

THE EPISCOPAL MINOR SEMINARY IN BUDWEIS 1853–1868

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the history of the minor seminary in Budweis (České Budějovice) between 1853 and 1868. The minor seminary in Budweis was one of the important formation and education centres founded by Bishop Jan Valerián Jirsík in 1853 with the financial support of the believers from the whole Diocese of Budweis. This text focuses on the life of the seminarians, their life and duties in the seminary, and the statutory as well as financial background of the seminary institution, all in the context of the life of the town of Budweis, the Diocese of Budweis, and the coexistence of the two language groups living in the diocese, i.e., Czechs and Germans.

Keywords

Minor seminary; Diocese of Budweis; Budweis; České Budějovice; 19th Century; Spiritual formation; Christian education

DOI: 10.14712/23363398.2026.6

Minor or boys' seminaries were considered very important formative-educational Church institutions of which their establishment in dioceses was foreseen by the decrees of the Council of Trent. In the Diocese of Budweis, specifically in its centre, in the city of Budweis (today České Budějovice, Czech Republic), such a seminary was founded in 1853 by the then bishop Jan Valerián Jirsík. This minor seminary existed as an institution until 1950, when it was closed down by the communist totalitarian government that came to power after the coup d'état in 1948. The communists saw the Catholic Church as one of their main ideological enemies. The abolition of the Church's formative

and educational institutions was part of the persecution of the Catholic Church aimed at its total destruction.

In a previous study devoted to the intention of bishop Jan Valerián Jirsík (1851–1885) to establish a boys' seminary in 1852–1853, not only was the available literature on the history of the seminary mapped in more detail but also the lack of primary sources arising from the activities of the seminary itself was noted. These sources had been irretrievably destroyed during the communist totalitarianism.¹

This study, which builds on the previous texts, seeks to right the historical wrong that has made the minor seminary in Budweis almost forgotten. It seeks to present to the academic community the first fifteen years of the existence of the minor seminary, from the time of its foundation at the beginning of the school year 1853/1854 to the end of the school year 1867/1868, based on secondary sources, mainly derived from the activities of the Bishop's Ordinariate of Diocese of Budweis, and with the help of other preserved sources. The study focuses on the internal life of this institution up to the turning point in the history of the minor seminary, which was the founding of the Episcopal Bohemian Gymnasium (Episcopal Bohemian Grammar School) and the beginning of the coexistence of the two institutions, formative and educational, in the same building.

1. Statutes of the Minor Seminary

The Budweis Minor Seminary, otherwise known as the 'Student', 'Boys' or 'Small' Seminary, started its activities at the beginning of the school year 1853/1854, namely on 1 October 1853, i.e., before the opening ceremony on 22 October 1853.²

¹ See Rudolf Svoboda, 'The process of establishing a minor seminary in the Diocese of Budweis in 1852–1853,' *Theologos. Theological Revue* 25, no. 2 (2023): 92–103. This study contains a complete, up-to-date bibliography on the history of the Diocese of Budweis, the figure of Bishop Jan Valerián Jirsík and the history of the minor seminary itself. See https://www.unipo.sk/public/media/31344/Theologos2023_2.pdf.

The legal background of the establishment of the so-called minor seminaries after 1850 is elaborated in the study Rudolf Svoboda, 'The Founding of Minor Seminaries After 1850 Consequences of the Transformation of the Relationship Between Church and State in the Austrian Empire on the Example of Establishing a Minor Seminary in the Diocese of Budweis,' *Church Law Review* 29, no. 3 (2023): 111–125. See <https://spcp.prf.cuni.cz/rcp/92/rcp92.pdf>.

² See the diocesan priestly bulletin *Erllass des bischöfl. Ordinariates von Budweis an den Klerus der Diözese* (Regulations of the Episcopal Ordinariate in Budweis to the clergy

At the beginning of the seminary's existence, Bishop Jan Valerián Jirsík issued statutes regulating its operation, the duties of the seminarists (called 'students' because their primary duty was to study at the gymnasium) and the roles of their superiors.⁵ The Statutes in force throughout its existence, i.e., until 1950, have proven to be timeless in terms of their content and functionality. However, it was also a kind of manifestation of Jirsík's ideas of the formation of young people, describing, alongside practical issues, the ideal towards which it was to be directed.

The Statutes are divided into three thematic sections and fifteen paragraphs.

