forms but with data collected in person by census officers), the paper informed its readers of the various “tricks” used by census officers in the previous census, calling on readers to ensure that the data for the category of *Umgangssprache* was recorded correctly for each member of the household (not only for the head of the household, which would enable officers to complete the form later, entering German as the *Umgangssprache* of the remaining household members). The newspaper also referred to Section 23 of the Census Act, which stipulated that the census officials were to complete the census forms according to the data provided not only by the head of the family, but also by residents who were not family members; this meant that domestic staff, apprentices and lodgers were to state their own *Umgangssprache*.³⁵ The newspaper emphasized that each Czech should openly declare his/her nationality and encourage other Czechs to do the same: “For this short period before the census, I emphatically recommend that we pay particular attention to three categories of Czechs: apprentices, young labourers, and girls in domestic service! Among these three groups there are large numbers of Czech souls who — alas — are dependent and unaware. By speaking to these people, informing them, and explaining the situation to them, we will not only ensure a good result in the census, we will also bring permanent benefits to us all.”³⁶ A separate article in VD focused on Czech women. It states: “We are relying on you, and we are not underestimating your role in public life. In the section ‘Umgangssprache’ all of you should write the word ‘böhmisch’.”³⁷

VD also criticized the lack of clarity in the interpretation of the census implementing regulations. In an editorial, the newspaper claimed that the government — by using the *Umgangssprache* data from previous censuses as a basis for drafting new bills which altered the situation with respect to official language use (e.g. by redrawing the boundaries of linguistically mixed districts) — was in fact admitting that

33 VD, 14. 1. 1910, p. 3, Sčítání lidu.

34 VD, 28. 4. 1910, p. 3, Přípravy ku sčítání lidu ve Vídni.

35 VD, 27. 10. 1911, p. 3, Naším obcím na dolnorakouském venkově; 16. 12. 1910, pp. 1–2, Pravidla pro nastávající sčítání lidu.

36 VD, 8. 12. 1910, p. 3, Sčítání lidu (author E. Štefan).

37 VD, 4. 11. 1910, p. 3, Českým ženám.

“the language of daily use is to be viewed as a sign of an individual’s nationality. This means that a respondent should state as his/her language of daily use the language of the nationality to which the respondent belongs.”³⁸ This also meant that the upcoming census was of the utmost importance: “The calculation of the numerical strength of the Czech and German nations in the coming years will depend on the number of individuals who give either Czech or German as their language of daily use. This numerical strength will be used as a basis for the establishment of schools for each nation, and it will be used to decide on important rights enjoyed by our nation, on language laws, and on education laws...”³⁹ However, from a Viennese or Lower Austrian perspective, this last statement — emanating from the Czech National Council’s head office in Prague — was somewhat misleading, as Czech did not have the status of a *landesübliche Sprache* there.

In the final days before the census, VD stepped up its campaign. The paper called on readers to complete the sections of the form concerning them and their families themselves, as was their right, and not to surrender this right to a German apartment block porter, landlord, or even a German national agitator. It instructed readers to fill in the forms using an ink pen, so the data could not be erased. The regulations stated that notification forms (*Anzeigezettel*) were not to be submitted to the heads of households before 4 January; in many cases, German nationalist organizations had issued instructions that the forms were to be submitted before this date, solely in order to enable them to coerce respondents who had listed Czech as their *Umgangssprache* into changing this data.⁴⁰ On 3 January 1911, the final day before the deadline for submitting the forms, VD wrote: “Czechs who list Czech as their language of daily use will often be told that they have given false information and that they will be penalized in accordance with Article 30 of the census regulations. Do not fear such threats, as every Czech not only has the right, but the duty to state their language of daily use, freely and truly, as Czech. Every case breaching the law and the census regulations will be reported to the National Council in Vienna 1, Grünangergasse 4, by registered post.”⁴¹

