

# Communicating Politics in the Dissecting Room

## The Influence of Medical Students and Physicians from Prague Charles-Ferdinand University on the Liberal Model of Human Progress at Vienna University

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**Abstract.** In the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, universities in the Habsburg Monarchy were supervised by the government and patronized by the state. The philosopher Bernard Bolzano, professor at the University of Prague, had to leave, as he had incited liberal ideas among students. Due to the lack of career prospects in Bohemia or Moravia, quite a few of them left Prague for Vienna. Believing in the ideals of liberty and equality, especially medical students and young physicians developed a strong oppositional attitude against the government and its university system. In order to put down important liberal ideas in society, the Prague Community in Vienna was deeply involved in the Doctors' Revolution of 1848. With the university reforms of 1849, a reform process was initiated towards political participation and a modern civil society.

**Politika v pitevně. Vliv studentů medicíny a lékařů z pražské Karlo-Ferdinandovy university na liberální model lidského pokroku na Vídeňské univerzitě.** V prvních dekádách 19. století spadaly univerzity v habsburské monarchii pod vládní dohled a stát je blahosklonně patronizoval. Filosof Bernard Bolzano, profesor pražské university, musel svou univerzitu opustit, když přicházel mezi studenty s liberálními idejemi. Kvůli špatným výhledům na kariérní postup v Čechách a na Moravě dost studentů odešlo z Prahy do Vídně. Zejména studenti lékařství a mladí lékaři si, protože věřili v ideály svobody a rovnosti, vypěstovali silně opoziční postoj k vládě a jejímu univerzitnímu systému. Pražská komunita ve Vídni se v „doktorské revoluci“ roku 1848 značně angažovala, aby mohla prosadit důležité liberální myšlenky ve společnosti. Reformní proces byl zaměřen na politickou účast a moderní občanskou společnost ve spojitosti s univerzitními reformami roku 1849.

**Keywords:** ideals of liberalism • education • value order • science-based medicine • medical students • political professors • revolution 1848 • university reform • modern civil society



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The Academic Legion, marching out of the auditorium of the old University of Vienna, today the main building of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

## 1. Influences on Liberal and Scientific Thinking

“What is liberalism? What does it want? It is nothing other than a striving to ennoble mankind. It follows ideals and therefore it could sometimes occur that it regards people as nobler than they are.”<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the civil society of the Habsburg Monarchy understood itself as a meritocracy, which was based on the principles of personal freedom and formal equality. Emphasis was placed on educating the youth, so that they would become mature and responsible citizens. It was this value order of the early-liberal bourgeoisie which provided everyone the chance to develop his individual personality.<sup>2</sup> Individualism was closely linked to German humanism’s ideal of “Bildung”, which can best be translated as “self-cultivation” in English. Liberalism became “a religious ideology, [...] a secular, emancipatory vision and a challenge to the ultra conservatism of the Roman Catholic Church and

<sup>1</sup> Eduard Suess, parliamentary speech, 14 February 1884, cit. in Jonathan KWAN. *Liberalism and the Habsburg Monarchy, 1861–1895*. Basingstoke, u.a. 2013, p. X.

<sup>2</sup> Hans-Werner HAHN – Dieter HEIN. Bürgerliche Werte um 1800. Zur Einführung. In Hans-Werner HAHN – Dieter HEIN (edd.). *Bürgerliche Werte um 1800. Entwurf – Vermittlung – Rezeption*. Köln, 2005, pp. 9–27, here p. 12.

the absolute state<sup>3</sup> that strongly influenced schools and universities. Textbooks for professors were prescribed and any substantive change in content required special consent from the study commission. Medical schools were training institutions for medical practice. From this generation of professors, who were still completely bound to the authority of the Emperor, little willingness for reforms could be expected.<sup>4</sup>