The first section states, 'Conditions under which boys shall be admitted.' (§ 1–5). According to these, boys of matrimonial descent with an inclination to the clerical state, who were of exemplary manners, aptitude for study, and due diligence, were to be admitted to the seminary. At the same time, they had already graduated with good grades from the first or higher class of the gymnasium (§ 1). If possible, a boy seeking admission should present himself in person to the seminary leadership. If he was to be admitted, he must not have had a conspicuous defect of body, speech, or senses. Furthermore, an application for admission had to be made to the Episcopal Ordinariate, the Episcopal Consistory or the seminary directorate, which had to be signed by the applicant (future seminarist) himself. Along with this, the required certificates were sent.

In the same application, the parents also informed the leadership of the seminary whether they were able to pay the fee for their son's stay in the seminary. If they could pay, they committed to an annual payment of a specific amount to be paid monthly or quarterly. It was also emphasized that the parents' status and residence should be correctly stated to facilitate communication. The fee amount, referred to as a 'boarding fee', was determined 'according to circumstances', which meant according to the parent's financial situation, current prices, and

of the diocese, henceforth *Erlass*), no. 8 (1853): 61–64; *Erlass*, nos. 11–16 (1853): 11–16, 21 and 23.

⁵ The Statutes are preserved in the book of the first biographer of the Minor Seminary in Budweis. See Josef Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář v Českých Budějovicích* (České Budějovice, 1878), 28–35. On the character of Josef Hoffmann, see Svoboda, 'The process,' 93–94.

the state of the so-called Seminary Fund.⁴ The statutes state an annual amount of 80 gulden of conventional currency for the whole school year.⁵ If a seminarian left the seminary during the year without a recognized reason, he was not entitled to a refund of fees (§ 2). Lastly, it was stated that each seminarian was to bring his own clothes, bedding, blankets, straw and schoolbooks to the seminary. Each seminarian was to take care of the cleanliness of the linen himself. The seminary provided an empty bed, a physician and medicine in case of illness, and bore the cost of attendance and lighting (§ 3).

The second section, entitled ‘Daily Order’ (§ 4–6), dealt with the daily life of the seminarians. Before the series of regulations, Bishop Jirsík first explains their purpose:

Living together requires a certain daily routine. Such an order is almost the soul of every society, a guardian angel against many faults, and contributes not only to diligence but also to the development of a steady and firm character. By observing a well-ordered order of the day, we train ourselves in self-denial, we learn to subordinate our desires, our comforts, our various appetites to the higher purpose towards which the institution is directed, we learn early to make small sacrifices, and thus prepare ourselves to be able by degrees to make the sacrifices which, according to the example of Christ the Lord, the priest who is to live, not for himself, but for the salvation of the people, is to make.⁶

The seminarian was obliged to observe all the regulations given in the Daily Order. Waking up was to occur every morning at five o’clock with the sound of the bell. The seminarian was to greet others joyfully with the words ‘Laudetur Jesus Christus’ and to respond to the

⁴ The so-called Seminary Fund was established in 1853 after the official announcement of a collection for the purpose of establishing a minor seminary. All donations intended for the minor seminary came into the fund. The Episcopal Consistory controlled it, and the state of the fund’s management was regularly communicated to the public through the diocesan priestly bulletin.

⁵ This amount rose over the duration of the seminary’s existence, taking into account the rising prices of basic necessities, so that, for example, in 1878, a quarter of a century after the seminary’s opening, the full amount of the fee was 150 gulden per year. It was common for some seminarians to pay an even higher amount of money, which happened already in the first year of its existence, but the vast majority of seminarians had their “meal allowance” reduced or even paid nothing at all. The financial provision of the seminary as an institution will be discussed later in this study.

⁶ Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*; 29–30.

greetings of others with ‘In saecula saeculorum’. Then he was to dress carefully, wash himself in a designated place and proceed to his museum, i.e., the gathering room, for common morning prayer under the guidance of the superior of the seminary. This prayer was followed by individual study, which lasted until 0700. From 0700 to 0715, a time was set to clean clothes and shoes. At 0715, breakfast was served. Then, seminarians went together to the gymnasium, where they first attended Holy Mass and classes were held.⁷ After the morning class, all students were to return immediately to the seminary to study together from 1130 to 1200. At the ringing of the bell, they were to gather in the dining hall, where they ate together after the Angelus prayer and the prayer before the meal. The observance of order and decorum during the meal is emphasized. After lunch, there was free time until 1300. Then, from 1300 to 1335, there was preparation for school followed by afternoon classes. At 1600, there was a snack. At 1645, individual study began again, which lasted until 1900, when dinner was served. Dinner was followed by tutoring of the pupils in the lower classes. At 2030, there was evening prayer together in the seminary chapel. Every Saturday at this time, the seminarians prayed the rosary for the seminary’s benefactors. After the evening prayer, strict silence was to be observed, and the seminarians went to bed (§ 4). The above-mentioned daily schedule was valid for school days and free days, except that on free days, afternoon studies started at 1345 and ended at 1600. Afterwards, there was a common walk. At 1700, study began again (§ 5). On Sundays and feast days, after Mass in the gymnasium church, the students also went to study. The study lasted from 0930 to 1200. After lunch, there was free time until 1545. Then the litanies and blessings were said in the seminary chapel (§ 6).

