

The paper's topic is Czech secondary education in the second half of the 19th century. It generally follows the development of the education system in Austria and discusses the consequences of the Exner-Bonitz school reform from 1849. This reform created two main types of secondary schools: the gymnasium and the real school. As a result of theoretical debates about a single, unified secondary school, a new type of school emerges in the Czech lands, the so-called real-gymnasium, a combination of both previous types.

In the 1860s, new schools are being founded in the Czech lands by the individual municipalities who also provide the funding. The paper selects one of them, the real-gymnasium in Malá Strana, Prague, as a model example and follows its development as a mixed type of secondary school and also the economic and administrative implications of its existence and the efforts of the city council to hand it over into the hands of the state. The relationship between the city officials and the Austrian Ministry of culture and education is analysed. Methodologically, the paper also discusses the use of autobiographical fiction in literature as a source for the study of everyday life in history. Considering the participants in the school situation, the paper's focus lies on students, their social standing and place of origin, as well as the problems they had to cope with. The last chapter is dedicated to the issue of first women students, in particular of their external studies on secondary schools and the difficulties of finding suitably qualified jobs for educated women in the Austrian empire. The paper includes an appendix with statistical data of the number of students.