Due to this enormous gap between the authoritarian academic environment and the liberal upbringing of the students, a smouldering discontent arose among the rebellious youth. Carl Rokitansky, for example, born on 19 February 1804, in Hradec Králové,<sup>5</sup> Bohemia, chose to study medicine at the University of Prague on his own initiative. His mother was a liberal and she wanted her sons to choose any profession, except the priesthood and the military. When Rokitansky became a student in 1818, he experienced student socialization in a fraternity. Fraternities were based on the principles of freedom, equality and national unity.<sup>6</sup> Describing his first years at university, Rokitansky wrote in his memoirs that “Ziegenhainer sticks”, decorated with the carving “fiat justitia pereat mundus”, were introduced to them by students from the University of Halle. However, a disciplinary order of Prague University, issued on 8 July 1819, forced students who possessed such objects to do military service.<sup>7</sup> Like professors, students were strictly controlled for political reasons. With the “Carlsbad Decrees” of

<sup>3</sup> David S. LUFT. *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna. Weininger, Musil, Doderer*. Chicago – London, 2003, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Erna LESKY. Vorbemerkung. In Carl von ROKITANSKY. *Selbstbiographie und Antrittsrede*. Eingeleitet, ed. und mit Erläuterungen versehen von Erna Lesky. Graz – Wien – Köln, 1960, pp. 5–9, here p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 34. Concerning Rokitansky’s biography see Hvězdoslav STEFAN – Olga PROCHÁZKOVÁ – Ivo ŠTEINER. *Karel Rokitanský*. Hradec Králové, LF UK v Hradci Králové, 2005; Helmut RUMPLER – Helmut DENK (edd.). *Carl Freiherr von Rokitansky. Pathologe – Politiker – Philosoph – Begründer der Wiener Medizinischen Schule des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Wien – Köln – Weimar, 2005; Felicitas SEEBACHER. „Freiheit der Naturforschung!“ *Carl Freiherr von Rokitansky und die Wiener Medizinische Schule: Wissenschaft und Politik im Konflikt*. Mit einem Vorwort von Helmut Denk und einer Einführung von Günther Hödl. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Klasse. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften, Mathematik und Medizin, 56, Wien, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Klaus RIES. Professoren als bürgerliche Werteproduzenten. In HAHN – HEIN (edd.). *Bürgerliche Werte um 1800*, pp. 51–68, here p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Karl Rokitansky’s. Getreu nach dem Originale, kopiert von Hans Rokitansky (o. O. 1880), p. 18 f.

August 1819, State Chancellor Prince Clemens von Metternich-Winneburg finally banned fraternities and ordered that “professors, talking politics” have to be watched because they would trigger a revolution.<sup>8</sup>

On 24 December 1819, the logician and philosopher of religion, Bernard Bolzano, was dismissed from the University of Prague.<sup>9</sup> The reasons behind this decision were conflicts of power and interests. Based on his utopia “On the Best State”,<sup>10</sup> he was accused of indicating political and social reform ideas to the students, of teaching the philosophical ideas of Immanuel Kant, and of being “a rationalist and seducer of the youth”.<sup>11</sup> Like Kant, Bolzano had “put the conception of individual freedom positively as the self-legislation of rational moral laws”.<sup>12</sup> Since 1805, Bolzano had been teaching at the ‘low’ Faculty of Arts, where all students had to attend the philosophical propaedeutic for six terms, before entering the ‘higher’ Faculties of Theology, Law or Medicine.<sup>13</sup> The brilliant rhetorician showed students the road to becoming a better person and achieving a better society:

“In humanity as a whole there is visible over the centuries, and going to infinity, a progress not limited to certain arts and sciences, but a progress extending to the three most important matters: true practical wisdom, virtue and happiness.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Jane REGENFELDER. Der sogenannte „Bolzano-Prozess“ und das Wartburgfest. In Helmut RUMPLER (ed.). *Bernard Bolzano und die Politik. Staat, Nation und Religion als Herausforderung für die Philosophie im Kontext von Spätaufklärung, Frühnationalismus und Restauration*. Studien zu Politik und Verwaltung, 61, Wien – Köln – Graz, 2001, pp. 149–178, here p. 164.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>10</sup> See Bernard BOLZANO. *Vom besten Staate*. Ed. Arnold Kowalewski. Prag, 1932.

<sup>11</sup> REGENFELDER. Der sogenannte „Bolzano-Prozess“ und das Wartburgfest. In RUMPLER (ed.). *Bernard Bolzano und die Politik*, p. 157.