The third section, ‘Additional Provisions on Reasonable Conduct’ (§§ 7–15), is the most extensive. It specifies the conduct of seminarians and the internal functioning of the seminary. The statutes emphasize that all boys must strictly observe the times for study and tutoring. Everyone must study in the place announced while maintaining strict silence and not disturbing others. No one was allowed to leave the study

⁷ At that time, the only gymnasium in the town was state-run, German-language, and located in the very centre of the town, in the former Dominican monastery with the adjacent large Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where the holding of Mass was no problem even for a large number of students. The gymnasium was about a quarter of an hour’s walk away from the minor seminary.

area without a valid reason. Similarly, it was forbidden to engage in other activities, such as reading literature, other than studying literature. In fact, a student was never supposed to finish his work because if he had mastered the current assignments, he was supposed to be preparing for future classes. It was also forbidden for a seminarian to teach others outside the seminary, but this was practically impossible due to the strict daily schedule. Jirsík especially pointed out the necessity and usefulness of well-managed and conducted correpetitions, the time and manner of which were to be determined by the seminary superintendent (§ 7).

The statutes also regulated the seminarian's aforementioned time outside of study. It was emphasized that on all days when there were no classes, there were to be group outings under the direction of the superior. Non-attendance was only possible for medical reasons, always announced in advance. During these, of course, decorum was to be maintained, and, in particular, it was strictly forbidden and understood as a violation of the statutes if anyone lagged behind the group.

Telling funny stories, singing polite songs, doing gymnastic exercises, or playing various games were permitted entertainment. The Order left latitude in this matter in that it was not wrong to make merry and move about as long as the rules of decorum were observed. On the other hand, smoking, card games, 'mischievous chasing and frolicking in the rooms', dangerous and noisy jumping up and down the stairs in the seminary, unnecessary lingering in the bedrooms and lying on the beds during the day were forbidden. In addition to drawing, reading valuable books, music, singing and recitation are listed as ennobling pastimes (§ 8).

The boys were also obliged by the Statutes to be respectful and obedient to their superiors, not only to the adults but also to those of their colleagues, the so-called invigilators, who were appointed to supervise the order and behaviour of their fellow boys. These, in turn, had the task of proving themselves worthy of the trust placed in them, of behaving kindly towards their classmates, and of setting a good example in every way (§ 9).

Seminarians were forbidden to leave the seminary without permission. After receiving permission, they had to be accompanied by another seminarian designated by the superior. They were to return at the appointed time. It was forbidden to visit the theatre, suspicious houses and especially taverns (§ 10).

Each seminarian was to preserve and love cleanliness, in which he was to keep not only himself but also his clothing and school belongings. He was to treat the things in the seminary so as not to damage them. Any arbitrary soiling of the house, toilets, walls or tables was forbidden, as was breaking windows, chairs, etc. Repairs of damaged items were to be made at the expense of the troublemaker (§ 11).

Similar care was also taken in the conduct of the students: ‘All the boys are to be governed by one spirit, the spirit of true, unfeigned piety and Christian love.’ Unkind, harsh words and curses, incompetent, untruthful, or even unclean speech should not come out of the mouth of any boy, and the most careful care should be taken to see that no offence is given in word or deed. Let everyone consider and remember the awful saying of Christ the Lord, ‘Woe unto that man by whom offence cometh.’ (§ 12). The boys, on the other hand, are to be distinguished by exemplary conduct, courtesy, diligence, obedience and orderly living so that they may set an example to others and also be living proof in public that they belong to the seminary, which ‘... is the seedbed of all good, the ornament of the diocese, the hope of the future and the apple orchard of our Most Reverend and Most Gracious Bishop.’ The honour of the whole seminary should be the honour of every seminarian, which each should defend and take care to make it even better (§ 13). Therefore, only such boys should remain in the seminary as those possessing the above qualities. Seminarians who did not observe the Statutes, those who did not improve after being admonished and those who had poor grades were to be expelled, for example, during the school year. In particular, those boys who had been maintained free of charge but had not made good progress in the first and second year of the gymnasium were to leave the seminary (§ 14). The last paragraph emphasizes that the seminarians should keep their goal in view. They are urged to pray, ask God and the Mother of God for protection and strength, and receive the sacraments frequently (§ 15).