The social democratic *Dělnické listy* did not launch its census campaign until November 1910, although it published many more articles on the subject than before the 1900 census. The paper distanced itself from the Czech bourgeois parties, but just like those parties it levelled criticism at the methods by which nationality was determined: “Having abandoned the historical bourgeois illusion of state law and instead adopted the principle of natural law, this opinion became very clear: there is no more reliable indicator of the natural, real situation than a thorough census [...] However, we do not understand why the government, instead of using the category of nationality, has once again opted for the ‘language of daily use’ in the census forms.”⁴² At the beginning of December, the newspaper’s editor J. Stivín wrote that ten years before,

38 VD, 18. 11. 1910, pp. 2–3, Co jest řeč obcovací?

39 VD, 4. 12. 1910, editorial K nastávajícímu sčítání lidu.

40 VD, 14. 12. 1910, pp. 2–3, Ku sčítání lidu; 23. 12. 1910, p. 2, Upozornění; 25. 12. 1910, p. 5, Budme na stráž!; 30. 12. 1910, p. 3, Pozor na německé domovníky!

41 VD, 3. 1. 1910, p. 1, V poslední chvíli.

42 DL, 19. 11. 1910, p. 2, Sčítání.

just over 100 000 people in Vienna had given their *Umgangssprache* as Czech. He criticized the Czech nationalists for exaggerating the number of Czechs in Vienna, but he acknowledged that there were at least 200 000 Czechs in the city. He viewed the upcoming census as an indicator of how many adherents the Social Democrats had among the (politically indifferent) labouring classes; new additions to the Czech community in Lower Austria were almost exclusively from the ranks of the proletariat, and the political circumstances in the province made it impossible to determine the numbers of Czech labourers based on their votes in elections.⁴³

Like VD, DL also appealed to its readers not to succumb to coercion from landlords and porters and not to submit their completed notification forms before 3 January; the paper warned readers about the activities of German nationalist agitators, who offered to help people complete the forms but who were in fact only interested in the section on *Umgangssprache*. DL noted that the Social Democrats had issued leaflets in all districts containing instructions and information on the census, as well as setting up advice bureaus. The newspaper also warned its readers that a ministerial directive permitted the *Umgangssprache* to be given as either “böhmisch”, “mährisch” or “slovakisch”, whereas there was a risk that the word “tschechisch” may be deemed invalid by the census inspectors.⁴⁴ During the checking of the census forms scheduled for 10 and 11 January, respondents were to check the census inspector that their *Umgangssprache* had not been altered.⁴⁵

Once the completed notification forms had been submitted and the inspectors were carrying out their checks, articles on the census made up the majority of the news reported by the Czech-language press in Vienna. DL gave specific examples of entire buildings where the inspectors had crossed out the entire “Umgangssprache” column from top to bottom on forms where the word “böhmisch” had been entered. The newspaper also carried information on a series of protest meetings held by the Social Democrats in response to violent incidents that had occurred during the census. It printed a sample complaint to the *Magistrat*, whose wording could be used by readers who felt that they had been the victims of foul play. The paper accused the Lower Austrian Governor’s Office [*Statthalterei*] of having turned a blind eye to illegal acts committed by the Vienna *Magistrat* during the census; it saw evidence of this collusion in the fact that the Bohemian and Moravian Governor’s Offices had both issued edicts reminding the census authorities of their duty to proceed with absolute objectivity, whereas the Lower Austrian *Statthalterei* had issued no such edict.⁴⁶

Like DL, VD also carried almost daily reports of specific cases in which the census inspectors had crossed out Czech as the *Umgangssprache* during the checking process. The newspaper claimed that the inspectors had changed the information on the pretext that they had asked Czech respondents whether they could also speak German, whether their children attended German schools, and whether they were

43 DL, 6. 12. 1910, p. 1, Kulturní význam sčítání lidu ve Vídni.

44 DL, 26. 12. 1910, Sčítání s násilím a švindlem; 29. 12. 1910, Jak se ruší zákon o sčítání lidu; 30. 12. 1910, Sčítání lidu.