<sup>12</sup> LUFT. *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna*, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Introduction. In Bernard BOLZANO. *Selected Writings on Ethics and Politics*. Translated by Paul Rusnock and Rolf George. Amsterdam – New York, 2007, pp. 1–41, here p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Bernard BOLZANO. Über das stete Fortschreiten des Menschengeschlechts in der Vollkommenheit. Am Feste der Erscheinung des Herrn im Jahre 1811, Kapitel IV. In Bernard BOLZANO. *Erbauungsreden für Akademiker*. Prag, 1813, pp. 69–88, here p. 75, cit. in Mark TEXTOR (ed.). *The Austrian Contribution to Analytic Philosophy*. London Studies in the History of Philosophy, London – New York, 2006, p. 270.

For Rokitansky, Bolzano was the “only truly great man at the Austrian Faculties of Arts”.<sup>15</sup> The philosopher, holding exhortations during Sunday services, had the possibility of “impressing upon students the need for the reform of society”. Fearing too much influence on “the future intellectual elite of Bohemia”,<sup>16</sup> the “Exhortations for Academics”<sup>17</sup> were put on the index of forbidden books in 1828.<sup>18</sup> This evoked even more resistance against the persisting system in academic circles. Bolzano’s “great truth of the permanent progress of mankind”,<sup>19</sup> strongly influenced the thinking and acting of the next generation of reformers.

## 2. The Builders of Modern Medicine and Modern Society

Several of Bolzano’s students, like Rokitansky or Joseph Škoda, left Prague for Vienna, expecting more academic freedom. Training and an academic career at the Medical Faculty of the University of Vienna was regarded as highly creditable. Both received a chair there: Rokitansky headed the Pathological Anatomical Institute, Škoda the Institute for Internal Medicine. By banning political engagement in the Premarch-period, the medical professors, characterized by the ideas of early liberalism, broke with long handed down healing methods, the conservative university system and the controlling health authorities. In their view, medicine had to have a scientific orientation. ‘The conquest of reality’ determined the progress in medicine, technology and culture and required a new understanding of the world, the society and a new image of man. It was these physicians from the crown lands of the Habsburg Monarchy, who implemented science-based medicine at the Viennese Medical Faculty. They met inside the large courtyards of the General Hospital of Vienna, where they could discuss new methods and exchange ideas. Brigitte Mazohl points out that in times of upheaval “creative elites” often form a “common sociotope”, which creates “the right spiritual

<sup>15</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Rokitansky’s, kopiert von H. Rokitansky, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Introduction. In BOLZANO. *Selected Writings on Ethics and Politics*. Translated by Rusnock and George, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> See Bernard BOLZANO. *24 Erbauungsreden 1808–1820*. Nach Originalhandschriften transkribiert und herausgegeben von Kurt STRASSER. Wien – Köln – Weimar, 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Introduction. In Bernard BOLZANO. *Selected Writings on Ethics and Politics*. Translated by Rusnock and George, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Margret FRIEDRICH. Bolzanos Projekt der Aufklärung. „Was zur Herbeiführung einer besseren Zeit schon durch uns selbst geleistet werden könne.“ In RUMPLER (ed.). *Bernard Bolzano und die Politik*, pp. 23–48, here p. 27.

and material conditions for creative action”.<sup>20</sup> In building up new interdisciplinary institutes, they were supported by politicians of Bohemian origin with influence at the Viennese Imperial Court, in particular by Cabinet-Minister Count Anton Kolowrat-Liebsteinsky, the political antagonist of Metternich.<sup>21</sup>

The interactions between the Medical Faculties of Vienna and Prague were so close “that we should speak of the Medical School of Vienna and Prague”, as Tatjana Buklijas emphasizes.<sup>22</sup> They played a major role in politics because medicine operated at the intersection of science, society and politics.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, medical institutes became political laboratories<sup>24</sup> for social developments, where students and academics built up an intergenerational civil community.<sup>25</sup> These “creative elites” formed the intellectual and political leadership group, influencing all different political camps.<sup>26</sup> The so-called “political professors” were the “decisive pacemakers” from the origin of the civil society to its modernization. Hence the university was “one of the most important switchpoints” for discussing and implementing political and societal changes.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Brigitte MAZOHL-WALLNIG. Der Einfluss Bolzanos und der Bolzanisten auf die österreichische Universitätsreform 1848/49. In RUMPLER (ed.). *Bernard Bolzano und die Politik*, pp. 221–246, here p. 224.