It is evident that this minor seminary’s strict discipline was comparable to the demands placed on the students of the priestly seminaries. The tremendous emphasis on study ensured excellent preparation for further higher studies, and the emphasis on all-round spiritual formation, in turn, shaped the spirit of the boys in such a way that most of them naturally applied to enter the priestly seminary after passing the graduation exam (Matura).

2. Material Arrangements for the Seminary

Establishing the Episcopal Minor Seminary in Budweis was not only a one-time expense but also entailed the need for permanent and well-thought-out financing.

The Diocese of Budweis (České Budějovice) was very poor, so its leadership – in this case, Bishop Jirsík – relied heavily on the support of its inhabitants. Generally speaking, this seminary existence became a ‘project’ of the entire diocese and, as such, was steadfastly supported by the whole diocese. Although there are no annual budgets for the seminary, it is clear that budgets were kept in the ‘school years’ since the seminarians were also students, and their stay was limited to the completion of their studies at the gymnasium. At the end of the school years, reports were produced, which included a brief financial balance sheet – but even these have not always survived. However, there must have been at least an outline budget for each school year, which was covered by three primary sources: contributions, i.e., payments by seminarians, donations from benefactors, and money from the Seminary Fund. The amount of money generated by the contributions of the seminarians varied from year to year because the seminary was oriented pro-socially, so even boys whose parents, mainly for financial reasons, paid either a reduced amount or nothing at all entered. The amount of the full contribution also varied over time, taking into account the financial circumstances of the seminarians, their growing needs and, of course, the changing prices of the basic necessities of life. In any case, the annual contributions of the seminarians were not nearly enough to cover the entire operation of the seminary. Donations, the amount of which could not be estimated in advance, were also a source of uncertainty for the creation of a stable budget. This is why the aforementioned Seminary Fund was created from donors’ money from the beginning of the institution’s existence, to enable its greater stability and development. The continuous growth of the financial resources in this Fund enabled a gradual increase in the number of seminarians and their provision and the necessary investments in the seminary building and its equipment in the first years of the seminary’s existence. By the end of Jirsík’s episcopate, the Seminary Fund had reached such a size, and portions of it were invested or otherwise appreciated in such a way that its earnings in subsequent decades enabled the institution of the Minor Seminary to

exist almost entirely independently, with only the contributions of the seminarians.⁸

3. The Seminary in its First Year of Existence 1853/1854

By its very nature, the Minor Seminary in Budweis was a student seminary. As shown above, in the seminary statutes, it was with the study of boys that its inner life was firmly intertwined. The extant reports on the activities of the seminary, therefore, describe the individual school years. New seminarians entered the seminary just at the beginning of each new school year, and before the beginning of each new school year, there were important personnel changes in its leadership positions.

The boys who entered the seminary were to begin their studies at the Budweis German Gymnasium, which was not without some difficulties from the beginning: this state-funded gymnasium was the only one in the city and had a fixed capacity for the number of students admitted. Naturally, boys came to study at this German gymnasium not only from the city of Budweis but also from the surrounding area.

⁸ It should be stated that the financial management of the Minor Seminary in Budweis and the drawing from the so-called Seminary Fund, which was established to support it and was constantly replenished by incoming donations, was completely transparent. It is this transparency that may have had a positive effect on the continued support from donors, many of whom supported the Seminary regularly.

For the record, at the end of the calendar year 1853, the Seminary Fund stood at 21,451 guldens. Of this, 8,216 guldens were paid in the following year. This amount was used to purchase and furnish the seminary building. At the end of the school year 1865/1866, the Seminary Fund amounted to 75,599 guldens 5,540 francs – after deducting all the costs associated with the seminary operation, i.e., including the salaries of the seminary management. Interestingly, the aforementioned ‘tuition’ or ‘board’ fees were paid in kind by individual seminarians, some of them by parents-artisans through their work or through the purchase of items needed by the seminary. In the school year 1853/1854, only six students paid full tuition; the others had the amount reduced, and four paid nothing. In the 1864/1865 school year, only four of the 77 seminarians paid full tuition. On the other hand, eighteen paid no tuition, and the rest paid reduced tuition. Again, it can only be stated that support for poor students was considerable. See Oldřich Šeda, *Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň* (State Regional Archives in Třeboň, hereinafter SOA Třeboň) – *oddělení Třeboň, Biskupský diecézní chlapecký seminář České Budějovice*, (1853) 1867–1847, inventory, Ev. Nr. 512, pp. 1–20, here see the chapter ‘Dějiny původce fondu’ (‘The history of the archive fonds originator’), p. 5; Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 40; Erlass, no. 24 (1853); Erlass, no. 1 (1854): 8; see also ‘Kassa-Rechnung des Knabenseminärs am Ende ses Jahres 1853,’ Erlass, no. 5 (1854): 27; ‘Bericht des Direktors über das bischöfliche Studentenseminär am Schluße des Schuljahres 1865,’ Erlass, no. 24 (1865) 191–192.

