

# Remembering the Fall of the Habsburg Monarchy One Hundred Years on: Three Master Interpretations<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article was first conceived as a commemorative address for the centenary of the extinction of the Habsburg monarchy, which occurred in November 1918. It seeks to take a correspondingly broad view, geographically and chronologically, of the factors that occasioned that collapse. It addresses three main themes, structured loosely around three classic historiographical analyses of the monarchy as a whole. The great irony of the last phase of Habsburg rule in Central Europe is that it was undermined by precisely those elements in the politics and society of the region that seemed, on the face of things, to derive most advantage from it. The article concentrates on the long-term dysfunctionality caused by the evolution of the Hungarian and German problems, and by the progressive enfeeblement of dynastic institutions. It also engages more briefly with a countervailing phenomenon, that some of those interests most conspicuously spurned by central government might have been the readiest to rescue it. On the argument presented here, World War I, which finally brought the monarchy low, was a catalyst rather than an independent determiner of that outcome.

**Keywords:** Habsburgs, empire, historiography, Austria, Hungary, Germans, Bohemia, Czechs, Central Europe, World War I

ON 9 NOVEMBER 1918 the Austrian *Verzichtserklärung*, a brief quasi-abdication, was being drafted. A few days later it would be signed—along with a still terser equivalent for Hungary—at Eckartsau castle, beside the Danube outside Vienna, by the last emperor/king, Charles I/IV, as a rough copy and in pencil.<sup>2</sup> The Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary was dead.

We've had just a hundred years without the Habsburgs. So my focus here is squarely with the shifting perceptions of a lost polity over an extended period. An occasion to reflect on attempts at a true historical understanding of this failed monarchy, in light of its failure (which forms, of course, a crucial part of the evidence); and of the monarchy *as a whole* because that's what was

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<sup>1</sup>Revised text of a public lecture given at the Remarque Institute, New York University, on 9 Nov. 2018, in commemoration of the centenary of the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy. I am most grateful to Larry Wolff for this opportunity, and to those who then or since have helped me with their comments, not least two very supportive anonymous readers for this journal. I have sought to preserve the somewhat personal and conversational character of the original.

<sup>2</sup>*Schicksalsjahre Österreichs* (see note 22 following), 2:466ff. The documents can be viewed online: see note 97 following. Charles was the first of that name to rule as emperor of Austria, according to the titulature established in 1804, though there had been six homonymous Holy Roman emperors, two of them Habsburgs. He was the fourth Charles to rule as king of Hungary, with one Habsburg among his predecessors.

distinctive about it. I stress that I deal in what follows with interpretations of the working of the Habsburg territories as a totality, a *Gesamtmonarchie* (the term that came into use during the epoch that concerns us here).<sup>3</sup> I mean that central system of direct and, as far as possible, equilibrated imperial rule to which the dynastic monarchy of Habsburg-Lorraine had recourse to conserve and protect its European position from the mid-eighteenth century on.

A grand subject, surely. But the relevant literature on it may strike us as comparatively and surprisingly limited. Besides much that's openly partisan, there is a great deal more that doesn't attempt to address the *Gesamtmonarchie* and its fate. That was simply not a concern for *national* historians in the region, then or later, however broad their range and incisive their analysis in other respects.

It's hardly been a theme at all, except by implication, in Hungarian historiography—and that's surely significant, as I shall suggest shortly. If Hungarian commentators looked to the bigger picture, then they did so largely in the early years after 1918; and Gyula Szekfű, Gyula Miskolczy, Oszkár Sashegyi, and a few others tended to reveal a quite different perspective, even on ostensibly “Austro-Hungarian” issues.<sup>4</sup> Much Austrian historiography has focused on the antecedents of the post-Habsburg state, especially under the Second Austrian Republic since World War II—that is also significant, and will merit further mention. Czech historiography has likewise been largely self-sufficient, even in the work of its most conspicuous cosmopolitan, Josef Pekař; but one major thread within it will be pertinent, toward the end of this article, as will be the research of Pekař's unassuming archivist-pupil Karel Kazbunda. In other Habsburg-related historiographies—Italian, Polish, South Slav, Romanian—the deeper structure of the monarchy was never a central feature (with a handful of distinguished exceptions, mainly Italian).

So *gesamtmonarchisch* elucidations have relied mostly on those outside the mainstream historiographical concerns of the successor states. On the one hand, old-Austrian analytical frameworks inherited from the days of the monarchy, from a historical practice that emphatically didn't write about the non-German parts of the monarchy as such, and many of whose representatives exhibit in their writing a nationalist undertow that—at least I'll suggest so later—weakens its explanatory power. The wonderful *Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918* series,<sup>5</sup> devised in the 1970s (thus just about sustaining the apostolic succession in its continuity with the vestiges of that earlier school) and now finally in process of completion, corrected those failings, reasserted earlier priorities, and provides—within the terms of its multi-authorial collaboration—abundant building materials for fresh interpretative schemes.

On the other hand, there has been foreign scholarship generated outside the lands of former Habsburg rule, above all in countries with their own recent imperial experience, from the United States to the USSR.<sup>6</sup> This was always linked in some degree to the

<sup>3</sup>It was certainly current by 1848. See, e.g., a work by the Transylvanian Saxon, Karl Ludwig Czekelius von Rosenfeld, *Ungarns und Siebenbürgens Stellung zur Gesamt-Monarchie* (Vienna, 1848).

<sup>4</sup>I think of such titles as Gyula Szekfű, *A magyar állam életrajza: történelmi tanulmány* [The life story of the Hungarian state: A historical study] (Budapest, 1917); Gyula Miskolczy, *A kamarilla a reformkorszakban* [The Camarilla in the Reform era] (Budapest, 1938); and Oszkár Sashegyi, *Ungarns politische Verwaltung in der Ära Bach, 1849–60* (Graz, 1979). More recent historians working in this tradition are József Galántai, Imre Gonda, István Diószegi, Éva Somogyi, et al. A work like András Gerő's *Dualizmusok. A Monarchia Magyarországa* [Dualisms: The monarchy's Hungary] (Budapest, 2010), despite its title, has nothing on the structures or workings of dual government.

<sup>5</sup>Adam Wandruszka et al., eds., *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, 12 vols. (Vienna, 1973–2018).

<sup>6</sup>There is a significant but self-contained body of Soviet and post-Soviet literature little known outside Russophone circles, especially on Slav national and cultural subjects within nineteenth-century Central Europe, and on the social,

Austrian *point de départ*, both by the tradition of external commentators back into the decades before 1918, and by academics from Central Europe who chose or were forced to make careers in exile.

However comprised, it's an impressive body of learning within its given constraints, and one accumulated over many decades. How to capture some of its essence at this commemorative juncture? I've made a personal and frankly self-indulgent choice: to concentrate on three works that seem to me to deliver the most powerful and coherent of analyses and most masterful of expositions. These are three challenging, hefty tomes, each in a different language, in fact hardly ever reissued or translated, partly because of their bulk but also because they demand such close and protracted attention. All in all, perhaps none of them is much read these days. Yet their contributions were as singular as they were authoritative. This *modus agendi* thus also allows me, through these three protagonists, a more individualized and humanized survey of the otherwise bloodless array of causative factors and concomitant circumstances.

That schema has proved a little too restrictive, so I'll also adduce three further authors (let's think of them as "deuteragonists," the principal supporting actors of ancient Greek drama) who ploughed more or less the same furrow with slightly less formidable powers of synthesis but at least as much lasting influence because each was less purely scholarly and more *engagé*. I shall use these six texts to illustrate the three themes that for me are central to the long-term failure of the monarchy, as well as to the immediate causal antecedents of its collapse. From each pair in turn I shall draw one of my "master interpretations." Not that the authors concerned should be identified with that interpretation. It is simply one leading thesis that seems to emerge clearly from the complex accounts that they present. And as to their interplay, well, the railway town of Vinkovci in Sylvania, between Zagreb and Belgrade, offers a clue—to be explained at the end.

I shall emphasize long-term factors (at least the cumulation of different triggers), strength of national allegiances (and resentments), and the complex, sometimes contradictory character of the Habsburg imperial mission (and lack of it). Having begun as an early modernist, I'm anyway attracted to contemplation of the *longue durée* in modern Habsburg history. And those who seek long-term causes tend to find them. Gibbon's paradigmatic empire took an awfully long time to decline.

That cuts against the recent trend in some quarters to stress the merits and successes of late Habsburg governance; the social, economic, and cultural benefits that derived from it; the steady, perhaps even upward trajectory of the realm. In particular such commentaries tend to doubt the corrosive and oppositional force of national movements and identities, and to see the monarchy's fate as largely determined by the outcome of World War I. I too entered this field seeking to avoid any obsessions about nationality; yet for understanding the destiny of the monarchy on the map of Europe I have been persuaded otherwise. Perhaps a degree of contradictoriness is inescapable. Above all I'll be dwelling on an apparent paradox: that *the rule of the Habsburgs was destroyed by its chief beneficiaries*.

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economic, and political history of Slav regions, which is at least by implication general in its scope. The most recent collective work is O. V. Khavanova et al., eds., *Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennye dvizheniia v monarkhii Gabsburgov, 1848–1914 gg. Ocherki* [Political parties and social movements in the Habsburg monarchy, 1848–1914: Essays] (Moscow, 2018). Most are the product of the Institute for Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Institut Slavianovedeniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk), for which see <https://inslav.ru/page/ob-institute>, accessed 26 Sept. 2019.

I take my three protagonists in chronological order of their activity as historians; but in reverse order of their main historical focus. The first is Louis Eisenmann, born in Alsace in 1869, just before the Franco-Prussian war. His Jewish family were optants—that is, they resettled in France after the conflict. Nevertheless, Louis became a Germanist. He then concentrated on Habsburg Central Europe and learned its principal languages; he held chairs at Dijon and the Sorbonne; he served as an expert adviser to the French government during and after the war; he edited *Le Monde slave*, but also the most important French journal in the whole historical field, the *Revue historique*. He died in 1937.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his career Eisenmann wrote extensively on current affairs, and in 1904 he presented at Paris an ostensibly legal work, his *thèse de doctorat en droit*. But it's squarely a work of history: *Le compromis austro-hongrois de 1867. Étude sur le dualisme*.<sup>8</sup> Eisenmann addresses the origins and implications of the Compromise (*Ausgleich/ kiegyezés*) of that year. He deploys a historical analysis of relations between Austria and Hungary, or rather between the kingdom of Hungary and what the Compromise document calls “the other lands under the rule of his Majesty.”<sup>9</sup> He takes a long view of Hungary's institutional separateness and the efforts of Habsburg rulers to build a common administration: the extending arm of Viennese executive authority set against repeated dietal guarantees that the lands of St. Stephen be *not* ruled “ad normam aliarum haereditarium provinciarum,” a stipulation retained when the Austrian imperial title was created in 1804.<sup>10</sup>

Eisenmann dwells on the extremes of the 1848–49 confrontation: equally scathing about separatist Lajos Kossuth's willful brinkmanship and the autocratic court policy of *Verwirkung* (constitutional forfeiture). He scrutinizes the impasse during the 1850s, with attempts to merge truncated and partitioned Hungary into a rigidly unitary Austrian neo-absolutist state. The heart of the book is a brilliant disquisition on the extended political crisis of the 1860s, as a range of federal and centralist experiments, notably enshrined in those terrible twins, the October Diploma and February Patent, eventually yielded the “dual centralism” of the Compromise laws. Here is the verdict, as a sample of Eisenmann's beautifully limpid style, on the failed efforts of the emperor's chosen premier between 1861 and 1865:

C'est ici la grande erreur, la grande contradiction de Schmerling. Son Parlement central ne pouvait représenter l'Autriche qu'avec le concours des Slaves; mais les Slaves étaient d'emblée rejetés dans l'opposition par la politique allemande. Perpétuant la division entre les Slaves et les Allemands, son système assurait le triomphe des Magyars. L'Autriche, si elle voulait être constitutionnelle, n'avait le choix qu'entre l'unité autonomiste du Diplôme et le dualisme; le centralisme, nécessairement, la conduisait à l'absolutisme, dont 1859 avait attesté la banqueroute. En poursuivant la chimère d'un centralisme constitutionnel—qui implique une contradiction dans les termes—Schmerling et les Allemands ont rendu inévitable le dualisme contre lequel ils se révoltaient.