<sup>21</sup> Manfred FLEISCHER. *Die politische Rolle der Deutschen aus den böhmischen Ländern in Wien 1804–1918*. Studien zur Migration und Wirken politisch-administrativer Eliten. Europäische Hochschulschriften 831, Reihe III. Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, 1999, p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> Tatjana BUKLIJAS – Emese LAFFERTON. Science, medicine and nationalism in the Habsburg Empire from the 1840s to 1918. In *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 38, 2007, pp. 679–686, here p. 682.

<sup>23</sup> Elena TADDEI – Franz von OTTENTHAL. *Arzt und Tiroler Landtagsabgeordneter (1818–1899)*. Wien – Köln – Weimar, 2010, p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> See MAZOHL-WALLNIG. Der Einfluss Bolzanos. In RUMPLER (ed.). *Bernard Bolzano und die Politik*, p. 224: Brigitte Mazohl-Wallnig speaks about a “laboratory of acting players”.

<sup>25</sup> RIES. Professoren als bürgerliche Werteproduzenten. In HAHN – HEIN (edd.). *Bürgerliche Werte um 1800*, p. 66.

<sup>26</sup> Wolfgang GASSER. *Erlebte Revolution 1848/49. Das Wiener Tagebuch des jüdischen Journalisten Benjamin Kewall*. Wien – Köln – Weimar, 2010, p. 123.

<sup>27</sup> RIES. Professoren als bürgerliche Werteproduzenten. In HAHN – HEIN (edd.). *Bürgerliche Werte um 1800*, p. 52.



### 3. The Doctors' Revolution

It was in Rokitansky's dissecting room at the Medical Faculty of Vienna, where a "striking movement" arose at the beginning of March 1848. About forty medical assistants and students formed an alliance to "stand for freedom and individuality", initiating a revolution like the one that took place in other European cities.<sup>28</sup> The Medical Faculty understood itself as the representative for the freedom of science, and was therefore much more radical than other faculties.<sup>29</sup>

Adolf Pichler reported that "we physicians in the General Hospital knew [...] day by day the foreign events far earlier than the public papers informed the readers; I remember that we sometimes discussed things right in the morning, that the Councils of State pretended not have heard at all."<sup>30</sup>

On 12 March, Viennese students from different faculties held a general assembly at the University. According to the opinion of the students, its auditorium became "the meeting-place for everybody, who wanted to hear the truth [...] and fight with open honest arms".<sup>31</sup> Using expressive rhetoric to justify the revolution,<sup>32</sup> the physicians Adolf Fischhof, Joseph Goldmark and Ludwig von Löhner demanded democratic rights like "freedom of teaching and learning".<sup>33</sup> On 13 March they held a meeting at the Medical Faculty, and it was Löhner, who suggested asking the Emperor for an armed military body in order not to allow the "proletariat to become the master of the liberal movement".<sup>34</sup> After State Chancellor Metternich was forced to resign, the provisional government, headed by Count Kolowrat, permitted the students the right to organize an armed military body. About six thousand students and academics from different

<sup>28</sup> Isidor FISCHER. *Wiens Mediziner und die Freiheitsbewegung des Jahres 1848*. Wien, 1935, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Gernot STIMMER. „Alles bewilligt!“ Die Wiener Studenten im Mai 1848. In Ernst BRUCKMÜLLER – Wolfgang HÄUSLER (edd.). *1848. Revolution in Österreich*. Schriften des Instituts für Österreichkunde, 62. Wien, 1999, pp. 23–54, here p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> *Aus den März- und Oktobertagen zu Wien 1848*. Innsbruck, 1850, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Archives of the University of Vienna: AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61. 148.99. Die Universität geschlossen oder Die Verschwörung der 105 schwarzgelben Manichäer gegen die Studenten. Eine wahre Geschichte zur Warnung und Belehrung aller Rechtgläubigen. Gedruckt und zu haben bei Franz Edler von Schmid, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Pieter M. JUDSON. *Wien brennt! Die Revolution von 1848 und ihr liberales Erbe*. Wien – Köln – Weimar, 1998, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Erna LESKY. *Die Wiener medizinische Schule im 19. Jahrhundert*. Studien zur Geschichte der Universität Wien, 6, Graz – Köln, 1965, p. 119.