45 DL, 3. 1. 1911, Sčítání lidu. Zločiny domácích pánů.

46 DL, 7. 1. 1911, 12. 1. 1911, 13. 1. 1911, 19. 1. 1911.

employed by German companies. At some locations in the rural areas of Lower Austria, where the census data were collected in person by census officers, officers had allegedly listed German as the *Umgangssprache* automatically, without even asking the respondents.⁴⁷ VD was outraged by a report on the census compiled by the Vienna *Magistrat*, which cynically accused the Czechs of misconduct: the report alleged that Czech agitators had completed the census forms behind respondents' backs, while Czech porters had terrorized tenants into recording Czech as their *Umgangssprache* and Czech landlords and employers had coerced their tenants and employees into doing the same. The *Magistrat's* report also accused the Comenius Society school and the Czech National Centre [*Národní dům*] of having engaged in extensive agitation, financed by the Czech community. The report claimed that the Germans must take action against such mass misconduct, purely in order to prevent illegal acts from taking place.⁴⁸

In one respect, the *Magistrat* was in fact correct; although the Czech agitation did not exceed the bounds of the law (if it had done so, it would have been immediately and ruthlessly repressed), it was far stronger and better organized than had been the case in the past. Both the Social Democrats and representatives of the bourgeois parties organized a dense network of census offices and advice bureaus in Vienna, which not only helped people complete their census forms and draft complaints, but also kept a careful record of all suspicious incidents and forwarded details of these cases to high-ranking political representatives.⁴⁹

As soon as 7 January 1911, the Social Democratic deputy Tomášek complained to the Lower Austrian Governor [*Statthalter*] and the Minister of the Interior about various violent incidents and illegal activities that had occurred during the census, when respondents' declarations of Czech as their *Umgangssprache* had been crossed out.⁵⁰ The Young Czechs' deputy Bedřich Pacák sent a letter to the Cisleithanian Prime Minister concerning the census in Vienna. He stated that due to various issues experienced during the Vienna census, the Czech National Council for Lower Austria intended to ensure that the data were rectified on the basis of Section 33 of the Census Act, with

47 VD, 12. 1. 1910, p. 1; 13. 1. 1911, pp. 1–2, Jak jest ve Vídni prováděna kontrola sčítání lidu; 14. 1. 1910, pp. 1–3, Ze sčítacího bojiště dolnorakouského; 17. 1. 1911, p. 1, Protesty proti nesprávnému sčítání lidu. Similar reports were also published in several subsequent issues.

48 VD, 1. 2. 1911, p. 1, Magistrátní skandál sčítací.

49 On 11 and 12 January 1911, František Tomášek (the Chairman of the Provincial Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party), published statements in DL to the effect that there had been numerous complaints alleging that census officers had crossed out Czech in the *Umgangssprache* section of the form. He described the situation in Vienna and Lower Austria as a case of systematic falsification of official census data and systematic coercion of members of the Czech minority community. He called on readers to report all illegal behaviour to district delegates (who would forward the information to the provincial secretariat) and to file a complaint with the *Statthaltere*.

50 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (further quoted as AVA), collection Innenministerium-Allgemein (further Mdl-Allgem.), call no. 33/1 in spezie, carton 2365, file no. 730 ex 1911.

a thorough review of the census carried out in person by officials of the provincial Governor's Office [*Statthaltereil*].⁵¹ In two more letters, which were forwarded by the Prime Minister to the Lower Austrian *Statthaltereil*, Pacák listed specific examples of people whose language of daily use had been recorded as German instead of Czech.⁵²

In mid-January 1911, in a parliamentary interpellation, the deputy Mašťálka reported illegal acts that were alleged to have occurred during the census in Vienna and at other locations in Lower Austria. Without giving specific examples, he highlighted coercion and repressive measures by landlords, porters and employers against the Czech population, mentioning the census inspectors' replacement of Czech by German as the *Umgangssprache* and pointing out that threats had been made to those who refused to accept this change (including the loss of employment or housing). Mašťálka stated that in rural areas, German had been given as the *Umgangssprache* entirely without the knowledge of respondents, who had not been asked about their language of daily use at all. He claimed that hundreds of thousands of members of the Czech nation had been adversely affected in this way: "Vielen hunderttausenden Angehörigen des böhmischen Volksstammes wurde auf diese Art die von ihnen gesetzmäßig wahrheitsgemäß einbekannte böhmische Umgangssprache mitunter unter den wichtigsten Vorwänden einfach gestrichen und durch die deutsche ersetzt und alle eingebrachten Proteste wurden einfach beiseite gelegt und somit am Papier ein tatsächlicher, massenhafter Volksraub vollzogen."⁵³