<sup>7</sup>Eisenmann has no biography. I have not even found a picture. See obituaries by Fuscien Dominois in *Revue des Études slaves* 17 (1937), 240–44; R. W. Seton-Watson in *Slavonic and East European Review* 16 (1937), 193–98.

<sup>8</sup>Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, 1904; reissued in 1968, with a preface by Victor-Lucien Tapié. Digitized at <https://archive.org/details/lecompromisaust00eisegoog/page/n8>, accessed 20 Sept. 2019.

<sup>9</sup>“[A]z ő Felsége uralkodása alatt álló többi országok”; German usage varied: “die zur ungarischen Krone nicht gehörigen Länder seiner Majestät,” or “die übrigen unter der Regierung seiner Majestät stehenden Länder.” Cf. Josef Redlich, *Das österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem*, 2:537ff.

<sup>10</sup>Law X of 1791 and the decree of 1804 were key texts for future dualism: Louis Eisenmann, *Le Compromis Austro-Hongrois de 1867: Étude Sur Le Dualisme* (Paris, 1904), 29, 47.

“By pursuing,” as Eisenmann here concludes, “the chimera of a constitutional centralism—which involved a contradiction in terms—Schmerling and the Germans rendered inevitable the dualism against which they had revolted.”<sup>11</sup>

What emerged? Hungary, a land dominated by a coherent noble elite, won out over the congeries of “Austrian” political groupings. Henceforth Magyar interests enjoyed disproportionate influence over both German and especially Slav ones. Hungary (re)gained a genuine but narrow and discriminative constitution. Austria was rewarded, or burdened, with sham representation that left extensive powers with the ruler. Besides, provisions for common affairs of the monarchy as a whole gave continuing immunity to the conservative springs of dynastic authority: the court, the army, the diplomatic service.

Eisenmann doesn’t predict an early end to the monarchy. Indeed, he thinks some forces of consolidation have been at work from mid-century onward, especially under the impact of peasant emancipation. A few years later he would sound a good deal more sanguine about its future prospects.<sup>12</sup> However, he did show in 1904 how its two “halves” had grown apart, and how Hungarian claims to full sovereignty were undermining it. Prescient comments, on the very eve of the constitutional crisis of 1905–6, when the last great Hungarian champion of a real, substantive link to Austria, István Tisza, temporarily lost control of the domestic political process.<sup>13</sup>

Enter my second witness to this master interpretation: Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957),<sup>14</sup> the only other among the classic commentators on the fate of the monarchy to stress its Hungarian aspect above all others. He’d been an active participant before the war as a prominent Magyar-Jewish intellectual and was at the heart of new sociological thought and radical politics. Then he briefly became a minister in the first republican Hungarian government, before being forced to emigrate. Jászi’s *Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*,<sup>15</sup> written at Oberlin, Ohio, and published in 1929, bears the stamp of that busy involvement—it’s a bit schematic and immoderate in its judgments. But the famous paradigm developed by Jászi of centripetal versus centrifugal forces (even if on close inspection we find he never quite clarifies satisfactorily which are which!) enjoyed immense influence; as did his stress on the malign effect of the sins of omission and commission by the Hungarian ruling class upon a dual system rigged in its favor.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Herein lies Schmerling’s great error, his great contradiction. His central parliament could only represent Austria with the help of the Slavs; but the Slavs were from the start thrown into opposition by German policy. Perpetuating the division between Slavs and Germans, his system assured the triumph of the Magyars. If Austria wanted to be constitutional, it only had the choice between the autonomist unity of the Diploma and dualism; centralism necessarily led it to absolutism, whose bankruptcy had already been demonstrated in 1859. “En poursuivant la chimère d’un centralisme constitutionnel—qui implique une contradiction dans les termes—Schmerling et les Allemands ont rendu inévitable le dualisme contre lequel ils se révoltaient.” Eisenmann, *Compromis*, 304.

<sup>12</sup>Louis Eisenmann, “Austria-Hungary,” in *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 12, *The Latest Age* (Cambridge, 1910), 174–212, esp. 212.

<sup>13</sup>On Tisza and his ideas: Gábor Vermes, *István Tisza: the Liberal Vision and Conservative Statecraft of a Magyar Nationalist* (New York, 1985); Ferenc Pölöskei, *Tisza István* (Budapest, 1985; 2nd ed. 2014); László Tökéczi, *Tisza István eszméi, politikai arca* [István Tisza’s ideas and political profile] (Szentendre, 2000; 2nd ed. 2018), by an admirer.

<sup>14</sup>Péter Hanák, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa* [Oszkár Jászi’s Danubian patriotism] (Budapest, 1985); György Litván, *A Twentieth-Century Prophet: Oszkár Jászi, 1875–1957* (Budapest, 2006).

<sup>15</sup>Oszkár Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, 1929; reissued 1961); Hungarian translation 1982, with preface by Péter Hanák.

<sup>16</sup>Jászi’s animus against Hungary’s (agrarian) ruling class for its social oppressiveness and ethnic chauvinism had already been articulated earlier, in his *Magyariens Schuld, Ungarns Sühne: Revolution und Gegenrevolution in Ungarn* (Munich, 1923), etc.

Thus for the present the “Hungarian problem” was not so much chauvinistic discrimination, official and unofficial, against the nationalities, though that was already condemned at the time by Jászi, and more ominously by foreign observers like R. W. Seton-Watson.<sup>17</sup> The really pressing issue—stressed by Eisenmann—lay in a growing divergence and alienation from the rest of the monarchy among the ruling Magyars. We can adduce much other evidence for that. Hungarian party-political programs, as they evolved from the 1870s on, are one kind of testimony.<sup>18</sup> So are cultural and ideological examples: from the “holy crown” thesis, as a claim for full sovereignty only developed after 1867, but based on much bogus historical argumentation,<sup>19</sup> to school primers, which not only taught nothing about Austria but also were filled with stories of resistance to it.<sup>20</sup> Even mutual economic benefits arguably tended to fuel these antipathies, as Hungarian commerce profitably outgrew its Austrian tutelage and each side sought to maximize its market advantages.

Relevant here is the lack, on either side of the internal frontier, of what Jászi called a common “civic education” (or more trendily “psychic synthesis”), for all the efforts of Adolf Fischhof and like-minded would-be facilitators. Likewise, the comparative paucity of personal or institutional linkages across the border anyway—though that subject awaits its historian<sup>21</sup>—the more troubling an issue for the Cisleithanian and Transleithanian establishments insofar as such links seem to have been rather more prevalent among non-Magyar and non-German nationalities. And whose “empire” was it now? Just as Hungarian politicians categorically rejected any implication that their country formed part of an Austrian *Reich*, so Hungarian maps of the period increasingly showed the lands of St. Stephen as a “magyar birodalom,” an empire of their own. The priorities of Hungarian historiography, then and since, as already suggested, point in the same direction.

All this would have its forward impact on the conduct and outcomes of World War I, as we shall see. But of course, as Louis Eisenmann laid out in his luminous prose, dualism represented the attempt to resolve an earlier crisis of authority that had been set in train by the revolutionary breakdown in 1848. And that leads me to my next protagonist.

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Josef Redlich lived between 1869 and 1936. He was thus an exact contemporary of Eisenmann: they were born and died within a few months of each other. Like Eisenmann and Jászi he had a provincial Jewish upbringing and then legal training. Redlich gained particular expertise in the principles of *Lokalverwaltung*, local government, with much experience of Great Britain and later (like Jászi) the United States. He pursued a political career for a time (like Jászi,

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<sup>17</sup>Jászi, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* [The formation of national states and the nationality question] (Budapest, 1912), esp. 317ff., 436ff. Seton-Watson affords a telling comparison with Eisenmann. He too arrived in Central Europe as a budding historical scholar but, ten years the younger of the two, promptly segued into current affairs as the political situation deteriorated. His historiography came later and was never *gesamtmonarchisch*.

<sup>18</sup>Gyula Mérei, ed., *A magyar polgári pártok programjai, 1867–1918* [Programs of the Hungarian bourgeois parties, 1867–1918] (Budapest, 1971).

<sup>19</sup>Ferenc Eckhart, *A szentkorona-eszme története* [The history of the idea of the Holy Crown] (Budapest, 1941); László Péter, “The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 81 (2003): 421–510.

<sup>20</sup>E.g., Alexander Bernát et al., eds., *Elemi olvasókönyv az új tanterv és utasítás szerint* [Elementary reading primer for the new curriculum and directive] (Budapest, 1906).

<sup>21</sup>Some preliminary thoughts for the earlier part of the period in my “Hungary in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1840–67: A Study of Perceptions,” *Etudes Danubiennes* 2 (1986): 18–39, now in R. J. W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary and the Habsburgs: Central Europe, c. 1683–1867* (Oxford, 2006), 245–65.

and over the same years), initially in the German National-Liberal camp, later more independently. Redlich became the last Habsburg-Austrian finance minister (for two weeks in late 1918); it was he who drafted that *Verzichtserklärung* with which I began.<sup>22</sup>

Then Redlich—already a zealous and penetrating diarist—steeped himself in history and produced *Das österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* (1920–26).<sup>23</sup> He subtitled it “Geschichtliche Darstellung der inneren Politik der habsburgischen Monarchie von 1848 bis zum Untergang des Reiches” (Historical account of the internal politics of the Habsburg monarchy from 1848 till the downfall of the empire), but it remained a torso, partly—but not solely—because he resumed other commitments, and it does not extend beyond the 1860s.<sup>24</sup> It’s a challenging read; here is one sentence from the preface:

Seit mehr als zwei Menschenaltern haben alle jene, die Oesterreich miterlebten—Deutsche und Nichtdeutsche, solche, die die Notwendigkeit seines aufrechten Fortbestandes als einer jahrhundertalten Verbindung so vieler Völker, Zungen und Länder so verschiedener Art bejahten und solche, die dies verneinten—sie alle haben an Oesterreich und für Oesterreich gelitten, jeder in seiner Weise und jeder unabhängig von dem, was er für Oesterreich als Ganzes und zugleich für das Volk, dem er angehörte, als Zukunft ersehnte—oder befürchtete.<sup>25</sup>

Redlich deploys an elaborate and dense treatment of immense power and subtlety, concentrating on the series of mid-century constitutional experiments: from revolutionary expedients in 1848; through the parliamentary debates at Kremsier/Kroměříž and the *octroy*s or governmental dictates of 1849; through plans for autonomous bodies but the reality of rigorous autocracy in the 1850s; to the more-or-less federalist Diploma and the more-or-less centralist Patent and the resultant struggles of the 1860s. Thus Redlich covers similar ground to Eisenmann; and at times they march parallel. Both stress, for example, how Hungarian aristocratic (*ständisch*) constitutionalism lost out at home, but was transplanted to Austria, with retrograde political consequences as provincial elites reasserted their authority in the crownlands. Both celebrate the genius of Ferenc Deák—Redlich compares him to John Hampden and John Pym—while condemning the Kossuthist hotheads. Both are more cautious about the Compromise, especially those parts of it over which Deák had no control.