<sup>34</sup> JUDSON. *Wien brennt*, p. 43 f.

universities decided to join the Academic Legion in Vienna.<sup>35</sup> The students who signed on were mostly so poor that it was impossible for them to pay their own uniforms.<sup>36</sup> Demonstrating brotherhood and unity with the students, the botanist Stephan Ladislaus Endlicher, the dermatologist Ferdinand Hebra, the anatomists Joseph Hyrtl and Carl Bernhard Brühl, as well as Rokitansky and Škoda, enrolled in the medical corps of the Academic Legion as “common people” and waived the officer’s rank.<sup>37</sup> Fischhof commanded the medical corps.<sup>38</sup> The March Revolution of 1848 was a “revolution of hope as well as despair”<sup>39</sup> for students and academics of all universities in Vienna. It became a ‘Doctors’ Revolution’, showing a “corporate representation of its ideals”.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4. Cosmopolitanism – Liberalism – Nationalism

By an “explosion” of pamphlets and newspapers, as well as the foundation of new civil associations, the bourgeoisie slowly perceived the values of Liberalism and opened a new political discourse.<sup>41</sup> Believing in the victory of “freedom”, the students redefined the meaning of “a free man”. One pamphlet, entitled “No nationality – cosmopolitanism! All over the world, only one nation!” predicted full of euphoria:

“The true free man must [...] discern [...] that all people are equal, only in their form they are different. Cosmopolitanism is the aim, what we are headed

<sup>35</sup> Gernot STIMMER. „Alles bewilligt!“ Die Wiener Studenten im Mai 1848. In BRUCKMÜLLER – HÄUSLER (edd.). *1848. Revolution in Österreich*, pp. 55–69, here p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.97. Moritz Gottfried SAPHIR. Aufforderung an die edlen Bewohner und insbesondere an die hochherzigen Bewohnerinnen Wiens. In *Der Humorist. Ein Volksblatt*. Eigentümer und verantwortlicher Redakteur M. G. Saphir, 12, 97/98, 22. April 1848, p. 1. This call appealed to “the generous female inhabitants of Vienna” to support these students financially, because “intelligence and ownership usually are natural enemies”.

<sup>37</sup> Karl PORTELE. Einige Bemerkungen zu Rokitansky. In *Mitteilungen des Pathologisch-anatomischen Bundesmuseums in Wien*, Nr. 1, 1986, pp. 59–62, here p. 60.

<sup>38</sup> GASSER. *Erlebte Revolution 1848/49*, p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> Mike RAPPORT. *1848. Year of Revolution*. New York, 2009, p. XII.

<sup>40</sup> STIMMER. „Alles bewilligt!“ Die Wiener Studenten im Mai 1848. In BRUCKMÜLLER – HÄUSLER (edd.). *1848. Revolution in Österreich*, p. 65.

<sup>41</sup> JUDSON. *Wien brennt!* p. 14.



towards, at least we have to lay a stone for it that is the sacred duty of every educated person. Our century has to and will complete this great work.”<sup>42</sup>

On the contrary, the student’s newspaper *Der Stürmer* wanted “Everything for the sovereign people of Germany!”<sup>43</sup> Even a radical “mobile corps” was formed in the Academic Legion, with the skull as a symbol and the slogan “Free and German until death”.<sup>44</sup> Antidemocratic currents avoided the endeavours for emancipation of Jewish intellectuals like Fischhof. They were opposed by a new wave of anti-Judaism. In April 1848, numerous German and Bohemian towns were confronted with attacks on Jews.<sup>45</sup> In Vienna, anti-Judaism agitations took place mainly in the anti-Jewish press. “If the shares fall, the Jews howl”, the blame for the economic crisis was accredited to the Jews.<sup>46</sup> Pieter Judson sees in these different experiments of shaping a German national identity “a crucial basis for the explosion of German national politics at the end of the 19th century” excluding other ethnic groups such as the Czechs or denominations such as the Jews.<sup>47</sup>