Ten days later there was an extensive debate in Parliament about the census in Vienna, with Karel Kramář playing a leading role. Kramář stated that the replacement of Czech by German as the *Umgangssprache* had been carried out by teachers who had been hired as census inspectors.⁵⁴ As an example of their pro-German bias he cited the text of a circular issued by the *Bund der Deutschen in Niederösterreich*: "Der Bund der Deutschen in Niederösterreich wendet sich vertrauensvoll an alle deutschen Lehrer Wiens mit der Bitte, in dieser bedrängten Zeit der hohen nationalen Gefahr treu zu Ihrem Volke zu stehen. Wien ist und muss deutsch bleiben, sonst ist das ganze Deutschtum der Ostmark verloren. Wer in Wien lebt und hier sein Brot verdient, sei es als Beamter, Geschäftstreibender, Arbeiter usw., muss sich der deutschen Sprache bedienen, seine Umgangssprache ist und bleibt daher deutsch, mag er auch zu Hause sprechen wie er will, geradeso wie die Umgangs- und Unterrichtssprache aller schulpflichtigen Kinder an den öffentlichen Schulen Wiens die Deutsche ist." Kramář claimed that these changes had not been the isolated acts of individuals, but the result of a campaign orchestrated by the Vienna *Magistrat*. He asked why money was being spent on collecting individual census data when in reality the *Umgangssprache* was determined on the basis of the language of the majority population; respondents' *Umgangssprache* was recorded as German on the basis of questions

51 AVA, Mdl-Allgem., call no. 33/1 in spezie, carton 2367, file no. 2457/1911.

52 AVA, Mdl-Allgem., call no. 33/1 in spezie, carton 2367, file no. 1624/1911.

53 AVA, Mdl-Allgem., call no. 33/1 in spezie, carton 2367, file no. 2242/1911. The interpellation took place at the 82nd meeting of the 20th session of the *Reichsrat* Chamber of Deputies on 17 January 1911.

54 Teachers made up an overwhelming majority of the almost 3 000 census inspectors.

such as “What language do you speak at the market?” or “What language do you speak with your landlord?”. Kramář further cited a circular issued by the *Bezirksverband der nichtpolitischen deutscharischen Vereine in Meidling*: “Wir fordern alle deutschen Hausbesitzer auf, das in diesem Augenblicke einzig wirksame Abwehrmittel anzuwenden und allen jenen tschechischen Wohnparteien, die zwar in Arbeit, Amt und öffentlichem Verkehr deutsch sprechen und deren Umgangssprache daher die deutsche ist, aber in die Volkszählungslisten gegen Wahrheit und Gesetz die tschechische Sprache als die Umgangssprache eintragen wollen, mit der Aufkündigung zu drohen und sie allfällig auch durchzuführen. Deutsche Hausbesitzer, Angehörige einer KulturNation, die auf Erde über 100 Millionen Menschen zählt! Wenn Ihr nicht haben wollt, das Eure Kinder gezwungen sind, die Sprache einer Minderwertigen Nation zu erlernen, unterstützt uns im Kampfe um die Deutscherhaltung Wiens!” He concluded his speech by stating that he had no objection to the category of *Umgangssprache*, provided that it was not used to decide on issues of nationality.⁵⁵

Kramář’s speech drew a reaction from the German deputy von Stransky, who stated that the German community could likewise point to a multitude of complaints from Prague, Plzeň [Pilsen], Louny [Laun] and other Bohemian towns. Von Stransky stated that the Germans were keen to prevent the artificial creation of a Czech minority community within German territory. Responding to accusations that the holders of Viennese citizenship rights [*Bürgerrecht*] who declared their *Umgangssprache* to be Czech had had this altered to German and had faced threats, von Stransky stated that this was entirely understandable, given the provisions of the city statutes of 1900 (see above); his view was that these people should not only be threatened, but should be either prosecuted for perjury or have their citizenship rights revoked.⁵⁶