However, their emphases differ. Redlich, though he addresses the Hungarian issue—that’s the “*Reichsproblem*”—knows and cares less about it than Eisenmann except, significantly, insofar as it was still part of the greater conundrum of a viable Austrian administration

<sup>22</sup>Redlich’s life is recounted, on the basis of much autobiographical material, by Fritz Fellner in his two remarkable editions: *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs 1908–19. Das politische Tagebuch Josef Redlichs*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1953–54); and, vastly expanded and with Doris A. Corradini as co-editor: *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs. Die Erinnerungen und Tagebücher Josef Redlichs, 1869–1936*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 2011). See also Amy Ng, *Nationalism and Political Liberty. Redlich, Namier, and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>23</sup>Josef Redlich, *Das österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem: Geschichtliche Darstellung der inneren Politik der habsburgischen Monarchie von 1848 bis zum Untergang des Reiches*, 2 vols. in 3 pts. (Leipzig, 1920–26). Never reissued; digitized at <https://archive.org/details/dassterreichis0112redluoft/page/n4>, accessed 20 Sept. 2019.

<sup>24</sup>In some measure Redlich made good this deficiency with his well-known life of the emperor: *Kaiser Franz Joseph von Österreich. Eine Biographie* (Berlin, 1928); *Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria: A Biography* (London, 1929). But that book, although a highly insightful study of the ruler, lacks the deeper analytical framework of the *Staats- und Reichsproblem*.

<sup>25</sup>“For more than two lifetimes [or generations?] all those who had experience of Austria—Germans and non-Germans, those who affirmed the necessity of its stable continuance as a centuries-old conjunction of so many peoples, tongues and lands of such different kinds, as well as those who rejected this—they have all suffered from Austria and for Austria, each in their own way and each independently of what they desired, or what they feared, as a future for Austria as a whole and for the people to which they belonged.” Redlich, *Staats- und Reichsproblem*, 1:v.

(*Verwaltung*). So Redlich concentrates on the Austrian “*Staatsproblem*.” He describes the grandeur of the government’s purpose: a standardized and civilized executive and judiciary, and especially a pioneering regulatory interplay between the two, amid the groundbreaking challenge from calls for linguistic, cultural, and political *Gleichberechtigung*, equal rights, for various national groups. That interplay, he finds, is what was neglected by the progressives at Krenshauer, otherwise much admired by Redlich. He dilates with appreciation on the humane values (“*Milde*,” etc.) of intermediary powers in Austria; of its *Beamten* and the merits of local (semi-)autonomy, the *freie Gemeinde*; and of nascent federal initiatives. Yet he sees how often these were still undermined by enduring habits of bureaucratic absolutism; and how constitutional life was stunted by the rule, which began with Schmerling, of “*beamtete Politiker*,” or were they “*politisierende Beamte*”?

Redlich’s most telling and nuanced commentary is reserved for attempts to resolve the *Staatsproblem* by recognizing continued German dominance of the monarchy. And here we begin to distinguish the outlines of a further master interpretation. I introduce it with another typically weighty sentence (it follows immediately on the one cited previously).

Das seelisch schwerste Geschick dabei war denjenigen Deutschen Oesterreichs auferlegt, die in ihrer Person und ihrem Wirken die österreichische Idee auf das Kräftigste bejahten und zur selben Zeit die österreichische Wirklichkeit ernstlich bekämpften—die das Große und Schöpferische in der von den Habsburgern durch die geistigen und materiellen Kräfte der Deutschen vollzogenen Reichs- und Staatsgründung auf das tiefste erfaßt hatten, zugleich aber auch die unheilvoll hemmende Wirkung gerade des deutschen politischen Denkens und Handelns auf die Herausbildung des fruchtbaren und aufbauenden Gedankens erkannten, den das alte Reich, wenn auch in sehr unvollkommener Gestalt, in sich verkörperte.<sup>26</sup>

Redlich was not a German nationalist—even if there are hints of it around 1914 in some of his diary entries, as when he writes on the day of the Sarajevo assassination of “*diese halb deutsche, mit Deutschland verschwisterte Monarchie*.” The issue in his *magnum opus* is squarely that of domestic solutions. Yet that issue was inseparable from the place of Germans at the heart of the Austrian imperial mission, and of Austria in a wider Germanic world.

We can see the implications of that more clearly in Redlich’s colleague, my second deuteragonist, Heinrich Friedjung (1851–1920).<sup>27</sup> Friedjung completes this quartet of historians with Jewish heritage: like Redlich he grew up in Moravia. Friedjung too was active as an advanced liberal in Austrian politics, in fact more radical as a young man than Redlich would ever be. At that time Friedjung condemned dualism so vehemently, as detrimental to Austria’s identity and integrity, that it cost him his first job as lecturer at a business school.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>“In this respect the severest fate emotionally was inflicted upon those Germans of Austria, who in their person and their activity affirmed the Austrian idea most strongly and at the same time seriously combated the Austrian reality—those who had most deeply grasped the greatness and the creativeness achieved in the empire and state founded by the Habsburgs through the spiritual and material powers of the Germans, yet who also recognized the banefully restrictive effect of that very same German political thought and action upon the development of the fruitful and constructive notion which the old empire incorporated, even in a very incomplete form.” *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>On him: Fritz Fellner, *Geschichtsschreibung und nationale Identität. Probleme und Leistungen der österreichischen Geschichtswissenschaft* (Vienna, 2002), 293–322; Fredrik Lindström, *Empire and Identity: Biographies of the Austrian State Problem in the Late Habsburg Empire* (West Lafayette, 2008); Friedjung, *Geschichte in Gesprächen* (see following, note 31).

<sup>28</sup>Heinrich Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1878), 4: “1867 haben wir uns einem an Bildung und wirtschaftlichem Sinn tief unter uns stehenden Volk gefügt, dem wir die Hegemonie im politischen Sinne und das Verfügungsrecht über unser Militärbudget zugestanden, so daß faktisch eine Tributpflichtigkeit Oesterreichs an den ungarischen Staat stattfindet.”



Friedjung turned to history and made his scholarly name with research on the same primary decades as Redlich: the 1850s and 1860s. They afforded him scope to chronicle the achievement of a duly constituted de facto German cultural and political control at home in Austria, and for his famous narrative of “the struggle for supremacy,” *der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft*, in Germany.<sup>29</sup> That work, whose quality was enhanced by Friedjung’s evident empathy for both the Austrian and the Prussian sides, lays out the essence of the matter for us in its conclusion. “This turn of events thus yielded one noble victim: the Germans of Austria, who were torn away from their motherland. They lost their political center of gravity at that time and have not yet recovered it.”<sup>30</sup>

Those words were written in the 1890s (when Kaiser Wilhelm II was one of his appreciative readers).<sup>31</sup> Friedjung had been drawn to the mid-century arena for Austria’s last stand as heir to the traditions of the Holy Roman Empire: the attempts to revitalize and defend the *Deutscher Bund* as a federative structure that still embodied the legacy of the Old Reich.<sup>32</sup> He was too good a historian to neglect *gesamtmonarchisch* issues, including the need for some kind of *modus vivendi* with Hungary. But he became a prominent and increasingly exposed spokesman for Austria’s future in harmony with a victorious Prussia and the resultant Second German Empire.

Both Redlich and Friedjung backed Austria’s subsequent diplomatic assertiveness, mainly in the Balkans. Redlich advised the forceful foreign minister Aehrenthal while Friedjung made publicity for him, until he was compromised (and hung out to dry) by his injudicious use of falsified official documents in seeking to prove that members of the South Slav opposition were enemies of the state. Behind this stance lay the whole secular decline of the domestic German power-position, and a perceived need to rescue it by close alliance with Germany. At the turn of the century, Friedjung wanted his conationals, the “firstborn” among the peoples of Austria, to recover their “political hegemony.”<sup>33</sup> When at the end of his life he contemplated the collapse of his homeland, the ethnic priorities remained the same: Austria was “a creation of the German nation as its advanced bastion to the south-west . . . for whose defence it also marshalled other nationalities.”<sup>34</sup>

This process played itself out against a background of hazy, overlapping, unstable identities. To be “Austrian” was still broadly a civic and territorial designation, awkwardly sandwiched between the provincial and the national (a semantic study would repay, both for the term “Österreicher,” with its cognates, and for the equivalents in other relevant languages: “rakušané,” “osztrákok,” etc.). “German” tended to trump it, culturally and maybe also politically. Indeed, the very ideology of the relaunched Austria of the 1850s had been largely

<sup>29</sup>Heinrich Friedjung, *Österreich von 1848 bis 1860*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1908–12); *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland, 1859–66*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1897–98); abridged English version, as *The Struggle for Supremacy in Germany, 1859–1866*, eds. A. J. P. Taylor and W. L. McElwee (London, 1935).

<sup>30</sup>“Demnach gab es bei dieser Wendung der Dinge ein edles Opfer: die Deutschen Österreichs, welche vom Mutterlande losgerissen wurden. Sie verloren damals ihren politischen Schwerpunkt und haben ihn noch nicht wieder gefunden.” Friedjung, *Kampf*, 2:559.

<sup>31</sup>Heinrich Friedjung, *Geschichte in Gesprächen. Aufzeichnungen, 1898–1919*, 2 vols., eds. Franz Adlgasser and Margret Friedrich (Vienna, 1997), 1:202–3.

<sup>32</sup>Jürgen Müller, *Deutscher Bund und deutsche Nation, 1848–1866* (Göttingen, 2003), captures the openness of the outcome more persuasively than Helmut Böhme, *Deutschlands Weg zur Großmacht. Studien zum Verhältnis von Wirtschaft und Staat während der Reichsgründungszeit, 1848–81* (Cologne, 1966). Cf. also Nicholas Hope, *The Alternative to German Unification: The Anti-Prussian Party: Frankfurt, Nassau and the Two Hesses, 1859–67* (Wiesbaden, 1973).

<sup>33</sup>Friedjung, *Aufzeichnungen*, 1:31, 2:239.