When an imposed constitution was signed on 25 April 1848, the students protested again. They criticized that it was made by an “absolute imperial power” and not as a “contract” between the people and the Emperor.<sup>48</sup> Therefore they threatened to cut the first draft of the constitution “with the anatomical knife” and to intervene continuously, until the required rights would be granted.<sup>49</sup> When the government finally permitted a national assembly with a chamber system, the students demanded the selection of the representatives:

<sup>42</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.87. J. SCHEDA (Jurist). Keine Nationalität – Weltbürgerthum. Auf der ganzen Erde nur eine Nation! In *Wiener Studenten Zeitung*. *Alles für Deutschlands souveränes Volk!* Neue Folge 20 (1848), p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.94. *Der Stürmer*. *Früher Studenten Zeitung*, 20. und 21. September (1848), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.60. Die Tottenkopf-Legion, ihre Tendenz als mobiles Corps der Wiener akademischen Legion und Nationalgarde, so wie auch die famose Auflösung derselben durch Herrn Koller.

<sup>45</sup> GASSER, *Erlebte Revolution 1848/49*, p. 98.

<sup>46</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.99. Die Universität geschlossen oder Die Verschwörung der 105 schwarzgelben Manichäer, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> JUDSON, *Wien brennt!*, p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.93. *Der Freimüthige*. *Für Politik, Tagesereignisse und Satire*. 1, 24 (1848), p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.99. Die Universität geschlossen, p. 2.

“Brothers! We have showed Europe what we are capable of [...] through courage, through faith in our Emperor. [...] Let us be an example for Europe [...] that we are real men of freedom, who do not judge the man by years, but according to his convictions and to his actions. [...] Therefore, brothers, if we need true representatives of the people, to which we can rely on, we must get them mainly from the University of Vienna.”<sup>50</sup>

## 5. The Intellectual Renewal

In the parliament of the Paul’s Church in Frankfurt am Main, the number of elected representatives with academic qualifications was impressive.<sup>51</sup> The rebelling scientific community had initiated a basic social transformation process in the Habsburg Monarchy. Graf Leo Thun-Hohenstein, of Bohemian origin and since 28 July, 1849, Minister of Education, built his teaching and university reform on the liberal ideas of the initiators of the 1848 revolution.<sup>52</sup> He implemented it with a creative group of academics, mostly from Prague, but also from other parts of Bohemia and Moravia, who were, like Thun, strongly influenced by Bolzanism.<sup>53</sup> Professors now were entitled to have a decisive influence on the appointments of professors and to elect a dean from their faculty. The staff of the Medical Faculty of the University of Vienna decided to elect Rokitansky. He was re-elected several times. In the academic year 1852/53, Rokitansky became the first free elected rector of the University of Vienna.<sup>54</sup>

Physicians of Bohemian origin were influencing the modernization of university politics in a political era of neoabsolutism, before the liberal era finally broke through onto the Habsburg’s political landscape in 1861. Liberalism turned out to be the “transformative force” in the “period of transition between absolute monarchy and modern democratic politics”.<sup>55</sup> For the academic year 1861/62, Johann von Oppolzer, professor for internal medicine and also of Bohemian

<sup>50</sup> AT-UAW/148.1-148.99, 683/61, 148.98. N. T. Nationalgardist aus Mähren, Studenten in der Reichsversammlung! An meine Brüder der österreichischen Monarchie, p. 1 f.

<sup>51</sup> JUDSON, *Wien brennt!*, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> Helmut RUMPLER, *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa. Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie (= Österreichische Geschichte 1804–1914*. Wien 1997), p. 334.

<sup>53</sup> MAZOHL-WALLNIG, Der Einfluss Bolzanos, in Rumpler (ed.), *Bernard Bolzano und die Politik*, p. 233.