There were so many complaints against the 1910 census in Vienna, involving so many specific details, that the problems were clearly not merely an exaggeration by Czech nationalist organizations. The state authorities had extensive experience with the feigned outrage of both Czech and German nationalist organizations and the press, and with various manufactured scandals;⁵⁷ however, in this case the authorities instigated a wide-ranging investigation of the census. The Ministry of the Interior, via the Lower Austrian Governor’s Office, instructed the Vienna *Magistrat* to produce a report on the census. The *Magistrat* stated that the data from 1900 were worthless due to widespread agitation and the misunderstanding of the meaning of *Umgangssprache*. Writing about the 1910 census, the report claimed that “der Unterschied zwischen Muttersprache und Umgangssprache beziehungsweise Nationalität

55 Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrathes im Jahre 1901, Session XX, Vol. V, Vienna 1911, S. 5049–5056. The existence of both circulars was confirmed by the Ministry of the Interior’s investigation into the collection of *Umgangssprache* data during the census in Vienna (cf. further): AVA, MdI-Allgem., call no. 33/1 in spezie, carton 2368, file no. 13213/1911.

56 Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrathes im Jahre 1901, Session XX, Vol. V, Vienna 1911, S. 5070–5071.

57 Cf. e.g. Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2006.

und Umgangssprache wurde seitens eines nicht unbedeutenden Teiles der Bevölkerung nicht erfasst". Because Czech agitators had been much more active in 1910 than in 1900, "die Revisoren [waren] beauftragt, die Bevölkerung über den Unterschied der begriffe Umgangssprache, Muttersprache und Nationalität aufzuklären". [...] "In gewissenhafter Ausführung des ihnen anvertrauten Amtes wendeten die Revisoren auch den Eintragungen in der Rubrik Umgangssprache die erforderliche Aufmerksamkeit zu und bewirkten, wo dies in den Umständen und Tatsachen gerechtfertigt war, über Ermächtigung der Parteien die bezüglichen Richtigstellungen." The *Magistrat* claimed that the definition of *Umgangssprache* had been entirely sufficient for disinterested members of the population, and that the data given in most cases did indeed reflect the real situation. There had been relatively few complaints, and most of them had been rejected as unfounded.

What reasons, then, did the *Magistrat* give for the sharp drop in the percentage of Czechs living in the city? It claimed that by acquiring citizenship rights [*Bürgerrecht*], many people had come to view themselves as Viennese, speaking German as their language of daily use. This, the *Magistrat* claimed, did not mean that people had rejected their original nationality or native language. Ten years earlier, many people had declared their *Umgangssprache* as Czech either voluntarily or under the influence of agitators. However, since then the city had stopped growing, and its population was no longer increasing. Many thousands of people with Czech as their *Umgangssprache* had left the city after the completion of large-scale construction projects, and the prices of food and rent had risen. The *Magistrat's* measures against "ordnungswidrige Agitationen" had also had an effect, as the number of people giving Czech as their *Umgangssprache* in 1900 had been overstated.

The *Magistrat* stated that it had hired 2 912 inspectors to check the census data, including 2 627 teachers selected with the consent of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education. The report emphasized that there had been intense agitation in favour of Czech as an *Umgangssprache* from the autumn of 1910, with the aim of increasing the number of people declaring Czech as their language of daily use: "Es muss nun als das Verdienst der Revisoren aus dem Lehrer- und Beamtenstande bezeichnet werden, an der Hand der staatlichen und hier amtlichen Vorschriften mit strenger Objektivität und sicherer Beurteilung ihres Amtes gewaltet zu haben." The *Magistrat* claimed that some people had demanded that their data be changed even after the checking process had been completed, as they had since read newspaper articles explaining the concept of *Umgangssprache* and had realized that agitation in this matter was unacceptable.⁵⁸