<sup>34</sup>“[A]ls Schöpfung der deutschen Nation deren nach Südosten vorgeschobenes Bollwerk . . . zu deren Verteidigung es auch andere Nationalitäten sammelte.” Heinrich Friedjung, *Historische Aufsätze* (Stuttgart, 1919), xiii.

purveyed by incomers from elsewhere in the Confederation; and that linkage continued to be reflected in its liberal thought.<sup>35</sup> The harder Austria's elites sought to propagate a civilizing mission in the age of imperialism, the more their enterprise came to be perceived as a merely German one, not least by the other nationalities in the state. As the writer Robert Musil put it in 1919: "Neither the Slavs nor the Romance peoples nor the Magyars of the Monarchy recognized an Austrian culture; they knew only their own—and a German culture that they did not relish."<sup>36</sup>

There were few outright pan-Germans in Austria perhaps (and the public antics of the *Alldeutsche* discouraged open adherence to such ideas), but many conscious members of a wider German community. Their attitudes could crystallize as exclusive and domineering if the pressures on it were felt to be existential. We find classic documentary evidence for that in Ernst Plener's memoirs, where he writes about German-Czech animosity over language as both vehicle and symbol in the 1880s' debates during the campaign for German as the *Staatssprache*.<sup>37</sup> Then the breakdown of public order on the same general issue at the time of the Badeni ordinances was manifestly a key episode. Moreover, we are surely right to invest with a certain aura of fatality (contemporaries did too) what has commonly been seen as the last-ditch attempt in the immediate prewar years to negotiate equal language rights for the Czechs and due democratic process within an integral Bohemian state, and thus to unblock the parliamentary impasse in Austria too. The largest cause of this failure, memorably chronicled by Kazbunda, lay in the ethnic and cultural intransigence of the German camp inside and outwith the Bohemian lands.<sup>38</sup>

Only after 1918 would "Austrianness" as—merely—*Staatspatriotismus* be first complemented and then replaced by a modern identity. That's something Josef Redlich helped promote, having foresworn the kind of *gesamtdeutsch* historiography that was led by his colleague Heinrich von Srbik. Srbik's "whole-German" views, which assigned a leading place to Austria and its political structures within the overall mission of a national Germandom, could easily assume a Nazi inflection, as Srbik demonstrated after the Anschluss. They and he came to a correspondingly ignominious end in 1945. Yet their subsequent repudiation should not obscure the earlier wide diffusion of the ideas Srbik chronicled.<sup>39</sup> The Treaty of St. Germain created in reality

<sup>35</sup>Much evidence for this in Georg Franz, *Liberalismus. Die deutschliberale Bewegung in der Habsburgischen Monarchie* (Munich, 1955). Representative figures would be Gustav Höfken; see Waltraud Heindl, "Wir wollen einen Familientempel bauen . . ." (Marginalien zu Mentalität und Familienleben des Beamten Gustave Höfken)," in *Verbürgerlichung in Mitteleuropa*, ed. Éva Somogyi (Budapest, 1991), 47–56; Ludwig von Biegeleben: see Rüdiger von Biegeleben, *Ludwig Frh von Biegeleben, ein Vorkämpfer des großdeutschen Gedankens* (Vienna, 1930); and Lorenz von Stein: see Giles Pope, *The Political Ideas of Lorenz Stein and Their Influence on Rudolf Gneist and Gustav Schmoller* (Ph.D. diss., Oxford, 1985).

<sup>36</sup>"[Es] haben weder die Slawen noch die Romanen, noch die Madjaren der Monarchie eine österreichische Kultur anerkannt; sie kannten nur ihre eigene und eine deutsche, die sie nicht mochten." Fritz Fellner, "Die Historiographie der österreichisch-deutschen Problematik als Spiegel der nationalpolitischen Diskussion," in his *Geschichtsschreibung und nationale Identität*, 145–72, quoted at 153.

<sup>37</sup>Ernst von Plener, *Erinnerungen*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1911–21), ii, passim.

<sup>38</sup>Karel Kazbunda, *Otázka česko-německá v předvečer Velké války. Zrušení ústavnosti země České tzv. annenskými patenty z 26. července 1913* [The Czech-German question on the eve of the Great War: The destruction of constitutionality in Bohemia by the so-called St. Anne's day patents of 26 July 1913], op. posth., ed. Zdeněk Kárník (Prague, 1995). This is a minor historiographical classic of the *Gesamtmonarchie* by a scholar who knew the pertinent old-Austrian archives better than anyone else: he supervised the transfer of many relevant documents from Vienna to Prague after 1918, but only wrote up his findings a half-century later.

<sup>39</sup>Heinrich von Srbik, *Deutsche Einheit. Idee und Wirklichkeit vom Heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz*, 4 vols. (Munich, 1935–42), mainly covers the mid-nineteenth century and luxuriates in notions like "Großösterreichertum," "Gesamtdeutschtum," and even "österreichisches Großdeutschtum." A related debate

only a “Deutschösterreich” (which is precisely why the war’s victors denied that title to the new rump state). There’s a mass of evidence both that public and, even more, private allegiances in the new Austrian republic were overwhelmingly in favor of *Deutschtum*, within which Austrianness comprised merely a local manifestation, and also that commitment to Anschluss formed a clear political preference.<sup>40</sup>

Later I shall revert briefly to this topic too, in the context of World War I. But evidently the prostration of the established order in 1848, which formed the point of departure for Redlich and Friedjung, had its own deep-seated causes. That was a particular concern for my final protagonist.

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Carlile Aylmer Macartney was born in 1895 to a wealthy Anglo-Irish family and educated at Winchester College. In 1914, instead of taking up a place at Cambridge to read classics, he volunteered for service on the Western Front and arrived in Vienna in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the monarchy. Macartney followed a career, like Eisenmann and Redlich, as a prolific pundit and adviser on the current affairs of the region. At the same time he made himself into a major, largely private scholar, especially of Hungary, about whose very ancient and very modern history alike he wrote works of profound importance. He excelled in the theory and practice of nationalism and its relation to statehood, mainly in Central Europe. He died at Oxford in 1978.<sup>41</sup>

*The Habsburg Empire, 1790–1918*, which appeared exactly a half-century after the dissolution,<sup>42</sup> is thus a product of his later years, but Macartney tells us he conceived it at the very start, and always ambitiously, as “a history of the Monarchy as a whole, and the whole Monarchy during . . . [its] second great phase.”<sup>43</sup> He tells a story, with enviable mastery of form, balance, and literary grace, and strewn with wit and irony. Macartney does not explicitly analyze: even at the end, in November 1918, the “old Monarchy” steals away—on page 833—without any further comment or conclusion.

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has been that over the place of Austria(n) within German history as a whole, stimulated by a judicious and astute essay of Karl Dietrich Erdmann, *Die Spur Österreichs in der deutschen Geschichte* (Zurich, 1989). The provocation for Erdmann was the proposed remit of a then new Deutsches Historisches Museum established in Berlin in 1987, as well as the Waldheim-Affäre. See the contributions in Gerhard Botz and Gerald Sprengnagel, eds., *Kontroversen um Österreichs Zeitgeschichte: verdrängte Vergangenheit, Österreich-Identität, Waldheim und die Historiker*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt, 2008), 194–370.

<sup>40</sup>Walter Wiltschegg, *Österreich – der “Zweite deutsche Staat”? Der nationale Gedanke in der Ersten Republik* (Graz, 1992), lacks something in coherence and balance, but cumulates evidence that German-national sentiments were everywhere, while Austrian-national ones were only created retrospectively after 1945.

<sup>41</sup>On Macartney, see the thoughtful and eloquent tribute by Hugh Seton Watson in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 67 (1981), 412–32. For his Hungarian associations: Ágnes Beretzky, *Scotus Viator és Macartney Elemér. Magyarország-kép változó előjelekkel, 1905–45* [Scotus Viator and Elemér Macartney: An image of Hungary with changing presages] (Budapest, 2005); R. J. W. Evans, “Hungary in British Historiography: C. A. Macartney and His Forerunners,” in *Mives semmiségek. Elaborate Trifles. Tanulmányok Ruttkay Kálmán 80. Születésnapjára. Studies for Kálmán G. Ruttkay on his 80th Birthday*, eds. Gábor Ittész and András Kiséry (Piliscsaba, 2002), 476–92; Evans, “The Making of October Fifteenth: C. A. Macartney and His Correspondents,” in *British-Hungarian Relations since 1848*, eds. László Péter and Martyn Rady (London, 2004), 259–70. A biography of Macartney is now being prepared by Róbert Barta (Debrecen).

<sup>42</sup>C. A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790–1918* (London, 1968); corrected version 1971 (the original was peppered with misprints); reissued 2010; Italian translation, edited by Angelo Ara, 1976.

<sup>43</sup>Macartney, *Habsburg Empire*, xiii.

Yet the whole work carries a single overarching thesis:

The history of the Austrian Monarchy falls into two phases. The earlier, and longer, is . . . one of continued upward progress. . . . Then the tide turns. New rivals appear in Europe. The territorial advance gives way to a retreat in which one outpost after another is lost. Obviously, neither the advance nor the retreat is quite unbroken. But it is unquestionably correct to speak of an advancing and a retreating tide, and it is not even over-straining the historian's license to name a day as that on which the tide turned in Central Europe: 28 January 1790.<sup>44</sup>

That is the date when Emperor Joseph II died. Whereas Joseph's impetuous and doctrinaire style of rule is presented by Macartney as the injurious facet of an otherwise largely successful enterprise, subsequent abdication from the centralizing, progressive, secular reform agenda of Joseph and his mother Maria Theresa would gradually undermine all Habsburg achievements.

Thus Macartney lays much explanatory weight upon the long barren reign of Francis II/I (1792–1835); then upon the disastrous regency for his incapable son (1835–48), and the failure to harness constructive impulses offered by new representative institutions in the revolutionary backlash of 1848. It was the age of Metternich and his "system" and its consequences. Macartney's narrative of these events has never been surpassed; and his measured but gently censorious verdict on Metternich's contribution remains convincing (attempts at rehabilitation, from Srbik to Siemann, ring hollow to me, a point to which I shall shortly return). Although Macartney deals in rich and elegant detail with later decades, overlapping in many of his emphases with the historians we have already considered, the core of his indictment seems to lie in and around the *Vormärz*.

That's clearer still in the work of Macartney's deuteragonist, on whom he drew for both conception and telling anecdote in his treatment of that period: Anton Springer (1825–91). Son of a monastery brewer at Strahov above Prague, Springer was drawn into dissident political and clerical circles in Bohemia and beyond during the *Vormärz*. A radical public intellectual during 1848–49, he then fled abroad, in due course settling in Germany where he became one of the pioneers of the discipline of art history.<sup>45</sup>

Springer's *Geschichte Österreichs seit dem Wiener Frieden* (1863–65) is a deft, sparkling, and devastating indictment of the Habsburg ancien régime, and of the dynasty's—and Metternich's—response to the challenge, first of reform and then of revolution. Springer had an axe to grind; but his basic argument was the increasing debility of a state that had no principle of coherence, no *Staatsidee*: "[I]t can be no secret that the fervor with which grounds of political reason and expedience are sought for the existence and continuance of the Austrian Empire leads us to suspect the absence of any natural and absolutely necessary foundation."<sup>46</sup> That had already been the refrain of the *Vormärz* pamphleteers like Andrian-Werburg (as it would remain for Josef Redlich and others).<sup>47</sup> Moreover, it introduced a satirical vein that would dog or enliven

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>45</sup>For Springer, see the excellent study by Jan Heidler, *Antonín Springer a česká politika v letech 1848–1850* [Antonín Springer and Bohemian politics in the years 1848–1850] (Prague, 1914), and Friedjung's appreciation in his *Historische Aufsätze*, 210–23.