With several dozen seminarians interested in studying, the situation arose that there was no room for some of the seminarians in the gymnasium. Therefore, some seminarians had to wait until a place became available for them to become full students. Until then, they were forced to study unofficially only as so-called privates. On 18 January 1854, Bishop Jirsík asked the Viennese government to solve this problem. By Ministerial Decree No. 1151 of 23 January 1854, it was allowed that the maximum number of 50 students in each gymnasium class of the Budweis German Gymnasium could be exceeded by 10–15 students just from the ranks of the seminarians and these could be admitted as full students.⁹

The Director František Pazourek gave a detailed report on the first school year in the summer of 1854. As ‘Erster Jahresbericht über das bischöfl. Diözesan-Knabenseminar’ (First Annual Report on the Bishop’s Boys’ Seminary) was published in the diocesan priestly bulletin.¹⁰ He mentions that at the beginning of the school year 1853/1854, 28 boys entered the seminary and were well taken care of in every way. They were divided into two classes. Among them also lived two students of the higher classes of the gymnasium who served as invigilators, each of whom was in charge of one class. From the beginning, the seminarians were led to observe strict internal regulations. In particular, it is emphasized that every day of the school year, an everyday morning and evening prayer was held in the house chapel, and to encourage and deepen the seminarians’ piety, the biographies of the saints were always read on the eve of the feast days, the teaching material was repeated, school assignments were made, various practical activities were carried out, and private instruction in the Czech language and singing lessons were also given. The report also mentions that, as part of their recreation, the boys went for walks, played various physical games in the yard of the seminary, played various other games to sharpen their minds, or performed gymnastic exercises under the supervision of their superiors. The seminarians received food four times a day, and in addition, they had water for hygiene, light, maid services, heating, medicines, and the services of a doctor. The medical service was provided by Dr Karl

⁹ ‘Hohe Ministerial-Verordnung zu Gunsten des budweiser Diöcesan-Knabenseminars,’ Erllass, no. 7 (1854): 53; Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 36–37; Šeda, Šeda, ‘Dějiny původce fondu,’ in *Státní oblastní archiv*, 2.

¹⁰ Erllass, no. 22 (1854): 178–180.

Haas without charge.¹¹ The statement of academic results shows that although 28 boys entered at the beginning of the school year, there was some turnover due to some boys leaving the seminary during the school year and new ones entering again. The exit number before the holidays was 29, and with regard to the level of proficiency and language skills (it should be remembered that the Gymnasium was taught in German), 16 were promoted to a higher class, six remained in the same class, and seven even were dropped to a lower class. These facts also show that, although (apart from the two invigilators mentioned above) these boys belonged in age to the lower grammar school (i.e., to the first four classes of the eight-year gymnasium), their entry skills were different. Therefore, they were gradually redistributed during the first year of study according to their academic performance. The statement mentions five boys who failed due to lack of diligence or talent and, therefore, had to leave the seminary and one who left voluntarily. Therefore, 35 boys passed through the Minor Seminary in its first year. The friendly atmosphere prevailing in the seminary is illustrated by the fact that at the end of the school year, two boys (one from each class), chosen by most of their classmates, received a prayer book as a gift from their superiors.¹²

Looking at Pazourek's report, one more thing to note illustrates what is happening in the seminary. The mentioned teaching 'in the Czech language' must be understood in the context of the reality of the Diocese of Budweis, the seminary itself and Jirsík's intention. The Diocese of Budweis was a diocese in which two language groups – Czechs and Germans – lived together. Their political representatives from the middle of the nineteenth century became involved in more frequent disputes, which were transferred to the linguistic, cultural and religious

¹¹ Hoffmann states that this was the case until his death. See Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 36. This man's support was not just about health care; he was a prominent figure in Budweis. Karl Haas (1815–1871) was a general practitioner, the author of several medical writings, but above all, a member of the prominent Haas family of Budweis, which, among other things, owned extensive land in a Prague suburb and participated in the political and social life of the town. In 1850–1871, Karl Haas was a member of the Town Committee (from 1862 the Town Council), a position he was perennially elected to every three years. In this position, he pushed for replacing unhealthy drinking water sources with a newly established water supply after the cholera epidemic of 1866. See Daniel Kovář, 'Haasové,' in *Encyklopedie Českých Budějovic* (hereinafter referred to as the ECB), second supplemented edition (České Budějovice: Statutární město České Budějovice, 2006), 149.