In my opinion, the almost exclusive use of teachers as census inspectors is highly problematic and suspicious, and it merely underlines the arbitrary approach taken by the Vienna *Magistrat* in comparison with the situation in the Bohemian lands (even in predominantly German-speaking areas). The state authorities were well aware that the teaching profession included enormous numbers of nationalist agitators. For

⁵⁸ AVA, Mdl-Allgem., call no. 33/1 in spezie, carton 2369, file no. 20768 ex 1911, final report of the Vienna City Authority on the 1910 census, issued on 1 June 1911; E. Brix, *Die Umgangssprachen...*, p. 141.

this reason the Ministry of the Interior had explicitly stated before the 1900 census that the appointment of teachers from *Volksschulen* and *Bürgerschulen* as census officers and inspectors was only permitted in cases of emergency, and it was entirely forbidden in linguistically mixed municipalities as well as in municipalities where nationalist agitation was expected in connection with the *Umgangssprache* criterion. These restrictions were lifted for the 1910 census, but even then it was not common for the census officials to consist primarily of teachers.⁵⁹

Let us return to the investigation ordered by the Ministry of the Interior on the circumstances accompanying the collection of *Umgangssprache* data in Vienna.⁶⁰ The Vienna *Magistrat* had to respond to several claims made in articles published in *Dělnické listy*, in speeches by Mašťálka and Kramář in the *Reichsrat*, and in complaints by the Social Democrat deputy Tomášek and the Young Czechs' deputy Pacák. The *Magistrat* and the *Statthaltere*i (which had been entrusted with carrying out the investigation) denied the allegations that landlords, porters and employers had coerced people not to declare Czech as their *Umgangssprache*. Their argument was that there had only been two officially documented cases of this type of threat, and even these had not been supported by evidence. In the authorities' opinion, each landlord had the right to terminate the tenancy of anybody at any time, and such an act could not be used as the basis for legal action.

The Lower Austrian Governor responded to the complaints about the crossing out of Czech and its replacement by German during the checking process by stating that the inspectors had received proper instructions, and that the difference between *Umgangssprache*, native language and nationality (as laid down in the communiqué published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 23 August 1910) had been duly explained to respondents. The Governor further stated that if the inspectors had indeed changed the information in individual cases, they had always done so after receiving consent from the respondents. Let us examine a typical example of the argumentation used. One of the Czech complaints stated that two thirds of the households at Klosterneuburgstrasse 84 in the 20th Vienna district had given Czech as their language of daily use, but that this had later been crossed out by the apartment block porters and replaced by German. The *Statthaltere*i responded as follows: "In the building in question, 48 out of a total 164 persons gave Czech as their language of daily use; in the case of some of these persons, the language of daily use was then changed to German, with their full consent" ("[...] wurden die gegenständlichen Änderungen im vollem Einverständnis mit den Ankunftspersonen vorgenommen"). There were more such cases (basis of the complaint — result of the review process): "Ramperstorffergasse 36. Bei allen Parteien wurde böhmisch und slovakisch gestrichen" — "Die grössere Anzahl der Eintragungen blieb unberührt. Bei einzelnen Personen wurde die Änderung nach Aufklärung über den Begriff Umgangssprache im Einvernehmen mit den Censiten durchgeführt" — "Webgasse 6. Bei der Schwester und dem Dienstmädchen des Prokuristen wurde böhmisch gestrichen, obwohl die Genannten angaben, dass sie gar nicht deutsch können" — "Im Einvernehmen mit der Auskunftsperson" [...]

59 AVA, MdI-Allgem., call no. 33/1 allgem., carton 2348, file no. 32322/1910.

60 AVA, MdI-Allgem., call no. 33/1 in spezie, carton 2368, file no. 13213/1911.

“Mühlgasse 50. Bei 7 Personen wurde böhmisch in deutsch abgeändert.” — “Von 78 Personen dieses Hauses gaben 48 deutsch an. Bei 7 Parteien sind die Anzeigezettel mit ein und derselben Handschrift ausgefüllt und gefertigt (Komenskyverein). Mit Wissen und Willen der Auskunftspersonen wurden den tatsächlichen Verhältnissen entsprechende Änderungen vorgenommen.” The typical arguments used by the Lower Austrian *Statthaltere* (e.g. “Änderungen wurden nach Aufklärung über den Begriff der Umgangssprache nur mit Zustimmung der Parteien vorgenommen”, or “mehrere Parteien stimmten nach Erklärung des Begriffes Umgangssprache der Änderung zu”) are far from convincing.