<sup>54</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Rokitansky’s, kopiert von Rokitansky H., p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> LUFT, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna*, p. 13 f.

origin, was elected rector of the Viennese University. In his inauguration speech he once again demanded “academic freedom for teachers and students”, criticising the control of science and teaching by the government.<sup>56</sup> These physicians from the crown lands of the Habsburg Monarchy, who all felt themselves to be “Austrians”, developed “an Austrian model of medicine in the service of a multi-ethnic Empire” and against a “German cultural leadership”.<sup>57</sup>

In 1857 a Viennese medical journal stated, that “a class of honourable men, who had received their university education at Viennese or Prague institutions and had acquired a good reputation in their professions, [should not] come over undeserved, maybe in favour of foreigners”.<sup>58</sup>

Only a few years later, professors from Germany were preferred for appointment because they fitted into the political programme of the national liberals. They replaced the ‘Austrian’ medicine model with a ‘German’ medicine model. At the same time a new group of educated middle-class functionary elites emerged. Physicians in leading positions were integrated into the aristocracy. Quite a few university professors followed its lifestyle: away from the “ascetic and morally narrow principles towards an excessive life”. This characterized the “triumph of capitalism” and rejected the values of the early liberal bourgeoisie.<sup>59</sup>

Watching these social developments, the “future of mankind” looked gloomy to Rokitansky. In his opinion, “the so-called modern individualism was on the way [...] to degrade to a cult of the individual”.<sup>60</sup> In his farewell speech of 1875, Rokitansky once more pointed out the ideals of liberalism that had formed his period. Appealing to the youth, he said, “Our entire time is filled with the desire for freedom and this freedom involves equality. [...] Freedom implies both: freedom for each individual person, and taking responsibility towards others.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Johann OPPOLZER, Ueber Lehr- und Lernfreiheit. Festrede bei Gelegenheit seiner Installation zum Rector magnificus, in *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift* 1, 3 (1864), pp. 43–53, here p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> BUKLIJAS, LAFFERTON, Science, medicine and nationalism, in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 38 (2007), p. 684.

<sup>58</sup> FEUILLETON. Berufung an Universitäten in Österreich, in *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift* 7, 41, 184–57 (1857), p. 747.

<sup>59</sup> GASSER, *Erlebte Revolution 1848/49*, p. 123.

<sup>60</sup> Josephinum. Collections and History of Medicine of the Medical University of Vienna, estate Rokitansky, handwritings collection 1.985, Carl Rokitansky, Abschiedsrede, gehalten am 16. Juli 1875, in Carl Rokitansky, *Drei Reden* (1844, 1862, 1875). Typoskript, geschrieben von Karl Rokitansky, pp. 36–48, here p. 43.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Only “freedom” enables “progress”, whereas everybody, bearing in mind the “freedom” of the others, must try, “if not to stand at the top, thus, on the side of progress”.<sup>62</sup> As Rokitsansky knew very well, he was speaking about a vision.

## Conclusion

The masterminds of liberalism, students and professors of different crown lands of the Habsburg Monarchy, but primarily from Bohemia, regenerated and modernized the authoritarian monarchy. The values of Liberalism set new standards. The Medical Faculties at the Universities of Prague and Vienna played a major role in changing political systems because medicine operated in a field between various academic professions as well as in new and emerging areas of cooperation of science, politics and the general public. Because political engagement was banned in the Premarch-period, they first pushed through reforms in medicine and founded a science-based Medical School. Scientific thinking shaped liberal reforms at the universities. The influence of physicians of Bohemian origin on implementing a scientific-orientated medicine at the Universities of Prague and Vienna and on constructing a modern society should be made more visible.

## Resumé

Vedoucí osobnosti liberalismu, studenti a profesoři z různých korunních zemí habsburské monarchie, ale přednostně z Čech, reformovali a modernizovali autoritářskou monarchii. Hodnoty liberalismu stanovily nové standardy. Lékařské fakulty pražské a vídeňské univerzity ve změně politického systému hrály prvořadou roli, protože medicína se pohybovala mezi různými akademickými profesemi, stejně jako v nových a vznikajících oblastech působila mezi vědou, politikou a veřejností. Politické angažování bylo ovšem v předbřeznovém období zakázáno, proto byly prosazovány reformy lékařství a zakládány lékařské školy založené na vědeckých poznatcích. Vědecký způsob myšlení pak formoval liberální reformy na univerzitách. Vliv lékařů českého původu na prosazování vědecky zaměřené medicíny na univerzitách v Praze a ve Vídni a na utváření moderní společnosti si zaslouží větší uznání a povědomost.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 42.