<sup>46</sup>"[E]bensowenig kann aber verhehlt werden, daß der Eifer, mit welchem Gründe der politischen Vernunft und Zweckmäßigkeit für das Dasein und die Fortdauer des oesterreichischen Kaiserthumes aufgesucht werden, den Mangel an einer natürlichen, unbedingt nothwendigen Grundlage vermuthen [läßt]." Springer, *Geschichte Österreichs seit dem Wiener Frieden 1809*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1863–65), 1:1. For the circumstances of the work's composition, see Heidler, *Antonín Springer*, 205–8.

<sup>47</sup>Victor von Andrian-Werburg, *Oesterreich und dessen Zukunft*, vol. 1 (Hamburg, 1843), 8: Austria is a "rein imaginärer Name, welcher kein in sich abgeschlossenes Volk, kein Land, keine Nation bedeutet." Redlich,

commentary on a perceptually accident-prone Habsburg regime thereafter, above all in the wickedly funny (and well-informed) north-German journalist Walter Rogge and the subsequent era of political cartoons.<sup>48</sup>

At the heart of the problem lay a “dynastic deficit”: a structure where dynastic rule had to do duty for the political and social bonds that could fuse together the congeries of Habsburg territories. This was customized empire; and the imperial decree of 1804 created only a title: an Austrian family *Kaisertum*, rather than an organic *Kaiserstaat*. Circumstances placed power in the hands of the dreary and narrow-minded Francis—who had several talented brothers but mistrusted them all. Amerling’s famous portrait of the aging Francis in his regalia (including the bulky crown never used at a coronation) conveyed superbly the splendor, but also the vacuity, of his position.<sup>49</sup> Then came the disarming but imbecilic heir apparent Ferdinand.<sup>50</sup> Even Francis Joseph, insinuated into the role in Ferdinand’s stead at the end of 1848, long earned grudging respect at best, rather than admiration or affection; later the more sentimental fidelity that attached to him was dangerously personalized rather than dynastic—and still less patriotic.<sup>51</sup> He likewise remained part of the problem, not of its solution.

However, this deficit reflected also the wasting asset of two traditional props of earlier Habsburg power: church and aristocracy.<sup>52</sup> Both of these the reformist rulers had sought to redirect and harness, rather than jettison. The church had suffered a protracted and damaging split between a more innovative wing under state aegis (the original “Josephinist” movement) and baroque-inspired conservatives, revived by the ultramontane reaction of such as the Hofbauer circle in early nineteenth-century Vienna. A later leader of that tendency was Anton Bruckner’s combative local bishop, Franz Joseph Rudigier. The church’s hesitant and disparate reactions to the challenge of 1848 compounded the malaise.<sup>53</sup>

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*Staats- und Reichsproblem*, 1:59ff. Cf. the recent formulation by Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge, 2006), 121–24, that Austria at that time failed to achieve a “unifying, supranational, state-wide civic political authority.”

<sup>48</sup>Walter Rogge, *Österreich von Világos bis zur Gegenwart*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1872–73). For the cartoons, see especially Géza Buzinkay, *Borsszem Jankó és társai: magyar élclapok és karikatúráik a XIX. század második felében* [Borsszem Jankó and his chums: Hungarian satirical journals and their caricatures in the second half of the 19th century] (Budapest, 1983).

<sup>49</sup>Reproduced at <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/5575>, accessed 25 Sept. 2019. Cf. R. J. W. Evans, “Communicating Empire: The Habsburgs and Their Critics, 1700–1919,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, sixth series, 19 (2009), 117–38.

<sup>50</sup>Even Francis Joseph said, “mein Onkel war doch ein halber Trottel.” Friedjung, *Aufzeichnungen*, 2:447. Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich: Strategie und Visionär. Eine Biographie* (Munich, 2016), 824–27, recognizes the debilitating effect of this (“Das Reich diente als großes Familienfideikommiss”), but exaggerates its role, as an excuse for Metternich’s failure.

<sup>51</sup>Robert A. Kann, “The Dynasty and the Imperial Idea,” in his *Dynasty, Politics, and Culture: Selected Essays* (Boulder, 1991), 45–67, is shrewd. On the cult, see Eduard von Steinitz, ed., *Erinnerungen an Franz Joseph I., Kaiser von Österreich* (Berlin, 1931); Alexander Novotny, *Franz Joseph I.: An der Wende vom alten zum neuen Europa* (Göttingen, 1968), esp. 72–82; Helmuth A. Niederle, *Es war sehr schön, es hat mich sehr gefreut: Kaiser Franz Joseph und seine Untertanen* (Vienna, 1987). Bedřich Hlaváč, *František Josef I.: život, povaha, doba* [Francis Joseph I: His life, character and times] (Prague, 1933), is critical; Adolph Kohut, *Kaiser Franz Josef I. als König von Ungarn* (Berlin, 1916), is not. Most recently Werner Telesko and Stefan Schmidl, *Der verklärte Herrscher. Leben, Tod und Nachleben Kaiser Franz Josephs I. in seinen Repräsentationen* (Vienna, 2016), stress the mythic character of the imperial image rather than how that image was received, especially in Transleithania.

<sup>52</sup>My understanding of these factors builds on my earlier work for earlier periods: especially R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550–1700: An Interpretation* (Oxford, 1979).

<sup>53</sup>Erika Weinzierl-Fischer, “Die Kirchenfrage auf dem Österreichischen Reichstag, 1848–9,” *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 8 (1955), 160–90.

Catholicism substantially failed through the nineteenth century as an attribute of loyalist cultural capital, even at the acme of the 1855 Concordat, which temporarily restored much of its civil authority: the measure was designed to reassert Habsburg *pietas* as a political weapon in Austria, and to reintegrate supportive elements in Germany and Hungary on the basis of a common spiritual purpose.<sup>54</sup> Vienna's massive and bleak Votivkirche, begun at just that time, as a thank-offering for the preservation of the young emperor from an attempt at assassination, stood as its symbol and omen. The tutelage of Catholicism tended increasingly to provoke opposition and constrain intellectual life. Besides, the loyalties of some of its more talented and discerning priests became suspect. On 28 October 1918, the first harangue that declared Czech independence from the steps of the Wenceslas monument in Prague came from a canon of the abbey of Strahov, indeed its former librarian, Isidor Zahradník: "We are breaking for ever our chains in which the faithless, foreign, immoral Habsburgs have tormented us."<sup>55</sup>

The aristocracy regrouped: indeed, too successfully for the ultimate good of dynastic rule. Reinforced after the termination of the Holy Roman Empire by puissant princes from the mediatised *Reichsadel*, it proved a reactionary counterpoise—and more formidably than in the rest of Germany, even Prussia—to the more adaptable service nobles.<sup>56</sup> The "second society" constituted by the latter expanded rapidly after 1848, as more and more military officers and state officials were admitted to its ranks according to tightly prescribed but quite generous criteria of seniority and attainment; but it failed to establish a separate, meritocratic rationale for itself.<sup>57</sup>

As their entrepreneurial role in the economic and cultural spheres faded by mid-century, the aristocrats became a social deadweight around the regime, which continued to accord them privileged access to the corridors of power. Their political influence was robuster in Austria than in Hungary (where the gentry partly supplanted them, while still tending to represent their interests), and strongest of all in the joint institutions of the dual state. By the same token, the public authority of nobles stood or fell in the end with that of the Habsburg regime as a whole, as was evidenced through its total repudiation in the aftermath of the monarchy's collapse, even—and most particularly—in rump Austria with the unanimous enactment of the *Adelsaufhebungsgesetz* in April 1919.<sup>58</sup>

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These themes carry us back to the postrevolution scenarios of our other protagonists. The more so if we consider the other two pillars of Habsburg rule, the ones that had been deliberately (re)

<sup>54</sup>For the earlier period, see Rudolf Till, *Hofbauer und sein Kreis* (Vienna, 1951); Adam Bunnell, *Before Infallibility: Liberal Catholicism in Biedermeier Vienna* (London, 1990). For the later period, see Joseph Scheicher, *Sebastian Brunner. Ein Lebensbild, zugleich ein Stück Zeit- und Kirchengeschichte* (Würzburg, 1888); Renatus Ritzén, *Der junge Sebastian Brunner in seinem Verhältnis zu Jean Paul, Anton Günther und Fürst Metternich* (Aichach, 1927).

<sup>55</sup>"Navždy lámeme pouta, v nichž nás týrali věrolomní, cizáctí a nemravní Habsburkové." Quoted by Arnold Suppan, *1000 Jahre Nachbarschaft. "Tschechen" und "Österreicher" in historischer Perspektive* (Vienna, 2017), 134.

<sup>56</sup>William D. Godsey Jr., *Nobles and Nation in Central Europe: Free Imperial Knights in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, 2004). Cf. Hannes Stekl, *Österreichs Aristokratie im Vormärz: Herrschaftsstil und Lebensformen der Fürstenhäuser Liechtenstein und Schwarzenberg* (Munich, 1973).

<sup>57</sup>Excellent new survey of this process, covering the whole monarchy and with transnational comparisons, by Jan Županič, "Proměna nobilitační politiky podunajské monarchie po roce 1848" [The change in ennoblement policy in the Danubian Monarchy after the year 1848], *Český Časopis Historický*, 117 (2019): 535–83.

<sup>58</sup>Hannes Stekl, *Adel und Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie, 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 2004), 101ff.; *ibid.*, 14–34 for a helpful survey of the nineteenth-century developments. For a paradigm family, see Hannes Stekl and Marija Wakounig, *Windisch-Graetz: ein Fürstenhaus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1992).

fashioned as the leading edge of its eighteenth-century reforms. Administration (*Verwaltung*) and the workings of bureaucracy (*Beamtenwirtschaft*) lay at the heart of the matter for all our analysts, as they have for more recent proponents of the theme of creative and interactive empire. There were many *Beamte*.<sup>59</sup> They were a locus for supranational and Josephinist traditions, and for direct association with the chief “selbständiger Oberbeamter” (the famous self-description of Francis Joseph as “free-standing senior official” on a census form).<sup>60</sup> Also, however, for practical contestation over language usage—doubly so when German came under threat as the administrative medium (*innere Dienstsprache*) throughout Austria.

And the canon of whistle-blowers within the *Verwaltung* must give us pause: from the withering sarcasm of Ignaz Beidtel (a *Vormärz* source much invoked by Macartney) to the nightmare visions of Franz Kafka, who presumably drew on his experience as an accident insurance official in the semipublic Arbeiter-Unfallversicherungs-Anstalt für das Königreich Böhmen.<sup>61</sup> Serious funding challenges emerged throughout Austria by the 1900s, inseparable from rising levels of corruption; they were especially pronounced in Bohemia, but affected other crownlands too.<sup>62</sup> On the eve of war Josef Redlich (by then a parliamentarian) instigated an abortive Commission for the Furtherance of Administrative Reform. Later, in his magnificently sesquipedalian prose, he delivered a classic account both of the decay of the political process in Austria from the 1890s onward, and of the subversion by mass and national party interests of the *Verwaltungssystem* that had to do duty for it.<sup>63</sup> In Hungary the rapidly expanding host of state bureaucrats (*közhivatalnokok*; *köztisztviselők*), though deriving much of their ethos from Austrian models, served radically dissimilar national purposes.