¹² Cf. Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 36.

levels in addition to the political area.¹⁵ Students from both language groups were admitted to the seminary, but the teaching at the Budweis Gymnasium was only in German. Some students of Czech origin had to struggle with the interpretation of the school material. By repeating the material in Czech, Bishop Jirsík not only ensured a more profound knowledge of the material for those Czech students who might not have been proficient in German but also ensured the cultivation of the Czech language, which he had long perceived as necessary. On the other hand, the German-speaking seminarians were taught the Czech language, which Jirsík undoubtedly also found very useful, given that they could become priests serving the inhabitants of a linguistically mixed diocese. All in all, the first school year took place without much trouble, and the picture of the Minor Seminary in the report mirrors the ideal one given in the Seminary Statutes.

Applications for admission to the seminary for the following year were very numerous, so the only serious problem was the lack of capacity in the one-storey seminary building. In response to this, Jirsík decided to add a second floor. Construction took place in the summer of 1854, so by the beginning of the new school year, 1854/1855, there could already have been 50 boys in the seminary.¹⁴

4. The Minor Seminary in the School Years 1854/1855–1867/1868

In the school years under review, the ordinary events in the seminary had a fixed rhythm and order, and it cannot be said that anything extraordinary happened there. Even the Concordat concluded in 1855 between the Austrian Empire and the Holy See did not disturb the seminary's activities, which in general terms merely confirmed the validity of what had already been permitted in relation to the seminary following the Imperial Patents of 1850. Bishop Jirsík continued to support the seminary vigorously. He considered its existence a very important part of his pastoral work, as evidenced, among other things, by the report on

¹⁵ For details on Jirsík's episcopal work and the situation in the Diocese of Budweis, see the monograph Rudolf Svoboda, *Jan Valerián Jirsík. In the service of God, Church and Country* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019).

¹⁴ Hoffmann mentions that Bishop Jirsík had announced his intention in advance, saying he was considering increasing the capacity to 50 boys. The preliminary budget was set at 6,000 gulden. The Seminary Fund covered the money for the building. See Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*; 37.

the state of the diocese of 1857, which was written before his departure on a visit *ad limina apostolorum*¹⁵ and was subsequently forwarded to the Roman authorities. In this report, the bishop mentions the establishment of a boys' seminary in the context of his concern for the upliftment of the religious life of the diocese. He presents the seminary as an institution functioning according to the statutes given by the Council of Trent, praises the good discipline of its boys, and expresses the hope that most of them will embark on the path to priesthood.¹⁶

A letter arrived from Rome on 11 June 1858, containing a commendatory reaction not only to the report on the state of the diocese as such but also to Jirsík's concern for the boys' seminary. Jirsík was given permission to grant apostolic blessings and plenary indulgences to those faithful who merited its support.¹⁷ The bishop thus gained significant support from Rome for the further development of the seminary, which he did not hesitate to use soon afterwards.

As already mentioned, by expanding the capacity of the seminary building, at the beginning of the school year 1854/1855, 50 students could already enrol in the three gymnasium classes. Nevertheless, the number did not remain at that number; the interest in entering the boys' seminary continued to grow steadily, as the following table shows the number of its boys in the years under review. It also takes into account the division of the seminarians in the surviving documents into 'Czech' and 'German', which is not so much a national distinction as a linguistic one:¹⁸

¹⁵ Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congregazione del Consilio, Relationes Dioecesium (fine sec. XVI – 1890 circa), Budvicen., Ceske Budejovice – Budweis (Bohemia), sign. 153, fol. 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 18–21.

¹⁷ See the certificate of the visit of the Congregationis Cassinensis of 6 April 1858, the certificate of the visit *ad limina*, and the delivery of the report on the state of the diocese of 1858. Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congregazione del Consilio, Relationes Dioecesium (fine sec. XVI – 1890 circa), Budvicen., Ceske Budejovice – Budweis (Bohemia), sign. 153, fol. 24–27; Erlass, no. 12 (1858): 89–91; Erlass, no. 20 (1858): 153–160.

¹⁸ This overview is based on Hoffman, *Studentský seminář*, 104–105 and individual reports in the priestly bulletin. The numbers of Czechs and Germans refer to the total number at the beginning of the school year.