The report also described the activities of Czech agitators, who went from door to door. It claimed that many notification forms [*Anzeigzettels*] had clearly been completed by a single hand, and in many cases this handwriting only appeared in Section XIII of the form (the section dealing with *Umgangssprache*). Allegedly the inspectors had frequently found that the respondents in question could not actually speak Czech, as they were unable to translate even the simplest information from their documents. The report also mentions one interesting case which, in my opinion, clearly proves that even the state authorities in Lower Austria interpreted *Umgangssprache* in an arbitrary way: In the village of Langenlois near Krems, a census inspector had crossed out “Czech” for one Johanna Bašta and three other members of her household, stating that only German was spoken in the village. Mrs Bašta, however, had clearly stated that she spoke Czech at home, and German with her neighbours. Her complaint to the District Office [*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*] was rejected: “mit Rücksicht auf den Unterschied zwischen Nationalität und Umgangssprache wurde von der Bezirkshauptmannschaft Krems eine abändernde Verfügung nicht getroffen.”

The Lower Austrian *Statthaltere* rejected the Czech deputies’ request that the *Umgangssprache* data be rectified on the basis of Section 33 of the 1869 Census Act. The *Statthaltere* stated that firstly it did not have sufficient funds, and secondly its investigations had failed to bring to light any grounds for doing so.

CONCLUSION

The case of Johanna Bašta clearly demonstrates how the (already very flexible) interpretation of the term *Umgangssprache* could easily be pushed to absurd extremes. As I have mentioned, the implementing regulations for the census defined *Umgangssprache* as the language which an individual normally used in his/her everyday dealings (i.e. in communication); this was evidently intended to mean the predominant language that was used in communication, including both private and public life. If Johanna Bašta claimed that she used both languages in communication, the authorities were not within their rights to approve the inspector’s alteration of her *Umgangssprache* data, as only the respondent could reliably judge which was the predominant language in his/her daily communication.

The example of Lower Austria, and above all Vienna itself, clearly shows that the state authorities failed to make sufficient efforts to implement methods and review mechanisms which would have reduced the occurrence of open coercion and *de facto*

fraudulent behaviour when recording respondents' *Umgangssprache*. It could possibly be claimed that the state authorities were in fact not willing to impose such methods and mechanisms centrally. In my opinion there were two fundamental reasons for this, which at present remain on the level of hypotheses: 1) Although Cisleithania transcended the level of individual nationalities, it relied primarily on its German-speaking elites, and it had to take into account their anxiety at the lower natural increase in the German population compared with the Slavic nations, as well as the migration of Slavic populations into German-speaking areas and industrial centres. The use of the term *Umgangssprache* in censuses, and above all the "definition" of this term, brought about a situation in which the assimilation of non-German populations into German-speaking environments appeared to be very successful, at least in statistical terms, so the German elites — the pillar supporting the state and the regime — were encouraged to remain loyal. 2) It appears that the state authorities intervened in the processing of *Umgangssprache* data to varying degrees, depending on whether or not the native language of the plaintiffs was *landesüblich* in the province; for example, when complaints alleged that municipal authorities in North-West Bohemia had coerced people into giving their *Umgangssprache* as German, the authorities were hesitant to intervene, but ultimately dealt with the issue more thoroughly and uncompromisingly than was the case in Vienna.⁶¹ At the start of 1911, Vienna was the scene of hundreds or even thousands of cases in which the provisions of the Census Act were clearly breached.