The other pillar, the army, overlapped organizationally with the administrative machinery, but seems inherently different and more equivocal as an explanatory factor in Habsburg destinies. It's accordingly less prominent, whether as an institution or a fighting force, in the work of our protagonists. All of them knew about war in 1914–18—Eisenmann was attached to the French general staff, Redlich visited the front as soon as hostilities began, Macartney fought in the trenches rather than studying for his degree—but they remained severely civilian in their emphases.

On the one hand, the Austrian army was a famously integrative force, both in the patterns of discipline and fidelity it inculcated within its own ranks, and as a bogey for real or potential malcontents. The vast Arsenal complex in Vienna (with its 177 million bricks), built in the aftermath of revolution to cow the capital's unruly inhabitants and as a central repository

<sup>59</sup>Karl Megner, *Beamte. Wirtschafts- und sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte des k.k. Beamtentums* (Vienna, 1985), 344ff., has statistics. Cf. Waltraud Heindl, *Gehorsame Rebellen: Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich 1780 bis 1848* (Vienna, 1991); Heindl, *Josephinische Mandarine. Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich, 1848–1914* (Vienna, 2013). John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford, 2015), makes a more positive case.

<sup>60</sup>Heindl, *Josephinische Mandarine*, 92. But on his *Totenschein*, under “Berufszweig und Berufsstellung,” Francis Joseph was recorded as “Kaiser von Österreich, König von Ungarn, etc.” Telesko and Schmidl, *Der verklarte Herrscher*, 84.

<sup>61</sup>Marek Nekula, “Franz Kafka als Beamter der Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungs-Anstalt für Böhmen in Prag,” in *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty Brněnské univerzity* [Proceedings of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Brno], ser. 6 (2001), 113–40; [https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/bitstream/handle/11222.digilib/105963/1\\_BrunnerBeitragGermanistikNordistik\\_15-2001-1\\_8.pdf?sequence=1](https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/bitstream/handle/11222.digilib/105963/1_BrunnerBeitragGermanistikNordistik_15-2001-1_8.pdf?sequence=1), accessed 22 Sept. 2019.

<sup>62</sup>Jiří Klabouch, *Die Gemeindegeldverwaltung in Österreich, 1848–1918* (Munich, 1968), 124ff.; John Boyer, “The Problem of Vienna in a General History of Austria,” in *Wien um 1900: Aufbruch in die Moderne*, eds. Peter Berner et al. (Munich, 1986), 205–20. On the vagaries of the Bohemian budget: Joseph Maria Baernreither, *Zur böhmischen Frage* (Vienna, 1910); Kazbunda, *Otázka česko-německá*.

<sup>63</sup>Josef Redlich, *Österreichische Regierung und Verwaltung im Weltkriege* (Vienna, 1925), 39–81.

and training facility for a fighting force answerable only to the sovereign, symbolizes this well. That was so even if the army ultimately cultivated loyalty to a ruler and state conceived in its own image: the outcome of events in 1848 would have been very different if the high command (and perhaps the troops too) had been loyal merely to the emperor.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, even the army could be a destabilizing agency. Its “enforced supranationalism” increasingly concealed “a distinctive, anachronistic psychic Germandom,” as one commentator has put it.<sup>65</sup> Its unity, especially in terms of administrative language, became a prime affront to Magyar nationalists, who attacked it on ostensibly patriotic and practical grounds, as in a pamphlet of 1905 entitled “uniform German command a danger for the responsiveness of the Habsburg army.”<sup>66</sup> But more fundamentally and long term: the upkeep of the military represented a chronic drain on state finances, as we’ve known in exhaustive detail since the pioneering contemporary work of Adolf Beer, then above all that of Harm-Hinrich Brandt.<sup>67</sup>

This brings us, antepenultimately, to the international standing of the monarchy. Of course, it was widely seen abroad to be a “European necessity,” as the cliché went: an external security assessment, or assumption, that continued like a sheet-anchor to protect the Habsburgs from the worst buffets of fate during the nineteenth century (notably during the existential upheavals of 1848–49). A large but weak state was best left to manage its own troubles because then neither it nor they would represent much danger to others. The latest argument, that Austrian policy makers could pursue a “grand strategy” of their own, seems much more persuasive for the age from Prince Eugene to Joseph II than later.<sup>68</sup>

Austria suffered from the chronic overcommitment of an increasingly second-order power, as recognized by commentators from Heinrich Friedjung to Roy Bridge.<sup>69</sup> This was also, however, a self-imposed predicament: the fruit of its Pyrrhic triumph at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, sealed by the congress at Vienna in 1814–15 and the problematic personal ascendancy of its chief architect Metternich. On Austria’s behalf, Metternich now shouldered protectoral functions across the continent, from Italy and Germany into much of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. His defenders, from Srbik—seeking a champion for his own *großdeutsch* convictions after 1918—to Wolfram Siemann, overlook the paradox at the heart of Austria’s designated role in Metternich’s grand design.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup>Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph* (West Lafayette, 1976), 22–37 and passim; Alan Sked, *The Survival of the Habsburg Empire: Radetzky, the Imperial Army, and the Class War, 1848* (London, 1979).

<sup>65</sup>“[K]ényszerű nemzetekfelettség . . . egy sajátos, anakronisztikus lelki németiség.” Tibor Hajdu, *Tisztikar és középosztály, 1850–1914: Ferenc József magyar tisztjei* [Officer corps and middle class, 1850–1914: Francis Joseph’s Hungarian officers] (Budapest, 1999), 164.

<sup>66</sup>*Das einheitliche deutsche Commando: eine Gefahr für die Schlagfertigkeit des k. und k. Heeres* (Budapest, 1905). “Schlagfertigkeit” also and more usually means “wittiness”; here presumably a pun is intended. I’m grateful to Judit Kormos for a copy of this pamphlet.

<sup>67</sup>Adolf Beer, *Die Finanzen Oesterreichs im 19. Jahrhundert* (Prague, 1877), 202ff.; Harm-Hinrich Brandt, *Der österreichische Neoabsolutismus: Staatsfinanzen und Politik, 1848–60*, 2 vols. (Göttingen, 1978). Antonio Schmid-Brentano, *Die Armee in Österreich: Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft 1848–67* (Boppard am Rhein, 1975), demonstrates weaknesses and conservatism at the army’s mid-century peak of influence.

<sup>68</sup>A. Wess Mitchell, *The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire* (Princeton, 2018).

<sup>69</sup>F. R. Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815–1918* (New York, 1990). In its vivid and mischievous way, the celebrated account by A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809–1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary*, 2nd ed. (London, 1948), also rests on this insight.

<sup>70</sup>Heinrich von Srbik, *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch*, 3 vols. (Munich, 1925–54); Siemann, *Metternich*. Theirs are widely divergent apologias anyway: Siemann, *Metternich*, 21–30, demolishes his predecessor’s case. My own view of Metternich in “Primat der Außenpolitik? Metternich und das österreichische



Metternich clearly failed within Austria. That's mitigated for his apologists by their claim that he always lacked sufficient influence over domestic policy (thus Siemann, who therefore neglects the latter almost entirely).<sup>71</sup> However, *even if true*—and there's plenty of evidence for Metternich's frustration of reformist initiatives across the board—that's not the chief flaw. For Austrian strength was a precondition of his international system; and thus mounting Austrian overstretch—aggravated by the fiscal constraints applied by Metternich's *bête noire* Kolowrat—was built into that too. Hence Austria weakened “Europe,” and vice versa. The existential crisis of the Habsburg state, from which it would never fully recover, went with the establishment of a kind of European concert.<sup>72</sup> Did the dynasty ever realize that —“necessity” or otherwise—it and its peoples were being sacrificed on the altar of European stability?

In Cartesian terms, Austrian foreign policy exhibited too little mind (*res cogitans*) and too much extension (*res extensa*). That required inflated military budgets, which yet fell afoul of political opposition at home, especially the damaging constraints imposed by German liberals before 1866 and Hungarian autonomists before 1914.<sup>73</sup> In fact, Hungarian backing for the great-power status of the Habsburgs peaked in the mid-1860s, just when they were in the process of losing much of what had remained of it.<sup>74</sup>

The monarchy's international stance, a more and more uphill bid to uphold prestige and reputation, thus remained till the end a function of the dynastic and imperial principle of rule—not for nothing was the Ministry of War the last department of state to shed its traditional designation of *Reichsministerium*. Yet that stance was also requisite to keep control over interlocking domestic concerns, as Eisenmann well understood.<sup>75</sup> Hence the forward position in Germany and Italy up to the 1860s, which continued thereafter as a kind of *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, on the one hand, and an uneasy alliance of rivals, on the other. Then the Balkans remained as the last imperialist objective, to contain South Slav discontents at home.

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In this combination we can discern the lineaments of the 1914 disaster for the monarchy: foreign policy still determined by the dynasty and an elite of aristocrats and civilian and military *Spitzenbeamte*, who continued to devote much energy to expansionist plans both

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Staats- und Reichsproblem,” in *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse*, 144. Jg. 2. Hbb. (2009), 61–76.

<sup>71</sup>Siemann, *Metternich*, 792–829, addresses issues of *Innenpolitik* seriously only from 1835; but then there is still nothing at all on Hungary, Croatia, or the Czechs. The most renowned of all treatments of Metternichian diplomacy, Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812–22* (London, 1957), does not even engage with this issue.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. Eisenmann, *Compromis*, 76: “La monarchie autrichienne, depuis 1815, ne se soutenait pas par ses propres forces: elle était étayée du dehors. Sa durée était liée à la durée de l'ordre européen institué par le Congrès de Vienne.”

<sup>73</sup>Schmidt-Brentano, *Die Armee in Österreich*, esp. 104ff.; László Péter, “The Army Question in Hungarian Politics, 1867–1918,” *Central Europe* 4 (2006): 83–110.

<sup>74</sup>István Diószegi, “A Deák-párt és a német egység [The Deák-party and German unity],” *Századok* 104 (1970): 227–49; cf. Diószegi, *Bismarck und Andrassy: Ungarn in der deutschen Machtpolitik in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1999).

<sup>75</sup>“[T]oute l'histoire politique de la monarchie depuis 1848 montre que la vie constitutionnelle de l'Autriche moderne s'est développée sous l'action exclusive ou tout au moins prépondérante de préoccupations ou de desseins extérieurs.” Eisenmann, *Compromis*, 677–78. He adds the typically shrewd observation that good relations with Germany allowed the Austrian government *more* flexibility to cultivate non-Germans at home.

before and after the outbreak of hostilities;<sup>76</sup> an army starved through Hungarian intransigence of the military enhancement achieved by its rivals in the immediate prewar years, but whose operations remained shielded from public scrutiny. However the actual sequence of events in July 1914 be interpreted, and the degree of responsibility of Austro-Hungarian leaders assigned, the key is that they could not and would not contain the wider belligerence triggered by their ultimatum to Serbia.

The coming of that war is absolutely crucial for the present argument. But only inasmuch as it introduced a new and final phase of degeneration of the Habsburg polity. It was not in itself a primary determinative factor: it only confirmed and aggravated existing debility. Once combat was under way, pressures from chief stakeholders intensified, eliciting ever more ineffectual responses from the constituted authorities. Wartime stringencies—exacerbated by draconian controls from above and popular discontents from below—catalyzed structural weakness, broadly according to the same tripartite schema we've been following.