	At the beginning of the school year			At the end of the school year
		Czech	German	
1853/1854	28	18	10	28
1854/1855	50	34	16	50
1855/1856	48	33	15	47
1856/1857	58	28	30	58
1857/1858	59	30	29	53
1858/1859	48	27	21	48
1859/1860	65	44	21	64
1860/1861	65	42	25	62
1861/1862	55	36	19	53
1862/1863	55	37	18	55
1863/1864	75	50	25	72
1864/1865	77	52	25	77
1865/1866	79	55	24	76
1866/1867	80	53	27	79
1867/1868	88	55	33	85

It can be stated that only in the school year 1856/1857 (and even for the last time in the entire history of the seminary) were there more German than Czech seminarians. Otherwise, the number of seminarians in the period under review gradually stabilized at approximately 2:1 in favour of Czechs, which also corresponded to the ratio of Czechs to Germans in the entire diocese. Gradually, the total number of seminarians increased so that in the school year 1867/1868, there were 88. The more significant increase is especially true for the years 1863/1864 to 1867/1868, which can be explained, among other things, by the existence of Czech parallel classes at the German Gymnasium in Budweis in 1862–1867, which were created as a solution to the growing number of Czech applicants for gymnasium studies.¹⁹ Let us also emphasize,

¹⁹ The Czech parallel classes at the four lower classes of the German Gymnasium in Budweis were in operation in the years 1862–1867. These parallel classes were transferred to Třeboň in 1867, which was one of the impulses for the establishment of the Czech Episcopal Gymnasium in 1868. See *Šedesát let Jirsíkova gymnasia v Českých*

however, that at the same time, the number of both Czech and German-speaking students of the seminary grew in absolute numbers, which shows, among other things, not only the continued interest of parents but also Jirsík's efforts to have boys of both language groups in the seminary. Gradually, the fruits of the formation of the Minor Seminary also began to show: the vast majority of graduates went on to the Episcopal Priestly Seminary after successfully passing the graduation exam.

The increase in the number of seminarians resulted in, among other things, Director František Pazourek being unable to manage the care of the seminarians himself. Therefore, at the beginning of the third year of the seminary's existence, i.e., the school year 1855/1856, Kašpar Černý was appointed to assist him as a study prefect. In the school year 1856/1857, Emanuel Papír became the prefect instead. In the following school year of 1857/1858, after Pazourek's departure, he was appointed director of the seminary, and František Uhl became the new study prefect.

The first three study prefects had other priestly duties besides this ministry, which was not a very suitable arrangement. The solution came with the school year 1858/1859, at the beginning of which Antonín Skočdopole became the full-time study prefect so that the institute finally had two superiors who devoted themselves entirely to the care of the seminarians.²⁰

Emanuel Papír, director until the end of the 1862/1863 school year, was an inspirational character for the boys. He particularly excelled in music and singing. He introduced the singing of hymns at evening prayers and other devotions, and this tradition continued after he left the seminary for another appointment. He also led the seminarians to reverence St Aloysius Gonzaga, the patron saint of studious youth. During his directorship, there was one change in the prefect's position. Antonín Skočdopole, who was appointed professor at the priestly

Budějovicích (České Budějovice, 1928); *Sto let prvního českého gymnasia a Střední všeobecné vzdělávací školy v Českých Budějovicích* (České Budějovice, 1968); *Sto padesát let Gymnázia J. V. Jirsíka v Českých Budějovicích (1868–2018)* (České Budějovice, 2018); Miroslav Novotný et al., *Dějiny vyššího školství a vzdělanosti na jihu Čech od středověkých počátků do současnosti* (České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2006), 204–206.

²⁰ Skočdopole was appointed study prefect on 28 October 1858. See Erlas, no. 21 (1858): 168; *Ordinariátní listy Budějovické diecéze (Ordinariate Letter of Diocese Budweis; hereinafter as OL)*, no. 2 (1919): 8.

seminary,²¹ was replaced by Václav Jiřík in the school year 1861/1862.²² Jiřík succeeded Emanuel Papír as Director of the seminary two years later, but he served in that position for only one year, in the school year 1863/1864. At the end of the school year, Jiřík left the minor seminary because he was appointed as a spiritual director in the priestly seminary. Josef Hoffmann was appointed the new director as of the school year 1864/1865 and remained so for 11 long years.²³ The position of study prefect was held first by Šimon Kabát from 1863/1864²⁴ and then by Jan Raška from the school year 1865/1866.²⁵

Extraordinary events rather avoided the seminary. In the school year 1863/1864, a disease manifested by high fevers spread among the students. Even the study prefect, Šimon Kabát, fell ill. Director Jiřík treated the sick, and with the help of Dr Haas, everything was managed without anyone passing away.

The running of the seminary was partly affected by the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian War. At that time, Jiřík proposed to the government to use the seminary building for possible war wounded. The offer was accepted, and after the end of the school year 1865/1866, the seminary rooms were converted into a temporary hospital. However, no wounded were eventually brought in. The seminary building did, however, serve as a barracks for two hundred soldiers.²⁶ Just after the events of the Austro-Prussian War, a cholera epidemic broke out,

²¹ He was appointed professor at the priestly seminary on 1 October 1861. See OL, no. 2 (1919): 8; Jan Šanda, 'Msgr. Dr. Antonín Skočdopole,' in *Almanach česko-budějovických bohoslovců* (České Budějovice, 1913), 22–29, here p. 24. According to the priestly bulletin, he was first appointed as a substitute professor but had to wait for a full appointment. See Erlass, no. 20 (1861): 159.