The most serious problem occurring during the collection of *Umgangssprache* data in the Cisleithanian censuses was undoubtedly interference from strongly nationalistic local government authorities, which had extensive powers in census administration. In my view, the Vienna *Magistrat's* "apologetic" report on the 1910 census is unique in one respect: unlike the reports on other investigations, the *Magistrat's* report is evasive; although it ostensibly denies that any illegal acts took place, reading between the lines a different message emerges. Comparing the overall tenor of the reports on investigations into the collection of *Umgangssprache* written by the Lower Austrian *Statthaltereien* with similar reports from the Bohemian lands,⁶² it appears that the approach taken by the Lower Austrian authorities when investigating complaints was far less impartial than that of their Bohemian counterparts.

On the other hand, I am aware that the Czech activists in Vienna were themselves far from impartial; it was their opinion that no census would be just and fair unless every respondent with Czech ethnic roots stated Czech as their *Umgangssprache*. A significant role was undoubtedly played by the voluntary assimilation of individuals who had lived for many years in the German-speaking environment of Vienna. However, it was the duty of a *Rechtsstaat* (and Cisleithania undoubtedly fell into this category) to ensure that all respondents were able to state their *Umgangssprache* according to their own free will — even those who had voluntarily decided not to assimilate linguistically into the majority community.

61 Cf. my study "Etnická klasifikace a institucionální zakotvení národnosti v českých zemích 1880–1938, Část I.: Předlitavské období", *Moderní dějiny*, Vol. 22, 2014, No. 2, pp. 89–116.

62 Ibid.

APPENDIX

VÍDEŇSKÝ DENNÍK, 28. 12. 1910, P. 2, ARTICLE “PŘI NASTÁVAJÍCÍM SČÍTÁNÍ LIDU DBEJ KAŽDÝ TĚCHTO PRAVIDEL” [RULES TO BE FOLLOWED BY EVERYBODY IN THE UPCOMING CENSUS]

I. Each Czech should state Czech as their language of daily use, in all circumstances.

II. Nobody should write “German” next to “Czech” in the space for “language of daily use”. This would risk the Czech language being crossed out in the *Umgangssprache* section at a later date.

III. Heads of families should give Czech as the language of daily use for each member of their family individually, explicitly writing the word “Czech” next to each family member (not a “ditto” mark or any similar sign). According to the law, heads of families also give information on the language of daily use for babies, deaf and/or dumb people and those of unsound mind, etc.

IV. Those persons who are *sui juris* and are not from the family but live in the same household — i.e. apprentices, domestic servants and other staff, lodgers etc. — have the legal right to decide on their own language of daily use; the head of the family with which they live is not entitled arbitrarily to determine the language of daily use of such persons.

V. Any Czech who has been threatened in any way, by anybody whatsoever, in connection with listing Czech as their language of daily use, should immediately notify the relevant authorities of this fact (the District Office or the Governor’s Office), submitting a request for protection; if assistance is not provided in good time, the individual should contact both the Ministry of the Interior in Vienna and the Czech deputies (via the Czech National Council) [...] You should also do this if you learn of any coercion or threats made to any other Czechs. The Czech deputies have promised you that they will assist you and intervene in such cases!

VI. If, while completing the *Umgangssprache* section, the census officer indulges in abusive remarks or attempts to persuade you to state German instead of Czech as your language of daily use, you should immediately rebuke him politely for this behaviour and inform him that you may notify the authorities; if he does not desist, you should immediately notify the District Office and also the Czech National Council so that the deputies can intervene.

VII. Everybody should inspect the census form to ensure that the information in the *Umgangssprache* section has been recorded according to the information given by the respondent; if the information has not been recorded correctly, you should take action immediately.

VIII. Each conscientious Czech should help persuade any undecided fellow Czechs not to betray their nation in this census, which is of exceptional importance for our nation’s development, and even for the very existence of our Czech minority communities!

The calculation of the numerical strength of the Czech and German nations in the coming years will depend on the number of individuals who give either Czech or German as their language of daily use. This numerical strength will be used as

a basis for the establishment of schools for each nation, and it will be used to decide on important rights enjoyed by our nation, on language laws, and on education laws; our numerical strength will enable our sons to occupy more or fewer positions in public office and companies, and it will also have a major influence on our economic interests.