Firstly, Hungarian separatist pressures within the dualist system frustrated cooperation, most notably in the area of food supplies. Calls from Austria for political reform encountered concerted Magyar resistance, even when they did not directly touch upon dualism. In the dark days of September 1917 a suggestion of modest concessions to the Slavs evoked an immediate riposte from none other than the comparatively Austrophile Tisza to the foreign minister, Ottokar Czernin: "The dualistic structure of the Monarchy and Hungary's paritative standing within it [are] a *conditio sine qua non* of our coexistence with its other peoples. Hungary has entered into a voluntary affiliation with the Monarchy as an independent state; it has never acknowledged a superior central authority, nor submitted itself to majority rule. Still less can that ensue after the experiences of this war."<sup>77</sup> The conflict had hardened attitudes. Moreover, by the end such defiance assumed the increasingly explicit purpose of evading ultimate responsibility for being on the side of the losers.

Secondly, in Austria German national feeling dominated public life. That was true for the army and the military administration. It soon became apparent that those who sought Austro-Hungarian victory could only achieve it through acceptance of Germany's command organization and its war aims. Indeed, Habsburg forces were still long sustained by the traditional ethos of service; but combat willingness on the ground became eroded.<sup>78</sup> In the civil sphere, regime loyalty crumbled, with abuse and oppression of its perceived foes at home and an unholy attachment to the greater German cause as its own diplomatic *raison d'être* evaporated. Not all those who felt a civic loyalty to the Austrian state were enthusiastic about the prospect of a triumphant Germany; but they could foresee that German defeat would ineluctably drag down their own now heavily compromised polity. The 1915 *Denkschrift aus Deutsch-Österreich*, part-authored by Heinrich Friedjung, exemplified the blue-sky *Mitteleuropa* thinking that could only exacerbate tensions in the Cisleithanian public sphere

<sup>76</sup>Evelyn Kolm, *Die Ambitionen Österreich-Ungarns im Zeitalter des Hochimperialismus* (Frankfurt, 2001); Marvin Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the Balkans during World War I* (Basingstoke, 2014).

<sup>77</sup>"Die dualistische Structur der Monarchie und die paritätische Stellung Ungarns in derselben [sind] eine *Conditio sine qua non* unseres Zusammenlebens mit den anderen Völkern der Monarchie. Ungarn hat sich als selbstständiger Staat freiwillig der Monarchie angeschlossen, es hat eine über ihm stehende Zentralgewalt nie anerkannt, und sich einer Majorisierung nie unterworfen. Noch weniger kann dies nach den Erlebnissen dieses Krieges geschehen." Peter Broucek, *Karl I. (IV.) Der politische Weg des letzten Herrschers der Donaumonarchie* (Vienna, 1997), 192–94.

<sup>78</sup>Márton Farkas, *Katonai összeomlás és forradalom 1918-ban* [Military collapse and revolution in 1918] (Budapest, 1969), is absurdly doctrinaire, but contains much material about rising levels of insubordination among the troops.

and intensify the alienation of all in Hungary except the pro-German clique around Tisza.<sup>79</sup> The Czech Zahradnik (we encountered him earlier) put the point with devastating directness in the Austrian Reichsrat in July 1918: “the whole German system that ruled here in Austria, that was one of the strongest reasons why people have lost any taste for war. People have lost interest in Austria. . . . [E]ither Austria is not German . . . or it has no right to exist.”<sup>80</sup>

Thirdly, dynastic leadership proved narrow and faltering. Having pandered again to Francis Joseph’s autocratic tendencies, government under the feeble Charles then almost replayed the vacillations of the *Vormärz*.<sup>81</sup> The last emperor had plenty of good intentions, both as peacemaker and as political reformer; but his plans lacked depth or precision, and he proved numbingly irresolute vis-à-vis both the Hungarian and the German-Austrian establishments. Detractors rumored he’d only ever read a single book on politics, one written by his own chaplain, which he gave up at page nine.<sup>82</sup> Subsequent dubious attempts to burnish Charles’s saintly credentials must recognize (perhaps as part of their saintliness?) that his velleities had become irrelevant, and were deemed so by almost all parties to the monarchy’s last existential struggle. By the end, “Europe’s necessity” had become Europe’s most dispensable political structure and was treated accordingly.

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The irreparable damage had been done at the intersection of my three master interpretations and the chief focus of my expositors: during the three decades from the 1840s to the 1860s. Those decades yielded what in 1920 one of their most prominent specialists (an ex-director of the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv) called the missed opportunities, the “*versäumte Gelegenheiten*.”<sup>83</sup> That suggests to me one penultimate reflection. If the monarchy was condemned by its prime beneficiaries, what of those it didn’t favor, or actively discriminated against? Thus Slavs in general, according to the standard narrative, and especially those who lacked advocates outside the Habsburg lands. This meant two main groups, Croats and Czechs, whose responses were, however, not quite what they might seem.

The Croats were often invoked as (ultra-)loyalists, not least in their own selective self-presentation, as the nation of General Jelačić. Yet in the immediate aftermath of their defense of the dynasty in 1848–49, the Croatian Party of Right, the *pravaši*, established a program of separatism and exclusivity more extreme than any other elsewhere in the monarchy. Inspired by the revolutionary firebrand Eugen Kvaternik, and led—after Kvaternik died in the abortive Rakovica uprising of 1871—by the magnetic Ante Starčević,

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<sup>79</sup>For the *Denkschrift*, see Günther Ramhardter, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Patriotismus: österreichische Historiker im Weltkrieg, 1914–18* (Munich, 1973), 73–99. For Tisza, see Pölöskei, *Tisza*, 238ff.

<sup>80</sup>“[D]as ganze deutsche System, das hier in Österreich herrschte, das war einer der stärksten Gründe, warum die Leute jedwede Lust zum Kriege verloren haben. Die Leute haben das Interesse an Österreich verloren . . . entweder ist Österreich nicht deutsch . . . oder es hat keine Existenzberechtigung.” Quoted by Holger Afflerbach in *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg*, pt. 1, ed. Helmut Rumpler (Vienna, 2016), 673.

<sup>81</sup>Andreas Gottsmann, ed., *Kaiser Karl I. (IV.), der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Donaumonarchie* (Vienna, 2007), 9–10, sees him as “für den nötigen Neuanfang in den letzten beiden Jahren des Ersten Weltkrieges wohl nicht der richtige Mann . . . [und] . . . an weltpolitischen Strukturproblemen gescheitert.” See the recent firmer indictment by Christopher Brennan, “Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond His Control or beyond His Capacity? The Domestic Policies of Emperor Karl I, November 1916–May 1917 (Ph.D. diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, 2012).

<sup>82</sup>As reported by the German-national staff officer, Edmund Glaise-Horstenau: Broucek, *Karl I. (IV.)*, 201–2.

<sup>83</sup>Hanns Schlitter, *Versäumte Gelegenheiten. Die Oktroyierte Verfassung vom 4. März 1849: ein Beitrag zu ihrer Geschichte* (Zurich, 1920). The same mood pervades Schlitter’s important concurrent *gesamtmonarchisch* archival series, *Aus Österreichs Vormärz*, 4 vols. (Zurich, 1920).

they enjoyed huge influence.<sup>84</sup> The *pravaši* soon fell into division, and they did not necessarily command a majority in the Croatian body politic; but they galvanized it, and incited a growing number within it to think the unthinkable. They could not threaten the *Gesamtmonarchie* on their own; but they furnished a first indication of violent secessionist ideology at its very heart.

The Czechs, for their part, were surely arch-opponents of both dualism and German domination of Austria. It was suspicion ever since 1848 of their supposedly pan-Slav and related seditious sentiments that provoked the arrests and persecution of so many of their leaders by the Austrian authorities in 1914–15. In 1917 Czernin described the Czechs to Charles as “a band of the most insolent, dangerous and shameless high traitors,” and likened his monarch’s conciliatory stance toward them as “an exact copy of the policy of Louis XVI.”<sup>85</sup> Yet their program of Bohemian state rights was all about *sustaining* the empire. And František Palacký, in April 1848, was its epigrammatic apostle: “Truly, if there had not long been an Austrian state, we should need to act swiftly, in the interest of Europe, indeed of humanity itself, to create it.”<sup>86</sup>

Palacký’s maxim—a dictum on the lips of others too in the 1840s<sup>87</sup>—is the most famous slogan of loyalism (and the whole Frankfurt Letter, from which it derives, its core text). Yet it stands as a pragmatic observation too because Bohemians in general and Czechs in particular had indeed invented the modern monarchy. They were foremost in running the entire system across Austria (at times even Hungary), from the later eighteenth century on, providing models of both procedures and mores in central and local *Verwaltung*.<sup>88</sup> This civic agenda of Palacký’s was more authentic and constructive than the quasiprofessional but partisan interpretative stance that he adopted in his magnum opus, the “Geschichte von Böhmen” that became ever more a “history of the Czech people in Bohemia and Moravia.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Key texts are Eugen Kvaternik, *La Croatie et la confédération italienne* (Paris, 1859); Kvaternik, “Politická razmatranja” [Political reflections], in *Politički spisi: Rasprave, govori, članci, memorandum, pisma* [Political writings: Debates, speeches, articles, memoranda, letters], ed. Ljerka Kuntić (Zagreb, 1971), 168–216, 409–503; and his proposals to the Sabor in 1861, *ibid.*, 217–379. Commentary in Mirjana Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije* [History of the state-right ideology] (Zagreb, 1973); Gross, *Izvorno pravaštvo: ideologija, agitacija, pokret* [The origin of state-rightism: Ideology, agitation, movement] (Zagreb, 2000); Wolf Dietrich Behschnitt, *Nationalismus bei Serben und Kroaten, 1830–1914: Analyse und Typologie der nationalen Ideologie* (Munich, 1980), 161ff.; Günter Schödl, *Kroatische Nationalpolitik und “Jugoslawenstvo”: Studien zu nationaler Integration und regionaler Politik in Kroatien-Dalmatien am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1990).

<sup>85</sup>“[E]ine Schaar der frechsten, gefährlichsten und schamlosesten Hochverräter . . . eine genaue Kopie der Politik Ludwigs XVI.” Broucek, *Karl I. (IV.)*, 125–26.

<sup>86</sup>“Wahrlich existierte der österreichische Kaiserstaat nicht schon längst, man müßte im Interesse von Europa, im Interesse der Humanität selbst, sich beeilen, ihn zu schaffen.” “Zajisté, kdyby státu Rakouského nebylo již od dávna, musili bychom v interessu Europy, ba humanity samé přičiniti se co nejdříve, aby se utvořil.” Text of the Frankfurt Letter in František Palacký, *Radhost: sbírka spisův drobných* [Radhost: A collection of shorter writings], 3 vols. (Prague, 1871–73), 3:10–17. For the context, see Jiří Kořalka, *František Palacký, 1798–1976: životopis* [František Palacký, 1798–1976: A biography] (Prague, 1998), 265–73.

<sup>87</sup>An anticipation (from 1843) in Miklós Wesselényi, *Szózat a magyar és szláv nemzetiség ügyében* [An appeal on the matter of Hungarian and Slav nationality], ed. Ágnes Deák (Budapest, 1992), 277. Another version in Springer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 1:1.