²² Jiřík's appointment was announced in the priestly bulletin of 19 October 1861. He is mentioned there as a chaplain from Budweis and a candidate for a doctorate in theology, who was also to lecture on general pedagogy in the priestly seminary, see Erlass, no. 20 (1861): 159.

²³ The then thirty-year-old Josef Hoffmann, who had just completed his doctoral studies at Augustanum in Vienna, was appointed professor of Church history at the priestly seminary on 1 September 1864 and from 1 October of the same year was also director of the minor seminary. His appointment as a full professor of Church history was not confirmed until a year later. See Erlass, no. 10 (1865): 80.

²⁴ Šimon Kabát was prefect of the minor seminary from 1 October 1863. After two years, he was appointed preacher at the seminary church of St Anne in Budweis. See Erlass, no. 22 (1865): 176; OL, no. 39 (1905): 148 (obituary); Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 38.

²⁵ Jan Raška, as a newly ordained priest, became prefect of the seminary on 1 October 1865, see OL, no. 19 (1905): 76 (obituary).

²⁶ Šeda, 'Dějiny,' 3; Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 40.

resulting in a one-month-delayed start of the 1866/1867 school year, but no one passing away was recorded among the seminarians, who were mostly on holiday outside Budweis at this time.²⁷

We can conclude the period under review with Jirsík's achievement, which was essential for future seminar development. In 1867, he had the opportunity to purchase a relatively large plot of land adjacent to the seminary from the builder Josef Kneissl.²⁸ He took advantage of the opportunity and, on 3 May of the same year, purchased it for 3,350 gulden, with the prospect of expanding the premises for the seminary, especially the seminary garden, where the seminarians could spend their rest.²⁹

Conclusion

The first fifteen years of the existence of the minor seminary in Budweis were marked by the gradual development of this institution and its growth, which was entirely in line with the intention of Bishop Jan Valerián Jirsík. This growth did not only concern the number of students. Gradually, the seminary building and its facilities were expanded to better suit the formation and education of seminarians. The financial stability of the minor seminary was crucial, and this was achieved thanks to the constant support of generous donors, the vast majority of whom were ordinary people from the entire Diocese of Budweis.

The image of the boys' seminary nevertheless appears rather static, which is primarily due to the nature of the sources – mostly official

²⁷ Šeda, 'Dějiny,' 3; Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 40.

Already during the cholera epidemic in 1855, 75 people died in the town. From the summer of 1866, cholera spread in Bohemia, introduced by Prussian soldiers. In September of that year, it reached Budweis, where by the end of 1866, it had claimed 286 lives. The epidemic subsided only in the first half of the following year. The experience with cholera in 1866 prompted the Budweis municipal administration, among other things, to speed up the construction of a new sewerage system and a modern water supply system with hygienically safe water. Josef Grulich, Karel Pletzer, 'Epidemie,' in ECB, 124.

²⁸ Josef Kneissl (1830–1910), a builder, was a town committee member (later the town council) from 1865. From 1876, he held the position of town councillor and police officer. In 1884, he became the deputy mayor to J. Stegmann. After his resignation, he became acting mayor in 1887. He was mayor-elect from 1891–1903. He was one of the founders of several local associations, such as the Deutsche Liedertafel and the Turnverein. He was a Knight of the Order of Franz Joseph I and a holder of the Papal Order Pro ecclesia et pontifice. See Pavel Koblasa, 'Kneissl Josef,' in ECB, 226.

²⁹ Šeda, 'Dějiny,' 3; Hoffmann, *Studentský seminář*, 40.

documents – that have survived to the present day. It should be noted that the seminary's own archive was almost completely destroyed during the communist regime, so we have relatively little information about the seminary's internal life. For the same reason, this study gives relatively little attention to the specific educational and formative methods, which are crucial in the context of seminary education. The fact is that during the observed period of the first fifteen years of the seminary's existence, the educational activity was carried out predominantly by another institution, namely the German gymnasium. The education of seminarians was still an unresolved area, and the problem of gymnasium studies for Czech-speaking boys was particularly pressing. Bishop Jirsík was to take care of this situation soon.⁵⁰

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⁵⁰ Jirsík decided to establish a Czech gymnasium, which eventually operated for several decades in the same building as the boys' seminary. This highly productive coexistence, which made it possible to better integrate the formative and educational aspects of the seminary training of boys, will be the subject of a subsequent study.