<sup>88</sup>Cf., in general, R. J. W. Evans, “The Habsburg Monarchy and Bohemia, 1526–1848,” in *Austria, Hungary and the Habsburgs*, 75–98.

<sup>89</sup>František Palacký, *Dějiny národu českého w Čechách a w Morawě, dle půwodních pramenů* [The history of the Czech people in Bohemia and Moravia, from original sources], 5 vols. in 11 pts. (Prague, 1848–72). Cf. Monika Baár, *Historians and Nationalism: East-Central Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 2010), 29ff., 138ff., and *passim*.

The most brilliant advocate of a Bohemian-led program to rescue the monarchy in its existential crisis of 1848–49 was none other than the bilingual, binational Anton[ín] Springer, whose lectures and commentaries, inspired by romantic idealism but laced with a strong dose of Hegel, made a powerful case for Austria as a federation of its freestanding peoples. But Springer then jumped ship, ending up as a *kleindeutsch* Prussophile sharply critical of his former Czech colleagues.<sup>90</sup> Palacký grew increasingly jaundiced too, though for different reasons; but his appeal for recognition of Bohemia's historic constitutional rights was maintained as a political campaign by his son-in-law František Rieger, the outstanding Czech public figure of the next generation; and then, as a scholarly enterprise, by the latter's son Bohuslav (Bohuš) Rieger (1857–1907).

Bohuš Rieger is the last in my pantheon of *gesamtmonarchisch* authors: let's call him a supernumerary, or perhaps a "tritagonist." Rieger was professor of law and constitutional history in Prague, addressing current issues of imperial government with powerful analyses of the evolution of state authority. At the same time, he worked on the countervailing evolution of the commune, the *freie Gemeinde*, though that too was coming under strain by 1900, as we know also from the parallel and contemporary researches of Redlich.<sup>91</sup>

Rieger worked from a Bohemian perspective, in the spirit of his grandfather Palacký. He consolidated contemporary claims for the "state right" (*státní právo*; *Staatsrecht*) of the lands of St. Wenceslas. But he did so with a full grasp of the pan-monarchical context: he was a major exponent of the *Reichsgeschichte*, which officially promoted the *res gestae* of the dynasty.<sup>92</sup> Rieger conveys a sense of almost bewildered frustration that the Habsburg polity, which he affirmed, had failed to secure the future, at least for its core Bohemian-Austrian territories, by embracing the reasonable and legitimate program of its nationally instructed Czech citizens, the best guardians of both its central and its local administration.

Was this the *versäumteste* of all those *Gelegenheiten*? Josef Pekař still argued the claim for the *České státní právo* as backbone of Habsburg government in the very year 1917 when he and other prominent Czech intellectuals finally distanced themselves—definitively, as it soon proved—from Austria.<sup>93</sup> For this most profound, versatile, and stylish of historians, recognition of the centrality of the lands of St. Wenceslas within the Austrian polity went with acknowledging the centrality of the Czech heritage within Bohemia. It was a patriotic cause, as against the cosmopolitan appeal to humanity espoused by Pekař's rival Tomáš Masaryk, in their intellectual tourney before the war over the "meaning of Czech history"

<sup>90</sup>Heidler, *Springer*, a fine appreciation: "Renegátem nebyl, byl apostatou" (ibid., 192).

<sup>91</sup>Rieger, *Drobné spisy* [Shorter writings], 2 vols, ed. Karel Kadlec (Prague, 1914–15); Rieger, *Zřízení krajské v Čechách* [Local government in Bohemia], 2 vols. (Prague, 1889–93). Cf. Josef Redlich, *Das Wesen der österreichischen Kommunalverfassung* (Leipzig, 1910). A general view, but a Czech perspective, in Klabouch, *Gemeindeselbstverwaltung*.

<sup>92</sup>Rieger's ideas can be reconstructed from an extended series of journal articles collected in his *Drobné spisy*. They deal with *Reichsgeschichte* "sub specie Bohemiae," from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Cf. his *Říšské dějiny rakouské* [Imperial history of Austria] (Prague, 1908). Josef Kalousek's *České státní právo* [Bohemian state right], first published in 1871 (Prague) coincidentally with the key parliamentary negotiations on the failed "Bohemian Compromise," and reissued in 1892, presented the most authoritative case for the whole historic claim of the Bohemian/Czech political nation.

<sup>93</sup>Josef Pekař, *Z české fronty* [From the Bohemian/Czech front], vol. 1 (Prague, 1917), 22–29 and passim. For Pekař's attitude toward the Austrian state and his political stances during the war, see the discerning study by Martin Kučera, *Rakouský občan Josef Pekař. Kapitoly z kulturně politických dějin* [Josef Pekař as an Austrian citizen: Chapters of cultural-political history] (Prague, 2005).

(*smysl českých dějin*).<sup>94</sup> The legitimacy of that claim, and the vital need for a settlement in Bohemia to secure the stability of overall Habsburg rule: those are propositions with which, in their different ways, Louis Eisenmann, Josef Redlich, and C. A. Macartney would all have agreed.

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Finally: of course, not all *Gelegenheiten* were *versäumt*. Much was productive in the late monarchy. It's just more than fifty years since the publication of Macartney's *Habsburg Empire*, the last of my masterworks. Since then there has been a shift of emphasis. Cultural and perceptual turns have yielded some wonderful history writing (maybe fully the equal of the authors I've surveyed).<sup>95</sup> But it doesn't—I think—have much directly to do with the underlying causes of the dissolution of the monarchy and its replacement by purported nation-states.

We do need to look beyond elites—but the monarchy's tragedy was a failure of elite governance, which drew in the masses as theatrical extras: *Statisten*, or at best *Komparsen*. We should scrutinize assumptions about the role of nationalism as a political force, while still recognizing that it could lead to squarely political outcomes in the Habsburg lands. It's an intriguing but surely a different issue whether many people had plural identities or no identity at all. My historiographical protagonists were already clear how far national movements and allegiances acted as conduits for wider cultural inclusivities and exclusivities, as well as vehicles for social and economic grievance. The centripetal loyalties of Jews were the exception to prove the rule—and maybe the spur for them in particular to write the history of the *Gesamtmonarchie*.

Moreover, if—as has often been opined of late—relatively little changed for many people in the region during and after 1918, that was less a matter of imperial survival than of a new order already substantially in place, including a conspicuous readiness to repudiate the Habsburgs as rulers.<sup>96</sup> As Charles puts it in that “renouncement” with which I began, “I have opened the way for the peoples to their free-standing state evolution.” Revealingly the Magyar version only mentions the “Hungarian nation” (*magyar nemzet*).<sup>97</sup> Charles spoke more truly than he realized, and he spoke for his predecessors as well. For his successors too, given the negligible impact of Habsburg monarchism in the subsequent politics of the region.

Yet there is much that feels compatible, even complementary, between the earlier and the newer approaches to the Habsburg Question. Eisenmann, Redlich, and Macartney each engaged actively with the public life of Austria-Hungary and of the Central European space

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<sup>94</sup>Martin Kučera, *Pekař proti Masarykovi. Historik a politika* [Pekař against Masaryk: The historian and politics] (Prague, 1995).

<sup>95</sup>This is no place to itemize it. Conveniently, much is now encapsulated and summarized in Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, 2016).

<sup>96</sup>The latest relevant monograph, Carlo Moos, *Habsburg post mortem: Betrachtungen zum Weiterleben der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna, 2016), is very feeble and limited in scope. See now also Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, eds. *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918* (New York, 2019). In the 1920s it was only in rump Hungary, ironically, that Habsburg legitimacy enjoyed any measurable support. In Austria its political wing, the Kaiserstreue Volkspartei, recorded a total of 1,235 votes at the parliamentary election of 1923.

<sup>97</sup>“Ich habe den Völkern den Weg zu ihrer selbständigen staatlichen Entwicklung eröffnet.” Declaration of abdication by Emperor Charles I/IV, 11 Nov. 1918, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Karl\\_I\\_of\\_Austria?uselang=de#/media/File:Verzichtserkl%C3%A4rung\\_Karl\\_I.\\_11.11.1918.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Karl_I_of_Austria?uselang=de#/media/File:Verzichtserkl%C3%A4rung_Karl_I._11.11.1918.jpg). “Nem akarom, hogy személyem akadályul szolgáljon a magyar nemzet szabad fejlődésének.” See: [https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eckartsau\\_i\\_nyilatkozat#/media/F%C3%A1jl:Eckartsau\\_i\\_nyilatkozat.jpg](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eckartsau_i_nyilatkozat#/media/F%C3%A1jl:Eckartsau_i_nyilatkozat.jpg), both accessed 24 Sept. 2019.

in the immediate aftermath of its collapse. All my writers pursued a liberal, at times a progressive agenda.<sup>98</sup> My protagonists affirmed the monarchy by the way they scrutinized its workings (albeit my deuteragonists were much sourer about some aspects of it), even as the deeper structure of their arguments strengthened the case for its ever direr enfeeblement. They may not have known all its languages (though Eisenmann set a strong example); they may not have introduced novel methodologies (though Redlich could be a powerful theorist); they may not have depicted wider society (though Macartney strove for comprehensiveness); but each of them sought to grasp the imperial essence of Habsburg rule. They were therapists, or at least etiologists, not gravediggers.

I conclude by mustering again my three “master interpretations.” The first two are the Hungarian/Magyar problem and the Austrian/German problem. Indeed by 1918 the terminology “Austria-Hungary” concealed an incongruous pair of empty identities. Although both words retained traces of earlier social and territorial denotation, the one was now nonnational, but always defaulting to Germandom, the other hypernational, and squarely Magyarized. The unique feature of the monarchy was not its linguistic and cultural diversity as such, but the absence of any preponderant groupings that still aligned themselves with the historic form of either of the duo of Habsburg states into which it fell after 1867.

Thirdly, there was what I’ve called the “dynastic deficit,” the growing inability of Habsburgs and their attenuating support structures to meet new challenges to their centralized government, at either practical or ideological levels. However trite may have been the continuing circulation of Napoleon’s *bon mot* (adapted from a witticism about the French old regime), that “L’Autriche est toujours en retard, d’une armée, d’une année, d’une idée,” there was a grain of truth in it. And the wider international judgment would likewise be crucial in the end. The external historiography of the *Gesamtstaat* anatomizes that decline; whereas attempts to create its own serviceable past—through official *Reichsgeschichte* and the like—failed to supplant national and regional narratives.

And the *interplay* of all these factors? I have no new methodology of causation with which to close. I turn rather to a classic forensic expositor of the *mens rea*. The accomplices who dispatched the monarchy just one hundred years ago were like the perpetrators of that celebrated murder on the Orient Express. Its *dénouement*, as readers of Agatha Christie will recall, is that each one of the suspects committed the deed simultaneously. And where? Squarely on old-Habsburg soil, as the train from Istanbul halted by a snowdrift in Slavonia, just outside the station at Vinkovci.

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<sup>98</sup>Some have accounted Macartney a conservative. Certainly he wrote with empathy about conservatives, but that is a different thing. He once told me that, when he arrived in Vienna in 1919, he felt himself “mildly pink,” and his first book, *The Social Revolution in Austria* (Cambridge, 1926), fits with that self-description.